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In New Opera, Aninyei Re-imagines Soyinka's *The Trials Of Brother Jero*



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Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

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Insecurity: Pressure Mounts For Release Of Oriire Abducted Teachers, Students

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- APC Blames Makinde For Rising Insecurity In Oyo
- Baptist Church Urges Continued Prayers, As Government Reassures Families

From **Owede Agbajileke** (Abuja) and **Rotimi Agboluaje** (Ibadan)

AS Nigerians prayerfully wait on both the federal and Oyo State governments to make good their pledge of ensuring the safe release of seven teachers and 39 students abducted on May 15, 2026, by terrorists from Community High School, Ahoro-Esinle, and Yawota Baptist Nursery and Primary School in Oriire Local Council, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS) has announced plans to stage a "solidarity and advocacy" rally in Ibadan on Monday, June 1, to press for the freedom of the victims.

The announcement by NANS came amid a protest on Friday by the Oyo State Teachers' Action Group, which was joined by the Nigeria Teachers' Congress (NTC), a non-governmental organisation, to demand for the safe return of the victims.

Speaking during the protest, the National President of the NTC, Reverend Bunmi Thomas, said the organisation decided to participate in the protest by the teachers as a show of solidarity.

"When we heard about the proposed protest by the Oyo State Teachers' Action Group, we were satisfied and decided to join them because what they are doing is lawful. They are demanding pragmatic action from the government to secure the release of the abducted teachers and students," he said.

Thomas acknowledged that government authorities had reportedly taken steps to address the situation, but insisted that more urgent action was required.

"If the government is trying and the desired result has not been achieved, then more efforts must be intensified. We want the government to do more to rescue the teachers and pupils," he said.

He expressed concern over the condition of the abducted victims, noting that some of them were very young children exposed to harsh conditions in captivity.

"We have children as young as two and three years old in the bush. They are exposed to rain and harsh weather conditions. These victims are in danger, and nobody knows who could be next," he lamented.

The group also called for improved security arrangements in public schools across the state, urging the government to deploy security personnel to educational institutions to prevent further attacks.

"We want the government to attach security personnel to all government schools. We cannot continue to work while living in danger," Thomas said.

In a statement on Friday, the President of NANS, Akinteye Babatunde Afeez, urged all branches of the association, along with allied partners, to participate in the solidarity and advocacy rally in Oyo State on Monday following the continued detention of the kidnapped students and teachers.

Afeez described the situation as distressing and unacceptable, insisting that Nigerian students could no longer remain silent while innocent pupils and educators are still being held by their abductors.

According to the statement, the solidarity movement is aimed at demanding urgent action from security agencies and relevant authorities towards ensuring the immediate release of the abducted students and teachers.

The NANS president said the rally would include visits to the affected schools, including Community High School/Grammar School, Ahoro-Esiele; L.A. Primary School, Ahoro-Esiele; and Yawota Baptist Nursery and Primary School.

He added that the association would also visit the Commissioner of Police, Oyo State Command, and the Director of the Department of State Services (DSS) in the state before embarking on a peaceful walk against insecurity in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital.

Afiez called on all NANS structures, student leaders, activists, stakeholders and well-meaning Nigerians to join the movement in demanding justice and the safe rescue of the victims.

"I write at this critical and defining juncture to invite all NANS structures, sister unions, stakeholders, and leaders to a solidarity movement in Oyo State.

"This solidarity movement is premised on the continuous hostage situation involving our students and teachers following the gruesome and inhumane attack in Orire Local Government Area.

"It has been two weeks since this cruel and callous act was perpetrated, and it is appalling that, till this day, the abducted students and teachers are yet to be rescued.

"At this critical crossroads, silence is no longer golden; we must act decisively and forthwith," Akinteye stated.

However, the All Progressives Congress (APC) in Oyo State has blamed the administration of Governor Seyi Makinde for the surge in kidnapping, violent attacks and other security breaches across the state, calling for immediate action to secure the release of abducted school children and teachers.

The APC said the worsening security situation in Oyo State contrasted sharply with earlier years in the South-West region, alleging that the state government had prioritised "political showmanship and lip service" over effective security management.

In a statement issued on Friday in Ibadan by its Publicity Secretary, Olawale Sadare, the APC expressed concern over recent incidents of abductions, including the kidnapping of students and teachers in Oriire Local Council, as well as the abduction of two staff members of the Cocoa Research Institute of Nigeria (CRIN) in Idi Ayunre, Oluyole Local Council.

The party accused Governor Makinde of failing to take decisive steps to curb insecurity, alleging that his administration had shifted blame to the Federal Government while neglecting its responsibilities.

"We have said on several occasions that window dressing and populism cannot help in building and sustaining a security architecture," the statement read.

"The current administration started on a bad note in 2019 with the disengagement of some critical stakeholders from joint security activities in the state."

The APC further alleged that traditional rulers and other key stakeholders had been sidelined in security coordination, while significant resources were allegedly spent on vehicles and surveillance equipment without corresponding results.

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



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu received in audience with the Vice President, Kashim Shettima and Nigeria Governor's Forum led by their Chairman, Governor of Kwara State, Abdulrahman Abdulrazak on sallah homage at his residence in Ikoyi, Lagos... on Friday. PHOTO: STATE HOUSE

Nigeria Will Emerge Stronger Despite Current Hardships – Tinubu

From **Terhemba Daka**, Abuja

PRESIDENT Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Friday expressed optimism that Nigeria would emerge stronger, fairer, more united, and prosperous despite the economic and social challenges currently confronting the country.

Speaking in a nationwide address to mark the third anniversary of his administration, the President said the difficult reforms introduced since May 2023 were necessary to rescue the nation from fiscal collapse and place it on the path of long-term recovery and sustainable growth.

President Tinubu acknowledged the hardship Nigerians had endured following the removal of fuel subsidy, exchange-rate reforms and other economic adjustment policies, but insisted that the sacrifices being made by citizens would ultimately yield positive results.

According to him, history has shown that great nations often pass through difficult periods before attaining lasting stability, growth and prosperity.

"History tests nations before it elevates them. Nigeria is passing through such a test. But I believe with all my heart that we shall emerge stronger, fairer, more united and more prosperous than ever before," the President stated.

He said when his administration assumed office three years ago, Nigeria faced severe fiscal and structural challenges, including mounting debt-servicing costs, unsustainable fuel subsidies, declining revenues, foreign exchange distortions, insecurity, energy shortages, and weakening public confidence in institutions.

Tinubu disclosed that at the peak of the subsidy regime, Nigeria spent as much as N18.4 billion daily on petrol subsidy, amounting to more than N4 trillion in 2022 alone.

He also revealed that multiple exchange-rate windows and forex arbitrage cost the country over N8 trillion within three years through speculative activities and rent-seeking practices.

"The situation demanded urgent and courageous action. Difficult but necessary decisions had to be taken to stabilise the economy and prevent a deeper national crisis.

"Had we refused to act, our nation would have drifted toward fiscal breakdown, worsening poverty and severe economic uncertainty. Together, we chose reform over ruin and decisiveness over hesitation," he said.

The President maintained that although the reforms initially triggered a sharp rise in the cost of living and placed pressure on households and businesses, the economy had now stabilised and was showing visible signs of recovery.

"I remain deeply conscious of those sacrifices, and I assure you: your sacrifices have not been in vain. Today, I can say with confidence that Nigeria has stabilised and is moving forward again," he stated.

Tinubu said the economy was now more competitive and better positioned for sustainable growth, adding that public finances had improved significantly while investor confidence was gradually returning.

He noted that states and local councils now had greater resources to fund development projects and social programmes.

Highlighting economic gains recorded under his administration, the President pointed to the performance of the Nigerian stock market, which he said rose from an All Share Index of 53,000 and market capitalisation of N30 trillion in 2023 to 250,000 and N160 trillion respectively in 2026.

He also listed ongoing infrastructure projects across the country, saying over 2,700 kilometres of highways and major roads were currently under construction, reconstruction or rehabilitation nationwide.

Among the projects he mentioned were the Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway, Sokoto-Badagry Super Highway, Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Road, East-West Road and several rural access roads aimed at boosting connectivity, trade, and economic activities.

According to Tinubu, rail modernisation projects were equally progressing to strengthen logistics and economic integration across the federation.

In the oil and gas sector, the President said reforms introduced by his administration had attracted billions of dollars in fresh investments from international oil companies that had previously shunned Nigeria.

He added that the $5 billion NLNG Train 7 project was nearing completion and would boost Nigeria's LNG production capacity, exports and revenue generation.

Tinubu further noted that improved local refining capacity and the growth of modular refineries were helping Nigeria reduce dependence on imported petroleum products while conserving foreign exchange.

On the power sector, the President said his administration was addressing longstanding challenges of debt, weak infrastructure, and underinvestment through expansion of transmission infrastructure, investment in renewable energy and efforts to strengthen the national grid.

"No modern economy can grow in darkness. When power improves, businesses expand, industries grow, jobs are created and families prosper," he said.

PDP Factions Renew 'War' Over Plot To Field Jonathan As Presidential Candidate

Turaki-led Faction Dismisses Wike's Threats

From **Azimazi Momoh Jimoh**, Abuja

THE Nyesom Wike-backed leadership of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) led by Abdulrahman Mohammed has distanced itself from reports of a planned convention to affirm former president Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as the presidential candidate of the party, describing the move as unauthorised and capable of creating confusion within the polity.

But the faction of the party led by former Minister of Special Duties, Kabiru Turaki, has insisted that its planned special convention to ratify the presidential candidature of Jonathan will hold as scheduled in Abuja.

The convention is scheduled for Saturday, May 30, 2026.

In a statement issued on Friday by its National Publicity Secretary, Jungudo Haruna Mohammed, the Wike-backed faction said no such convention, meeting or process had been scheduled, approved or endorsed by its leadership or any recognised organ of the party.

The faction, therefore, urged members of the party, supporters and the general public to disregard the reports, insisting that the information being circulated in some quarters was false and misleading.

"The party wishes to categorically state that no such convention, meeting or process has been scheduled, approved or endorsed by the leadership or any recognised organ of the PDP," the statement read.

It maintained that all its primary elections, including governorship, state assembly, National Assembly and presidential primaries had already been concluded in line with the guidelines of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), the Electoral Act and the party's constitution.

According to the faction, the exercises were peacefully conducted across the country under the supervision of INEC.

It also called on former president Jonathan to publicly dissociate himself from what it described as a "charade" in order to safeguard the integrity of the democratic process and preserve the credibility he earned while serving the nation.

The PDP further urged security agencies to investigate the source of the alleged false reports and prosecute those responsible, accusing them of attempting to create political tension in the country.

It warned that it would no longer tolerate acts capable of dragging the party into disrepute through misinformation and unauthorised political activities aimed at undermining its democratic structures.

"The PDP will henceforth not fold its arms and allow the party to be dragged into disrepute through falsehood, misinformation, and unauthorised political activities aimed at undermining its integrity and democratic structures," Mohammed stated.

Reaffirming its commitment to due process, internal democracy and the rule of law, the party advised members of the public to rely only on official communications issued by duly authorised officials of the PDP.



Wife of the Ogun State Governor, Mrs Bamidele Abiodun (left); former Governor of Ogun State, Chief Olusegun Osoba; Ogun State Governor, Prince Dapo Abiodun; the Reagent of Ijebuland, Chief Sunny Kuku; wife of the late Awujale of Ijebuland, Olori Iyabo Adetona, and the Minister of Art, Culture, Tourism, and the Creative Economy, Barrister Hannatu Musa Musawa, during the Year 2026 Ojude Oba festival with the theme: 'Celebrating the Legacy of Oba Sikiru Adetona,' held in Ijebu-Ode ... on Friday.

Shun Illegal Memorials For Civil War Victims, Army Tells South East Residents

From **Johnson Eyiangho**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Army has urged residents of the South East to shun a directive by the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) to organise church memorials for victims of the Nigerian civil war, describing it as illegal and aimed at disrupting peace in the region.

MASSOB had directed churches in the South-East to hold memorial services for civil war victims and enforce a sit-at-home on May 30.

In a statement, the Acting Deputy Director, Army Public Relations, 82 Division Enugu, Lt.-Col. Olabisi Ayeni, said the directive was not only illegal and provocative, but must be disregarded by all, warning that any gathering or activity outside the framework of lawful national commemorations will not be tolerated.

"The Nigerian Army is aware that sympathisers of MASSOB, IPOB resolved to issue this illegal order to create chaos. Clerics, innocent citizens and youths are therefore strongly advised to stay away from such plans, which are designed to destabilise the peace enjoyed in the entire Southeast."

Ayeni urged the residents, including churches, go on with their services and businesses without fear of intimidation as any individual or group that attempts to disrupt public peace or religious activities will face the full weight of the law.

He said the Armed Forces, in collaboration with other security agencies, were committed to safeguarding lives, property and ensuring peace across the South-East.

Ayeni said the attention of the South East Joint Task Force, Operation *Udo Ka*, had been drawn to the illegal directive.

"Headquarters Operation *Udo Ka* empathises deeply with families who lost loved ones during the civil war and acknowledges the sacrifices made to keep Nigeria united.

Troops Rescue 92 Abducted Civilians, Recover Eight Vehicles From Sambisa Forest

From **Njadvara Musa**, Maiduguri

TROOPS of the Northeast Joint Task Force (JTF) under Operation Hadin Kai (OPHK) have rescued 92 abducted civilians and recovered eight vehicles from the Burataі-Kumaya axis of Sambisa Forest in Borno State.

The military said in Maiduguri that the rescued persons comprise 52 males, 33 females and seven children from various communities of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states.

A statement released by the Media and Information Officer of the OPHK, Lt-Col. Sani Uba, disclosed: "The ground troops have demonstrated their unrelenting commitment to the protection of civilians by executing a swift and decisive rescue operation that freed 92 kidnapped victims from Boko Haram and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWA) terrorists along the 130-kilometre Damaturu-Biu road.

"At approximately 11:22 a.m., alerted troops of the 135 Special Forces Battalion deployed at Dutse Kura detected BH/ISWAP terrorists forcibly herding civilians and vehicles off the road and into the surrounding bush using their surveillance system.

Third Year Anniversary: Oborevwori Attributes Achievements To God's Grace

Selman Commends Governor, Urges Focus

From **Monday Osayande**, Asaba

DELTA State Governor, Sheriff Oborevwori, on Friday attributed the successes recorded by his administration over the past three years to the grace, wisdom and mercy of God.

He declared that the state's development strides were achieved without borrowing a kobo following prudent management of resources.

Speaking at the 2026 Delta State Thanksgiving and Praise Day held at the Dome Event Centre, Asaba, the governor said the occasion was an opportunity to appreciate God for His faithfulness and guidance as the administration marks its third anniversary in office.

Addressing a gathering of political leaders, government officials, clergy, traditional rulers and residents, Oborevwori expressed gratitude to the people for their support since he assumed office on May 29, 2023. He noted that the journey had been "eventful, exciting and enlightening."

According to him, the last three years had witnessed the implementation of people-oriented programmes and projects designed to improve the living standards of citizens, alongside the execution of major infrastructure projects across the state.

He said: "Today, we are celebrating three years of this administration. Indeed, this is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our sight. I remain eternally grateful to God for finding me worthy to serve the people of Delta State in this capacity."

The governor explained that despite challenges encountered along the way, his administration had successfully navigated them through divine wisdom, sincerity of purpose and prudent financial management.

North-Central APC Forum Withdraws Ultimatum Against Yilwatda

From **Owede Agbajileke**, Abuja

THE North-Central Forum of the All Progressives Congress (APC) has withdrawn the two-week ultimatum it earlier issued to the National Chairman, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, to resign or be sued, saying it has no intention of causing division within the party ahead of the 2027 general election.

The Forum had in the ultimatum asked Yilwatda to resign within two weeks or face court action over alleged irregularities recorded in the conduct of the APC primaries.

However, the Forum withdrew the ultimatum and tendered apologies to Yilwatda, in a statement signed by its National Chairman, Alhaji Saleh Zazzaga, on Friday evening.

The North-Central APC Forum, in the follow up statement, disclosed that the ultimatum was informed by wrong information and a misunderstanding of prevailing issues in the party.

In withdrawing the ultimatum, the Forum pledged its commitment to harmony, peace and progress in the ruling party, even as it equally suggested that enemies of the party might have tried to influence its earlier position on the conduct of the APC primaries.

The statement added: "The North-Central APC Forum, as a body of well-meaning stakeholders of our great party in the North-Central zone, has always been committed to the development and progress of the party.

"Our call for the resignation of the National Chairman of the APC, Prof. Nentawe Yilwatda, was based on misinformation and a misunderstanding of the true situation. Having become aware of the true facts, we hereby withdraw the ultimatum and extend unreserved apologies to the national chairman and other leaders of the APC.

"The North-Central APC Forum has no intention of instigating a crisis or being an agent for the destabilisation of the APC.

"We were not well informed in our previous pronouncements on issues concerning the APC primaries. We have no choice than to withdraw the ultimatum and apologise for the tensions raised by our previous position, now that we are privy to the true state of affairs."

NSIB Begins Probe Into Container Vessel, Oil Tanker Collision In Bonny

From **Joke Falaju**, Abuja

THE Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) has commenced investigation into the collision between container vessel, MV Maersk Valparaiso, and oil tanker, MT Lady Martina, at Bonny Anchorage in Rivers State.

The incident, which occurred on May 20, 2026, has been classified by the Bureau as a Very Serious Marine Casualty.

NSIB, in a statement issued by its Director of Public Affairs and Family Assistance, Mrs. Funke Adebayo-Arowojobe, said it activated its marine occurrence response protocols immediately after receiving notification of the incident.

According to the statement, an investigation Go-Team was deployed to Onne and Bonny on May 22 to commence evidence preservation and preliminary investigative activities.

The Bureau disclosed that investigators boarded both vessels and conducted interviews with the Masters and key crew members, while operational records and navigational data linked to the incident were secured.

It added that the Voyage Data Recorder (VDR) and Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) data from MV Maersk Valparaiso had been successfully downloaded for forensic and navigational analysis.

The statement noted that in line with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) Casualty Investigation Code and international obligations, NSIB had formally notified the Transport Safety Investigation Bureau (TSIB) of Singapore as a substantially interested State.

Special

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Banditry, Kidnapping Cast Shadow

Despite the lofty goals of the Federal Government's Safe School Initiative, the incidences of abduction in schools and other educational institutions in Nigeria have increased tremendously, threatening the country's national development. Reports have it that in the month of May alone, over 100 students were kidnapped and yet to gain their freedom. Sadly, while other children were celebrating the Children's Day on May 27 in their homes, amusement parks and recreation centres, their abducted colleagues – kids as young as two-years-old are in the cold forest with their captors, uncovered, afraid and scared. In this report, ***GBENGA AKINFENWA*** *echoes the question of parents, teachers and concern Nigerians on why the Safe School Initiative is failing Nigerian students.*



Dormitory of St. Mary's Catholic Primary and Secondary School, Niger State, after the students and staff were abducted by gunmen in Papiri community, on Friday, November 21, 2025

HIS frenzied tone, followed by the keen sobbing and free flow of tears, few minutes before he was gruesomely slaughtered echoed. His facial expression, coupled with the two lines of tears were enough to force tears down the eyes of hardhearted individuals.

Mr Michael Oyedokun's only sin to have died in such a traumatic way –being beheaded was the fact that he was a teacher. He is one of the victims of the coordinated attack on the three schools in Oriire Local Council, Oyo State, where many students and teachers were abducted by bandits recently.

The bandits invaded Baptist Nursery and Primary School, Yawota; Community Grammar School, Ahori Esinele; and L.A. Primary School, Esiele, at about 9:30am on Friday, May 15, 2026, leaving in their trails, sorrow, tears, gnashing of teeth and indelible mark of terror.

In recent times, schools and educational institutions have become soft targets of these bandits, terrorising, maiming, abducting and killing students in separate coordinated attacks, while the law enforcement agents are becoming helpless.

Few weeks before the Ogbomoso incident, April 27, to be precise, five students of the Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State, were reportedly abducted by armed criminals around the community.

The students were rescued by the Ogun State Police Command, according to their spokesperson, DSP Oluseyi Babaseyi.

Acting promptly, a patrol team was deployed to the scene where an ash-coloured Toyota vehicle was discovered abandoned.

Babaseyi disclosed that further examination of the scene revealed an identity card belonging to a student of Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade, confirming that the occupants of the vehicle were students.

He said: "Acting on this directive, operatives of Isara Area Command, Ipara Division, SWAT, Anti-Kidnapping Unit, Violent Crime Response Unit (VCRU), Quick Response Squad (QRS), and OP MESA were swiftly mobilised and conducted coordinated bush combing and tracking operations along suspected escape routes.

"The sustained operational pressure led to the successful rescue of the five victims from the custody of the abductors on April 28, 2026. The victims were immediately evacuated, debriefed, and taken for medical attention due to conditions sustained while in captivity."

Few days ago, local hunters in Odeda council of Ogun State, raised fresh alarm when suspected kidnappers sent threatening letters warning that schoolchildren in several communities in the area could soon be abducted.

The hunters said the threats have created fear among residents, especially parents, as insecurity continues to spread across rural communities in the state.

According to them, the alarming development comes barely two weeks after a petrol station manager was kidnapped in the area and later released after ransom was reportedly paid.

The Chairman of the Hunters' Association in Odeda, Festus Ogundairo, lamented that the security situation in the council area has become increasingly disturbing.

According to him, information circulating on social media indicates that armed groups have sent letters to some communities threatening to attack schools and abduct pupils. He added that some towns and villages were specifically mentioned in the threats.

Beyond these instances, it is glaring that palpable fear of insecurity is gradually enveloping schools and communities, based on reports and threats circulating on the 'exploits' of the daredevil bandits.

That this development has tainted the Safe School Initiative launched 12 years ago, is to say the least as many schools have been attacked, several students kidnapped, while others were killed, not leaving out the tutors.

The Safe Schools Initiative was launched in 2014 in the wake of the Chibok schoolgirls' abduction in Borno State.

It was introduced by the United Nations Special Envoy for Global Education, Gordon Brown, in partnership with the Nigerian Global Business Coalition for Education and private sector leaders during the World Economic Forum on Africa.

The initiative focused on a range of safety measures including school-based interventions, community protection efforts, and targeted support for schools in high-risk areas.

At inception, the Federal Government committed $10m to the Safe Schools Fund, a figure matched by an equal pledge from the private sector.

The initiative sought to improve the protection and safety of students, family members and teachers focusing on rehabilitating the security infrastructure at schools and establishing community-orientated security concepts, transferring students from high-risk areas to safe schools and providing complementary trauma counselling and providing education for internally displaced persons in camps and communities.

The contributions from Federal Government and private sector were to be complemented by the establishment of Nigeria Safe Schools Initiative Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF) for UN support, co-financing and implementation of activities pertaining to the initiative.

It seemed to have kicked-off well with some positive result because by March 2015, a total of 750 pupils were moved to boarding schools in safe parts of the country, where they were able to continue their education.

To further solidify the commitment to secure schools, former President Muhammadu Buhari in December 2019 signed the safe schools declaration ratification document.

Accordingly, the Federal Government had in December 2022 launched a N144. 8b Safe Schools Financing Plan, with a view to protecting schools from terrorist attacks, across the nation.

But as time went on, the impact waned, raising countless questions on how the funds were utilised and the strategy being adopted, especially as the bandits intensified attacks on educational institutions across the geo-political zones.

Last year, there was a report that the Federal Government was planning to review the implementation of the project, with plans to convene a national summit that will bring together representatives from all 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory.

The government should not wait until the children of elites and notable public figures are kidnapped before providing adequate security in all schools and aggressively pursuing the release of those in captivity. As a mother, I am particularly pained to think of what these innocent children are passing through at the hands of these mindless beasts.

Last February, the Federal Government took a bold step towards repositioning the initiative with the unveiling of a comprehensive plan to reinforce security across schools nationwide. The major overhaul was announced in partnership with the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC).

The move, according to the Minister of Education, Dr Tunji Alausa, follows alarming revelations that more than 60,000 schools in the country lack adequate security infrastructure.

Alausa, who disclosed this during a visit to the NSCDC Commandant-General, Ahmed Audi, in Abuja, where both officials reviewed the country's school security framework, said the government would move away from reactive approaches to school attacks and instead adopt a structured and sustained security strategy, particularly in vulnerable communities.

"We will move from knee-jerk responses to a continuous security presence, especially in vulnerable schools. Our children must remain safe in school, and this administration is committed to providing the resources and structure required," he said.

The minister described attacks and abductions in schools as unacceptable, stressing that the government maintains zero tolerance for assaults on educational institutions.

He added that safeguarding pupils is a collective responsibility involving government authorities, security agencies, and host communities.

As part of the renewed strategy, Alausa announced the creation of a dedicated Safe Schools Department within the Federal Ministry of Education.

He said the unit would coordinate national security efforts, strengthen collaboration with relevant agencies, and ensure consistent implementation of safety measures.

He also revealed plans to integrate technology into the security framework, including the deployment of panic buttons and alert systems directly linked to security command centres to

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Over Safe School Initiative

enable rapid emergency response.

Before this period, last December to be precise, at their plenary session, the Upper Legislative Chamber, declared a move to open a full-scale investigation into the initiative, following repeated attacks on schools and the mass abduction of students across the country.

The Chairman of the Ad-hoc Committee, Senator Uzor Kalu, warned that the inquiry would leave no stone unturned. "Since 2014, more than 1,680 children have been kidnapped, and 180 schools attacked," he said. "It is unacceptable that schools remain soft targets despite years of funding and policy frameworks."

The committee was mandated to conduct a thorough financial audit and summon ministers, state governors, and civil society actors to explain operational lapses.

"Every naira and every dollar spent on this programme would be accounted for," Kalu said. "We need answers on why our schools remain vulnerable despite enormous investment and global attention."

The probe was also expected to review the deployment of security personnel, early warning systems, and school infrastructure upgrades. Kalu stressed that the investigation was aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability, not assigning blame. "Parents deserve assurance that their children's education is safe. We will not rest until schools are truly secure," he said.

However, despite all the promises, declarations and projected moves, little or no impact has been made, as the matter could be likened to "motion without movement situation."

A confirmation to this is the fact that the tragic incidents have continued to escalate, almost on daily basis. Reports have it that aside from the May 15 abduction of 47 students and teachers in Ogbomoso, Oyo State, a similar mass abduction of roughly 50 students in Borno State around the same period, and separate school attacks in Katsina and Zamfara states that resulted in the capture of numerous students and educators have sent fears down the spine of many concerned Nigerians.

The National President, National Parent-Teacher Association of Nigeria (NAPTAN), Alhaji Haruna Danjuma, who warned that the trend of this heinous act would worsen Nigeria's existing out-of-school children crisis and deepen learning poverty, questioned the current status of the Safe Schools Initiative programme as a response to the growing number of attacks on students, notably the Chibok schoolgirl kidnappings back then, calling for immediate, practical security upgrades across Nigerian schools.

"We did not envisage a new wave of school attacks, especially in the Southwest. We thought this nightmare was over. We send our children to school to learn, not to become bargaining chips for ransom. This madness will discourage parents from educating their children and terrify students."

He urged President Bola Tinubu and state governors to live up to their constitutional duty of protecting lives and property.

"Schools must be fenced and guarded by trained, energetic security personnel, not just local gatemen. We need to involve parents and local youths, and train students and teachers on emergency response and security tips.

"Security awareness is critical; citizens must speak up when they notice suspicious movements."

The Founder/Chief Executive Officer of the Amazing Grace Children Rights Foundation (AGCRF), Mrs Grace Omoye, described the incessant attacks on schools and the kidnapping of students as a dangerous trend mortgaging the country's future.

Omoye noted with concern that in the month of May alone, over 100 students had been kidnapped, questioning why governments at all levels have yet to secure their release.

She emphasised that the implications of the ugly trend extend far beyond the immediate trauma inflicted on the abducted children, their families, and teachers. She warned that the recurring violence is already instilling deep fear in Nigerian children and educators, stripping them of the peace of mind required to attend school.



A mother hugs her daughter on July 25, 2021, after she was released with 27 other students of Bethel Baptist High School, Kaduna, who were kidnapped. PHOTO: AFP via Getty Images

Omoye said: "The government should not wait until the children of elites and notable public figures are kidnapped before providing adequate security in all schools and aggressively pursuing the release of those in captivity. As a mother, I am particularly pained to think of what these innocent children are passing through at the hands of these mindless beasts."

However, the AGCRF boss is calling on the government to decisively address the crisis, secure the immediate release of the captive children, and reassure the nation that it has not been overwhelmed by the insecurity threatening the country's corporate existence.

Omoye also urged corporate organisations, Parents/Teachers Associations (PTAs), and civil society to join hands in protecting Nigerian schools to safeguard the nation's future.

An educationist, based in Abeokuta, Ogun State, Mr. Tunde Sanyaolu, said the incessant incidences have become a major threat to national development.

"In recent times, students and teachers have been kidnapped by groups seeking ransom. These incidents have created fear and uncertainty among parents, students, and educators. This poses serious dangers to the future of the country as it seriously threatens the peace needed for the development of the country."

He said the Safe School Initiative meant to address menace was launched with good intentions, but sadly, the policy has not achieved its main goal because attacks on schools and kidnapping of students have continued unabated.

"One of the greatest effects of school abductions is decline in education as a result of the disruption of education. Some schools have been forced to shut down after attacks, especially in rural areas. Parents are now afraid of sending their children to school. Workers in educational institutions go to work in fear. More and more students may drop out of school.

"The availability of manpower to run and sustain the country in the future is now endangered. When education is disrupted, and children are denied access to education, the country loses future professionals and skilled workers such as teachers, lawyers, engineers, technicians, and doctors among others. A nation without educated citizens cannot develop economically, politically, or socially.

"Frequent attacks on schools discourage learning and increase illiteracy rates. Some students lose interest in education owing to fear. Children who are denied education are more likely to become unemployable in the future."

Sanyaolu stated that victims of abduction often suffer emotional trauma, fear, anxiety, and depression. "Some students, including those that are not abducted, may never recover fully from the experience. Such psychological damage affects not only academic performance, but also the medical condition and overall well-being of students, teachers, and parents.

"When schools are repeatedly attacked, citizens will begin to lose trust in government's ability to confront the menace and provide security. Groups of people or sections in the country will be forced to find ways of providing security for themselves.

"Foreign investors may view the country as unsafe. This will not only damage Nigeria's international image, it will also have negative impact on the nation's economy because insecurity will discourage both local and foreign investments.

Sanyaolu hinted that the Safe School Initiative has not lived to expectation because it was "mainly created to respond to threats from *Boko Haram*, but over time other groups also began targeting schools. The initiative is not made strong or flexible enough to handle the growing threats.

"Another problem is weak implementation. Many schools are supposed to be fenced and given surveillance systems, and trained security personnel, but a large number of schools never got any of these. Some projects were started but were not completed.

"Necessary trainings are not being given to schools and communities on how to respond to security emergencies. The initiative depends heavily on the security system at the national level. Whereas the military and the police are overstretched because they face multiple security crises, therefore, they cannot provide adequate protection for every school in the country," he said.

Sanyaolu stressed that the failure of the initiative has necessitated the need to intensify efforts on the creation of community policing, and local vigilantes, while traditional leaders are given visible roles with corresponding involvement of state governments.

A security expert based in Anambra State, Mr Anayo Chizoba, said the initiative struggled to achieve its goal because the measures are reactive, not preventive; inconsistent security deployment; under-resourced and overstretched security forces; poor intelligence and community engagement; and focus on politics over implementation, among others.

Said he: "Many state governments respond to attacks by shutting down schools, which is actually a wrong method to adopt. Shutting down schools definitely stops learning, but doesn't address the root cause. It also signals that the state can't secure its schools, which emboldens attackers. Security presence in the school are often inadequate, they are either poorly coordinated, or withdrawn after initial response.

"The Police, NSCDC, and vigilantes are stretched across multiple fronts – banditry, insurgency, kidnapping. Schools in rural/northern areas often lack perimeter fencing, guards, or early warning systems. Attacks are often preceded by threats, but intelligence doesn't get to schools in time. Where community-school-police collaboration is weak, early warnings are missed.

"A good number of people, especially the opposition are of the opinion that government prioritises politics over urgent security fixes. Based on past experiences, policies exist on paper, but implementation, funding, and accountability lag."

To make the Safe School Initiative effective, Chizoba advised the Federal Government to ensure proper and consistent funding and roll-out, not immediately after high-profile attacks have been recorded.

"As part of the strategy of the initiative, government should ensure there are perimeter fencing, controlled entry points, alarm systems, and safe rooms in high-risk areas; focus should shift from reacting to attacks, to preventing them and restoring trust; and the handlers of the initiative should use targeted closures only for immediate threats, as prolonged shutdowns destroy education and push kids into vulnerability.

"There is need to fix intelligence and early warning systems; set up direct communication lines between schools, communities, and security agencies; usage of community informants and local vigilantes who know the terrain; and prompt actions on intelligence reports of imminent attacks."

He added that the Federal Government should also set up trained school protection units rather than overstretching regular police who are handling banditry, insurgency, and kidnapping simultaneously, adding that clear command structure must also be put in place to know who responds when an alert goes out.





Sokoto State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu (third right); Sultan of Sokoto, Muhammadu Sa'ad Abubakar (second right) and others when the governor paid Sallah homage to the Sultan at his palace...on Wednesday



Deputy National President, Nigerian Chamber of Commerce, Chief Emi Membere Otaji (left); Da Ogo the VIth, Head of the Queen Elababene/ Da Ogo Group of Houses in Kalabari Kingdom; Prince Tonye T.J.T Princewill; Amanyanabo of Torusarama piri aka The Source, Mujahid Dokubo Asari and Deuin- Ala XII of Kalabari. Paramount Chief of the Ancient Duein - Ala Chieftaincy House, Chief David T Briggs at the inauguration of the new President of Benin Republic, Romuald Wadagni.



Managing Director (MD)/ Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Griffin Capital Asset Management, Ugonnaya Osi (left); Group CEO, Griffin Capital Group, Babatunde Obaniyi; Group Chairman, Griffin Capital Group, Musa Bello Esq; MD/CEO, Griffin Insurance Brokers Limited, Mfon Akpan; MD/CEO, Griffin Capital Finance Company, Abiola Ajayi; and MD/CEO, Griffin Capital Advisory, Chukwudifu Ugwu; at the brand launch of Griffin Capital Group in Ikoyi, Lagos.



Editor-in-Chief/Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of *Leadtimes Africa* Magazine, Dr. Samuel Oga; Provost, College of Occupational Health and Safety Management, Prof. Peter Ekong; Chairman/CEO, AirFirst Group, Dr. Gbolahan Olusegun Abatan and the Advisory Board member of *Leadtimes Africa* Magazine, Dr. Ifeanyi Madu at the investiture of Dr. Abatan as the winner of the *Leadtimes Africa* Global Leadership Excellence Award (2026) in Lagos.

Wema Bank Names 10-year-old Ozoakpata As One-Day MD/CEO Winner

By **Kehinde Olatunji**

WEMA Bank has named 10-year-old Chinmamanda Diamond Ozoakpata as the winner of its 2026 One-Day MD/CEO Children's Day initiative, an experiential leadership programme designed to inspire financial literacy, ambition, and early leadership development among Nigerian children.

The announcement was made as part of the bank's 2026 Children's Day celebrations held at its head office in Lagos, where the initiative saw the young pupil step into the role of Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer for a day, symbolically taking charge of one of Nigeria's oldest indigenous financial institutions.

According to the bank's Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Moruf Oseni, the initiative reflects the institution's long-term commitment to youth empowerment and early financial education.

He said the programme was created to inspire children to believe in their ability to achieve success while exposing them to real-world leadership experiences within a structured corporate environment.

Don't Hide Under Politics To Destabilise Our Enduring Peace — Aliyu Warns

SOKOTO State Governor, Ahmed Aliyu, has warned politicians against using politics as a tool to destabilise the enduring peace being enjoyed in the state.

The governor gave the warning when he paid Sallah homage to Muhammad Sa'ad Abubakar at his palace as Muslims across the globe celebrate *Eid-el-Kabir*.

In a statement signed by the Director General, Media and Publicity, Government House, , Abubakar Bawa, Governor Ahmed Aliyu said: "Sokoto State is enjoying a peaceful atmosphere and harmonious coexistence among its residents. That the peace must be sustained. We will not fold our arms and allow unpatriotic citizens to jeopardise our peaceful coexistence."

He added that the government was spending huge sums of money on infrastructure development across the state, noting that such projects must be protected.

"We will deal decisively with anyone found vandalising public infrastructure."

"These projects being executed across the state are funded with taxpayers' money and must be protected by every well-meaning citizen of the state," the governor said.

Sports Crucial To Youth Development — Adegbite

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

CHIEF Executive Officer / Managing Director of Q and N Sports Development Ltd, Prince Adewale Adegbite, has said sports, not academics alone, can secure a brighter future for Nigerian youths.

Adegbite, who made this assertion at the grand finale of Waves of Champions Football Tournament 2026 held at the Gateway International Stadium, stressed that sports has the potential to transform the country by discovering young talents, reducing youth unemployment and crime, and creating opportunities for them to excel globally.

He lamented Nigeria's poor representation at the last Olympic Games, saying it exposed the urgent need for grassroots sports development and talent discovery across the country.

He said it was concerning that a country with a population of over 200 million people could not produce up to 20 athletes capable of representing it at the global stage.

FG, Partners Task Nigerians On Prioritising Real Milk For Improved Nutrition Outcomes

By **Sunday Aikulola**

AS part of efforts aimed at tackling malnutrition and improving nutrition outcomes across the country, the Federal Government, nutrition experts, healthcare professionals, and regulators have tasked Nigerians on embracing nutritional benefits of real milk.

They stated this during the official launch of the Choose Milk Campaign in Lagos. The campaign is a strategic national initiative focused on helping Nigerian households make informed dairy choices by strengthening consumer education and awareness on the nutritional benefits of milk and the differences between real milk and creamers.

Launched by stakeholders from the Danish Dairy Board, European Union, alongside senior representatives from the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare and Ministry of Livestock Development.

World Menstrual Hygiene Day: Advocates Urge Nigerians To Break Silence Around Menstruation

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A NEW documentary film addressing menstrual health and the stigma surrounding periods among young girls premiered in Lagos on Children's Day, drawing attention to the need for more open conversations around menstruation in Nigeria.

The 40-minute participatory documentary entitled, 'Menses…? What's That?' was screened on Tuesday at Polygon Space, Victoria Island, Lagos, at an event organised by ADANSONIA Foundation in partnership with Sweet Potato Media.

The documentary features real-life conversations with 18 girls between the ages of 11 and 18 who shared their experiences, fears and opinions about menstruation in what the organisers described as a "safe environment."

Speaking at the premiere, the film's Creator and Director, Imoh Eboh, said the project was inspired by the persistent shame and silence that still surround menstruation in many homes, schools and communities.

"We made this because too many kids still think periods are dirty or shameful. We are creating a period-friendly world through the voices of these girls for all young people of the world, male and female. Everyone should watch it," Eboh said

MTN Empowers Nigerian Youth-led Startups With N45m

By **Suliyat Tella**

MTN Nigeria has awarded N45 million to selected youth-led startups operating in sectors such as health technology, fintech, education, and the creative industry.

HubPharm Africa emerged as the top winner, receiving N15 million, while other businesses including Coconoto Ltd and Rava Send also secured funding support.

The initiative, which saw 30 young businesses present their ideas for funding and support, is at the core of its youth-focused campaign known as 'Live It 100,' which uses music, innovation, gaming, business and entertainment to support young Nigerians and their growing influence in the digital economy.

The campaign was introduced through a partnership with youth platform, The Gathering, and featured a 100-hour non-stop experience held at the National Stadium in Surulere, Lagos, from April 22 to 26, 2026.

Unlike many corporate events focused heavily on branding and celebrity appearances, the 'Live It 100' experience centred more on youth participation, creativity, networking and innovation.

Why Osiri University Is Intentional About Grounding Learning In African Philosophies – Chancellor

Education, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), remains one of the most powerful drivers of sustainable development in Africa, yet access to quality and affordable higher education continues to be a major challenge across the continent. From widening inequality to limited institutional capacity, millions of young Africans, particularly Nigerians, still find their academic ambitions constrained not by ability, but by cost. It is within this gap that Osiri University emerges as a bold and timely intervention, an institution designed not just to educate, but to democratise opportunity.

Built on the principle that financial barriers should never determine intellectual destiny, the university offers a tuition-free pathway to higher learning, opening doors for students who might otherwise be left behind. At the helm of this transformative vision is Professor John Kalu Osiri, a distinguished scholar whose career bridges science, business, and leadership. From his early training as a chemist to his global academic leadership, Osiri has consistently explored how education can catalyse societal transformation. His concept of the "chemistry of leadership" reflects a belief that innovation, culture, and human potential, when properly harnessed, can reshape nations. In this exclusive interview with ***ONYEDIKA AGBEDO and SUNDAY AIKULOLU,*** *Osiri speaks on the vision behind the university, its tuition-free model, and what it means for Nigerian and African students seeking affordable, high-quality education.*

There is a growing concern about access to higher education in Africa. How does Osiri University respond to this challenge?

THE challenge is real and urgent. Across Africa, and especially in Nigeria, we have millions of talented young people who are ready to learn but are blocked by financial barriers. Osiri University was created to remove that obstacle. We believe education should be accessible to all who are willing to pursue it. Our model is designed to ensure that cost is no longer the reason a student is left behind.

Osiri is described as a tuition-free university. How exactly does this work?

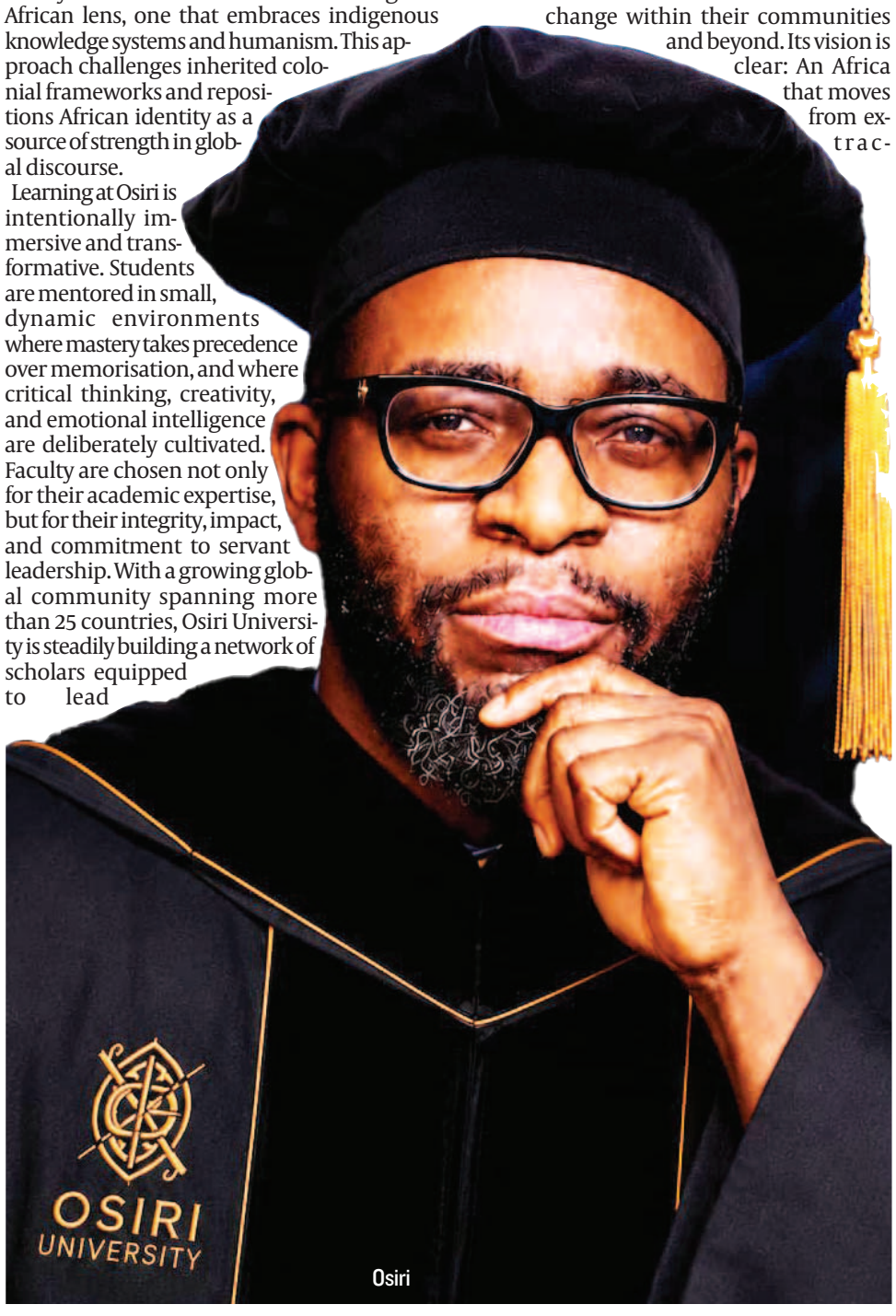
We have taken a different approach to the economics of education. Through strategic partnerships, innovative delivery systems, and a lean operational structure, we are able to provide high-quality education at little to no cost. The goal is not just affordability, but true access. We want students to focus on learning and impact, not on how to pay fees.

What makes Osiri University different from traditional institutions?

We emphasise mastery over memorisation. Many systems reward students for recalling information, but we train them to think, create, and solve real problems. Our classrooms are interactive, our cohorts are small, and mentorship is central. We are building thinkers, innovators, and leaders, not just graduates. Authorised in Nebraska and currently undergoing the U.S. accreditation process, Osiri University represents a departure from traditional academic models. It is not bound by legacy systems that often prioritise exclusivity; instead, it is intentionally structured to expand access while maintaining academic rigour. For many Nigerians, this translates into something profoundly significant – the opportunity to earn a globally relevant education at little to no cost.

Beyond affordability, Osiri University advances a deeper intellectual mission. Rooted in the traditions of Pan-African thought and inspired by scholars such as Claude Ake, the university seeks to redefine education through an African lens, one that embraces indigenous knowledge systems and humanism. This approach challenges inherited colonial frameworks and repositions African identity as a source of strength in global discourse.

Learning at Osiri is intentionally immersive and transformative. Students are mentored in small, dynamic environments where mastery takes precedence over memorisation, and where critical thinking, creativity, and emotional intelligence are deliberately cultivated. Faculty are chosen not only for their academic expertise, but for their integrity, impact, and commitment to servant leadership. With a growing global community spanning more than 25 countries, Osiri University is steadily building a network of scholars equipped to lead change within their communities and beyond. Its vision is clear: An Africa that moves from extraction to innovation, from exporting raw resources to building industries, leading technological advancement, and shaping global narratives.



Osiri

This approach challenges inherited colonial frameworks and repositions African identity as a source of strength in global discourse.

In a continent where the promise of education is often hindered by financial realities, Osiri stands as a compelling response, an institution that not only aligns with UNESCO's call for inclusive and equitable education, but actively embodies it. For countless young Nigerians seeking a future defined by possibility rather than limitation, Osiri is not just a university, but a pathway to transformation.

Your philosophy includes integrating African knowledge systems. Why is this important?

For too long, education in Africa has been shaped by external frameworks that do not fully reflect our realities. At Osiri, we are intentional about grounding learning in African philosophies like *Ubuntu*: "I am because we are." We also draw from Pan-African thought to ensure that our students understand their identity, their context, and their role in shaping the future.

The Council of Elders includes notable figures. How do they influence the university?

We are privileged to have guidance from global thought leaders such as Mallence Bart-Williams, PLO Lumumba, and Chigozie Obioma. Their role is advisory, helping to shape the vision, values, and long-term direction of the university.

Their appointment also marks a significant step in the university's commitment to building a globally respected academic institution grounded in leadership, integrity, and African-inspired thinking.

Prof. Lumumba is widely known across Africa and beyond for his work as a legal scholar, anti-corruption advocate, and Pan-Africanist. Over the years, he has served in key national and academic roles, including Director of the Kenya School of Law and Director of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission. He is also a respected global speaker on governance, leadership, and the future of Africa.

His addition to the Council of Elders brings experience and a strong voice aligned with Osiri University's philosophical foundation, particularly its commitment to the *Ubuntu* principle, which emphasises shared humanity, collective growth, and responsible leadership.

Prof. Lumumba's presence will help guide the institution as it continues to expand access to higher education through its tuition-free model and globally accessible programmes.

What specific opportunities does Osiri offer Nigerian students?

Nigerian students stand to benefit immensely. They gain access to a globally relevant education without the heavy financial burden typically associated with studying abroad. Our online model allows them to learn from anywhere while engaging with a diverse, international community. More importantly, they are equipped with skills that are directly applicable to Nigeria's development.

The university is still undergoing U.S. accreditation. Why should students trust the institution at this stage?

Every great institution starts somewhere. We are transparent about our process and committed to meeting rigorous standards. Our leadership, faculty, and governance structure reflect credibility and global experience. Students who join us now are pioneers shaping the future of education.

What role do faculty play in delivering the Osiri vision?

Our faculties are central to everything we do. We select them not just for academic excellence, but for integrity, impact, and a commitment to servant leadership. They mentor students closely, challenge them intellectually, and guide them towards meaningful contributions in society.

The university also offers the option to earn a master's degree along the way. How does that work?

Students enrolled in the PhD can earn a Master's degree at no additional cost in fields such as Sustainable Leadership, Data Science, Food Systems, or Multimedia Studies. This allows for both depth and breadth in their academic journey.

You often speak about Africa moving from "extraction to mastery." What does that mean?

It means Africa must move beyond exporting raw materials to creating value. We should not just produce resources; we should process, innovate, and lead industries globally. Education is the foundation for that shift, and Osiri is designed to prepare students to drive that transformation.

Your PhD in Business Innovation seems to be gaining attention. What makes it unique?

Our PhD is multidisciplinary and flexible. Students can enroll in our PhD with just a Bachelor's degree or HND, and complete the programme online in three years with a Master's degree in the first year, depending on prior coursework. What truly sets it apart is that students can focus their research on any area they are passionate about, whether in business, agriculture, data science, or the creative industries, so long as it drives innovation and impact.

What kind of students are you looking to admit into the university?

We are looking for curious, driven individuals who want to make a difference. You don't have to come from privilege; you just need the willingness to learn, grow, and contribute. If you are committed to creating impact, you belong at Osiri.

Finally, what message do you have for young Nigerians who feel discouraged about their educational future?

Do not give up on your dreams because of financial limitations. The world is changing, and new opportunities are emerging. Osiri University is one of those opportunities. If you are ready to learn and lead, there is a place for you. If you are ready to challenge yourself, think differently, and contribute to building the future—Osiri is for you. Education should not just advance your career; it should empower you to transform your world.

Post-Primaries Grievances, Defections And APC's Quest To Retain Power In 2027

Ahead of the 2027 general election, the ability of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) to manage post-primaries crises has come under serious test following the defection of some aggrieved contestants and their supporters to opposition parties and the disquiet in the camp of other defeated aspirants, ***ADAMU ABUH*** *writes.*

As the countdown to the 2027 general election intensifies, the leadership of the All Progressives Congress (APC) is once again confronting a familiar and potentially destabilising challenge: managing the fallout from its primaries without triggering internal implosion.

For the ruling party, post-primary disputes are no longer viewed as routine democratic disagreements. Since assuming power in 2015, the APC has repeatedly learned that unresolved grievances arising from candidate selection can weaken internal cohesion, provoke costly litigation, fuel defections and, in some cases, hand electoral advantage to opposition parties without a vote being cast.

It is against this backdrop that the APC National Chairman, Nentawe Yilwatda, recently disclosed that the party's National Working Committee (NWC) had activated its reconciliation and conflict-resolution structures to address grievances emanating from the party's primaries ahead of 2027.

Speaking after a meeting with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, Yilwatda said Presidential Conflict Resolution Committees and Party Reconciliation Committees were already working to prevent disputes from degenerating into deeper crises.

"We have Presidential Conflict Resolution Committees and Party Reconciliation Committees that are already working," he said. "Politics is competitive, and when thousands of aspirants are contesting for limited positions, disagreements are inevitable."

Beneath the reassurance, however, lies an unmistakable concern within the ruling party: the fear that unresolved internal battles could weaken the APC ahead of what promises to be a fiercely competitive electoral cycle.

The APC's recurring vulnerability to internal disputes is rooted partly in the circumstances surrounding its formation. Unlike older parties shaped by enduring ideological traditions, the APC emerged in 2013 from a coalition of competing political tendencies united largely by the objective of removing the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) government led by former President Goodluck Jonathan from power. The merger brought together the Action Congress of Nigeria (ACN), Congress for Progressive Change (CPC), All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), factions of the All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA) and defectors from the PDP.

While the alliance succeeded in producing the historic 2015 victory that brought former military ruler Muhammadu Buhari to power, it also institutionalised multiple centres of influence within the party. Over the years, APC primaries have increasingly become battlegrounds involving governors, ministers, lawmakers, political godfathers and regional blocs competing for the control of party structures and electoral tickets.

In several states, the struggle for nominations has evolved into a contest over political survival, succession and long-term influence. The result has been a recurring cycle of internal disputes capable of threatening party unity. The APC's experience since 2015 reveals a consistent pattern where grievances were addressed early and reconciliation remained possible; and where disputes were ignored and the consequences were politically devastating.

Perhaps no episode better illustrates the latter than the crisis in Zamfara State before the 2019 elections. The supremacy battle between camps loyal to former governor Abdulaziz Yari and Senator Kabiru Marafa led to parallel primaries and prolonged litigation. Despite winning the elections, the APC eventually lost all elective positions in the state after the Supreme Court ruled that the party failed to conduct valid primaries. What should have been an electoral triumph became one of the most painful self-inflicted defeats in the party's history.

A similar crisis unfolded in Rivers State, where the rivalry between supporters of former Minister of Transportation, Rotimi Amaechi, and Senator Magnus Abe produced court decisions that excluded the APC from participating in key elections. In Edo State, reconciliation efforts between former governor Godwin Obaseki and former National Chairman of APC, Adams Oshiomhole collapsed completely, leading to Obaseki's defection to the PDP and eventual re-election against the APC.

Yet there have also been instances where swift intervention prevented fragmentation. Ahead of the 2020 governorship election in Ondo State, disagreements among supporters of late governor Rotimi Akeredolu and rival aspirants were eventually managed through negotiations and elite intervention. Likewise, after the emergence of Governor Biodun Oyebanji during the 2022 governorship primary in Ekiti State, party leaders moved swiftly to pacify dissatisfied camps and prevent defections before the election.

The contrast between these outcomes underscores a central lesson in Nigerian politics: unresolved grievances become more dangerous with time. Once disputes move from party structures to the courts or rival political platforms, reconciliation becomes significantly more difficult.

Despite renewed reconciliation efforts, warning signs are already emerging across several APC chapters. Complaints over consensus arrangements, alleged imposition of candidates and manipulation of delegate processes have triggered growing dissatisfaction among aspirants and party stakeholders.

One of the most politically symbolic developments is the defection of former Minister of Communications and Digital Economy, Isa Ali Pantami, from the APC to the PDP in Gombe State after disagreements surrounding the APC governorship primary. Pantami, who had withdrawn from the APC race over alleged irregularities, later emerged as the PDP governorship candidate, a development that significantly altered the political equation in the state.

> *The APC's experience since 2015 reveals a consistent pattern where grievances were addressed early and reconciliation remained possible; and where disputes were ignored and the consequences were politically devastating.*

The significance of the Pantami and his "Pantamiyya" followership episode extends beyond Gombe. It illustrates how unresolved internal grievances can quickly transform influential party figures into opposition assets.

In Kano State, similar cracks have also begun to appear following the primaries. A member of the Kano State House of Assembly representing Gwale Constituency, Abdulmajid Isa Umar Mai Rigar Fata, defected from the APC to the Nigeria Democratic Congress (NDC) after failing to secure the party's return ticket. Also joining the NDC in Kano were Kabiru Sani Auwal Obi and Mahadi Isa Umar.

The Kano defections, in a terrain where the Kwankwasiyya Movement led by former governor Rabiu Musa Kwankwaso remains deeply rooted, are politically significant because they suggest that aggrieved APC members are no longer merely threatening rebellion within the party but are increasingly willing to strengthen emerging opposition platforms capable of challenging the ruling party's dominance in key northern states.

In Delta State, former Deputy President of the Senate, Ovie Omo-Agege has defected to the NDC after losing the APC ticket for Delta Central Senatorial District, saying, 'I will not remain a sitting duck in a party where I cannot advance the interests of Delta Central, Delta State and Nigeria."

Elsewhere, Senator Garba Maidoki has also been linked with grievances surrounding the primaries, while former APC National Youth Leader, Sadiq Abubakar, and House of Representatives member, Abdullahi El-Rasheed, have similarly been associated with complaints over consensus arrangements and internal exclusion. Within party circles, there are fears that more defections could follow, especially among lawmakers denied return tickets or excluded from emerging succession calculations.

Already, a governorship aspirant of the APC in Benue State, Dr. Jeffrey Kuraun, has accused the party of frustrating his attempt to challenge the outcome of the disputed governorship primary election conducted in the state on May 21, 2026.

Kuraun alleged that members of the APC Governorship Primary Election Appeal Committee became unreachable and unavailable when he attempted to formally file and present his petition against the conduct of the exercise.

He claimed that despite repeated efforts by himself, his representatives and legal team to locate or contact members of the appeal committee, they "could not be found anywhere."

According to him, no sitting date was communicated to aggrieved aspirants, while no official channel was provided for the submission and presentation of complaints arising from the disputed primary election.

He described the development as a denial of his constitutional and democratic right to fair hearing within the party framework.

Kuraun said the development had raised serious concerns about the credibility of the party's internal dispute resolution mechanism.

"The inability of aspirants to access the appeal committee undermines the credibility of the entire dispute resolution process and raises fundamental questions about whether the process was deliberately designed to frustrate legitimate complaints," he stated.

The APC aspirant explained that following the alleged obstruction, he was compelled to forward his appeal through DHL courier service addressed to the National Chairman of the APC, with copies also sent to the National Legal Adviser of the party.

He, however, lamented that no formal response, invitation, hearing or reconciliation meeting had been communicated to him by the party leadership.

"This silence is both disturbing and disappointing," he added.

Kuraun maintained that the issue transcends personal ambition and touches on the integrity of internal democracy within the ruling party.

"A political party cannot claim commitment to democracy while simultaneously denying aggrieved members access to the very mechanisms created to resolve disputes fairly," he said.

Over the years, the APC has developed an elaborate conflict-management framework involving the NWC, reconciliation committees, appeal panels and interventions by influential power brokers, including governors and the Presidency.

This strategy became particularly evident during the 2020 internal crisis that led to the dissolution of the APC National Working Committee led by Oshiomhole and the appointment of the Caretaker/Extraordinary Convention Planning Committee headed by Mai Mala Buni. The intervention stabilised the party ahead of the 2023 elections and reinforced the APC's reliance on elite accommodation as a survival mechanism.

But the political environment ahead of 2027 appears far more combustible. The stakes are considerably higher. Control of party structures, succession calculations, regional balancing and President Tinubu's second-term ambition are already intensifying competition across many states.

At the same time, complaints about consensus arrangements and elite imposition have deepened perceptions among some party members that internal democracy is increasingly subordinate to political power calculations. Where aspirants believe outcomes were predetermined, reconciliation becomes far more difficult because grievances shift from electoral disappointment to questions of legitimacy and exclusion.

Still, the APC retains one enduring advantage: the resilience of Nigeria's culture of political accommodation, where aggrieved actors often return to negotiations once future opportunities, appointments and broader strategic interests are considered.

Yilwatda himself expressed confidence in the party's capacity to manage disagreements. "There is no better party for conflict resolution than our party," he said while referencing recently concluded congresses across the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) that many predicted would fracture the APC.

APC founding member, Mr. Osita Okechukwu, also defended the inevitability of disputes in democratic politics, insisting that internal disagreements are part of the democratic process and can be managed through institutional mechanisms, in addition to opportunities available to aggrieved party chieftains to defect to any of the opposition parties of their choice to actualise their aspirations.



Tinubu

Yilwatda

2027: While Power Speaks From Abuja, Adebayo Walks Among Victims

By **Adedayo Olalekan**

IN a nation where communities devastated by banditry, kidnappings and mass killings often receive little more than presidential statements and military assurances, Adewole Adebayo is increasingly projecting himself as a different kind of national leader — one who believes leadership means physically standing with the people in their darkest hours.

From Plateau to Oyo and Ekiti states, the Social Democratic Party (SDP) chieftain has continued a series of condolence visits that many supporters now describe as the conduct of a "president-in-waiting" — a leader who not only speaks about insecurity but personally goes to grieving communities to comfort victims, offer hope and assure citizens that they have not been abandoned.

At the centre of Adebayo's message is one philosophy he repeatedly emphasises wherever he goes: democracy is not about discussion but participation.

For Adebayo, leadership is not measured by speeches from Abuja or carefully prepared statements from government houses; governance means physically participating in the pain, fears and struggles of ordinary Nigerians. It is this philosophy that has driven his recent nationwide condolence and solidarity visits.

In Angwa Rukuba community of Plateau State, where deadly nighttime attacks left many residents dead and families shattered, Adebayo did not merely issue a statement of sympathy; he travelled to the affected area, sat with grieving families and listened to residents recount their ordeals and even offered financial succour.

"The people of this community are saddened and battered, but they will not leave this land. God is always responsible, even if the government is not," he said.

His words reflected both compassion and anger — compassion for victims and anger over what he described as repeated failures of governance.

Adebayo argued that the attackers terrorising communities across Nigeria were "neither more powerful nor more intelligent than the institutions of state," insisting that insecurity persists because leaders have failed to prioritise justice and protection of citizens.

For many residents, the significance of the visit was not merely political rhetoric, but the symbolism of a national figure physically appearing in a forgotten community during a period of grief.

The same message followed him to Ibadan, Oyo State, where he visited Governor Seyi Makinde amid growing kidnappings and insecurity in Oriire Local Council of the state. There, Adebayo openly accused President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of failing Nigerians on security.

"President Tinubu has failed in his duties as Commander-in-Chief," he declared.

But beyond criticising the President, Adebayo used the moment to further explain his philosophy of participatory leadership. According to him, the office of president is not ceremonial. A Commander-in-Chief, he argued, must not become distant from the suffering of the people. That belief, he says, is why he continues to physically visit troubled communities instead of merely reacting from afar. In Eda-Oniyo, Ekiti State, after fatal attacks on worshippers and the kidnapping of church members by armed bandits, Adebayo again travelled to the community to identify personally with victims. He condemned the killings and kidnappings, insisting Nigerians should not be forced to live permanently in fear.

Describing the repeated attacks across the country as evidence of "failure of governance," he maintained that the Nigerian state must be rebuilt around the protection of lives and property. To Adebayo, insecurity is not just a security issue; it is a moral test of leadership.

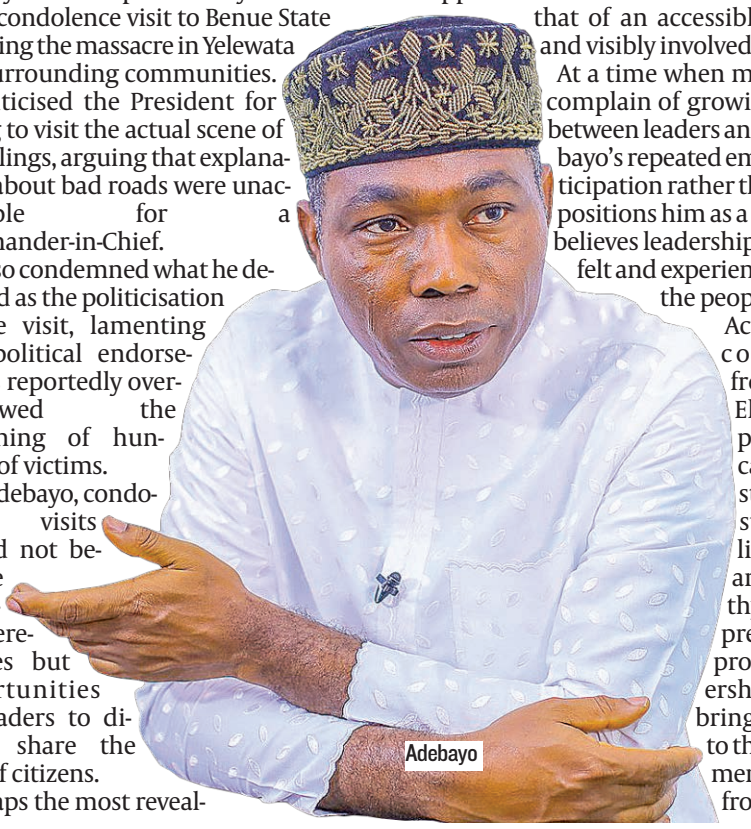
President Tinubu has also visited some affected communities and repeatedly condemned attacks across Plateau, Benue, Niger, Kwara and other states. His administration launched "Operation Savannah Shield," deployed troops and consistently promised justice for victims of attacks.

Yet, critics argue that the Federal Government's responses have largely become predictable: condemnation, promises, deployments and official assurances, while killings and abductions continue.

Adebayo became particularly vocal after Tinubu's condolence visit to Benue State following the massacre in Yelewata and surrounding communities. He criticised the President for failing to visit the actual scene of the killings, arguing that explanations about bad roads were unacceptable for a Commander-in-Chief.

He also condemned what he described as the politicisation of the visit, lamenting that political endorsements reportedly overshadowed the mourning of hundreds of victims.

For Adebayo, condolence visits should not become political ceremonies but opportunities for leaders to directly share the pain of citizens.


Adebayo

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of Adebayo's recent engagements came when he was asked what he would do differently if elected president. His answer was simple: what Nigerians are already seeing.

According to him, these condolence visits represent the exact style of leadership he would bring into office. "This is what I would be doing as president — attending to the problems of insecurity and physically being with my people," he said. "That is what a chief executive officer and commander-in-chief does."

The statement captures the image Adebayo appears determined to build ahead of 2027 — that of an accessible, empathetic and visibly involved leader.

At a time when many Nigerians complain of growing disconnect between leaders and citizens, Adebayo's repeated emphasis on participation rather than discussion positions him as a politician who believes leadership must be seen, felt and experienced directly by the people.

Across grieving communities from Plateau to Ekiti, the SDP presidential candidate is steadily constructing a political identity around empathy, physical presence and the promise that leadership should bring hope directly to the people — not merely statements from a distance.

Ogunkale Reflects On Stewardship, Reels Out Interventions In Osun

By **Moyosore Salami**

FORMER Senior Special Assistant to the Governor on Budget and Economic Planning in Osun State, Elder Bisi Ogunkale, has reflected on his stewardship between 2020 and 2022, highlighting a series of infrastructure and community-based interventions facilitated across parts of Aiyedire Local Council of the state.

Ogunkale said his period in office was driven by the need to address basic developmental challenges confronting rural communities, particularly in areas of electricity supply, road infrastructure, water rehabilitation and flood control.

Speaking on projects facilitated during the period, he noted that several interventions were carried out in communities such as Oluponna and Ile Ogbo, with emphasis on improving living conditions and addressing long-standing infrastructure deficits.


Ogunkale

Among the projects highlighted by Ogunkale was the facilitation of a 500KVA transformer brought to Oluponna in October 2022.

According to him, the intervention was aimed at improving electricity supply within the community and supporting commercial and residential activities affected by unstable power distribution.

He explained that the transformer installation became necessary following concerns raised by residents and business owners over poor electricity supply in parts of the town.

Ogunkale said: "One of the interventions facilitated during my stewardship was the provision of a 500KVA transformer to Oluponna in October 2022. The objective was to improve power supply and support economic activities within the community.

"Access to stable electricity remains an important factor in community development, especially for traders, artisans, students and small business owners."

He also referenced the rehabilitation of the Oluponna Mini Dam in October 2022, describing the intervention as part of efforts to revive critical community infrastructure.

According to him, the rehabilitation work was designed to improve the functionality of the dam and address challenges associated with deteriorating water infrastructure within the area.

Ogunkale noted that the intervention was particularly important to residents whose activities depend on access to water resources, especially farmers and local users within the community.

He said: "The rehabilitation of the Oluponna Mini Dam was another important intervention facilitated during that period. The project was intended to restore the usefulness of the dam and improve its relevance to residents and surrounding communities."

Ogunkale further highlighted the rehabilitation of the Ileeran-Elefon Road, including the construction of the River Enta Bridge and several culverts along the 3.4-kilometre road corridor.

He explained that the project was initiated to improve access and mobility within the affected communities, particularly during the rainy season when movement along the route became difficult.

He stated that the construction of the bridge and culverts was necessary to address water-related disruptions that frequently affected transportation and movement of goods and persons.

He further noted that improving road connectivity remained essential to rural development, particularly in agrarian communities where residents depend heavily on road networks for transportation of farm produce and commercial activities.

"The Ileeran-Elefon road project, which included the construction of River Enta Bridge and several culverts along the 3.4-kilometre stretch, was facilitated to improve movement and accessibility within the area.

"In many rural communities, road infrastructure plays a critical role in economic and social activities. The intervention was aimed at easing transportation challenges and improving connectivity for residents," Ogunkale said.

On environmental interventions carried out during his stewardship, he stated that river dredging exercises were facilitated in both Oluponna and Ile Ogbo communities.

He explained that the dredging activities were aimed at reducing flooding concerns and improving water flow within affected rivers and waterways, adding that the interventions became necessary due to environmental challenges associated with blocked or poorly maintained waterways in parts of the local council.

Ogunkale described the dredging exercises as significant interventions within Aiyedire Local Council, noting that such activities had not received similar attention for years.

He added: "I also facilitated the dredging of some rivers in Oluponna and Ile Ogbo to address flooding and environmental concerns affecting residents. The intervention was important because maintaining waterways is necessary for flood control and environmental sustainability within rural communities."

He maintained that the interventions were inspired by the desire to respond to practical needs within underserved communities.

Ogunkale noted that development at the grassroots level requires consistent attention to infrastructure capable of improving the daily lives of residents, stressing that projects relating to electricity, roads, water infrastructure and environmental management remain critical components of sustainable rural development.

Ogunkale added that the interventions facilitated during his tenure could be independently verified within the affected communities, saying the projects remain visible across different parts of Oluponna, Ile Ogbo and surrounding areas in Aiyedire Local Council.

He also called for sustained attention to rural infrastructure and community-based development initiatives, noting that continued investment in local infrastructure would improve economic activities and living conditions within many communities across the state.

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ENGR. AHMED UMAR FAROUK: REPOSITIONING NIGERIA'S AIRSPACE MANAGEMENT THROUGH INNOVATION AND REFORMS

As the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu marks its third year in office, we continue to align with the Renewed Hope Agenda through reforms, infrastructure development, and institutional strengthening.

The Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) has recorded notable progress within this period under the leadership of its Managing Director, Engr. Ahmed Umar Farouk.

Since assuming office in 2023, Farouk has spearheaded a series of reforms and modernization initiatives aimed at improving air navigation safety, operational efficiency, and technological advancement within Nigeria's aviation sector.

Industry stakeholders have particularly commended the ongoing modernization of critical air navigation infrastructure across major airports in the country. The upgrades in communication, surveillance, and navigation systems are expected to significantly improve airspace safety and operational reliability. Under his leadership, NAMA also expanded the implementation of Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) procedures in key airports nationwide. Aviation experts say the initiative has enhanced navigational accuracy, reduced flight delays, and improved operational efficiency within the nation's airspace.

In the area of safety and service delivery, stakeholders including the Nigerian Air Traffic Controllers' Association (NATCA) have acknowledged the agency's efforts in strengthening airspace safety standards while ensuring smoother and more efficient flight operations.

Farouk's administration has equally prioritized staff welfare and human capacity development through regular technical training, professional development programmes, and improved support for aviation personnel, particularly air traffic controllers.

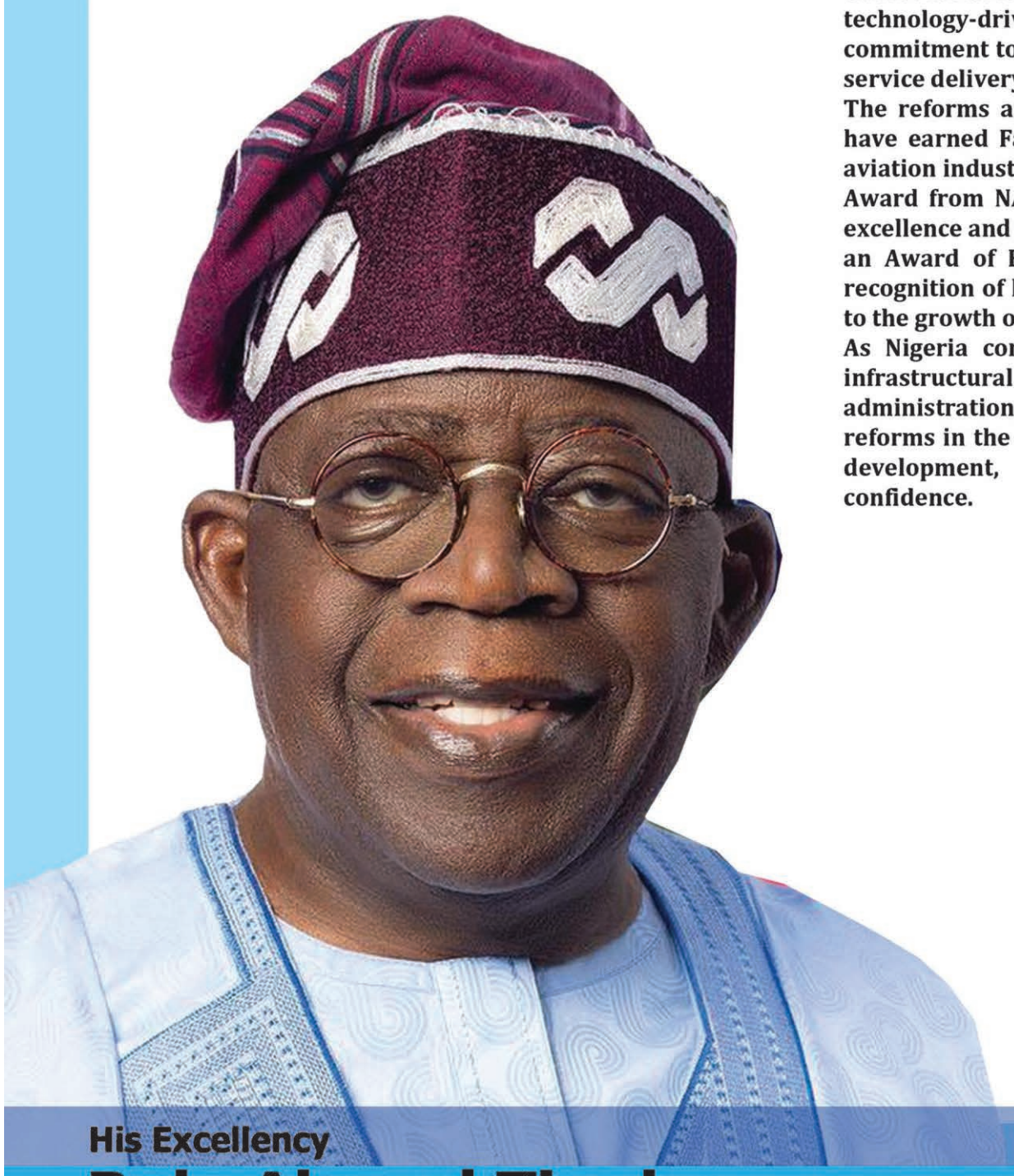
Another major milestone recorded under his leadership is the commencement of the construction of NAMA's new Corporate Headquarters and National Air Traffic Management (ATM) Centre in Abuja. The project is expected to serve as a major hub for modern airspace management and technological coordination in Nigeria's aviation industry.

NAMA has also strengthened collaboration with international aviation bodies such as the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the Agency for Aerial Navigation Safety in Africa and Madagascar (ASECNA), further aligning Nigeria's aviation standards with global best practices.

Observers note that the agency's increasing deployment of technology-driven solutions reflects a broader commitment to innovation, modernization, and improved service delivery within the aviation ecosystem.

The reforms and achievements recorded by the agency have earned Farouk recognition within and outside the aviation industry. He received the Exceptional Leadership Award from NATCA for his contributions to operational excellence and aviation safety. He was also honoured with an Award of Excellence by BusinessDay Newspaper in recognition of his impactful leadership and contributions to the growth of Nigeria's aviation sector.

As Nigeria continues to pursue economic growth and infrastructural transformation under the Tinubu administration, stakeholders believe that sustained reforms in the aviation sector remain critical to national development, regional connectivity, and investor confidence.



His Excellency
Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR
President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
Federal Republic of Nigeria.



Engr. Ahmed Umar Farouk
Managing Director/CEO
Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA)

Editorial

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That Despicable Flogging Of Street Children In Calabar

THE reported flogging and torturing of street children in Calabar, Cross River State the other day, in the guise of sanitizing the streets, is condemnable. Certainly it is a most inappropriate way to treat the problem of street urchins, an issue that requires a holistic approach into failed parenting, lack of opportunities and failure of government.

On March 19, 2026, officials of the Calabar Urban Development Authority reportedly flogged and tortured street children in Calabar. The disturbing episode points to untruthfulness about why children end up on the streets. It indicates a government that has failed in its duty of accountability. With no viable offerings on child protection, education, rehabilitation, and long-term social planning, it unleashes brute force on hapless youngsters.

The children were reportedly seen "tied, lying on the ground and crying, while the officials flogged them with machetes." Civil society groups that stepped in to secure their release were allegedly assaulted. The arrest amounts to barbarism. In societies that subscribe to decency and sanity, law enforcement officers do not make arrests without due process. Neither do they mete out corporal punishment, degrading treatment, nor prefer violence over policies promoting humaneness and rationality.

No child emerges from the womb muttering a desire to end up on the streets of Lagos, Kano, or Calabar. They are pushed there by poverty and broken homes. Treating them like offenders rather than as children in need of help simply worsens the situation. Childhood poverty is not a crime. A society that thinks otherwise risks throwing away its future and turning a problem it could have managed into a cycle of exclusion and resentment.

Section 17(1)(b) of the Constitution affirms the sanctity of human dignity and requires the direction of policies towards ensuring that every citizen is treated with respect. The Child Rights Act, adopted in many states, including Cross River in 2009, prohibits violence against children and sets out how a child in conflict with the law or in need of care must be handled, with welfare and due process at the centre. Flogging children with machetes or tying them to the ground and subjecting them to degrading treatment is an abuse of power and a breach of the state's duty.

Children arrive on the streets following years of subjection to societal dysfunction. When government agencies mobilise task forces to "clear" streets, they chase symptoms and ignore the root. The state should first have sought answers to the hard questions of why those children were on the streets, decades after successive administrations have budgeted billions of naira in yearly appropriations. Why were they not in classrooms or with their parents at home? Relevant authorities should have undertaken intelligent debate on finding sustainable solutions rather than putting up a display of sheer brawn.

The condemnation by the wife of the state governor and the expression of commitment to pursue justice are commendable. However, the seriousness of the allegation demands more than dismay vented in the media. Legal instruments must be wielded to stop such incidences of impunity. Civil remedies should be explored, including actions against the relevant authorities or personnel for breach of fundamental rights and child abuse. A proper, independent investigation should establish the facts, name the officials culpable, and lead to diligent prosecution.

Yet, accountability will only suffice for the aftermath. A lasting response to the contradiction is the replacement of force with a system that demonstrates humanity. Steps should be taken to return street children to the embrace of a caring society through the provision of basic education, vocational training, and reintegration with their families, where that is possible. Where families cannot or will not take them, the state must explore community-based alternatives.

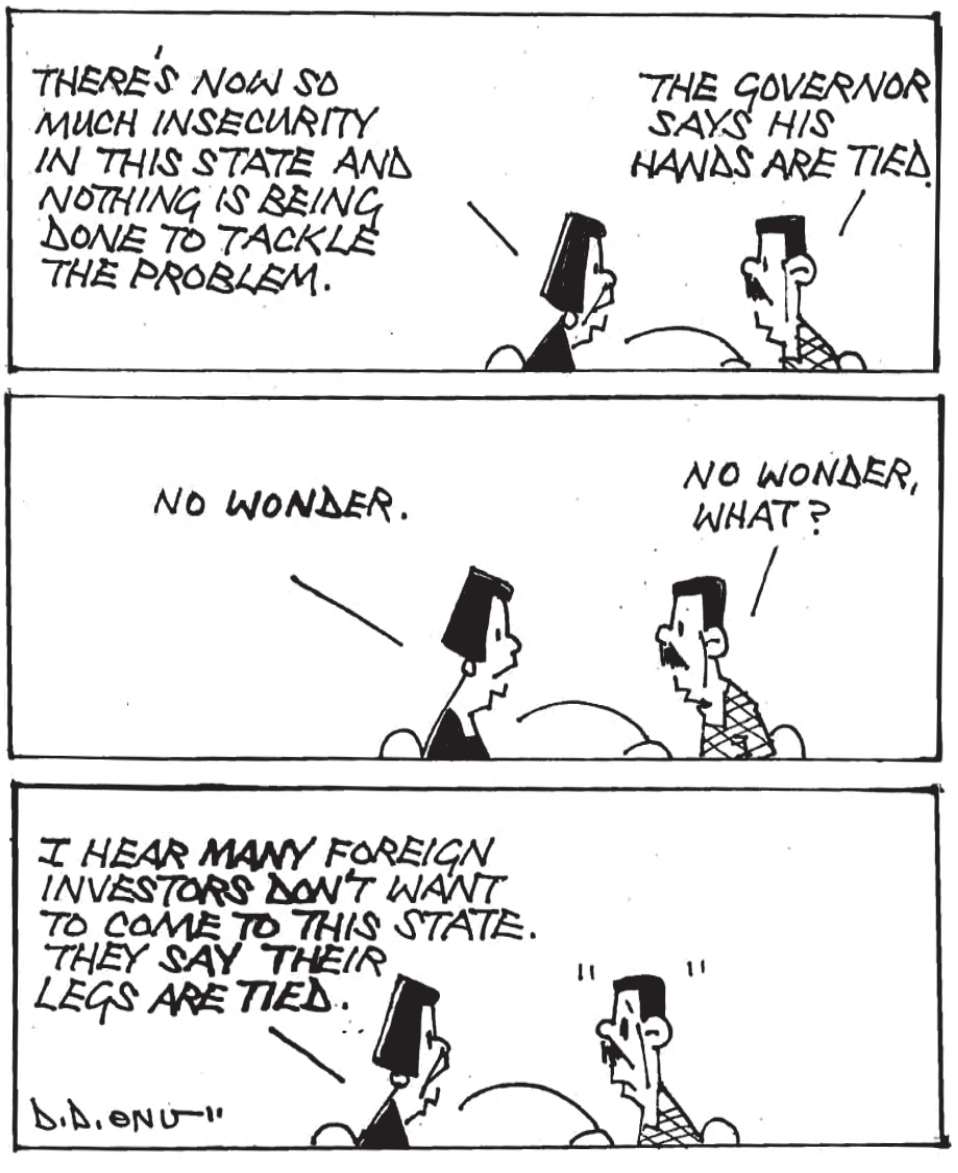
Parents and guardians bear the first duty of care. However, parental responsibility cannot stand in for state duty. There must be synergy on both sides. Where poverty, displacement, or other barriers weaken a family's capacity, the state must step in with support, not punishment. A balanced framework recognises that families need help to do their part and that any move against neglect must come with access to services that make doing the right thing possible.

It is a fact that Nigeria's population has grown without a corresponding expansion in schools, healthcare, housing, and jobs. This has put a strain on public services and narrowed opportunities. Most states across the federation still struggle with overcrowded classrooms, insufficient teachers, and poor social services. Under such circumstances, vulnerable children usually become the first line of victims. The nation needs a credible population policy, one that promotes informed family planning and brings demographic trends in line with the availability of resources.

Religious organisations and non-governmental agencies have a lot more work to do in breaking the shackles of long-held traditions and customs that are out of sync with contemporary socioeconomic realities. Family planning is neither a sin nor a taboo. It is the definition of what it means to be responsible.

Across the world, especially in the West, countries have shown what is possible when child welfare is prioritised. Almost every child has access to basic education and primary healthcare. Also, at-risk families have the opportunity to avail themselves of social programmes before things fall apart. The result is a system that stops hardship before it becomes full-fledged abandonment. Where a state invests early, there is less likelihood that someday, its law enforcers would storm the streets, brutalising children in a so-called clean-up operation. Ministries handling education, women's affairs, and social welfare should run a statewide audit of out-of-school and street children, set up referral routes from the streets to services, and send out outreach teams trained in child protection. States should also make budgets with specific targets for enrollment, retention, and reintegration.

Every Nigerian child has a right to dignity, protection, and the chance to grow into a productive adult. When the state fails to provide that and then turns its violence on the very children it has failed, it adds cruelty to injustice. The Calabar incident should mark a turning point in the nation's attitude towards childcare and reaffirm the worth of every child.



LETTER

The Best Way Out Of This Political Quagmire

SIR: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), as the electoral umpire, has the statutory right to adjust the election timetable.

Now that there are still crucial suits affecting the major opposition parties, I am of the opinion that the best thing to do at this juncture is to approach INEC to adjust the timetable by at least one month, since elections could still be held 30 days before the expiration of the tenure of this administration on May 29, 2027.

So, when INEC adjusts the timetable for primaries, it is acting pursuant to its administrative powers under sections 28, 29, and 84 of the electoral act.

Section 28 of the Electoral Act gives INEC the authority to issue the election timetable schedule. Section 29 governs submission deadlines for candidates, while section 84 regulates party primaries and inec oversight.

All these provisions together support INEC'S power to revise or reschedule dates for primaries and candidate submissions, provided the statutory timelines are still obeyed.

In view of the above, the major opposition parties should approach INEC to amend/adjust the timetable by, at least, one month to enable them sort out or conclude the pending suits in court.

The law is made for man and not the other way round. so, if it is expedient for INEC to adjust the timetable in the interest of equity and fair play, it should not have any problem in doing so, provided the extension still falls within the statutory timeline prescribed by law.

So, I do not think there is any cause for alarm or any fear of jumping from one party to another.

Even if INEC is not willing to co-operate, the parties can approach the courts to compel INEC to do the needful.

Meanwhile, all the courts still handling crucial matters concerning the political parties should expedite action and bring those matters to final conclusions.

This is my humble opinion on the present state of our political uncertainties.

• *Raymond Oise wrote from Lagos*

Opinion

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South Africa's Xenophobic Violence, Betrayal Of Pan-African Solidarity

By Rasheed Ojikutu

THE persistence of xenophobic violence in post-apartheid South Africa raises painful questions about whether the ideals fought for during liberation have been fully realized. While we heap blames on the likes of Daniel Francois Malan, the President (1948-1954) who justified and intensified the policy of segregation between black and white in South Africa, the National Party and its leadership such as John Vorster, P.W Botha and F.W de Klerk for rendering Black South Africans politically marginalized in their own country. Can we honestly confirm that man's inhumanity to man has stopped in that country? History often judges harshly those who fail to appreciate the sacrifices made on their behalf. As the news of xenophobic attack on other African countries resonates and vibrates through the continent, the situation recalls an African folktale in which a monkey rescues a starving lion from a ditch, only for the lion to immediately turn against its rescuer. Many Africans now feel similarly betrayed by recurring xenophobic violence in South Africa. This is the situation Nigeria and many other African countries have found themselves in South Africa but the aggressors in this case should understand that the lion was returned to the ditch through the wisdom of the tortoise.

Between 1994 and 2018, there were 529 xenophobic incidents recorded with 309 deaths ,901 assaults. Over 2,193 shops looted and more than 100,000 displaced persons. These damning statistics have continued to multiply. Most of the attacks are directed against African migrants in the country, particularly Zimbabweans, Somalians and Nigerians. Apart from rhetoric, South African government and political leadership have done very little to stem the tide of the wanton destruction unleashed on our people.

Affected countries and families of those at the receiving end, have expressed disappointment that a country whose liberation from apartheid received massive support from other African states now witnesses violent attacks against the same fingers that fed them during their time of need. Nigeria particularly, played one of the most significant roles in the anti-apartheid struggle through diplomatic pressure, financial sacrifices, educational support, and moral leadership. The irony of the attacks against Africans in democratic South Africa therefore raises difficult questions about institutional and historical memory with the suspicion of underlying political manipulation.

In the apartheid era, Black South Africans were deprived of political rights, freedom of movement, quality education, and economic opportunities. The obnoxious system classified South Africans according to race and enforced segregation in every aspect of life. Black South Africans were forced into "homelands," denied voting rights, and subjected to harsh security laws. Leaders such as Nelson Mandela, Oliver Tambo, Walter Sisulu, Govan Mbeki, and Desmond Tutu became symbols of resistance. It was during this dark period in the life of that country that Nigeria emerged as one of the strongest defenders of Black liberation in Africa.

While the inhuman treatment lasted, many African countries regarded apartheid not merely as a South African issue but as an attack on African dignity and identity. Nigeria deliberately instituted anti-apartheid diplomacy as a major component of her foreign policy and dealt a frontal attack on the apartheid regime in that country.

From the 1960s through the 1990s, Nigeria devoted enormous human and material resources to the liberation of Southern Africa. Successive Nigerian governments supported liberation movements in

Angola, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Namibia, and South Africa. Nigeria provided money, scholarships, passports, diplomatic support, and accommodation for South African exiles.

The fathers of the young men and women being attacked in South Africa today were made by the Nigerian Military administration of Olusegun Obasanjo to contribute part of their hard-earned monthly salaries into the established Southern African Relief Fund (SARF). Nigerian workers, including civil servants and employees across various sectors, were encouraged and in many instances compelled through payroll deductions and public campaigns to contribute part of their salaries to support liberation struggles in Southern Africa. Many Nigerians of that generation, including the author of this article, still remember the slogan "Mandela tax" or anti-apartheid contributions. School children, market women, workers, and students in Nigeria donated money toward the liberation cause.

Nigeria spent millions of dollars supporting anti-apartheid movements. Nigerian diplomats aggressively campaigned for sanctions against the apartheid regime in international organizations such as the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Nigeria flung her doors open its to South African exiles with several leaders and activists of the ANC accommodated, and supported by our government and other local institutions.Oliver Tambo, Tambo Mbeki, Alfred Nzo, Joe Slovo, and many members of the ANC and their Youth League were offered travel assistance, financial support, and opportunities for political mobilization. In the 1970s and 1980s, Lagos became an important center for anti-apartheid solidarity. Conferences, rallies, and fundraising campaigns were organized regularly. Nigerian universities, trade unions, journalists, and musicians participated actively in these campaigns. Nigerian artists such as Sunny Okosun released songs condemning apartheid, while writers such as Wole Soyinka spoke strongly against white supremacy.

Many young South African students (the fathers of those on the streets of South Africa who are unleashing violence on the children of those who fed and cloth them during that ugly period in the life of their country) who fled apartheid received scholarships to study in Nigerian universities and secondary schools. Nigeria offered to those young men and women scholarships that covered tuition, accommodation, feeding, and living expense thereby reflecting Pan-African ideals.

At a time when many countries were unwilling to confront the apartheid regime openly, Nigeria invested heavily in the intellectual development of South African blacks.

Nigeria consistently boycotted international engagements involving South Africa, thereby using sports, diplomacy, and culture as powerful tools for isolating the racist regime. A good example was the boycott of the 1976 Montreal Olympic Games.

Nigeria also supported the 1977 Gleneagles Agreement within the Commonwealth, which discouraged sporting contact with South Africa. Nigerian diplomacy helped push for stronger sanctions and international isolation of the apartheid regime.

Beyond sports, Nigeria cut economic and diplomatic ties with companies and institutions linked to apartheid. Nigerian passports reportedly carried warnings against travel to apartheid South Africa. Cultural exchanges with the apartheid regime were rejected.

The same people to whom so much was sacrificed are today the enemy of their benefactors by resorting to xenophobic attack on their African brothers. Many South Africans themselves condemned the violence and defended African unity. Religious organizations, civil society groups, and student bodies organised campaigns against xenophobia and called for peaceful coexistence.

One can exonerate the generation on the streets because they did not witness the brutality of apartheid directly. Hence, they cannot appreciate the extent of international solidarity that contributed to South Africa's liberation. This disconnect between the past and the present is what is at the moment creating bitterness among some Africans who feel betrayed by xenophobic violence. The South African leadership rather than standing akimbo while their children immolate the friends of South Africa should mobilize the youths for historical education, youth engagement, and continental dialogue because we should not forget that Africa's future depends on cooperation rather than division. The sacrifices made during the anti-apartheid struggle should serve as a reminder that African liberation was achieved collectively. Remembering this shared history remains essential for preserving peace, dignity, and unity across the continent.

Let it be very clear to all South Africans that the land of Nigeria is big enough to take back our children in Diaspora but that there is always a payback for those who injure our psyche. When in November 1969, the government of Kofi Abrefa Busia in Ghana passed the Aliens Compliance Order (1969) and consequently ejected thousands of Nigerians from Ghana, that country did not realize that a payback time will come. Today, we have a bag in our country called "Ghana Must Go". The phrase which is of daily usage in Nigeria is linked to the mass expulsion of Ghana migrants from Nigeria in the early 1980. History reminds us that actions between neighboring African societies often leave long memories and enduring consequences.

South African leaders must act decisively before resentment deepens across the continent. Africa's future depends not on division or hostility, but on the preservation of the solidarity that sustained the anti-apartheid struggle. The sacrifices made by many African nations, particularly Nigeria, should remain a permanent reminder that the liberation of South Africa was a collective African achievement.

• *Rasheed Ojikutu is Professor of Statistics (rtd), University of Lagos.*

Poverty, Corruption And The Civil Service Law

By Precious Taiwo

IT'S a very common scenario in Nigeria where a Grade-one, entry level civil servant; A cleaner, employed at a federal ministry is paid N70,000 at the end of the month but the cost of rent in the worst of Lagos slums is N50,000 per month. According to the law of public service, He is not authorized to sell Airtime at his gate or run a small pos business briefly after work because he could get sacked.

Another scenario is a driver who earns N115,000 drives a director home in a Prado, then treks to his one room apartment. The law bans him from driving Uber on weekends but of course, he could farm. As it appears to be by policy one of the many passive activities a civil servant can get into without it conflicting with his duties.

This is the reality for millions of public officers under the 1999 constitution. Nigeria today has 85.6% of the workforce self employed, 11.1 % draws salaries from the private sector alongside personal ventures. All that is left is the 3.7% which consists of the civil servants and are prohibited from engaging in any private business.

The problem is Paragraph 6 (b) of the Fifth Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. It bans every public officer from running 'any private business, profession or trade'. I am writing to call for an urgent amendment to this clause.

The Law:

The Constitution of the Federalist Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), Fifth schedule, Part 1, paragraph 6 (b) states "except where he is not employed on full-time basis, engage or participate in the management of any private business, profession or trade; but nothing shall prevent a public officer from engaging in farming."

This clearly states that as long as the government pays your salary every month, you are not to engage in any other business activity. It bans every public officer from running any private business, profession or trade.

\Why was this law originally in place?

The 1999 constitution was drafted after 16 years of military rule and at the time corruption festered unchallenged. Military governors and public officers would run private companies with the use of government contracts, creating massive conflicts of interest. The ban was reapplied to break that culture.

Meanwhile, this ban was already a pre-existing policy. The 1979 Constitution, Fifth Schedule, Part 1, Paragraph 1 was written in the same identical language.

_"A public officer shall not. . .engage or participate in the management or running of any private business, profession or trade." This was the same rule that guided the public service during the Second Republic before the Military takeover in 1983 which suspended the Constitution and ruled by decree.

The 1999 ruling goal was to force public officers to choose between serving the state or running a private business. Under the military rule, It became a practice for directors in works, health and education ministries to own construction firms. Ministers of commerce and finance often owning import companies, while setting tariff policy in council chambers, they'd issue waivers to their own firms. The ministry became a procurement arm for the director's business.

By 1999, the public service had become the fastest route to private wealth and public good secondary, if not completely forfeited. Thereby was the constitution drafted to put an end to the military style looting. A choice either to serve the state fully or run your business. The public office becomes a full time call with farming as the sole exemption to safeguard national food security.

Under the 1979 constitution, a Director's salary could buy a Peugeot 504 and train four children abroad comfortably and still have a lot to save afterwards. In fact, at the time the United Kingdom, America and Canada were full of Nigerian civil servants' kids in the 80s. Their salaries were robust enough to cover it.

By 1999, when the Law was reapplied and strengthened by Code of conduct bureau, the structural Adjustment Program (SAP) had killed the naira and depreciated its value. By 2026, that same Director-level job can't buy a tire of a 504, let alone train 1 child in Ikeja. The problem was that the government enforced the ban without restoring the economic dignity that made the ban fair in 1979 and continually it has remained so.

Poverty as we know it is sitting ducks in Nigeria. In 2026, the least earned by a public officer is N70,000, in Nigeria today that's the price of a bag of rice. For basic living for a month which includes Food, transport, utilities, data/phone health care, school fees and others? The cost of living in Lagos and Abuja needs N300k for a fairly decent life. But in the government such pay is limited to ranks for senior officers or managerial positions with about six-nine years of experience. The ban, written when government salaries could sustain a household now forces public officers to choose between obeying the policy and living in destitution. If obeying the constitution means working honestly and staying poor, then the law itself is producing poverty not alleviating it. Right now, the unintended consequence is a civil service populated by those who either have external family wealth or have already decided to break the law to survive. When a newly recruited constable N55,000 salary cannot cover Lagos rent, petty bribery helps his daily expenses.

Due to the Structural Adjustment Program in 1999, Farming was mandated as the only activity for civil servants at the time aimed at Food security. Let's be realistic, not every civil servant would take up the idea as skills and knowledge varies, so it was a trap. A public officer who cannot earn beyond a non-living wage will either quit, steal, hide or have a secret business.

• *Precious Taiwo is a Broadcaster and Presenter at UNIZIK FM*

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In New Opera, Aninyei Re-imagines Soyinka's *The Trials Of Brother Jero*

By **Gregory Austin Nwakunor**

ONE of the forms of art brought to Nigeria by Europe's infiltration of the continent is opera. By definition, opera is a unified performance, which combines various art forms, basically music and drama. However, as an art form, it has not enjoyed deep rooted appreciation as a performance art.

Founder/CEO of Vesta Orchestra and Opera Foundation, Rosalyn Aninyei, is one person who is burning the flame of opera.

Having lived and worked in Vienna, Austria for over a decade, inspired by the vibrant musical culture of the city, the violinist is looking to create a world standard stage for the many talented performing arts professionals in Nigeria. She returned home to Nigeria in 2016 to found the Vesta Orchestra and Opera Foundation in 2016. "We are 10 this year, and would be rolling out beautiful operatic and musical works to celebrate," she says.


Aninyei

Recently, Aninyei re-imagined Wole Soyinka's *The Trials of Brother Jero* as an opera. The opera is a groundbreaking adaptation of Wole Soyinka's classic play, set which debuted at the National Theatre in Iganmu, Lagos. Directed by Aninyei and produced by Vesta Orchestra, the opera featured a 50-man orchestra, 25-man chorus, and aims to bring Soyinka's satirical work to a broader international audience.

She hopes this production will contribute to the future of Opera and musical theatre in Nigeria. The violinist adds, "I hope the government would join us as we try to provide more affordable performance houses. The current state of things puts things out of our reach financially."

When she was asked reason for this, an art form, she smiles, "I believe we have very many stories to tell. Some we have told and retold 1000 times. This is a timeless story. I grew up going to the National Arts Theatre with my mum and siblings to watch various plays and even then, as a music student, I wanted to hear more instruments and more music in these plays. Going to the opera in Vienna repeatedly as an adult, it occurred to me that there would be people in Nigeria like me, who enjoy the drama, spectacle and music of opera."

On the choice of Lagos as the ideal city for the premiere? Aninyei had this to say: "The National Arts Theatre is domiciled. Growing up, the theatre was the gathering point for art performance in West Africa. I felt to begin this journey here, would be the natural thing to do."

Why did she feel it was the right time to stage this work in Lagos?

"I wanted to hear more instruments and more music in these plays. Going to the opera in Vienna repeatedly as an adult, it occurred to her that there would be people in Nigeria like her, who enjoy the drama, spectacle and music of opera," she confesses.

She wanted audiences to go away with their hearts full of beautiful music and their minds recharged by joy. The audience was elated. On the opening night, "We had laughter from start to finish," she reveals.

In transforming a satirical play into an operatic experience, she consulted with composer Dr Seun Owoaje on how to begin. He told her Librettist would need to take the play from story to verses and then he can compose music to the verses. She also consulted songwriter/composer Kehinde Oretimehin and he wrote the Libretto, after which, Owoaje composed the music.

To preserve the humour, satire, and social criticism of the original play while adding music and operatic form, there was a continuous melody with recitatives and arias in every scene, and the orchestra driving the entire narrative home. The singing and continuous music element in opera added an intense emotional dimension, which just speaking may not convey. The collaboration between the music team, cast, choreographers and designers was smooth from start to finish. "Most of us had performed Jero at some point in school. It is a familiar story, and the humorous nature made it easy to approach our goal in harmony."

"Opera as an art form, is full of drama and humour. Nigerians are equally full of drama and humour. This was an easy marriage . What new dimensions does opera bring to 'Brother Jero' that spoken theatre may not?"

What were the biggest creative risks in adapting such a well-known literary work?

Aninyei explains, "in Opera, you do not get to hear everything being sung. We also could not take the entire book into Libretto, as the songs would have been too many. So we had to see which scenes to summarise and which to perform in their entirety. A few criticisms have come about one or two scenes missing a bit of dialogue, but on the whole, I believe the story was properly performed. Without loopholes."

What were the biggest production challenges in mounting an Opera of this scale?

She says, "This was my first time directing, and I chose an Opera. Potential sponsors did not understand what I was talking about, seeing as the art form is not common to us. So funding was a major issue. Now that we have an example, it is my hope that going back to them produces a positive response the second time around."

Aninyei saw it as both social commentary and entertainment. But made the commentary even more contemporary, by the sheer fact of this new iteration of the book.

"Nigerians performing an Opera of a Nigerian work. Beautiful," she quips.

She hopes this opera will spark about faith, power, and performance in public life. She sees see this as part of a broader movement to reinterpret African literary classics for contemporary audiences. "It definitely is the case for the Vesta Orchestra. We will be telling more of our Nigerian stories as Musicals and Operas. There is a hunger for African stories globally. We must be the ones to tell them," Aninyei says.

"I had a lot of young people call me from LASU, UNILAG, OAU, University of Ibadan theatre arts departments, all looking to come watch the show. Why, I asked? Their answers were all the same. They want something different. They are interested in new iterations of our stories. They want to be there when the first full Opera of a Nigerian work is performed. It tells me people need us to approach 'Nigeria' anew," she remarks.

Already, there are plans to tour the production or take it to international festivals. She is filled with gratitude for the level of talent the country has.

"Around every street corner is a genius; and my work allows me interact with many of them," she confesses.

Born Rosalyn Awelekanma, she is a graduate of International Development with a Master's in International Business. She studied Violin at the Vienna Conservatorium School of Music, and Essentials in Orchestra Management at the Juilliard School, New York. She is a member of the League of American Orchestras.

How Samdech's Creators Workshop Deepens Creative Community

By **Sunday Aikulola**

FOR one full day in Abuja, cameras were out, conversations flowed freely, and a room packed with storytellers, photographers, videographers, and digital creatives became proof of something the numbers have long suggested: Nigeria's creator economy is not slowing down anytime soon.

The second edition of the SamDech Creators Workshop arrived at SYNCHUB, Abuja, and from the moment doors opened, it was clear this was more than another industry event. It was a genuine gathering, a space where ambition met access, and where creators hungry to learn found the community and tools to back it up.

After a well-received maiden edition in Lagos, which featured respected creatives including KaganTech and filmmaker/communication consultant, Adebisi Peters, the Abuja chapter raised the stakes considerably. The format expanded, the speaker lineup deepened, and the energy in the room reflected a creator community ready to step into its next chapter.

A Day Built For Doers

The workshop centred on photography, videography, visual storytelling, and creator technology. Four facilitators, ShallyTech, Alfred Ikeogwu, Motion Studioz, and Abuja Tech Bro, led deeply practical sessions covering smart workflow systems, mobile videography, creator tech tools, and the real economics of building a sustainable creative career.

Sessions were designed not for inspiration alone, but for immediate application. Attendees left with frameworks, techniques, and renewed clarity about the path ahead. Global creative brands LensGO and Canon provided vital support, contributing through product sponsorships, hands-on demonstrations, and creator giveaways throughout the day.

Their involvement signalled growing confidence among international partners in Nigeria's creator ecosystem.

More Than Selling Gear

What distinguished the Abuja edition for many attendees was not simply the calibre of the knowledge on offer; it was that all of it came entirely free of charge. No ticket fees. No hidden costs. Experienced speakers, curated sessions, freebies, refreshments, and a thoughtfully organised environment, all without asking attendees to spend a single naira.

Speaking at the event, SamDechNG founder Gabriel Chikodi Samuel was candid about the company's deeper motivation. For him, workshops like this are not a marketing exercise — they are a statement about what the brand fundamentally believes.

"We want creators to have access not just to gear, but to the knowledge, exposure, and community that help them become better at what they do. That is the bigger vision behind this workshop," Gabriel Chikodi Samuel, Founder, SamDechNG.

Filmmaker and Communications consultant Adebisi Peters, who facilitated the Lagos edition, spoke to what this kind of access means in practice.

"SamDech has always been one of the best places to get gear because of his direct relationship with manufacturers. But beyond that, the fact that he creates opportunities for creatives to gain industry knowledge, whether they are existing customers or completely new creators, says a lot about his character," said Peters.

The workshop's impact was felt most tangibly in the stories creators carried home. Several attendees walked away with professional-grade tools, video lights, teleprompters, and microphones, items that, for many, represented meaningful upgrades to their everyday workflow.

Ben Aileme, who won a Bediro Video Light on the day, described the experience as refreshing and genuinely empowering.

"Honestly, putting together an event for creatives, inviting experienced speakers, and providing freebies and refreshments without charging a dime is something you rarely see. Since attending, I have been consistently creating content weekly, with plans to scale up to three times a week. A big part of that renewed drive came from this workshop," said Aileme.

Olufunmi Elise Ojo, who received a LensGO Teleprompter, explained how the workshop directly improved her content process. "Receiving a teleprompter as a gift was a pleasant surprise. SamDech has made content creation so much easier. I used to cram scripts and stare directly into the camera. I no longer have that stress, and I am truly grateful," Ojo, an attendee said.

The Momentum Continues

The excitement did not end when the event did. Following the workshop, organisers launched a creator challenge sponsored by LensGO, inviting attendees to submit creative recap videos of their experience. The campaign drew strong organic engagement online, with creators showcasing the editing, storytelling, and visual skills they refined throughout the day. One standout creator walked away with a professional microphone and teleprompter setup.

With two successful editions now complete in Lagos and Abuja, the SamDech Creators Workshop is becoming more than a workshop series. It is becoming a platform: a recurring proof of concept that creators in Nigeria do not just need talent. They need spaces that believe in them enough to invest in their growth.



Broadcast Content Across Borders

Compiled by **Shaibu Husseini**

Festival de Cannes Announces Winners Of 2026 Edition

THE Jury of the 79th Festival de Cannes, chaired by South Korean director, screenwriter and producer Park Chan-wook, surrounded by American actress and producer, Demi Moore, Irish-Ethiopian actress and producer Ruth Negga, Belgian director and screenwriter Laura Wandel, Chinese director and screenwriter Chloé Zhao, Chilean director and screenwriter Diego Céspedes, Ivorian-American actor Isaach De Bankolé, Scottish screenwriter Paul Laverty, and Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård, presented its winners' list among the 22 films presented in Competition this year. Fjord by Cristian Mungiu was declared winner of Palme d'or, the top prize of the festival while Minotaur by Andrei Zviaguintsev got the Grand Prix award. Fjord starring Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve, explores the escalating culture clashes within an immigrant family in Norway. This winning marks Mungiu's second Palme d'Or. There was a joint winning for the best directors' award and the joint best directors are Javier Calvo and Javier Ambrossi for La Bola Negra and Pawel Pawlikowski who directed Fatherland. Best Screenplay award was handed to Emmanuel Marre for A Man Of His Time, while the Jury prize went to the film by Valeska Grisebach titled Das Getraumte Abenteuer (The Dreamed Adventure). The award for best performance by actresses went to Virginie Efira and Tao Okamoto in the film by Hamaguchi Ryusuke titled All Of A Sudden while the award for best performance by actors went to Emmanuel Macchia and Valentin Campagne in the film by Lukas Dhont titled Coward. The Palme d'or for the short film category was awarded to Para Los Contrincantes (For The Opponents) by Federico Luis.

…As Festival Audience Explore Uncertain Regards Selection

SINCE the end of screenings for the 79th edition of the Festival de Cannes on the Croisette, the Official Selection has continued its journey across France through partnerships with Pathé, mk2 and UGC. While the rerun of the competition is still in full swing, cinephiles eager for new discoveries will also have the opportunity to explore the films of the Un Certain Regard selection. This year, the Un Certain Regard Prize was awarded to Austrian director Sandra Wollner for *Everytime*. Made up in part of first features, the Un Certain Regard selection stands alongside the competition as the core of the Official Selection, spotlighting singular works distinguished by both their subject matter and their aesthetic approach. A total of 16 Un Certain Regard films will be screened again across four Paris cinemas. The films to be screened include Ben'Imana by Marie-Clémentine Dusabejambo | *1st film* -Caméra d'or 2026, *Congo Boy* by Rafiki Fariala – Best Actor Prize, *De Toutes Les Nuits, Les Amants* by Sode Yukiko and Les Éléphants Dans La Brume de Abinash *Bikram Shah* | *1st film* – Un Certain Regard Jury Prize.



Cannes Jury President Park Chan wook | Cristian Mungiu | Mandisa Mandisa Zitha

Durban Filmmart Partners Encounters SA Documentary Festival

THE Durban Filmmart has announced a strategic new partnership between Durban FilmMart, Filmmart.Africa and the Encounters South African International Documentary Festival - Africa's leading platform for documentary film. This collaboration strengthens the commitment to fostering meaningful industry engagement, and offers a space for film professionals and audiences to explore non-fiction storytelling from Africa and around the world. The 28th Encounters South African International Documentary Festival runs from 04 to 14 June 2026 and features over 58 African and international documentaries. Screenings will take place in Cape Town, Johannesbourg and Pretoria. Mandisa Zitha, Encounters Festival Director said Encounters was proud to be returning as Africa's leading documentary festival. "This year, we celebrate documentaries that move beyond the complexities of the current global moment to embrace light, love and hope. We have brought together both established and emerging filmmakers from around the world to share stories that move beyond the fast pace of the news cycle, offering audiences a deeper connection to the lives and hearts of their characters. Our comprehensive industry programme features award-winning filmmakers and experts from diverse fields, creating meaningful conversations that connect documentary storytelling to the lived realities and historical legacies that shape our world. We are delighted to once again gather in community around documentary cinema" the festival director said. Opening the festival is 'Truck Mama' by director Zipporah (Zippy). Truck Mama follows Eva, a single mother and truck driver in Kenya, who navigates dangerous roads to provide for her family. In a male-dominated world, Truck Mama balances long hauls and daily challenges including calls to her children. The other documentaries featured in the programme include 'Mama-Demic' by Nicole Schafer and Patience Nitumwesiga's 'The Woman Who Poked The Leopard'. These projects, first developed through DFMI's incubation and market access programmes, now form part of the continent's most vital documentary showcase. Through this partnership, Filmmart.Africa becomes a digital companion to the 28th Encounters South African International Documentary Festival, offering users access to filmmaker profiles, in-depth project information, curated insights, and opportunities for connection. Partnerships like this between Filmmart.Africa and Encounters demonstrate the power of aligning platforms, institutions, and storytellers to amplify visibility and accelerate growth. Digital tools are no longer optional; they are essential in enabling access, breaking down borders, and creating the kinds of networks that lead to meaningful, long-term opportunities.

See www.filmmart.africa for more details on the Encounters 2026 programme.

Moses' Remarkable Journey Through Media, Philanthropy, Purpose

By **Patrick Ochoga**

AT 44, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo Moses stands tall as a shining symbol of excellence, resilience, influence and purpose in the ever-evolving world of media and public relations. Like fine wine that grows richer with time, his journey through journalism, entrepreneurship, philanthropy and spiritual service continues to inspire a generation of young professionals who desire to leave lasting footprints in the sands of time.

For more than 15 years, Ifetayo has remained a vibrant force in celebrity journalism, luxury and lifestyle reporting, media consultancy and brand visibility management. An accomplished media practitioner with enviable milestones, he has carved a niche for himself as one of Nigeria's most respected voices in entertainment and lifestyle journalism.

Through dedication, creativity and an uncommon passion for excellence, he has steadily built a reputation that extends beyond Nigeria to Africa, Europe, Canada and the United Kingdom.

As the Founder of First Lady Award Entertainment and the Chief Executive Officer, (CEO) of Megastar Magazine, Megastar Magazine Online and Megastar Magazine TV on YouTube,Ifetayo has continued to redefine media entrepreneurship with innovation and class.

His platforms have become powerful channels for celebrating achievers, promoting brands and telling inspiring stories that shape society positively.

With over 5,000 subscribers on Megastar Magazine TV, his influence in the digital media space continues to grow remarkably.

A proud alumnus of the prestigious London School of Journalism, where he studied Multimedia Journalism in 2023, . Ifetayo also sharpened his professional skills at the Institute for Advancement of Journalism in Johannesburg, South Africa, and the National Open University of Nigeria where he studied Entrepreneur and Business Management.

His academic and professional journey reflects a man deeply committed to learning, self-development and global relevance.

Indeed, the age of 44 carries profound significance. In many cultures and spiritual reflections, 44 symbolizes stability, achievement, mastery and the manifestation of purpose. It represents a season where vision aligns with experience and where wisdom begins to yield greater influence and impact. For Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo, turning 44 is not merely about age; it is the celebration of a life dedicated to service, excellence, growth and meaningful contributions to humanity.

Over the years, he has covered some of the most influential personalities and historic moments in Nigeria and beyond. From interviewing former Nigerian Heads of State and Presidents including Ibrahim Badamosi Babangida, Gen Abdulsalami Abubakar and Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, to reporting prestigious global events, Dr. Ifetayo has consistently demonstrated courage, professionalism and media brilliance.

Notably, he was among the select journalists who covered the wedding ceremony of the daughter of former President Goodluck Jonathan. He also made history as the only appointed Media PR personality who accompanied Ogiame Atuwatse III on an official visit to Canada aimed at attracting foreign direct investment to the Warri Kingdom and Nigeria.

As PR Consultant to Ned Nwoko, Ifetayo further distinguished himself when he joined the renowned philanthropist on the historic expedition to the South Pole Antarctica, a groundbreaking campaign to raise awareness about malaria eradication in Africa. Such remarkable milestones reflect his fearless spirit and commitment to impactful storytelling on the global stage.

Beyond journalism, Ifetayo is a philanthropist with a compassionate heart. Inspired by the timeless words of former American President John F. Kennedy, he donated a solar-powered toilet facility to Junior Secondary School Sagwari Dutse in Abuja, proving that true success is measured by service to humanity.

He is also a motivational speaker, social analyst and solution provider in media-related endeavors whose insightful perspectives continue to inspire audiences across different platforms.

His passion for knowledge and growth is equally admirable. An avid reader and a great traveler, Ifetayo believes strongly in expanding his network and connections beyond the shores of Nigeria.



Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo Moses

Through his podcast, My Story, hosted on Megastar Magazine YouTube Channel, he teaches financial literacy, resilience and personal growth, encouraging people from all walks of life to dream bigger regardless of their humble beginnings.

Spiritually grounded, Ifetayo is also a Pastor in the Redeemed Christian Church of God and remains deeply devoted to God.

He openly acknowledges the "God factor" in everything he does and has drawn mentorship and inspiration from Pastor Enoch Adeboye. His faith, humility and cheerful disposition continue to endear him to friends, colleagues and admirers.

Despite his towering achievements, Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo remains a jolly good fellow with a heart of gold, warm, accessible and deeply compassionate.

Happily married to his heartthrob, Titilola Ajoke Ifetayo and blessed with wonderful children, he exemplifies the beauty of balancing family life with professional excellence.

As family, friends, colleagues and admirers celebrate this exceptional media icon at 44, the prayers are heartfelt and sincere: may his light continue to shine brighter across nations; may his influence grow in wisdom and grace; may doors of greater opportunities open endlessly before him; and may Almighty God continually guide, protect and preserve him for greater impact in the years ahead.

Happy 44th Birthday to Dr. Adeniyi Ifetayo Moses, a rare gem, an inspiring achiever and a true ambassador of excellence.

Ekiti Welcomes the Mother of the Nation



We warmly welcome our dear Mother of the Nation, First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and National Chairman of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI),

Her Excellency,
Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON

to Ekiti State on a one-day working visit and flag off of the APC Women Campaign Rally today, May 30, 2026.

Ekiti women love you and appreciate all your support.

E kaabo si Ipinle Ekiti



Her Excellency,
Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON.
First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and National Chairman of the Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI)

Her Excellency
Dr. Olayemi Oyebanji
First Lady, Ekiti State and State Coordinator, Renewed Hope Initiative (RHI)

Fareedah Oyolola And Ifeoluwa Onafowokan...Teenagers Championing Educational Support For Vulnerable Children

Through their EduSpark by Tomorrow's People, Fareedah Oyolola and Ifeoluwa Onafowokan are demonstrating that leadership is not necessarily tied to age, wealth or official positions, but to the willingness to identify problems and respond to them practically.

By **Suliyat Tella**

IN Nigeria, conversations about young people are mostly centred on social media trends, unemployment, migration, and economic hardship. Stories about teenagers leading organised social impact projects are less common. Yet, in Lagos, a group of secondary school students recently drew attention after carrying out an educational outreach programme for hundreds of pupils in a public primary school.

The initiative, organised under EduSpark by Tomorrow's People, a non-governmental project, is jointly led by teenage students, Fareedah Oyolola and Ifeoluwa Onafowokan. Fareedah and Ifeoluwa are students of Greensprings Secondary School, Lagos, and both are less than 17 years old. Together with more than 30 volunteers, they donated books, writing materials, and other educational supplies to pupils at Expressway Nursery and Primary School I, Ikosi Road, Ketu, in Kosofe Local Council of Lagos State. What made the outreach stand out was its scale and the age of those behind it.

Despite the heavy rainfall on the day of the event, the students continued with the programme. Accompanied by security personnel, the volunteers, who arrived in four vehicles, distributed educational materials to over 400 pupils in the school.

According to Fareedah and Ifeoluwa, the project was inspired by their awareness that many children in public schools lack access to basic educational materials that students from more privileged backgrounds often take for granted.

Fareedah explained that the initiative stemmed from a foundation she started in 2023, known as Tomorrow's People, adding that over time, it became a collaborative project involving Ifeoluwa and other student volunteers.

"Tomorrow's People started as my foundation in 2023, but EduSpark has now become a shared vision between Ifeoluwa and me. We both realised that we came from privileged homes and had access to educational resources that many children do not have," she said.

The statement reflected the central theme behind the outreach, which is the growing awareness among some young Nigerians about inequality in access to education.

Across the country, many public schools continue to face shortages of books, classroom materials, and other learning resources. In some communities, pupils still depend heavily on donations from private individuals, religious organisations, and charities. For children from low-income families, even simple learning materials such as exercise books, school bags, and writing tools can become financial burdens. This reality is one of the factors that motivated the organisers of EduSpark.

According to them, the initiative was built around the belief that educational opportunities should not be determined entirely by family income or social class.

Fareedah, who previously gained attention after becoming an international scholar at the age of 13, said her interest in social impact work increased after participating in the Rise for the World Competition, a platform encouraging young people to create practical solutions to societal problems.

According to her, the programme encouraged her to think beyond personal academic achievement.

"Our mission for this initiative is to provide much-needed educational resources to underprivileged and marginalised students across Lagos, Nigeria," she said.

Before the outreach in Ketu, the duo had carried out a similar intervention in Okobaba community, where more than 300 children reportedly benefitted from educational support.

Co-founder of the initiative, Ifeoluwa, explained that their partnership began during a Creative Activities and Services (CAS) class project at school.

She said the experience showed the importance of collaboration among young people.

"One thing we want people to understand is that we achieve more when we work together. Partnership allows people to pool resources, ideas, and energy to create greater impact," she said.

She described working with Fareedah on the project as one of the best decisions she had made.

At the school premises, pupils gathered as volunteers shared exercise books, pens, and other learning materials. Student volunteers worked in different capacities to ensure the materials were transported to the school and distributed successfully despite poor weather conditions.

Those involved included Sharon Ayodeji-Ojo, who served as Financial Team Lead; Lynette Hunponu-Wusu, Event Lead; Anita Ogba and Ademinitioluwa Ogunwuyi, who coordinated logistics; and Leyla Olarenwaju alongside Maimunah Salako, who handled advertisement and engagement.

Several other volunteers also participated in the project, including Aisha Odukoya, Belema Oruene, Michelle Onwubuya, Oluwapamilerinayo Osho, Tiaraoluwa Olusola-Sanni, Oluwafifehanmi Omolayole, and Kosisochukwu Ugboh.

Others included Oluwatobi Bajomo, David Amaefule, Raluolisa Chidi-Abali, Oluwabukunmi Willoughby, Ololade Agbaoye, Riritarioluwa Doherty, Oluwadabira Adedoyin, and Happiness Egede.

Others were Alvin Gbeja, Precious Sodolamu, Aderinsola Adebajo, Olivia Nurudeen, Kobi Okaro, Daniella Ozoemena, Oluwatoniloba Adeagbo, Idara Attah, and Mofehintoluwa Falola.

School authorities said the outreach was unusual, noting that they had rarely witnessed such coordination and commitment from students of secondary school age. The management of the school praised the duo for supporting children in a public school setting.

School Manager, Mr. Olurantimi Henry Ajibulu, described the initiative as impressive and emotionally touching.

"For teenagers to identify less privileged children and decide to support them voluntarily is beyond imagination. Choosing our school for this outreach is something we deeply appreciate," he said.

Assistant School Manager, Mrs. Foluke Akinduro, also commended the students and their parents for encouraging values centred on compassion and responsibility.

"These young people are showing society that education is not only about academic success but also about impacting lives positively," she said.

For the pupils at Expressway Nursery and Primary School, the outreach was a direct intervention that provided practical support and encouragement. Many pupils gathered around the volunteers with visible excitement as books and writing materials were distributed across classrooms. Some smiled while comparing the items they received with those of their classmates. Others quietly held onto the materials while listening to the organisers speak about education and hard work.

One of the beneficiaries, John Destiny, a Primary Four pupil, expressed appreciation to the organisers.

"I am so excited about what they have done. May God bless them and continue to help them," he said.

The outreach also highlighted the influence of parental support in shaping socially conscious children.

Fareedah's mother, Mrs. Rasheedah Oyolola, expressed gratitude over her daughter's achievements and acknowledged the role played by her husband, Mr. Yusuf Oyolola, in supporting their daughter's development.

According to her, Fareedah's progress reflects discipline, guidance, and consistency from both family and school.

The EduSpark project reflects a growing interest among some young Nigerians in community development and volunteerism.

Rather than focusing entirely on individual achievements, the organisers attempted to direct attention towards children in underserved communities.

Fareedah's story has particularly attracted attention because of the contrast between her academic accomplishments and her involvement in community support work.

After gaining recognition as an international scholar at the age of 13, many expected her public image to remain centred mainly on academic excellence. However, the outreach in Ketu showed another side of her interests.

Alongside her friend and co-founder, Ifeoluwa, she has continued building EduSpark as a platform focused on educational support for vulnerable children.

Both Fareedah and Ifeoluwa acknowledged that they benefitted from educational support systems unavailable to many children attending public schools. Their comments during the outreach repeatedly focused on privilege and responsibility. Rather than presenting themselves as heroes, they framed the project as an attempt to share the opportunities they had access to while growing up. Their approach reflects a growing belief that leadership is not necessarily tied to age, wealth or official positions, but to the willingness to identify problems and respond to them practically.



Tomorrow's People started as my foundation in 2023, but EduSpark has now become a shared vision between Ifeoluwa and me. We both realised that we came from privileged homes and had access to educational resources that many children do not have.



Some of the beneficiaries during the outreach



Fareedah (left) and Ifeoluwa (right) with two students who benefitted from the outreach

Animation Hub Launches Feature Earth AI Creators Programme

To Train Nigerian Children In AI Animation, Environmental Storytelling

By **Sunday Aikulola**

ANIMATION Hub has officially announced the launch of the Feature Earth AI Creators Programme, a nationwide initiative designed to equip Nigerian children with artificial intelligence, animation, digital storytelling, and environmental innovation skills.

The programme, led by Adetunwase Adenle, four-time Guinness World Records holder, Co-Founder of Animation Hub, Founder of Slum Art Foundation, and Project Coordinator of the Feature Earth AI Creators Programme, aims to inspire a new generation of creators who can use technology to address environmental challenges through storytelling and innovation.

Launching on June 5, 2026, in commemoration of World Environment Day, the initiative will engage 5,760 schools across Nigeria, with 24 children selected from each participating school. The program is expected to provide more than 138,000 children between the ages of 8 and 15 with access to training in artificial intelligence, animation, environmental awareness, creative problem-solving, and digital content creation.

Participants will learn how to use AI-powered animation tools to create short films and visual stories that highlight environmental issues affecting their communities, including plastic pollution, flooding, climate change, waste management, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable living practices.

According to Adenle, the initiative is designed to ensure Nigerian children are prepared for the future while becoming active contributors to environmental solutions.

"Artificial intelligence is transforming the world at an unprecedented pace, and our children deserve the opportunity to learn, create, and innovate with these tools. We want children to move beyond being consumers of technology and become creators of ideas, solutions, and stories that can positively impact their communities. Through animation and AI, children can raise awareness about environmental challenges while proposing solutions in ways that are creative, engaging, and impactful. This initiative is about empowering the next generation of innovators, storytellers, and environmental leaders," Adenle said.

The Feature Earth AI Creators Programme is being delivered through Animation Hub in collaboration with First City Monument Bank (FCMB) under the Bank's Flip to Tech Initiative, a platform focused on equipping young Nigerians with future-ready digital skills and opportunities.



Omoniyi Iyanda, head of CSR FCMB (left) and Adetunwase Adenle, Co-founder Aniamtion Animation Hub

Speaking on the partnership, Omoniyi Iyanda, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), FCMB, said the initiative aligns with the bank's commitment to youth empowerment, innovation, and sustainable development.

"At FCMB, we believe that investing in young people is one of the most effective ways to create lasting impact. Through the Flip to Tech Initiative, we are helping children gain access to emerging technologies while encouraging them to become active participants in solving environmental challenges.

"The Feature Earth AI Creators Programme reflects our commitment to Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and demonstrates how technology, education, and sustainability can work together to create meaningful change," Iyanda said.

NBMA Returns Bigger For 7th Edition

By **Daniel Anazia**

THE countdown has officially begun as organisers of the Nigerian Broadcasters Merit Awards (NBMA) announced that the highly anticipated ceremony will hold on Saturday, October 10, at the Oriental Hotel, Lagos.

Widely regarded as one of Nigeria's foremost platforms for celebrating excellence in broadcasting, this year's edition is already shaping up to be bigger, bolder, and more impactful. As part of the preparation for the event, organisers have issued a final call for nominations across various award categories, encouraging media organisations, industry stakeholders, and members of the public to submit deserving entries before the nomination deadline.

Adding fresh excitement to the build-up, the organisers has also officially opened registration for the maiden edition of the Next Broadcast Star Challenge, a talent discovery initiative aimed at identifying, mentoring, and spotlighting the next generation of broadcasters and media personalities in Nigeria.

The initiative is expected to create opportunities for aspiring on-air talents while strengthening the future of the country's broadcast industry. Beyond the award ceremony itself, NBMA organisers have also lined up an impressive schedule of activities designed to promote youth engagement, media excellence, and industry collaboration.

Among the key pre-event programmes is the Ambassador Olusola Annual Lecture, alongside campus engagement sessions and networking events scheduled for July 21 at the University of Lagos (UNILAG); a Celebrity Football Match on July 30 at the Yaba College of Technology (YABATECH), bringing together media personalities and entertainment figures in a celebration of sports and community spirit.

Speaking on the upcoming edition, Group Chief Operating Officer of Cresthills Media Group and member of the NBMA Advisory Board, Adeolu Gboyega, described the platform as one that has evolved far beyond recognition.

"NBMA has grown beyond an award platform; it is now a movement dedicated to preserving broadcasting excellence while empowering the next generation of media professionals. The 7th edition promises to be impactful, inspiring, and unforgettable," he said.

Since its inception, NBMA has continued to honour outstanding voices, celebrate professionalism, and preserve the legacy of broadcasting in Nigeria. With nominations underway, fresh talent initiatives unveiled, and exciting activities already lined up, expectations are high for what promises to be another memorable celebration of Nigeria's broadcast industry.



Gboyega Adeolu

Odukoya-Ijogun Inaugural Live Worship Concert Holds Sunday

By **Tobi Awodipe**

THERE are moments that mark a generation; moments where heaven and earth meet in the sacred space of worship. This May, one such moment is set to unfold in Lagos as Gospel music minister and associate senior pastor of The Fountain of Life Church Lagos, Toluwani Odukoya-Ijogun, hosts her inaugural live worship concert tagged, 'Raising an Altar of Thanksgiving' on Sunday, May 31 at the MUSON Centre, Onikan, Lagos.

More than a concert, the event is a live worship recording which begins at 6pm is a night wholly consecrated to giving God the praise He alone deserves. Conceived from a place of deep spiritual conviction, The Worship Project draws its heartbeat from Psalm 95:6: "Come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."



Odukoya-Ijogun

For Odukoya-Ijogun, this is a milestone moment, both in her personal faith journey and in her ministry. She describes the concert as carrying one singular focus: to exalt the name of the Lord and create a living record of thanksgiving to God.

According to her, "at a time when the world grows louder with distraction and noise, The Worship Project is a deliberate return to the altar. It is a gathering for believers who understand that true worship is never accidental; it is intentional,"

As the associate senior pastor of The Fountain of Life Church and worship artiste whose ministry is anchored in the pursuit of God's presence, Odukoya-Ijogun's first public worship project comes as a declaration of faith that the best thing the people of God can do in this season is to stop, turn and say thank you.

"Every song, every prayer, and every voice lifted in that room will form part of a permanent offering: a testimony of praise that will outlast the evening itself. What is recorded that night will not simply be an album. It will be a declaration — proof that in this season, the people of God chose to stop, turn, and say thank Him," she said.

TEETH4TEETH ... With Justin Akpovi-Esade

ASP Isokpehi: Thug Or Policeman?

T4T is among many Nigerians who believe that men and officers of the Nigeria police force will never change from their very bad ways even if God decides to send His most popular and loved Angel Gabriel to come and be the Inspector General. Day after day, horrible tales emanate from the bowels of the force. If they are not extorting hapless Nigerians(that is an hourly, if not every minute occurrences), they are killing in extra judicial manners. And it seems the devilish ones are many in the ranks of the Assistant Superintendent of Police, ASP, because of recent, policemen in that rank had shown Nigerians the evil they are capable of. From ASP Usman 'Ogbegbe' to ASP Newton Isokpehi who just recently brazenly came on social media to issue a chilling death threat to Nigerians who but attempt to film him while on a roadblock assignment; the numbers of ASPs from hell keep rising.

T4T read the police authorities had arrested Isokpehi and he is being prepped to face Orderly Room Trial. That may be the end of that issue because since over a week that the report made its way to the newspapers, the PRO of Police has not given any update on the issue and this familiar attitude of police authorities further erodes the confidence(if there is still any left) the public has on it.

In a chilling video over a week ago, Isokpehi was seen issuing a threat that even Lawrence Anini, one of the most dreaded armed robbers in Nigeria's history did not issue in the height of his reign of terror that lasted over a year. ASP Isokpehi, an Edo native, said he would shoot to death any Nigerian civilian who dared to film him while on duty at checkpoints. He called civilians unprintable names and dared them to go against his threat if his superiors who gave them the go ahead order to be filming officers on duty will not come and bury them.

T4T will not suggest dismissal as punishment for the thug who calls himself a policeman, instead, he should be redeployed to force headquarters and assigned to a desk where he will be pushing files from 9am to 5pm. And the IG of police should ensure he does not use the elevator. When he climbs five storeys up and down distributing files to both senior and junior officers for hours, he will have a brain reset before he retires from the force.

The IG, Mr. Tunji Disu should not sweep this case under the office rug. The policeman meant every word he said in that video, so, releasing him back on the streets is a danger to civilians. Imagine running into this kind of Policeman in the middle of the bush between Ogun and Ondo states and you attempt to film him as he searches your belongings in the car. He would just shoot that person dead and put a small gun in his hands and parade him as an 'armed robber' who he killed in an "exchange of fire" and he would be cheered even when the family of the dead is kicking that their son was no armed robber. Nobody will believe the family.

John Fashanu's Daughter's Making Him To 'Explain Tire'

A NIGERIAN Afro pop star made a catch phrase of "You go explain, explain tire, no evidence" popular, some couple of years ago. That was exactly what retired British-born Nigerian football star, John Fashanu was seen doing in a video T4T saw online on Wednesday morning. Baba was explaining non stop, yet 'no evidence', not literally sha. This was what the football Ambassador said in the video after he introduced himself: "I want to address several false claims recently made in the media regarding my health, personal life, and affairs.

Firstly, I want to make it absolutely clear that reports suggesting my health is deteriorating or that I suffer from any medical condition are completely false. I am in good health and doing well," Fashanu took a breather and continued. "A number of statements published in The Daily Mail(a UK newspaper abi na tabloid sef) a week ago are simply untrue. Contrary to what has been suggested, Amal (Fashanu's daughter) has not been visiting Nigeria every weekend for the past three months. In fact, she visited me in Nigeria for the first time a fortnight ago, during which she introduced a man she referred to as her husband. She has not been managing my affairs, properties, or professional engagements in any capacity. She has never acted as my agent, and several statements published about our relationship are simply untrue.

"I have a trusted management team in place that work closely with my wife and lawyers particularly in the past seven months. I have only(only?) been married three times and I am currently with my third wife, Vivian, whom I love dearly. While I will always love my daughter, it is deeply painful and disappointing to see inaccurate and damaging statements made publicly. My lawyers are currently reviewing the publications and considering the legal implications of the false claims that have been made."

As usual, the press will always take a beating in every issue, family or otherwise but thank God say nor be Nigerian press do dis one: "Finally, I believe it is extremely important that the press exercises responsibility, fairness, and due diligence when publishing potentially damaging information about any individual."

This is T4T's summary: Make person pikin nor let am begin do long video dey explain tire IJN!

Somebody shout Amen!

100 Most Influential In Travel, Hospitality, Tourism By Pyne Awards Africa, MIPAD

By Maria Diamond

OVER the years, a number of intentional African descent have worked tirelessly to shape the future of tourism, hospitality, aviation, destination marketing, and global travel experiences to position Africa as a central force in shaping global travel narrative; elevate global visibility of African and diaspora leaders in tourism and hospitality; strengthen cross-continental connections and investment opportunities, while inspiring the next generation of leaders across Africa and the diaspora.

This intentionality to put Africa on the forefront of the sector in global space has not gone unnoticed, thus, when the organisers of the prestigious Pyne Awards Africa signed a partnership with Most Influential People of African Descent (MIPAD) to unveil the 100 Most Influential People of African Descent in Travel, Hospitality & Tourism, a global recognition spotlight trailblazers of African descent who are shaping the future of tourism, hospitality, aviation, destination marketing, and global travel experiences, the outcome was a defining moment, for the global tourism ecosystem.

From industry executives and policymakers to innovators, entrepreneurs, and cultural ambassadors, the official list was unveiled on May 25, 2026, in celebration of Africa Day, African excellence, impact, and influence across continents.

Set against the backdrop of the Pyne Awards Africa 2026 in Maputo, Mozambique by The Pyne Hospitality Company, the initiative aligns with this year's theme, "True to Excellence," reinforcing a shared vision to elevate African and diaspora contributions to global tourism on the world stage.

The founder of The Pyne Hospitality Company, Amaka Amatokwu-Ndekwu, while remarking, said: "This is not just a list. It is a coordination layer for the people shaping how the world travels, where it invests, and how Africa and its diaspora are experienced globally. We are not just highlighting influence, we are aligning it."

She continued: "Beyond recognition, this initiative will serve as a strategic coordination platform, identifying and convening the leaders shaping global travel flows, tourism investment, and hospitality infrastructure across Africa and the diaspora".

Chairman MIPAD, Kamil Olufowobi said: "Through curated engagements at Pyne Awards Africa, UNGA in New York, and MIPAD's global convening, honorees will be connected with capital allocators, destination leaders, and industry partners to drive partnerships, investment, and cross-border collaboration. The goal is not only to celebrate influence, but to activate it."

MIPAD, a global initiative supported by the United Nations International Decade for People of African Descent, has consistently recognised excellence across business, politics, media, and culture. This new sector-focused edition marks a significant expansion into the tourism and hospitality space.





Balloranking, Dapper Music & Entertainment On Shared Vision Journey

By Maria Diamond

AS the Nigerian music industry continues to expand globally, sustained partnerships between artists and management structures have increasingly become an important indicator of stability and shared vision.

It is based on this that Balogun Olamilekan popularly known as Balloranking, one of the most consistent voices within Nigeria's contemporary street-pop movement and Afrobeats landscape, officially re-signed his partnership with Dapper Music & Entertainment in a bid for growth, consistency, and artist development.

Over the course of the partnership, Balloranking has delivered projects and records that strengthened his identity as an artist capable of balancing melodic accessibility with introspective storytelling. From Trench Kid Deluxe to Ghetto Gospel and subsequent releases, his catalogue has resonated strongly with audiences drawn to emotionally grounded music shaped by real-life experience, helping establish him as one of the defining voices within a new generation of Nigerian street-pop artists

The partnership which has developed steadily over the last four years reaffirms both parties' commitment to long-term progress.

The renewed agreement was formalised during a signing ceremony held at the Dapper Group headquarters in Lagos, marking a continuation of a relationship that has evolved alongside Balloranking's rise. The new deal reflects updated terms shaped by the progress achieved throughout the partnership and signals the beginning of a new phase for the artist, with a forthcoming project already in development.



Music artiste Balogun Olamilekan "Balloranking (left) and Group CEO Dapper Group, Damilola "Dapper" Akinwunmi.

Symbolic Study Of Beads As Nigeria Cultural Heritage

By Nwokeocha Onyinyechi Agatha

BEADS, among humanity's earliest artistic creations, occupy a remarkable position in African cultural history. Beyond their aesthetic value, they encapuslate social hierarchy, spiritual authority, gender expression, and artistic identity. This paper offers a comprehensive analysis of bead culture within Nigeria and the African continent at large. It traverses the evolution of beads from prehistoric artifacts to contemporary fashion statements, while emphasizing their enduring spiritual, economic, and artistic roles. The research underscores the relevance of beads traditions in the preservation of indigenous identity and the need for proactive cultural documentation within museum spaces.

Across centuries and civilisations, beads have served as visual languages of power, identity, and faith. In African societies, they represent more than ornamental beauty that embody collective memory, ancestral legacy, and social order.

In Nigeria, beads stand at the crossroads of art, ritual, and heritage. They mark personal milestones, signify status, and mediate spiritual relationships between the physical and metaphysical realms. From the coral regalia of the Benin monarchs to the waist beads of Yoruba women, these small but potent objects articulate the African worldview where matter, spirit, and identity coexist.

To be concluded.

Nwokeocha is Assistant Director (Curator), National Museum, Onikan Lagos

Gemba Positions As Lifestyle, Creative Ecosystem

By Silver Nwokoro

THE future of Nigeria's hospitality industry lies in experience-led infrastructure that combines luxury, wellness, creativity and culture.

This was the take of Gemba Hotels and Resorts as the firm moves to position itself as a lifestyle and creative ecosystem rather than a traditional hotel business.

Its founder, Joe Enobong who disclosed this recently said the Calabar-based resort was built around the concept of quiet luxury, a hospitality model that prioritises emotional comfort, privacy, wellness and immersive experiences above extravagant displays.

According to him, the resort draws inspiration from the Japanese philosophy of "Gemba," which refers to the place where real value is created. "At the centre of the concept is what I call the 'Quiet Luxury Principle,' which focuses on emotional intelligence, atmosphere, privacy, wellness and psychological calm rather than spectacle or excessive display," Enobong said.

He added: "We wanted to create spaces where people experience sophistication without tension and luxury without emotional exhaustion. Ultimately, we are not simply building a hotel or resort. We are building a new category of African hospitality where luxury, culture, wellness, creativity and technology converge."

Enobong noted that Nigeria's urban middle and upper-middle class are becoming increasingly experience-driven, stressing that consumers now spend more on atmosphere, exclusivity, identity and wellness than on material possessions.

He explained that the changing consumer behaviour informed the decision to integrate cinemas, gaming lounges, co-working hubs, wellness spaces and curated cultural experiences into the resort. "Modern consumers no longer separate hospitality, leisure, wellness and creativity the way they once did. The future of luxury is emotional rather than performative, and that transition is accelerating in Nigeria," he said.



Enobong

On Children's Day Celebrations, Garki Hospital Eases Emotional, Financial Pressure From Families

By Favour Odimegwu

SMALL Care, Big Smiles was the theme of this year's Children's Day event organised by Garki Hospital, Abuja, to celebrate the children receiving treatment at the hospital.

Falling within the Sallah season, the celebration brought a rare moment of joy, colour and relief to young patients and their families amid illness, medical procedures and emotional strain.

Aside from the distribution of kindness packs to children in the paediatric wards and outpatient units; there was financial support for selected patients in need.

The hospital's paediatric recreation room was transformed into a lively, child-friendly space decorated with colourful balloons and filled with music, games and gift packs. For a couple hours, the atmosphere shifted from anxiety to excitement. The room offered a temporary escape for children in the ward, those attending appointments and others undergoing tests or recovering from treatment.

As the Children's Day celebration met the spirit of Sallah at Garki Hospital, the message was clear: in healthcare, small acts of kindness can carry enormous weight and sometimes, laughter can be medicine too.

The hospital's Marketing and Communication Officer, Miss Joy Adejoh, said the initiative was designed not only to mark Children's Day but also to ease the emotional and financial pressure many families are carrying.

However, beneath the music and celebration was the reality of why the children were there in the first place.

"Not every child is happy to be here today. Some are going into surgery, some are on standby awaiting treatment, while others have just completed theirs. We simply want to create a joyful environment around them despite their circumstances," said Adejoh.

Mrs Maryam Isah, whose child is being treated for a severe stomach upset, said the celebration helped calm and comfort her child, turning a difficult hospital experience into a more manageable one.

For Madam Hafsat Abubaker, the most memorable moment came when her child who was initially in tears, frightened by injections received a party gift pack, thereafter quickly brightened up, wiped away the tears and began dancing.

Another parent, Mr Desmond John praised the hospital for creating a meaningful Children's Day experience for the young patients. He also used the occasion to call on the government to strengthen primary healthcare delivery and expand quality health initiatives to reach more vulnerable children and mothers. He said the country must do more to stop the loss of pregnant women and children to poor medical infrastructure.

This year's event was organised with support from We Share Charity Foundation, Peak Milk and Airtel Nigeria.

NewsExtra

Rite Foods Celebrates *Eid-el-Kabir* With Muslim Faithful

• Urges Nigerians To Embrace Spirit Of Sacrifice, Gratitude, Love, Togetherness

By Opeyemi Babalola

AS Muslim faithful across Nigeria celebrate *Eid-el-Kabir,* Rite Foods Limited has extended warm greetings to the Muslim community all over the world, urging Nigerians to embrace the spirit of sacrifice, gratitude, love, and togetherness that defines the sacred season.

Eid-el-Kabir, which commemorates the obedience and steadfast faith of Prophet Ibrahim, serves as a reminder of the values of selflessness, compassion, and unity values that continue to inspire genuine moments of togetherness within families, communities, and society at large.

Speaking on the occasion, the Managing Director of Rite Foods Limited, Seleem Adegunwa, encouraged Muslims to reflect on the deeper significance of the celebration by upholding the virtues of sacrifice, kindness, and resilience.

He noted that beyond the festivities, *Eid* is a time for sharing joyful moments with loved ones, creating memories, and strengthening bonds moments that Rite Foods is proud to be a part of through its refreshing and quality product offerings designed for every occasion.



Managing Director of Rite Foods Limited, Seleem Adegunwa,



Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Ekuma Eze,

From the bold refreshment of the 13 variants of Bigi Carbonated Soft Drinks to Bigi Premium Drinking Water, the nourishing goodness of Sosa Fruit Drink, the energy-packed Fearless Energy Drink, and the tasty range of Rite Spicy Beef Sausage, Bigi Beef Sausage, and Bigi Flex Sausage, Rite Foods continues to offer consumers products that complement every celebration and shared experience.

Also speaking, the Head of Corporate Affairs and Sustainability, Ekuma Eze, urged Nigerians to continue to embody the values of peace, generosity, and unity during and beyond the *Eid* season.

According to him, "E*id-el-Kabir* is a period that reminds us of the importance of faith, sacrifice, and humanity. At Rite Foods, we remain committed to enriching everyday experiences by providing quality brands that bring people together around moments of happiness and celebration."

Renowned for innovation and excellence within Nigeria's fast-moving consumer goods industry, Rite Foods has continued to earn recognition for its commitment to sustainability, innovation, and social impact through several industry awards, including honours at the SISA Awards, SERAS Awards, and the Edge Awards.

ShortStory

www.guardian.ng

Seven Days To Golgotha! (2)

By **Segun Durowaiye (08055356855)**

Continued from GUARDIAN WEEKEND, May 23-24, 2026

THE arrival of Bolaji that eventful day saved Seun's life, and stopped him from committing suicide. Only God knew what would happen next.

Bolaji was dark-skinned, short and plump, and in his early 40s. He was a Surveyor by profession. Seun himself was 6ft tall, light in complexion and always spoke borrowed American accent whenever he was in the heat of an argument.

The colour of Seun's skin at the moment was a little sallow, which actually depicted a suffering man. Seun read Public Administration at the University, but even with all his academic qualifications, life treated him wickedly and with ignominy.

Seun finally agreed to follow his friend to the Prophet. The Prophet's Church was located at the popular Jangbesi Road in Sango Otta, Ogun State. It was getting dark when they got there. The Prophet, a bearded, pot-bellied man, was around to welcome them. He was about 5ft 4 inches tall. He was wearing a white flowing silk garment and a red sash, which bore the spiritual phrase: 'Eli Jah Agaborah!' The Church's premises was big and magnificent, and it was painted in white gloss. God, the altar was fantastic and beautiful! Some converts and faithful adherents could be seen moving up and down the spacious Church premises. The Prophet looked up suddenly, stretched his hand heavenward and muttered some spiritual notes.

"Gentlemen," he gestured, "come closer. I have been expecting you. Why did you have to stay this long before seeking the face of God, Seun?" Seun was shocked! He moved three steps closer to the man of God. 'How did he know my name?' he thought. He recalled that Bolaji told him that this particular Prophet of God needed no introductions, as he knew everything through spiritual and mystical revelations.

"You're surprised, Seun, this is my first time of coming here myself!" Bolaji said to the bewildered Seun.

"My elder sister told me a lot about this special man of God and described this place to me, insisting there's no problem or situation he cannot solve," Bolaji added in hushed tones.

"You seem to know everything!" Seun spoke for the first time. "How did you know my first name, Prophet?"

"Don't doubt the power of the Almighty, Seun. Today, I stand between you and the Lord God. Nothing is hidden to the anointed and to those with the special halo of the Creator of heaven and earth. Your problem will have a solution if you believe and follow my instructions. You carry the stain and emblem of Satan! They have even plotted how to take your life. Your attempt at committing suicide is added sin with infernal judgment. Hear me, and listen carefully, your problem is not only your own but that of your entire family, which had been handed down from your great, great grandfather, who was a High Chief many, many years ago. A very terrible curse was placed on your family some centuries ago by an albino who happened to be a victim of ritual sacrifice at that time. He was beheaded by the orders of your great, great grandfather by name Chief Atolagbe II.

"Time is definitely not on your side, Seun, you have to fast for seven days. You must do the great dry fasting on a mountain called Okeigbala, which is located about 35 kilometres from here. You will lie at the top of the mountain and you won't eat or drink anything for the seven days. You will be under the scorching sun and even the rains for these seven days. If you want to pee or defecate, it must be on the same spot."

"God have mercy!" exclaimed Seun, "That's another way of committing suicide, Prophet! And after that my problems would be over?" he asked.

"Just do this great dry fasting and you will never be the same again. Now, follow me to Mount Okeigbala so that you can experience the new transformation. I won't say anything further," the Prophet stopped talking. He strolled briskly towards the altar and took a silver-coloured rod, which was round at the tip. He made the sign of the cross with it and beckoned on the troubled man to follow him. The Prophet was holding the Holy Bible in his right hand…

To be continued.

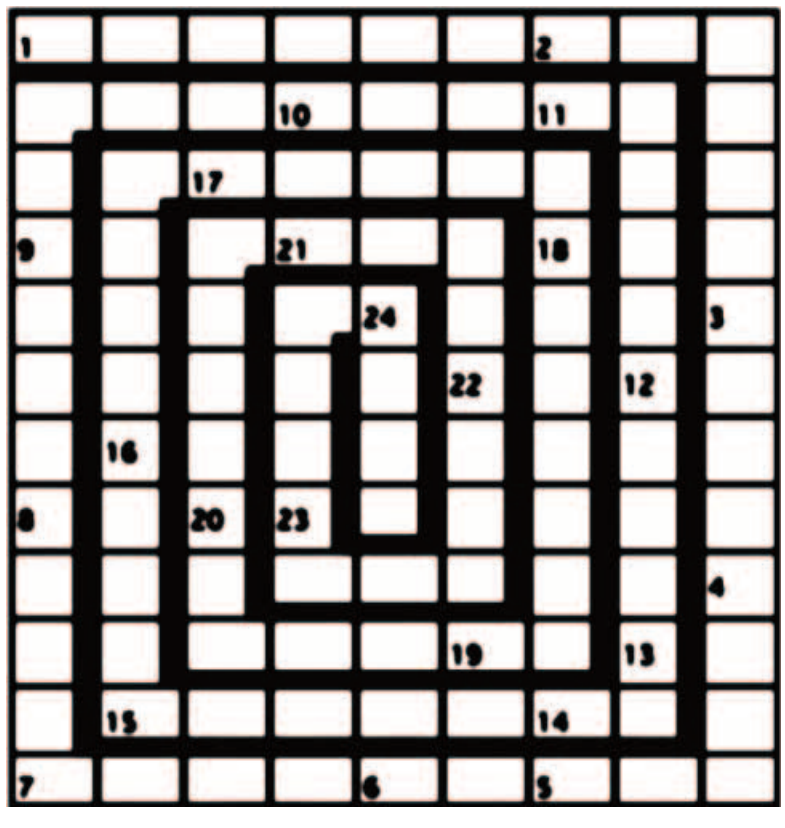
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Overlapping Word Game

with OLULANA KAYODE 08023183727
olulana3@yahoo.com

Solution

1 Abubakar
2 Argentina
3 Inane
4 Examine
5 Nest
6 Stooge
7 German
8 Anthem
9 Emblem
10 Misuse
11 Useful
12 Locate
13 Team
14 Amaechi
15 Hinder
16 Erratic
17 Icicle
18 Escalate
19 Essence
20 Censor
21 Repute
22 Termite
23 Enugu
24 Urea



Overlapping Word Game

1 Ex I.G. of Police, (3, 5).
2 Distinguished, (7).
3 Merchant, (6).
4 Irregular in opinion, (7).
5 Make very cold, (3).
6 Complete, (6).
7 To stop, (5).
8 Continue despite obstacles, (6).
9 Refusing to move forward, (7).
10 Writing arranged in lines, (5).
11 Showing good sense, (8).
12 Draw blood from, (5).
13 Dry earth in form of fine powder, (4).
14 Person's height, (7).
15 Move back, (6).
16 Desolate terrain, (6).
17 Of little significance, (7).
18 Of choice between many possibilities, (9).
19 Causing alarm and fear, (8).
20 A moral defect, (7).
21 Sudden, heavy impact, (5).
22 Relating to motion, (7).
23 Obstruct an opening, (5).
24 Flat and level, (4),

Word Search

Nigerian Capital Cities-2

Jos	Ilorin	Katsina
Lafia	Minna	Jalingo
Benin	Gusau	Osogbo
Kano	Ibadan	Damaturu
Ikeja	Lokoja	Abeokuta
Akure	Sokoto	

A	N	I	S	T	A	K	G	R	J	D
R	I	A	N	N	I	M	U	F	A	S
O	N	J	A	J	F	O	S	M	L	O
L	E	E	D	N	A	D	A	B	I	B
I	B	K	A	F	L	T	U	A	N	G
U	L	I	B	E	U	E	F	S	G	O
T	O	L	I	R	O	T	O	K	O	S
A	K	O	U	U	R	N	I	L	A	J
M	O	R	D	K	O	B	G	O	S	O
A	R	I	F	A	J	O	K	O	L	A
D	O	N	A	K	A	T	S	I	G	S

(c.) Olukayode Olulana

Society

Birthdays

AGBAKOBA, Chief Olisa Charles Nicholas, lawyer, maritime lawyer, human rights activist and former president of Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) is 73.

Born in Jos, Plateau State on May 29, 1953, he is the co-founder of Nigeria's foremost human rights organisation, the Civil Liberties Organisation. He studied law at the University of Nigeria and Nigerian Law School and he is a graduate of the London School of Economics and Political Science. He was admitted to the bar in 1978 and served as a research fellow in the Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) Law and Intelligence Department.

He left NIIA after a year and formed his own law firm, Olisa Agbakoba and Associates, which specialises in commercial Maritime law. He has been a leader in the country's pro-democratic movement, and is the President of Afronet, an international NGO dedicated to furthering the human rights cause.

He became known through his work in human rights and democracy movement in Nigeria. He was also the founder of United Action for Democracy and the Zambian pan-African human rights organisation AfroNet.

In 1993, he was honoured with the Human Rights Award of the German Association of Judges. In 1996, he was given the Aachen Peace



Agbakoba



Okogie

Award and has also been honoured by American Bar Association, International Bar Association, Institute of Directors (IoD), Nigerian Maritime Lawyers Association and Fellow, Chartered Institute of Mediators and Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (FCIArb).

OKOGIE, Cardinal Anthony Olubunmi, clergy, social critic and retired Archbishop of Lagos Catholic Church will be 90 on June 16, 2026. Born on June 16, 1936 in Lagos to a royal family in Uromi, Edo State, he was educated at Holy Cross School, Lagos; St. Patrick's College, Lagos and St. Theresa Minor Seminar, Ibadan, Oyo State.

He later proceeded to Urban University, Rome. He was ordained a priest on December 11, 1966. He holds a licentiate in Sacred Theology. Following his ordination, Cardinal Okogie planned to continue his studies in Rome, but was unexpectedly called back to Nigeria where he served for a short time as pastoral assistant at the Holy Cross Cathedral in Lagos.

He was then drafted into the Nigerian Army as a chaplain. He served again at the Cathedral and was appointed Catholic religious instructor and chaplain in King's College, Lagos.

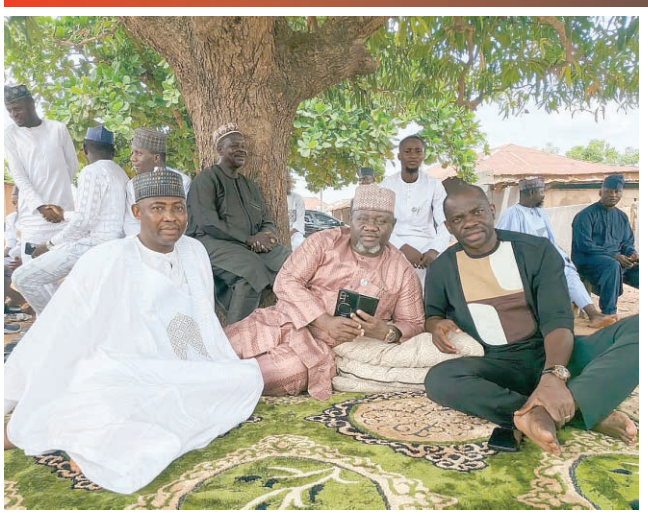
On August 29, he was ordained titular Bishop of Mascula and Auxilliary of Oyo. He was transferred to Lagos, first, as Auxilliary Bishop, then on April 12, 1973 nominated Archbishop. After another period of service at Holy Cross Cathedral, he became an instructor. As Bishop, Okogie was President of the Catholic Bishop Conference and Christian Association of Nigeria.

He was proclaimed Cardinal by His Holiness, late Pope John Paul II in October 2003.

He resigned from the pastoral governance of the See of Lagos, having reached the age limit of 75 years on May 25, 2012.

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

Events



Member, representing Umaisha/Ugya Nasarawa State House of Assembly, Sa'ad Ibrahim Abdullahi (left); Secretary to the State Government (SSG), Nasarawa State, Dr. Laraban Shuaibu Magaji (SAN) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Megastar Media Communications, Dr Adeniyi ifetayo during Salah celebrations with SSG in Toto Local Council, Nasarawa State ...on Wednesday.



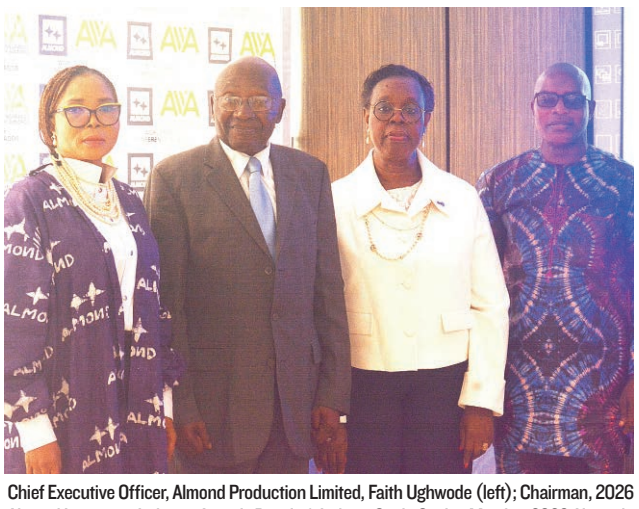
Daughter, Olamide Okoya (left); Founder/Chairman of Eleganza Group of Company, Chief Razaki Akanni Okoya; Managing Director, Eleganza Industrial City Limited, Chief (Dr.) Folashade Noimat Okoya and Chief Gbega Obasa, during the 2026 *Eid-el-Kabir* prayer organised by Chief Okoya at Oluwanishola Estate, Lekki–Ajah Expressway, Lagos,



Olota of Ota, Oba (Prof.) Adeyemi Obalanlege (left); ace journalist, Tola Adeniyi; *Alapomu* of Apomu, Oba Kayode Afolabi; Head of Department, Mass Communication, University of Lagos, Prof. Tayo Popoola; *Adimula* of Awori Kingdom, Isheri Olofin-Mole, Oba Sulaiman Adekunle and Adeniyi Ojikutu at the unveiling of *Newswatch 5* Lecture Series organised by Olori Janet Afolabi Foundation (OJAF) in Lagos ...recently.



Publisher, *Yes International* Magazine and Chairman, Rotary District 9111 Humanitarian Reporting Award Committee 2026-2027, Azuh Arinze (left); District Governor-elect, Bukola Bakare; Vice- Chairman, Public Image Committee, Tope Akande; and Chairman, Rotary District 9111 Public Image Committee, Olalekan Otun at the Committee's Inauguration held at Rotary Centre, Ikeja GRA, Lagos ...on Tuesday.



Chief Executive Officer, Almond Production Limited, Faith Ughwode (left); Chairman, 2026 Almond Insurance Industry Awards Panel of Judges, Ogala Osoka; Member 2026 Almond Insurance Industry Awards Panel of Judges, Jean Chiazor Anishere, and Consultant, Almond Insurance Industry Awards, Prof. Olajide Fadun, during the World Press Conference of the Almond Insurance Industry Awards held in Lagos.



General Manager, Lagos State Consumer Protection Agency, Afolabi Solebo (left); Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Commerce, Cooperatives, Trade and Investment (MCCTI), Babatunde Onigbanjo; Commissioner for CCTI, Folashade Bada Ambrose-Medebem; and Commissioner for Information and Strategy (MoIS); Gbenga Omotoso; at the Ministerial Press Briefing of MCCTI at Alausa, Ikeja, Lagos



Nigerian Institute of Journalism (NIJ) Registrar, Mrs Patricia Kalesanwo (left); Deputy Provost, Dr Adeboye Ola; Provost, Gbenga Adefaye; Caleb University VC, Prof. Olalekan Asikhai; Deputy Vice Chancellor, Research, Innovation, Strategy & Administration, Prof. Adesola Ajayi; Vice Chancellor Academics, Prof. Sunday Adewale; and Dr Sophia Abiri-Franklin at a partnership initiative held in Ogba, Lagos,.



Mr Olumide Aju (SAN), first son of the deceased (left); Mrs Bola Aju and Dr Oluseyi Aju, during the funeral service for their late mother, Chief (Mrs) Ibidun Aju at the Ebenezer Cathedral of the Anglican Diocese On The Coast, Ilutitun Osoro, Ondo State...recently



Mr Ebuka Chikelue (right); Mrs. Chinwe Diamond Muanya; Mrs. Jennifer Udochukwu; and Chief Chukwuma Muanya at the wedding reception of Chioma and Nnamdi at Ikeja, Lagos...last Saturday



Past President, American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), Farouk Mehboob (left); ASHRAE Nigeria Chapter President, Franklin Olatunji; pioneer President Nigeria Chapter, Babatunde Badru and past President ASHRAE Nigeria Chapter, Ade Oyenekan at 2026 Distinguished Lecture held in Lagos.

The Guardian
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

SPECIAL FOCUS ON MOST IMPACTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE FIRST LADIES OF STATES IN NIGERIA

DR GLORIA DIRI: A Voice of Advocacy and Leadership Redefining Impact Through the Gloria Diri Foundation

FIRST Lady of Bayelsa State, Dr Gloria Diri has earned recognition for her hands-on approach to public service, prioritising direct engagement with communities over ceremonial appearances. As wife of Governor Douye Diri, she channels her position into work that centres on women, children, widows, the elderly and survivors of gender-based violence, with a particular focus on rural families and communities often left at the margins. Her approach combines quiet discipline with visible compassion, turning policy-adjacent initiatives into direct outreach that reaches households across the state.

A trained nurse-midwife and public health advocate, Dr. Diri's professional journey began long before she entered the public spotlight. Her career in healthcare reportedly spans more than two decades, including service at the Federal Medical Centre in Yenagoa, where she rose to the position of Deputy Director of Nursing Services before becoming First Lady of Bayelsa State on 14 February 2020. Guided by her Christian faith, she frames service as both duty and conviction, lending credibility to her advocacy on welfare and protection, and this consistent commitment to community development has marked her as one of the more supportive and impactful First Ladies in Nigeria today.

A Life Rooted in Service

Dr. Diri's background in nursing and community health has shaped much of her public work. Her interventions are not limited to ceremonial appearances; they reflect a practical understanding of the challenges facing families, especially those in rural and underserved communities. Her humanitarian vision is also deeply connected to her roots in Igbedi, a riverine Ijaw community in Kolokuma/Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State. Shaped by the values of resilience, simplicity, community life, farming, and fishing, she has carried these influences into her public role as First Lady.

Through the Gloria Diri Foundation, she has supported the elderly, widows, vulnerable girls, young mothers, and rural women, while also promoting healthcare access, education, vocational support, and economic self-reliance. Her work extends beyond welfare; it includes practical empowerment through the provision of tools such as canoes, fishing nets, farming equipment, and entrepreneurial training for rural communities. In this way, Dr. Diri's service bridges compassion and development, preserving cultural heritage while opening new pathways for women and young people to thrive.

The Gloria Diri Foundation: Compassion in Action

Long before her role as First Lady became prominent, Dr. Gloria Diri had already established herself as a caregiver and humanitarian through the Gloria Diri Foundation. Drawing from her professional background as a nurse, she built her mission around care, relief, dignity, and the restoration of hope.

The Foundation has focused particularly on those who are often overlooked in society: elderly people, widows, impoverished families, unsupported girls, vulnerable women, and young mothers. Its programmes include outreach to elderly citizens, support for widows, health advocacy, livelihood assistance, and empowerment projects aimed at improving the quality of life of beneficiaries.

Her support for widows is especially significant. Many women face economic hardship after the loss of their husbands, and Dr. Diri's interventions have helped provide relief, encouragement, and practical assistance to those navigating difficult circumstances.

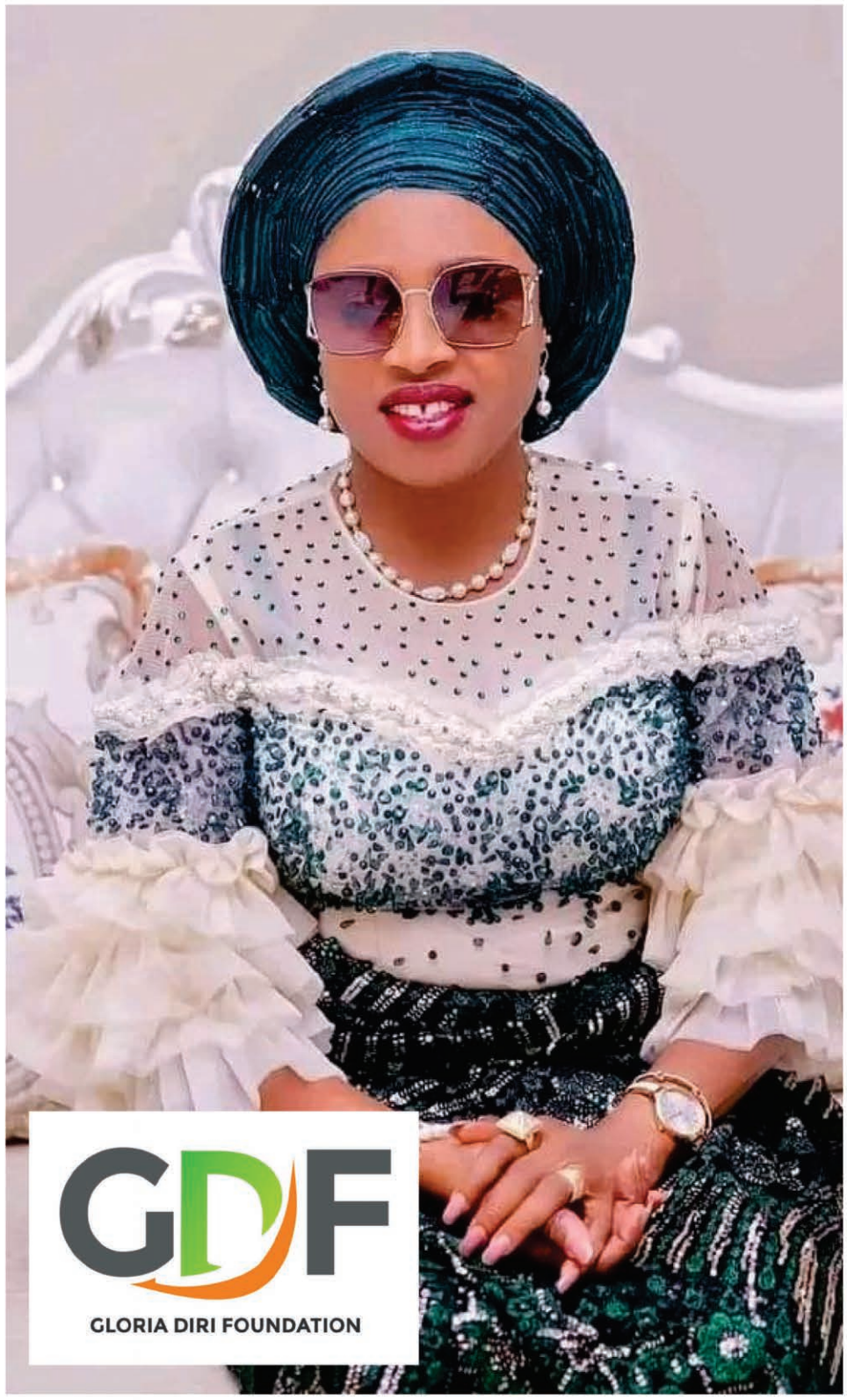
Her concern for young girls is equally important. Through educational and vocational support, the Foundation has helped girls and young women gain opportunities for a more stable and dignified future.

Championing Women's Empowerment

One of Dr. Diri's major areas of impact is women's empowerment. Her work has supported Bayelsa women not only through welfare interventions, but also through programmes designed to strengthen their economic participation.

Her focus on women's economic independence is evident in empowerment initiatives that provide tools, training, and support to women in agriculture, food processing, entrepreneurship, and small-scale enterprise.

In 2025, she described the UN Women-supported Bayelsa Food Hub as a "new dawn" for women and girls in the state. The facility, located in Yenagoa, was designed to support food processing, packaging, storage, and entrepreneurship. The programme also involved the distribution of cassava stems and fertilizer to 300 women, with the aim of improving livelihoods, food production, and economic stability.



Dr Gloria Diri, First Lady of Bayelsa State,

Her advocacy also aligns with the broader push for skills acquisition and entrepreneurship in Bayelsa State. During the 2025 World Entrepreneurship Day celebration in Yenagoa, she praised skills development programmes as a pathway to producing a new generation of entrepreneurs and reducing dependence on oil-driven economic structures.

Building a Global Sisterhood Through TWOT International

A major part of Dr. Gloria Diri's women-development work is her leadership through The Woman of Today Development Association International, widely known as TWOT International or TWOT Sisters.

Through TWOT International, she has extended her advocacy beyond welfare support into structured mentorship, policy dialogue, leadership preparation, and international sisterhood. The organisation reflects her belief that women should not only be empowered individually but should also become instruments of empowerment for others.

TWOT strengthens the broader vision that defines her public work: women rising together, communities becoming stronger, and leadership being used as a force for service and transformation.

The platform has also become an important space for conversations on women in politics and governance. At a TWOT conference held in Yenagoa, Dr. Diri encouraged women in leadership to act with integrity, knowledge, courage, and readiness. She emphasized that advocacy for greater political representation would only be meaningful if women were prepared to occupy such spaces and use them effectively.

Through TWOT, she continues to promote mentorship, inclusion, confidence-building, leadership development, and collective action among women from different backgrounds.

Standing Against Gender-Based Violence

Focused on making impact through service, she has also become one of the leading public voices in Bayelsa State against gender-based violence. In July 2020, she launched the Gender Response Initiative Team, known as GRIT, to address cases of gender-based violence and sexual violence by improving access to medical care, legal support, psychological assistance, and survivor protection. Her advocacy contributed to stronger public attention around the Violence Against Persons Prohibition law in Bayelsa State. In 2025, the Bayelsa State Ministry of Information reported that Dr. Diri reaffirmed her support for survivors of gender-based violence and emphasized that GRIT, working with relevant ministries and security agencies, provides free medical and psychological support services to survivors.

The establishment of a Sexual Assault Referral Centre and safe space in Yenagoa has further strengthened Bayelsa's response system for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. The centre provides protection, care, and support for victims, especially children and women affected by abuse.

Advancing Health and Public Awareness

As a public health professional, she continues to lend her voice to health campaigns across Bayelsa State. Her involvement in maternal, newborn, and child health campaigns reflects her longstanding commitment to preventive healthcare, health education, and improved access to lifesaving services for families. In January 2026, she joined state health officials in supporting the Measles-Rubella Vaccination Campaign in Yenagoa, calling on parents, guardians, and caregivers to make children available for vaccination. The Bayelsa State Ministry of Health also recognized her contributions to health sector advocacy and leadership.

Her healthcare advocacy is not limited to formal events. She engages with local communities, schools, health centres, and organisations to raise awareness, encourage participation, and promote healthier families.

Supporting Girls in Technology and Education

Dr. Diri's advocacy extends into education, digital literacy, and the development of the girl child. In 2023, she emphasized the importance of ICT and computer literacy during a Technovation Regional Pitch Event in Yenagoa. The programme, supported by the Bayelsa Education Development Trust Fund and Odyssey Educational Foundation, trained girls in coding, robotics, mobile app development, and digital entrepreneurship.

Her message was clear: girls must be equipped with the skills required to compete in a technology-driven world. By supporting digital education and innovation, she continues to encourage young women to become problem-solvers, entrepreneurs, and future leaders.

Promoting Rural Livelihoods and Self-Reliance

Another important part of Dr. Diri's work is her encouragement of rural livelihoods, particularly farming and fishing. These traditional occupations have sustained generations of Ijaw families, and she continues to promote them as pathways to dignity, income, and self-reliance.

Her practical support for rural women and young mothers includes livelihood tools, farming support, fishing equipment, and entrepreneurship training. This approach shows that her empowerment vision is not limited to urban centres; it reaches women in riverine and rural communities whose daily lives are closely tied to the land, rivers, and local economy. By supporting these livelihoods, the amiable First Lady strengthens both cultural heritage and economic independence.

A Voice of Compassion and Leadership

Beyond formal initiatives, Dr. Gloria Diri's public image is built around compassion, advocacy, and motherly concern for the welfare of Bayelsans. Whether speaking against violence, encouraging parents to protect their children, supporting women farmers, promoting vaccination, or encouraging entrepreneurs, her message consistently centres on dignity, responsibility, and opportunity.

Apart from the programmes and outreach, Dr Mrs Gloria Diri's record points to a quieter kind of influence: shaping attitudes and opening doors where they were once shut. As an author, mentor and motivational speaker, she translates professional experience and personal conviction into practical guidance for families and young people, keeping family values and youth development at the heart of her advocacy. From healthcare drives and public health campaigns to efforts in digital education, rural livelihoods and the fight against gender-based violence, her work links local needs with broader networks, including international sisterhood through TWOT. What stands out is the way her service turns position into presence—meeting people directly, protecting those at risk, and creating chances that outlast any single initiative. In Bayelsa and further afield, that approach has made her a steady reference point for women, children and communities working toward a more secure and hopeful future.

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON MOST IMPACTFUL AND SUPPORTIVE FIRST LADIES OF STATES IN NIGERIA

HAJIYA SILIFAT ABDULLAHI SULE: The Visionary Woman with Social Conscience Restoring Dignity and Offering Succour Through SAS Hope Foundation

HAJIYA Silifat Abdullahi A. Sule has used her tenure as First Lady of Nasarawa State, which began in May 2019, to reshape the office into something far more active than tradition suggests. Instead of limiting herself to formal duties, she has made it a direct channel for reaching women, children and young people who are routinely left out of mainstream services. With a background in education and home economics, she founded the Silifat Abdullahi Sule Hope Foundation, also known as SAS Hope Foundation, to deliver practical support where it matters most. What started as a personal initiative after her husband, Engineer Abdullahi A. Sule, became Governor has since grown into one of the state's most recognisable charitable outfits, centred on restoring dignity, widening opportunity and improving health for those who need it most.



HER EXCELLENCY
HAJIYA SILIFAT ABDULLAHI A. SULE
FIRST LADY
NASARAWA STATE

Born on 10 October 1963, she spent her formative years in Kakumi, within Bakori Local Government Area of Katsina State. Her early schooling began at Baptist Primary School in Sabon Gari, Kano, before she moved on to complete her secondary education at Kabomo Teachers College in Bakori, at the time part of Kaduna State. She later advanced her studies at the College of Education, Akwanga, earning an NCE in Home Economics, and went on to obtain a BSc in Food and Nutrition from A.B.U. Zaria's Akwanga branch. It is this blend of academic training and lived experience that has shaped her approach to philanthropy, enabling her to design programmes that address the immediate realities faced by families across Nasarawa State.

At the heart of the foundation's mission is a commitment to dismantle the social barriers that trap women, youth and children in cycles of disadvantage. From its inception, Hajiya Silifat has prioritised eradicating rape and drug abuse, expanding access to education for girls, and opening pathways for women and young people to become economically self-reliant, while also intervening in family health for communities with limited care. By framing the foundation's work as complementary to government efforts, she ensures that each intervention is both immediate in its impact and measurable in its outcomes, turning the administration's blueprint for growth and inclusion into lived improvements across Nasarawa State.

Hajiya Silifat Abdullahi A. Sule's work is closely woven into the broader development agenda of Nasarawa State. Through the SAS Hope Foundation, she has deliberately aligned grassroots interventions with the Nasarawa Economic Development Strategy and the Renewed Hope Initiative, ensuring that programmes on maternal health, girl-child education, skills training and economic support translate government policy into real change for families in both towns and rural communities. Rather than operating on the sidelines, she steps in where service gaps are widest, pairing a practical, hands-on approach with a clear focus on dignity, access and opportunity. It is this combination of purpose and presence that has restored a sense of possibility for many who once felt overlooked, strengthening public confidence that development can reach those who need it most.

In education and health, the record is substantial. SAS Hope Foundation has sponsored the schooling of over 500 orphans across Nasarawa State and worked with the ABOC Foundation to distribute over 10,000 exercise books to pupils in every one of the state's 13 local government areas. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in October 2020, she led the donation of 3,800 gallons of liquid soap, thousands of hand sanitisers and hand-washing basins to 248 secondary schools, an intervention the State Commissioner for Education described as the first of its kind in Nasarawa. Beyond the pandemic response, the foundation has taken on the medical bills of seven cancer patients – five women and two children – up to surgery level, and routinely visits hospitals to provide new mothers with baby materials and "mama's kits" designed to encourage safe hospital deliveries.

Social protection for vulnerable youth runs alongside these health interventions. In Gudi Station, Akwanga LGA, the foundation supports over 150 children by covering feeding and schooling costs to keep them off the streets. It has paid tuition for young people living with disabilities who gained admission to higher institutions and awarded scholarships to students of Nasarawa State Polytechnic to study abroad. Recognising the challenges facing Almajiri pupils, Hajiya Silifat has met directly with mallams, providing clothing, food, drugs, cash and learning materials to reduce street begging and support safer, more structured Qur'anic education.

Economic empowerment has been pursued through a blend of skills training and seed funding. About 400 women have received training in cosmetology and were provided with soft capital to start small businesses, while another 300 women in Nasarawa West Senatorial District were given financial assistance each after completing skills acquisition programmes. Widows and people living with disabilities have also benefited from tailored training and grants. The model of her foundation is deliberate: move beneficiaries from training to income generation, reduce household dependency and strengthen local economies from the ground up.

Hajiya Silifat's advocacy extends into public health and youth protection. Working with NYSC medical teams, the foundation has organised free medical outreaches in communities across the state. In partnership with the NDLEA and other agencies, she has led programmes to curb drug and substance abuse among young people and women, urging mothers to be vigilant about peer influences. On gender-based violence, she has encouraged victims to speak out and supported measures to ensure perpetrators face justice, working closely with the Office of the First Lady of Nigeria and the Nasarawa State Ministry of Women Affairs. During the 16 Days of Activism Campaign, she presented the foundation's work to the Nasarawa State House of Assembly, securing a pledge of legislative and practical support to end violence against women and girls.

Prominently, Hajiya Silifat Abdullahi Sule did not just ensure restoration of the health condition of Rukayya, a three months old baby raped by a twenty-five years old man, but stood her grounds until the perpetrator got convicted.

Her initiatives, such as the mother-child care program, have reached the remote and grassroots areas, ensuring that no one is left behind. She has also confronted gender-based violence and female genital mutilation head-on, pairing public advocacy with support for those affected, while her push for the rights of girls to learn and live free from harm has shifted attitudes on the ground and given thousands of young women a stronger footing to shape their own futures.

Hajiya Silifat Abdullahi Sule's work has drawn notice well beyond Nasarawa State, earning her a string of honours that reflect both the breadth and focus of her advocacy. She has been named African Peace Ambassador by the African Youth Assembly for Peace, appointed Grand Matron of the Mada Development Association, and recognised as a Breastfeeding Champion for her efforts to improve maternal and child health. Added to this, she received the award for Best Performing First Lady on Girl Child Education. Each recognition underscores a consistent theme: turning policy into practical support for women, girls and families.

Across Nasarawa's communities, that impact has not gone unnoticed. In gratitude for her hands-on engagement, traditional councils have conferred several honorary titles on her, including *Ozi of Toto*, *Onyawole of Alago land*, *Jaruman Matan Nku*, and *Giwar Mata* of Nasarawa State. These titles, rooted in local culture, signal a broader appreciation for a First Lady who has made herself accessible and responsive to the people she serves.

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From The Rector

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

The Power Of Counsel In Navigating Life Challenges (2)

By **Stephen Wolemonwu**

THE purpose of counsel, someone said: "Is to provide guidance, expert advice and objective perspective to improve decision-making, ensure safety, and foster success. It acts as a safeguard against mistakes, helps resolve complex issues (legal, personal or financial), and assists in navigating life's challenges by leveraging the knowledge and experience of others. The benefit of Counsel can not be over-emphasised.

The Importance Of Counsel:

• Counsel enables you to consider several angles and perspective to a matter before taking decision.

• It aids guidance and wisdom: offering expertise to navigate complex situations, such as legal matters (via attorneys), or personal issues (via counsellors). You leverage on the expertise of others to make meaningful decisions.

• Strategic decision-making: Helps you or your organisations define goals, identify strengths and make informed choices.

• Risk management: protects you from potential pitfalls, legal disputes and bad decisions.

• To gain clear perspective and clarity: provides an objective, third-party viewpoint that brings clarity to emotional or complex situations.

If considered in specific contexts:

• Legal Counsel: Ensures compliance with laws, manages disputes, and provides expertise in negotiation and litigation.

• General counsel: often functions as a strategic partner, providing legal and business advice to leadership to prevent issues, rather than just solving them afterward.

• Personal/Spiritual counsel: offers wisdom for life, relationship management, and moral guidance.

• Seeking counsel is recognised as an act of wisdom that aids in achieving victory and avoiding destruction caused by a lack of knowledge

• Establishing and succeeding in plans: Proverbs 15:22 states that plans fail without counsel, but succeed with many advisers, guiding decisions and actions.

• Safety and protection: seeking counsel, particularly from godly, experienced individuals, provides safety, prevents falling and offers protection from bad decisions.

• Alignment with God's will: true biblical counsel aligns with Scripture, helping individuals discern God's purpose rather than relying on their own understanding.

• Correction and growth: it helps individuals see through their own "blind spots," provides needed correction, and fosters spiritual maturity.

• Guidance from the Holy spirit: Jesus refers to the Holy spirit as the "Counsellor" or "Helper," whose purpose is to teach all things and guide believers in truth.

• Preventing failure: by seeking wise advice, individuals can avoid the disastrous consequences of foolish choices.

Sources Of Wise Counsel

Counsel and advice are received through a variety of channels, ranging from human, professional sources to spiritual and internal sources, including mentors, spiritual leaders, books, and the Holy spirit.

These Channels Often Include:

1. Spiritual and Divine Channels

• The Holy Spirit: Often described as a primary counsellor providing internal guidance, comfort, wisdom and correction.

• The Word of God (Scripture): Acts as a foundational guide for life decisions. Scripture is the ultimate source of counsel, offering infallible wisdom and direction.

• Prophetic Words: Most times God through His seasoned servants can share insights on specific areas of life at a crucial time to provide guidance.

• Personal intimacy with God (Prayer and Fasting): A direct, personal channel for seeking divine direction and wisdom.

2. People and Human Relationships

• Mature Believers/ Elders mentors: Proverbs encourages seeking counsel from those with experience, godly character, and spiritual maturity. Experienced individuals who have already navigated similar life phases can be of great assistance in the journey of life.

• Spiritual Authorities/ Leaders: clergy men with sound teaching and outstanding testimonies can guide through godly counsel.

• Family and Friends: Close relatives and peers who provide informal, emotional, and practical advice.

• Counsellors and Life Coaches: Trained experts who use specialised skills (such as asking questions) to guide decisions.

3. Personal Study and Intellectual Resources

• Books and Literature: Materials written by experts, mentors, or spiritual leaders offering wisdom on specific topics.

• Seminars and Conferences: Structured events designed for education and expert guidance.

• Personal Reflection/ Meditation: Analysing one's own life and circumstances in light of wisdom.

4. Situational and Formal Channels

• Life Circumstances (Trials/Blessings): personal experiences when intentionally reflected upon provide lessons and guidance.

• Formal Consultations : Structured meetings with professionals like lawyers, doctors, priests, or financial advisors.

Key Considerations For Receiving Advice

• Discretion: It is advised to test counsel by ensuring it aligns with God's word; to also seek advice from multiple, credible sources to avoid biased or recklessness.

• Openness: Receiving counsel requires a teachable spirit and an open heart, rather than relying solely on one's own understanding.

• Actionable Steps: The best advice is often applied through small, actionable steps in one's life.

• The Bible warns against following the "counsel of the wicked" or ungodly advice, which leads to destruction and poor outcomes (Psalm 1:1, 1 Kings 12

Conclusion

God is still leading us today, especially through counsel and advice from positive channels. Counsel from authorities is ever green, especially spiritual authorities. You can access the leadings of God by opening up yourself to receive counsel from spiritual authorities: Fathers, mentors, elders; men with results and experience. Most of these men and women have learnt and earned this right over time through their personal experiences, victories and results.

No one can over grow advice; you should never come to a time in your life where you consider yourself to be above advice. Many people are saved from destruction because of counsel; never you under estimate the power of counsel.

When we consider ourself above counsel due to success achieved, heights attained and progress made we become guilty of vain glory. Jesus taught that those who exalt themselves will be humbled (Luke 18:9-14). James 3:16 notes that where selfish ambition exists, there is "disorder and every vile practice. Philippians 2:3 instructs: "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."



Stephen Wolemonwu

• *The Ven. Stephen Wolemonwu, Rector, The Ibru International Ecumenical Centre 08035413812; stephenwolemonwu@gmail.com*

Emotionally Crippled People

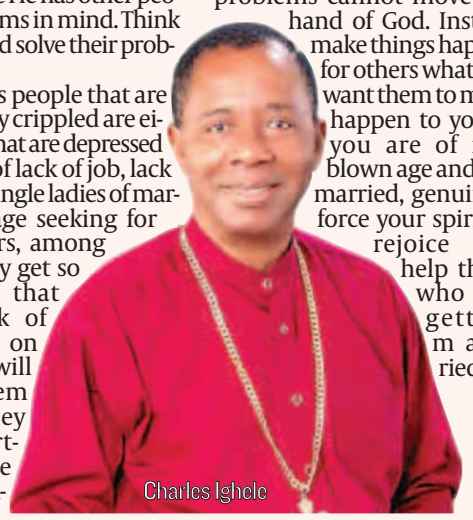
By **Charles Ighele**

IMAGINE Mephibosheth and what he said when David sent for him. The greatest problem with him was not that he was physically disabled. It was that he was emotionally crippled. His mind was sick. Who are the people with sick minds? They are those who think so much about themselves and things that concern their families. They think and think on these things and are sad. They cry. Easily get hurt. They cannot enjoy life this way. Know that God loves you and He created you because He has other people's problems in mind. Think of others and solve their problems.

Most times people that are emotionally crippled are either those that are depressed as a result of lack of job, lack of money, single ladies of marriageable age seeking for life partners, among others. They get so depressed that they think of themselves on how/who will give them jobs, money or life partners. People who have inferiority or superiority complex also fall into the class of emotionally crippled people. They are either never happy or make others small in order to feel big.

See how you can be of help to other people. Visit motherless baby's homes, old people's home or even visit sick people in the hospital to encourage them and to pray with them. Think of others and God will think of you.

Think less of your problems and think more of other people's problems. Know that thinking negatively of your problems cannot move the hand of God. Instead make things happen for others what you want them to make happen to you. If you are of full-blown age and not married, genuinely force your spirit to rejoice and help those who are getting married.



Charles Ighele

Catholic Priest Builds Another House For Widow

By **Chris Irekamba**

FOUNDER of the Faithspiration Organisation and a priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, Rev'd Fr. George Adimike, recently built a house for Anthonia Ezugwu, a poor widow, in Diaba Opi Agu, a remote community in the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Anambra State.

The gesture marked the second of such benevolent intervention by the priest in the community.

Fr. Adimike and his Faithspiration team journeyed from Onitsha to Opi Agu to the warm embrace of grateful villagers and faithful members, ready to witness what can only be described as the incarnation of love.

The house was solemnly blessed by the Catholic Bishop of Nsukka Diocese, Most Rev'd Godfrey Igwebuike Onah, whose arrival was greeted with joy by members of the Catholic Women Organisation (CWO) and other observers.

The Bishop, in his address, thanked God for raising instruments of compassion within the church, commending Fr. Adimike for what he described as a "distinct apostolate of mercy," noting that his gesture was not his first outreach in Opi Agu.



Catholic Bishop of Nsukka Diocese, Most Rev'd Godfrey Igwebuike Onah (centre); founder, Faithspiration Organisation and priest of the Onitsha Archdiocese, Rev'd Fr. George Adimike (right); beneficiary, Anthonia Ezugwu and others, during the hand over of the house to the widow in Diaba Opi Agu, Nsukka, Anambra State

Recalling the ripple effects of such generosity, Bishop Onah disclosed that the first house built by Fr. Adimike had inspired another benefactor from Anambra State to construct a church in the same community.

He urged the people to imbibe the spirit of love and extend it to people within and outside the church, reminding members that true Christianity is measured in concrete acts of charity.

The Parish Priest of St. Patrick's Parish, Opi Agu, Rev'd Fr Nweke Pascal, expressed gratitude to the Bishop for his pastoral presence and to Fr. Adimike for his continued generosity.

He also appreciated the faithful and well-wishers whose presence added colours and meaning to the celebration.

The Community Chairman, who spoke on behalf of the people, conveyed profound gratitude to the Bishop, Fr. Adimike, and all who remembered Opi Agu in such a meaningful way.

He described the gesture as a sign that the community is not forgotten, but held in high esteem by the church.

There Is No Alternative To Jesus Christ

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," (Acts 4:12).



APOSTLE Peter, who said these words under the heavy unction of the Holy Ghost, stand as the ultimate boundary of human hope and the final authority on the destiny of the soul. In a world that is constantly searching for a back door into heaven, a shortcut to peace, or a substitute for righteousness, the word of God remains an immovable rock. We live in a generation that prides itself on "many ways" and "personal truths," yet the reality of eternity is not governed by human opinion but by divine decree. There is no alternative to Jesus Christ because there is no other person in the history of the universe who could bridge the infinite gap between a Holy God and a fallen humanity. To seek another way is not just an error in judgment, but a rejection of the only lifeline thrown to a drowning world.

The fundamental reason there is no alternative to Christ lies in the nature of our condition. The Bible is clear on this, according to Romans 3:23: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin is not a social mistake or a temporary lapse in character; it is a spiritual death sentence. Romans 6:23 tells us that "the wages of sin is death," and this is a debt that no human being can pay for himself or herself, let alone for another. We see men and women, today, trying to pay this debt through the currency of "good works," yet Isaiah 64:6 reminds us that "all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" in the sight of a thrice-holy God. You cannot wash a stained soul with dirty water, and you cannot redeem a fallen life with the efforts of a fallen nature. There had to be a perfect, sinless substitute and that is a Lamb without blemish and without spot. He has taken our place upon the altar of divine justice. Only Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, could fulfill this requirement.

When Jesus stood among His disciples and declared in John 14:6: "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me," He was not offering one option among many. He was stating an exclusive biological and spiritual reality. Just as there is no alternative to light to dispel darkness, same way there is no alternative to Christ to dispel the spiritual blindness of the human heart. Many look to philosophy, seeking to think their way into peace, but philosophy only discusses the problem while Christ provides the cure. Many look to religion, seeking to perform their way into favour, but religion is man's attempt to reach God, whereas the Gospel is God reaching down to man. There is only "one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5). Any other mediator is a counterfeit; any other path is a dead end.

The Cross of Calvary is the final proof that no alternative exists. If there had been any other way to save humanity—if keeping the law could have done it, if animal sacrifices could have sufficed, or if human sincerity were enough—then the Father would never have allowed His Only Begotten Son to endure the agony of the Cross. The blood of Jesus is the only substance in the universe that has the power to cleanse the conscience from dead works. Hebrews 9:22 says: "And without shedding of blood is no remission." It was not just any blood, but the precious blood of Christ that paid the ransom. When we realise the magnitude of the price paid, we understand the gravity of looking for an alternative. To suggest there is another way is to suggest that the sacrifice of Jesus was unnecessary. But God, in His infinite wisdom, knew that only the Creator could redeem the creature.

The power in the name of Jesus is unparalleled because it is the only name that carries the authority of heaven. Philippians 2:9-10 tells us that God has "given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." There is no other name that makes demons tremble, no other name that brings instant peace to a troubled mind, and no other name that can translate a soul from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light. When a sinner cries out to that name, they are not calling upon a theory; they are calling upon a Person Who is "upholding all things by the word of his power," (Hebrews 1:3). There is no alternative to His power because His power is the very power of the Godhead.

Furthermore, the sufficiency of Christ is total. He does not need our help to save us; He only needs our surrender. We are "justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus," (Romans 3:24). This is the "soul-converting" power of the message: that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. He does not wait for you to become an alternative version of yourself before He accepts you. He takes the broken, the shattered, the rejected, and the vile, and by His Spirit, He makes them new. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," (2 Corinthians 5:17). This transformation is not a renovation of the old life, but the importation of a new life—His life. No other system or belief can offer a new birth; they can only offer a new coat of paint on an old tomb.

To the one who is searching, the message is simple: stop looking for an alternative. You will find no rest for your soul in the dry wells of this world. The invitations of Christ are always personal and urgent. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I shall give you rest," (Matthew 11:28).

Finally, we must consider the consequence of rejecting the only way. If there is no alternative to Christ for salvation, then to be without Christ is to be without hope. John 3:36 warns us: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." This is the sobering reality that fuels the urgency of the Gospel. It is not an act of intolerance to tell a man that there is only one bridge over a chasm; it is an act of supreme love. The bridge is Christ. He was bruised for our iniquities and wounded for our transgressions (Isaiah 53:5). He stood in the line of fire so that we could stand in the hall of grace.

There is no alternative to Jesus Christ because He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the Bread of Life that satisfies the hungry, the Living Water that quenches the thirsty, and the Light of the World that guides the lost. He is the Advocate Who pleads our case and the King Who is coming again to rule in righteousness.

Whether you are at the height of success or the depth of failure, your need for Him remains the same. Trust in Him today with all your heart. Lean not unto your own understanding or the shifting opinions of society. Anchor your soul in the truth of Acts 4:12. There is no other name. There is no other way. There is no other Saviour. Jesus Christ is not a better way; He is the Only way!

Testimony Of The Lord's Doing

'15 Years Of Chronic Pile Healed'

MY name is Moses Sodipo. I am from Ogun State, but I reside at Alaba, international market, Lagos. I joined The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries this year. After joining the church, God showed me many things to prove that He is the owner of The Lord's Chosen.

I recently relocated to my house in Alaba so that I will live closer to the church. Before now, l did not know that a particular tenant was the brain behind my not relocating to my house after it's completion. He had been bragging that he came from a particular place in the South East, and feels that he can live in the house without paying his rent. The man, who has 10 children has been a thorn on my flesh, but last Thursday, as l was coming home, he saw me and began to shout fire, fire, and ran away.

In fact, God of Chosen is so great that He drove the troublesome tenant away from my house after he bragged that he would live for a donkey's years without paying a kobo. Oh, l thank God so much.

Another testimony is how I joined The Lord's Chosen. It was one fateful Friday, l was coming back from a prayer meeting and l saw people in a crusade in that area and when I looked at the cable, l saw the G.O. of this ministry preaching and God said to me this is the man I have been telling you about. Without wasting time I joined them in that regional crusade, and after the crusade, I demanded to see the pastor of that branch. It was after seeing him that I came to the headquarters in Ijesha, Lagos, and to the glory of God, l have been experiencing real peace in my heart. To crown it all, God of Chosen healed me of an age-long pile (hemorrhoid) that afflicted my life for 15 years. Praise, the Lord!

I pray for our G.O. and all Chosen members worldwide; heaven at last in Jesus' name...Amen!



Large gathering of worshippers at the just-concluded Abuja 2026 Crusade of The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Revival Ministries held at Abiola National Stadium, Abuja.

IbruCentre

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Jesus, The Eternal Prophet And Priest (1)

GOD, the Father, proclaimed the raising of "a Prophet from among" the children of Israel. This coming Prophet is Jesus Christ. The promise extends to people of all races and every generation. The Lord emphasised that when Christ, the Prophet comes, "he shall speak… all that (He) shall command him."

However, a solemn warning accompanies this announcement: whosoever "will not hearken (listen, observe or submit) unto (the) words, which he shall speak"— whether Pharisee, Sadducee, Herodian, Israelite or Gentile — it shall be required of him. Besides being a Prophet, Christ is royalty because He is a Prince and Lord of all, and He is the high Priest.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the revealed Prophet that embodies the fullness of God's message to humanity. His message alone holds validity and any alteration – addition or subtraction – invites severe consequences, including plagues and removal of one's name from the book of life. Born among the Jews, Christ was initially sent to the Jews, then to the Gentiles. As the Prophet with a capital 'P', He transcends humanity.

The words of Christ are not His, but those which the Father put in His mouth for all creation. He called sinners to repent and believe the gospel. He also emphasised the blessedness of being pure in heart, which is the truth that sanctifies. Christ called men to tarry in prayer to be endued with power from on high. Any soul that delights in religion without righteousness and refuses to repent despite hearing the gospel would "be destroyed from among the people." We recognise Jesus Christ, as the promised Prophet, as confirmed by Apostle Peter, who declared Him to be the One whom God "raised up (and) sent … to bless (us), in turning away every one of (us) from his iniquities." Besides, in the past, God spoke "unto the fathers by the prophets." However, He "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed."

Therefore, we cannot afford to neglect or disobey Christ's word because "every transgression and disobedience" will be judged. Christ, Himself, confirmed that the Father sent Him with "a commandment, what (He) should say." It is, therefore, our responsibility not only to hear His words, but also to submit to and obey them, if we must eventually get to heaven.

Springs Of Wisdom

By Pastor W. F. Kumuyi



• *Further reading (King James Version): Deuteronomy 18:15,18,19. Acts 3:22,23,26; Hebrews 1:1,2; 2:1-4; John 8:24,28,29; 12:49,50; 4:25,26. Deuteronomy 18:18,19; Psalm 2:6-8,12; Isaiah 9:6,7; Acts 3:22,23; Matthew 13:13-15. John 8:42-44; John 9:27,28; Luke 19:12-14,27. 1 Samuel 2:35; Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 2:17; 3:1-6; 4:14; 5:4-6,9; 6:18-20; 7:25,26; 13:11-14; 1 Peter 2:9,21,24.*

Biblical Pattern For Revival (11)

By Abel Ukachi Amadi

RESTORATION HOUR

Text: Joel 2:12–13; Habakkuk 3:2

Key Verse: Acts 1:14: "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren," (KJV).

ACTS 1:14 is the secret for any church or gathering of believers that wants to experience revival. There are two keys words in Acts 1:14 that are very fundamental for revival. They are "accord" and "prayer". Thus, revival is birthed in unity and prayer. They are the precursor to the revival that gave birth to the church in Jerusalem. The first being "one accord," which means "being of one mind." The Bible says that they continued with one accord. Not only did they begin with one accord, but continued in one accord. So, unity — being together, being of one mind, and being of one purpose — is very essential to experiencing revival for any group of believers. In an atmosphere where there is unity, there will be an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Psalm 133:1 says: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" The preparatory process of getting into revival is to maintain unity of the Spirit.

When God's people come together in unity regardless of name, denomination, and doctrinal differences, putting aside petty squabbles, with just one purpose of seeking God, there will be a mighty outpouring of His Spirit's presence and power. There will be an outpouring of anointing, refreshing, blessing and life upon all, from the head to the toe, from the greatest to the least!

The second point is that there was prayer and supplication in the church that gathered in Jerusalem. They continued in prayer, supplication, and intercession. They were just united in one accord and offered prayer and supplication and there was outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon them. Zechariah 10:1 says: "Ask the Lord for rain in the time of the latter rain. The Lord will make flashing clouds; He will give them showers of rain, grass in the field for everyone." John Hyde was God's main instrument of Sialkot revival in the Punjab region in India in 1904. Prior to revival in Punjab region, in 1899 Hyde started spending whole nights in prayer, forgetting about food or sleep. He became known as "Praying Hyde," "the Apostle of Prayer" and "the man that never sleeps." God used him to touched thousands and thousands of lives in India and abroad. Early in 1904, a revival broke out in the girls' school, with many girls publicly confessing sins and accepting Jesus Christ.



Amadi

Revival brings down the miraculous power of God in the Church and spreads the fire of revival. The church in Jerusalem would serve as a great prototype for us to understand what a church birth in revival would look like. The first eight chapters of Acts capture the first 12 years of the church in Jerusalem. As the outpouring progressed, everybody started flowing in the miraculous. Soon, we start hearing about Stephen (Acts 6) and Philip (Acts 8) through whom mighty signs and wonders were released. God's desire for sending revival is to see every person in the church healing the sick, casting out devils and raising the dead in the name of Jesus Christ. He wants to see His people invade the streets of our country manifesting the glory of God. Because of the persecution led by Saul in Jerusalem, the believers were scattered, but they carried the fires of revival wherever they went. They went into Samaria, Judea and Antioch and those places were set on fire (Acts 8 & 11). Ordinary believers carried the fires of revival wherever they went.

• *Today's nugget: Unity and prayer are secrets to revival. Prayer: Lord pour out your spirit upon me. Prayer lines: 08033299824. E-mail: amadiabelukachi@gmail.com, Rev. Abel Ukachi Amadi, General Superintendent, Assemblies of God Nigeria.*

PFN Ends National Fasting And Prayer, Tasks Govt On Security

By Isaac Taiwo

THE National President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Francis Wale Oke, has decried the worsening state of insecurity and bloodshed across the country.

He observed that Nigeria has gradually lost its sense of value for human life, amid recurring killings, kidnappings and violent attacks.

Speaking at the conclusion of a three-day national fasting and prayer programme organised by the fellowship to mark the 2026 Global Pentecost Day, Oke said Nigerians are deeply troubled by the alarming increase in banditry, terrorist attack, insurgency and abductions in different parts of the country.

Represented by the Lagos State Chairman of PFN, Yemi Davids, at the event held at Global Impact Church, Ogudu, Lagos, the cleric said the nation was passing through one of its darkest moments as innocent citizens continued to die in avoidable circumstances.

Among those present at the gathering were Leke Adeboye, Vice Chairman of PFN, Lagos State, Dolapo Onaolapo and Poju Oyemade.

Addressing journalists on Sunday, Oke condemned the continued captivity of some of the abducted Chibok schoolgirls and Leah Sharibu, noting that Sharibu remained in bondage for refusing to renounce her Christian faith.

He also recalled the killing of Deborah Samuel in Sokoto, describing the incident as a painful symbol of religious intolerance and mob violence that had gone largely unpunished.

According to him, states such as Taraba, Plateau, Benue and Kaduna have become daily killing fields, while communities in Kwara were allegedly being terrorised by heavily armed bandits.

The PFN president further condemned the abduction and killing of teachers and students in Oyo, including the beheading of Mr Michael Oyedokun, describing the attacks as barbaric and unacceptable.



Adoration (64)

Biblical Womanhood

By Emeritus Prof. Mercy Olumide



The Benefits Of Adoration (Cont)

1• The power and ability to face the uncertainties and adversities of life are found in God. "Refuge" pictures a shelter from danger, indicating that God is our true security in the storms of life (see Is 4:5-6). "Strength" refers to His might when battling our foes (21:8; Ex 15:13) and includes His power that works in us (Col 1:29), enabling us to overcome obstacles in life. (2) The end result is that He is "a very present help in trouble." God is available to His people and wants us to call upon Him for help in any time of need (Heb 4:16). He is sufficient for any situation and never leaves our side; thus, we need not fear.

Jesus Teaches About Worry (Mat 6:25-34)

"Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" (Mat 6:25)

Because of the ill effects of worry, Jesus tells us not to worry about those needs that God promises to supply. Worry may (i) damage your health, (ii) cause the object of your worry to consume your thoughts, (iii) disrupt your productivity, (iv) negatively affect the way you treat others, and (v) reduce your ability to trust in God. How many ill effects of worry are you experiencing?

The Difference Between Worry And Genuine Concern

Worry immobilises, but concern moves you to action.

Seven Reasons Not To Worry (Mat 6:25-34)

• The same God who created life in you can be trusted with the details of your life (6:25)

• Worrying about the future hampers your efforts for today (6:26)

• Worrying is more harmful than helpful (6:27)

• God does not ignore those who depend on him (6:28-30)

• Worry shows a lack of faith in and understanding of God (6:31,32)

• There are real challenges God wants us to pursue, and worrying keeps us from them (6:33)

• Living one day at a time keeps us from being consumed with worry (6:34)

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you," (Mat 6:33).

To **"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"** means to turn to God first for help, to fill your thoughts with his desires, to take his character for your pattern, and to serve and obey him in everything. What is really important to you? People, objects, goals, and other desires all compete for priority. Any of these can quickly bump God out of first place if you don't actively choose to give him first place in every area of your life.

Those who follow Christ are urged to seek above all else God's kingdom and His righteousness.

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

Excellence is never accidental. It is the product of discipline, diligence, and an unwavering commitment to purpose. Nigerians have consistently demonstrated these qualities, earning global recognition across science, governance, business, arts, and public service. Yet despite these achievements, Nigeria's reputation continues to be unfairly shaped by the misconduct of a few. The actions of individuals who have placed personal gain above national honor have cast a shadow on the image of our country and its people abroad. The truth, however, tells a different story. There remains a substantial number of Nigerians who conduct themselves with integrity, humility, and patriotism. They serve as role models in their professions and communities, refusing to compromise their values. Many have gone further to mentor and inspire the next generation, helping to build a more accountable and progressive Nigeria. This special edition celebrates 50 Nigerians of merit — men and women whose integrity-driven lives and outstanding contributions deserve national recognition. Their stories remind us that honor, hard work, and service remain the true hallmarks of the Nigerian spirit. We invite you to read on and be inspired.



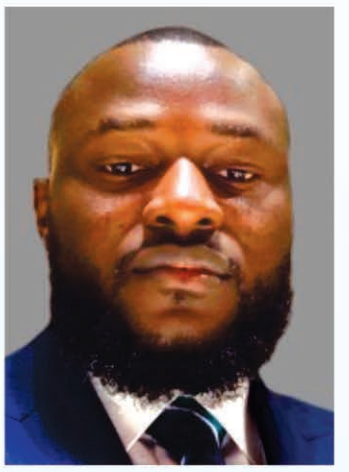
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Chief Executive Officer, Caverton Offshore Support Group Plc



DR. JIMOH R. BADAMOSI
CEO, JRB Solar Investment Limited



PRINCE MUSTAPHA AUDU
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ABAMA JUDY JOY
MD/Chief Executive Officer, I4cus Nigeria Limited



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BABATUNDE OKOYA
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Lange and Grant Pushes For Low-Cost Housing in Nigeria

lange+grant

A leading integrated manufacturing and project development company, Lange and Grant Commodities Limited, has announced its strategic focus on industrializing construction and advancing modularity in Nigeria's Real Estate sector to industrialize mass housing. This is a new concept framed essentially to bring industrial approach to the building sector.

This is geared towards reducing housing deficit in Nigeria.

Founder and CEO of the company, Babatunde Okoya said the initiative is a direct response to Nigeria's growing housing deficit and the need to reduce construction costs and timelines without compromising quality.

The company combines advanced manufacturing technology with certified materials to produce durable, energy-efficient, and cost-effective products that support infrastructure and housing development across Nigeria.

In his words: "Manufacturing in Nigeria has declined over the years, but the opportunity to rebuild it through industrialized construction is here.

"At Lange and Grant, our vision is to make low-cost, high-quality housing accessible to all Nigerians by shifting from slow, site-based building to scalable, factory-driven modular systems."

"Lange and Grant is committed to building the future of construction in Nigeria through industrialization, job creation, and scalable housing solutions."

Okoya, former Managing Director of Eleganza Industries Limited and a business executive with over 20 years of experience, founded Lange and Grant in 2004. The company operates an integrated facility with a yearly production capacity exceeding 1 million square meters.

Lange and Grant's product portfolio is designed to support faster, more efficient, and cost-effective construction such as Insulated Sandwich Panels: High-performance panels for thermal insulation, soundproofing, and energy efficiency in residential, commercial, and industrial buildings.

Also Insulated Roofing Sheets: Durable, weather-resistant roofing for factories, warehouses, offices, and housing projects.

Fiber Cement Products which is durable, fire-resistant wall systems for modern architectural applications.

Portacabins & Prefabricated Buildings: Rapid-install structures for housing, offices, classrooms, and site operations.

Light Gauge Steel Systems: Lightweight, durable structural systems that enable faster assembly and lower material waste.

These solutions allow developers and government partners to reduce build times by up to 60% and cut lifecycle costs through improved energy efficiency.

The benefits of polyurethane insulated sandwich panels and how it reduces emissions and protect homes from extreme heat as a result of global warming.

1. Low Lifetime Carbon Footprint

Modern polyurethane production utilizes zero-ODP (Ozone Depletion Potential) and low-GWP (Global Warming Potential) blowing agents.

2. The Ultimate Shield Against Extreme Heat

Polyurethane panels stop outdoor heat from penetrating the building envelope. The indoor climate remains stable and cool, even when the sun beats down on the roof and walls. It turns a home into a resilient refuge against heatwaves.

3. Energy Efficiency: It provides outstanding thermal resistance (high R-value) with minimal thickness, drastically reducing HVAC energy consumption and costs.

4. High Structural Strength & Lightweight

Despite being remarkably light, sandwich panels possess a high strength-to-weight ratio.

They are lightweight, they require less heavy support framework (beams and columns), which lowers overall structural steel and foundation costs.

The composite nature of the panel allows it to withstand significant wind loads, making it excellent for both roofing and wall cladding.

5. Rapid and Easy Installation

Time is money on a construction site, and PUR panels are engineered for fast-track building.

6. Waste Reduction

Panels are manufactured to precise specifications in a factory setting, significantly reducing material waste at the building site.

7. Airtight and Moisture Resistant

The panel system creates an airtight envelope, eliminating thermal bridging and drafts.

It acts as an excellent barrier against water vapor, preventing moisture ingress that could lead to mold, mildew, or structural degradation.

8. Durability and Low Maintenance

PUR sandwich panels are built to last for decades without degrading in performance.

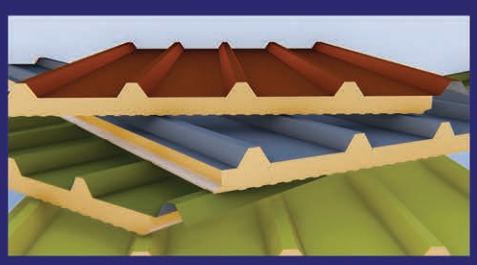
The outer metal skins are typically treated with anti-corrosive coatings (like PVDF or Polyester) that protect against harsh weather, UV rays, and chemical exposure.

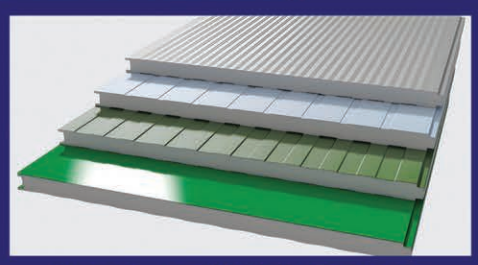
They do not require frequent painting or repairs. A simple periodic wash is usually enough to keep them looking and performing like new.

"With Lange and Grant, you have the solution to the modern-day construction challenges that demands speed, durability and structural excellent. We build faster and smarter." ***Babatunde Okoya***



OUR PRODUCTS


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Insulated Wall Panels

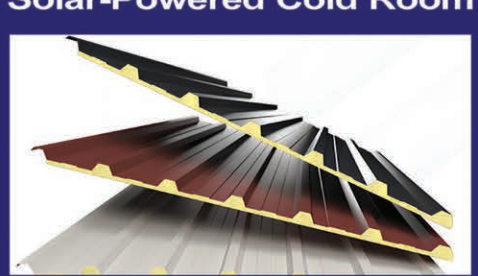

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SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

Illuminating the Path of Merit: The Visionary Journey of Dr. Jimoh Rauf Badamosi

In a country where the quest for sustainable development often intersects with the challenges of infrastructure and energy access, a few visionary leaders stand out as pillars of progress. Among these icons of industry is Dr. Jimoh Rauf Badamosi, the Chairman of JRB Group of Companies and Chief Executive Officer of JRB Solar Investment Limited. As we spotlight *Distinguished Nigerians of Merit*, Dr. Badamosi's inclusion is not merely a recognition of business success, but a testament to a life built on integrity, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to the Nigerian project.

The Foundation of a Global Visionary

DR. Badamosi's story is a compelling narrative of Nigerian unity and enterprise. Though a native of Ikirun in the Ifelodun Local Government Area of Osun State, his formative years were spent in the Igbo-Eze South Local Government Area of Enugu State. This cross-cultural upbringing provided him with a unique, detribalised perspective that has informed his business dealings and philanthropic efforts across the federation.

His academic journey reflects a commitment to public service and administration, holding a National Diploma in Public Administration from the Federal Polytechnic, Nasarawa, and a Bachelor's Degree in the same field from Nasarawa State University. This educational background in administration proved foundational for managing the complex logistics of the JRB Group. His later recognition with an Honorary Doctorate Degree from the Federal College of Dental Technology and Therapy, Enugu, served as an early indicator of the impact his humanitarian services would have on the nation.

Pioneering the Renewable Energy Revolution

While many entrepreneurs seek the path of least resistance, Dr. Badamosi chose the challenging terrain of the energy sector. Recognising the energy access gap as a primary hurdle to Nigeria's economic take-off, he founded JRB Solar Investment Limited in 2010. His preparation for this venture was rigorous; he sought world-class expertise through intensive training and mentorship with Anji Dasol Science and Technology, a prominent Chinese energy firm. This was further bolstered by strategic partnerships and advanced mentorship with the German industry leader, JVG Technology.

Under his leadership, JRB Solar Investment has transformed from a startup into one of Nigeria's foremost renewable energy providers. The company's mission remains clear: to provide affordable and reliable electricity to individuals and communities who have long been underserved by the national grid. Dr. Badamosi views solar energy not just as a business, but as a critical tool for national transformation. He notes that even in Europe, where grid power is steady, solar remains a staple alternative despite having a fraction of Nigeria's sunlight.

A Portfolio of Excellence: From Bridges to Mini-Grids

Dr. Badamosi's definition of merit—earning success through ability, effort, and character rather than favouritism—is etched into every project his group undertakes. Perhaps the most visible testament to this excellence is the Third Mainland Bridge in Lagos. JRB Solar Investment was responsible for the installation of nearly 2,000 units of solar streetlights spanning the 9.5km stretch and its 5km ramp, illuminating one of Africa's busiest thoroughfares with clean energy.

The group's technical prowess extends to large-scale infrastructure and power generation, including:

The construction of a 1 Megawatt Solar Mini Grid Plant for the Head of Service of the Federation.

The installation of solar power systems at the Nigeria Naval Base in Onne, Rivers State.

Critical road infrastructure projects, such as the emergency intervention construction of the East-West Concrete Road in Delta State, the Oyo-Ogbomoso dual carriageway, and the reconstruction of the Abuja-Keffi Road.

For Dr. Badamosi, these projects represent more than just contracts; they are opportunities to prove that Nigerian companies can replicate and even exceed the "exactness and excellence" seen in the Western world.

Leadership and the Inquisitive Mind

Central to the success of the JRB Group is a leadership philosophy that values every voice. Dr. Badamosi operates on the principle that you are never too rich to learn from anyone. He fosters an environment where staff members are encouraged to share innovative ideas, believing that when people feel significant, their intellectual contributions can take a company to new heights.

Despite the high-pressure environment of the energy and construction sectors, he maintains a strict scale of preference to balance official duties with family and social engagements. His advice to aspiring leaders is practical: never take your rest and exercise for granted, as good health is the prerequisite for appreciating life's achievements.



Philanthropy and the Rauf Badamosi Foundation

The measure of a man of merit often lies in what he gives back. Dr. Badamosi established the Rauf Badamosi Foundation in memory of his father, focusing on the welfare of the underprivileged. The foundation's work is extensive, ranging from providing youth empowerment through start-up capital to the construction and rehabilitation of schools, hospitals, and roads. By installing solar streetlights in rural communities, the foundation ensures that the benefits of renewable energy reach those who need them most, regardless of their economic status. In 2024, Dr Badamosi initiated what is termed JRB PRIZE FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY, an annual contest for secondary schools to share their brilliant and innovative ideas on the future of renewable energy, through essay contest among FCT Schools. N10 Million worth of prizes and gift items was given to the winners, to support their education and encourage them to keep striving for academic excellence.

Navigating Challenges and the Road Ahead

Even a man of Dr. Badamosi's stature faces significant hurdles. He identifies the primary challenge in the renewable sector as the logistical bottleneck of importing panels, batteries, and inverters, coupled with foreign exchange instability. Furthermore, he has called for the full implementation of tariff waivers on renewable energy products—a policy endorsed by the federal government years ago but yet to be fully realised.

To solve these issues, Dr. Badamosi is "thinking outside the box" by developing an assembling plant in Nigeria. This facility, which is currently underway, aims to facilitate quicker project completion and reduce the nation's reliance on imported finished products. He remains optimistic about the future, particularly with the 2023 Electricity Act signed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, which empowers private companies to engage in embedded electricity generation.

A Message to the Next Generation

To the young entrepreneurs of Africa, Dr. Badamosi offers a message of resilience: "Never take a NO for an answer". He encourages them to take calculated risks and stay focused on their vision even when overwhelmed. His life serves as a blueprint for success anchored on character; he urges young Nigerians to never compromise their values for material gain, promising that hard work will eventually lead to a resounding success where the sun shines on everything they do.

In Conclusion, Dr. Jimoh Rauf Badamosi is more than a businessman; he is a visionary who has successfully wedded the pursuit of excellence with the spirit of philanthropy. As he takes his place among *The Distinguished Nigerians of Merit*, he stands as a reminder that with the grace of God, an inquisitive mind, and a commitment to societal good, one man can indeed light up a nation.

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Dr. Abiola Babatunde-Ojo: Leading Ardova Plc with Integrity, Vision and Institutional Excellence

Notwithstanding the remarkable achievements recorded in her personal and professional journey, Dr. Abiola Babatunde-Ojo, remains an embodiment of humility and resourcefulness, distinguished by a leadership style that is proactive, inclusive, and firmly anchored on excellence, having consistently raised the standard of corporate performance and institutional delivery within Nigeria's downstream energy sector. She stands among Nigeria's notable corporate leaders whose professional journey reflects discipline, depth, and sustained impact across banking and the downstream energy sector. As the Managing Director of Ardova Plc, one of Nigeria's leading integrated energy companies, she occupies a strategic position in an industry that plays a central role in national development, economic stability, and industrial growth. Her leadership reflects years of structured growth, technical expertise, and a consistent commitment to institutional excellence.

With over two decades of professional experience spanning banking and oil and gas, Dr. Babatunde-Ojo has built a reputation grounded in financial discipline, governance strength, and operational transformation. Her career path reflects steady progression through roles that demanded analytical precision, commercial awareness, and strategic decision making. Over time, she developed a leadership identity anchored on accountability, long term value creation, and performance driven execution.

Her academic foundation reflects a strong blend of technical and governance training, anchored by a Bachelor of Science degree in Statistics from the University of Ibadan, where she developed a strong analytical mindset and numerical discipline that later supported her career in finance and energy. She further advanced her education with a Master's degree in Corporate Governance from Leeds Beckett University in the United Kingdom, strengthening her understanding of institutional oversight, board structures, and ethical leadership. She also earned a Doctorate in Business Administration from the University of Business and Innovation Studies in Washington DC, a qualification that deepened her strategic perspective on business transformation, leadership systems, and organizational growth.

Beyond academic achievements, Dr. Babatunde-Ojo is distinguished by her professional affiliations and certifications, which reflect both competence and peer recognition. She is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, a Fellow of the National Institute of Credit Administration, and a Member of the Chartered Institute of Directors. These affiliations position her within a network of professionals committed to governance excellence, financial integrity, and institutional accountability.

Her leadership philosophy is grounded in integrity, empathy, accountability, and service, with a strong belief that leadership is a responsibility centered on people, where the primary goal is to create environments that enable individuals and teams to perform at their best. In her approach, leadership is not defined by authority alone but by the ability to inspire trust, build confidence, and maintain stability even in difficult circumstances. She places strong emphasis on authenticity and calm decision making, especially in moments of uncertainty where clarity becomes essential.

Dr. Babatunde-Ojo's understanding of merit is deeply practical, defining it as the consistent demonstration of hard work, integrity, and preparedness. In her view, merit is not limited to recognition or titles but is reflected in the discipline of daily performance and the credibility that comes from sustained effort. This belief has shaped her professional journey and continues to influence how she builds teams and evaluates performance.

Her appointment as Managing Director of Ardova Plc reflects both trust and expectation in her capacity to lead at scale, within a highly competitive energy sector shaped by regulatory shifts, market volatility, and global energy transitions that continuously redefine industry dynamics. Under her leadership, the company continues to focus on operational efficiency, customer centric service delivery, and long term strategic positioning within Africa's energy value chain.

A defining feature of Ardova Plc under her leadership is its emphasis on transformation and adaptability, as the company continues to strengthen its internal systems, improve operational resilience, and deepen its focus on innovation. At the center of this approach is a strong commitment to people development. Dr. Babatunde-Ojo consistently highlights that organizational success is driven by the quality, commitment, and alignment of its workforce. This people centered approach has helped reinforce a culture of accountability and performance across the organization.

Integrity remains a central pillar in her leadership approach, particularly in highly competitive industries such as oil and gas where leaders often face pressure to prioritize short-term gains over long-term credibility. However, she maintains that sustainable success is built on trust and ethical consistency. Her leadership decisions reflect a commitment to transparency and due process, even when such choices require difficult outcomes or delayed benefits. Over time, this consistency has reinforced confidence among stakeholders and strengthened institutional trust.

Her career journey has also been shaped by challenges common to leadership in the energy sector, where economic fluctuations, policy changes, and operational uncertainties have demanded adaptability and resilience. In navigating these realities, she emphasizes clarity of communication, emotional balance, and solution oriented thinking. For her, challenges serve as development points that strengthen leadership capacity and deepen strategic judgment.

One of her key priorities at Ardova Plc is the development of a lasting institutional legacy, reflected in her deliberate commitment to building systems capable of sustaining performance over time. This focus on institutional strength reflects her belief that organizations must be structured to endure leadership transitions while maintaining continuity in values and operations. She also places strong emphasis on mentorship and talent development, viewing leadership succession as a critical responsibility.

The highly innovative and dynamic managing director is equally passionate about the broader role of Ardova Plc in national development, envisioning the company beyond commercial performance as a strong contributor to economic growth, job creation, and energy accessibility. She sees the organization as a platform for nurturing future leaders who will continue to strengthen Nigeria's industrial and corporate landscape.

Her journey into leadership was inspired by a long-standing commitment to impact, as she developed from the early stages of her career a strong interest in contributing to systems that create value beyond individual success. This motivation guided her progression through different sectors and roles, each providing exposure to new challenges and opportunities for growth. Along the way, mentorship and professional experiences played a significant role in shaping her leadership perspective.

As a woman in a senior executive position within a traditionally male dominated sector, Dr. Babatunde-Ojo also represents a growing shift in leadership representation within Nigeria's corporate space. Her presence reinforces the importance of competence, consistency, and resilience in breaking barriers. She acknowledges the responsibility that comes with visibility and uses her platform to encourage younger professionals, particularly women, to pursue excellence with confidence and discipline.

Described in many quarters as a visionary and thoroughbred leader with passion for excellence, Dr. Babatunde-Ojo recalls that there were moments in leadership when making the right decision was far from the easiest, particularly in situations where commercial pressure or urgency encouraged shortcuts, yet her commitment to transparency, due process, accountability, and unwavering principles ultimately strengthened trust, respect, and credibility with all concerned parties.

Her long-term vision for Ardova Plc aligns with the changing direction of the energy industry, as she aims to position the company as a forward-looking, competitive, and resilient institution amid global energy transition and innovation across supply chains. This includes strengthening operational capabilities, deepening market relevance, and embracing sustainable practices that align with global standards.

On a personal level, her legacy is closely tied to impact. She seeks to be remembered not only for corporate achievements but also for the people she has mentored, the systems she has helped build, and the values she has upheld throughout her career. Her leadership journey continues to reflect a balance between performance, principle, and purpose, shaping both the institution she leads and the individuals who work within it.

She encourages young Nigerians to embrace preparation, discipline, and integrity, emphasizing that while success may not come quickly, consistency, continuous learning, strong values, and good character remain essential for building lasting respect and sustainable success.


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OKEY UDEOGU: Building Indigenous Digital Infrastructure for Nigeria's Future

FOCUSED, innovative, resilient, and deeply committed to building indigenous technology systems capable of transforming institutions at scale, Mr. Okey Udeogu, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of **Pixels Solution Ltd**, has distinguished himself as one of Nigeria's leading technology entrepreneurs through **visionary leadership, technical excellence, and an unwavering commitment to digital innovation**. Over the years, he has successfully positioned Pixels as a trusted technology powerhouse delivering sovereign software infrastructure, mission critical digital platforms, and large scale enterprise solutions across governance, finance, education, agriculture, and national security.

For two decades, Udeogu has worked at the intersection of software engineering, institutional transformation, and national scale digital infrastructure. What distinguishes his journey is not merely the breadth of sectors his company now serves, but the firm belief that complex technology systems capable of handling mission critical operations can and should be designed, built, and maintained by Nigerian professionals.

Founded in **2006**, Pixels Solution Ltd began as a modest technology firm developing digital solutions for small organizations. Over time, however, the company evolved into one of the country's most ambitious indigenous software infrastructure providers, engineering platforms that now process multi billion naira transactions, secure sensitive public data, and drive large scale digitalisation across both public and private institutions.

At the centre of Udeogu's philosophy lies a deeply held belief in data sovereignty and indigenous technological capability. He maintains that nations unable to control and secure their own digital infrastructure remain perpetually vulnerable, economically, politically, and institutionally. This conviction has shaped the strategic direction of Pixels, pushing the company beyond routine software deployment into the creation of large scale ecosystems capable of supporting national priorities.

His understanding of merit is equally uncompromising, as for Udeogu, merit is not built on perception, influence, or access, but on **competence, consistency, and measurable results**. In the technology space, he believes merit becomes entirely objective because systems either work under pressure or they fail. Code either performs reliably or it collapses. Platforms either solve problems or they create new ones. Projects are either completed or abandoned. This philosophy has shaped a corporate culture built around execution, precision, and accountability rather than superficial optics.

The leadership principles that guide him are anchored primarily on **diligence and resilience**. In his experience, a company doesn't survive on bright ideas or ambition alone. Long-term success comes down to a disciplined team that has the stamina to push past setbacks. For him, great organizations are built by consistently navigating technical obstacles, institutional delays, and keep delivering under intense pressure.

Within Pixels, this philosophy translates into a work culture that encourages deep focus, long term thinking, and relentless problem solving. In an ecosystem where rapid shortcuts are common, Udeogu has instead focused on building lasting value proving that when **character meets competence, local tech firms can compete at the highest global standards.** That discipline has produced some of the country's most consequential indigenous technology solutions across fintech, education, governance, national security, and agriculture.

Among the company's most notable innovations is **PixPay**, a school fees payment ecosystem that has processed more than fifty billion naira across Nigerian schools. Beyond simplifying school payments, the platform has helped institutions block revenue leakages while improving transparency and operational efficiency. More recently, the integration of **seamless payment functionality directly into WhatsApp positioned the platform as one of the more innovative payment solutions within Nigeria's education technology ecosystem**.

Yet perhaps even more significant is the extent to which Udeogu's work has entered highly sensitive national infrastructure spaces traditionally reserved for foreign technology providers. Through **collaboration with the Nigerian Armed Forces**, Pixels developed **Bugle**, a secure communication platform designed for the reporting, escalation, and monitoring of critical national crises including insurgency, kidnapping, and armed robbery. The platform enables faster operational coordination and response management, contributing directly to security monitoring processes.

In the **social justice and civic space**, the company engineered the **Human Rights Abuse Tracking System (HRATS)** for the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC). The platform gives Nigerian citizens a direct, transparent tool to make their voices heard by safely reporting rights violations and tracking their resolutions in real time. By bringing digital transparency to civic advocacy and dispute resolution, this system represents another major milestone in Pixels' commitment to building technology that protects and empowers the public.

In the electoral space, the company engineered the **CT-DASS** platform for the Independent National Electoral Commission. The platform plays a critical role in election monitoring by tracking INEC's readiness before elections, monitoring polling unit openings nationwide in real time, identifying and escalating immediate threats during any election. In a country where electoral integrity is central to democratic stability, the **platform represents a major technological contribution to the nation's electoral process.**



His work in agriculture reflects another layer of strategic thinking. Through partnership with the Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria, Pixels launched the **National Agricultural Intelligence Platform (NAIP)**, a system designed to **leverage decades of local agricultural research data in training advanced AI models capable of supporting farmers, extension workers and policymakers**. At a time when conversations around artificial intelligence are increasingly dominated by global technology powers, Udeogu is positioning Nigeria not merely as a consumer of AI technologies but as a contributor grounded in local data and local realities.

In governance and revenue administration, the company developed **Adera**, a digital outdoor advertising and signage management platform operating on a revenue sharing model with state governments. The platform helps plug revenue leakages while improving transparency in public revenue collection systems.

Equally impactful is **VERIAN**, a large scale academic records repository developed in partnership with the Anambra State Government. The platform has digitised and preserved approximately three million examination records dating back to 1991, while **pioneering the introduction of verifiable QR code authentication for certificates**. Beyond improving efficiency, the system has strengthened document credibility and reduced opportunities for certificate fraud.

The significance of VERIAN extends beyond technical achievement alone. Udeogu recalls a defining integrity test that emerged during management of the platform. Because the system houses sensitive academic records and controls certificate verification processes, external actors once approached the company with offers of substantial financial inducement in exchange for the fraudulent creation of examination records for unqualified individuals.

Technically, the manipulation would have been possible. Ethically, however, it would have destroyed public trust. The company rejected the proposal entirely. For him, that decision reflected a principle he considers non-negotiable, once public trust in digital systems is compromised, recovery becomes almost impossible. Integrity, in his view, is not situational. It must remain constant even when compromise appears profitable and undetectable.

This emphasis on integrity and accountability defines much of the company's operational structure. Because many of the platforms developed by Pixels process billions of naira and manage highly sensitive information, cybersecurity, transparency, and architectural reliability remain central priorities. Every deployment, every upgrade, and every system design decision is evaluated through the lens of long term institutional trust rather than short term financial gain.

One of the greatest challenges Udeogu faced during the **company's early years was overcoming skepticism toward indigenous technology firms.** Many institutions doubted whether a Nigerian company possessed the technical capacity to handle mission critical infrastructure systems. Rather than giving up, Pixels adopted a high conviction strategy rooted in confidence and patience.

The company frequently offered to build and deploy complex systems entirely at zero cost, allowing institutions to use them without financial risk for extended periods. By assuming the risk themselves, they allowed **performance to become the strongest argument**. Once institutions experienced reliable operations firsthand, skepticism gradually gave way to trust and long term partnerships.

Beyond infrastructure and business growth, mentorship remains one of Udeogu's deepest priorities. He is intentional about cultivating a workplace environment where young Nigerian developers, engineers, and strategists can grow into globally competitive professionals. His long term ambition extends beyond building software alone. He wants to build people, institutions, and a culture of indigenous technological confidence.

His broader vision for Nigeria's technology future is equally ambitious. He believes the country possesses the intellectual capacity to emerge as a major global technology force, particularly within artificial intelligence, digital governance, and sovereign software infrastructure. However, achieving that future requires a sustained commitment to local talent development, merit based systems, and institutional integrity.

To young Nigerians seeking to build their careers in the tech world, his advice remains direct and deeply practical. Mastery matters. Reputation matters. Shortcuts may create temporary visibility, but sustainable success depends on reliability, discipline, and the ability to consistently deliver under pressure. He encourages **young professionals to fall in love with the process of mastery rather than the appearance of success.**

Ultimately, **he hopes his journey is a powerful reminder that true success in the digital age does not depend on cutting corners or merely relying on external connections. By anchoring his life and business on absolute diligence and resilience, he has not only built an enduring tech empire but has also laid down a blueprint for the next generation of African innovators.**

As Pixels steps into its next decade, Okey Udeogu's legacy is built around pushing the boundaries of what is possible proving that when unyielding competence is paired with absolute integrity, professionalism, and ethical standards, Nigeria can lead the future of global technology.

Policy & Partnerships: How EMVC Is Working with Government and Private Sector to Scale EV Adoption

Prince Mustapha Audu, CEO, Electric Motor Vehicle Company (EMVC)



Prince Mustapha Audu

The creation of EMVC followed a clear, pragmatic review of Nigeria's mobility sector. Despite abundant energy resources and a strong base of human capital, the industry remains marked by high operating costs, persistent inefficiencies, and dependence on imported fossil fuels. Each year, significant foreign exchange is spent on fuel and vehicle imports, even as public transport reliability declines and environmental concerns grow.

To address this imbalance, EMVC was established to localize electric mobility in Nigeria. The mandate spans the design, assembly, and eventual manufacturing of vehicles built for African road and energy conditions.

At its core, the company is tackling a systems-level challenge: lowering the total cost of mobility, improving energy efficiency, and laying the groundwork for a sustainable automotive industrial base in Nigeria.

How would you describe EMVC's mission and long-term vision for electric mobility in Nigeria and across West Africa?

OUR mission is to accelerate Africa's transition to sustainable, locally driven mobility solutions. Our vision, however, is unapologetically industrial, we see Nigeria emerging as a leading hub for electric vehicle manufacturing and innovation in West Africa.

Over the long term, EMVC is not simply building vehicles; we are cultivating an ecosystem, spanning assembly, charging infrastructure, technical training, battery development, and supply chain localisation. We envision a future where electric mobility is not imported into Africa, but engineered, built, and exported from Africa.

What sets EMVC apart from other players in the automotive and clean energy space?

EMVC is differentiated by an integrated, end-to-end approach. Where many players focus on vehicle importation or isolated technologies, we are building across the full value chain: vehicles, charging infrastructure, after-sales support, and human capital development.

Our local orientation is equally critical. Our products are engineered for Nigerian roads, power realities, and consumer expectations, with durability, cost-efficiency, and adaptability at the core of our engineering philosophy.

Finally, collaboration is fundamental. We work closely with government, institutions, and private sector partners to ensure this transition is coordinated and nationally transformative, not fragmented.

What have been the biggest technical and operational challenges in pioneering EV manufacturing locally, and how are you overcoming them?

The challenges are significant and multifaceted. Technically, there is a shortage of specialised skills and persistent infrastructure constraints, particularly in power reliability. Operationally, supply chain gaps and limited access to critical components remain pressing issues.

Our response has been deliberate and phased. In the near term, we assemble and integrate globally sourced components. Over time, we are investing in localization, through skills development, technical partnerships, and eventual component manufacturing.

We are also engineering resilience into our systems by integrating renewable energy solutions and advanced battery management systems designed to perform within Nigeria's unique energy environment.

How is EMVC working with government, regulators, and private sector partners to build the necessary ecosystem for EVs, charging infrastructure, policy, and consumer awareness?

Collaboration anchors our strategy. We work closely with government and regulators to shape forward-looking policies that accelerate EV adoption. Through initiatives like EVAMAN, we help define industry standards, drive advocacy, and align ecosystem development.

On infrastructure, we partner with private sector players to deploy charging networks in key locations, while exploring decentralized energy models including solar-powered solutions.

Equally important is public awareness. Through pilot programs, demonstrations, and training, we build trust and understanding, recognizing that adoption depends as much on confidence and education as on technology.

In your view, what role will electric mobility play in Nigeria's energy transition and climate commitments over the next decade?

Electric mobility will be central to Nigeria's energy transition. The transport sector remains a major driver of fuel consumption and emissions, and electrification presents a clear and scalable pathway to address both.

Over the next decade, widespread EV adoption has the potential to reduce urban pollution, lessen dependence on imported fuels, and align with the growth of renewable energy. Beyond environmental benefits, it offers compelling economic value, lower operating costs and the emergence of new industrial sectors.

Handled strategically, electric mobility can simultaneously advance Nigeria's environmental commitments and economic development.

You're known to have an active interest in politics. What motivated your involvement, and how do you see politics intersecting with your work in industry and innovation?

My involvement in politics stems from a commitment to nation-building at the structural level. Many constraints facing businesses, policy inconsistency, infrastructure gaps, and regulatory uncertainty, originate within the governance framework itself. Industry and politics are therefore inseparable. For innovation to thrive, the enabling environment must be intentionally shaped.

My engagement allows me to contribute to policies that support industrial growth, technological advancement, and long-term economic stability. At its core, it is about bridging private sector innovation with public sector decision-making.

I am also deeply inspired by the legacy of my father, Prince Abubakar Audu. His contributions to industry and education remain enduring, and his vision continues to shape my own pursuit of impactful leadership.

In a closing note, what legacy do you hope to leave behind?

I hope to be remembered as someone who contributed to building something enduring, an industry that creates jobs, drives innovation, and positions Nigeria at the forefront of a critical global transition.

Beyond EMVC, I would like my legacy to reflect impact: expanding possibilities, shifting mindsets, and demonstrating that world-class solutions can be conceived and built in Nigeria.

If we can inspire a generation to think boldly, build locally, and compete globally, then that is a legacy of lasting value.

TheGuardian SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

CHIKATARA CASMIR MBONU: Strengthening African Institutions Through KSBC Advisory Partners And Merit Driven Leadership

WHENEVER the conversation turns to financial services excellence, institutional transformation, and the urgent business of building capacity-driven organisations that can compete with distinction on the global stage, one name that features with compelling authority and well-earned recognition is that of Mr. Chikatara Casmir Mbonu, FCA, FICA, AMP, a consummate banker, financial services expert, celebrated economic analyst, and one of the most respected and influential voices in Nigeria's business and finance space today. Currently the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of KSBC Advisory Partners Limited, a first-class financial consulting firm based in Lagos and working with several financial institutions across Africa,

He brings to his role over thirty-six years of experience spanning accounting, consulting, banking, training, mentoring, and life coaching, having previously served as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of two Nigerian commercial banks, namely Citizens International Bank and Assurance Bank of Nigeria, a record that speaks eloquently and without ambiguity to the depth and breadth of a career lived entirely in purposeful service of institutional excellence and national economic development.

A very brilliant scholar and multiple academic prize winner, Mbonu is a First-Class Honours graduate of Civil Engineering from the prestigious Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, where he graduated as the overall best student of his entire set, and subsequently distinguished himself further as the national best overall candidate in the final qualifying professional examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, a feat that announced early the calibre of mind and depth of character that would go on to transform banks, shape national economic policy, and inspire a generation of finance and business professionals across the African continent.

He began his illustrious career at the renowned international firm of Arthur Andersen, now KPMG in Nigeria, where he qualified as a Chartered Accountant and gained formative exposure to audit, tax, and consulting services of the highest international standard, before joining Guaranty Trust Bank as a pioneer staff member and rising through a distinguished banking career to the very summit of executive leadership in the Nigerian financial services industry. He has since undergone advanced professional development at the Lagos Business School and the globally respected IESE Business School in Barcelona, Spain, reinforcing a commitment to continuous learning that has remained one of the most consistent and defining features of his extraordinary professional journey.



On the meaning of merit, which he regards as one of the most consequential and misunderstood concepts in professional life, the highly cerebral Mbonu is precise, defining it as the earning of trust, responsibility, and influence through competence, character, consistency, and contribution, accumulated deliberately and demonstrated reliably over time. Merit, he affirms, is not about titles, noise, or visibility, but about substance, about whether one can solve problems, build institutions, inspire confidence, and deliver results under pressure when it matters most. "Excellence eventually announces itself," he noted.

His leadership philosophy, anchored firmly on excellence, ownership mentality, integrity, strategic thinking, and deliberate people development, reflects the very standards he has consistently demanded of every institution he has led or advised across his distinguished career. He holds with particular and unwavering passion the conviction that great organisations are built by people who stop saying "they" and start saying "we," people who take responsibility beyond their formal roles, think and act like builders rather than spectators, and regard institutional success as a deeply personal obligation that cannot be deferred or outsourced to convenience. It is a philosophy he has translated into measurable and enduring impact at every level of his career, from redesigning banking credit processes and conducting enterprise risk audits to training relationship managers across twenty-one African countries and advising central banks in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Gambia, Ghana, and Liberia on the fundamental transformation of their banking institutions into stronger, more resilient, and more development-oriented engines of national economic growth.

A man widely celebrated in professional circles for his unbending integrity and exceptional standards, Mbonu was equally forthcoming on what sets KSBC Advisory Partners Limited apart within a competitive consulting industry, pointing to the firm's depth, practical relevance, transformational mindset, and uncompromising pursuit of excellence as its defining hallmarks, noting that every client engagement is approached with the ownership mentality of an institution insider and the intellectual rigour of a world-class professional body, combining competence, professionalism, integrity, and excellence into a value proposition of enduring and continent-wide significance.

On major challenges he has confronted in the course of his career, he recounted his experience of leading technically distressed banking institutions through urgent and complex processes of repositioning, rebuilding confidence, restoring profitability, and creating entirely new organisational mindsets in environments that offered little comfort and demanded everything of his leadership capacity. It is a challenge, he notes with measured pride that has come to define one of the most enduring descriptions associated with his name over the years: that he performs best in turnaround situations, thriving precisely where others find it most difficult to begin.

He therefore, advises young Nigerians to pursue excellence, take ownership of their work, uphold integrity, and balance ambition with humility, competence, and a strong sense of responsibility to society and future generations.

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DR. ADEBOLA OLUKOYA OLUBANJO: Faith-Driven Accountant, Consummate Business Recovery Specialist, And Beacon Of Integrity Building A Legacy Through Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited

WHENEVER professional excellence, ethical leadership, and the rare combination of faith-driven values and rigorous financial expertise that has the power to transform distressed businesses and inspire entire generations of professionals are discussed, one name that features with enduring prominence and unmistakable authority is that of Dr. Adebola Olukoya Olubanjo, a distinguished chartered accountant. A Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, Fellow of the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants in the United Kingdom, Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Taxation, and Fellow of the Business Recovery and Insolvency Practitioners Association of Nigeria, the visionary personality is the Executive Chairman of Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited, a firm whose remarkable journey of over forty-six years of uninterrupted growth, corporate integrity, and professional distinction stands as one of the most compelling testaments to what faith, character, and disciplined excellence can build in Nigeria's challenging but opportunity-rich professional environment.



A man whose professional formation began in the rigorous discipline of auditing and accounting, Dr. Olubanjo trained as an auditor and became a Partner in the firm of Obiora Mono and Co. in Benin City before taking the bold and consequential decision to return to Lagos and establish his own accounting practice in 1980, a decision driven not by inherited advantage or external support but by a clear-eyed recognition of his own competence, a courageous willingness to begin, and an unshakeable conviction that his skills, his faith, and his values were sufficient foundation upon which to build an institution of lasting significance. From that foundational accounting practice grew Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited, a sister consultancy firm that would go on to distinguish itself across Nigeria's professional services sector as a trusted partner to businesses in financial distress, a champion of corporate governance and financial discipline, and a symbol of what principled, client-centered, and values-anchored professional practice looks like when it is sustained across nearly half a century of committed service.

On the meaning of integrity, which he regards not merely as a professional standard but as the most fundamental expression of personal character, the venerable Dr. Olubanjo is refreshingly direct and disarmingly simple in his definition, describing it as what one will do whether people are watching or not, the unwavering consistency between one's public conduct and one's private behaviour, the reliability of a yes that means yes and a no that means no, and the quality of being known, trusted, and depended upon without reservation or qualification. It is a definition, he is emphatic, that is not theoretical but lived, practiced daily across every client engagement, every professional decision, and every human interaction that has characterised his distinguished career. "It is a core value in my life," he affirmed.

The guiding principles that have shaped Dr. Olubanjo's remarkable leadership style are rooted in a faith transformation that he describes as the most significant turning point of his life, the moment he gave his life to Christ and adopted the values of Christian service, love, humility, and people-centered leadership as the governing framework of everything he does professionally and personally. He leads, he explains, as Christ leads, with simplicity, with genuine love for people, with a deep desire to see others succeed, and with a commitment to building up the lives of those around him, particularly young men who stand at the crossroads of decision and need not a lecturer but a guide, not a critic but a companion, not a distant example but a living demonstration that the limitations of the present moment are temporary and that any level of achievement is attainable to those who believe, commit, and persevere. "The circumstances of now, it will go," he says with the quiet certainty of a man who has personally outlasted several seasons of national difficulty and institutional turbulence. "It is just a temporary thing."

What distinguishes Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited from other firms operating within the same professional space is a differentiator that goes far beyond the standard menu of consultancy, taxation, and auditing services that the firm competently delivers. Dr. Olubanjo has deliberately positioned himself and his firm as specialists in business rescue and financial recovery, choosing to walk toward distressed businesses rather than away from them, bringing to bear his licensed expertise as a qualified liquidator not in the service of dissolution but in the far more demanding and far more rewarding service of restoration, restructuring, and renewal. Rather than encourage clients to liquidate or to borrow beyond their capacity to repay, he places himself in their position with genuine empathy, asks himself what he would want in their circumstances, and then works alongside them as a partner rather than a consultant, teaching them the principles of financial control, frugality, debt freedom, and disciplined saving that form the bedrock of sustainable enterprise. "I am not just a consultant," he has said with characteristic warmth and conviction, "but a partner to see them succeed."

It is equally important to note that the corporate values underpinning Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited's forty-six years of institutional growth and integrity are not accidental but are the product of a deliberate and sustained commitment to the code of ethics instilled by the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, reinforced and deepened by the biblical principles of honesty, fairness, and love for neighbour that Dr. Olubanjo adopted at the point of his faith conversion and has carried without compromise into every dimension of his professional life ever since. Ethics, he affirms, is not a subject studied and filed away but a living standard taught to partners, demonstrated to clients, and embedded in the culture of every team that has passed through the firm's formative influence across four and a half decades of professional practice.

Perhaps the most instructive and humanising chapter of Dr. Olubanjo's remarkable story is the period of severest professional and financial trial that he navigated with courage, creativity, and an integrity that refused to bend even at its most costly. Having borrowed from the bank to execute a government contract, he found himself in the devastating position of a client who did not pay as promised, a government that introduced policies working against his interests, and a bank poised to seize his mortgaged house and every asset he had pledged as collateral. With nothing left to pledge, his reputation at stake, his workforce facing unemployment, and creditors calling before dawn and addressing him without the respect his years of honest service deserved, Dr. Olubanjo chose not despair but action, going personally to trusted clients, appealing to the relationships he had carefully cultivated over years of reliable service, and introducing a bold new policy of seventy percent advance payment before any engagement commenced. The clients, he notes with deep gratitude, listened, because trust built over years does not evaporate in moments of difficulty. He paid every debt, restored every relationship, and emerged from that crucible not diminished but deepened, carrying forward a sympathy for financially distressed businesses that now defines the most distinctive and most valuable dimension of his professional offering.

Looking ahead, Dr. Olubanjo envisions a succession-driven future for Adebola Sobanjo Company Limited, one in which equity partners, directors, and carefully trained younger professionals gradually and fully assume the operational responsibilities he has carried with such distinction, growing the firm across the next forty-five years through mergers, acquisitions, and expanded partnerships that may eventually change the name on the door while perpetuating without alteration the values, the standards, and the culture of excellence and integrity that have made the name worth inheriting in the first place.

To those who would seek his wisdom, whether through the pages of his books, among them the widely regarded titles How to Create Wealth and Avoid Poverty and Vision, Your Bridge to a Brighter Future Life, or through the personal engagements he offers freely and without charge to any who approach him with sincerity and proper advance arrangement, Dr. Olubanjo's counseled that young Nigerians should have faith in God and let faith be the foundation of every of their decisions. In his words, "Love your neighbour as yourself and let that love find expression through practical acts of help, support, and generosity. Guard your health with the same discipline you apply to your business. Develop financial literacy as a lifelong habit. Own property, no matter how modest the beginning. Invest in your marriage with the same seriousness you devote to your career. Educate your children because it remains the finest insurance any parent can provide. Above all, build relationships with the same care and consistency you apply to your professional reputation, because no one succeeds alone, and the laughter shared between people who genuinely care for one another is deeply and wonderfully medicinal."

TheGuardian
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth
SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

Olabode Makanjuola: Building Indigenous Capacity, Sustainable Mobility, and the Future of Integrated Logistics in Africa

WITHIN the complex world of aviation, marine logistics, and offshore operations, where precision, technical competence, and sustained capital investment are critical to success, few business leaders have demonstrated the resilience, foresight, and execution that define the career of Mr. Olabode Makanjuola. As Chief Executive Officer of Caverton Offshore Support Group Plc, he oversees one of Africa's leading integrated offshore support companies, with operations spanning aviation logistics, marine transport, maintenance services, training, vessel construction, and sustainable mobility infrastructure.

Under his leadership, Caverton has grown far beyond its original offshore support focus into a diversified enterprise recognised for indigenous technical capacity, operational discipline, and innovation across sectors traditionally dominated by foreign operators. Through sustained investment in local expertise, infrastructure, and technology driven solutions, Makanjuola has continued to position the company as a major force in shaping the future of transportation and logistics in Africa.

Armed with a degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Leicester and a Master's degree in Shipping, Trade and Finance from City University Business School in London, Makanjuola has spent more than two decades operating at the intersection of infrastructure, logistics, finance, and transport systems. His professional journey reflects a sustained commitment to building institutions capable of competing at international standards while remaining deeply rooted in local capacity development.

At the heart of his leadership philosophy lies a simple but demanding principle, leadership requires presence. He believes leaders must lead from the front, not from a distance. Within Caverton, this philosophy translates into visible commitment, operational involvement, and personal accountability. He is known for being among the first to arrive at work and among the last to leave, a reflection of the work ethic he expects throughout the organisation.

For Makanjuola, leadership is not defined by rhetoric or title, but by execution. "More action, less talk," is a principle that has guided many of Caverton's most ambitious decisions. Whether entering the helicopter business at a time when many doubted indigenous firms could survive in such a highly specialised sector, or pioneering electric ferry technology in Africa, his leadership style has consistently favoured bold implementation over endless deliberation.

One of the defining chapters of his career has been Caverton's entry into urban water transportation. Long before water transport became part of mainstream infrastructure conversations in Lagos, Makanjuola saw its potential as a practical response to urban congestion and mobility inefficiency. At the time, however, public confidence in water transportation was low. Safety concerns, weak infrastructure, and limited government commitment had made the sector commercially unattractive.

Even within business circles, many questioned the rationale behind investing in ferries. Yet Makanjuola remained convinced that the sector could only improve if credible operators were willing to build solutions themselves rather than wait endlessly for external intervention. That conviction led Caverton into indigenous ferry construction, beginning with the establishment of a boatyard in Badore, Lagos.



The process was anything but straightforward. From assembling naval architects and engineers to navigating bureaucratic hurdles and financing uncertainties, every stage involved substantial risk. Yet the company pressed forward without the backing of guaranteed government contracts or external assurances. The objective was clear, prove that Nigerian engineers and technicians could build safe, internationally compliant ferries locally.

The result was the successful construction of Caverton's first 40 passenger ferry. That achievement changed perceptions. Government attention followed, leading to additional orders and the expansion of the company's boatyard operations. More workers were employed, new technical standards were introduced, and indigenous marine manufacturing capacity began to deepen.

Then came another defining moment. Following the removal of fuel subsidy in Nigeria, transportation economics shifted dramatically. Rather than retreat, Caverton moved further ahead. Makanjuola and his team decided to pursue a more ambitious path, the construction of Africa's first electric ferry designed specifically for African waterways.

Working with engineering partners and internal naval architects, Caverton successfully integrated electric propulsion systems into locally built ferries, creating a groundbreaking proof of concept for sustainable urban mobility on the continent. What emerged was not merely a transportation product, but a broader statement about African innovation, industrial confidence, and the future of energy efficient mobility systems.

This work reflects Makanjuola's broader vision for transport infrastructure across Africa. Increasingly, his focus has shifted toward the convergence of infrastructure, energy, and mobility, particularly within the framework of electrified transportation, asset backed financing, and public private collaboration. He believes future transport systems must be financially sustainable, technologically adaptable, and locally maintainable if they are to deliver lasting impact.

Under his leadership, Caverton Offshore Support Group Plc has also invested heavily in aviation and marine training. Recognising early challenges around skilled labour shortages, particularly in helicopter operations and engineering support, the company established extensive training programmes that have produced hundreds of Nigerian engineers and technical personnel. Many now work internationally, including in the Middle East and other global energy hubs.

This commitment to local capacity development aligns with Caverton's wider corporate philosophy built around safety, indigenous expertise, and long term strategic partnerships. The Group, through subsidiaries including Caverton Helicopters and Caverton Marine, has become recognised as one of the leading indigenous service providers operating across Nigeria and Sub Saharan Africa.

Safety, according to Makanjuola, remains non-negotiable. In sectors such as offshore aviation and marine logistics, where operational failure can have catastrophic consequences, cutting corners is simply unacceptable. Caverton's operational systems are subjected not only to Nigerian regulatory oversight but also to rigorous audits by international oil companies. Failures carry serious commercial consequences, making discipline and compliance essential components of survival.

Yet beyond operations and infrastructure, Makanjuola speaks frequently about systems, culture, and national mindset. He often points to the remarkable adaptability of Nigerians abroad, noting that Nigerians consistently excel within well-structured systems globally. In his view, the challenge is not capability but environment. The critical task for national development, he believes, lies in creating systems that reward discipline, innovation, and accountability at home.

His approach to management also reflects intellectual humility. Despite leading a highly capital intensive organisation, he insists leaders must remain open to diverse perspectives. He encourages team participation, values collaborative problem solving, and believes organisations perform best when employees feel genuine ownership over outcomes. For him, success is most meaningful when people can proudly point to projects and say, "I helped build that."

Beyond business, the caverton boss, Makanjuola remains active in several civic and professional organisations. He serves as Vice President of the Nigerian Belgian Chamber of Commerce and sits on the board of the Sickle Cell Foundation Nigeria. He also recently completed a three year tenure as President of the Lagos Polo Club, reflecting his longstanding engagement within Nigeria's business and social communities.

What continues to drive him, however, extends beyond corporate growth or financial success alone. Family, impact, and national relevance remain central motivations. He believes meaningful enterprise should improve lives, create opportunities, and contribute positively to society. This belief shapes his emphasis on long term value creation over short term gain.

To young Nigerians seeking careers in aviation, logistics, engineering, or infrastructure, he counseled that hard work, perseverance, and complete dedication to one's craft remain essential. According to him, challenges will come, distractions will exist, and circumstances may often appear discouraging, but sustained commitment to excellence remains indispensable.

Looking ahead, his ambition is to make Caverton not merely a successful company but a household name synonymous with performance, reliability, innovation, and indigenous excellence across Africa's transportation, marine, and aviation logistics sectors, an ambition that already appears increasingly attainable judging by the trajectory established under his leadership.

TheGuardian
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SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

The Rare Brilliance of Black Diamond Engineering: A Philosophy of Integrity and Excellence:

Engr. Adedo Olalekan Adegoke, MD/CEO Black Diamond Engineering,

IN an industry often characterized by aggressive competition and profit at all-costs mentalities, Black Diamond Engineering Limited stands as a testament to a different way of doing business. Named after the rarest and most precious of stones, the company embodies a philosophy where merit, integrity, and intellectual fulfillment take precedence over the bottom line

For this firm, engineering is not just about the technical application of physics and mathematics; it is a service to humanity rooted in character. The Genesis of a Visionary: From Creativity to Civil Engineering. The foundation of Black Diamond Engineering was laid long before the company was formally incorporated. It began with the innate curiosity of a young boy between the ages of 12 and 16, who found joy in innovation and the translation of ideas into reality. This creative spark was nurtured by an uncle, an electrical engineer, who provided the technical guidance necessary to turn talent into skill

A defining moment in this journey occurred during a secondary school "Introductory Technology" assignment. While the rest of the class struggled to manipulate a simple milk tin, the future founder—guided by his uncle and domestic tools—successfully crafted a metal cone and frustum.The teacher, Mr. Artusa, was deeply impressed, but the true impact was on the student himself. He realized that engineering was the art of taking what nature and the environment provide and translating it into something that serves humanity, whether through roads, bridges, or buildings

This early success solidified a path toward civil engineering, a field chosen for its practicality and lack of abstraction. Driven by a love for mathematics and the rigorous calculations required to interpret design loads, the founder pursued his education with a focus on science, eventually finding his niche in civil engineering after an initial interest in the oil and gas potential of chemical engineering

The Philosophy of the "Black Diamond"

The choice of the name **"Black Diamond"** was deliberate and deeply symbolic. In a world where white and blue diamonds are better known, the black diamond remains the most precious and rare much like an individual or a company that maintains unwavering integrity. The name serves as a constant trigger and inspiration to do good, reflecting the Yoruba belief that a name influences one's actions and destiny.Unlike many contemporary firms, Black Diamond Engineering was not born out of a desperate need to establish a business, but rather through a natural, organic progression.After seven years of adding significant value to another firm, growing it from a living room setup to a robust office with a full staff. The founder's transition to his own company was a response to people seeking his expertise. This lack of desperation is what allows the firm to remain value-driven rather than profit-driven

At the heart of Black Diamond is a commitment to intellectual fulfillment. The firm prioritizes the value added to a structure, the quality of relationships with clients, and the opportunities provided to vendors and staff. This philosophy posits that by focusing on adding value and intellectual excellence, commercial success naturally follows, whereas a singular focus on profit can actually drive opportunities away.

Integrity: The Non-Negotiable Core

For Black Diamond Engineering, integrity is the ultimate leadership principle. While education and exposure are vital, they are nullified if integrity is lost. It is this "integrity spirit" that builds the confidence and trust necessary for clients to offer new opportunities.Maintaining this level of excellence in a competitive environment requires what the founder calls the "tripod" of success: contentment, patience, and commitment. Contentment is particularly emphasized as the antidote to greed, which is the primary trigger for compromised integrity. By remaining contented with available resources and refusing to be driven by greed, the firm ensures it never compromises on the quality of its work.

A Case Study in Resilience: Overcoming the 300% Inflation Crisis

The true test of a company's philosophy occurs during times of crisis. For Black Diamond, this test came recently in the form of extreme economic volatility. After a decade of commercial stability, the firm faced a period where the price of materials skyrocketed by 300% within two years. Contracts signed a year prior were suddenly exposed to massive financial instability, and many clients were unwilling to review contract values.

In this high pressure environment, many firms would have compromised the integrity of their structures to save costs. Black Diamond took a different path. The founder stepped in directly, assuming the roles of accountant and lead commercial officer when key staff moved on to other opportunities.

To overcome the crisis without sacrificing quality, the firm employed "value engineering", This involved:

Redesigning and Tweakng: Using solid technical knowledge to refine designs to be more cost-effective while achieving the same structural goals.

Resource Optimization: Sharing domesticated resources across different project sites to maximize efficiency.

Collaborative Supervision: Working closely with clients' technical and supervisory teams to ensure transparency during the redesign process.

By choosing to absorb higher costs rather than compromise the structure's integrity, the firm demonstrated its commitment to the long-term safety and value of its projects

The Merit-Based Culture and Staffing Challenges

Operating on a unique philosophy presents its own set of technical challenges, particularly regarding staffing. Finding "like-minded" individuals who can translate the company's vision is a constant battle. Merit, in the context of Black Diamond, is defined by hard work, commitment, and a tenacious spirit, it is not a reward easily earned but something that must be achieved through hands-on dedication.

To mitigate staffing turnover, the founder focuses on "indoctrinating" a core lead team that relates with him directly. By ensuring these key leaders are firmly rooted in the organization's model, the vision is effectively translated down to the junior staff, ensuring that as the company's "circumference" grows, its central core remains stable.

A Generational Legacy

Looking toward the future, Black Diamond Engineering is focused on creating standout projects that serve as a lasting legacy. The goal is not merely to build skyscrapers, but to create structures that serve as a reference point for generations to come.

The founder's advice to the next generation of Nigerian engineers is simple yet profound: operate on the tripod of contentment, patience, and commitment. By being patient through the "tunnel" of challenges and remaining committed to one's craft, young professionals can build careers anchored in the same merit and character that define Black Diamond Engineering.



Black Diamond Engineering Limited remains active and resilient in the industry, a "precious stone" that continues to shine through its refusal to compromise on the principles of integrity and excellence







The Guardian
SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

Biodun Dabiri and the Discipline of Governance Built on Clarity, Accountability and Principle

MEETING him for the first time, one is struck not only by his calm and composed presence but also by the steady assurance of experience he brings, marked by discipline, clarity of thought, and an unshakable sense of responsibility in complex governance spaces. This combination gives Mr. Biodun Dabiri a strong and respected presence in Nigeria's infrastructure and investment landscape.

As Chairman of Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited, he represents a class of leadership rooted in investment banking expertise, boardroom governance, and institutional development, bringing structure and direction to large scale economic infrastructure initiatives that continue to shape Nigeria's long term development trajectory. A career spanning investment banking, corporate leadership, and national infrastructure development reflects a consistent adherence to firm principles, where decisions are guided by discipline, accountability, and a clear sense of national purpose. Mr. Dabiri has distinguished himself beyond formal titles, emerging as a shaping force whose standards and commitment to integrity have influenced institutions, strengthened professionals, and supported projects with lasting national impact.

On the meaning of merit, which he regards as one of the most foundational and most frequently misapplied concepts in institutional life, the erudite professional, Dabiri is characteristically precise and unsparing, insisting that merit cannot be credibly determined in the absence of objectively defined standards and that before appointments, promotions, or rewards are considered, any institution serious about excellence must first establish with clarity and discipline what success in a given role actually requires. Merit, he affirms with the conviction of a man who has spent decades watching institutions rise and fall on this very question, demands the moral courage to measure individuals against evidence-based benchmarks rather than subjective preference, familiarity, or personal loyalty, because few forces weaken institutions as surely and as silently as the gradual normalisation of comfort over competence. "A genuine culture of merit ultimately cultivates a culture of trust, which remains one of the most enduring competitive advantages any institution can possess." He noted.

His leadership philosophy, built on four non-negotiable pillars of clarity of mandate, identification and recognition of key performers, fairness as strategy rather than sentiment, and astute stakeholder engagement conducted with patience and cultural intelligence, reflects the seasoned thinking of a leader who has led across the board of investment banks and the chairmanship of national infrastructure projects with equal distinction and equal adherence to the same foundational standards. He is emphatic that every engagement begins with an unambiguous statement of purpose and measurable outcomes, because without that precision, accountability becomes impossible and performance management degrades into an exercise in subjectivity. He is equally emphatic that institutions rise and fall on the energy and commitment of a relatively small number of exceptional people, and that leaders who fail to identify, nurture, and appropriately reward those individuals do so at their institution's peril, a lesson he has applied with discipline and with demonstrable results across every leadership role he has occupied.

As Chairman of Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited, Dabiri has pursued a vision that extends far beyond the management of a logistics asset and encompasses the entire port and marine economy ecosystem, including ship repair facilities, cold chain logistics, bunkering services, light manufacturing, marine insurance, freight forwarding, and the full range of professional services that cluster naturally around a functioning deep-sea port of international standard. His appointment as Chairman of Lekki Port was preceded by his appointment as Chairman of the Lekki Free Zone by Governor Ambode, a role through which he quickly recognised that positioning the Free Zone as a credible vehicle for boosting Nigeria's industrial growth would require the urgent development of a deep-sea port capable of signalling to the global investment community that Nigeria could honour complex, multi-party commitments and deliver infrastructure that meets the most demanding international standards. "I want Lekki Port to be remembered not merely as a gateway for cargo, but as the anchor point for a new generation of Nigerian industrial and commercial enterprise." he stated.

What followed was no less demanding. Flying eighty engineers and technicians from China to the construction site at a time when most of the world's airspace was closed required round-the-clock coordination between the project implementation team and the Nigerian Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Aviation, and Health, the Presidency, the Governor of Lagos State, and their counterparts across every jurisdiction along the only viable flight path, with the team at one point marooned in Kenya while a special charter flight was arranged and authorised. Once on site, the engineers were quarantined, accommodated, and medically monitored within the project perimeter and set immediately to work, a discipline that, as Dabiri notes may well have contributed positively to the project's remarkable cost and schedule performance. The port was delivered within three years and through a global pandemic, a testament, he affirms, to the power of principled, patient, and rigorous stakeholder engagement conducted with determination and unfailing consistency. He also acknowledges with genuine gratitude the immense contributions of now President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who though not in office at the time threw his weight and unrelenting effort behind untying every obstacle in the project's path, and the Oba of Lagos, Oba Rilwan Akiolu, whose force and influence proved equally significant in making the project a reality.

On the subject of integrity and accountability, which he regards as the invisible architecture of every consequential decision he has made across a career spent in close proximity to transactions that at today's valuations would be measured in trillions, Dabiri is both deeply serious and deliberately circumspect, speaking not with the ease of a man who has never been tested but with the quiet confidence of one who has been tested repeatedly and has emerged each time with conscience intact and reputation uncompromised. He draws a distinction, sharp and important, between the dramatic moral confrontations that announce themselves as integrity tests and the far more dangerous sequence of small accommodations, each of which seems reasonable in isolation and each of which nudges one incrementally further from one's standards, noting with the authority of long experience that the discipline of integrity lies precisely in recognising that first small step for what it is and declining to take it. "Integrity maintained selectively," he affirms without equivocation, "is not integrity at all, but tactical manipulation."

The legacy Dabiri is most deliberately building at Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited is captured in three words he regards as indivisible and equally essential: professionalism, openness, and collaborative spirit. Professionalism means that every process and every decision conducted under the organisation's name must be of a calibre that would withstand the scrutiny of the most demanding international investor, regulator, or auditor, because in a competitive global environment for infrastructure investment, institutional quality is not a soft asset but a hard one, and he harbours the deeply held aspiration of witnessing Lekki Port listed on international exchanges as the biggest port in Africa within the next decade. Openness means a commitment to transparency with all stakeholders that goes well beyond the minimum required by law or contract. And collaborative spirit reflects the reality that a project of this complexity and national significance cannot succeed through unilateral will alone but requires the genuine alignment of a remarkably diverse coalition of interests sustained through mutual respect, honest communication, and shared ownership of outcomes.

Among the achievements he holds in equal regard to any transaction or infrastructure project is the legacy of professionals he has mentored across decades of investment banking leadership, men and women who today lead banks, shape financial policy at the highest national and international levels, and serve on significant boards, carrying with them the values, the standards, and the character that were formed in part through his guidance and example. It is a legacy that speaks directly to his conviction that true leadership is ultimately measured not by the monuments one builds but by the people one shapes and the values one leaves embedded in institutions long after one's active involvement has concluded.

To young Nigerians aspiring to build careers anchored on merit and character, the distinguished Biodun Dabiri counseled that learning and toiling must precede earning, and that sequence must be protected with real determination against the enormous social pressure to reverse it. Commit first to acquiring genuine competence, to earning a reputation for integrity in every small assignment as much as in the large ones, and to embracing the discipline of lifelong learning with the full understanding that fortune, in the long run, favours not merely the brave but the hardworking, the patient, and the principled. At the same time, guard your character with even greater rigour than you would guard your most valuable financial asset, because financial capital can be rebuilt after a loss, but a reputation for integrity, once genuinely forfeited, is among the hardest of all things to recover.

Lekki Port



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Micheal Shobukola: Steering Strongmas Group Toward Modern Real Estate Excellence

MICHEAL Shobukola, the Founder and Managing Director of Strongmas Group, is a visionary entrepreneur whose work is centered on redefining modern living experiences across Nigeria's evolving real estate landscape. His entrepreneurial journey began with the launch of Strongmas Automobile in 2019, but he soon recognised a profound opportunity to impact how people live within their own four walls. By strategically expanding into real estate through Strongmas Residence in 2020 and later broadening the Group's footprint with Strongmas Maison, Shobukola has positioned himself as a leader in premium residential and lifestyle solutions. His work is driven by a passion for innovation and a belief that the future of real estate lies in creating intelligent environments where comfort, convenience, wellness, and technology seamlessly coexist.

Closing the Gap Between Structure and Experience

Strongmas was born from a simple but powerful belief: a home should be more than just a structure; it should be an experience. Shobukola noticed a significant gap between the high aspirations of homeowners and the reality of what the market was delivering. While many developments focused solely on providing basic housing, they lacked thoughtful design, smart technology integration, and true lifestyle functionality. This realisation became the foundation for Strongmas Residences. Shobukola's mission is to create homes designed around how people truly live today—smart, connected, secure, efficient, and comfortable. He believes a home should simplify life and provide lasting value, rather than just serving as a physical asset.

Leadership Built on Intentional Excellence

At the center of Shobukola's success are the guiding principles of innovation, accountability, discipline, and people empowerment. He maintains that sustainable growth occurs when a clear vision is supported by efficient systems and empowered team members. For Shobukola, leadership is about creating environments where individuals can perform at their highest potential. His personal factor for real estate success rests on three pillars: location, design, and configuration. He famously asserts that "your home should be a joy to live in and a pleasure to own," a philosophy that permeates every level of the Strongmas organisation. By building a culture of operational excellence, transparency, and speed of execution, he has ensured that the company can scale while maintaining consistent quality.

Redefining Modern Luxury Through Intelligence

In Shobukola's view, luxury in the modern age is no longer defined solely by aesthetics or premium finishes. Instead, it is defined by how intelligently a space functions and how effectively it enhances everyday life. To meet the evolving expectations of today's homeowners, Strongmas prioritizes smart experiences, convenience, and AI infusion. This lifestyle-first, experience-driven approach differentiates Strongmas within Nigeria's luxury market. By integrating automation, advanced security systems, and privacy into their developments, they create environments where residents can live smarter and with greater convenience. This commitment to quality control and contemporary architecture ensures that projects do not simply meet expectations but consistently exceed them.

AURUM and Elysian Rise: Flagships of the Future

The current vision of the Strongmas Group is most vividly embodied in its flagship developments: AURUM and Elysian Rise. These projects represent a shift toward future-ready residential living. AURUM is designed to reflect refined urban living through exclusivity and tailored smart home experiences. Meanwhile, Elysian Rise introduces a broader lifestyle ecosystem designed around wellness and modern city living. Elysian Rise is particularly unique due to its detailed features, which include electric car stations, smart access control systems, integrated sound systems, and spa facilities. With clubhouse lounges, fully serviced apartments, and advanced safety systems, it is designed as a complete ecosystem rather than just another residential building.

A Strategic Opportunity for Forward-Thinking Investors

For investors, the luxury property market in Nigeria—specifically within strategic urban locations—presents significant opportunities for capital appreciation and recurring income. Shobukola highlights that today's investors are increasingly prioritising assets that combine smart technology with strong investment fundamentals. Developments like Elysian Rise and Aurum are designed to anticipate future living trends and evolving consumer behavior, which is key to creating long-term value. By focusing on infrastructure development and population growth areas, Strongmas provides investors with high-value locations that are built to withstand the tests of time and shifting market demands.



A Pan-African Vision for Global Transformation

As a Pan-African entrepreneur, Shobukola sees Africa's cities entering a transformative period where they will become global centers of innovation, commerce, and technology. He envisions future African cities as being more connected, AI-enabled, and sustainable. Strongmas Residences aims to lead this transformation by developing communities that reflect global standards while remaining adaptable to diverse cultures and lifestyles. Shobukola's goal is to play a role in shaping cities around the world where technology and human experience work together to elevate how people live and connect. This global perspective ensures that Strongmas is not just a local player but a contributor to a worldwide shift in urban development.

The Legacy of Intentional Impact

Looking toward the next five to ten years, Shobukola aims to position Strongmas as a globally recognised lifestyle and real estate brand. His vision includes expanding across international markets and creating smart communities that integrate sustainability and mobility solutions. His personal philosophy remains rooted in the idea that excellence must be intentional; success is the result of discipline, consistency, and a willingness to evolve. Ultimately, Shobukola wants Strongmas to be remembered for redefining the home experience and setting new global standards for how human-centered design and technology come together to shape the future of living. His legacy will be one of meaningful solutions and lasting value that positively influence lives and communities across the globe.

STRONGMAS
RESIDENCE





AVAILABLE UNITS
2 - Bedroom Apartment
3 - Bedroom Apartment

PAYMENT PLAN
40% Initial Deposit
12 / 18 Months

HOUSE TYPOLOGIES
2 - Bedroom Apartment
3 - Bedroom Apartment

CURATED EXPERIENCES

CCTV SECURE
ELEVATOR
24-HOURS SECURITY
SMART AUTOMATION
DEDICATED CONCIERGE
FULLY EQUIPPED GYM

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ABAMA JUDY JOY: BUILDING TRUSTED TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS FOR NIGERIA'S FUTURE THROUGH I4CUS NIGERIA LIMITED

Across Nigeria's technology and innovation sector, few professionals have distinguished themselves in the fields of digital transformation, institutional automation, and technology-driven governance solutions as remarkably as Ms. Abama Judy Joy, a respected business executive, ICT strategist, entrepreneur, and technology innovator whose nearly two decades of extensive and battle-tested expertise across software engineering, digital transformation, enterprise administration, biometrics solutions, automated revenue systems, and institutional technology deployment have positioned her as one of the most impactful and forward-looking technology leaders shaping innovation across Nigeria's public and private sectors today.

As the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of I4cus Nigeria Limited, a leading indigenous ICT solutions company headquartered in Abuja with a steadily expanding footprint in educational technology, enterprise software development, government digitalisation, and automated revenue management systems, she has translated her enduring passion for innovation into practical, measurable, and community-transforming solutions that are modernising institutions, empowering communities, and contributing significantly to the growth and deepening of Nigeria's digital economy, building in the process a body of work and an institutional legacy that stand as one of the most compelling expressions of what visionary, values-anchored, and technically excellent indigenous technology leadership can achieve in Nigeria's demanding but opportunity-rich business environment.

Her journey into the world of technology is as instructive as it is inspiring, rooted in a curiosity that took shape in her earliest years and was given its first formal expression when her mother, recognising the gift she carried, enrolled her in a Diploma programme in Computer Studies in 1993 immediately after her secondary education, a decision that proved prophetic in its timing and transformative in its consequences. She performed exceptionally well, and the passion ignited by that foundational experience never dimmed, sustaining itself through university studies in Political Science at the University of Jos, a Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting from the Federal University of Technology Owerri, and a Master of Business Administration in Finance and Accounting from the University of Jos, where an encounter with an American visiting professor of Management Information Systems proved to be a defining intellectual turning point, crystallising her understanding of how technology could support management, improve operational efficiency, and drive organisational growth in ways that neither discipline alone could achieve. She is currently pursuing a PhD in Strategic Entrepreneurship, a pursuit that reflects the same commitment to continuous academic advancement and research-driven innovation that has distinguished her professional journey from its earliest chapter to its present remarkable height.

A holder of fellowships and memberships with the Nigeria Computer Society, the Computer Professionals of Nigeria, the Integrated Institute of Professional Management, the Chartered Institute of Management and Leadership USA, and the American Institute of Education and Training, among several other distinguished associations, Abama brings to her leadership role at I4cus Nigeria Limited a breadth and depth of professional formation that is equalled only by the practical, on-the-ground impact that her company continues to deliver across Nigeria's public and private sectors. Under her visionary leadership, I4cus Nigeria Limited has grown from a conventional software solutions provider into a multi-dimensional technology company of national significance, deploying integrated ICT systems that include enterprise software solutions, biometrics and identity management systems, payment gateway integration, institutional portals, digital revenue collection systems, networking infrastructure, e-library systems, and a wide range of consultancy services that have collectively touched universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, state governments, and administrative institutions across the length and breadth of the country.

On the meaning of merit, which she regards as one of the most essential and most frequently misapplied concepts in professional life, the distinguished Abama is both measured and precise, defining it as the granting of opportunities based on what a person is capable of doing, the value they bring, and the results they consistently achieve, rather than on favouritism, personal connections, or the kind of unearned influence that corrodes institutional culture and undermines the confidence of those who choose to do things the right way. Merit, she affirms, creates fairness, encourages excellence, and builds the culture of accountability without which no organisation can sustain long-term credibility or attract the quality of talent that genuine growth demands. It is a philosophy she has embedded into every layer of I4cus Nigeria Limited's operations, ensuring that recognition within the firm is earned through competence, dedication, integrity, and demonstrated performance rather than proximity to power or personal affiliation.

Her leadership style, shaped in significant measure by Japanese management principles that emphasise trust, teamwork, long-term relationships, employee development, discipline, and collective responsibility, reflects a people-centred and values-driven philosophy that she has applied with remarkable consistency across nearly two decades of organisational leadership. She leads with integrity as the non-negotiable foundation, ensuring that her words, decisions, and actions remain in constant alignment because trust, she affirms without equivocation, is the cornerstone of effective leadership and the bedrock upon which strong organisational cultures are built and sustained. She invests equally in accountability, people development, empathy, and continuous learning, holding firmly to the conviction that leadership is not primarily the exercise of authority but the patient, disciplined work of supporting, mentoring, and empowering others to grow personally and professionally in ways that ultimately multiply the organisation's capacity for impact far beyond what any individual leader could generate alone.

What distinguishes I4cus Nigeria Limited within Nigeria's competitive ICT industry is a combination of unwavering commitment to operational excellence, a culture of integrity that has been tested and proven rather than merely declared, and a client-centred approach to service delivery that consistently prioritises measurable and lasting value over the expedience of short-term commercial gain. The company has played a strategic and nationally significant role in driving the adoption of digital governance and automated revenue administration within Nigeria's public sector, leading initiatives focused on the automation of internally generated revenue systems for state governments and institutions, improving transparency, accountability, operational efficiency, and real-time revenue monitoring in environments where these qualities were previously conspicuous by their absence. Its expertise in biometrics and identity management solutions, encompassing the deployment of biometric capture and verification systems for personnel management, institutional registration, identity validation, attendance systems, and digital record administration, has further entrenched its reputation as a technology partner of genuine depth and demonstrated national value.

Perhaps the most remarkable and most revealing demonstration of the integrity that I4cus Nigeria Limited's boss has woven into the very fabric of the company's culture is the defining moment she recounts with characteristic candour and quiet pride, a moment approximately five years ago when an excess payment of close to seventy million naira arrived in the company's account as a result of an unexpected rush by clients. At a time when the company needed funds to execute ongoing projects and when the excess would have been exceedingly difficult for any external party to detect, it was the company's own Chief Information Officer, working within a culture where ethical conduct is expected and not merely encouraged, who immediately identified the discrepancy and escalated it to management. Without hesitation and without deliberation, Abama directed that the client be contacted, informed, and refunded in full. Days later, a further excess of approximately two million naira was similarly discovered and returned with the same promptness and the same absence of internal debate. "Trust is earned through consistent ethical behaviour," she affirmed in recounting this experience, "and reputation is one of the most valuable assets any organisation can build." The client's genuine surprise and deep admiration at this display of organisational honesty was, for Abama, not a source of self-congratulation but a confirmation that the culture she had spent years deliberately building was working precisely as intended.

The recognition that her contributions to technology innovation, digital transformation, educational advancement, entrepreneurship, and leadership excellence have attracted over the course of her career is both extensive and richly deserved, encompassing the Distinguished Fellow Award on Excellence in Management and Leadership from the Integrated Institute of Professional Management in both 2022 and 2025, the Award of Excellence in Innovation and Technology from the National Builders Achievers Awards in both 2019 and 2022, the recognition of Vanguard of Good Leadership and Epitome of Hope from the National Association of Nigerian Students in 2024 and 2026, the prestigious title of Garkuwan Matasan Arewa, meaning Icon and Cynosure of Nation Building, from the Northern Youth Council of Nigeria in 2024, and the Achiever Per Excellence Award from the National Youth Council of Nigeria in 2025, among a wide range of additional commendations from respected national and international institutions that collectively affirm the breadth and depth of her impact across technology, governance, education, and youth empowerment.

Looking ahead with the purposeful optimism that have come to define her leadership, Abama envisions I4cus Nigeria Limited growing into a premier organisation of national and continental standing, recognised not merely for its technical capabilities but for the integrity, professionalism, and values-driven service delivery that have been its most consistent and most compelling distinguishing marks since its founding. She is equally committed to a personal legacy of people development, mentorship, and institutional transformation, hoping to be remembered not only for the technological solutions her company deployed but for the leaders she helped shape, the lives she positively influenced, and the standards of ethical conduct she upheld and modelled without compromise across every season and circumstance of a career built entirely on merit, character, and an unwavering commitment to creating lasting value.

To young Nigerians building careers anchored on merit and character, the accomplished. Abama Judy Joy offers counsel drawn from the frontlines of nearly two decades of purpose-driven professional service. In her words “invest relentlessly in competence and continuous learning, build a reputation for integrity that speaks before you enter any room, embrace hard work and patience as the irreducible companions of genuine achievement, value relationships and the wisdom that comes through mentorship and collaboration, and remember always that true success is measured not only by the positions attained or the wealth accumulated but by the character demonstrated, the lives touched, and the enduring legacy of ethical leadership and meaningful contribution left behind for the generations that follow.”



ABAMA JUDY JOY

i4CUS NIGERIA LIMITED RC767484
…making it easier

DR. HUGHES DIMKA: THE NIGERIAN VISIONARY ADVANCING CLEAN ENERGY AND CLIMATE FINANCE IN AFRICA

Whenever the conversation turns to clean energy development, climate finance innovation, and the urgent imperative of building the digital and physical infrastructure required to unlock Africa's sovereign economic potential, one name that features with growing prominence and well-deserved authority is that of Dr. Hughes Dimka, a distinguished Nigerian development finance expert, health-tech entrepreneur, clean energy advocate, and one of the most purposeful and consequential minds working at the intersection of enterprise, scholarship, and national transformation today. Founder and Managing Director of Hopewell Solutions Services Limited, Yale Three Cairns Fellow, holder of an MPhil in Development Finance from the prestigious Stellenbosch University, and a PhD candidate in Development Finance at Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Dr. Dimka represents a rare and inspiring convergence of world-class academic formation, bold entrepreneurial vision, and an abiding commitment to solving Nigeria's most pressing developmental challenges from within, on home soil, and in service of the communities that need it most.

Dr. Dimka belongs to a rare and commendable generation of Nigerians who, having acquired internationally recognised credentials and fellowships of the highest distinction, chose deliberately and purposefully to return home rather than pursue the comfort of foreign appointments and overseas careers. Armed with an MPhil in Development Finance from Stellenbosch University and elevated by the Yale Three Cairns Fellowship in deploying Clean Energy Finance, one of the world's most selective and rigorous clean energy leadership programmes, he returned to Nigeria not with a readymade position but with a clearly defined mission, to solve Nigeria's energy and climate finance challenges from within, building the institutions and infrastructure that can translate Africa's vast and largely untapped potential into verifiable, community-anchored, and globally competitive prosperity. "Clean energy and climate finance are not just economic opportunities, they are Africa's path to sovereign prosperity. My life's work is to build the infrastructure that makes that future real." He affirmed

As Founder and Managing Director of Hopewell Solutions Services Limited, Dr. Dimka has built an institution anchored in the conviction that sustainable enterprise and community impact are not competing goals but are in truth the very same goal, pursued through complementary channels and expressed most ambitiously through two landmark initiatives, Project 100 and Tavo Energy, each representing a distinct but deeply interconnected dimension of his overarching development vision. The most immediate and tangible expression of this vision is Project 100, one of the most ambitious community energy initiatives currently underway in Nigeria's Middle Belt, setting out to deploy one hundred mini-grids across the North Central region and bring clean, reliable electricity to rural and peri-urban communities that the national grid has long bypassed. The North Central states, spanning Benue, Kogi, Kwara, Nasarawa, Niger, Plateau, and the Federal Capital Territory, are home to millions of Nigerians whose economic potential is throttled daily by energy poverty of the most debilitating kind. Farmers cannot cold-store produce. Clinics cannot power diagnostic equipment. Students cannot study after dark. Project 100 targets this painful reality directly and systematically, with each mini-grid designed not merely as an electricity installation but as a living anchor for local economic activity, powering agro-processing enterprises, small businesses, schools, and health facilities, and transforming energy access from a distant aspiration into a concrete and community-owned engine of growth.

Complementing this ground-level energy deployment with equal ambition and global reach is Tavo Energy, a pioneering initiative operating under the Tavo Technologies umbrella and designed to become Africa's first dedicated marketplace for carbon credits and International Renewable Energy Certificates, known as I-RECs. The platform addresses a critical and long-standing gap in the continent's climate economy, one in which African clean energy projects generate internationally recognised environmental assets of enormous value, yet most of that value flows outward to brokers and intermediaries based outside the continent. Tavo Energy fundamentally changes this inequitable equation by enabling African project developers, corporates, and governments to trade these instruments directly, transparently, and efficiently, retaining value on the continent and positioning Africa as an active and sovereign participant in the global climate finance architecture. With backing from a growing network of international climate finance institutions, including targeted engagements with the African Development Bank's SEFA facility, the Green Climate Fund, the Bezos Earth Fund, and GEAPP, Tavo Energy is attracting precisely the global attention and institutional confidence that its bold ambition merits.

The highly distinguished Dr. Dimka equally invests with deep dedication in scholarship and mentorship, conducting rigorous research on financial inclusion and MSME-driven economic growth in Nigeria's North Central Region while quietly and consistently nurturing a rising generation of young Nigerians in clean energy finance, climate entrepreneurship, and development-oriented leadership, building with characteristic patience and purpose the human capital that Nigeria's future will most certainly and urgently depend upon.



Hopewell Solutions Services
RC 663108

ENGR. ALEX OMAGHOMI: Engineering Africa's Agro Industrial Future Through Zilex Holding

WHENEVER the conversation turns to agro-industrialization, engineering-led development, and the urgent imperative of building integrated value chains capable of unlocking Africa's vast agricultural potential, one name that features with increasing prominence and authority is that of Engr. Alex Omaghomi, a Nigerian agro-industrialist, telecommunications engineer, real estate developer, and civic leader whose career spans large-scale capital projects and integrated agribusiness development across Sub-Saharan Africa and the United Kingdom. He is the Group Chief Executive of Hostplace Group and Zilex Holding, two formidable platforms through which he leads diversified portfolios across EPC civil engineering, real estate development, oil and gas services, cross-border trade, and large-scale agribusiness systems, bringing to each the same disciplined, systems-driven thinking that has come to define his reputation as one of the most consequential development minds of his generation.

An Itsekiri Prince from Delta State with a Bachelor of Science in Telecommunication Engineering from Ghana Technology University and a Master of Business Administration from the University of South Wales in the United Kingdom, Engr. Omaghomi represents a rare and compelling fusion of technical engineering depth and executive business strategy, a combination that enables him to conceive, design, and execute complex, multi-sector development projects at a scale that few practitioners on the continent can match. His work is defined by a consistent and unrelenting focus on building the physical, commercial, and institutional infrastructure required to unlock Africa's agro-industrial potential, and it is this singular clarity of purpose that has earned him recognition across boardrooms, policy forums, and media platforms in Nigeria and beyond.

At the core of his leadership philosophy is a systems-based view of development in which agriculture is not treated as a subsistence sector but as the upstream engine of industrial economies. He positions agro-industrialization as the missing link between rural productivity and national economic transformation, arguing with characteristic conviction that farming, engineering, infrastructure, processing, logistics, and manufacturing must be designed as one connected value chain rather than a collection of isolated sectors operating without coherence or coordination. "Agro-industrialization is not an option for Nigeria," he has stated with the authority of a man who has staked his career on this belief, "it is the missing link between rural productivity and national industrial power."

Through Zilex Holding, the diversified investment and operating company he founded with interests spanning agro-industrial development, EPC civil engineering, oil and gas services, real estate, and cross-border trade, Engr. Omaghomi is building what he envisions as a foremost agro-industrial platform on the continent, one rooted in the central principle that sustainable industrial growth is driven by value addition and not by raw export dependency. Under his leadership, Zilex Holding is steadily emerging as a force for integrated value chain development that connects agricultural production to processing, logistics, and market access across Africa and the United Kingdom, demonstrating in practical and measurable terms that the continent's prosperity lies not merely in what it grows but in what it builds from what it grows.

The most ambitious expression of this vision is the flagship 5,000-hectare Integrated Agribusiness and Agro-Industrial Estate currently being developed in Ondo State, Nigeria, a bold and meticulously conceived private-sector-led model for agricultural transformation that Engr. Omaghomi is personally spearheading. Designed as a fully integrated agro-industrial ecosystem combining large-scale agricultural production, agro-processing and manufacturing systems, storage, logistics and distribution infrastructure, and export-oriented value chain development, the estate is engineered to convert agricultural output into industrial output, bridging the long-standing gap between rural production and global market competitiveness. A defining and socially resonant feature of the project is its deliberate focus on youth and women economic inclusion, creating structured pathways for skills development, employment, and enterprise participation within the agricultural value chain, and positioning the estate as a replicable national blueprint that other states and investors can study, adapt, and deploy across Nigeria.

Beyond engineering and enterprise, Engr. Omaghomi is equally a policy analyst and civic leader of considerable influence, contributing to national conversations on governance and economic reform through public commentary and thoughtful writing. In February 2026, he was appointed Deputy Director for Delta State of the City Boy Movement, supporting youth mobilisation, civic education, and grassroots engagement in service of reform-oriented governance, reflecting his conviction that sustainable national development requires the purposeful alignment of enterprise, policy, and political leadership. Through the Alexander and Rosemary Omaghomi Foundation, he further champions humanitarian initiatives supporting vulnerable populations and driving grassroots economic empowerment across West Africa.

The highly cerebral Engr. Omaghomi enjoins policymakers, investors, and development practitioners alike to recognise that Nigeria's agricultural potential will remain unrealised until matched by the engineering capability and institutional coordination required to transform it into genuine industrial power. "Agro-industrialization in Nigeria cannot be imported from a manual," he affirmed. "It must be engineered from the ground up to fit our unique landscape." It is a charge delivered not from theory but from the frontlines of a career built entirely on turning that conviction into concrete and nationally significant reality.



ZILEX HOLDINGS

HOSTPLACE LIMITED

TheGuardian
Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

SPECIAL FOCUS ON 50 DISTINGUISHED NIGERIANS OF MERIT

CHIBUEZE IKEDICHUKWU UKAEGBU: Pioneering Accessible Digital Education in Nigeria

IT is a social phenomenon that some men are born great by providence while others achieve greatness by dint of hard work. History is replete with stories of men who defy all odds and the constraints of their time to raise the bar beyond their contemporaries and, in doing so, make history for themselves. Such characters are rare and do not emerge in every generation. Chibueze Ikedichukwu Ukaegbu, founder and Chief Executive Officer of LearnFactory Nigeria, fits perfectly into this description, a man who has consistently chosen the difficult path of service, innovation, and impact in a society where many pursue only personal advancement.

A computer engineer, technology entrepreneur, and education advocate, Ukaegbu stands today as one of the most purposeful and selfless innovators working at the intersection of technology, human development, and community transformation in Nigeria. Through vision, resilience, and an uncommon commitment to empowering others, he established LearnFactory Nigeria, the first software development, outsourcing, and training hub in Southeast Nigeria, creating a platform that has redefined access to digital opportunities for thousands of young people across the region.

For over a decade, he has translated a lifelong passion for technology education into free, high quality, industry relevant digital skills training that has produced hundreds of employable technology professionals and transformed the lives of countless ambitious young Nigerians in Aba and beyond who previously had neither access nor opportunity in the world of technology. In a country where youth unemployment and lack of access continue to limit potential, Ukaegbu has remained firmly committed to building people, creating opportunities, and proving that technology can serve not merely as a tool for innovation, but as an instrument for social and economic transformation.

Ukaegbu's story is one of heritage, conviction, and deliberate sacrifice. Raised in a family of teachers, with a mother who served as a secondary school principal and a father who established the first computer school in Southeast Nigeria in 1988, he grew up at the unique intersection of education and technology, an environment that shaped his values, sharpened his instincts, and gave him an early and irreversible conviction that technology, when taught well and made accessible without barriers, has the power to unlock potential that poverty, geography, and institutional neglect have conspired to suppress. By his first year at Enugu State University of Science and Technology, he was already organising free lectures and teaching his classmates programming, a habit of generous instruction that would define every subsequent chapter of his professional journey, from his four years of missionary teaching in Ghana, where he helped develop technology curriculum for police academy schools, to his work with Zinox Technologies and AK Banks Consulting, to his eventual return to Aba in 2014 to establish the institution he had long dreamed of building.

That return was not without its costs, and Ukaegbu is candidly and instructively honest about the difficulty of the early years. For the first three years of LearnFactory's existence, from 2015 to 2017, only three students paid for training, and none of them were from Abia State. The broader community either did not understand what was being offered or did not trust that world-class technology education could be obtained in Aba rather than Lagos, Abuja, or Port Harcourt. Rather than abandon the vision, he made a decision in 2018 that would become the most defining and most distinguishing feature of LearnFactory Nigeria's identity: he made everything free. Since that year, across fourteen cohorts of its flagship training programmes and countless school-based interventions, LearnFactory Nigeria has not charged a single penny to any student, absorbing the full cost of instruction, power, facilities, and personnel in service of a conviction that access to quality technology education should not be a function of one's ability to pay but of one's willingness to learn and to grow.

The two foundational problems that Ukaegbu set out to solve when he established LearnFactory Nigeria remain as urgent today as they were a decade ago. The first is the yawning gap between what Nigerian universities teach in their technology programmes and what the industry actually demands of its professionals, a gap that sends graduates into a job market for which their education has left them substantively unprepared. The second is the lateness with which Nigerian young people typically begin their technology education, often not until their twenties, at a point when the window for the kind of deep, foundational skill-building that produces truly world-class practitioners has already begun to close. To address the first, LearnFactory established a rigorous internship and fellowship programme, later expanded into the Dr. Alex Otti Tech Fellowship and the flagship Abia TechRise initiative developed in partnership with the Federal Ministry of Education, the World Bank, and the Abia State Government, equipping young people with advanced skills in software development, artificial intelligence, product management, UI/UX, data engineering, and animation. To address the second, it launched the EmBED programme, standing for Education Made Beautiful, Engaging, and Delightful, bringing coding, STEM education, and digital skills training directly into primary schools and junior secondary schools across the region, ensuring that children begin building the technical foundations of their futures at an age when those foundations can be laid most deeply and most durably.



What distinguishes LearnFactory Nigeria from other organisations operating in the education technology space is not merely its commitment to free training, remarkable as that commitment is in an environment where power costs alone can consume over one hundred and fifty thousand naira per month, but the culture of selfless giving and genuine community that he has cultivated at every level of the organisation. Many of LearnFactory's most skilled facilitators are former beneficiaries of its programmes who, having gone through the process and benefited from its investment in their growth, chose to return and give back rather than accept more lucrative opportunities elsewhere. The organisation has grown to a staff strength of nearly fifty highly skilled professionals working across disciplines spanning three-dimensional animation, digital arts, two-dimensional animation, and cybersecurity, united not by the promise of the highest available salaries but by a shared and deeply felt conviction that the impact they are creating is worth the sacrifice it sometimes requires. "Freely we received, freely we are giving," Ukaegbu affirmed.

The challenges Ukaegbu identifies as most debilitating for young Nigerians seeking to acquire digital skills are both structural and economic in nature, encompassing the prohibitive cost of the tools required for technology training, the brutal expense of power in a country where a litre of diesel now costs over two thousand naira, the scarcity of highly skilled trainers willing to remain in the training sector rather than migrate to better-paying corporate roles, the inconsistency and expense of internet access, and the uncertainty of employment outcomes that can discourage even the most determined learner from investing fully in the process of skill acquisition. These are challenges that LearnFactory confronts daily, absorbing their cost wherever possible and advocating persistently for the systemic changes that could reduce their weight on the young Nigerians who have the most to gain from quality technology education and the fewest resources with which to access it.

His leadership philosophy, shaped by the servant leadership model he encountered in his study of how Jesus led and deepened through the teaching of motivational voices like Sam Adeyemi, is built on humility, accessibility, clarity of responsibility, and an unwavering recognition of the intrinsic value of every human being served by the organisation. He leads with no airs, maintaining a deliberately flat organisational structure in which every team member knows their role and their key performance indicators and is empowered to fulfil them to the best of their ability within a culture of openness, mutual respect, and shared purpose. "A leader's primary responsibility," he affirms with the quiet conviction of a man who has lived this principle through years of sacrifice, "is to serve his market through his people."

Looking ahead, Ukaegbu envisions LearnFactory Nigeria expanding its impact across four high-potential sectors, namely education, health, clean technology, and agriculture, building digital products and solutions that address the most pressing challenges in each area while continuing to deepen its core work of technology skills development with an increasingly artificial intelligence-centred curriculum designed to ensure that LearnFactory graduates are not only competent in the fundamentals but are equipped to leverage the most powerful tools of the digital present and future.

To young entrepreneurs and innovators building businesses in Africa, the distinguished Chibueze Ikedichukwu Ukaegbu offer counsel, in his words "prepare your mind thoroughly for suffering, because entrepreneurship is not glamour but sacrifice; develop a clear and compelling vision powerful enough to sustain you through months without income and years without recognition; build staying power as the most essential entrepreneurial virtue of all; find and empower the right people whose values align with your mission; and remember always that the entrepreneur who comes to serve a market with a genuine solution to a genuine problem, and who has the discipline and the determination to stay with that mission through every wind of discouragement and doubt, will in time build something that neither money alone nor ambition alone could ever have produced".

FAITH OSAZEMWINDE: Building Systems, Skills, And Standards For Nigeria's Digital Future

SHE is a highly resourceful and experienced business leader who has distinguished herself not only in technology and human capital development but also in structured capacity building and executive training. Ms. Faith Osazemwinde is a Nigerian entrepreneur and Founder/Chief Executive Officer of FOZY Global Concepts Ltd, an Abuja based firm focused on ICT training, CBT services, consultancy, and executive development. Her professional journey reflects a steady commitment to practical learning, disciplined execution, and the development of systems that strengthen institutions beyond individual contribution.

She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Mathematics and Economics from the University of Benin and an MBA from Business School Netherlands. She also maintains professional affiliations with bodies such as the Computer Professionals Registration Council of Nigeria, Nigeria Computer Society, and the Nigerian Institute of Management. These qualifications support her work as a Certified Management Consultant and Fellow of the Institute of Management Consultants. Her expertise spans strategic communication, public relations, process design, and project management, all of which shape how she structures both training delivery and organisational systems.

At the core of her leadership philosophy is a clear interpretation of merit, as she defines merit as doing things correctly, even when the process demands patience and discipline. In her view, institutions weaken when they chase speed over structure or short term results over proper execution. At FOZY Global Concepts, this thinking translates into a strong focus on service quality, process rigour, and consistent delivery standards. Clients return not because of marketing claims but because outcomes remain dependable.

Her organisation operates on three guiding principles that shape internal culture. Excellence drives every training and consultancy engagement. Accountability ensures that clients remain informed at every stage of project execution. Respect governs relationships across staff, clients, and partners. These values are not treated as abstract ideals but as daily operating rules that determine how work is done and how responsibilities are handled.

As Chief Executive Officer of FOZY Global Concepts Ltd, Osazemwinde has built a vision centred on becoming a dependable solutions provider for both public and private sector clients. The organisation does not limit itself to training alone. It addresses technical gaps, software needs, and soft skill deficiencies through structured interventions. The goal is to diagnose problems clearly and respond with practical, measurable solutions.

Her leadership style places strong emphasis on excellence, resilience, and accountability. In her experience, the business environment depends heavily on trust and referrals. This makes reputation a central asset. She maintains that consistent delivery builds credibility, and credibility drives growth. Within her organisation, commitments are treated as binding, and transparency is maintained throughout every project cycle.

A key priority in her long-term vision is institutional strength, reflected in her commitment to building systems that function independently of individuals. The aim is continuity, where operations remain stable even in the absence of senior staff. This includes documented procedures, standardised delivery methods, and a culture where quality expectations are clearly understood by all team members.

Her journey has also involved navigating a male-dominated technology and ICT environment, and rather than adopt a competitive stance, she promotes collaboration. This approach has allowed her organisation to build partnerships, expand reach, and access opportunities that might otherwise have been limited. It also reflects her belief that growth in the sector benefits from shared effort rather than isolated competition.

Over the years, FOZY Global Concepts has recorded steady progress, as the organisation has operated for more than eight years, trained thousands of participants across different programmes, and maintained stable internal staff welfare practices. Salaries are paid consistently, and employee satisfaction remains a priority. Its CBT centre in Apo, Abuja serves as both a training hub and an employment platform, supporting digital literacy and examination services.

Government and institutional partnerships form a significant part of its portfolio, with the company delivering training programmes for agencies such as the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board across regional cohorts in the South-West, Nigerian Airspace Management Agency in the South-West and North-Central regions. It also works with organisations including the Federal Road Safety Corps and various Universities, Polytechnics, and Colleges of Education across Nigeria reinforcing its role in public sector capacity development.

A defining moment in her leadership journey came during an incident at her CBT registration centre where improper handling of funds was reported. She responded firmly, reinforcing strict adherence to transparency rules. This incident reflects her broader stance that institutional credibility depends on uncompromised financial discipline and ethical conduct at every level.

Community impact remains central to her work, with the organisation having trained over 5,000 individuals through structured programmes and community-based initiatives. Some of these are free sessions targeted at students and young people. These programmes also include cybersecurity awareness, guiding participants away from cybercrime and towards legitimate digital careers.

Looking ahead, she envisions FOZY Global Concepts expanding its footprint beyond Abuja into other regions of Nigeria and Africa. The long term plan includes broader software development capacity, expanded CBT operations, and a larger skilled workforce capable of delivering services at scale. The organisation is expected to evolve into a more autonomous structure capable of operating with reduced dependence on daily executive oversight.



FOZY GLOBAL CONCEPTS
Discover What's Possible

DR. JANET ADETU: TRANSFORMATIONAL FORCE, LEADERSHIP PRESENCE STRATEGIST, AND CHAMPION OF EXECUTIVE EXCELLENCE

Without mincing words, she is a woman of humane character, a silent achiever and an amazon whose personality recognizes dexterity at all times. Dr. Janet Adetu, a name that commands immediate recognition in the global arena of executive coaching, leadership development, and corporate transformation. A Professionally Certified Executive Coach, Leadership Presence Strategist, Confidence and Culture Transformation Specialist, Corporate Etiquette and Personal Brand Expert, Chartered Financial Accountant, Qualified Risk Director, and celebrated Forbes Coaches Council Member since 2020, Dr. Adetu is a rare and remarkable confluence of technical mastery and human insight whose influence spans five continents and touches the lives of professionals, executives, and board members at the very highest levels of decision-making. She is the Founder and Chief Executive Officer of JSK Consulting Group, established in Nairobi, Kenya in 2010, and Principal Partner at ViserX Executive Coaching International, bringing to both institutions over thirty years of corporate experience and more than eight hundred hours of professional coaching transformation journeys that have fundamentally redefined what it means to lead with presence, purpose, and unassailable credibility.

Driven by a passion to empower professionals to reach their fullest potential, she founded the Crown Code System, a proprietary framework designed to help individuals strategically position themselves for high performance, impactful presence, accelerated promotion, career advancement, and board readiness. Having worked with over five hundred professionals, executives, and senior decision-makers from conception to transformation, she has built a body of work that is as far-reaching in its global influence as it is deeply personal in its impact, ensuring that every professional who passes through her process emerges not only more competent but more confident, more credible, and more commanding in the rooms that matter most.

On the meaning of merit, which she describes as one of the most misunderstood concepts in professional life, the highly cerebral Dr. Adetu defined it as the consistent demonstration of competence, character, and contribution over time. Merit, she affirms, is not about titles, visibility, or inherited opportunity but about earned credibility, the kind that is built in the quiet discipline of doing excellent work even when no one is watching, sustained by values and integrity, and ultimately measured by the lasting impact one creates beyond oneself. "Merit is when your work speaks, your values stand, and your impact endures," she noted with characteristic clarity, encapsulating in a single sentence a philosophy that has governed every chapter of her distinguished career.

Her leadership style, anchored on purpose-driven decision-making, integrity without compromise, and a deep commitment to empowering others, reflects the very principles she imparts to the executives and organisations she serves. As a trained and certified Executive Coach, she brings to her leadership a rare combination of emotional intelligence, accountability, and adaptability, holding herself and her team to standards of excellence driven not by external pressure but by a profound respect for the work, the people she serves, and the legacy she is deliberately and intentionally building. Great leaders, she is fond of affirming, do not create followers; they develop other leaders, and it is this conviction that has shaped the culture and character of JSK Consulting Group from its founding to its present stature as a globally recognised authority in executive presence and corporate transformation.

What distinguishes JSK Consulting Group in a highly competitive industry is its integrated, transformation-focused approach, combining executive coaching, leadership development, human resource advisory, corporate support services, and professional etiquette into one cohesive and results-driven value proposition. Rather than offering isolated solutions, the firm delivers holistic experiences that ensure clients are not only operationally sound but also strategically visible, influential, and positioned for sustained impact. It is a distinction born of Dr. Adetu's foundational belief that true transformation addresses not just what professionals can do, but how they are seen, heard, and respected for the full measure of the value they bring.

Looking ahead, her vision for JSK Consulting Group is one of strategic global expansion, the institutionalisation of her signature frameworks into scalable academies and digital platforms, the development of a next generation of world-class coaches and facilitators, and the deepening of partnerships that extend her firm's reach and relevance across Africa, the United Kingdom, and beyond. Her personal legacy, however, is captured in something far more enduring than corporate milestones. It is the image of a professional walking into a room of influence with confidence, clarity, and unmistakable presence, knowing that Dr. Adetu helped put them there.

To young Nigerians building careers anchored on merit and excellence, she offers counsel that is as practical as it is timeless: build competence before chasing recognition, develop strong values early, invest in continuous learning, be intentional about your presence, and remember always that merit is built daily through what you do, how you do it, and who you become in the process. It is advice forged not in theory but in the crucible of a career lived with uncommon discipline, vision, and grace.



JSK
CONSULTING GROUP

TAIWO AYODELE ADENIYI: Pioneering Industrial Resilience and Corporate Excellence

IN the Nigerian manufacturing sector, only a few CEOs command as much respect for their strategic foresight and unwavering integrity as Mr. Taiwo Ayodele Adeniyi. As the Group Managing Director and CEO of Vitafoam Nigeria Plc, Adeniyi has not only steered one of the nation's most iconic brands through turbulent economic waters but has also emerged as a pivotal voice for the organised private sector. His inclusion in the *Distinguished Nigerians of Merit* is a testament to a career defined by operational excellence, national service, and a commitment to industrial growth.

A Foundation of Academic and Professional Excellence

The brilliance behind Vitafoam's modern success is rooted in a deep commitment to learning and operational precision. A product of the University of Lagos with degrees in Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Adeniyi further honed his expertise with a Master's degree in Supply Engineering and Logistics from the University of Warwick, UK. This rare blend of scientific inquiry and logistical mastery provided him with the unique perspective required to navigate the complexities of the manufacturing sector.

His professional career began at Pharma Deko Plc, where he quickly distinguished himself in quality assurance and research and development. Even in these early stages, his resourcefulness was evident as he championed ISO 9000 standards and developed complex distribution networks. However, it was his move to Vitafoam in 2007 as a Logistics Manager that set the stage for a corporate revolution.

The Logistics Architect: Transforming the Bottom Line

Upon joining Vitafoam, Adeniyi immediately applied his strategic lens to the company's supply chain. He achieved a remarkable one-month holding stock across all factory locations, insulating the company against production halts and saving significant costs. By negotiating cutting-edge prices and increasing local sourcing of production materials to approximately 70%, he stabilised the company's internal economy during volatile periods.

The results were instantaneous and staggering. Under his logistical guidance, Vitafoam's turnover jumped from N6.149 billion in 2007 to N8.172 billion in 2008, while retained profits grew from N439 million to N698 million. His ability to forestall stock-outs through a meticulously designed materials planning system ensured that Vitafoam remained a reliable partner for millions of Nigerians.

Leading Through Diversification and Innovation

Since assuming the role of Group Managing Director/CEO in June 2015, Adeniyi has steered Vitafoam through some of Nigeria's most challenging economic cycles, including the recession of 2015/2016. His strategy for market leadership is clear: focused and deliberate growth of subsidiary companies. Under his chairmanship, subsidiaries such as Vitablom, Vitapur, Vono, Vitavisco, and Vitaparts have flourished, creating a "full range solution" for bedding and allied products.

Central to this success is the concept of backward integration. By producing critical raw materials within the group, Vitafoam has not only guaranteed availability but has also saved vital foreign exchange. This strategic autonomy has propelled the company's turnover to unprecedented heights—growing from N12.18 billion in 2015/2016 to an astounding N97.4 billion in 2024/2025.

Despite inflationary pressures and foreign exchange volatility, Adeniyi maintains profitability through a relentless focus on innovation and R&D. Whether it is exploring the untapped potential of Rigid PU and Visco elastic segments or investing in human capital, the goal remains the same: delivering quality that "speaks loudly".

A National Voice for the Private Sector

Mr. Adeniyi's influence extends far beyond the boardroom of Vitafoam. As the immediate past President of the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association (NECA) and Chairman of the Organised Private Sector of Nigeria (OPSN), he has been a pivotal figure in harmonising the interests of government and private enterprise.

His tenure at NECA was marked by historic industrial peace, achieved through his commitment to tripartite dialogue between labor, government, and employers. He led delegations to the International Labour Organization (ILO) in Geneva and was instrumental in removing bottlenecks for doing business in Nigeria through collaborations with agencies like PEBEC. From negotiating the national minimum wage to providing sustainability plans during the COVID-19 pandemic, Adeniyi has been a tireless advocate for national economic growth.

Integrity and Sustainability

For Taiwo Adeniyi, business success is inseparable from core values. "Integrity is not what we do when it is convenient," he asserts, aligning the company's values with his personal ethos of respect and sustainable action. This commitment is reflected in Vitafoam's robust ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) policies. Through Vitapur Nigeria Limited, the group is developing environmentally friendly blowing agents and exploring recycling technologies for used mattresses in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment.

A Mentor and Visionary

Despite his high-ranking positions, Adeniyi remains committed to the development of the next generation. He advises young Nigerian professionals to practice delayed gratification and focus on developing core competencies, promising that the system will eventually recognise and reward excellence. His personal life reflects this stability; he is happily married to Dr. (Mrs.) Oluwafunmilayo Funke Adeniyi, a distinguished Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Lagos.

Taiwo Ayodele Adeniyi's career is a blueprint for principled leadership. From being a Logistics Manager who achieved unprecedented stock-holding efficiency to a CEO who tripled corporate turnover, his journey demonstrates that when integrity and excellence meet strategic planning, the impact is felt far beyond the balance sheet, it shapes the nation. For his contributions to the Nigerian economy and his role as a guardian of industrial harmony, he stands tall as a Nigerian of Merit.



Vitafoam
-the fine art of living

JOHN OAMEN: Architecting a Bankable and Transparent Future for African Infrastructure

JOHN Oamen, the CEO of Cutstruct, is far more than a typical entrepreneur; he is a dedicated infrastructure strategist and capital mobiliser whose primary mission is to transform the fundamental ways construction projects are financed and delivered across the African continent. Through his leadership, Cutstruct has evolved from a simple marketplace solution into a sophisticated **execution and capital structuring layer** designed to turn complex, high-risk developments into bankable, investable assets that can attract institutional capital. Oamen operates at the critical intersection of developers, financial institutions, and public sector stakeholders, building robust systems that reduce construction risk and accelerate housing delivery at scale. His work reflects a grander ambition: to move beyond merely building a company and instead build **institutions and frameworks that outlive their founders** while strengthening the broader economic ecosystem.

The inspiration for Cutstruct was born from Oamen's own lived experience as a contractor, where he identified a glaring systemic inequality in the construction market: material pricing was dictated entirely by volume. He observed that large developers were securing essential materials for significantly less—sometimes **2,000 to 5,000 per square meter cheaper**—simply because they possessed the scale to negotiate. Meanwhile, smaller contractors were left to pay a heavy premium. This sparked a fundamental question for Oamen: what if he could aggregate those smaller, fragmented orders to achieve the same economies of scale, granting every builder access to top-tier pricing? However, he quickly realised that pricing was only one facet of a much larger problem. The industry also suffered from a profound lack of empathy in its logistics. While an average supplier might view an order as just a bucket of paint, Oamen understood that to a developer, that paint represents a **hard deadline and a sacred promise** made to an off-taker. When a delivery is delayed, it isn't just a minor logistical hiccup; it is a reputational catastrophe that breaks client trust over factors that should be manageable. Cutstruct was built to take supply chain logistics out of the hands of those who did not understand these high stakes and replace them with a seamless, reliable system.

Transparency and traceability are the twin pillars of Oamen's strategy for fostering trust across the supply chain. He recalls a personal frustration where someone else attempted to pass off pictures of his own completed projects as their own work, highlighting the industry's desperate need for verifiable records. By moving procurement onto a digital platform, Cutstruct creates an **immutable digital footprint** where every transaction and project milestone is tracked and authenticated. This digital approach ensures that every action—from timestamps and signatures to approvals and sign-offs—is recorded, creating a "single source of truth" that multiple stakeholders can access from anywhere. Even in instances where customers do not directly use the platform themselves, Oamen ensures that every transaction is captured on the system to maintain total operational transparency. This commitment to a verifiable record is what allows Cutstruct to provide the governance required to make construction projects truly bankable.

Building a construction technology, or "ConTech," company in one of the world's most traditional and physically demanding industries has not been without its challenges. Oamen acknowledges that construction is a sector where many processes must remain physical and offline because **verification, trust, and accountability are critical**. Rather than fighting against these industry realities or trying to force a purely tech-driven model onto a brick-and-mortar sector, Cutstruct has focused on understanding why these physical processes exist and building solutions around them. Oamen does not view Cutstruct as just a technology company; he sees it as a **solutions company that leverages technology** to solve the genuine pain points that create friction in traditional construction. This pragmatic approach extends to the company's view on sustainability, which Oamen defines primarily through the lens of efficiency. By optimising material sourcing and reducing project inefficiencies, Cutstruct helps minimise waste, reduce unnecessary transportation, and improve resource utilisation. As Africa undergoes rapid urbanisation, Oamen believes that building systems that are both **economically viable and environmentally conscious** is no longer just a responsibility—it is a business necessity.

Oamen's leadership philosophy is rooted in the belief that a company is only as strong as its people and its integrity. He credits much of Cutstruct's progress to a core leadership team, including his Co-founder, Modele, their CFO, and a dedicated group of VPs and department heads who believe in the vision and execute it consistently. He has learned that in an industry like construction, where relationships and reputation are the primary currency, long-term success is built purely on **credibility and resilience**.

Looking toward the next decade, Oamen predicts a total transformation of Africa's construction sector through deeper digitisation and the integration of financial technology. He envisions a future where **data and predictive analytics** allow developers to make smarter decisions regarding costs and risk management, while innovative financing models unlock unprecedented opportunities across the continent. His advice to the next generation of African entrepreneurs is to avoid chasing trends and instead focus on solving real problems in traditional sectors like agriculture, logistics, and manufacturing, where inefficiencies are greatest. Driven by a desire for impact and a lasting legacy for his children and his country, John Oamen is not just building projects; he is engineering the future of a continent.



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THE GREAT INVOCATION
(THE WORLD PRAYER)

From the point of Light within the Mind of God
Let light stream forth into the minds of men
Let Light descend on Earth.

From the point of Love within the Heart of God
Let love stream forth into the hearts of men
May Christ* return to Earth.

From the centre where the Will of God is known
Let purpose guide the little wills of men –
The purpose which the Masters know and
serve

From the centre which we call the race of men
Let the Plan of Love and Light work out
And may it seal the door where evil dwells.

Let Light and Love and Power restore the Plan
on Earth.

In the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish translations of the Great Invocation, the name by which the Coming One is known in these religions is used: - the Lord Maitreya, the Lord Krishna, the Imam Mahdi and the Messiah respectively.

WORLD INVOCATION DAY
SUNDAY, 31ST MAY 2026

World Invocation Day or the Festival of Goodwill is a world day of prayer and meditation when men and women of every spiritual path join in a universal appeal to divinity and use the Great Invocation. **Together they focus the invocative demand of humanity for the Light, the Love and spiritual direction needed to build a world of justice, unity and peace.**

Having come to the end of the first quarter of this century, the world is now faced with many challenges ranging from poverty, illiteracy, insecurity, religious intolerance and conflict, economic and political crises, natural disasters and more recently, the wars in Israel, Iran, Lebanon, Ukraine, Gaza and Sudan among other socio-political crises. Our survival is threatened, not only by these challenges but by our lack of wisdom and will to seize some of the opportunities presented to improve the general well-being of humanity, to put aside those beliefs, sentiments and actions that separate us and seek those that unite us, to share our plentiful resources (material and otherwise) and to solve the many other critical problems which confront the human family through sustainable development.

Yet the solution exists. One of the greatest insights of our time is that of the interdependence and interrelatedness of all life. Today, millions of people share the conviction of an inner spiritual unity within humanity which transcends any outer differences of race, nation and creed. As men and women of goodwill the world over give expression to this conviction in their lives, a process of planetary transformation is taking place. A new civilisation is emerging which embraces all peoples and is founded on the spirit of brotherhood and right human relations.

The United Nations, through its Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, echoed this when he, in 2021, while highlighting the opportunity presented to mankind by the then ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, called on everyone to "stand up against hate, treat each other with dignity and take every opportunity to spread kindness."

The world's problems are of humanity's making and they are for humanity to solve. But the essence of the spiritual life lies in knowing that we are not alone. The energies of Divinity are abundantly available and, on World Invocation Day, an appeal is made for the release of the energies which will enable humanity to create the new civilisation.

Each year, since 1952, people everywhere have celebrated World Invocation Day, joining in the affirmation of the oneness of humanity, the livingness of our relationship to God and the responsibility of humanity for the working out of the divine Plan on earth.

Are you a Nigerian who is genuinely interested in helping our country overcome its current serious problems of insecurity, tribal and religious conflicts, its economic, political, infrastructural and other challenges? Are you from, or concerned about any other country like Iran, Lebanon, Israel, Sudan, Ukraine, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Congo DRC, Yemen, etc, where there is conflict, disease, insecurity and political instability?

You are cordially invited to join other men and women of goodwill all over the world in celebrating World Invocation Day, tomorrow, 31st May 2026, by using the Great Invocation in prayer and meditation to ask for and invoke Divine aid and wisdom to enable Nigeria and these other countries to overcome their problems.

Thereafter, please use it on a daily, weekly or monthly basis to enable all those who work in all spheres of human endeavour, worldwide, to create the new civilization of justice, peace and unity.

THE GREAT INVOCATION

The Great Invocation belongs to all humanity and not to any one religion or group. It is a world prayer, translated into more than seventy-five languages and dialects.

To use the Great Invocation is world service, for it is an instrument of power in the manifestation of the Plan of God on earth. It speaks directly to world need today. We need light to illumine the way ahead and reveal the vision of a new civilisation; we need love to govern the relationships between people and bring to an end the reign of hatred and separatism; we need the power of the will-to-good to direct human choice and decision making. The universal use of the Great Invocation on World Invocation Day charges this day with deep spiritual significance, for it builds a channel through which Divine Light, Love and Power can reach and irradiate the hearts and minds of people everywhere.

The beauty and the strength of the Great Invocation lie in its simplicity and in its expression of truths which are central to all the major religions. People from many different faiths now anticipate the reappearance of the spiritual leader of humanity. In the Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim and Jewish translations of the Great Invocation, the name by which the Coming One is known in these religions is used – the Lord Maitreya, the Lord Krishna, the Imam Mahdi and the Messiah respectively.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Most of the festivals of the major world religions are held in accordance with the lunar calendar. The date of World Invocation Day is also determined in this way. It follows on two months from the Christian Festival of Easter and one month from the Buddhist Festival of Wesak. Please write to **World Goodwill** or its Nigerian affiliate: **Goodwill Association of Nigeria,** for the actual date of World Invocation Day each year.

World Invocation Day is supported by many different groups and organisations throughout the world. World Goodwill and Goodwill Association of Nigeria promote the celebration of World Invocation Day through a range of literature including guidelines on how you can help ensure that the day is more widely observed in your community. Copies of the Great Invocation in card, bookmark, leaflet and poster forms are available on request.

World Goodwill is an international movement founded in 1932 to help in the establishment of right human relations through the use of the power of goodwill. The work of World Goodwill is essentially educational. It is an accredited non-governmental organisation with the Office of Public Information of the United Nations. Its local affiliate: Goodwill Association of Nigeria has units of service in many parts of Nigeria that organise monthly full moon meditation meetings as well as other service activities.

For further information, contact any of the following:

GOODWILL ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA

1. ABUJA UNIT OF SERVICE
PSIN P. O. Box 18
Gwarinpa, Abuja
Email: abujagoodwill@yahoo.com
Phone: +2348035381951

2. BENIN UNIT OF SERVICE
P. O. Box 10838
Benin City, Edo State
Email: beninunitofservice@gmail.com
Phone: +2348055306863

OR

WORLD GOODWILL
No. 3 Whitehall Court
Suite 54 , London
England SW1A 2EF
Email: london@lucistrust.org

Miko Promises Due Process, Integrity In Trade Facilitation At PTML Command

Outgoing Controller Declares N178b Revenue

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE newly deployed acting Controller of Nigeria Customs Service, Ports Terminal Multiservices (PTML) Command, DC Nura Ibrahim Miko has formally resumed, promising to operate with integrity, follow due process and ensure seamless trade facilitation.

He took over from Controller Joseph Anani who disclosed that the command has collected over N178billion revenue as at the time of handing over.

Speaking with officers, men at PTML Command and stakeholders, Miko said: "I want you to know this: I am here to work with you, not merely to lead you. Under my watch, Integrity will be non-negotiable, trade facilitation will remain our priority, just as due process will be strictly respected. Teamwork will be our greatest strength. Results will be achieved through collaboration, not fear. Together, we will take this command to greater heights."

Miko, who stated this after taking over from Comptroller Anani, described the area as a well organised Command, promising to build on the achievements of his immediate predecessor.

Interswitch Unveils Digital Forecourt Suite With 'Pay-As-You-Want' Capability At Summit

By **Sulaimon Salau**

INTERSWITCH has unveiled its tailored Digital Forecourt suite, an integrated digital retail ecosystem designed to seamlessly connect payments, operations, and customer experiences within modern fuel retail environments.

The unveiling took place at the NNPC Retail Business Transformation Summit held at the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF), Abuja, where Interswitch participated as headline technology partner.

At the centre of the Digital Forecourt ecosystem is the "Pay-As-You-Want" capability, a flexible payment solution that enables customers to choose how they pay for fuel and related services, across cards, transfers, USSD, QR, wallets, and other payment channels, while empowering retailers to deliver faster, more convenient, and truly customer-centric experiences.

The summit convened regulators, industry leaders, technology providers, and key stakeholders to explore strategies shaping the future of retail energy in Nigeria.

Olam Agri New Products To Capture Evolving Tastes

By **Sulaimon Salau**

OLAM Agri's wheat-milling business, Crown Flour Mill Limited, has unveiled its new wheat flour and semolina brands, Mama's Choice Flour and Mama's Pride Semolina, as part of its continued drive to capture evolving consumer needs.

Speaking at the events, the Managing Director, CFM, Nitin Mehta, described the product launch as a demonstration of the company's commitment to delivering market-driven solutions while sustaining the business position as a leading player in the nation's food and agribusiness sector.

"Our ambition is not only to remain a market leader but to continue setting the pace in quality, affordability and innovation within the segments we operate in. Mama's Choice Wheat Flour and Mama's Pride Semolina were developed after extensive market/consumer research and engagement with shoppers, users, retailers, and confectioners who demanded a wheat flour that delivers better yield, lower oil absorption, whiter finished products.

RCC Unveils Enhanced Global SIP Trunking, Microsoft Teams Direct Routing

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

ROUTERCALL Communications (RCC), a leading provider of innovative omnichannel communication solutions, has announced significant enhancements to its Global SIP Trunking services and a powerful new offering – fully integrated Microsoft Teams Direct Routing.

These advancements empower multinational corporations, SMEs, and corporate organizations with unparalleled reliability, flexibility, and cost efficiency in their business communications.

The CEO of RouterCall Communications, Mr Adeola Akindele, said the move becomes very essential as the way businesses communicate is fundamentally changing, , noting that RCC is at the forefront of this evolution.

"Our enhanced Global SIP Trunking service breaks down geographical barriers, offering businesses a truly borderless communication experience. Coupled with our new Microsoft Teams Direct Routing, we are enabling organisations to leverage their existing collaboration platforms as a fully functional.

Africa Faces $90b Yearly Energy Investment Gap Ahead 2030 Transition Goals — Expert

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

AFRICA faces an estimated $90 billion annual energy investment gap as countries across the continent intensify efforts to achieve their 2030 energy access and transition goals.

The Chairman of Schneider Electric, Jean Pascal Tricoire, disclosed that Africa would require nearly $200 billion in yearly energy investments to meet those targets, compared with current funding levels of about $110 billion.

Speaking on the continent's energy outlook, Tricoire described electricity as the strategic backbone of economic growth in West Africa, noting that industrial expansion, digital infrastructure, healthcare systems and modern cities all depend on the availability, reliability, and efficiency of power supply.

Citing World Bank energy access data, he said, close to 600 million people across Africa still lack access to electricity.

He added that Nigeria alone accounts for more than 80 million people without electricity access, making it one of the world's largest energy access deficits.

He further noted that even in areas where electricity connections exist, millions of households and businesses continue to experience unstable and inadequate power supply.

"West Africa continues to experience some of the lowest electrification and reliability levels in the world, with millions still facing inconsistent or insufficient supply even when connections exist," he said.

Tricoire also highlighted the growing pressure on electricity systems arising from the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, cloud computing and digital infrastructure.

He stated that global electricity demand from data centres rose by about 17 per cent in 2025, largely driven by AI-related workloads and increased cloud computing growth.

"In Nigeria, data centre capacity is already estimated at more than 130 megawatts, yet operators still rely heavily on alternative power sources because of persistent grid instability," he said.

The Schneider Electric chairman argued that improving electricity supply across the region could significantly accelerate economic integration and industrialisation under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

According to him, the AfCFTA has the potential to boost Africa's Gross Domestic Product by more than $500 billion by 2043 if supported by adequate energy infrastructure.



Chief Executive Officer, Nestle Central and West Africa, Samer Chedid (left); Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Wassim Elhusseini; Chairman, Board of Directors, Gbenga Oyebode; Secretary/Legal Adviser, Bode Ayeku, and Finance Director, Josue Mbassi during the 57th yearly general meeting of the company held in Lagos. PHOTO: MARVELLOUS OBASA

ISN Medical Targets African Expansion, Local Manufacturing

By **Sulaimon Salau**

AS Nigeria continues to grapple with a healthcare system under severe strain, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of ISN Medical, Felix Ofungwu, has urged the federal government to urgently implement the historic Abuja Declaration — a 2001 commitment by African Union member states to allocate at least 15 percent of their annual national budgets to the health sector.

Addressing journalists in Lagos, Ofungwu disclosed that Nigeria is a signatory to the accord but has not executed the policy, adding that regrettably, only a handful of AU member countries have honoured the commitment in the years since.

He also advocated for stronger collaborative efforts across public and private sectors to bridge persistent healthcare gaps, noting that foreign exchange volatility had historically posed challenges for medical equipment importation. "Things have been relatively more stable over the past twelve months," he said, describing the development as an opportunity for organisations to deepen investment in the Nigerian healthcare space.

On the organisation's future direction, Ofungwu said, "We are committed to a strong sense of values, integrity, and we don't compromise on quality. We ensure that patients who have any interaction with us are properly diagnosed. We've done this consistently for 45 years. In the future, we would like to see all patients get the right diagnosis and that ISN has led the charge that every patient is properly diagnosed." He added that the organisation provides equipment and consumables used to confirm diagnosis, is involved in disease research, and is intentional about the partners it works with.

A significant part of ISN Medical's work is channelled through its Consumer Healthcare Unit, which focuses on bringing quality diagnostic solutions directly to patients and healthcare providers.

Start-ups Get N50 million To Boost Operations

By **Sulaimon Salau**

THE founder and Group Managing Director of the Rainoil Group, Dr. Gabriel Ogbechie (OON), has given ten start-ups N50 million as part of efforts to help these companies scale.

Each of the start-ups got N5 million during a symposium, Dr. Gabriel Ogbechie's Entrepreneur Symposium, themed, 'Resilient Entrepreneurship: Building in an uncertain economy' held to mark the 60th birthday of Ogbechie.

The beneficiaries were picked from the over 100 entrepreneurs that applied for the grant, which was shortlisted to 26, before the 10 eventual winners were selected.

Highlighting Nigeria's population of over 200 million consumers, Ogbechie noted that the current macroeconomic challenges are accompanied by massive consumer demand across logistics, housing, agritech, and retail commerce.

He therefore implored young Nigerians, especially entrepreneurs, to focus on operational discipline and long-term planning rather than immediate profits.

He recalled founding Rainoil in 1997 with a modest startup capital of just N300,000 utilizing insights he gained during five years of working as a sales and operations executive in an indigenous oil company.

Instead of acquiring expensive retail assets upfront, the company initially focused on niche product sourcing and wholesale distribution logistics. Over nearly three decades, that model has evolved into an integrated energy giant:

Ogbechie challenged the common focus on macroeconomic risks, pointing out that Nigeria's population size creates reliable, baseline demand across several core sectors.

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ENUGU: 08033958839, 07030180057
ONLINE: 08058717159, 08126307209

CHANGE OF NAME

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Clark Ibrahim Tamaraebi now wish to be addressed as Clark Ibrahim Tamaraebi Idahosa. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Idiahi Christopher now wish to be addressed as Idiahi Christopher Ehimegbe. My DOB is 10-10-1988 not 08-06-1988.All former documents remains valid. Public note.

ADDITION OF NAME: I, formerly known as Eneh Christiana, now wish to be known as Eneh Ozoemenam Christiana. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ADDITION OF NAME: **I,** formerly known as Tobore Gift Efe now wish to be addressed as Tobore Gift Efe-Kingsley. All former document remain valid General public take note.

ADELEKE: I, formerly Adeleke Favour Faith, now wish to be known as Iyunade Favour Faith. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ALIMI: I, formerly Alimi Oluwadamilola Aminat now wish to be known henceforth as Alade Oluwadamilola Aminat. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

AMAECHI : I, formerly known as Miss Sylvaline Chidimma Amaechi, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Sylvaline Chidimma Obiuto. Former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ANITA: I, formerly known as Utieyin Eyela, now wish to be addressed As Anita Utieyin Nemi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note

AYANBISI : I, formerly known as Olufunmilayo Anuoluwa Ayanbisi, now wish to be addressed as Olufunmilayo Anuoluwa Adekunle. All former documents remain valid.General public take note

BANJOKO : I, formerly known as Miss Rosemary Odunayo Banjoko now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Adediwura Odunayo Oluwafemi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note

BENAFEGHA : I formerly known as Yeri, Benafegha Charles now wish to be addressed as Yeri Charles John. All former documents remain valid. W.A.E.C and General public take note.

BUSARI: I, formerly known as Miss Busari Rukayat Olamide now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Mordi Rukayat Olamide. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

CONFIRMATION OF NAME This, Faith Osebhahemen Onoabhagbe and Onogbhagbe Faith Osebhahemen is same person now addressed as Onoabhagbe Faith Osebhahemen. Former documents remains valid, public note.

CORRECTION OF DATE OF BIRTH : I, Eboh Onyebuchi Valentine, On my WASC, my date of birth was wrongly written as 28th Nov. 1988 instead of the correct date as 24th Sept. 1986. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured as Mohammed Sabo instead of Mohammad Jibrin Bawayo. All former documents remain valid. General public take.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured on my BVN as Oshoporu Gbenga instead of Oshuporu Gbenga Samuel. All former documents remain valid. Banks, public take note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly captured on my NIN and BVN as Osigweh Lilian Oluchi instead of Osigwe Lilian Oluchi. All former documents remain valid. General public note.

CORRECTION OF NAME: My name was wrongly written as Olu-Bukola Adegunloye instead of Olusegun Kola Adegunloye. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

DANIEL: **I,** formerly known as Daniel Aghogho now wish to be addressed as Emekpu Aghogho Lucky. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

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ENWENINEN: I, formerly known as Temple Boniface Enweninen now wish to be addressed as Temple Boniface Enwenwen. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

EPUNDU : I, formerly known as Epundu Amarachi Miracle now wish to be addressed as Chukwuemeka Amarachi Miracle. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

EZEADILI: Formerly known as Ezeadili Esther, Chinwe Ezeadili, or Chinwe Esther Ezeadili, I am now addressed as Chinwendu Esther Ezeadili. All former documents remain valid. Public note

FANIYI : I, formerly known as Faniyi Hamdalat Bolanle, now wish to be addressed as Abdulrahman Hamdalat Bolanle. All former documents remain valid General public take note

FASUSI: I, Fasusi, Bayo Olanrewaju is the same person as Fasusi Adebayo Olanrewaju. All former documents valid. General public take note.

ILOUGA: I, formerly Miss Ilouga Chizoba Chetachi, now wish to be known as Mrs. Ani Chizoba Chetachi. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OBIANIGWE : I formerly known as Obianigwe Josephine Chidimma now wish to be addressed as Mrs Nwedo Josephine Chidimma (NEE. OBIANIGWE) All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODEBIYI: I, formerly Miss. Odebiyi Oluwatobi Ayomide now wish to be known as Mrs. Mafe Oluwatobi Ayomide. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

ODIJIE : I formerly known as Odijie Victoria now wish to be addressed as Azenabor Victoria. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKECHUKWU: I, formerly known as Okechukwu Cynthia Chinelo now wish to be addressed as Idike Cynthia Chinelo Oluwafemi . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

OKORIE: I, formerly known as Okorie Mirabel Eziada now wish to be addressed as Odimegwu Miriabel. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

OLANIYAN: Formerly known as Olaniyan Oluwasegun Simon now wish to be know and address as Olaniyan Oluwasegun Olubunmi. All former documents remain valid. Public note

OLAOLUWA: I, formerly known as Olaonipekun Israel Olaoluwa now wish to be addressed as Olaonipekun Israel Olaoluwakiitan. All former documents remain valid. General Public note.

ONWUSURUKA: I, formerly Onwusuruka Donatus Ugochukwu now to be called Onwusuruaka Donatus Ugochukwu. All former document remain valid General public take note.

PEACE : I, formerly known as Peace Isang, now wish to be addressed as Peace Kawasch. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

PEPPLE: I, formerly known as Pepple Francis now wish to be addressed as Reginald Francis Pepple. All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME: I, formerly Toyosi Ajoke Keshinro now wish to be addressed as Rukayat Omotoyosi Keshinro. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

REARRANGEMENT OF NAME: I, Formerly known as Kadiri Ali now wants to be addressed as Ali Kadiri. All former documents remain valid. General public, take note.

UWAKHONYE :I, formerly known as Miss Patience Iyagan Uwakhonye, now wish to be addressed as Mrs. Patience Iyagan Onu . All former documents remain valid. General public take note.

News

Ogun Reaffirms Commitment To Boosting Diaspora Investment In Tourism, Hospitality

From **Azeez Olorunlomeru, Abeokuta**

OGUN State government has reaffirmed its commitment to boost the state's economy through Diaspora investments, especially in the tourism and hospitality sector.

Speaking at the inauguration of Treal Hotel and Suites, located in Ibara Housing Estate, the Secretary to the State Government, Tokunbo Talabi, who represented Governor Dapo Abiodun, said the state remains a prime destination for investors due to its strategic location and growing economic potential.

Talabi added that Ogun's proximity to Lagos, coupled with its expanding tourism assets and rich cultural heritage, positioned it as a natural hub for hospitality and leisure investments.

He commended the chairman of the hotel, Mr. Adebayo Fagbenro, for returning to invest in his home state after over two decades abroad, describing the move as a vote of confidence in Ogun's business environment.

"The government remains committed to creating an enabling environment for investors, especially members of the Diaspora bringing global experience and capital into the state," he said.

Also speaking, the founder of the Kingsway International Christian Centre, Matthew Ashimolowo, called for stronger collaboration between Nigerians at home and those in the diaspora to drive national development.

Search AfriCon Conference Ends In Lagos, Moves To Kenya In November

By **Suliyat Tella**

IT was a session of insights, as renowned digital experts converged on Lagos for the third edition of Africa's most dependable digital marketing conference, Search AfriCon, which was held at Oriental Hotel, recently.

The conference, which has enlarged in scope and quality since its debut in 2024 afforded professionals in the digital field like content creators, social media managers, paid media and agency leaders as well as founders a full day of expert-led sessions, practical workshops, and high-value networking, involving over 250 attendees drawn from Africa and beyond.

Founder of Search Africon, Ebere Cecilia Jonathan, who expressed delight at the success of the event, highlighted the importance of the conference in equipping African professionals with the tools and strategies they need to enrich their craft in order to impact positively on African businesses.

Stakeholders Demand Stronger Frameworks As CIPMN Inducts 39 Professionals

By **Oludare Richards**

STAKEHOLDERS across the economic and governance sectors have called for stronger institutional frameworks to drive national development, identifying effective project management as the critical engine needed to achieve sustainable growth.

This position was the central theme at the recent mandatory proficiency training, annual conference, and induction ceremony organised by the Chartered Institute of Project Management of Nigeria (CIPMN) Membership Arm in Abuja, culminating in the formal induction of 39 new members into the institute.

In an official notice during the event, the CIPMN Membership Arm addressed ongoing institutional friction, clarifying that under the Federal Government Reforms of 2022, the central council is no longer responsible for membership recruitment, training and induction.

The Arm urged the regulatory body to focus on its core responsibilities—such as strengthening the project management cadre within the civil service, alleging that these areas are currently neglected.

It confirmed that the CIPMN Membership Arm, under Hajiya Hajara Yusuf, remains the body responsible for training and induction, not the Council Secretariat under Mr. Henry Ifeanyi Mbadiwe.

The institute successfully conducted its hybrid mandatory proficiency training, focusing on Module One of the CIPMN Principles.

Nigerian Saxophonist Awaits Guinness World Records Confirmation After 38-hour Performance

By **Opeyemi Babalola**

A NIGERIAN saxophonist, Gbemileke Samuel Adekeye, fondly called G-Effect, has completed a 38-hour nonstop performance in an attempt to set a new Guinness World Record.

The achievement surpasses the current record of 33 hours held by Portuguese saxophonist Elvis Nunes Sousa, who set the feat in 2025.

Speaking at the Airport Hotel, Ikeja, where the marathon performance was held, Adekeye said although he was unable to meet his original 40-hour target, the challenge was meant to inspire young Nigerians to look beyond limitations and chase their dreams with resilience and determination.

"My inspiration comes from trying to lay a legacy and inspire the younger generation not to look at any limitation or barrier to whatever they set out to do," he said.

Samuel also revealed that he hopes to bring global recognition back to Nigeria by surpassing the Portuguese record holder.

"The current champion is from Portugal; so presently I want to bring Nigeria's name into the limelight again," he added.

The saxophonist described the attempt as physically and mentally demanding, noting that preparations for the record-breaking feat began over a year ago.

"I've been preparing for over a year now. I believe with God on my side, it is possible," he said.

Project Manager, Ademiluyi Michael, described the marathon attempt as a long-term dream that has been in development for over two years.

Two Schools Emerge Best At Health, Wellness Debate

By **Isaac Taiwo**

OUR Ladies of Apostle Secondary School, Yaba and Atlantic High School, Epetedo, emerged the two best in the first and second categories of debates contested among six participating schools during the maiden edition of 'The Integrated Health, Wellness and Education Conference."

The conference was organised by Global Affairs Magazine under the theme 'Bridging Health, Wellness and Education for Sustainable National Well-being.'

The Convener, Regina Robinson, described the event as a strategic intervention aimed at encouraging more Nigerian students to pursue careers in medicine and other specialised healthcare professions amid the growing wave of brain drain in the sector.

"This initiative was conceived in response to the increasing migration of medical practitioners and health professionals abroad due to poor remuneration and unfavourable working conditions in Nigeria.

"The conference is deliberately targeted at secondary school students to inspire them to embrace careers in medicine, pharmacy and specialised healthcare fields" she said.

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SPECIAL REPORT ON NIGERIA'S EXCEPTIONAL AND MOST VALUE-ADDING FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

ACCORDING to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), studies have shown that GDP can be increased by as much as 35% if level playing fields are created for both men and women in labour force participation. Women constitute half Of Nigeria's population, and thus, a critical mass in the potential labourforce ofthe country.

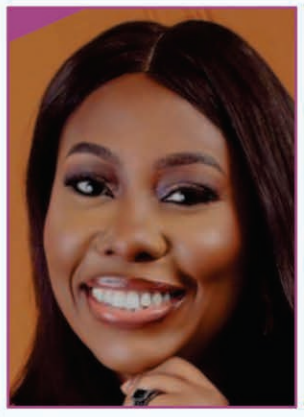
In an increasingly dynamic world that we live in today, it is necessary that women be well integrated into the labour force so that the country can reap the full economic benefits deliverable from women due to their enormous contributions to economies.

Educated and informed women can drive prosperity and innovation just as they can help to improve the quality ofthe society. For this reason, they are needed in every sphere ofthe economy if Nigeria is to achieve greatness. Therefore, having qualified women in the workforce would definitely translate to higher standards, hence more aggregate output.

***The Guardian** is showcasing some selected female professionals who occupy the front row based on depth Of their knowledge in their chosen fields and who have distinguished themselves in a string of notable ways in the course of their careers.*



RAHMATALLAH DABIRI-OBADINA
Executive Director, Operations, Kresta Laurel Ltd



ADETOUN AKINSUNMI
Chief of Staff, SeamlessHR



ADERONKE SMITH
Head, Bancassurance, emPLE Insurance



RACHEAL IHEANACHO
Head, Human Resources, CFAO Mobility Nigeria



MOYOWA URANJE-ODUESO
Head, People & Culture, SeamlessHR



BUNMI OJUMU
Fin. Controller, International Energy Services Ltd



FUNMILOLA ABIOLA-OYEWOLE
Milo Sports Marketing Manager, Nestle Nigeria



CHINWE AGOMUO
Assistant Sales Manager, Mantrac Nigeria



RACHAEL OWOLABI
Head, Marketing/Customer Experience, emPLE Insurance



OMONIGHO BROWN
Head, Contract Management, Julius Berger Plc

Rahmatallah Dabiri-Obadina - A Resilient Woman Administrator Taking Kresta Laurel Higher And Higher

A resilient and resolute administrator with prolific results in managing high profile projects, Rahmatallah Dabiri-Obadina, Executive Director, Operations of Kresta Laurel Ltd, a leading elevator/ lifts firm in Nigeria is a professional with over 25 years of diversified experience in business growth, strategic planning, and process management. An expert channel developer, negotiator, and strategist, she is a business executive who has had successful roles in sales, procurement, project management, products and services in her career.

Rahmatallah who studied Mathematical Sciences with focus on operational research, and has added a Masters in Business Administration, MBA, has equally undergone a management programme at the Lagos Business School. Furthermore, she is a certified professional manager- a Fellow of the Nigerian Institute of Management. She joined Kresta Laurel Ltd in 2001 as a client service officer and through hardwork rose through the ranks to become General Manager in 2019 before gaining another promotion in 2024 to Executives Director, Operations, in appreciation of her invaluable contributions and value-adding services in the company.

As the Executives Director, Operations, her role traverses overseeing and coordinating the entire business activities in the company in order to achieve its set goals and objectives of customer satisfaction, profitability growth and innovative advancement. She is equally tasked with developing and implementing strategies for providing cost- effective, consistent and reliable services to customers across product offerings.

Speaking about influencers on her life and career, the woman who formulated and executed a blueprint corporate strategy for Process Efficiency And Profitability With Exceptional Outcomes for the company firstly mentioned God, thanking Him for his mercy and grace on her, and then her family, loving husband, Mr Olatunde Obadina, children and siblings. "I am blessed with a large, closely tied nuclear and extended family," she says, adding "progress and achieving successes are pivoted on the bedrock of family love, care, understanding and support."

Rahmatallah who also got an Outstanding Commendation award for the instrumental role she played in driving record high sales in 2008 as Deputy. General Manager, a thing which culminated in Kresta Laurel's Improved ranking as first indigenous and foremost international ranking elevator /vertical transport and material handling company in the country, did not also forget the role her dad, Engr Olatunde Dabiri played in her life. She acknowledged him as being a pillar of strength who had been helping to chart her course of growth, providing immeasurable support since childhood. "He identified my innate potentials and believed in my capacity, and that gave me courage and determination to succeed despite all odds. I am indeed eternally grateful to him", she stated.

She continued, "I am privileged to have a dad as a mentor. He taught me resilience, perseverance, integrity, and the culture of hard work. He emphasized humility, modesty, and decency; morals that I am proud to cascade to younger generations as well. In his own words-'No sweat goes uncompensated, continue to put in your best and someday, sometime, it will definitely pay off, and it might be when you least expect the gains. These values have been my modus operandi, and I have testimonies of the harvest of goodwill"

Another great influence on her which she didn't fail to mention is her principal, Senator Otunba Gbenga Daniel, the founder of Kresta Laurel whom she described as an exceptional leader whose courage, determination and faithfulness are exemplary. According to her, he is the person that has provided the platform for her growth, and an enabling environment to maximize her potentials.

A woman whose value-adding competences in the company is distinctive, Rahmatallah has severally coordinated, planned and executed iconic projects, mobilized for installation and after sales maintenance services across the country whilst also ensuring contract promises are kept for customer satisfaction, business continuity and profitability. She is equally playing an important role in seeing to the synergy between the core business units and branch offices coordination for effective, compact and well-organized processes aimed at cost effectiveness and standard practices.

Besides, with her leadership style that inspires and empowers, the KLL team is a always gingered to perform at their best. Thus, winning together is entrenched as a core value while safety practices is prioritized. Apart from this, she has successfully refined and implemented new client service procedures, a measure which has created effective and efficient services delivery and also created structures for procurement, logistics, and project management processes. Additionally, a database for reviews, gap closure and requisite improvement has been created by her. Notably too, she was a part of the team that won the SEB Manager from the OEM for Service Equipment Business Best Practices 2015 including an International Operations Excellence award to the company in 2024 amongst other accomplishments.

Like many other professional women in career jobs, Rahmatallah has faced challenges over time in her career. Said she: "Being a woman amongst men leaders can be very daunting, one is perceived to be the weaker party, as such, your opinions are sometimes tainted with the perception of 'a woman's emotion'

But on the contrary, women usually have a firm resolve in our approach to problem solving and target reaching efforts. In fact, a woman needs to be exceptionally competent to survive in a man's world"



Asked of her aspirations for the company, she responded saying she wants it to continue to wax stronger and continue to be the industry leader offering specialized products and services. While it continues to foster innovative concepts and contributions to the country's technological advancement, she also looks forward to the company diversifying and growing in leaps and bounds. Furthermore, she projects that the company will continue to build competences amongst teaming graduates and technical trainees whilst providing career opportunities for people in the country and the diaspora just as it continues to be a great place to work.

And to budding female professionals, she advised them to be well trained in order to cope with the intellectual demands of their chosen careers adding that self-confidence, integrity, hard work and resilience also are needed if they want to succeed. Also, she counselled them to be fully engaged in the business or company agenda by rendering selfless service.

TheGuardian Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

SPECIAL REPORT ON NIGERIA'S EXCEPTIONAL AND MOST VALUE-ADDING FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

Adetoun Akinsunmi- Improving Operational Efficiency At SeamlessHR



A business leader with a strong background in consulting, human resource management, operations, strategy, customer success and organizational growth, Adetoun Akinsunmi is the Chief of Staff at SeamlessHR. Asked what the function entails, she replied: "My role involves driving strategic priorities, ensuring alignment across teams, improving operational efficiency, supporting executive decision- making and helping the organization execute on key growth initiatives. It is a role that combines strategy, leadership and execution"

Her career journey has been diverse, she started briefly in sales, then moved to consulting at KPMG where she had opportunity to work across different industries and business challenges. The experience gave her the broad exposure, sharpened her problem-solving skills and built a strong appreciation of how organizations create value. Thereafter, she transitioned into human resources at SeamlessHR where she developed deeper expertise in people, strategy, organizational effectiveness and talent management. Afterwards, she delved into customer success, helping businesses realize value from technology solutions. Overtime however, her responsibilities have expanded into strategy and operations leading to her current role as Chief of Staff.

Adetoun whose work principle has always been to add measurable value to any organization where she finds herself has added value in no small measure to SeamlessHR over the years. She has helped improve cross functional execution, strengthen customer success and revenue initiatives, supported organizational design, driven accountability and help leadership turn strategy into measurable results. In particular, she was a major contributor to Codeable, one of the company's social impact programmes under SeamForGood which focused on equipping underserved and marginalized communities with technology skills, mentorship, as well as access to opportunities. Supporting initiatives like that, she says, reflects her belief that business success should also create meaningful social value.

On the memorable experiences in her career, Adetoun said it is seeing people she has mentored grow into leadership roles. "There is something deeply fulfilling about investing in people and watching them step into their potential with confidence," she asserted. Besides, she values the transformational initiatives that she has led which improved business performance, strengthened execution and enhanced team effectiveness.

Like many women, her career has not been totally smooth sailing. According to her, there are times when qualities that are positively described in others are interpreted differently In women just as there was the reality of juggling professional work with home care. However, she hinted that she handled them by focusing on results and allowing consistency and competence speak for her.

Her goal is to continue to contribute to building impactful organizations while equally contributing meaningfully to Africa's business and technology ecosystem. And to upcoming female professionals, she charged them to build competence relentlessly and not to shrink themselves to make others comfortable.

Committed To Adding Value To emPLE Insurance With Her Insurance and Sales Expertise

-Aderonke Smith, Head, Bancassurance



RAISED in a disciplined, value-driven family where integrity, loyalty and diligence is prioritized, these values have continued to shape Aderonke Smith's personal and professional journey. A chartered insurer she is today the Head, Bancassurance for emPLE Insurance, a function through which she drives innovative distribution strategies that deliver structured, value-driven solutions through bank partnerships for the company.

A product of the University of Ilorin, a professional insurer and an associate of the National Institute of Marketing of Nigeria, Aderonke has deep expertise in retail distribution, financial institutional accounts and corporate sales in the insurance industry. Her career commenced at Old Mutual and has evolved over time as she has led high-performing teams with strong track records of success in the course of her career. A glowing and robust insurance professional, she has earned several personal awards and have built and led award- winning teams recognized for their excellence.

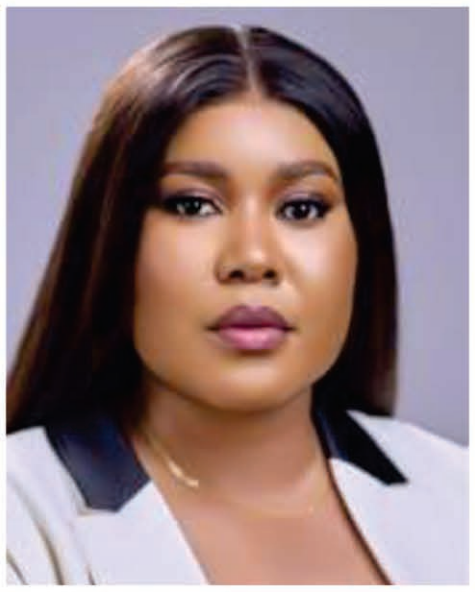
As Head of Bancassurance, she has been able to add value to the company in no small way. Said she: "I am consistently committed to adding value by leveraging my wealth of experience in customer acquisition, relationship management and partnerships to distribute fit-for-purpose insurance products across Nigeria. My risk management and sales expertise alongside strategic partnerships drive operational excellence and foster a client- centric culture. I also add value through innovative partnerships, business engagement and risk advisory initiatives. Leading a dedicated team, I provide tailored financial solutions to a diverse range of corporate clients, from SMES to large financial institutions ensuring we fully address their unique risk needs, safeguard their business continuity, and empower them to thrive."

Some of her most memorable moments come from leading high-impact teams to design innovative, value-driven insurance solutions, with a strong focus on expanding financial inclusion in Nigeria. She has also had the privilege of mentoring team members, helping them grow and excel in their roles. These pivotal experiences have been central to her growth as well and contributed to the lasting impact she continued to create in the insurance industry in Nigeria.

She admits that as a woman she has encountered challenges which range from bias to resource constraints and societal expectations. "I tackled these by building a strong support network both professionally and personally and seeking mentorship from both men and women who guided me. I also invested in my skills through continuous learning and stayed committed to delivering results, which gradually earned me respect and opened more doors. Each challenge became an opportunity to grow, and I have learned to lead with confidence, empathy, and a focus on inclusive success," she emphasized.

Her goal for her department is to see it become a go-to partner in insurance distribution by deepening customer engagement, expanding financial literacy and driving innovative product solutions. And to budding female professionals, she counseled them to stay endlessly curious, invest in skills, always nurture strong networks and to never stop learning.

For Me, HR Is A Calling - Racheal Iheanacho, Head of Human Resources, CFAO Mobility Nigeria



FOR me, HR was never simply a career of choice, it was a calling. I have always been drawn to people, their potential and the invisible forces that either unlock or limit their performance. I have an innate ability to connect with people across all levels, from the frontline workers to the business leaders. I also believe deeply that organizations must get the people part right to deliver great business results. Beyond every profit margin, every product launched, every customer served, is a human being making a decision. HR sits at the intersection of all of that and that is exactly where I wanted to be."

The above is the response of Racheal Iheanacho, Head of Human Resources, CFAO Mobility Nigeria when asked why she took to human resource management as a profession. An education graduate of the University of Ibadan, Racheal has over the years invested relentlessly in her growth in the profession, earning globally recognized credentials including the Senior Professional in Human Resources-International, SPHRi, associate membership of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Management of Nigeria, ACIPM, a Lead Auditor certification in ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management Systems, and professional certifications In Data Analytics, Lean Six Sigma and Leadership Coaching from Lagos Business School. For her however, the defining milestone in her career development, was completing the Executive Certificate Programme in Organizational Leadership at Harvard Business School, USA.

Racheal's career started at Jubaili Bros Engineering Ltd where she did her youth service. During the service year, an opportunity opened in the HR department and she walked up to the Managing Director to express her interest and that was how she was absorbed. After Jubaili Bros, she has however worked in the oil and gas servicing, fast moving consumer goods, IT management, and engineering sectors, before joining CFAO Mobility in 2023. Within two years, she got elevated to Head of HR, thereby leading the people strategy of one of Africa's highly regarded and storied mobility firms.

The most memorable experiences of her career are not in promotions or accolades, she stated. For her, seeing the people she gave an opportunity; opening a door for someone whose talent simply needed a room to breathe and then watching them flourish has always been of immense joy to her. Accordingly, she stressed that HR is not about processes for her, but about people whose lives she has quietly shaped.

Her vision for the HR function at CFAO Mobility is to build a robust internal leadership pipeline, identifying and developing the next generation of the firm's leaders from within. She is intent on making the firm an employer of choice industry-wide in Nigeria. Ultimately, she says she wants to leave the HR function stronger than she found it. And to aspiring female professionals, she wants them to know that they are the most important project they need to work on and to invest in their competence relentlessly. Asides, she enjoined them to build their support system with care, be fiercely kind, hold on to their faiths and to always stay ready and be the most prepared every time as opportunities rarely announce themselves.

Helping to Build An Institution That Africa Can Be Proud of Is Fulfilling-Moyowa Uranje-Odueso, Head, People & Culture, SeamlessHR



SEAMLESSHR is an HR technology firm that builds software to help organizations across Africa manage their employee lifecycle. Currently operating in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and Uganda, one of its top female executives today is Moyowa Uranje-Odueso. A lawyer and hr practitioner, Moyowa is the current Head, People and Culture in the firm, a role which makes her responsible for how the company attracts, develops and retains talents while also shaping the culture and leadership capability needed to scale sustainable outcomes.

"When I joined SeamlessHR, "she says, "we were a small team of 40 in Nigeria with a big dream. I've had the priviledge of helping turn that dream into a reality as we've grown across Ghana, Kenya and Uganda. For me, it's never just been about filling roles or expanding offices; it's been about building an institution that Africa can be proud of. By focusing on intentional culture and sustainable performance, we are proving that the continent can produce world-class leaders and companies that stand the test of time."

With years of experience working across finance and technology industries, Moyowa's career, no doubt, has evolved over time into one that sits at the intersection of people, business and strategy. According to her, she had always been naturally drawn to people, growth, and building solutions, which is why hr became a meaningful path to her in spite of the fact that she initially read law. And today, she is especially passionate about leadership, organizational culture and helping African businesses build competitive institutions. A professional who has been fortunate to be listed among the Top 100 HR Professionals In Africa and has been named as one of the Top 10 HR Women In Tech, she has always wanted her name to be associated with excellence. So, when these honours came, she was especially proud because they reflected years of hard work and intentionality.

Moyowa who says her family has been one of the biggest influences on her career and life grew up around people who valued hard work, excellence and discipline, values that have shaped her life till date. In particular, she hinted that her grandmother, Lady Emma Adeyola Adebiyi, now of blessed memory contributed immensely in shaping her by teaching her to be diligent, kind, generous, yet to always 'carry fire'. Professionally, she has also been fortunate to work with visionary leaders and founders who challenged her to think bigger, move faster, and operate outside traditional norms.

Her goal for the firm is to help it continue to scale by ensuring they build strong leadership pipelines, attract and retain top talent even as they create systems that allow people to perform at high levels while still being connected to the culture and mission of the organization. "I'm also very passionate about helping position African talent and institutions competitively on the global stage," she says. "For me success is building a company that is not only high-performing, but also intentional about people, culture and long-term impact"

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SPECIAL REPORT ON NIGERIA'S EXCEPTIONAL AND MOST VALUE-ADDING FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

Building And Strengthening Trust With Our Customers Is Our Major Focus - Rachael Owolabi, Head, Marketing And Customer Experience, emPLE Insurance

A versatile marketing and customer experience professional, Rachael Owolabi is an executive with over two decades of experience across the value chain of insurance spanning sales, underwriting, claims, operations, marketing and customer experience. This, needless saying, has exposed her to how companies create value not just from a product standpoint, but from the customer's perspective. An MBA from the University of East London holder, she is currently the Head of Marketing and Customer Experience at emPLE Insurance, one of the foremost insurance companies in Nigeria today.

Rachael who is also currently pursuing an Executive MBA in Digital Marketing and Business Transformation at Rome Business School, and who also possesses professional certifications in digital marketing, customer relationship management and project management explained that she decided to pick on marketing as a profession because it is not just about communication but also about shaping perception, driving engagement and ensuring that a brand's promise aligns with the actual experience customers receive. "Today", she noted, "in my role at emPLE, marketing is about impact. It allows me to sit at the intersection of strategy, data, and creativity, using insight to build trust, strengthen brand positioning and drive sustainable growth. Ultimately, my decision to move into marketing was driven by a desire to bridge the gap between what businesses offer and what customers truly need in a way that creates value on both sides"

ne memorable experience in her career was to have led the transition of customer service processes at Old Mutual Nigeria where she worked in the past, from a largely manual system to a fully digitized, automated framework. At that time, she hinted, customer interactions were fragmented across channels which created inefficiencies and impacted the overall processes negatively. Alongside this, she equally championed a shift towards a more data-led approach by introducing structured systems for capturing, analyzing and leveraging customer data.

At emPLE Insurance, her focus has been on strengthening the connection between the company's brand promise and the experience customers receive. This, she informed, involves integrating marketing and customer experience into a unified strategy that not only drives visibility, but also builds trust, improves retentions, and enhances overall business performance.



Additionally, she has succeeded in embedding a more customer-centric approach across the organization, ensuring customer insight informs decision-making across marketing, operations, and product development. She has equally been able to refine their brand positioning and drive more structured, data-informed marketing efforts so that their campaigns and communications are creative, relatable and aligns with measurable outcomes

Going forward, her priorities, and that of the company is to simplify how insurance is communicated and understood. "Insurance can often feel complex or distant to many people, and our goal is to break that barrier by making our messaging clearer, more relatable, and easier for everyday customers to engage with. When people understand what they are buying, they are more confident in their decisions", "she remarked.

She continued, "Alongside this, we are focused on continuously building and strengthening trust with our customers. In our industry, trust is everything and it goes beyond what we say as a brand to what customers consistently experience. Ultimately, our goal is to position emPLE as a brand that customers not only choose, but believe in; one that empowers them through clarity, consistency, and a genuine commitment to their long-term financial well-being"

My Entry Into Marketing Did Not Begin As A Deliberate Choice - Funmilola Abiola- Oyewole, Milo Sports Marketing Manager, Nestle Nigeria



FOR Funmilola Abiola -Oyewole, her professional journey began in the banking industry where she managed to build a strong foundation in discipline, customer engagement, work ethic and professional standards. But against all expectations, when she was leaving the industry, it was for a sales function at Nestle Nigeria Plc, a fast moving consumer goods leading company in Nigeria. It was her stand-out performance in this role there that eventually opened the door into marketing and brand building for her. Today, she works as the Milo Sports Marketing Manager in the company.

Thus, she often tells people that marketing for her did not begin as a deliberate choice. "It began with performance, and over time, it became a natural fit, "she says. "My entry into the function was a result of strong performance in sales which created the opportunity to transition into the discipline. But beyond that opportunity I discovered that marketing aligned deeply with how I naturally think and operate. I have demonstrated this with remarkable business result and academic qualifications where I emerged the best graduating student in CIM, UK, Diploma in Marketing. I also have MBA in Marketing in addition to my Bachelors and Master's degree in French Language."

Funmilola who confessed that she is drawn to the way marketing connects business objectives with human behavior hinted that the discipline demands curiosity, sharp observation and the ability to translate insight into meaningful action. Talking specifically about Milo Sports Marketing however, her role focuses on building Milo's relevance through sports-driven platforms and youth engagement. It involves designing and executing programmes that connect the brand to supporting children and young people through sports. Stating how she has fared in the role, she informed: "Under my watch, we continue to strengthen Milo's positioning as a leading advocate that sports is a great teacher that supports life skills development such as resilience, teamwork, discipline and confidence. The brand continues to maintain strong equity and relevance because of its consistent commitment to youth development and our focus is on deepening the impact while ensuring sustainability, reach, and meaningful engagement across Nigeria."

As a professional woman, her career too has come with challenges peculiar to women. One of the most consistent has been navigating high-performance environments where expectations are demanding, timelines are tight, and excellence is non-negotiable. In addition, there had been moments where assumptions were made before performance was seen. She said she tackled this by allowing performance to speak for her, and over time, credibility built itself through delivery rather than explanation.

On the challenges being encountered in the course of her work and how this is being handled, she remarked that operating in a market as large and diverse as Nigeria can really be challenging particularly in scaling sports programmes effectively across different regions. Added to this is infrastructure gaps in grassroots sports development. To address these, her team has continued to strengthen partnerships, innovate execution models, and refine how sports experiences are delivered.

Her goal is to continue to deepen Milo's impact in youth sports development even as they continue to expand the reach of their engagement platforms across Nigeria. And to budding female professionals, she advised them to build competence and allow performance to define credibility. Furthermore, she charged them to embrace continuous learning, seek out mentors and remain resilient in the face of challenges.

Chinwe Agomuo: Treading In A Field Men Solely Tread And Excelling

SHE initially worked with a major distributor of fast-moving consumer goods, with responsibility for promoting and driving the sales of the products under her belt across several open markets in Lagos State before she transitioned into a completely different terrain- the sales of heavy machinery and industrial equipment to construction and industrial companies at Mantrac Nigeria Ltd, a rarity for women. Working in a highly technical and male-centered industry and being a woman, one would wonder how she would cope. But Chinwe Agomuo has not only coped but excelled, proving her resilience and capability to tread where men solely tread.

"Despite the challenges that came with entering a highly technical and competitive industry, I remain focused, determined, and optimistic about my growth," said Chinwe who through consistency, resilience, and a strong willingness to learn, has continued to make her mark among men in the firm. "Operating in the heavy machinery and industrial sales sector as a woman has not always been easy, especially in an environment where the field is largely occupied by men. However, one of the unique experiences that comes with the job is having the opportunity to stand where men stand, and speak where men speak, while confidently establishing myself in the industry."

Now an Assistant Sales Manager in the company, Chinwe revealed that her secret for performing is her commitment to continuous learning and self-development. "I chose to focus on building my knowledge of the industry, understanding the products, and improving my communication and relationship-building skills. Over time, I learned to let my competence, professionalism, consistency and results speak for me. Through determination, discipline, and a positive mindset, I have continued to grow professionally and earn the trust of clients and colleagues alike," she disclosed.

One of the most defining moments in her career occurred in September last year, when Caterpillar celebrated its 100th anniversary. As part of the celebration, there was a sales promotion on excavators where participants were required to sell to three different customers in order to quality for an exclusive trip to the Caterpillar Demonstration and Learning Center in Malaga, Spain to join in the 100 year celebration. She successfully met the target and qualified for the trip. Said she: "It was a proud moment in my career as it reflected the hard work,



dedication, and consistency I had invested in building myself within the heavy machinery industry. Qualifying for such an opportunity was not only a professional achievement but also a reminder that commitment and persistence truly produce results."

However, the discharge of her duties has not been without challenges. According to her, unlike fast moving consumer goods, heavy equipment sales often involve long decision-making processes, multiple stakeholders, high-value transactions, and extended negotiations before deals are concluded. This, she explained, can make converting opportunities into actual sales a lengthy and demanding process. Also, because heavy machinery and industrial equipment is a heavy capital outlay, many customers may delay purchasing decisions due to funding limitations, changing market conditions or economic uncertainties, she added. To overcome them however, Chinwe informed that what she has done is to focus heavily on relationship management, continuous learning and solution-based selling.

Beyond professional achievements, her aspiration is to positively influence people through her work, experiences and interactions. She is desirous of using her journey to inspire the young people and women in particular to pursue growth, embrace challenges and remain resilient regardless of the obstacles they may encounter.

My Role Is To Safeguard The Commercial Integrity of Our Projects - Omonigho Brown, Head of Contract Management, Julius Berger Plc



SHE is the Head of Contract Management for Julius Berger Plc. A lawyer of over 17 years standing, her job is to safeguard the commercial integrity of this giant construction firm's projects and this entails translating complex engineering goals into robust contractual frameworks, such as FIDIC and bespoke EPC models, manage risk allocation, negotiate high-value agreements, and resolve claims. She ensures that the firm's contract processes are commercially sound, and aligns with their strategic bottom line.

The woman we speak of is Mrs Omonigho Oyoma Brown. With a Second Class Upper in Law obtained from the Delta State University, a Master of Laws, LL.M from the University of South Wales, UK, and an MBA with Distinction from Nexford University, USA, alongside professional certifications in contract management, arbitration, and project leadership, Omonigho surely has come a long way. Beginning her career in banking, she moved into energy sector as a contract analyst with Schlumberger, now SLB, covering sub-saharan Africa, supporting cross-border contracts across Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, and Ethiopia. It was from here that she moved to Julius Berger Plc.

Recalling the defining times of her career, Omonigho stated: " A definitive highlight has been steering the complex commercial and contract management frameworks for Nigeria's landmark infrastructure projects, including the second Niger Bridge, the Lagos-Sagamu Expressway, and the Bodo-Bonny Road. Standing on sites that will drive economic growth for generations, knowing my legal and commercial strategy helped lay the groundwork, is incredibly fulfilling. Being listed among these 25 exceptional professionals is certainly another proud milestone."

On the challenges being faced as a woman in an infrastructure sector which is predominantly male, she said she had to face the unspoken challenge of having to prove her competence beyond bias and stereotypes. To handle it, she explained that she allowed her delivery speak for her by focusing entirely on driving commercial value. Besides, she learned to build on collaborative alliances and lifting other women as she climbed.

The most profound influences on her life has been her parents as she said that they were the ones who instilled discipline, resilience and a keen sense of purpose early in her. "My mother shaped my values around integrity, responsibility and emotional strength, while my father reinforced structure, focus, and the importance of excellence in execution," she says. Professionally however, she stated that she was influenced by mentors and global practitioners in construction law, arbitration and project delivery.

On why she chose to be a lawyer, she replied; "I chose law at an early stage, influenced by a novel I read about a highly accomplished female lawyer whose precision and courtroom success left lasting impression on me. My father also played a guiding role in that decision, encouraging me toward the legal profession because he saw it as a strong foundation for discipline, reasoning, and long-term professional versatility."

Omonigho's ultimate goal for her department is to build it to a world-class contract management function comprising of a high-performing, agile team of commercial contract professionals so that contracts can function as strategic enablers of delivery, not just legal safeguards. And to budding female professionals, she enjoined them to build deep technical competence and not negotiate on excellence. She further admonished them to focus fiercely on adding values and mastering their craft.

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Why Youths Must Look Beyond Traditional Farming

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

EXPERTS have called on Nigerian youths to look beyond traditional farming and tap into the broader agricultural value chain.

While speaking at a youth-focused conference, 'Beyond Farming', with the theme: 'Exploring Real Opportunities Across the Agricultural Value Chain' in Lagos, they noted that the country's agricultural sector is ripe for disruption — and young people are being urged to lead the charge.

The experts noted that from processing and logistics to marketing and tech, opportunities abound for those willing to innovate and plug the gaps.

The Convener of the conference, Chy Nwakanma, said agriculture has been narrowly defined, overlooking the vast ecosystem beyond farming, including processing, logistics, trade, technology, and finance.

Nwakanma emphasised that the most scalable and impactful opportunities lie within the broader value chain, but young people need clarity on where to start and how to participate. "Young people are interested, we are curious, we are willing," she said, but many are asking questions like "Where do I start? What role can I play? How do I move from interest to action?"

She noted that the conference aims to address these questions and provide practical pathways for young people to participate in the agricultural value chain.

Nwakanma said: "Beyond Farming" is a platform designed to move the conversation forward, beyond ideas and inspiration, into real opportunities and action.

In her keynote address, Abisola Olusanya, the Lagos State Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Systems, emphasised the importance of moving beyond farming.

"Agriculture in 2026 is no longer about horses, commerce, and cultivation," she said. "It's about technology, logistics, finance, climate resilience, innovation, food enterprise, and economic prosperity," said Olusanya, who was represented by Gboyega Idris at the veterinary department at the ministry.

According to her, the Lagos State government is already making strides in this direction, with initiatives like the Lagos Central Food Systems and Logistics Engagement Effort, a food logistics and aggregation centre set to become one of the largest in sub-Saharan Africa.

She explained that the project aims to reduce post-harvest losses, improve food quality, and connect producers directly to consumers and processors.

Olusanya added that the state is also promoting youth engagement in agriculture through programmes like the Lagos Agricultural Programme (LAP), which provides practical training, enterprise support, and internship opportunities for young Nigerians.

TheGuardian Conscience, Nurtured by Truth SPECIAL REPORT ON NIGERIA'S EXCEPTIONAL AND MOST VALUE-ADDING FEMALE PROFESSIONALS

Bunmi Alomaja Ojumu: Driving Operational Excellence, Innovation, And Financial Sustainability at IESL

BUNMI is a seasoned finance executive, chartered accountant, and strategic business leader with over 20 years of cross-sector experience spanning audit, media, and oil and gas. As Financial Controller at International Energy Services Ltd, she has led major financial transformation initiatives, strengthened governance systems, improved profitability, and driven sustainable growth. Recognized for her excellence, leadership, and value creation mindset, she remains passionate about mentoring women, empowering youth, and building enduring institutions in Nigeria.



Her background

I am a seasoned finance executive with over two decades of progressive experience in corporate finance, strategic leadership, governance, and business transformation. I hold a B.Sc. in Accountancy and have built my career on a strong foundation of discipline, integrity, and continuous professional development.

Over the years, I earned the distinction of becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria, FCA, alongside global certifications in Project Management, PMP, Financial Modelling and Valuation Analysis, FMVA, ACIT, and other professional credentials.

My background reflects a rare combination of technical expertise and executive leadership. It has equipped me with the ability to solve complex business challenges, drive profitability, build sustainable systems, and lead institutions with vision and accountability.

What made her go into the accountancy profession

Accountancy appealed to me because it is the true language of business. Behind every successful organization is a sound financial structure, and I wanted to be part of shaping that foundation.

To me, accountancy has never been about numbers alone, it is about strategy, stewardship, and decision-making. It provides the intelligence required to measure performance, manage risks, create value, and position businesses for long-term growth.

It was the perfect profession for someone like me who values analytical thinking, integrity, and impactful leadership. Finance is not just about managing numbers—it is about shaping the future of organizations.

Her career trajectory

My career journey has been both dynamic and rewarding, spanning key sectors of the economy.I started in Audit and Consultancy, where I gained rigorous technical training in controls, compliance, and financial reporting. I then moved into the Media/E-content sector, where I developed agility, innovation, and commercial insight in a rapidly evolving industry.

For several years now, I have operated in the oil and gas sector with International Energy Services Ltd, IESL, where I have progressed into executive leadership.

This multi-sector exposure has given me a broad strategic perspective; from operational finance to enterprise-wide leadership, performance management, treasury optimization, and corporate transformation.

Influences on her life and career

My life and career have been shaped by a combination of visionary mentors, exceptional leaders, and strong family values.

Professionally, I have been inspired by leaders who demonstrated that finance goes beyond reporting, it is about influencing direction, creating value, and leading with integrity. They taught me to think beyond balance sheets and understand the bigger picture of business growth.

Personally, my family has been my greatest support system. They instilled resilience, discipline, and ambition, which enabled me to pursue multiple professional qualifications while rising through demanding corporate leadership roles.

Challenges faced in career and how she handled them

Like many women in technical and leadership spaces, one major challenge has been overcoming unconscious bias, especially in traditionally male-dominated sectors.

There were moments when I had to work harder to prove competence and ensure my voice was heard. I addressed this not through resistance, but through consistent excellence, technical mastery, and measurable results.

Over time, performance became my strongest voice. I moved from earning a seat at the table to becoming a contributor to strategic direction. I believe every woman should aspire not only to sit at the table, but to influence the agenda.

I also leveraged emotional intelligence, collaboration, and executive presence because true leadership is not only about authority, but influence.

I do not see challenges as barriers; I see them as opportunities to create better systems. Memorable experiences in career. Several moments stand out as defining milestones in my journey.

Early in my career, I was entrusted with coordinating finance and logistics for a Shell-sponsored multi-state academic competition across four states in Nigeria. Managing budgets, people, operations, and diverse stakeholders at that stage of my career was transformational. It taught me leadership under pressure.

Another major highlight was pioneering the Project Accounts & Budget Control function at IESL. I built the framework from inception, creating a structured financial control model that became central to project delivery governance and accountability.

I am also proud of leading the successful implementation of SAP and SAGE ERP systems. These were more than technology upgrades, they were enterprise transformation initiatives that improved controls, reduced manual inefficiencies, enhanced reporting accuracy, and strengthened audit outcomes. Transformation happens when vision is matched with execution.

How she has been adding value to International Energy Services Ltd

I believe value creation must be measurable.

At IESL, I have strengthened internal control systems, improved financial governance, and enhanced reporting transparency. I have driven cost optimization initiatives that improved cash flow and working capital efficiency.I also introduced financial modelling tools that support strategic decisions, scenario planning, and investment analysis.

Beyond systems and numbers, I have built and mentored teams, creating a culture of accountability, performance, and continuous improvement. Success is meaningful when it creates opportunities for others to rise.

When women lead with excellence, institutions become stronger and societies prosper.

Challenges faced in the discharge of duties and how she tackled them

The operating environment remains highly dynamic, ranging from energy market volatility to evolving regulatory frameworks and macroeconomic pressures.

I address these challenges through proactive risk management, scenario planning, data-driven analysis, and agile decision-making.

Another key challenge is talent development in a fast-changing finance environment. I tackle this by mentoring teams, encouraging innovation, and promoting continuous professional development.

Sustainable success today requires both strong systems and strong people

Goals

My immediate goal is to continue driving operational excellence, innovation, and financial sustainability within my organization.

Beyond corporate leadership, I am passionate about nation-building through youth empowerment, financial literacy, and mentorship.

I also aspire to support the emergence of more female executives in finance and business leadership.

Ultimately, my goal is to create lasting impact through institutions, people, and legacy.

Advice for budding female professionals

First, invest deeply in competence. Technical excellence gives confidence, credibility, and staying power.Second, be resilient. Career growth is rarely linear; challenges are often part of preparation for leadership.

Third, seek mentors and build strong professional networks. Guidance can accelerate growth significantly.

Finally, guard your integrity fiercely. Your reputation is your most valuable professional asset, protect it more than your title. Skills may open doors, but character keeps them open.

To every aspiring female professional: never shrink your ambition. You belong in every room your excellence qualifies you for.

IFC Targets Investment In Nigeria's Livestock, Energy Sectors

THE International Finance Corporation says it would send a mission to Nigeria to explore scalable investment structures that could unlock private capital.

Managing Director of the Corporation, Diop Makhtar, announced this in Kigali, Rwanda, during a meeting with President Bola Tinubu on the sidelines of the just concluded 13th Africa CEO Summit.

Makhtar, who led an IFC delegation that included Regional Vice President, Africa, Ethiopis Tafara, and Director, Central Africa and Nigeria, IFC, Dahlia Khalifa, said IFC is interested in discussing modalities for collaboration with Nigeria in energy, housing, and livestock production.

He lauded President Tinubu for the bold reforms initiated by his administration, especially the removal of the fuel subsidy and the harmonisation of the nation's exchange rate.

Makhtar described Nigeria's reform process as courageous and transformative, sending a strong signal to international investors about the country's commitment to difficult but necessary reforms.

He said local currency facilities and banking partnerships, including structures involving Nigerian financial institutions such as Access Bank, could strengthen efforts towards interstate financial integration, ease trade, and enhance business across the continent.

Makhtar said African leaders faced common development challenges and must collectively drive what he described as "African Renaissance" built around strong African institutions and regional economic champions.

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TheGuardian Conscience, Nurtured by Truth

CELEBRATING 100 INSPIRING AND AWARD-WINNING AMAZONS IN NIGERIA

Throughout history, the central role played by women has ensured the stability, progress and long-term development of nations. In the 21st century, the issues of gender balance and the need to accord women equal opportunities and allow them achieve their full potentials in the society, have gained more momentum, globally. While some progress has been made to overcome impediments to their chances of contributing to development, a lot still needs to be done in the area of decision-making. According to the United Nations (UN), investing in women and respecting their rights is the surest way to uplifting communities, organizations and countries, as well as achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Most importantly, the global body made its submission to the effect that 'Balance' is not a women's issue, but rather a business issue. The race is on for gender-balanced boardroom, gender-balanced government, gender-balanced media coverage, gender-balanced employment opportunities, gender-balanced wealth creation, gender-balanced sports activities, amongst others.

Thus, the involvement of women in nation-building is an inalienable right, as well as inescapable reality for a holistic and comprehensive political, economic and social advancement in the modern world. In truth, over time, some women who have been entrusted with leading roles to manage human and material resources have more often than not, proved that given adequate backing, they can perform creditably. Indeed, the 21st Century has birthed the long-awaited desire of women to be in the corridors of power, to be vocal about their needs, and to execute their dreams by contributing their quota to national development.



LADY OTUNBA (MRS) ADEBOLA OSIBOGUN, Chairman, Imowo Microfinance Bank



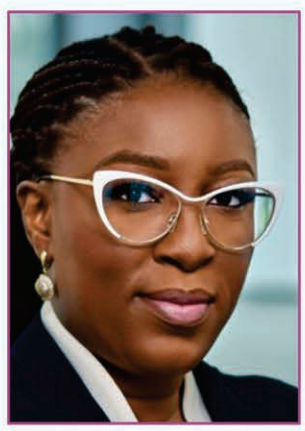
PROF JOY NGOZI. EZEILO (OON, SAN), Dean Emerita, Faculty of Law, University of Nigeria



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KEMI ABIMBOLA WILLIAMS
Board Member & ED, Tetracore Energy Group

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CELEBRATING 100 INSPIRING AND AWARD-WINNING AMAZONS IN NIGERIA

ABIGAIL UTOMI, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, Alpha10 Group: Helping Clients Build, Preserve, And Grow Wealth With Integrity

Abigail Utomi's career has been shaped by a sustained commitment to value creation, institutional and human capital development, and advancing sound financial decision-making. Over the years, she has built extensive experience across the wealth management ecosystem, covering Asset Management, Securities Trading, Trust Services, and Investment Banking in both tactical and strategic roles. This breadth of exposure has provided deep insight into the opportunities and structural challenges within Nigeria's financial services sector.

A defining inflexion point in her career came with the recognition that clients sought more than financial products; they required trusted partners capable of providing guidance through uncertainty and supporting long-term wealth creation. That understanding became a foundational pillar for the vision and establishment of Alpha10 Group. Her professional trajectory has been non-linear, a characteristic that has proven to be a strategic advantage. Each role, challenge, and leadership assignment contributed to the depth of experience and perspective needed to build an organisation centred on long-term value creation, innovation, and client success.



What inspired you to build a career in Nigeria's financial services sector?

NIGERIA'S financial services sector presents enormous opportunities to drive economic inclusion, wealth creation, and national development. I was inspired by the possibility of creating solutions that empower individuals and businesses to achieve financial stability and long-term growth through efficient capital allocation.

The sector is also constantly evolving. New technologies, changing client expectations, and shifting economic realities ensure that there is always an opportunity to innovate, solve problems, and create meaningful impact.

How would you describe Alpha10 Group's mission and unique value proposition to clients?

Alpha10 Group exists to help clients build, preserve, and grow wealth through disciplined, transparent, and client-focused financial solutions. Our mission is centered on creating sustainable value while maintaining the highest standards of professionalism and integrity.

What differentiates Alpha10 is our ability to combine institutional-grade investment expertise with personalized client engagement. We understand that clients have different objectives, risk tolerance, or financial journey, which is why our solutions are tailored rather than standardized.

We are also deliberate about looking beyond short-term market noise. While many investors focus on what is happening today, we focus on positioning our clients for where opportunities will be tomorrow. Our approach combines rigorous analysis, strategic insight, and prudent risk management to deliver sustainable outcomes over the long term.

What does "growing wealth sustainably" mean in practice at Alpha10, and how do you ensure clients' financial goals align with long-term stability?

Growing wealth sustainably means creating financial solutions that deliver value over time while guarding against loss from potential risks. It is not simply about achieving the highest return in a particular year; it is about creating a financial future that can withstand market cycles and economic uncertainty.

At Alpha10, we achieve this through disciplined asset allocation, diversification, rigorous investment research, and continuous portfolio monitoring. We work closely with clients to understand their objectives, risk appetite, and future aspirations, ensuring that financial decisions are aligned with both immediate needs and long-term financial security.

Wealth creation is a marathon, not a sprint, and markets have a way of humbling anyone who forgets that.

How would you describe your leadership philosophy, and what specific practices do you use to build a culture of integrity and accountability at Alpha10?

My leadership philosophy is built on integrity, excellence, accountability, and continuous learning. I believe that strong institutions are built by empowered people who understand both their responsibilities and the impact of their work.

At Alpha10, we promote transparency, professionalism, and clear accountability structures. We encourage ownership at every level of the organization and ensure that performance expectations are clearly defined and measurable.

Leading by example is particularly important to me. People are more likely to embrace high standards when they see those standards consistently demonstrated. We strive to create a culture where ethical conduct is non-negotiable, excellence is expected, and continuous improvement is celebrated.

Reflecting on your journey in finance, what challenges have shaped your leadership the most, and how have those experiences strengthened your approach at Alpha10?

Like many in finance, I've navigated economic uncertainty, market volatility, FX fluctuations, inflation, and regulatory shifts. These challenges shaped my leadership philosophy around resilience, adaptability, and disciplined decision-making. They taught me that effective leadership is less about avoiding problems and more about responding with strategy and judgment.

At Alpha10, these lessons guide how we manage risk, seize opportunities, and build for sustainable growth, because in a changing market, sound judgment matters as much

For young Nigerian women looking to lead in finance, tech, or entrepreneurship, what key lessons and practical advice would you offer based on your own experience?

Competence, character, and commitment will outweigh any stereotype. Keep investing in your development, as the business world demands constant learning, adaptability, and excellence. Seek mentors, build strong networks, and take opportunities even when you feel unprepared, leadership often arrives before readiness. Confidence helps, but expertise, results, and integrity sustain success. Excellence opens doors that doubt cannot.

What does being recognized as an "Inspiring Amazon in Nigeria" mean to you personally?

This recognition is both humbling and a responsibility. It reminds me that I must continually inspire the next generation of leaders. Its real value lies not in the title, but in showing that meaningful impact is possible from any starting point. If my story encourages even one person to pursue their goals with more confidence, the honor has served its purpose.

It also demands consistency, staying current with trends while upholding strong ethical standards.

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SPECIAL REPORT ON CELEBRATING 100 INSPIRING AND AWARD-WINNING AMAZONS IN NIGERIA

Imowo Microfinance Bank: Celebrating An Amazon Driving its Responsible Solutions, Innovation and Leadership

Right from recorded history, the pivotal roles played by women in nation building cannot be overemphasized, as the issue of gender balance and need to give women equal opportunities continuously gather momentum in modern society. However, some progress has been achieved but more is needed. In recognition of this feat, The Guardian's "100 Inspiring and Award-Winning Amazons in Nigeria" showcases groundbreaking and inspirational women across varied sectors who are catalysing the national growth and development. Lady Otunba (Mrs.) Adebola Osibogun stands among them. She is a defining force, as well as, distinguished financial services professional with over four decades of experience spanning commercial banking, real estate financing, trusteeship and corporate governance.

She was the 18th President and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN), served on the board of many other companies, and currently chairman of board of directors at Imowo Microfinance Bank. A bank that is being engineered by seasoned, experienced and competent bankers, and thus, committed to empowering its customers through responsible solutions, innovation and leadership.

Otunba (Mrs.) Osibogun is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, the Chartered Institute of Taxation of Nigeria, the Nigerian Institute of Management (Chartered), among others. She has attended executive programmes at INSEAD, Kellogg School of Management, London Business School, Euromoney Learning, and Lagos Business School, and has published widely on mortgage institutions, financial literacy, and housing finance.

Her contributions have been recognised with numerous honours, including the Legendary Award of the CIBN.

Beyond her professional life, she is deeply committed to philanthropy, having endowed the Otunba 'Debola Osibogun Essay Competitionfor tertiary students, awarded scholarships to underprivileged students, reconstructed the Vicarage at St. Paul's Anglican Church, Irewon, and funded the construction of the David Olatunde Agbeja Moot Court at the University of Ilesha. She serves as President of the Consumer Awareness and Financial Enlightenment Initiative (CAFEi), a non-profit dedicated to financial education and consumer protection.

In this interview, she speaks on her educational background, career milestones and other sundry issues.

Educational background and experience in the industry

My educational journey began at Queen's School, Ibadan, where I completed both O'Level and Higher School Certificate programmes. I then proceeded to the University of Ibadan, where I earned a Bachelor of Education degree in Education & Economics, followed by a Master of Science degree in Banking and Finance from the same institution, which I hold with enormous pride and deep affection.

I was appointed an ambassador of the University at its 75th anniversary celebration.

In terms of industry experience, I have spent over four decades in financial services, covering the full spectrum of commercial banking, mortgage banking, microfinance banking, and trusteeship. I rose to become General Manager at Cooperative Bank Plc, then Managing Director of COOP Savings & Loans Limited (now Cooperative Mortgage Bank, Ibadan) and ultimately MD/CEO of Skye Trustees Limited (now STL Trustees), from which I retired in 2009.

I have served on the boards of major institutions, including FBN Mortgages Ltd and FBN Holdings Plc, and I currently serve on the boards of Odu'a Investment Company Ltd, Imperial Homes Mortgage Bank, and Imowo Microfinance Bank. I continue to remain actively engaged in corporate governance today.

Career journey

My career began in earnest in the banking sector, when women in top leadership roles were exceedingly rare. From my early years, I was clear about the values I wanted to bring to the profession - integrity, rigour, and genuine service to people. I worked hard, took on increasingly complex responsibilities, and eventually rose to executive leadership positions across mortgage banking, commercial banking, and trust services.

One of my proudest moments was serving as Managing Director of COOP Savings & Loans (now Cooperative Mortgage Bank) and later Skye Trustees Limited (now STL Trustees), where I led institutions through periods of significant transformation. Alongside my executive career, I pursued leadership within professional associations. Between 2001 and 2005, I had the honour of becoming the first woman elected National President of the Mortgage Banking Association of Nigeria. A decade later, in 2014, I was elected the 18th President and Chairman of the Governing Council of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria. I was also appointed by the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, to serve on two Presidential Committees: the Presidential Committee on Urban Development and Housing, and the Presidential Committee on Mortgage Financing.

Retirement from active banking in 2009 did not mean withdrawal from service. I have continued to contribute through board roles and non-executive directorships. I reinforced this commitment by setting up my NGO, Consumer Awareness and Financial Enlightenment Initiative (CAFEi). Currently, I serve as Chairman at Imowo Microfinance Bank. Every chapter of this journey has reinforced my belief that a career built on purpose is its own reward.

About Imowo Microfinance Bank - its vision and mission

Imowo Microfinance Bank has a proud history stretching back to 1993, when it was incorporated as Imowo Community Bank Limited. It received its CBN microfinance banking licence in 2006 and has since grown into a well-regarded community financial institution with over 21,000 customers, serving the people of Ijebu-Ode and its environs. Our Vision is to be a leading innovative service provider delivering seamless financial solutions. Our Mission is to consistently offer well-designed products backed with efficient service delivery to our customers through multiple channels, using a well-equipped and highly motivated workforce to give value to our stakeholders.

Underpinning everything we do are our core values, captured in the acronym IMOWO — Integrity, Mutual Respect, Openness, Welcoming, and Outstanding Services. These are not merely words on a wall; they govern how we engage with customers, colleagues, and community we serve.

How the bank achieves delivering seamless services to customers

Seamless service begins with culture, and the tone is set from the top. At Imowo MFB, we have been deliberate about embedding customer-centricity into everything we do. From our onboarding processes to our loan disbursement timelines and our approach to resolving complaints. Our vision itself speaks to seamless financial solutions, so this is not accidental; it is intentional.

We have also invested in the right people and in building systems and policies that promote consistency and accountability. We operate a computerised platform, offer instant ATM card issuance, and provide mobile banking services so that customers can access their funds around the clock. Our compliance and risk management frameworks are not merely regulatory obligations - they are tools for building trust. When a customer knows that their funds are safe, their data is protected, and their institution will treat them with dignity and transparency, that confidence translates directly into a more positive banking experience.

Insight on gender equality in Nigeria's financial space

The conversation around gender equality in Nigeria's financial sector has come a long way but we must be honest that much ground remains to be covered. When I became the first female President of the Mortgage Banking Association of Nigeria in 2001, and later the President of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria in 2014, these were celebrated milestones. And they were. But we should equally ask ourselves: why did it take so long?

The financial sector has some of the most talented women in Nigeria. The challenge is not one of capability; it is systemic. Boardrooms, C-suites, and leadership pipelines still reflect deeply entrenched biases. Deliberate interventions are necessary: mentorship, sponsorship, enabling policies on parental leave and flexible working hours, and conscious leadership development for women at mid-career level.

I am encouraged by the growing number of women in senior banking roles today. But we need not just representation, we need presence. Women must have a seat at the table where decisions are made, not merely where they are ratified.

Projections for Imowo MFB's growth in 10 years' time

In ten years' time, I see the bank as significantly larger, more technologically enabled, and even more impactful institution - still rooted in the communities we serve, but with a broader reach and deeper footprint.

Our near-term priority is strengthening our core banking infrastructure and compliance systems, which will underpin sustainable growth. Over the medium to long term, I expect the Bank to deepen its product range, expanding agricultural financing, women-focused lending, and digital payment services. Most importantly, I project that, the bank will be recognised not just for its financial performance, but for the measurable difference it has made in the lives of thousands of households and ultimately, it is the most meaningful measure of our success.

Ways forward for women's advancement in Nigeria

The path forward for women in Nigeria requires a multi-layered approach. First, we must address education by ensuring that girls at every level of the society have access to quality learning and are encouraged to aspire to leadership without apology. Second, we must challenge cultural and workplace norms that continue to limit women's professional progression.

Organizations must create environments where women are assessed on merit and given equal opportunities to rise.

Third, women themselves must be intentional about investing in one another. Mentorship and sponsorship are powerful tools, yet not enough women in positions of influence actively pull others up. I have made this a personal commitment throughout my career, and I would encourage every woman in leadership to do the same.

Finally, policy must play its role. Government, regulators, and the private sector must operationalize their gender commitments through board composition targets, procurement policies, and development finance mandates. Words on paper must translate into outcomes in practice.

Relaxation Activities

I am fortunate to have a range of interests that keep me grounded and energized outside of professional responsibilities. I enjoy reading - particularly on finance, leadership, and governance. I am passionate about golf and polo, both of which I have enjoyed for many years.

I also enjoy basketball, which I played for the old Western State team and later served as Captain of the University of Ibadan basketball team throughout my university days. I also derive great pleasure from meeting people from all walks of life.

At the end of the day, my greatest joy is my family - my husband, Sir Otunba (Giwa) 'Deji Osibogun, our children, and our grandchildren, whom I fondly call my "grand-delights." Time spent with them is the most restorative thing in the world.



Lady Otunba (Mrs.) Adebola Osibogun
Chairman, Board of Directors
Imowo Microfinance Bank Ltd.

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Rachel Moré-Oshodi, Chief Executive Officer, ARM Harith Infrastructure Fund Managers: Building Africa's Most Trusted Infrastructure Investment Platform

WITH over two decades of experience, Rachel Moré-Oshodi has built a career across infrastructure, energy, project development, project finance, and investment, with a strong focus on emerging markets and the African continent. Her portfolio includes complex transactions, public-private partnerships, energy projects, and investment platforms designed to meet development priorities while upholding global commercial standards.

As Chief Executive Officer of ARM-Harith Infrastructure Investment Limited, she leads a pan-African investment platform dedicated to sustainable infrastructure, energy transition, and climate-aligned investments. Central to her leadership is the question of how to mobilize long-term capital into the assets and systems required for Africa's growth. Throughout her career, she has been instrumental in pioneering transactions across the region, particularly in energy and infrastructure, helping to define new pathways for private capital participation in Africa's development. Her involvement spans deals with a cumulative value exceeding US$7 billion.

Beyond ARM-Harith, Moré-Oshodi is the founder of Ruwah, a financial literacy initiative for children aimed at building early understanding of money, ownership, confidence, and long-term planning. For her, infrastructure and financial literacy are two sides of the same goal: one provides the physical and economic systems for national progress, while the other equips future generations with the mindset to sustain and benefit from that progress.

In this special report featuring inspiring, award-winning women in Nigeria, the accomplished CEO discusses gender equality, women's contributions to economic growth, and the milestones ARM Harith Infrastructure Fund Managers has achieved over the years. Excerpts…

What drives your commitment to leadership and positive change in Nigeria?

My commitment comes from both experience and conviction. I have seen enough of Africa's potential to know that our challenge is not a lack of talent, ambition or ideas. Very often, the challenge is the absence of systems strong enough to convert that potential into lasting prosperity.

Nigeria is full of brilliant people, resilient entrepreneurs, ambitious young people and enormous pools of untapped capital. But too many people still live below their potential because the infrastructure is weak, access to finance is uneven, institutions are fragile, and opportunity is not always distributed fairly. That is what drives me.

Leadership, for me, is not about title or visibility. It is about responsibility. It is about asking what I am building that will outlive me. It is about using whatever influence I have to strengthen systems, open doors, create opportunity and help build institutions that can carry the next generation further.

I believe deeply in Nigeria. I also believe that belief must be matched with discipline, structure and execution. Positive change does not happen because we hope for it. It happens because people commit themselves to building it, even when the work is difficult and the results take time.

As CEO of ARM Harith Infrastructure Fund Managers, what is the company's mission and vision?

At ARM-Harith, our mission is to mobilise long-term capital into sustainable infrastructure that supports economic growth, improves lives and strengthens African economies.

Infrastructure is sometimes spoken about in technical terms: power plants, transport systems, digital infrastructure, logistics platforms, water systems and social infrastructure. But behind every infrastructure asset is a human story. A business that can operate more efficiently. A hospital that can function better. A farmer who can move goods to market. A young person who can access digital opportunities.

Our vision is to help build one of Africa's most trusted infrastructure investment platforms: an institution capable of mobilising domestic and international capital at scale, and deploying that capital into assets that are commercially sound and developmentally meaningful.

A major part of our work is proving that African capital must not sit on the sidelines of African development. The future of African infrastructure cannot depend only on external funding. Local pension funds, institutional investors, development finance institutions and private capital all have a role to play. And we must build the structures that allow African savings to help finance African growth. For me, that is the real work.

How does ARM Harith Infrastructure Fund Managers support and empower the next generation of women leaders?

We support women leaders by ensuring that women are part of the core business conversation.

At ARM-Harith, women are encouraged to build technical depth, participate in meaningful work, and develop the confidence to contribute in serious investment, governance, legal, finance, investor relations and portfolio conversations. That matters because leadership is built through exposure, responsibility, feedback, sponsorship and trust.

We also align our approach with the principles of the 2X Challenge, which is focused on mobilising capital in ways that advance women as entrepreneurs, employees, leaders, consumers and economic participants.

I believe strongly in mentorship, but mentorship alone is not enough. Women also need access to decision-making rooms. They need to be trusted with complex assignments. They need to see how capital is raised, how investment committees think, how boards operate, how risk is assessed, and how value is created.

What strategies are essential to accelerate gender equality in Nigeria?

We need to move from talking about it to intentionally designing it. For me, three areas are essential: access to capital, leadership in the boardroom, and financial literacy and education.

First, women need better access to capital. Too many women build with less funding, weaker networks and higher levels of scrutiny. That is not a talent problem. It is a capital allocation problem. If women are underfunded, the economy loses businesses, jobs, innovation and productivity that could have been created.

Second, women must be present where decisions are made. It is not enough to say the pipeline of women is improving if women do not sit on boards, investment committees, executive teams and policy platforms where real power is exercised. Representation matters, but authority matters even more.

Third, financial literacy and education must begin early. Girls should grow up understanding money, ownership, investment, negotiation and value creation. Confidence is shaped early, and so is exclusion. If we want more women to build businesses, lead institutions and influence capital, we must prepare them long before they enter the workplace.

Nigeria cannot build at full capacity while women remain underfunded, underrepresented and under-protected. Gender equality is an economic design. It is one of the ways we unlock the full productivity of the nation.

As one of Nigeria's 100 Inspiring and Award-Winning Amazons, what does this recognition mean to you, and how will you leverage it to drive further positive change?

I receive the recognition with gratitude, but also with responsibility. Awards are meaningful, but they are not the destination. For me, this recognition is valuable because of what it can help amplify: the importance of infrastructure, energy access, women's leadership, financial literacy, and building African institutions that can stand the test of time. The word "Amazon" carries an image of strength, but I think real strength is not always loud. Sometimes it is the discipline to keep building when the work is difficult. Sometimes it is the courage to enter rooms where people do not expect you. Sometimes it is the humility to learn, the conviction to speak, and the consistency to execute.

I want to use this recognition to encourage younger women not to wait for permission to lead. Leadership often begins before the title comes. It begins in the way we take ownership, solve problems, build competence and refuse to make ourselves smaller than the work we are called to do.

How can awareness of sexual assault and child protection be strengthened in Nigeria?

We must begin by breaking the silence. Too many cases of sexual assault and child abuse are hidden because of shame, stigma, family pressure, fear of retaliation, or lack of trust in the system. That silence protects perpetrators and leaves victims unsupported.

Awareness must begin in homes, schools, religious institutions, workplaces, communities and the media. Children should be taught body safety in age-appropriate ways. Parents and guardians must know how to listen, believe and act. Schools must have clear safeguarding policies, trained personnel and safe reporting channels.

But awareness alone is not enough. We need enforcement, support and accountability.

Survivors need access to medical care, psychosocial support, legal protection and justice processes that do not retraumatise them. Communities must stop treating abuse as a private matter to be quietly managed.

The scale of the issue is serious. UNICEF Nigeria states that six out of every ten Nigerian children experience some form of violence, while one in four girls and 10% of boys have experienced sexual violence. UNICEF also notes that only a small fraction of children who report violence receive any form of support.

Child protection must become a national priority. Every child deserves to be safe, believed, protected and heard. That should be non-negotiable.

What advice would you give emerging women leaders in Nigeria seeking to create meaningful impact in their communities? Start where you are, but do not think small. Impact does not always begin with a large platform. Sometimes it begins with one problem you refuse to ignore, one person you mentor, one business you build properly, one community you organise, or one institution you help improve.

My advice is to build competence. Be excellent at what you do. Learn the numbers. Understand the system. Speak with substance. Do the work well enough that your contribution cannot be dismissed easily.

Do not wait until you feel completely ready. Many women hold themselves to a standard of perfection that the world does not require from everyone else. Prepare well, but step forward.

Do not confuse humility with shrinking. You can be humble and still be bold. You can be respectful and still be clear. You can be gracious and still ask for the opportunity, the capital, the promotion, the board seat, or the platform.

Also, build with others. No meaningful change is created alone. Find your community. Support other women. Mentor younger people. Keep your values close, especially as your influence grows.

Real change often starts in small ways. But when those small actions are consistent, courageous and connected to a larger vision, they can transform families, institutions and eventually nations.



ARM Harith
INFRASTRUCTURE FUND MANAGERS

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Breaking the hurdles in the energy sector

MY professional journey has been shaped by a blend of creativity, structure, and a strong commitment to delivering value across different sectors. I've always been drawn to roles that involve building systems, solving problems, and bringing people together to achieve shared goals.

A defining moment for me was realizing that leadership isn't about authority, but about influencing the ability to inspire people, providing clarity of vision, and creating impact through others.

I bring over a decade of multi-sector experience spanning corporate services, creative enterprise, and the energy industry. I currently serve as a Board Member and Executive Director, Corporate Services at Tetracore Energy Group, where I oversee corporate operations and contribute to the strategic direction of the organization as we continue to expand our integrated energy solutions across gas distribution and power generation.

Alongside this, I founded McApril Integrated Company in 2010, where we work across interior design, real estate, branding, and logistics. I also co-founded Nextpage Life Foundation, which focuses on education and empowerment initiatives.

At the core of everything I do is a simple goal: to build systems that work, empower people to perform at their best, and create lasting impact.

I am driven by a core passion for excellence and a desire to make meaningful impact. Every project or initiative I undertake is centered on creating solutions, elevating lives, and building lasting value.

I am naturally a problem solver, and this mindset pushed me toward entrepreneurship, where I could identify gaps and take bold steps to address them. Consistency, attention to detail, and a strong commitment to continuous learning have also been critical to my development.

Above all, I value people, building strong relationships, empowering teams, and creating environments where others can thrive. This combination of values and mindset has been instrumental in shaping my professional journey and enabling me to deliver sustainable results.

Nigerian Women in Leadership

There has been noticeable progress in the representation of Nigerian women in leadership across business, politics, and social sectors. More women are stepping into executive roles, founding businesses, and influencing policy conversations. However, there is still a need to accelerate this progress through intentional mentorship, access to funding, policy reforms, and cultural shifts that support women's advancement.

To truly accelerate growth, we must invest in capacity building for young women, create more leadership pipelines, and ensure that organizations adopt inclusive policies that recognize and promote merit.

Challenges and How They Were Addressed

Starting a business in Nigeria comes with its challenges, especially as a woman in a largely male-dominated business environment. In my early entrepreneurial days, there were moments of doubt, limited access to capital, and cultural resistance to women taking up space in certain sectors, particularly in the energy and logistics industries. However, I chose not to see these challenges as limitations, but as opportunities to strengthen my resilience.

Overcoming them required a firm commitment to integrity, grit, and trusting my vision. I knew that to thrive, I had to build credibility through consistent delivery and by exceeding expectations. I surrounded myself with mentors, stayed informed, and remained determined to create my own opportunities. Through faith, perseverance, and a problem-solving mindset, I turned challenges into stepping stones.

Product Achievements and Societal Impact

One of my proudest achievements has been my contribution to the growth and operational excellence of Tetracore Energy Group, where I have played a key role in strengthening internal systems and driving efficiency across the organization. Being part of a company actively addressing energy access challenges and supporting industrial development in Nigeria is deeply fulfilling, as its impact extends beyond business into national economic growth and improved livelihoods.

Equally significant is my work with Nextpage Life Foundation, which I co-founded to empower individuals through education and transformation initiatives. Through this platform, we have implemented impactful projects including school rehabilitation initiatives in Lagos State, as well as scholarship programs that currently benefit over 300 students.

We have also delivered teacher welfare programs in various schools, recognizing the critical role educators play in shaping the future. In addition, our medical outreach programs have provided healthcare access to underserved communities, including minor surgical procedures for over 500 individuals.

Together, these initiatives reflect a deep commitment to creating sustainable impact through strengthening critical infrastructure in the energy sector and improving lives through education, healthcare, and community development.

Structural Barriers to Women's Participation

Despite progress, several structural barriers still limit women's participation in higher levels of decision-making. These include limited access to funding, cultural expectations, inadequate representation in leadership pipelines, and policies that do not fully support work-life balance.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-dimensional approach: stronger institutional policy, deliberate inclusion strategies, mentorship programs, and a shift in societal mindset.

It is also important for women who are already in leadership positions to actively support and create opportunities for others coming behind them.



Abimbola Kemi Williams
Board Member and Executive Director,
Corporate Services at Tetracore Energy Group

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CELEBRATING 100 INSPIRING AND AWARD-WINNING AMAZONS IN NIGERIA

At Meristem Trustees Limited, We Safeguard Client Interests with Vigilance and Expertise

We achieve this through robust governance frameworks, regulatory compliance, strong risk management systems and continuous monitoring of transactions and trust structures. We understand that the financial landscape is becoming increasingly complex, so remaining proactive is critical. We continuously review our processes, adopt global best practices and leverage technology to enhance transparency, reporting, and operational efficiency. Our objective is always to safeguard clients' interests while delivering long-term value.

Take us a bit through your professional journey and your rise to becoming Managing Director of Meristem Trustees Ltd?

MY journey has been shaped by a deep interest in finance, fiduciary responsibility and the long-term preservation of wealth and value. Over the years, I have had the privilege of working across various aspects of trust administration, estate planning, corporate trust services, public trust services and investment-related transactions. What has remained constant is my passion for helping individuals, families, institutions and governments build structures that outlive them structures that preserve value, create continuity and protect legacies. Becoming Managing Director in 2020 was therefore not just a career milestone, but the culmination of years of purposeful learning, leadership and service within the fiduciary space. It is both an honour and a responsibility to lead an institution that is focused on integrity, innovation, and client-centered service delivery.

As a leader in the financial sector, what experiences have shaped your leadership style and what advice would you give to aspiring women professionals?

My leadership style has largely been shaped by resilience, continuous learning, emotional intelligence and the importance of collaboration. Working in the financial services industry teaches you the importance of discipline, strategic thinking and staying calm under pressure. As a woman in leadership, I have also learnt the importance of confidence, consistency and authenticity. I believe leadership is not about occupying a position but about creating impact, empowering others and building sustainable institutions. To aspiring women professionals, I would say: invest in yourself continuously, build real competence, stay grounded in integrity and do not shrink yourself to fit into any room. There will always be challenges, but perseverance and excellence have a way of creating opportunities and opening doors.

What range of services does Meristem Trustees offer and how do they cater to corporate, government sectors, agencies and individual clients?

Meristem Trustees Limited provides a broad range of fiduciary and trust-related services tailored to meet the needs of individuals, corporations, government institutions and public sector agencies. Our offerings span corporate trust services such as debenture trust, bond trust, collective investment scheme trust, escrow services and security trust arrangements. We also provide estate planning and wealth preservation solutions including private trusts, living trusts, executorship services, education trusts, special needs trusts, adieu trusts, Islamic trusts and other bespoke structures. For corporate and institutional clients, we structure and administer transactions that provide security, transparency and investor confidence. For governments and agencies, we support infrastructure financing and public sector transactions through sound fiduciary frameworks. For individuals and families, we help create structures that preserve wealth, ensure seamless succession and protect legacies across generations.

Meristem Trustees Limited has built a reputation in fiduciary services; what core values and systems have driven this consistency over the years?

Our consistency is built on integrity, professionalism, accountability, excellence and client trust. In fiduciary services, trust is everything. Clients are entrusting you with not just assets, but their long-term intentions, family expectations and legacy aspirations. Over the years, we have strengthened our internal governance systems, compliance culture, risk management processes and operational efficiency. We also place significant emphasis on technology, people development and ethical standards, ensuring that every member of our team understands the importance of transparency and diligence in every transaction we undertake.

How do you ensure the highest level of trust and protection for clients' assets in an increasingly complex financial landscape?

We achieve this through robust governance frameworks, regulatory compliance, strong risk management systems and continuous monitoring of transactions and trust structures. We understand that the financial landscape is becoming increasingly complex, so remaining proactive is critical. We continuously review our processes, adopt global best practices and leverage technology to enhance transparency, reporting, and operational efficiency. Our objective is always to safeguard clients' interests while delivering long-term value.

What distinguishes Meristem Trustees Limited from other firms in the same space?

What sets us apart is our ability to combine technical expertise with a personalised approach to client service. We are intentional about understanding the unique realities of every client and designing solutions that align with their long-term objectives, not just their immediate needs. A few months ago, we launched the Special Needs Trust, a deeply personal and impactful solution designed to help parents and guardians create sustainable long-term funding structures for loved ones who are neurodivergent, vulnerable or living with disabilities. Additionally, our strong institutional culture, experienced team of professionals, commitment to innovation, and the collaborative strength of the Meristem Group position us uniquely within the industry. Beyond transactions, we are focused on building enduring relationships founded on trust, excellence, and shared purpose.

How are you leveraging technology and innovation to enhance service delivery and client experience?

Technology and innovation are central to our growth strategy. As client expectations evolve, we recognise that service delivery must also evolve. We are continuously improving our digital processes to enhance efficiency, responsiveness and client engagement. This includes automation of internal processes, improved reporting systems, digital communication channels, and data management solutions that strengthen operational effectiveness. For us, innovation is not limited to technology; it is also about rethinking how fiduciary solutions are structured and delivered in a way that is simpler, smarter and more responsive to client needs.

> **"One of the realities of leadership is that women often have to work harder to prove competence in highly competitive environments."**

Tell us some landmark projects that highlight Meristem Trustees' expertise and impact in the industry?

For us, landmark transactions are never just deals on paper, they are deeply personal milestones in people's lives and legacies. What stands out most for us is the privilege of helping families translate their intentions into lasting impact. Be it preserving family wealth across generations, ensuring continuity of a patriarch or matriarch's vision, protecting vulnerable beneficiaries, or structuring succession for complex business holdings, each project begins with one constant, understanding what a family ultimately hopes to preserve long after they are gone. We take pride in transactions where trusts have enabled harmony where there could have been conflict, stability where there was complexity and continuity where there was risk of disruption. We are honored each time a family allows us walk that journey with them, helping them turn aspirations into enduring structures that protect, preserve and purposefully deploy wealth for generations to come.

How does Meristem Trustees contribute to the broader financial ecosystem and economic development in Nigeria?

We contribute to financial market stability and investor confidence by providing transparent fiduciary structures that support investment, financing and wealth preservation. We play an important role in facilitating capital market transactions, supporting infrastructure financing and strengthening governance structures that enhance institutional credibility and investor protection. Through our services, we also promote intergenerational wealth transfer and sustainable financial planning for individuals and businesses. Strong fiduciary institutions are essential to building stable economies, and we remain committed to contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's financial development.

Looking ahead, what strategic priorities will drive the growth and expansion of Meristem Trustees Limited in the next few years?

Our strategic priorities include innovation, digital transformation, service expansion, talent development and deepening client engagement. We are particularly focused on strengthening wealth preservation and estate planning offerings while also expanding our corporate and public trust solutions in response to evolving market needs. We will continue to reinforce our strategic partnerships, explore emerging opportunities within the financial services ecosystem and continue delivering solutions that address evolving client and market needs. Most importantly, we remain committed to maintaining the trust and confidence that clients have placed in the Meristem brand.

What inspired your passion for fiduciary services and wealth preservation and how has this passion evolved over the years?

My passion for fiduciary services comes from understanding the importance of continuity, protection and legacy. Wealth is not simply about accumulation; it is about stewardship. It is about ensuring that value is preserved, properly governed and transferred responsibly across generations. Over the years, that passion has evolved into a deeper appreciation for the role fiduciary institutions play in creating stability for families, businesses and institutions. Seeing the peace of mind that well-structured trust arrangements can provide continues to inspire the work I do.

What have been some of the biggest challenges you have faced as a leader and how did you navigate them?

One of the realities of leadership is that women often have to work harder to prove competence in highly competitive environments. There can also be unspoken expectations around balancing professional excellence with personal responsibilities and navigating that balance requires intentionality and discipline. I have navigated these challenges through resilience, preparation, continuous self-development and maintaining a strong support system. I have learned to focus less on proving myself and more on consistently delivering value and results. I also believe confidence and authenticity are important. Women should not feel pressured to diminish themselves in order to lead effectively.

What is your approach to innovation in structuring bespoke trust and investment solutions for clients?

At Meristem Trustees, innovation begins with understanding the unique objectives and realities of each client. We recognise that every client's situation is different, so our approach is intentionally solution-driven and highly tailored. We combine legal, financial and operational expertise to develop practical and flexible trust structures that address modern realities, including succession planning, investment protection, transaction security and wealth transfer. Our ability to adapt, think creatively and anticipate evolving client needs allows us deliver solutions that are both practical and sustainable.

What role does collaboration play in delivering value-added solutions to clients?

Collaboration within the Meristem Group is central to how we deliver value-added solutions to clients. While other business units within the group focus on growing and optimising wealth through investment management, capital markets and financial advisory services, we at Meristem Trustees ensure that such wealth is seamlessly preserved, structured and efficiently transferred in line with clients' long-term intentions. This synergy allows us serve clients more holistically. Wealth creation and wealth preservation are not treated as separate conversations but as interconnected stages of a single journey. By working closely with our sister entities, we are able to align investment strategies with succession planning objectives, ensuring assets are not only grown but also protected and transitioned in a manner that reflects each client's wishes.

How do you approach client education and awareness regarding estate planning, trusts and wealth management?

Client education is important to us because many people still do not fully understand the value of estate planning and fiduciary structures. A lot of people assume trusts and estate planning are only relevant for a select few, but the reality is that these structures are important tools for continuity, protection and family stability. We regularly engage clients through advisory sessions, thought leadership initiatives, seminars, webinars, articles, newsletters and tailored consultations aimed at increasing awareness and promoting informed financial decisions. Our goal is to simplify complex concepts and help clients understand how trusts and estate planning solutions can protect their assets, preserve family harmony and secure long-term financial stability. Ultimately, informed clients are better positioned to make decisions that create lasting impact and enduring legacies.



Damilola Hassan
MD, Meristem Trustees Limited

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"From Local to Global: Prof. Joy Ngozi Ezeilo on Law, Justice, and the Fight for Women's Rights"

Please tell us about your background, the defining moment that shaped your leadership journey, and the experiences that led to the founding of the Women's Aid Collective (WACOL).

My journey is one I often describe as moving from local to global, a phrase that also inspired my recent biography, *From Local to Global: A Woman on a Mission*.

I WAS born in Enugu in 1966, just over a year before the Nigerian Civil War began in July 1967. The trauma of war, combined with the loss of my father during my teenage years, profoundly shaped my childhood and ultimately my life's purpose. Those early experiences awakened me to the deep inequalities and systemic biases faced by women.

One pivotal moment stands out. When my father died, my mother was subjected to harmful widowhood practices. Until then, having grown up largely in an urban environment, I had not fully confronted the harsh realities of entrenched gender discrimination. Watching her endure those injustices ignited in me a determination to study law, become a lawyer, and dedicate my life to defending the rights of women and other vulnerable groups.

Academically, I studied law at the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, later earning an LL.M. from Queen Mary College, University of London, and a PhD in Nigeria. I also obtained a Diploma in Peace and Conflict Resolution from Uppsala University, Sweden, and a Diploma in Gender Studies from CODESRIA in Senegal. Although I began my career in corporate law, representing banks, I quickly realized that my true calling lay in human rights, social justice, and transformational change. That realization led me to specialize in public international law, human rights, and criminal law.

Several formative leadership experiences prepared me to establish the Women's Aid Collective (WACOL) in 1997. They include serving as Enugu State Coordinator and National Publicity Secretary of Women in Nigeria (WIN), acting as Publicity Secretary of the International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), mobilizing grassroots women ahead of the 1995 Beijing World Conference on Women, and later serving as Commissioner for Women Affairs and Social Development in Enugu State.

These experiences revealed a major institutional gap: Nigeria lacked an organization that addressed both women's access to justice and reproductive health rights in a holistic way. That insight gave birth to WACOL. The leadership development support I received from the MacArthur Foundation in 1998 further strengthened my vision of building an organization dedicated to advancing the rights of women and young people and securing justice and effective remedies for those whose rights are violated.

What core values have shaped your professional journey and the milestones you have attained?

The milestones I have been privileged to attain, becoming a Professor of Law, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, a Life Bencher, a former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and receiving the national honour of Officer of the Order of the Niger, are grounded in a few non-negotiable values.

Integrity, Justice, and Empathy: I have always believed that laws have little meaning unless they transform the lives of the most vulnerable. Empathy has guided my pro bono work, while integrity has been a lifelong compass. My father taught me early that a good name is worth more than wealth, and that principle has remained central to how I live and lead.

Intellectual Rigor and Innovation: Capacity, competence, and a relentless pursuit of knowledge have been the cornerstones of my personal and professional journey. Whether pioneering the teaching of Women, Children, and the Law at UNN in 1997, which is now an accredited course, or helping to develop curricula in human rights, health law, and reproductive rights, I have always believed that professionals must continue to break new ground. For me, scholarship must not only interpret society; it must help transform it.

Resilience and Persistence: In human rights advocacy, setbacks are inevitable. Bills fail, policies stall, and resistance can be intense. But real leadership means staying the course, regrouping, and continuing the work with conviction. I have never been afraid to speak truth to power, and I do not walk away from causes I believe in.

Grassroots Accountability: No matter how global my work has become, when presenting reports before the United Nations General Assembly, I have remained accountable to the communities and ordinary people whose lives inspire this work. The traditional honours I have received are deeply meaningful to me because they reflect trust from the grassroots, not just recognition from institutions.

How do you assess the progress of Nigerian women in leadership, and what steps are needed to accelerate it?

My assessment is one of serious concerns. Women's political participation in Nigeria remains far below where it should be. Current figures place women's representation in both elective and appointive positions at about 6.7 percent, well below the West African, continental, and global averages. No country can credibly pursue sustainable development while excluding more than half of its population from governance and economic decision-making.

To change this trajectory, we must move beyond rhetoric and put in place firm institutional frameworks.

Legislative Reform and Affirmative Action: We need sustained advocacy for constitutional and legislative reforms. Having contributed to efforts that embedded affirmative action in Rwanda's constitutional framework, I know that legal quotas can make a measurable difference. Nigeria must pass the Special Seats Bill and the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill to ensure women's inclusion is protected by law rather than left to goodwill.

Passage of Critical Gender Bills: Nigeria must also advance the key gender-related bills that have repeatedly faced resistance in the National Assembly, including reforms on women's political representation, citizenship by registration, internal party affirmative action, and indigeneship rights.

Resource Mobilization and Collective Action: We must also invest deliberately in women-led organizations and public institutions that advance gender equality, including the Ministries of Women Affairs, the National Centre for Women Development, NAPTIP, and the National Human Rights Commission. Gender budgeting should be mainstreamed at both federal and state levels. Nigeria has made important international and regional commitments; it must now match those commitments with real resources and measurable action.

What have been some of the greatest challenges in your work, and how have you responded to them?

The challenges have been institutional, cultural, and political, but I have always sought to confront them with strategy, persistence, and purpose.

Legislative Roadblocks: One of the most frustrating moments was seeing five critical gender bills rejected by the 9th National Assembly. Our response has been sustained coalition-building, persistent advocacy, and civic mobilization to ensure those reforms are reintroduced and advanced. At the state level, there has been progress: 35 states have now passed versions of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Law, building on the federal VAPP Act of 2015, a reform I strongly supported alongside many committed partners.

The Access to Justice Gap: Nigeria's justice gap remains enormous, especially for poor and vulnerable citizens. Too often, rights are violated without remedy. Through WACOL, we have responded by providing free legal aid and comprehensive support services for women, children, and persons with disabilities in difficult circumstances. To date, we have supported more than 82,000 survivors and victims, while also establishing Tamar Sexual Assault Referral Centres to provide integrated medical, legal, and psychosocial care.

The Scale of Gender-Based Violence: When we began this work, there were no dedicated safe spaces for abused women. In response, I established WACOL's first safe house in 1998 and later built Nigeria's first ultra-modern private shelter for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in 2002. Creating these spaces was not only about protection; it was about restoring dignity and providing a pathway to healing and justice.

Institutional Bias and Political Exclusion: Women continue to face entrenched bias in leadership spaces, including academia and politics. My own experience contesting for the office of Vice-Chancellor at several universities underscored how often merit alone is insufficient. In many cases, women confront invisible barriers sustained by patriarchal systems, political bargaining, and gatekeeping structures. These realities have strengthened my resolve to keep advocating for transparent, merit-based systems and greater inclusion of women in leadership.

Political Godfatherism and Electoral Malpractice: My brief experience in electoral politics in 2006 exposed the corrosive effects of political godfatherism and malpractice. I entered the race with a reform agenda rooted in human rights and gender equity, but the process revealed how difficult it can be for principled candidates, especially women, to compete within compromised systems. Rather than allow that experience to define me, I returned to academia and grassroots advocacy with even greater clarity of purpose.

Which achievements are you proudest of, and what impact do you believe they have had on society?

Over nearly three decades, I have been privileged to record achievements at local, national, and international levels, but what matters most to me is their impact on people's lives.

Pioneering Legal Aid: Through WACOL, we have provided free legal aid and pro bono support to more than 80,000 women, children, and vulnerable individuals, helping to expand access to justice for those who might otherwise have been left unheard and unprotected.

Legislative Legacy: In 2005, I chaired the committee that drafted the federal bill on the elimination of violence in society. That early work contributed to the foundation of what later became the Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) Act of 2015. Beyond that, we have also supported the passage of laws addressing widowhood practices, female genital mutilation, harmful traditional practices, early marriage, safe motherhood, and anti-discrimination protections for people living with HIV and AIDS.

Global Leadership Against Human Trafficking: As United Nations Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, especially women and children, from 2008 to 2014, I carried out official country missions across 16 nations and presented key reports to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva and the General Assembly in New York. That work helped spotlight the global dimensions of modern slavery and strengthen international advocacy against trafficking.

Academic Transformation: One of my greatest joys has been helping to institutionalize the teaching of gender, human rights, and health law within Nigerian universities. Seeing former students grow into activists, practitioners, scholars, and development leaders is deeply rewarding because it shows that the work is multiplying far beyond me.

Recognition and Honours: The awards and honours I have received- nationally, internationally, and from traditional institutions-are meaningful not simply as titles, but as reflections of years of service. Whether it is being named among influential women globally, receiving national recognition, or being honoured by communities at the grassroots, I see each one as a reminder of the responsibility to keep serving with integrity and purpose.

In your view, what structural barriers continue to limit women's participation in governance and high-level decision-making?

The barriers remain structural, institutionalized, and deeply self-reinforcing. Some women have internalized the dichotomized public-private divide, which frames women's roles as reproductive and domestic, and not in governance or the public arena. Thus, where the power is, women are not.

A Heavily Monetized Political System: The cost of contesting public office in Nigeria is prohibitively high, and that reality disproportionately excludes women, who already face systemic economic disadvantages in areas such as income and inheritance.

Patriarchal Party Structures: Many political parties still operate through old-boy networks where key decisions are made in spaces and at times that are exclusionary to women. Without internal reforms and affirmative measures, women remain sidelined during candidate selection and party advancement.

Discriminatory Legal Frameworks: Conflicts around indigeneship and residence by marriage continue to disadvantage many women politically. In practical terms, some women are denied full belonging both in their state of origin and in their marital communities, leaving them excluded from meaningful participation.

Socio-Cultural and Religious Stereotyping: Deep-seated cultural expectations still frame leadership and public ambition as unfeminine for many women. Breaking this pattern will require legal reform, institutional redesign, and a broader cultural shift toward inclusion and equal representation.



Ijura

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CELEBRATING 100 INSPIRING AND AWARD-WINNING AMAZONS IN NIGERIA

Dr. Adeola Adeleye-Fasubaa: The Global Bridge-Builder and Ekiti's Diamond in the Diaspora

DR. Adeola Adeleye-Fasubaa stands as one of the most dynamic voices in Nigerian governance and international relations, serving with distinction as the pioneer Director General of Ekiti State Diaspora Relations.

Renowned for her visionary leadership, strategic engagement, and unwavering commitment to nation-building, she has continued to redefine diaspora relations by creating meaningful connections between Ekiti indigenes across the world and their homeland. Through innovative policies and impactful initiatives, she is harnessing the immense knowledge, expertise, influence, and resources of the diaspora community to drive sustainable development in Ekiti State.

Her outstanding contributions earned her the prestigious State Government Diaspora Personality of the Year Award at the 2024 Nigerians in Diaspora Awards (NIDA) Gala held at the Renaissance La Défense Hotel in Paris, France. Selected from nominees representing all 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory, the award recognized her exceptional leadership and transformative role in strengthening government-diaspora partnerships. Organized by Friends of Nigeria in France, the NIDA platform celebrates Nigerians making remarkable impacts globally, and Dr. Adeleye-Fasubaa's recognition further affirmed her growing influence in diaspora diplomacy and public service.

In her acceptance remarks, she dedicated the award to the administration of Governor Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji and the people of Ekiti State, describing it as a collective achievement that reflects the importance of building enduring bridges between Nigerians at home and abroad. She reaffirmed her commitment to advancing policies and initiatives that empower diaspora communities while contributing to the socioeconomic growth of the state.

As Director General, Dr. Adeleye-Fasubaa has consistently championed cultural preservation and inclusive engagement. One of her notable engagements was an interactive session with the Ekiti State Council of Traditional Rulers at the Council Chambers in Ado-Ekiti, led by the erstwhile Chairman of the Council, Oba Ayorinde Ilori-Faboro, Ajiboyede III and Olojudo of Ido-Ekiti. The meeting focused on strengthening diaspora ties to their ancestral roots and encouraging Ekiti indigenes abroad to actively participate in community development.

During the engagement, she emphasized the importance of preserving Yoruba language, values, and traditions among children born abroad, urging diaspora families to remain connected to their heritage. Her collaborative approach with traditional institutions reflects a leadership style that combines modern governance with cultural identity to promote unity, continuity, and sustainable progress.

Beyond advocacy and diplomacy, Dr. Adeleye-Fasubaa's leadership is defined by practical impact and developmental engagement. She recently inspected the new Ekiti Agro-Allied International Airport, applauding the developmental strides of the Oyebanji administration while exploring opportunities for the facility to enhance diaspora connectivity, investment, tourism, and economic growth.

She has also become a leading voice on responsible migration and youth empowerment. Through conferences and strategic engagements addressing the "Japa Syndrome," she continues to promote informed and productive migration while highlighting opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, and development within Nigeria. Her presentations at national summits, including diaspora-focused engagements have further showcased Ekiti State's Strategic Diaspora Model which is being emulated by others for effective diaspora collaboration and innovation.



Dr. Adeola Adeleye-Fasubaa

A passionate advocate for inclusion and social development, Dr. Adeleye-Fasubaa recently hosted a virtual town hall event (as part of Ekiti State's Diaspora Town-Hall Engagement series) on disability care and inclusive education, unveiling bold initiatives aimed at empowering persons living with disabilities within the state. Her commitment to inclusivity demonstrates her belief that every citizen—regardless of location, status, or physical ability—deserves an opportunity to contribute meaningfully to society.

She has hosted several of such Town-Hall Engagements which include having Governor Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji, Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Ekiti Council of Traditional Rulers, several other dignitaries and Commissioner s as her guests.

Widely respected for her intelligence, eloquence, and diplomatic approach, Dr. Adeola Adeleye-Fasubaa continues to inspire a new generation of leaders through her dedication to service, innovation, and national development. During the recent State Visit of President Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu and First Lady Oluremi Tinubu to the United Kingdom, she was appointed a member of the Media Committee which was inaugurated on Sunday, March 15, 2026, at the prestigious London Hilton Hotel, Park Lane.- the State Visit Secretariat, (SVS). She engaged and interacted with various international stakeholders and Nigerian citizens while also delivering a goodwill message from Governor Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji of Ekiti State. She participated at various interactive/parliamentary sessions during the course of the visit.

Whether engaging global stakeholders, mobilizing diaspora communities, or collaborating with traditional rulers and policymakers, she remains a powerful symbol of visionary leadership in contemporary Nigeria.

Her growing legacy is one of connection, empowerment, cultural preservation, and transformational governance. As Nigeria increasingly recognizes the strategic importance of its diaspora population, Dr. Adeleye-Fasubaa stands at the forefront of efforts to build lasting partnerships that create opportunities for future generations. Her recognition among Nigeria's most inspiring and award-winning women is not only well deserved, but also a reflection of a remarkable career devoted to building bridges between people, communities, and nations.

MSI NIGERIA
REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (REOI)

Subject: **Supply of Promotional Materials**
Date of the REOI: **30/05/2026**
Closing Date for receipt of EOI: **12/06/2026**
Reference: **EOI/025/2026**

Background
MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices is a social enterprise established in Nigeria in 2009 and is a leading provider of family planning and a range of contraceptive options to women, girls, and families across the 36 states of Nigeria and the FCT. With a mission to ensure children by choice not chance, MSI Nigeria envisions a world where every birth is wanted. Through collaborations with government at the national, state, and community levels, MSI Nigeria offers accessible and comprehensive reproductive healthcare services using operational approaches, such as Marie Stopes Medical Centres, community outreach teams, public sector strengthening support, and a toll-free contact centre.

Description of requirements:
MSI Nigeria is inviting Expressions of Interest (EOIs) from eligible suppliers for supply of the item below:

S/N	Description of Item	Quantity
1	**Executive Notepads – Cyan Blue and Black** See link Below	**100pcs**
2	Branded Pen See link Below	**2,500pcs**
3	Thermal Flask Specification Size: 1 litre Grade: 304 Stainless steel See link Below	**500pcs**
4	Back Packs – High Quality Specification See link Below	**500pcs**
5	**Branded Tabletop Mat and Drink Cover** Specifications: **Tabletop Mat** • Material: Plastic • Size: A3 • Front Print • All prints and logos in full colour **Drink Cover** • Material: Plastic • Size: 6inches • Shape: Round • Front Print • All prints and logos in full colour See link Below	**2,500pcs**
6	**Branded Plastic Hand Fans** Specifications: • Plastic • Front and Back print • All prints and logos in full colour See link Below	**2,500pcs**
7	**MSI BRANDED VISOR CAP** • Lightweight and comfortable • Premium quality finish • Adjustable fit • Bold and professional branding	**2,500pcs**
All price quoted should include all statutory deductions of 2% WHT and a 7.5% VAT (Value Added Tax) amount on a separate line of your quotation. All prices quoted are subject to applicable government taxes. MSI Nigeria makes payment for transactions within 21 days.		
Delivery Location: Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, Off Okonjo-Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.		

Potential Suppliers
This Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) is addressed at qualified vendors engaged in printing services, who must have an operational printing press within the country. Applicable due diligence will be carried out on successful vendor before award.
Please find attached the link to the samples https://bit.ly/3RmWwLw.

Submission of EOI:
Quotation, Company Profile, Corporate Capability such as copies of certificate of Incorporation, Memorandum of Association CAC Form CO2 and CO7 or Status Report, Evidence of tax clearance for 2022-2024, and should be submitted to: MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices Nigeria, Plot 59 Anthony Enahoro Street, off Okonjo-Iweala Road, Utako District, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

All documentation should not exceed 25 pages as this will be strictly adhered to during selection process.

For all your family planning services and reproductive health questions, concerns, and referral services, call our toll-free numbers: 22252 or 08000022252 and WhatsApp/SMS 09099022252. Follow us on all social media platforms @msichoicesng.

Signed:
For MSI Nigeria Reproductive Choices
Country Director

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE LEPROSY MISSION NIGERIA

Consultancy for Participatory Gender Analysis & Baseline Study (SIDA Project)

The Leprosy Mission Nigeria invites qualified consultants, consultancy firms, research institutions, or consortiums to submit proposals for:

1. **Participatory Gender Analysis**
2. **Baseline Study**

under the SMC/Sida Development Cooperation Grant Programme covering Niger, Kebbi, Kogi, Kwara, Sokoto States, and the FCT across 20 project communities.

The assignments will address gender equality, disability inclusion, climate resilience, livelihoods, safeguarding, civil society strengthening, and programme monitoring/evaluation.

Duration: 4–6 weeks depending on assignment.
Interested applicants should submit:

1. Technical proposal
2. Financial proposal, submitted separately
3. Proposed methodology, sampling approach and workplan
4. CVs of lead consultant and key team members
5. Evidence of at least two similar assignments
6. Sample gender analysis/social inclusion report for Participatory Gender Analysis
7. Sample baseline/evaluation report for Baseline Study
8. Tax identification and registration documents, where applicable
9. Signed safeguarding and anti-corruption commitment
10. Signed conflict of interest declaration
11. Brief note on language capacity for the target communities

Prospective applicants should access the full Terms of Reference here: https://leprosymissionnig.org/get-involved#work
Applications should be sent to: **tlmnapplication@gmail.com**

- Subject: *Gender Analysis Consultancy Application – TLM Nigeria Programme*
  Deadline: **15th June 2026**
- Subject: *Baseline Study Consultancy Application – TLM Nigeria Programme*
  Deadline: **15th June 2026, 11:59pm**

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

THE LEPROSY MISSION NIGERIA

Consultancy for End-Term Evaluation (LF Project)

The Leprosy Mission Nigeria invites qualified consultants, consultancy firms, research institutions, or consortiums to submit proposals for an **End-Term Evaluation** of the *Inclusion First Programme: Strengthening Disability Inclusion through Empowered Households in Nigeria*, supported by the Liliane Foundation.

The programme was implemented from **July 2021 to June 2026** and seeks to improving the quality of life and social participation of children and young persons with disabilities through Community-Based Rehabilitation and Rights-Based Approaches.

The evaluation will assess programme relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and lessons learned through field assessments, interviews, surveys, and data analysis.

Duration: 3 months from commissioning to submission of the final report.

Interested applicants should submit:

1. Technical proposal
2. Financial proposal, submitted separately
3. Proposed methodology, sampling approach and workplan
4. CVs of lead consultant and key team members
5. Evidence of at least two similar assignments
6. Sample evaluation report
7. Tax identification and registration documents, where applicable
8. Signed safeguarding and anti-corruption commitment
9. Signed conflict of interest declaration

Prospective applicants should access the Full Terms of Reference at ***https://leprosymissionnig.org/get-involved#work***

Applications should be submitted by email to:

tlmnapplication@gmail.com

Subject line: End-Term Evaluation Consultancy Application – Inclusion First Programme
Deadline: 15th of June, 11:59pm
Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.



Members of Spirits and Wines Association of Nigeria (SWAN) at the one-day workshop on Combatting Illicit Trade in the Spirits and Wines industry.

Why SWAN Undertakes Sanitisation Of Spirits, Wines Ecosystem

By **Gbenga Akinfenwa**

IRRESPECTIVE of the progress the wines and spirits sector has attained over the years, industry analysts believe the sector is still being held back by some critical challenges, debarring it from progressing beyond its current position.

One of the major debacles is the issue of illegal activities within the sector, specifically the increasing incidences of illicit trade, which seems to have defied all possible solutions.

Sadly, this development is also rubbing off on the Federal Government's supposed revenue. According to the Spirits and Wines Association of Nigeria (SWAN), Nigerian government forfeited an estimated N428b in revenue due to these illegal activities within the sector.

Across Nigeria, wines and spirits are familiar features of daily – at weddings, birthdays, naming ceremonies, business engagements, and weekend gatherings, playing a vital role in moments of connection, celebration, and shared experiences.

But this development, which poses as serious risks to public health, revenue of practitioners, legitimate businesses and even government has begun to gradually send many of the industry players out of the business.

According to a survey carried out by Euromonitor in 2024, the level of illicit trade in spirits and wines in Nigeria was about 40 per cent, which suggests that for every five bottles sold, two were from illicit trade, which gives a sense of how large the impact of the heinous act is.

It was this threat that prompted the drive by the umbrella body of the industry – SWAN to sanitise the industry. This move is basically due to the fact that illicit trade in the industry is associated with economic crimes such as tax evasion, smuggling, counterfeit packaging, market distortions and revenue losses.

SWAN is the industry body comprised of businesses involved in the manufacturing, importation, distribution and marketing of spirits, wines and other forms of alcohol in Nigeria. Its main vision is to be recognised for its commitment to sanitising the alcohol market in Nigeria, while promoting best practices and high ethical standards.

One of the immediate steps was to organise a summit, to bring together all sector players, individuals, agencies and corporate bodies involved in the spirits and wines value chain.

At the high-level workshop, held at the Continental Hotel, Abuja, the key players across the value chain, unanimously expressed their resolve to combat fake and adulterated alcoholic products threatening lives and their livelihoods.

Apart from regulatory agencies, law enforcement bodies, manufacturers, distributors, legislators, senior media practitioners, the diplomatic community and international organisations, including Interpol and the Alliance Against Counterfeit Spirits (AACS), were also represented.

Made up of notable organisations including Bacardi, Brian Munro Limited, Diageo, Guinness Nigeria, Moët Hennessy, Nigerian Bottling Company, Nigerian Breweries, Pernod Ricard Nigeria and William Grants & Sons, SWAN believes that fragmented enforcement cannot defeat organised criminal networks, especially with the coordination of counterfeit syndicates observed over time.

According to the body, illicit trade exposes weaknesses in regulation, enforcement, border control and market surveillance, while Nigeria's porous borders continue to fuel smuggling, allowing untaxed and unverified products to enter the market.

The conclusion at the workshop indicates that the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON), the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), and the Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (FCCPC) and other stakeholders have critical roles in combating illicit trade.

In his opening remarks, the Managing Director of Pernod Ricard and President of SWAN, Michael Ehindero, described illicit trade as a direct threat not only to business integrity but to human life. He noted the urgency of collective action while rallying key players in the industry against the menace.

"Illicit trade, defined as the production, importation, or sale of goods outside regulatory frameworks, continues to pose risks to consumer protection, government revenue, and legitimate businesses.

Deliberations at the workshop produceda range of recommendations, including the creation of a formal multi-stakeholder coordination platform, intelligence-led enforcement strategies, increased investigative journalism and the strengthening of laws. This is aside the need for sustained public awareness campaigns, whistleblower mechanisms, and tighter supply chain controls. With SWAN declaring an all-out offensive against illicit trade and stakeholders pledging sustained collaboration, there is cautious optimism that the Abuja engagement marks a turning point.

"This includes counterfeiting, smuggling, illegal production, tax evasion, and the diversion of legitimate products into unauthorised channels. It is a global challenge that cuts across multiple sectors in the consumer goods industry, food and beverages, pharmaceuticals, tobacco, cosmetics, and alcohol, with significant consequences for public health, government revenues, and economic development.

According to him, counterfeiters are increasingly replicating trusted brands, producing and distributing illicit products outside regulated systems, while smuggling and parallel imports continue to bypass safety checks and taxes.

"Beyond the human cost, illicit trade has a devastating impact on our economy. Governments lose billions in tax revenue, funds that should be supporting education, healthcare, infrastructure, and public safety. Legitimate businesses that invest in compliance, quality, and employment are unfairly undercut. Jobs are lost. Investor confidence is shaken. This is not a victimless crime, it weakens entire value chains and slows national development," he added.

Speaking on the drivers of the problem, the SWAN President said illicit trade is not unique to the industry and is fueled by multiple factors. "Illicit trade is not specific to this industry. It is a pervasive issue. We have heard other industrial associations make the same issues and complaints. Consumer demand for cheaper alternatives, regulatory lapses and taxation pressures are the contributing factors.

"There is an incentive for people to cheat or engage in unsafe practices. Because it is a business, people often seek cheaper alternatives. That desire for lower-cost products also drives the growth of these illicit businesses. There are also systemic issues, including possible regulatory lapses. It happens," he noted.

Also speaking at the event, the SWAN Director-General, Tony Okwoju, called for stronger stakeholder-led enforcement against illicit trade due to its impact on lives, legitimate business and government revenue.

He added that the trend has major implications for government revenue, noting that illicit operators do not pay taxes. Okwoju also noted the ongoing collaboration between industry players and regulators, including the NAFDAC.

"Our members are continually collaborating and engaging with the enforcement agencies, not just NAFDAC, with a view to working together to fight this. It is a continuum," he said.

Providing a global perspective, the Managing Director of the Alliance Against Counterfeit Spirits (AACS), David Francis, highlighted the increasing sophistication of counterfeit operations, noting that fake packaging materials are often mass-produced abroad and shipped into local markets.

"They're becoming organised into gangs, well-organised networks and becoming really sophisticated. The quality of the things we are seeing coming from China into this market are making it increasingly challenging for consumers to spot fake goods, whether they're bad or good, or whatever the fundamentals are.

"So, you'll see the labels, you'll see the cartons, you'll see the bottles, and you'll see the caps. This is a do-it-yourself counterfeiting kit coming into the domestic market. All you need to find is the liquid. And we all know that the liquid is relatively easy to source in any domestic market around the world. So again, I just want to highlight how important it is that we stop these things getting into the market," he said.

Francis explained, "When we are talking about illicit trade and those headline numbers, that includes tax-evaded, smuggled and parallel products.

"Counterfeit is a subsection of that, with particular dangers related to unregulated production. Counterfeit is a smaller subset of the overall illicit market. It is important to bear that distinction in mind," he said.

Also speaking, Kingsley Uranta, a media expert, called for stronger investigative journalism to expose the networks behind illicit trade, stressing that the problem is both widespread and deeply entrenched.

At the regulatory level, agencies acknowledged the growing threat of illicit trade while outlining ongoing interventions. The FCCPC described the situation as a serious public health and economic challenge.

In his keynote address, the Executive Vice Chairman of FCCPC, Tunji Bello, warned that illicit alcohol trade is a "multi-dimensional crisis" affecting consumer safety, market integrity, and public revenue.

"It is not merely an industry problem," Bello said, stressing that the issue touches on "consumer protection, health protection, public revenue, public safety, and indeed the overall integrity of our market.

An Assistant-Comptroller of Customs, Kolapo Oladeji, who represented the service, pointed at ongoing efforts to combat smuggling and strengthen border controls while also calling for improved policy frameworks.

According to him, the agency plays a critical role in the wines and spirits industry through licensing local manufacturers and collecting excise duties, while also enforcing fiscal policies for the Federal Government.

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Sports

Adieus, Youngest Millionaire



THE thought of Henry Nwosu is big on my mind.

When I nicknamed him 'Youngest Millionaire' it was because Henry was the youngest player in our group to be worth a million Naira in domestic Nigerian football after AFCON 1980. Henry had other nicknames, one of which was 'Congo'.

Before 1980, none of us had ever earned a million Naira. What were approved for us as bonuses were no where near that 'impossible' figure. A thousand Naira was a whole lot of money. We were previously on N2:00/N5:00 daily allowance, and N60:00 match bonus. Those were the maximum we received.

Then came the Nations Cup and our world changed, particularly for the youngest amongst us, a young man just out of secondary school who was going to earn a big bonus. A thousand Naira felt like a million, hence my nickname for him - 'The Youngest Millionaire'.

When Henry Nwosu joined us in the national team on the eve of the 1980 AFCON, he was very well established as captain of Nigeria's Flying Eagles team, and was well known in the secondary schools (academicals) football circle.

He was so good as a midfield player (he controlled it like a 'General') that he could have played for any team in the world, in my humble estimation. He was diminutive, skillful beyond his age, fearless, with powerful shots and great passing skills with both feet, a superb dribbler, and a natural leader on the field with the ball at his feet.

His acrobatic 'bicycle' kicks were legendary. He scored many goals from literally doing a somersault in the air whilst shooting at an opponent's goal.


Henry Nwosu

Henry earned his invitation to the Green Eagles on merit, through his exceptional performance as captain of Nigeria's junior team. Some of us didn't initially think he could displace any of the more established and famous players already in Nigeria's midfield - Muda Lawal, Aloysius Atuegbu, Shafiu Mohammed, Godwin Iwelumo, Okey Isima and so on, but he surprised everyone of us with the confidence with which he matched them in almost every department. He adapted quickly and easily into the different roles and team tactics he was introduced to.

Henry never joined the transition of players to Europe at the time for a professional career because his close friends later revealed that he admitted to them that he could not cope with the cold weather.

I don't know, also, why he did not follow his friends and colleagues like Alfred Keyede and Sam Owoh to the USA for academic studies with all his contributions to academicals football.

In African football his career for well over a decade at international level is fully documented with stints in a few African countries. He had remarkable contributions to Nigeria's superb performances at the 1984 and 1988 AFCONS, before finally retiring in the early 1990s.

Although, he later went into coaching, he was not as successful as when he was a player. Coaching and playing are two different ball games.

At his peak as a coach, he was a member of the technical consortium assembled by late Chief Adegboye Onigbinde to join him to take the national team of Nigeria, the Super Eagles, to the 2002 World Cup in Korea/Japan. Things did not go down well. The crew was sent packing after a rather dismal performance by the team. I am not so sure what coaching he did again after that, but he did not make any serious mark.

Henry fell ill a few years ago, and with the help of the Governor of Lagos State, some friends and a few philanthropic Nigerians, he was rehabilitated. Unfortunately, health wise, he never quite fully recovered.

On March 14, 2026, Henry Nwosu passed on after struggling without success to 'defeat' a lingering heart condition.

As he is laid to rest at his Creator's in Heaven, on June 6, 2026, on behalf of the entire football family of colleagues, fans and family this is to wish him a peaceful journey Home!

Meanwhile, this is a passionate appeal to the Governor of Imo State, Dr. Peter Mbah; the Governor of Lagos State, Mr, Babajide Sanwo-Olu; the Chairman of the National Sports Commission, Mallam Shehu Dikko; DG of the NSC, Chief Bukola Olopade; the President of the Nigerian institute of Football Federation, Alhaji Ibrahim Gusau; the commissioners of Sports of Lagos and IMO States, any interested Philanthropic Nigerians and organizations that want to be a part of supporting the organisation of a befitting burial for Henry Nwosu, MON, to please reach out to his family. They need our collective help and support NOW to make it happen.

Adieus 'Youngest Millionaire'.

Business

TETFund, Army Alliance Signals New Push For Research, Technology Growth

THE growing collaboration between the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund) and the Nigerian Army represents an important step forward in Nigeria's journey towards educational advancement, technological innovation and national development. At the centre of the partnership is the determination of the Fund under Architect Sonny Echono to build stronger institutional partnership that transforms the country's capacity in education, research, security and innovation.

During a courtesy visit to the Army Headquarters in Abuja, Echono reaffirmed TETFund's commitment to deepening relationship with the Army to promote academic excellence, technological advancement and sustainable growth. His remarks reflected a broader vision, where educational institutions and strategic national agencies collaborate in pursuit of sustainable development goals.

The recent engagement highlighted the nexus between education and national security. A stable and secure learning environment is essential for smooth academic activities while a highly educated population provides the expertise and innovation required to strengthen national institutions.

TETFund's approach, therefore, demonstrates a forward looking understanding of development, one that sees investment in knowledge, research and human capital development as the foundation for national progress.

Accompanied by senior management officials of the agency, Echono noted that the military has continued to play crucial roles beyond its constitutional responsibility of ensuring national security. He believed that investments in education, research, and innovation have contributed significantly to national growth. According to him, institutions established and supported by the Armed Forces are helping to nurture skilled professionals and promote academic excellence across various fields.

Echono held that collaboration between TETFund and the military reflects a shared vision of building a stronger and more knowledge driven nation and that the agency recognises the importance of supporting institutions that combine discipline, research and technology in preparing young ones for future challenges and opportunities in a rapidly evolving global environment.

He also emphasised the need for sustained partnerships between government agencies and strategic national institutions in order to deepen research, encourage innovations and strengthen local capacity in science and technology, insisting that TETFund remains committed to initiatives that will improve learning infrastructure, expand research opportunities and enhance human capital development for the benefit of the country.

One of the highlights of the visit is Echono's disclosure that TETFund is particularly interested in emerging technologies such as robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and other modern technological systems explored by the military.

In recent years, TETFund has continued to position itself as one of the leading agencies driving educational transformation in the country. Through infrastructure development, academic staff training, research grants and institutional support, the agency has played a major role in improving the quality of tertiary education across the country. Its interventions have strengthened universities, polytechnics and Colleges of Education by expanding their research capacities and improving learning outcomes.

By supporting institutions such as the Nigerian Army School of Engineering in Makurdi and the Nigerian Army University in Biu, Borno State, TETFund is helping to create Centres of Excellence that will contribute to national innovation and manpower development. The significance of such support becomes more evident in light of the Army's growing focus on modern military technology.



In his response, the Chief of Army Staff, General Waidi Shaibu, expressed profound appreciation to Echono for the engagement, and commended the agency for its continued support to military educational institutions. He described the meeting as a valuable opportunity to deepen collaboration between both bodies in education, research and technology.

Shaibu stated that the Army is increasingly focusing on strengthening its modern warfare capabilities, particularly in drone technology, armament production and other emerging defence innovations.

According to the Army Chief, one of the major areas that support is needed is in the development of skilled manpower capable of driving technological progress within the defence sector. He said the Fund's contributions to intellectual development and capacity building would play an important role in producing the expertise required to support local military technology and defence manufacturing initiatives.

He further observed that building indigenous production capacity remains essential for long-term technological and security aspirations and that strengthening local expertise and encouraging home grown innovation will enable the country advance capacities in equipment development and modern defence systems.

The Army Chief also eulogised TETFund for its significant impact on the education sector through consistent investments in infrastructure, research and human capital development.

As Nigeria pursues sustainable development and greater technological advancement, the partnership between TETFund and the Army stands out as a strong example of how collaboration between key national institutions can drive meaningful progress. The shared commitment to education, innovation, research and manpower development reflects a clear vision for a future where Nigerian institutions are empowered to compete globally while addressing local challenges through home grown solutions. Through its strategic interventions and forward looking policies, TETFund under Echono reinforced its position as a critical driver of national transformation and capacity building.

The renewed cooperation between both institutions highlights the growing recognition that investment in knowledge and human capital remains central to national growth and stability. By supporting initiatives that promote advanced research, technological innovation and specialised training, TETFund is helping to lay the foundation for a more self-reliant, skilled and technologically driven Nigeria.

TheGuardianSports

www.guardian.ng

Nigeria, Jamaica Battle For Unity Cup Glory

'By **Gowon Akpodonor**

THE Super Eagles and Reggae Boyz of Jamaica will clash this Saturday in the final of the invitational tournament tagged Unity Cup in London. There are lots of history tied to this encounter.

The two sides met in last year's final, drawing 2-2 before the Super Eagles triumphed 5-4 on penalties. Nigeria also won the inaugural edition in 2002, defeating Jamaica 1-0, and retained the trophy in 2004 when Obafemi Martins scored on his debut.

Perhaps, the biggest story this time is the fact that both Nigeria and Jamaica were eliminated by DR Congo from the fast approaching 2026 FIFA World Cup. While the Super Eagles lost out to DRC in the African Playoff in Morocco, the Reggae Boyz were sent packing by the same DRC in the intercontinental Playoff in Mexico.

This Saturday, Cup holders, Nigeria, look determined to retain the Unity Cup at Charlton Athletic's The Valley Stadium.

Head coach Eric Chelle praised his squad after their 2-0 semi-final victory over Zimbabwe and hinted at tactical adjustments for the clash with the Reggae Boyz.

Chelle is expected to experiment further with his youthful group, with Wrexham goalkeeper, Arthur Okonkwo, likely to start after keeping a clean sheet in the semi-final.

Chelle's likely lineup features a solid backline of Chibueze Oputa, Chibuike Nwaiwu, Igoh Ogbu, and Obinna Igboke, with midfield options including Tochukwu Nnadi, Alhassan Yusuf, and Samson Tijani.

Up front, Terem Moffi, Philip Otele, and debut hero Femi Azeez, who scored twice against Zimbabwe, are expected to lead the attack. Azeez's brace made him the first Nigerian debutant to score two goals since Mathias Obianika achieved the feat 55 years ago. His performance has raised expectations ahead of the final, where Nigeria will look to extend their dominance in the Unity Cup.

The Super Eagles trained at Cray Valley on Thursday, with their official session scheduled at The Valley on Friday.



Femi Azeez celebrates after scoring two goal for the Super Eagles against Zimbabwe

NSC Supports Enugu State For Coal City Games

THE National Sports Commission (NSC) has reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Enugu State's preparations for the 2026 National Sports Festival, Coal City Games, with the approval of critical sports infrastructure projects aimed at delivering a world-class event.

The Federal Government, through the Commission approved a series of strategic sports infrastructure projects for Enugu, further strengthening preparations for the 2026 National Sports Festival.

Among the approved projects for Enugu State are the construction of an Olympic-size swimming pool, the upgrade of the indoor sports hall, the rehabilitation of athletes' hostels, and the execution of other supporting sporting infrastructure projects. These interventions are designed to significantly enhance the state's capacity to host major national and international sporting events while creating a sustainable environment for athlete development.

The construction represents a landmark investment in aquatic sports development at a time where aquatics athletes are on the rise, winning medals at high-stakes championships. The facility is expected to provide athletes with access to better training and competition infrastructure, while also positioning Enugu as a viable destination for national and international swimming competitions. The project aligns with ongoing efforts by both the Enugu State Government and the National Sports Commission to expand opportunities across a wider range of sporting disciplines.

The planned upgrade of the indoor sports hall will modernize facilities used for basketball, volleyball, badminton, table tennis, handball, combat sports and other indoor events. The renovation is expected to bring the venue closer to international standards, improve athlete welfare, and enhance the overall spectator experience.

Equally significant is the rehabilitation of athletes' hostels, a project aimed at improving accommodation standards for athletes and officials. The upgraded hostels will provide a more conducive environment for training camps, competitions, and talent development programmes, while supporting Enugu's readiness to host large-scale sporting events.

The approval also covers additional supporting sporting infrastructure projects that will complement the state's broader sports ecosystem. These developments are expected to strengthen grassroots participation, enhance sports tourism opportunities, stimulate economic activity, and create employment opportunities for young people across the state.

Despite Uphill Task, Arsenal Believe Victory Against PSG 'Has Been Written'

'By **Gowon Akpodonor**

THE believe in Arsenal camp is that victory against Paris Saint-Germain in Saturday's UEFA Champions League final in Budapest has 'Been Written.'

Arsenal celebrated winning the Premier League last Sunday by partying long into the night at the lavish Bacchanalia restaurant in Mayfair, basking in the glory of winning their first title in 22 years.

But what appears their biggest challenge holds this Saturday as Mikel Arteta's army face title holder, PSG, in a final many feel might be difficult for The Gunners to survive.

Arteta's squad touched down in Hungary on Thursday night, fully focused on the task at hand.

A major boost for The Gunners, who flew from Luton Airport, is that Jurrien Timber is part of the travelling party after coming through first team training.

Timber, a key part of Arteta's defence prior to his injury, has been sidelined for two and a half months after suffering a hamstring problem against Everton back in March.

After missing the majority of Arsenal's title run-in, Timber will be eager to play some part against PSG if passed fit, especially as he was named in the Netherlands' World Cup squad on Wednesday.

With fellow right-back Ben White also suffering from a knee problem, Arsenal will likely have to call upon Cristhian Mosquera if Timber is unable to feature.

A win against PSG this Saturday would crown the Gunners champions of Europe for the very first time in their long history.

They will head into the clash at the Puskas Arena as underdogs against the Champions League holders, who defeated Bayern Munich 6-5 on aggregate in the semi-final.

Arsenal, meanwhile, beat Atletico Madrid 2-1 across two legs to reach the final, courtesy of a crucial winner by Bukayo Saka at the Emirates.

Arteta's champions lifted the trophy Selhurst Park last Sunday after defeating Crystal Palace 2-1, ultimately claiming the domestic honour with a seven-point bridge between them and season-long title rivals Manchester City.

Saturday's is one of the most anticipated Champions League finals in recent memory, as it pits the tournament's most potent attack against its most resilient defence.

PSG arrives in Budapest as the Champions League's top scorers, while Arsenal boasts an amazing unbeaten record throughout their European campaign so far this season.



Will PSG celebrate against Arsenal?

Taiwo Afolabi U-17 Cup Final Holds In Lagos

By Gowon Akpodonor

THE final of the 10th edition of Taiwo Afolabi U-17 Cup will hold this Sunday at the Mobolaji Johnson Sports Complex, Onikan, Lagos. A total of 32 teams (boys) and 24 teams (girls) took part in the preliminaries matches of this year's edition.

To get to the final, Futune FA, Oshodi, defeated Infinity FC, Eti-Osa in the boys' semifinal, while Apex FC Agege lost 3-5 to Dynamo FC, Iwaya, in a penalty shootout after their encounter ended 0-0.

In the Girls' semifinal Starlet Girls, Idimu, defeated Puma Queens 2-1, while Fela Girls lost 4-5 to Labro Queens, Ipaja, after their encounter ended 1-1.

Sponsored by the Executive Chairman, Sifax Group, Dr. Taiwo Afolabi, the competition has produced some talented footballers for Nigeria in past editions.

According to the organisers, Sunday's final at the Mobolaji Johnson Sports Complex will be attended by important dignitaries, including some present and ex-international players.

Ideye, Others Show Support At 'Her Baby Box' Charity Game

FORMER Super Eagles striker Brown Ideye was among top celebrities who turned out during the week to support the 'Her Baby Box' charity football match in Lagos to mark Children's Day. The event raised awareness for an initiative aimed at reducing infant mortality among indigent mothers across Nigeria.

The match, organised by the 'Her Baby Box' charity foundation, brought together celebrity teams playing under the banners of Arsenal, Chelsea and Manchester United, alongside an All-Stars side that featured Ideye.

Manchester United reached the final after defeating Arsenal 3-2, but it was the All-Stars who claimed the top prize, running out 6-0 winners to lift the trophy. Arsenal defeated Chelsea in the third-place playoff.

Singer, Timi Dakolo, former Big Brother Naija housemate, Alex Unusual, actor Efa Iwara and AMVCA winner Emmanuel Kanaga were among the entertainers who came out to lend their support, alongside Mr Nigeria 2018, Prince Nelson.

The event drew a lively crowd and was held by invitation, with organisers describing it as 'deliberately intimate' for the first edition, while signalling plans for a much larger gathering in future.

'Her Baby Box', co-founded by Victor Amadi and Olaoluwa Gbadeyan, is a maternal and infant health intervention that provides essential newborn care kits containing items such as baby clothes, diapers, wipes and bathing materials sufficient to last from birth to six months. The kits are distributed to indigent mothers in rural communities who would otherwise lack access to basic newborn essentials.

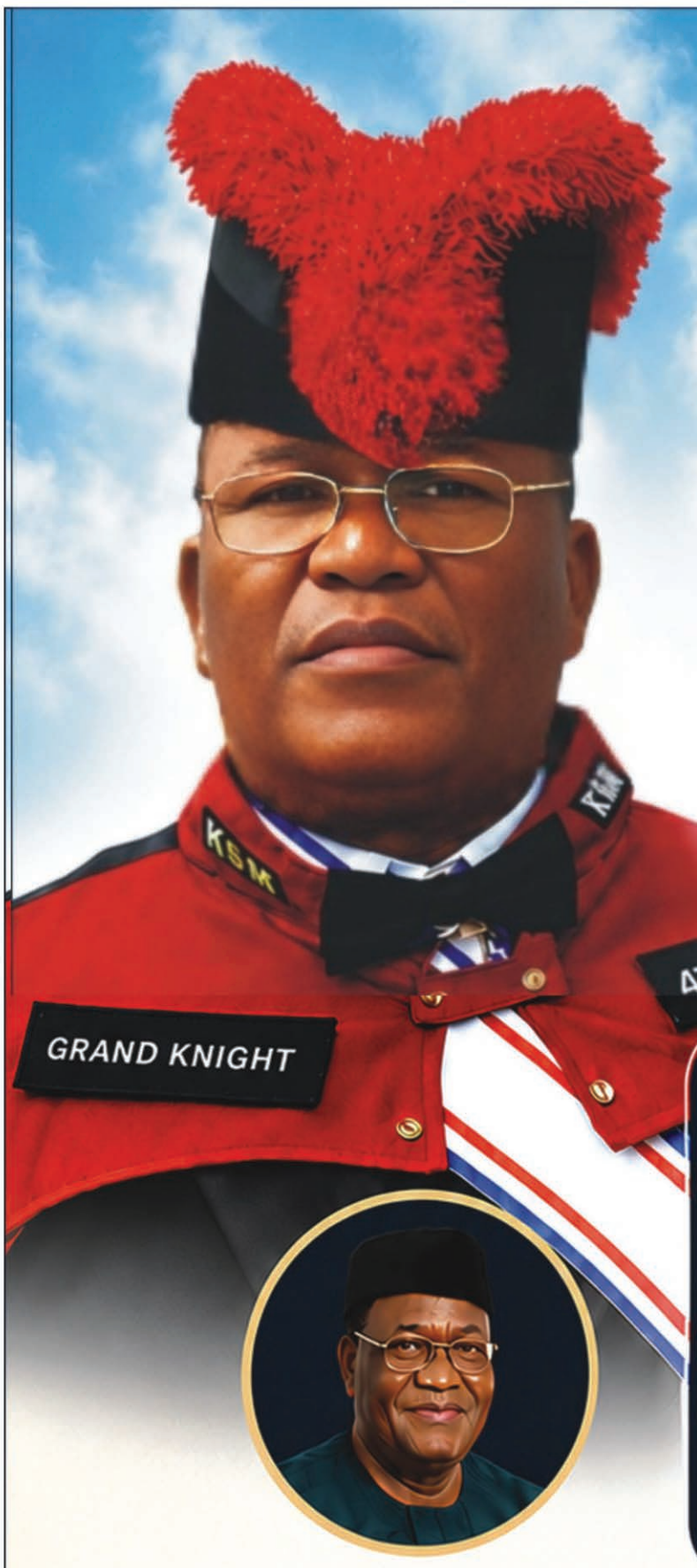
The foundation has so far reached over 500 women since its establishment.

Amadi, who played for Arsenal on the day and finished third, said the initiative was deeply personal.

"My mum lost her two infant babies. Although I didn't meet them, she still talks about it, and it comes from a place of pain. I wouldn't want any other woman to experience that. So any opportunity to reduce it, I'm up for it," he said.



Team Manchester United at Her Baby Box' Charity Game in Lagos



Glorious HOME CALL

With deep gratitude to God for a life well lived, we announce the passing unto glory of our **Patriarch,** beloved **Husband,** Father, Grandfather, Brother, Uncle and In-law.

ENGR. CHIEF SIR PHILIP UKAOBASI UMUNNAKWE

KSM, BFng (Lon), FNSE, FNMS, FNMGS, FIMM (Lon), FIMMME, SPX, CFng (Lon), JP

(11 NOVEMBER 1938 – 25 MARCH 2026)

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

SATURDAY, 30TH MAY 2026 | 2:00PM

Requiem Mass: Holy Family Catholic Church, Festac Town, Lagos

Service of Songs and Tribute Night: Holy Family Event Centre, 32 Road, Festac Town, Lagos

WEDNESDAY, 3RD JUNE 2026 | 4:00PM

Vigil Mass: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Osina, Ideato North LGA, Imo State

THURSDAY, 4TH JUNE 2026 | 10:00AM

7:30am | Lying in State in the Family Chapel

10:00am| Funeral Mass: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Osina, Ideato North LGA, Imo State.

Interment

Reception: Chief Phillip Umunnakwe's Residence, Uhuala, Osina, Ideato North LGA, Imo State

SUNDAY, 7TH JUNE 2026 | 9:00AM

Thanksgiving Mass: St. Mary's Catholic Church, Osina, Ideato North LGA, Imo State

SURVIVED BY:

- Chief (Lady) Georgina Umunnakwe - Wife
- Barrister Chris & Mrs Chika Omoruyi
- Chief Oliver & Lolo Ify Okeke
- Engr Okezie & Mrs Veska Umunnakwe
- Engr. Mrs Njy Umunnakwe-Rios
- Engr. Chukwudi Umunnakwe

SIGNED:

ENGR OKEZIE FRANKLIN UMUNNAKWE (SON) FOR THE FAMILY

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May 30 – 31, 2026



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INSIDE STUFF WITH MARTINS OLOJA



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#2027: Team Tinubu And Danger Of Assumption

AT this time when politicians smile out of meeting rooms where they often bury truth in a grave, it is also the right time for social commentators and oracles to tell them some inconvenient truths that will assist them in their reflection, deflection and even defection. So, permit me today to begin a serial to our leaders at all levels on the danger of assumptions that may set off their abysmal failure in office. First, let me confess that this title isn't original to me. Read below a story of how I got fascinated by the title through a public affairs writer/speaker from Katsina State, **Mallam Sani Ibrahim Dabai** who once spoke to it at a colloquium. Below is the original copy that got me cracking:

"A few months ago, I was invited to a programme somewhere as a guest speaker. When I entered the auditorium, I saw some guests I knew sitting in one corner. I went up to them and started to greet them one after the other. I shook their hands, even with the ones I didn't know until I got to one guest. I didn't know him and when I extended my hand, he ignored it. After few seconds, I withdrew my hand. All my thought was, "what arrant nonsense?" I kept asking the question from myself. I felt very embarrassed and angry. Embarrassed for myself and angry at the man. What was he feeling like, I thought. All those other guests accepted my greeting. And to my knowledge, I hadn't done anything wrong. I gave him a very scornful look, greeted the remaining guests and went to take a seat. Even after I sat down, I was still pissed. I kept stealing glances at the guest to see how he would react to other people.

Then I saw it... Amazingly he was blind!!!

His eyes were open, but he couldn't see at all! The other guests who came to greet him had to touch him first, then take his hand if they wanted to shake hands with him.

To my great surprise, he is my hidden protege who really appreciates my lectures. I never knew he came purposely because his wife informed him that I would be the guest speaker for this year's programme. In fact, he was waiting to hear someone bemoan my name so as to stand and hug me. When I heard this, my embarrassment level tripled. In addition to that, I felt stupid, very stupid. I was still angry, just angry at myself. In fact, I could not say a word to him until I got to the podium and my speech for that programme changed from **"Recovery" to "DANGER OF ASSUMPTION". How they shape our perceptions and limit our potential**

We've all done it. A quick glance at someone's outfit, a passing remark, or an incomplete piece of information leads us to conclusions that feel true but are often far from it. Assumptions are a part of human nature, a mental shortcut designed to save time and energy. But what happens when these assumptions lead us astray? Making assumptions about people, situations, and outcomes not only limits our understanding but can also rob us of opportunities for growth, connection, and success. Let's dive into why assumptions are so tempting, the risks they carry, and how we can reframe our thinking for better outcomes.

Assumptions are rooted in our brain's need for efficiency. Instead of processing every detail, we rely on past experiences, societal norms, and biases to fill in the gaps. While this can be helpful in certain scenarios (e.g., assuming a car will stop at a red light), it often backfires when applied to complex human interactions or unpredictable situations.



Tinubu

I have to borrow from the brilliance of Mallam **Sani Dabai** who realised that he had to change his topic from **'Recovery' to 'Danger of Assumptions'** to talk to our very presumptuous political leaders at all levels today so that Nigeria, our Nigeria would not come to harm through their #2027 'politricks' that isn't suggesting redemption songs at the moment. At this time of staccato voices that are clearly devoid of wisdom, reason and responsibility, this is a time to speak nothing but truth to the power of our duty bearers, our leaders who have believed to have had some assumptions that they don't need the people's votes or even support to be elected and re-elected at this time.

When elections begin as a process in most parts of democratic worlds, leaders are always afraid of the people who are expected to vote for them to be or remain in power. But in Nigeria, the people have been wired to be afraid of their leaders who have curiously assumed that indeed as it is written, **'wine is for merry making but money answereth all (their political) things'.** They assume very dangerously that what money cannot do during elections, more money will do.

From their body language and gleaning from their third anniversary speeches, we can deduce that there is no reference to their responsibility to a constitutional provision that, "security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government". Yesterday, our leader told us, among others on "SECURITY AND NATIONAL UNITY":

'. . .Security remains central to our national mission and to the creation of a virile and prosperous society. Our Armed Forces and security agencies have intensified operations against terrorists, bandits, kidnappers, oil thieves, and criminal networks. While challenges remain, many communities and highways are becoming safer and more economically active. We continue investing in intelligence, surveillance, logistics, technology, and inter-agency coordination. We are improving the capabilities of our armed forces and security agencies, and reclaiming the authority of the Nigerian state wherever criminality threatens peace and order. While we continue to confront the challenges head-on, progress is being made. I want to assure you that this government will not relent until every Nigerian can live, work, travel, and dream in safety. . .'

Even in a well-written anniversary article as part of wrap-around advertorial in major newspapers in Nigeria, the Information and National Orientation Minister, Alhaji **Mohammed Idris** posited:

". . .On this third anniversary we are very proud to affirm that President Tinubu has kept faith with the Nigerian people on all counts. We have an economy that has grown to 441.5 trillion in 2025, up from 309.5 trillion in 2023. Inflation has more than halved – from the 34.80% recorded in December 2024 to 15.69% in April 2026. Nigeria's non-oil exports surged to $6.1 billion in 2025, an 11.5% increase over 2024; while Federation tax revenue collection rose from 19.9 trillion in 2023 to 28.3 trillion in 2025. Monthly disbursements by the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) have doubled to over 2 trillion, from less than 1 trillion in 2023, while foreign capital inflows have grown nearly 90% – from $12.32 billion in 2024 to $23.22 billion in 2025. External reserves have this year hit a thirteen-year high of $50 billion. . ."

The President and his Information Minister have spoken and written well for the optics at this time. But there is a danger in their assumptions that the people who are expected to cast their ballot in most parts of the vast country of more than 90 million registered voters will be swayed by the flowery and elegant words used in the 3rd anniversary self glorification. Let's face the brass tacks: I believe it is dangerous to assume that the Core northern states of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Zamfara, Borno and Yobe where terrorists have kept them away from their farms and homes are persuaded by the grandiloquence of our leaders.

Isn't it dangerous too to assume that most parents in some Katsina communities where they have to release their daughters to terrorists for regular abuse and rape are persuaded that this administration "will "continue to confront the challenges head-on"? Will they believe the anniversary assurance "that this government will not relent until every Nigerian can live, work, travel, and dream in safety. . ."?

The Information Minister's statistics can't be easily faulted but we can rely on a classic from a guru who claims that it is dangerous to assume sometimes that statistics can be used to confound the populace at all times. This is what a scholar, **Aaron Levenstein**, a professor of business management, teaches those who use statistics anyhow:

Statistics are like bikinis. What they reveal is suggestive, but what they conceal is vital"

Malam Idris, is doubtless, a good man but his anniversary statistics may have concealed the existential threats that most people face with insufferable food inflation, unaffordable energy prices, high cost of imports because of forex rate, low income, youth unemployment and multidimensional poverty of the people in the last three years.

Specifically, the president has directed people generally to ask their governors in 36 states and Abuja what they have done with increased allocations as a result of savings from subsidy-is-gone 'presidential order' three years ago. There is therefore some danger in assumptions in Abuja that the governors have used the funds allocated to them to take care of the people in the state.

Meanwhile, our leader's third anniversary speech didn't deepen the people's assurance about security of the people, including in Oyo state where 46 children and teachers are still being tortured in the wilderness of the wicked. At press time, there was a report that two negotiators dispatched to strike a deal with the terrorists were killed too this week. This is how the wickedness from the wicked in Oyo was contextually reported by **Albab Abdullahi:**

'In every civilized country and in every true religious teaching, negotiators are sacred. They are messengers of peace. They carry hope where there is fear. They speak for life when death is close. Even when talks are hard and danger is real, their role is respected. Their lives are not to be touched. History remembers them as heroes who save souls without firing a gun.

But in Oyo, that sacred rule was shattered in cold blood.

Two negotiators went into the bandits' hideout to secure the release of abducted children. Their only weapons were words and goodwill. They went to find a way for peace, to bring terrified kids back to their parents. What did they meet? Death. The bandits did not see human beings. They did not see peace ambassadors. They saw targets. Another massacre happened. Blood was spilled on the very ground where negotiation was supposed to bring life. This is not just murder. This is a deep insult to humanity itself. . .

When those who risk their lives to save others are slaughtered, it sends a clear and bloody message: these criminals want more than money. They want fear. They want control. They want to prove that no one is safe, not even those trying to end the nightmare.

This evil is not only in Oyo. It is happening across Nigeria. Kidnapping for ransom has become a deadly business. Families cry, communities live in terror, and negotiators are increasingly becoming victims themselves. Each time this happens, it proves the same painful truth: the system is failing. . .'

We can see from the sad news on the **Oyo 46** and others in Borno, already a killing field, that there is a danger in assumptions of our leaders that all these economic and security issues threatening existence of Nigerians aren't serious enough to stop their election and re-election, after all. This is just a wake-up call on how not to plan to win election and lose the country in 2027. We will continue next week on other vital areas where there are dangers in assumptions that mismanagement of national priorities doesn't matter in an election year, after all. **God bless Nigeria!**

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