



NEWS Rep escapes mob attack in Zamfara

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IMF endorses our reforms - Okonjo-Iweala

Contrary to repeated denials by some top government officials that the ongoing economic reforms of the present administration anchored on the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS), were home-grown, the Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, said yesterday that the reforms have the endorsement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Several top bureaucrats in President Olusegun Obasanjo's administration have repeatedly claimed that the ongoing economic reform programmes were formulated within the country by Nigerians, and not tailored by

By Ahmed I. Shekarau,
Group Business Editor

Bretton Woods institutions like the World Bank and the IMF.

One of such bureaucrats is the current governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Professor Charles C. Soludo, whose immediate past position was the Chief Economic Adviser to the President. Professor Soludo who is often referred to as Mr. NEEDS, has argued severally that the ongoing reforms were not dictated to Nigeria by the IMF. The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, was also reported recently to

Contd. on Pg 2



Zamfara State Governor, Alhaji Sani Ahmed (left), Alhaji Hassan Ahmed Magaji (middle) and Secretary General, Nigeria Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Alhaji Lateef Adegbite (right) during the regional conference of the African Islamic Faith-based Organisations held in Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

NATIONAL CONFAB

Delegates make case for agric subsidy

Majority of the delegates who spoke yesterday at the ongoing national political reform conference have called for heavy agricultural subsidies to ensure food security

By Habeeb I. Pindiga,
Political Reporter

in the country.

The delegates were speaking at the commencement of debate on the economy, human and social security, na-

tional security and social infrastructure for national development and integration.

They said no nation can prosper unless it provides an enabling environment for adequate food production.

Enumerating four steps towards agricultural development in Nigeria, the Emir of Gombe, Alhaji Shehu Abubakar said government must maintain rural roads, supply water, develop industries that would process farm products and enhance airports for exportation of processed products.

Abubakar also called for subsidy and timely provision of fertilisers as well as good pricing for the products to encourage farmers to invest in the sector. He said at the moment, farmers mostly practice at a loss.

Others who spoke in the same vein included Kema Chikwe, Emmanuel Iwuanyanwu, Sunday Adewusi, Chris Abashiya, Ibrahim Lame, Bello Khaliel, Yahya Abdulkarim, Garba Duba, Abubakar Moriki, Malami Yandoto, Isyaku Tofa, Sule Hamma, Margaret Icheen, Shettima Mustapha, Mohammed Ibrahim Hassan

and Abdulkadir Orire.

Most of them sought the provision of between 10 and 40 percent of the budget at all levels to fund agriculture, and suggested the enhancement of product preservation

and processing.

Abdulkarim raised alarm that desert encroachment was threatening food security while Duba, Hassan and Icheen suggested that with

processing industries, Nigeria will rank among the top exporters of finished agricultural products.

Khaliel urged that the

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UN Security Council: AU demands two permanent seats

The 15-member committee set up by African leaders at the last African Union summit in Abuja, has recommended for two permanent seats and five non-permanent seats to Africa on the UN security council.

In a press conference, the Foreign Affairs minister, Ambassador Olu Adeniji, disclosed that the decision, which has already been approved by the executive council of the AU, will be the focus of the next AU meeting held for July in Libya.

The minister said that the meeting will decide which two countries will contest the permanent seat in the security council, adding that Nigeria stands a good chance of get-

By Jibril Abubakar and
Elkanah Chawai (Foreign
Desk Reporters)

ting the ticket with its commitment to peace in Africa.

The common voice adopted by Africa was informed by a panel report set up by the General-Secretary of the UN, Kofi Annan, to re-examine the UN. The report proposed two options for the expansion of the security council membership which were first, to increase the security council permanent membership with two slots for Africa and four African non-permanent memberships which was called 'Option A.'

The alternative option

Contd. on Pg 2

PRIVATISATION

ANPP cautions against private monopolies

The All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP), has called for the involvement of more Nigerians in the federal government's privatisation policy to avoid the creation of private monopolies.

Chairman of the party, Chief Don Etiebet, who made this position known yesterday in Abuja at the ongoing national political reform conference, said it will be dangerous to break government monopolies only to create same in the private sector.

"ANPP believes that the privatisation programme should be streamlined to bring in more Nigerians and be more evenly spread throughout the country to enable more Nigerians own a slice of the means of the economic development of this

country particularly in the key sectors.

"ANPP believes that it is very dangerous to transfer the state monopoly of the past in the key sectors of the economy to new private monopoly wholly, and in an undeveloped country like Nigeria with multi-ethnic groups, multi-religious groups and poverty-stricken environment where unemployment

and hunger has the tendency of causing instability," he said.

Etiebet expressed concern that Nigeria as the world's sixth largest exporter of petroleum does not own functional refineries.

ANPP, he also said, was unhappy that Nigeria cannot boast of a national air carrier bearing its name when

Contd. on Pg 2

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News

National Confab *Contd. from Pg 1*

nation's water resources be used to complement rainfall so that farming would be an all-year-round activity.

Lame suggested that military men and prisoners be sent to the farms to add to the manpower deployed to agriculture.

Hamma advised the federal government to use part of the oil windfall to subsidise agriculture as an emergency area.

On his part, Orire suggested that 40 percent of the nation's budget be given to the sector for 10 years.

In his closing remarks at the end of yesterday's session, chairman of the conference, Justice Niki Tobi said the dominant view was that agriculture should be given priority.

Also at yesterday's session, delegates made a case for the development of solid minerals in the country to provide an alternative foreign exchange earner to oil.

Abubakar Abdullahi, Joseph Omada and many others called for serious attention to the sector, as they said, if tapped, the abundant mineral resources would boost the nation's earnings. Omada urged the establishment of a solid minerals development bank.

Other issues that featured

prominently yesterday include education, security and youth development.

Delegates sought an arrangement in which the federal government could hand-off the running of primary and secondary education for states and local governments.

Speaking on security, delegates demanded a re-orientation and funding for the police, as well as withdrawal of military from civil security matters.

On youth development, Alhaji Abubakar Mu'azu Hassan, criticised what he called recycling of leaders who participated in the first, second and third republics, but yet wanted to continue participating in governance.

He said such a situation was denying the youths the opportunity to serve their fatherland.

Hassan, who represents the youths of Gombe State suggested that all those who occupied public office in the previous republics should be barred from elective and appointed positions besides those of advisory capacity to allow youths participate.

He also called on the nation's leaders to apologise to the youths for denying them the opportunity to serve over time.

IMF *Contd. from Pg 1*

have said Nigeria's economic reforms were not dictated by the IMF or the World Bank.

But the minister of finance said yesterday when she featured in a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) programme tagged: *Hard Talk*, that the IMF "scrutinised" the Obasanjo administration's reform programmes.

"Let me just say one thing here. In the past 18 months, we've implemented a very rigorous economic reform programme that has been scrutinised by the International Monetary Fund."

We've managed to have... last year's results, even our worst critics will say what we've accomplished last year was one of the best," Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said while fielding questions on the BBC programme.

She maintained that "Nigeria has a very strong case (for debt relief)," arguing that "Nigeria is a very poor country contrary to what people think because we have oil."

According to her, Nigeria is a complex country of over 130 million people, which is

ANPP *Contd. from Pg 1*

smaller nations have this. "Nigeria airways must come back," he said.

The party also recommended that the National Electric Power Authority (NEPA), be reorganised into three companies namely: generation, distribution and services.

It said while generation must remain under public control, distribution and services should be privatised.

the size of Western Europe, and has an infinitesimal per capita income per head compared to many countries of the world.

She lamented that Nigeria is still viewed with the stereotype notion of a very corrupt country, stating that the Obasanjo administration, which was "democratically elected" is a big deviation from past leaderships that denied the image of Nigeria.

The minister listed among others, the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), as part of the federal government's commitment to rid Nigeria of corrupt practices, particularly in the economic sector.

Dr. Ngozi reiterated that though the Nigerian government earned about US\$25 billion from crude oil sales last year, that amount can only be shared into about 53 United States cents for each of the 130 million Nigerians, adding that the Obasanjo administration is putting on ground a lot of infrastructure required to move the nation forward.

She challenged Western Europeans especially members of the European Union (EU), to repatriate looted funds belonging to Nigeria stashed in their countries as a step to show that they were morally clean.

When prodded further on allegations of massive corruption in government circles, the minister said the government was doing everything possible to rid the nation of corrupt practices.

Specifically, Dr. Ngozi said

Why I was dismissed - Justice Senlong

By Kemi Ogedengbe,
Judicial Editor

Justice Chrisantus Senlong yesterday said that he was dismissed from service because he had no "god father" in the National Judicial Council (NJC).

He told judicial correspondents shortly after a court session on the dismissal suit that he was recommended for dismissal because a member of the NJC committee that investigated the petition against him had an axe to grind with him.

Earlier, Senlong while testifying from the witness box at the Federal High Court, Abuja, gave a graphic picture of how he was suspended and later dismissed from service based on the report of a committee set up by the NJC.

Led in evidence by Mr. J.B. Daudu (SAN), the witness said that he was invited to appear before a panel set up by the NJC because of a petition written against him by Justice M.M. Adamu, who was the head of the Akwa Ibom State governorship and legislative tribunal.

Senlong, according to the complaint against him was

said to have given the tribunal the impression that Hon. Justice Pats-Acholonu and Justice George Oguntade, were interested in the result of the Akwa-Ibom State governorship petition to be resolved in favour of the petitioner, Dr. Ime Umana.

Explaining his case, Senlong accused the two lawyers who served on the investigating committee of the NJC of recording a verdict tainted with bias because their law firms appeared before the controversial tribunal which he was alleged to be influencing, an allegation that was denied.

He said that he had received a letter from the investigating committee to appear before it, another one from the Chief Justice of Nigeria conveying his suspension from

office and lastly his dismissal letter dated March 16, 2004.

According to him, a letter by the president of the Court of Appeal had revealed that he was trying to pervert the cause of justice, saying that he was surprised that the allegation was treated as a criminal matter.

He went further that he had never been arraigned before any court in respect of the criminal allegation in the petition against him.

Senlong said that four members of the investigating committee attended the NJC meeting which discussed the petition between March 6 and 7, 2003.

"It was at this meeting that the NJC set up a committee made up of Chief Kehinde Sofola SAN, Justice I.A. Shotimini, Grand Khadi U.Y. Abdullahi and Chief T.J.O. Okpoko, SAN.

He said that the NJC

implemented the report of the committee that was supposed to be fact-finding and issued his dismissal letter. "There should have been a larger meeting of the council to look into the report of the committee."

Besides, he said that a letter written by the committee to EAS Airline asking it to furnish it with information if he (Senlong) and Dr. Umana were on board at a particular time, exonerated him that he never travelled with Umana to Jos. "We were never their passengers."

Senlong alleged that the NJC violated his right to fair hearing when it just acted on the recommendations of the committee without setting up a larger panel to examine the report of the investigation committee.

Further hearing continues on April 13, 2005.



R-L: Alhaji Waziri Mohammed PDP North East delegate, Major General Alwali Jauji Kazir, Yobe State delegate, Norbert Esenwah, Nigeria Youth Organisation South South delegate and Chief Chika Okafor, Imo State delegate at the national political reform conference in Abuja... yesterday.

Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

UN *Contd. from Pg 1*

tagged 'Option B', proposed that no new permanent member should be elected, but added that a new category of non-permanent membership be created which will allocate four slots to Africa and will give the advantage to members to stay for four years and seek re-election in contrary to the two-year tenure and restriction on seeking re-election.

The minister stated that Nigeria has always been in support of option A, adding that the decision has enhanced Nigeria's quest for a permanent security council membership.

"Since there were two options in the recommendation, it was important to make sure that if we aspire to be a permanent member, option A should be the one that will be

accepted... We then decided that our strategy should first be targeted to ensure that Africa expresses support for Option A.

"Our point of view pervaded, that is our point of view by leading the group that says that we should take advantage of the two permanent seats offer, that is the only context which Nigeria can aspire to be a member of the security council," he said.

He added that Nigeria's bid strategy, which will enter the third stage, will involve ensuring that Africa has a say on who the two permanent members will be stating that the AU has agreed that Africa will designate two members that will contest adding that it will be by consensus.

Adeniji said that the Union took a strong stand over the

countries to become permanent members and would make an influential factor on the UN final decisions.

He revealed that Nigeria is working discretely for it to become a permanent member of the UN security council on which the AU will take a final stand come July.

On veto powers of permanent members, he stressed that Nigeria and the AU have considered it undemocratic and have called for its abolition in the reforms of the UN, but added that if the permanent members insist on veto powers, the new permanent members should be accorded the same power status.

He disclosed that a mechanism consisting the chairman of the African commission, chairman of the executive

council of the AU and the chairman of the 15-member committee has been set up to negotiate veto powers and other elements with the UN.

The foreign affairs minister currently chairs the executive council of the AU.



Kofi Annan, UN scribe

NEWS

FG hands over Iron-Ore coy to Global

By Hamisu Muhammad,
Business Reporter

The federal government has commenced the process of handing over the National Iron-Ore Mining Company (NIOMCO), Itakpe, with the release of official documents to its new manager-Global Infrastructure Nigeria Holdings Limited, at a ceremony in Itakpe, near Okene, Kogi state.

A statement signed by Mr. Clinton Adebolu Oni, chief press secretary of the Power and Steel ministry, said the representative of the minister at the occasion, Engr. Abubakar Yaro Ibrahim, informed the audience that the idea to concession the NIOMCO began in October 2004, when president Obasanjo saw the broad outline that the ISPAT Group could effectively transform the Ajaokuta steel company.

Engr. Ibrahim said Mr. President gave a directive to set up a committee to look for possible ways to enhance raw materials production to sustain Ajaokuta steel company.

At the occasion, the managing director of the Steel Company, Engr. Verma Mohan noted that the take over marked a new chapter in the dramatic change that has begun in Ajaokuta.

It would be recalled that the idea of NIOMCO began in 1971 when the federal government promulgated Decree 19 which set up the Nigerian Steel Development Authority (NSDA) with the mandate to plan, operate and maintain iron-ore and steel plants in the country.

NCAA investigates Chanchangi accident

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) has commenced investigations into the cause of the accident involving a Chanchangi plane that skidded off the Nnamdi Azikwe Airport tarmac last Saturday.

NCAA Director-General, Engr. Fidelis Onyeyiri, who disclosed this to newsmen yesterday, stated that the authority's director of operation has begun interviewing the crew members and control tower to establish what actually led to the incident.

Onyeyiri however affirmed that there was actually a wind and rainstorm when the incident occurred, stressing that the NCAA will get to the bottom of what happened by Wednesday or Thursday.

According to him, the affected aircraft will be inspected for damages, adding that if the aircraft is alright, it



Vice President Atiku Abubakar, Governor James Ibori of Delta State and Hajiya Aminu Titil Abubakar during the launching of the Peter Okocha Foundation held at the Golden Gate Restuarant in Lagos...weekend.

Pix: Joe Oroye

UN should adopt islamic approach to community dev-Gov Sani

By Abubakar Haruna,
Reporter Abuja

The governor of Zamfara state, Alhaji Ahmad Sani, has urged United Nations agencies to adopt Islamic approach in view of the recognition of the numerical strength and the potentials for growth in Islamic communities.

Alhaji Ahmad Sani who made the statement at the opening ceremony of the Regional conference of African Islamic Faith-based organisations in Abuja, yesterday, said that Islam addresses all facets of human endeavor.

He said "while women rights as enunciated through the Married Women Property Act of Great Britain is a relatively new development,

barely 100 years old, Islam has provided for women's rights in the holy Quran and Sunnah of the prophet".

He added, "over 1400 years ago through legislation on rights to life, security, social well-being, ownership of property among others."

The governor who listed surah An-nisa'i (4:32), pointed out that the right of women were well protected by the Shariah in marriage and they were free to pursue their interest so long as they observed the conditions set out by Shariah including economic interests.

According to him, women have been considered as partners in marriage whose dignity and honour must be respected and both men and women were encouraged to marry as soon as they reach the age of puberty in order to reduce or even avoid promiscuity.

He then urged the Ulama and imams to come up with the true Islamic position of the various sub-themes of the conference by putting the fear of Allah into all perspectives.

Earlier, the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Mohammed Maccido who was represented by Alhaji Hassan Ahmad (Magajin Garin Sokoto), described the conference as a unique opportunity to highlight the beautiful doctrines of Islam on the family.

Maccido said that the opportunity should also be seized to correct the distortions of the teachings of Islam which were all over the place on the status of women and the roles ascribed to them in Islam.

According to him, a clear

distinction should be drawn between Islamic rules and practices on the one hand and certain cultural practices in some societies which he said have nothing to do with Islam, adding that for example, Islam never endorses harmful practices against women whether as mothers or children.

Human rights, challenge to Nigeria's democracy

-Rep

By Zainab Alimi,
Political Reporter

The deputy chairman of the House of Representatives committee on human rights, Hon. Abdul Oroh, yesterday said that the real challenges facing Nigeria's democracy is ensuring that Nigerians are able to enjoy all the human rights provided in the constitution and in the international and regional human rights instruments to which the country is a signatory or to which she has ratified or acceded to.

In his welcome address at a two-day public consultations on Nigeria's ratification of international rights institution holding in Abuja, Hon. Oroh stressed the need to put in place a sustainable framework for the promotion and protection of human rights in Nigeria.

"Clearly, one of the biggest challenges facing our new democracy is building a country that is fair to all its citizens, where all individuals feel and know that they are valued members of society and that they have rights that respects human dignity, promote human development, equality and advances human freedom", he said.

He therefore charged parliament to take the lead to eradicate widespread poverty

FG sets up conflict resolution c'ttees

Vice president Atiku Abubakar yesterday presided over the meeting of the presidential implementation committee on strategic conflict resolution throughout the country.

At its inaugural meeting yesterday, the committee set up six sub-committees on security reforms, early warnings and early response, socio-political and economic conflict and measures to be adopted to prevent them.

The committees resolved to look into conflicts in all ramifications, assess response measures and recommended national and international action against such conflicts.

Five standard cases of conflicts were listed as:

-security related manifestatives which included positive action of small arms, corruption of law enforcement agents and vigilante groups.

-political manifestation of conflicts like territorial disputes.

-poor, and inequality resource competition and inequality in the allocations of the nation's resources.

-ethnic and religious conflicts committee, this is to replicate the implementation committees of the national action plan at the state and local government levels.

Among members of the presidential implementation

By Reuben Yunana, Senior
Reporter State House

committee are the defence minister, Rabi Kwankwaso, internal affairs minister Iyorchia Ayu, minister of justice and Attorney General Akin Olujinmi, director of State Security Services, Kayode Are, DIG of Police, Mike Okiro, NNPC GMD, Funsho Kupolokun, GD national boundary Commission, Dahiru Bobbo and Mrs. Hainat Balogun and Human Rights Activist, Shehu Sani and Women Political Activist, Hajia Laila Dogonyaro.

Rep escapes mob attack in Zamfara

From Salisu Zakari Maradun,
Correspondent Gusau

A member of the House of Representative representing Maradun and Bakura constituency of Zamfara state, Alhaji Bello Muhammed Matawalle, over the weekend escaped attack from angry youths who accused him of betrayal.

The incident occurred at Talata Mafara during the "Yarima 2007 Endorsement" campaign which was organised by the people of the Zamfara west senatorial district.

Numbering about 300, the youths alleged that the lawmaker has not brought any development project to the area he is representing.

According to them, the lawmaker has in addition to his failure to bring any development project, also abandoned the people he is representing.

The member escorted by a large number of security men up to a distance of almost two kilometers away from the venue of the event.

"Our former representative was better than him because always came home to show concern about his people," one of the youths said.

When contacted on telephone, the lawmaker said he would not say anything adding that the press should do what they like as he is not the only one who has found himself in such a situation.



Aminu Bello Masari, Speaker House of Reps

News

National Confab... National Confab... National Confab...

“Obasanjo’s explanation on confab delegates unacceptable”

An Islamic scholar and member of the delegation that visited President Olusegun Obasanjo over the imbalance in the composition of the leadership and membership of delegates to the ongoing national political reform conference, Sheik Dahiru Usman Bauchi, has described as unacceptable the president’s excuse of not considering religion as a factor in the nomination of the delegates and contradicts the normal procedure of

From Mohammed Abubakar, *Stringer in Gombe*

governance in the country. Sheik Dahiru Bauchi in a telephone conversation with *Daily Trust* from Gombe, said the president was wrong to say he did not consider religion as an important factor while nominating delegates to the conference.

He said: “It is unfortunate that the president could pretend to be ignorant in the matter while we all know that in the country, appointed or

selected officers, by whatever name you call them, are made to swear by their scriptures, either the Qur’an or the Bible. We also know that declaration is given to our religious differences to ensure equity in all our endeavours as a religion.”

He said for the president to say he disregarded this important factor because it did not matter was not only wrong but an exhibition of the president’s total disregard for the continued peace of this country.

The Sheik explained that their demands include a change in the composition of the delegates to the conference where the chairman and secretary do not come from the same religion and that the number of Christian delegates of 223 be reduced to tally with that of the Muslims of 160 delegates.

He informed that if the president refused to agree to their demands, they will have no option but to ask their state governors to withdraw all Muslim delegates from the conference.

Adewusi, Coomassie warn against state police

Two former Inspectors General of Police, Alhaji Sunday Adewusi and Alhaji Ibrahim Coomassie, have warned that the creation of state police will breed chaos in the country and would be abused by governors to intimidate their opponents.

They were speaking yesterday in Abuja at the ongoing national political reform conference.

Adewusi, who was the police boss in the second republic, said 36 additional autonomous police forces besides the Nigeria police would mean a multiplication of the problems bedeviling

By Habeeb I. Pindiga

the police.

He said proponents of state police were ignorant of the antecedents of such forces, warning that a police force in the hands of state governors could lead to inter-state wars.

“A state police can become a state army and very soon states will engage each other in war. For this reason, we should forget the idea of a state police,” Adewusi urged.

Coomassie, who also served as IG during the regime of late General Sani Abacha, said state police is a dang-

erous idea that should not be toyed with.

He said the police in Nigeria is seen as a tool of coercion, and this was why “everybody wants to control it.”

According to Coomassie, since the formation of the police force in 1861, it has been abused and misused by its controllers, saying when each state gets its own police force, the abuse will multiply 36-fold.

“Examples abound why we must be careful about state police and regional police,” he warned.

The ex-police boss gave examples of how the police was misused in the second

republic even when the force was controlled by the federal government.

Solutions to the problems of the police, he said, lies in the decentralisation of its functions, and to give this legal backing, as well as proper funding and recruitment.

Adewusi attributed corruption in the police to the general decay in society, saying a nation’s police force mirrors the kind of society.

He said the police rank and file could hardly be blamed for the much-touted graft in the force, since the society is equally decadent.



President Olusegun Obasanjo

Vox pop from Kano

As the controversy over the setting up of the national conference on political reform and its representations rages, some Kano residents have given their views on various issues.

Malam Adamu Abdullahi Maishayi, a motorcycle dealer: My opinion is that Allah should give us the blessings of the conference. But if I should have my way, I would have stopped it because I know that the benefits will not be felt by the masses across the country. One thing that I believe is that some decisions have been reached even before the setting up of the confab. Why I say this is that they did not even seek the opinion of the masses, who are in the majority in this country before setting up the conference. Our prayer is for God to allow the decisions to be made in favour of the country. I will therefore call on the delegates to be God-fearing that considering the financial benefits but the honour and glory of our father land.

Mohammed Sada: An engine oil seller: In the first place, I condemn the conference because there is no need for it since the House of Representatives and the Senate exist for a the same purpose. What President Obasanjo should have done was to give the National Assembly the responsibility to fashion out the reforms, then the opinion of the people should be sought and finally, statesmen would be invited to make inputs.

Malam Abubakar Baba Telle Kofar Mazaugal: I support the conference because it will be a blessing for the country. It will help us identify the problems and enable us find solutions. I am not in support of recalling delegates. Their stay is of immense benefit, because whatever decisions will be taken will be taken with their consent. I am sure with notable delegates like Professor Auwalu Yadudu and Abdullahi Ganduje and

By Jamilah Nuhu Musa & Yushau Adamu Ibrahim

may others, they will do their best to protect our interest. May be these delegates will even be better than members of the National Assembly. We have noticed that the National Assembly just a rubber stamp doing only the biddings of Obasanjo. However, I call on delegates to the confab to consider the socio-economic situation in Nigeria.

Malam Hamza Uba: A tools dealer: It was constituted on, selfish grounds. What is the essence of electing members of the National assembly? We elected them to protect our interests. The members were elected based on their merit and ability to deliver. So why the national confab? But the National assembly members have been a disappointment to us. This in my opinion, has led to the setting up of the confab. Since this is the case, the delegates should come back home and allow the National Assembly, to do the work.

In the event where they cannot do it, we will vote them out and elect fresh members to represent us.

Fauziyya Usman: Food seller in Fagge: I support the conference. It is for the benefit of the country as far as I am concerned. We want the conference to identify Nigerian problems and find solutions that will be on benefit to us.

Hajiya Aisha Liman: Provisions seller: We are experiencing too much hardship. We cannot pay the school fees of our children. We cannot eat three square meals a day. We need a national conference to identify the problems of the masses or for mapping out or deciding any reforms? All these delegates are the problem of this country. They are only interested in themselves not the poor people. Therefore, I do not see any need for the conference. We only need God fearing leaders and people to save this country from collapse.



The Emir of Gombe, HRH, Alhaji Usman Shehu Abubakar, standing contributing to the debate, during the sitting of the national political reform conference in Abuja ...yesterday.



L-R: Mrs Esther Audu, FCT delegate, Chief (Mrs) Margaret Icheen, Benue delegate and Mr Adebson Tanimu, Nasarawa delegate. Pix: Kennedy Egbonodje.

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MUHAMMAD AL-GHAZALI

ON TUESDAY
temphist@yahoo.com

Nigeria: Between globalisation and glocalisation

It was Margaret Thatcher who first proclaimed that there was no alternative to globalization all those years ago when it began to replace crude imperialism or neocolonialism in classic political-economic nomenclature propagated by the likes of Samir Amin. Although it has provoked an endless debate across the globe since those early days, resistant to the dangers it posed to the sanctity of the nation state actually began over a century ago when Otto Von Bismarck the then German Chancellor and moving force behind its unification, expressed fears that domestic regulations were being undermined by the flow of goods and capital among nations.

But the Berlin wall came crashing down and with it came George Bush Senior and his yam about a New World Order complete with its inherent contradictions. President Clinton was to build on this when he made better use of multilateral organisations and the open market system. It was thought that by weaving economies of the world together and promoting free trade, it would also help promote peace, but in reality however, nothing could be further from the truth.

Indeed, the theory of peace through prosperity is not new, but first, for the sake of clarity and what is to follow in the later parts of this discourse, let me dwell a bit more on the full implications of globalisation especially as it affects the local economy. It is about GSM and the mobile phone in your hands; it concerns teleconferencing and your ability to send or receive information from all corners of the globe in the split of a second; it explains that strange looking designer jeans your son or daughter wore to school last week with an Italian trademark and cotton sourced from Egypt. It involves cultural perversion and our recourse to CNN or the BBC for news concerning even our localities or the preference for DSTV instead of the local TV stations; it is about Nigerian products [not cocaine or 419] being able to compete favourably on the global market with all the attendant benefits for the growth of the local economy.

It seems easy to point at countries such as China, India and Malaysia, as countries, which have benefited immensely from classic globalisation.

China in particular, with its annual growth rate at 7% emerged only last week as the fastest growing economy in the world! Indeed, the Asian economies are faring so well now that people are now talking about the Pacific Century, Asian Renaissance or even the rise of a new Asian. The same level of economic prosperity and development is not evident in Nigeria or to that extent several countries in the developing world. But in truth, our state of underdevelopment is not due to our failings alone.

A giant share of the blame lies with America and Europe for their insistence on subsidising especially agriculture while also putting a lacuna to efforts to enact trade policies favourable to the developing world. With this scenario, unless the West makes meaningful concessions with respect to agriculture, non-tariff barriers or intellectual property rights, real

development for most of the developing world will continue to be an illusion. In that respect, people from the affected countries would continue to be alienated from the positive or tangible benefits of globalisation. Nigeria's romance with the idea of course commenced in 1986 with the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Nearly two decades afterwards with NEEDS, it has become evident that the only thing that was structurally adjusted to our collective pain, was the huge gap that increased between the rich and the poor.

If five years are not sufficient enough to gauge the efficacy of an ideology or programme, then nothing ever will. To the extent therefore, NEEDS, like SAP before it, has been an unmitigated disaster because unemployment has continued to sour, while the economy continues to degenerate even further.

It is precisely due to the inequities globalisation has created in the international system that scholars are now tempted to advance the process of glocalisation as a more appropriate term to describe what is happening to the world we now live in. I had earlier drawn an analogy between peace and prosperity. Suffice to add that to Jason Falinski one of the exponents of the term, the same values are "much more likely to occur when we all feel part of the same neighbourhood" [i.e. prosperity]. Erik Swyngedouw stretches the point further when he described "glocalisation as the twin process whereby, firstly, institutional/regulatory arrangements shift from the national scale both upwards to supra-national or global scales and downwards to the scale of the individual body or to local, urban or regional configurations and, secondly, networks are becoming simultaneously more localised/regionalized and trans-national." Now, India with its advanced space programme, and massive industrial capacity easily falls into this category.

It is one of the world's leaders in computer software production, while it began exporting automobiles more than a decade ago. With the exception of oil, Nigeria is perhaps better known for its capacity for beer production or the exports of cocaine, prostitutes and 419.

To that extent therefore and in plain terms, what glocalisation demands is the need for us to fix our local economy and social infrastructure before nursing the faintest hopes of competing or even reaping from the benefits or opportunities available in the global economic system as it is presently structured. Sadly, there is nothing on the ground to suggest that we have the remotest chance of ever achieving that status.

Ghana, our erstwhile rivals on the west African coast, seem a surer bet because they seem to know where they are going if not where they are coming from. Presently, rather than to devise ways of escaping from our economic predicament, no fewer than two hundred senior citizens of the country, who otherwise should be in comfortable retirement, are engaged in a wasteful talk-shop

on how to co-exist or even live together. They seem so oblivious of our many failings it is actually pitiful.

Hunger continues to ravage the land but I never for once ever contemplated that it also extended to our livestock until the reality was brought to my attention a few days ago in London. Nature dictated that I had dinner with a fellow Nigerian at the local franchise of Kentucky Fried Chicken. As we got set to devour the food, my friend glanced at the giant chicken drumstick in his hands which could pass for that of a turkey back home and grimaced. He muttered something about an axe to grind with his local *Suya* man for selling him pigeons all this while. It was meant to be a joke and we could afford to laugh about it afterwards.

But the significance was not lost on me. Our livestock are also starving and malnourished but still have to pay the supreme sacrifice to extinguish our hunger.

I wondered if the government had any strategy or policy in place to preserve grazing areas or even creating new ones for herdsmen in the country. With their tunnel vision, I don't expect that to be an issue for the selfish eggheads presently gathered at the International Conference Center in Abuja. Given their antecedents, most would probably be tempted to believe it is the Mallam's problem. Yet if I were Niki Tobi, I would recommend a tour of Malaysia to enable his delegates see first-hand, the wonders Mahithir Muhammad was able to conjure from his nation's mixed bag of ethnic and religious diversity.

Sadly also, the president continues to surround himself with an economic team that lacks common sense and swallows any idea from the World Bank and allied international institutions hook, line and sinker. Incredibly, despite earning close to a trillion dollars since our independence from the British, the nation has no functional railway system today.

They inundate us with figures about the raise in the nation's external reserves as if that alone is indicative of tremendous economic growth. They are versed at invoking high-sounding economic terms and strategies, but haven't got the slightest idea about the immense benefits an efficient rail or urban transport system could impact on Nigerians.

The Kainji hydroelectric power station came well after the Akosombo dam in Ghana. Today, the one in Ghana remains a model of efficiency while ours suffers from corruption and mismanagement, not to mention the sordid tales or the state of our refineries.

Call it globalisation or glocalisation, real development will continue to elude us for as long as our leaders remain shortsighted and primitive in their thoughts and actions. We live in an increasingly competitive world which demands that for nations to make a difference on the global stage, they must first put their houses in order and not decapitate much energy thinking of how to live together. It's a far more serious world, pure and simple.

Opinion

Of reform confab and distrust

One major problem that has greeted the national political conference today is the widespread suspicions. This, I believe has less to do with its desirability but more with the state of distrusts in the leadership.

Unfortunately, we are in such a situation where Nigerians no longer see anything good in their government. The people of this country, said Chief Sunday Awoniyi, "do not have confidence that he (the president) will not manipulate the conference and bring undue influences and inducements to bear on the conference in favour of particular changes he desires." This assertion by the respected leader, Chairman Arewa Consultative Forum only added weight to the extent that Nigerians have become so distrustful of their leaders.

Coming under this background, I believe the national political reforms conference is yet but another chance for government to rebuild a new image for itself. Government anywhere allover is considered a serious business with utmost respect attached to it. In the situation we are in at the moment it appears that the dignity in leadership has gone into tin air. The resultant effect is a disappearance in patriotic zeal in the people.

That is why most Nigerians believe that our problem has its root in our character rather than in the system. The challenges therefore before the national political reforms conference must start from the root. It can only face the challenges if only it is prepared to make its agenda open and genuine.

Very vital to the conference is the capacity to evolve mechanism for rebuilding confidence and trust both in government and among different groups of this country. The better way to start is to see how government can become more transparent and accountable to the people. The inadequacy in our constitution that appears to give too much power to the executive has to be addressed.

I believe one of the ways out is to take a second look at the immunity clause in our constitution. As good as this clause appears to be, there is no doubt that it has been grossly abused in our own situation. If it is working in America where it was merely dubbed, I believe it has failed here.

If the immunity clause is to be retained, it must not be at the expense of public accountability. We must be able to address the dangerous trends where the clause appears to give blank cheques to our executives. This I believe is a license to corruption, which is the root of our problem.

Also related to it is the asset declaration act. The way and manner that those in offices flaunt their wealth in the society, regardless of the fact that majority of our people still wallow in abject poverty is enough prove that something is wrong with the way public officers declared their asset. The problem here is twofold. That I believe is either that the agency responsible for it is not doing its job or something is wrong with our asset declaration act.

These are fundamental issues, which are considered more important to the ordinary man in Nigeria than the sharing of power that would take a center stage at the conference. For what has

become glaring to people now is the fact that sharing of power has not achieved any difference in the life of an ordinary Nigerians.

It has appeared not to be the antidote. Even the local councils that are meant to be closer to people in power equation has become far away to them in benefit terms. As important as power sharing appears to be, it has never guaranteed the provisions of the minimum standard of living to common man in Nigeria.

With the resources that this country is blessed with, every Nigerians should be able to afford a minimum standard of living. What we required are the machineries for equitable distribution with a change in our character.

Still on the agenda, the conference must be able to come up with framework for a better understanding among different ethno-religious group of this country. To do this is to address the issue of indigeneship. We can only forge unity if we see ourselves as one irrespective of where we come from.

These are challenges the delegates to national political conference should strive at, rather than the politics of regionalism, which has not moved us forward. The delegates must shelve aside their selfishness and ethnic colouration. They must admit that the issues at stake required tolerance, compromise and give and take. Above all it requires honest and selfless service to the nation. For those who take extremism as a past time must not be given a chance to bring the hand of the clock backward.

Yekini A. Abdullahi, No 4 Sultan Road, U/Sarki Kaduna.

"The people of this country, said Chief Sunday Awoniyi, "do not have confidence that he (the president) will not manipulate the conference and bring undue influences and inducements to bear on the conference in favour of particular changes he desires." This assertion by the respected leader, Chairman Arewa Consultative Forum only added weight to the extent that Nigerians have become so distrustful of their leaders."

... SAME STUFF DIFFERENT RACES ?



YOUR LETTERS

Confab: Sanusi Lamido's disturbing thesis

Sanusi Lamido Sanusi's article on Reverend Father Kukah is not only superficial but unconvincing. Sometimes people write just to remain in circulation or to be 'read' but Sanusi should, by now, go beyond this quest for vain popularity. Sanusi's comments on Garba Deen's and Kabiru Yusuf's articles is full of what Jean-Francois Lyotard, the French Philosopher would describe as inability to read others correctly and creatively.

It is un-intellectual of Sanusi to even rush to the net (Gamji.com) on a subject (Kukah) that he admits he knows little about. Even without subjecting Sanusi's piece to psychodynamic and psychoanalysis test, the reader can see that it is just another ego trip by the writer. In an article where Kukah is the central theme, Sanusi mentioned himself over 36 times, in form of "I", "me", "my" subconsciously transforming himself to the principal character of the discourse.

If he had taken his time to do a little research, even in the most simplistic Foucauldian approach, about Kukah from the latter's conduct, interviews, speeches and records, he would not have robbed Kukah of the limelight, and indeed may have succeeded in giving us more light on why Kukah deserves the

appointment or otherwise. By adopting this pervasive intellectual euphoria to rush to the press with half-baked articles, Sanusi can transform himself into a serious and objective writer.

In a piece where he accused others of stereotyping and generalizations, he is repeating same simplistic, subjective generalizations on those he is criticizing. I found his allegations of racial discrimination against 'non-Arab and non-white Muslims' narrow and at best speculative. That you are mistreated in Saudi Arabia does not automatically indicate that it is because of the colour of your skin. Who tell you that Black Americans are not receiving better treatment than

Egyptians, Iraqis and Albanians? So many reasons abound why Nigerians get maltreated abroad beyond the colour of their skin. No need to just rush to such conclusions despite the sub-conscious racial phobia we feel once we are with other races or in another country. We are looking forward to reading serious articles, for instance on *Gamji.com* and the *Daily Trust* but writers should be aware that we need something serious; especially in this era so many other things and sites are competing for our attention.

James Brown
University of Leicester
LE1 7RH UK
Email: jbrownjbrown@yahoo.com

National confusion conference?

What else should Nigerians expect from PDP president and governors that regained power by manipulating the electoral process?

Just take the colour of the representatives from PDP ruling states and Federal Government. They are selected based on bureaucracy not meritocracy. They are just henchmen that that will likely focus on Obasanjo and forget their people.

One can presume the

outcome of the conference as the founder has hidden agenda detected by far sighted and reasonable Nigerians such nly revisit Oputa panel report but also recommend appropriate prosecution and punishment. The issue of appropriate implementation and bud-getary discipline should also be revisited.

Ibrahim Sani Malumfushi
No. AQ 11, Gamagira road
Ungwan Sanusi
Kaduna

Kindly allow me a space in your widely circulated newspaper to express my view over the demolition of Wuse market.

It seems the FCT minister, Malam Nasir el-Rufa'i is saying that Abuja is not for the masses. Lots of our properties worst billions of naira were destroyed and even looted as a result. Even in New York and London there are traders contributing a lot to the development of those cities.

The so-called infrastructure he is now trying to put in place may not even be maintained after he left. There are so many other priorities for his office which should be solved first before going into our wealth: persistent of water scarcity, refuse dump all over, inability to provide basic needs to satellite towns, abundant education projects etc.

Perhaps many before you were there and leave, some were drop after pleasing their godfathers, whatever one did no matter how long one day will reverse back to him here or thereafter.

Death is ringing its bell every minutes and seconds and one must be accountable for his wrong deeds including my shop and goods which were abundantly destroyed.

For someone to be in the office of the FCT minister does not mean that he has the free ticket to punish the

El-Rufai and Wuse market demolition

masses.

However, we and our families would never forget you and your tenure, and we will keep praying to Allah to replace all that the bulldozers

have mercilessly destroyed for us.

Abdullahi Bilya Rogo
No. 109 Gadan Kaya Qtrs.
Kano City

Roads and Dariye's arithmetic

Recently Plateau State's Governor Joshua Dariye told the world that he has spent the sum of eleven billion naira for roads construction and rehabilitation, while flagging off township roads projects in Shendam and Pankshin.

Out of N11 billion his Excellency claimed to have spent on roads construction, he said the sum of N4 billion of the amount under the so-called re-engineering programme. Based on simple arithmetic, when you deduct N4 billion from N11 billion, you will have N7 billion left. This means that N7 billion was used to cover the roads project, including urban roads.

This is Plateau State where Jos, the State capital cannot boast of a single motorable road. All road networks in the metropolis are full of potholes. It was General Chris Alli that awarded contracts of some of the major roads inside Jos

metropolis to Messrs Tilley Gyado Construction Company. I stand to be corrected. One wonders what stops the State from being a tourist haven, if such a big amount was spent roads rehabilitation and construction.

However, with almost 800 days for Chief Dariye and his co-travellers' tenancy to expire in Government House, they still have room for improvement, especially in the area of road construction and rehabilitation.

For Chief Dariye, he will be doing a great favour to the people of Plateau and Nigeria, if he can show us the roads he used N11 billion of taxpayers' money to construct. Our people have a saying that "the blind man does not know that people are watching him until he is touched". My advice for Dariye is to stop chasing shadows.

Engr Usman. Ladan
ladanusman@yahoo.com

Reactions to articles published in this paper may be directed to the editor via the email address: editor@dailytrust.com

Opinion

Of society and destructive adverts

Any keen observer can infer without fear of contradiction that the last few years have witnessed a serious decadence in societal morality in our nation, especially among the youths. The panache with which the moral fibre of this nation is being distorted and destroyed is so amazing. Indeed, if nothing is done to check this evil trend, the Nigerian society, without doubt, will degenerate into a state worse than what obtained in Sodom and Gomorrah, which had attracted the unrestrained wrath of God.

As a pharmacist, I am indeed horrified at the rate at which young girls walk into pharmacies and "drug stores" to demand for oral contraceptives. The rate is indeed mind-boggling. I am sure that if proper statistics is taken, we will be shocked to discover that the most used class of drugs among girls, especially those who fall between the ages of 13 and 25, are oral contraceptives!

Now consider the case of this young girl who just boldly walked into a pharmacy to seek advice from the pharmacist on duty on whether she could still go ahead to take a particular oral contraceptive she usually took each time she had sexual intimacy (of course, premarital and unprotected), which she had already taken for three consecutive times that same month.

Or this other case where this mature lady walked into a pharmacy to buy a drug (of course without prescription, as is usual in Nigeria), but the pharmacist on duty, on noticing the drug she had just bought from one of the sales officers and called her back to intimate her with further information about the drugs. She was clearly informed about the contraindications of the drug, one of which is pregnancy. The lady who the pharmacist thought was married, declared, to the consternation of the pharmacist, that the actual reason for purchasing drug, was to do away with a few weeks old pregnancy! No doubt, an aftermath of indiscriminate immoral relationships with men.

It is unfortunate that these women take these drugs with abandon, and without any knowledge of the possible hazards it could pose to their systems, and its capacity to hamper their ability to conceive by the time they eventually marry. Looking at this issue critically: if a girl takes oral contraceptives to avoid premarital pregnancy, would that same contraceptives prevent her from contracting HIV or other STDs? A thousand times no! The reason therefore for the staggering number of secondary school girls, according to a newspaper report sometime ago, being found to be HIV positive after a random test

conducted in few schools in Lagos, is now no more far-fetched.

Each time I see these girls and mature ladies too, come in to ask for oral contraceptives, the question that readily comes to my mind is: who really informs these women about these drugs? This question has remained unanswered until recently when I saw a poster in a pharmacy advertising a particular oral contraceptive. After taking a critical analysis of the terrible consequences such an advertisement could portend to our unmarried youths, parents and the entire society, I shook my head in sorrow. I sincerely think that such adverts could constitute a keg of poison to the entire human race.

On this particular poster was the picture of a young girl bemoaning her fate and biting her finger in regret for indulging in pre-marital sex. "Now how do I avoid getting pregnant?" was the question on her lips. Then the advertiser presented the drug being advertised as the solution! And with an air of finality, the advertiser declares that the drug is "your choice in emergency contraception." Now, looking at the issue very closely, it was easy to see that the advertisers decided to use the picture of that young girl because such drugs mostly used by girls in that age bracket. Hence, they have become the juic-

By Chibundu, Chigoziri C.

iest targets of these advertisers!

When a nation permits uncritical advertisement of drugs that overtly or covertly promote promiscuity, I think that such a country is working hard to enact its doom. It is unfortunate that even when the Western are beginning to appreciate the need to preach sexual abstinence as the surest way of checking the spread of HIV, Nigeria is busy advertising contraceptives with vulgar ostentation.

If we will tell ourselves the truth, the reasons why a youth would refrain from engaging in premarital sex include - (a) If he/she fears God (i.e., genuinely born again) (b) If he/she had good moral upbringing (c) If the fear of teenage or premarital pregnancy was dully instilled in her (d) If such a fellow retains a lively fear of contracting HIV virus and other STDs.

Regrettably, this generation is one that has jettisoned and trampled under foot the first two reasons above. It is most painful that this age has witnessed a proliferation of churches and worship centers, yet the fear of God has remained in very serious decline. Some preachers teach their followers the acts of God, but deny them the knowledge of the ways of God and how to follow Him with reverential fear.

Many parents hardly have time to inculcate in their children good morals. They have abandoned their wards in the hands of maids and house-helpers to mould their character. Worse still, our value system has become so distorted and warped. Things that men of past generations, whose scions we are, held sacrosanct, and which made for good morals, are now termed anachronistic.

If then the third deterrent referred to earlier is dully taken care of by the prescription of the advertisement we mentioned earlier, what again would restrain our youths from being practical dogs, seeing that the fourth reason above is not an issue to most youths, as their young and adventurous minds are easily overwhelmed by youthful exuberance and the Greek gifts that shameless men use to entice the young girls?

But we would want to ask: assuming all these associated hazards were not there to restrain the youth, is there no more any place in society for the high esteem that used to be allocated to chastity in the life of unmarried female folks? The society should know that when a girl has made a habit of sleeping around with men, then remaining faithful to her husband as after marriage, would almost be an impossible task.

Indeed, it is clear that

contraceptives do not fall into the class of drugs called OTCs, which can be advertised, as they are strictly "prescription drugs." So, advertising such drugs is a flagrant breach of one of the laws of pharmacy. The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), being the regulatory agency under whose remit this issue falls, should therefore rise up to check these clearly unlawful advertisement of contraceptives. Also, the Pharmacists Council of Nigeria (PCN) should rise to the occasion and join forces with NAFDAC, as a way of living up to their responsibility of regulating the distribution and dispensing of drugs and poisons in our country. They should ensure that only trained professionals are involved in the distribution and dispensing of drugs and poisons in Nigeria as is the case in every other country of the world. This is because if a trained professional is restrained by his knowledge of the consequences of abuse of drugs and the ethics of his profession from dispensing these drugs to our youths when they come calling for them, can a patent medicine dealer resist the temptation since it is solely for commercial purposes that he is operating the drug store? The time to act is now.

Culled from www.nigeriavillagesquare1.com

NPRC and the PNC: Thoughts on opposing confabs

From what has been going on in the past few weeks, what we now have are two conferences being planned: the government-arranged National Political Reform Conference (NPRC) and the civil society-to-be-arranged Peoples' National Conference (PNC). That civil society conglomerate is now nicknamed PRONACO (Pro-Sovereign National Conference Coalition.)

Let me start with what I hope is a disclaimer: I do not believe the government's "conference" can rightly be called a "dialogue", since "dia" means "two", and one wonders whether the two combatants here would be the government and the people. If they are, then the NPRC is DOA, dead-on-arrival; the people are supposed to be re-fashioning their own government, and it should not be the People vs. the Government.

That is point Number One. Point Number Two is this: Neither of these two conferences can be called a SNC (Sovereign National Conference) yet, because without an assured referendum, and without an understanding that no one - not the president, not the National Assembly - can change an iota of what is decided following the referendum, what we will have will simply be a set of recommendations that can all be easily trashed, not a sovereign decision.

Let us look at each proposition seriatim.

The NPRC: The president of course likes the word

"reform" - he sees himself as a reformist president, reforming the economy, reforming the military, reforming everybody and everything else but himself - and now five years later, particularly after the disastrous 2003 elections, the mounting corruption scandals and an economy that defies stimulation, he believes that it is time to reform the "polity."

The problem is that there is more than the polity to be reformed - Nigeria needs re-constitution, re-formulation, re-establishment, "re-gbogbo-c" - without any "no-go" areas! Despite his seven-point agenda for the NPRC, it is still a very limited agenda with some "no-go areas" - that is debilitating problem number 1.

The announced constitution of the membership of the NPRC is another MAJOR debilitating problem: Out of 354 members, 50 are to be nominated by the president, 218 to be nominated by the state governors and the FCT minister, and the rest (86 members only) to be chosen in indeterminate ways from various groups. The members of the National Assemblies and State Assemblies are even EXPLICITLY excluded from the list of members of the NPRC!

When you figure that the President is a PDP member; 28 of the 36 governors are PDP, and the PDP as a party is also allotted by itself 12 members (ANPP 4, AD 2, and other parties 2), then one will be forgiven to believe that at least 228 members out of the 354 will be sympathetic to

PDP causes - a PDP rally with some bit players included.

Third problem is timing: it appears that the National Conference - conceived as a grand conglomeration of an elite few holed up in Abuja - will be held continuously for 3 months, from mid-February to May, hopefully so that something big about a "New Nigeria" can be announced on or around the celebrated anniversary date May 29 of this Republic.

Question is: only the jobless will be available CONTINUOUSLY for such a long time. One wonders for example what four jobful members of the Diaspora will SUDDENLY leave to head for Nigeria for such an extended period of time at such a short notice.

Which brings us to another concern: almost N1 billion devoted to the conference, with about 65% of that amount to be spent on delegates welfare. N1 billion? That is EXCESSIVE, for a limited-agenda conference, with limited membership over such a limited period of time, and amounts almost to a bribery to get people to participate. Already, the dangling of money has begun to have some Pavlovian effect on those who at first kicked against the NPRC.

The fifth and sixth problems are fatal if not corrected: without (5) an ENABLING legislation supporting the process; witness the Oputa Panel process; and (6) an enabling legislation stipulating an end-point of the NPRC as a binding referendum, then the greatest

By Mobolaji E. Aluko

possibility is that the whole NPRC exercise will be a COMPLETE waste of government time, at least in connection with this Obasanjo administration.

The PNC: Advocates of the Sovereign National Conference (SNC) in civil society have since 1990 conceived it as a Peoples' National Conference (PNC) which transforms into an SNC WHEN the government of the day - whether civilian or military - agrees to and organizes a binding referendum on terms agreed at the conference. This is what would correct the sixth concern outlined above.

What about timing? With a view of ensuring credible grassroots participation at the beginning and bubbling up further representations at higher levels - rather than the traditional one-grand-conglomeration-of-biggies in Abuja - the PNC is conceived not to be a short and quick meeting but a six- to nine-month process of mini-conferences in various parts of Nigeria, culminating in a large meeting anywhere to be agreed, most probably in Abuja.

Finally, what about enabling legislation? The PNC will not and should not be waiting for such legislation in order to convene: the Peoples' conference is for the sovereign people. Period.

Additional recommendations: For many years now, and certainly since the June 12 era, I have been a strong

advocate for the SNC, but decided to take it easy with its advocacy, fully aware that willy-nilly, Obasanjo or not, it will be convened when the marginal cost of not convening it exceeds the marginal cost of convening it. We may not be exactly there yet - but we are awfully close.

Personally, I will participate in any PNC as it best approximates an SNC, but will watch the NPRC closely from afar unless its glaring defects are corrected.

With respect to that PNC, in addition to the terms that it has set out for itself above, to give it more legitimacy in connection with its aspiration as a pre-SNC effort, one would hope that its own decision-making process will include the following:

(i) That each nationality group must have equal number of representatives at the PNC

This provision begins to assault the very idea of "minority" and "majority" in our political discourse. To realize this objective, we have to start from this exercise of a new foundation stone for a new Nigeria by according every nationality an equal representation so that no group is overwhelmed by the spurious claims to fictitious population figures.

(ii) A corollary to the foregoing is that each nationality will have one vote.

Quite frankly, this means therefore that the actual number of representatives will not matter once this

notion of one-nationality-one-vote is accepted. However, number will be crucial for the purpose of deliberations on the issues presented, and if need be, for the purpose of sending and receiving messages from their people at home should such consultations become necessary.

(iii) Voting on matters on the agenda will be by line item.

This means that each of the agenda items for resolution at the PNC should be debated and resolved on its own, without lumping it with other issues.

(iv) Decisions will be reached by consensus and only matters so decided will be binding on all nationalities.

It is extremely important that this clause be accepted so that every nationality is able to exercise its right to determine matters that are vital to its nationality interests. Every decision that is not reached by consensus will be open to further negotiation.

There is a STRONG rumor mill, and it is not an idle one - either a fear or a deliberate plan, some even say official plan - that the NPRC will eventually lead to a National Fracas, which will hasten the chaotic dissolution of the Nigerian state as presently constituted. That fear or plan must be resisted by all well-meaning Nigerians.

So let the talks begin!

Culled from www.nigeriavillagesquare1.com



NATIONAL DIRECTORATE OF EMPLOYMENT (NDE)



CALL ON UNEMPLOYMENT YOUTHS FOR SELF-EMPLOYMENT

The National Directorate of Employment (NDE) in fulfilment of its mandate to create employment opportunities for unemployed Nigerians as part of the Federal Government programme to combat poverty, has equipment available to distribute to youths trained under the Directorate's various Vocational Skills Development (VSD) programme and other employment schemes. These include;

1. Business training and entrepreneurship promotion for graduates of tertiary institutions.
2. Training in rural employment for food processing, crop production and animal husbandry
3. Training under the labour-based method of construction and maintenance of public infrastructure.
4. Skills acquisition training in relevant trades to empower the beneficiaries to own and manage workshops and other related businesses.

The NDE is therefore calling all **unemployed youths and other artisans** who have undergone any of the above training nationwide, especially under the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme (NOAS) and who are desirous to be self-employed, to apply for workshops tools and equipment under the NDE Resettlement Scheme.

Application Forms are obtainable, free of charge, from all NDE offices in the 36 States and Abuja for the following trades.

(i) Domestic Trades

- * Fashion Designing,
- * Knitting
- * Hair Dressing & Barbing
- * Catering
- * Shoe/leather works,
- * Art & Sign writing/Interior Decoration etc.

(ii) Automobile Trades

- * Auto Mechanic
- * Spray Painting
- * Battery Charging
- * Panel Beating
- * Vulcanising
- * Bicycle repairs etc.

(iii) Technical Trades

- * Welding
- * Blacksmithing

- * Plumbing
- * Pipe Fitting
- * Carpentry etc.

(iv) Electrical Trades

- * Electrical installation
- * Radio repairs
- * Television maintenance
- * Refrigeration & Air-conditioning repairs etc.

ELIGIBILITY

All graduated trainees under the National Open Apprenticeship Scheme and other artisans who are interested in obtaining the equipment **on loan basis** should have the following requirements.

1. A candidate must possess the **NDE testimonial or any tangible evidence** of training from other recognised workshops.
2. A candidate must also produce two (2) guarantors who must be either;
 - (a) Civil servants not below salary Grade Level 12
 - (b) Renowned business executives
 - (c) A member of the State or National Assembly; or
 - (d) Chairmen of Local Government Councils.

REGISTRATION

All interested applicants should register at the NDE State office nearest to them and collect and complete Resettlement Application Forms. The completed forms should be returned to the NDE office that issued same not later than two weeks from this publication.

10 % DEPOSIT

All successful applicants are expected to deposit 10% of the total cost of the equipment applied for. Failure to meet these conditions may lead to the cancellation of the application. More details can be obtained from **NDE offices in the 36 States** and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

Signed:

MANAGEMENT

Trust International

Foreign & Diplomatic

Report of the Commission for Africa

African poverty and stagnation is the greatest tragedy of our time. Poverty on such a scale demands a forceful response. And Africa - at country, regional, and continental levels - is creating much stronger foundations for tackling its problems. Recent years have seen improvements in economic growth and in governance. But Africa needs more of both if it is to make serious inroads into poverty. To do that requires a partnership between Africa and the developed world, which takes full account of Africa's diversity and particular circumstances.

For its part, Africa must accelerate reform. And the developed world must increase and improve its aid, and stop doing those things which hinder Africa's progress. The developed world has a moral duty - as well as a powerful motive of self-interest - to assist Africa. We believe that now is the time when greater external support can have a major impact and this is a vital moment for the world to get behind Africa's efforts.

The actions proposed by the Commission constitute a coherent package for Africa. The problems they address are interlocking. They are vicious circles which reinforce one another. They must be tackled together. To do that Africa requires a comprehensive 'big push' on many fronts at once. Partners must work together to implement this package with commitment, perseverance and speed, each focusing on how they can make the most effective contribution.

Getting Systems Right: Governance and Capacity-Building

Africa's history over the last fifty years has been blighted by two areas of weakness. These have been capacity - the ability to design and deliver policies; and accountability - how well a state answers to its people. Improvements in both are first and foremost the responsibility of African countries and people. But action by rich nations is essential too.

Building capacity takes time and commitment. Weak capacity is a matter of poor systems and incentives, poor information, technical inability, untrained staff and lack of money. We recommend that donors make a major investment to improve Africa's capacity, starting with its system of higher education, particularly in science and technology. They must help to build systems and staff in national and local governments, but also in pan-African and regional organisations, particularly the African Union and its NEPAD programme. Donors must change their behaviour and support the national priorities of African governments rather than

allowing their own procedures and special enthusiasms to undermine the building of a country's own capacity.

Improving accountability is the job of African leaders. They can do that by broadening the participation of ordinary people in government processes, in part by strengthening institutions like parliaments, local authorities, trades unions, the justice system and the media. Donors can help with this. They can also help build accountable budgetary processes so that the people of Africa can see how money is raised and where it is going. That kind of transparency can help combat corruption, which African governments must root out. Developed nations can help in this too. Money and state assets stolen from the people of Africa by corrupt leaders must be repatriated. Foreign banks must be obliged by law to inform on suspicious accounts. Those who give bribes should be dealt with too; and foreign companies involved in oil, minerals and other extractive industries must make their payments much more open to public scrutiny. Firms who bribe should be refused export credits.

Without progress in governance, all other reforms will have limited impact.

The Need for Peace and Security

The most extreme breakdown of governance is war. Africa has experienced more violent conflict than any other continent in the last four decades. In recent years things have improved in many countries, but in other places violent conflict is still the biggest single obstacle to development. Investing in development is investing in peace.

The most effective way to tackle conflict - to save both lives and money - is to build the capacity of African states and societies to prevent and manage conflict. That means using aid better to tackle the causes of conflict. It means improving the management of government incomes from natural resources and international agreements on how to control the 'conflict resources' which fuel or fund hostilities. It means controlling the trade in small arms.

African regional organisations and the UN can help prevent and resolve conflict when tensions cannot be managed at the national level, through, for example, effective early warning, mediation and peacekeeping. Donors can support this by providing flexible funding to the African Union and the continent's regional organisations; and supporting the creation of a UN Peace building Commission. The co-ordination and financing of post conflict peace building and development must be improved to prevent

states emerging from violent conflict from sliding back into it.

Leaving No-One Out: Investing in People

Poverty is more than just a lack of material things. Poor people are excluded from decision-making and from the basic services the state ought to provide. Schools and clinics must be available to the poorest people in Africa. This is an urgent matter of basic human rights and social justice. But it is also sound economics: a healthy and skilled workforce is a more productive one, fulfilling their potential with dignity. Investing for economic growth means rebuilding African health and education systems, many of which are now on the point of collapse. This requires major funding, but it is not only a question of resources. It is also about delivery and results. These are powerfully strengthened when local communities are involved in decisions that affect them.

Properly funding the international community's commitment to 'Education for All' will provide all girls and boys in sub-Saharan Africa with access to basic education to equip them with skills for contemporary Africa. Secondary, higher and vocational education, adult learning, and teacher training should also be supported within a balanced overall education system. Donors need to pay what is needed to deliver their promises - including the cost of removing primary school fees.

The elimination of preventable diseases in Africa depends above all on rebuilding systems to deliver public health services in order to tackle diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria effectively. This will involve major investment in staff, training, the development of new medicines, better sexual and reproductive health services and the removal of fees paid by patients, until countries can afford it. Funding for water supply and sanitation should be immediately increased, reversing years of decline.

Top priority must be given to scaling up the services needed to deal with the catastrophe of HIV and AIDS which is killing more people in Africa than anywhere else in the world. But this must be done through existing systems, rather than parallel new ones.

Governments should also be supported to protect orphans and vulnerable children and other groups who would otherwise be left out of the growth story. Almost half of the extra aid we are recommending should be spent on health, education and HIV and AIDS.

Going for Growth and Poverty Reduction

Africa is poor, ultimately, because its economy has not

grown. The public and private sectors need to work together to create a climate which unleashes the entrepreneurship of the peoples of Africa, generates employment and encourages individuals and firms, domestic and foreign, to invest. Changes in governance are needed to make the investment climate stronger. The developed world must support the African Union's NEPAD programme to build public/private partnerships in order to create a stronger climate for growth, investment and jobs.

Growth will also require a massive investment in infrastructure to break down the internal barriers that hold Africa back. Donors should fund a doubling of spending on infrastructure - from rural roads and small-scale irrigation to regional highways, railways, larger power projects and Information & Communications Technology (ICT). That investment must include both rural development and slum upgrading without which the poor people in Africa will not be able to participate in growth. And policies for growth must actively include - and take care not to exclude - the poorest groups. There should be particular emphasis on agriculture and on helping small enterprises, with a particular focus on women and young people. For growth to be sustainable, safeguarding the environment and addressing the risks of climate change should be integral to donor and government programmes. This programme for growth takes over a third of the total additional resources we propose.

More Trade and Fairer Trade

Africa faces two major constraints on trade. It does not produce enough goods, of the right quality or price, to enable it to break into world markets. And it faces indefensible trade barriers which, directly or indirectly, tax its goods as they enter the markets of developed countries.

To improve its capacity to trade Africa needs to make changes internally. It must improve its transport infrastructure to make goods cheaper to move. It must reduce and simplify the tariff systems between one African country and another. It must reform excessive bureaucracy, cumbersome customs procedures, and corruption by public servants, wherever these exist. It must make it easier to set up businesses. It must improve economic integration within the continent's regional economic communities. Donors can help fund these changes.

But the rich nations must also dismantle the barriers they have erected against African goods, particularly in agriculture. These barriers hurt citizens in both rich and poor countries. They must abolish trade-distorting subsidies to their agriculture and



British PM, Tony Blair

agribusiness which give them an unfair advantage over poor African farmers. They must lower tariffs and other non-tariff barriers to African products, including stopping the bureaucratic application of rules of origin which excludes African goods from preferences to which they are entitled. And they must show this ambition by completing the current Doha Round of world trade talks in a way which does not demand reciprocal concessions from poor African nations. Careful attention must be given to ensure that the poorest people are helped to take advantage of the new opportunities and to cope with the impacts of a more open system of world trade. Africa must be provided with the funds that can help it adjust to the new opportunities of a changed world trading regime.

Where Will the Money Come From: Resources

To support the changes that have begun in Africa, we call for an additional US\$25 billion per year in aid, to be implemented by 2010. Donor countries should commit immediately to provide their fair share of this. Subject to a review of progress then, there would be a second stage, with a further US\$25 billion a year to be implemented by 2015. Ensuring the money is well-spent will depend on two factors. First, good governance in Africa must continue to advance. But, second, donors must significantly improve the quality of aid and how it is delivered: that means more grants, more predictable and untied aid, and donor processes that are less burdensome on the already stretched administrations of African countries. It must also be better harmonised with the aid of other donors and better in line with the priorities, procedures and systems of African governments. Above all, it must be given in ways that make governments answer-

able.

These changes are needed not just from individual donor nations but also from multilateral institutions - both African and global. The African Development Bank needs to be strengthened and the role of the Economic Commission for Africa enhanced. The IMF and World Bank need to give higher priority to Africa's development. They also need to become more accountable both to their shareholders and to their clients, and to give Africa a stronger voice in their decision-making.

Rich nations should commit to a timetable for giving 0.7 per cent of their annual income in aid. To provide the critical mass of aid which is needed now, the aid should be front-loaded through the immediate implementation of the International Finance Facility. Practical proposals should be developed for innovative financing methods such as international levies on aviation, which can help secure funding for the medium and longer term.

For poor countries in sub-Saharan Africa which need it, the objective must be 100 per cent debt cancellation as soon as possible. This must be part of a financing package for these countries - including those excluded from current debt schemes - to achieve the MDGs, as promised in Monterrey and Kananaskis.

Conclusion

Bold comprehensive action on a scale needed to meet the challenges can only be done through a new kind of partnership. In the past contractual and conditional approaches were tried, and failed. What we are suggesting is a new kind of development, based on mutual respect and solidarity, and rooted in a sound analysis of what actually works.

This can speed up progress, building on recent positive developments in Africa, towards a just world of which

Trust International

World Report

Togo lays former leader to rest

Leaders of West African states, including the Nigerian president, have turned out for the funeral of Togo strongman Gnassingbe Eyadema.

They were joined by French and EU officials as the late leader was given a solemn send-off in the capital, Lome. Thousands of mourners also lined the city's streets for the funeral of the man who ruled for nearly 40 years.

A bid by his son, Faure Gnassingbe, to take over after his death five weeks ago was resisted by Togo's neighbours.

Infuriated by the decision of the military to install him as president in defiance of the constitution, they declared a coup had taken place and imposed sanctions.

Faure Gnassingbe later stepped down and a presidential election has been called for 24 April.

The BBC's correspondent noted that, through their presence at the funeral, the region's presidents are demonstrating satisfaction with the outcome of the confrontation which followed Eyadema's death on 5 February.

A giant portrait of Eyadema, with the words "I will always be with you", overlooked Lome's marbled Palais des Congres building where dignitaries had gathered to receive the coffin.

The late leader received

full military honours including a cannon salute.

Wrapped in the red, yellow and green national flag, it was placed on a podium.

Togolese Foreign Affairs Minister Kokou Tozoun praised the late leader, comparing him to the baobab, a powerful tree common to Africa.

"The baobab... whose leaves, fruits and roots nourish the people, has fallen," he said.

After seizing power 38 years ago, Eyadema governed unchallenged for more than two decades.

He legalised political parties in 1991, as a result of popular pressure, and won three elections - but there were

continual allegations of political repression and electoral fraud.

President Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, who also chairs the African Union, was present, along with the leaders of Ghana, Niger, Ivory Coast and Benin.

French Foreign Minister Michel Barnier and the EU's development commissioner, Louis Michel also attended.

Outside the building, thousands of supporters of the governing party - the Togo People's Rally - followed the funeral on television screens.

Faure Gnassingbe is due to stand as the party's candidate in the presidential poll.

One million protest Syrian presence in Lebanon

Nearly one million people have gathered for an opposition rally in Beirut, officials said - a month after the death of former Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri.

The BBC correspondent in Beirut said the crowds have turned the city centre into a sea of red, white and green - the colours of Lebanon's national flag.

The protest is against the continuing presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon.

Reports said it has surpassed recent pro-Syrian rallies organised by the Hezbollah guerrilla movement.

Syria has pulled back some of its troops in Lebanon to the border.

Damascus also promised the withdrawal of its 14,000 troops and intelligence agents.

The move was cautiously welcomed by US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as a "positive development".

Meanwhile military intelligence officers left two offices in the north in the town of Amayoun in Koura region and Deir Ammar on the coast, the Associated Press news agency reported.

Beirut city official Mounib Nassereddine told AFP news agency more than 800,000 people

had turned out for the protest, which would make it the biggest demonstration held in the country's history. AP also estimated the same turnout, with people still arriving.

Demonstrators packed Martyrs Square, near where al-Hariri died in a car bomb, and spilled over into nearby streets.

The sea of people fell silent at 12:55pm, the exact time al-Hariri was killed four weeks ago.

Unlike previous anti-Syrian rallies, Sunni Muslims came out in force to join Druze and Christians to commemorate the loss of their leader.

A stream of buses and cars brought protesters from the eastern Bekaa Valley, while others arrived from Junieh in

"We are coming to liberate our country. We are coming to demand the truth," Fatma Trad, a Sunni from the northern area of Dinniyeh, told AP.

Many offices and schools closed early for the demonstration.

An investigation is continuing into al-Hariri's death and the opposition has demanded the resignation of senior security officials.

Sunday saw a mass pro-Syrian rally, this time in the town of Nabatiyeh.

Earth quake rocks eastern Turkey

A strong earthquake has hit eastern Turkey, damaging buildings and injuring five people, two days after another quake shook the region, news reports say.

The earthquake with a preliminary magnitude of 5.9 centred on the rural Bingol province at 3.55am on Monday, and toppled several buildings that had been badly damaged in Saturday's magnitude 5.7 earthquake, private NTV television reported.

The station said there was no loss of life, but many panicked residents remained outdoors after the quake.

Private CNN-Turk television said five people were injured on Monday.

Bingol is 700km east of Ankara. Saturday's earthquake damaged more than 200 buildings and injured 16 people, according to the prime minister's office.

Scores of people have been staying in tents in the snow covered area since Saturday's quake.

Earthquakes are frequent in Turkey as it lies on active fault lines.

Two massive quakes killed about 18,000 people in 1999. A magnitude 6.4 quake in Bingol killed 177 people in 2003.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

MAPPING EXERCISE FOR HIV/AIDS SUPPORT GROUPS

The National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA) in collaboration with USAID/ENHANSE, UNDP, UNAIDS, is starting a mapping exercise of all Support Groups of People Living with HIV/AIDS in the country.

Specialists have been engaged to oversee the mapping exercise, (one per zone) in the geo-political zones of the country. The names and telephone numbers of the consultants are as follows:

1. North East Zone - Dr. (Mrs) Altine M. Tongo -08035075881
2. North West Zone - Mallam Abdullahi Maiwada -08036500205
3. North Central Zone - Mr. Ayano Chule ≤08032912192
4. South West Zone - Mrs. Rolake Nwagwu ≤08033035895
5. South East Zone - Mr. Benard A. Nwabuko ≤08042108462
6. South South Zone - Dr. Amos Abu ≤08034417328

Their telephone numbers will only be valid for the period of mapping exercise

The State Action Committee on AIDS (SACA) will coordinate the mapping exercise as relates to their states. Support Groups of PLWHAs are hereby notified about the exercise, and requested to provide all necessary information about their membership and details of their operation to the SACA Secretariat in their states.

The exercise will commence on Monday, March 7th and end on Friday, March 25th, 2005.

For further information, please call 09-2904411-17 ext 109 & 104 or

send an e-mail to mapconsultants2005@yahoo.com or mmohammed@naca.gov.ng

Signed

Prof. Babatunde Osotimehin
Chairman, NACA

Pope returns to Vatican

Pope John Paul II has left his hospital in Rome,

than two weeks recovering from throat surgery, and has returned to the Vatican.

Looking alert but grim-faced, he waved to crowds lining the road for the trip of a few kilometres (miles) from the Gemelli clinic to the Holy See.

He was travelling in a grey Mercedes minivan with tinted windows rather than his more usual popemobile.

Earlier, he addressed pilgrims for the first time since his tracheotomy.

The pontiff, 84 and with Parkinson's Disease, is expected to appear at Easter Week events later this month but a papal spokesman stressed he would be "continuing his convalescence" at the Vatican.

It is thought the tube that was put in his throat is still in place.

When he spoke from the window of his 10th-floor room, the Pope sounded hoarse.

He read only a few words from a sheet of paper but his appearance delighted those who had gathered below.

In Polish, he thanked a group of pilgrims who had travelled from his birthplace in the southern Polish town of Wadowice to be among the crowd.

Career Opportunities

At Our Manufacturing Plant

Who We Are

Procter & Gamble is one of the world's largest and most innovative international companies, operating in the extremely competitive fast moving consumer goods market. We develop, manufacture and market high quality products designed to meet consumer needs worldwide. Our products, over 300, are recognized and relied upon by people all over the world. They include Always, Pampers, Crest, Zest, Camay, Oil of Ulay, Head & Shoulders, Vicks, Tide and Ariel. Our world headquarters is in Cincinnati, Ohio USA. From our origin in 1837, P&G has grown into a multi-billion dollar business, employing more than 100,000 people worldwide.

Procter & Gamble in Nigeria

P&G started operations in Nigeria in 1992. We have our Head Office in Lagos and a plant in Ibadan. We have major distributors all over the country and some of the products we produce and market locally include Always, Pampers, Vicks Lemon Plus, and Ariel.

What we are looking for

- Technicians at our Ibadan Plant (with Sciences, Mechanical, Chemical, Industrial/Production, Agricultural and Electrical Engineering background).
- Outstanding young men and women between 22 and 28 years of age, with excellent communication skills.
- People with strong academic record with diplomas in Engineering, Sciences, Medical Sciences, or any related discipline.
- Intelligent, ambitious and dynamic people with a marked ability in leadership, working effectively with others.

Educational requirements

- Technical School certificate or its equivalent
- NCE (Technical)
- OND (completed 1 year internship or not)/upper credit
- HND (completed YC or not) upper credit
- Technical Mastery & qualification in the following:
 - PLC programming (Allan Bradley) Hardware & Software
 - Drive control analysis
 - Basic Trouble shooting skills
 - PLC Troubleshooting
 - Gemco Controller & Cams application
 - Instrumentations such as proxies, sensors and photoeyes
 - Servodrive systems.

Why Procter & Gamble?

We offer you a range of very attractive benefits including:

- * Immediate Responsibility
- * Excellent Training
- * Competitive Compensation Package
- * Promotion Only From Within
- * Creative Working Environment

How to Apply

All applicants interested should send a text with the following parameters to **08034352441**

First Name
 Last Name
 Tribe: H-Hausa, Y-Yoruba, I-Ibo, O-Others
 Age:
 Sex: M-Male F-Female
 Course: Eng-Engineering, S-Sciences,
 GPA: Convert to a scale of 5 if not already scaled
 Preferred contact phone: Fill number if different from one in use, otherwise type 1
 Email address: If applicable - Use % sign for underscore (_)
 Leadership record: Number of times you have led people to achieve significant goals
 Preferred test center: IB: Ibadan, PH: Port-Harcourt or AB: Abuja
 Present Employer: Abbreviate, if none write none
 Institution: PT: Polytechnic, CT: College of Education (Technical)
 NYSC: NY-Not Yet, S-Serving, C-Completed
 Separate items with #
 E.G.
 Danladi#AKintoye#y#22#M#Eng#4.40#Kadpoly#1#danladi%akintoye@yahoo.com#4#AB#P&G#PT#C

Only Short listed candidates will be contacted via identified SMS number or email address.

Candidates who have taken a P&G test in the past 18 months need not reapply.



Business Trust

Today's flight schedule

Albarka Air	
Lagos - Abuja	07:20
	10:30
	15:15
	13:00
Abuja - Lagos	8:45a.m.
	11:00
	13:15
	17:00
Maiduguri - Abuja 06:50	
Abuja - Maid.	17:00
Lagos - Yola 1:00p.m.	
Abuja - Yola	14:30
Yola - Abuja	15:30
Yola - Lagos	4:00 p.m.
Chanchangi Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15a.m.
	11:00a.m.
	12:10p.m.
	4:45p.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	8:30a.m.
P/H - Lagos	9:00a.m.
	4:30p.m.
Abuja - Kaduna	2:30p.m.
Kaduna - Abuja	1:30p.m.
IRS Airlines	
CBQ - Abuja	8.00 a.m.
Abuja - Lagos	9:45a.m.
Lagos - Kaduna	9:30a.m.
Kano - Lagos	7:30p.m.
Lagos - Kano	11:15a.m.
Kaduna - Lagos	11:00a.m.
Lagos - Abu/MM	2:30p.m.
Abuja - MM	1:45p.m.
MM - Abuja	3:45p.m.
Abuja - Cal	5:15p.m.
Kano - Abuja	1:15p.m.
Abuja - Kano	2:30p.m.
Kano - Lagos	3:45p.m.
Lagos - Kano	6:00p.m.
EAS Airlines	
Lagos - Abuja	8:15p.m.
	11:45a.m.
	5:45p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	10:15a.m.
	7:15p.m.
Lagos - Jos	11:45a.m.
Jos - Lagos	2:30pm.
Dasab Airlines	
Auja - Lagos	8:30 a.m.
Lagos - PHC	10:30 a.m.
PHC - Lagos	12:30 a.m.
Lagos - Kano	2:30 p.m.
Kano - Lagos	4:30 p.m.
Lagos - Abuja	6:30pm.
ADC Airline	
Lagos - Abuja	7:15 a.m.
	12:45 p.m.
Abuja - Lagos	8:55 a.m.
Lagos - Calabar	11:15 a.m.
Calabar - Lagos	7:20 a.m.
P/H-Lagos	9:45am.

Most airlines operate the same flight schedule on week days.

Oil prices fall ahead OPEC's meeting tomorrow

Crude oil futures fell yesterday after the president of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) said oil-producing nations may decide to increase production at tomorrow's meeting in Iran.

Light, sweet crude for April delivery fell 38 cents to \$54.05 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange by afternoon in Europe. Heating oil fell more than a cent to \$1.5280 a gallon.

Brent crude fell 35 cents to \$52.75 on London's International Petroleum Exchange.

Nymex crude futures have traded around \$55 a barrel ahead Wednesday's OPEC meeting in Isfahan, Iran.

Before leaving for the meeting, Kuwait's oil minister Sheik Ahmed Fahd Al Ahmed Al Sabah said, "If there is a need and if there is a spare capacity among OPEC members, there might be a decision to increase production."

Al Sabah, who is also OPEC's president, had said a

day earlier that the surge in oil prices had made some members consider exceeding their quotas.

"I think that now everybody is overproducing," Al Sabah said. "Current prices make it lucrative for everybody to hike production without the need for an (official) decision."

The United Arab Emirates' oil minister, Mohammed bin Dhaen al-Hamili, said Sunday that the producer group was not expected to cut its output ceiling and may

"maintain current production levels with the aim of calming the market."

Neither minister saw signs of tightening oil supplies and Hamili suggested stockpiles could even increase by 2 million barrels per day during the second quarter. Oil inventories typically rise then as demand declines following the Northern Hemisphere winter.

Victor Shum, an oil analyst at Texas-based Purvin & Gertz in Singapore, said prices will stay above the \$50 barrel level.

"The strength of demand means that any downward correction would not be significant," he said.

The Paris-based International Energy Agency, a watchdog for the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, said Friday that it expects world oil demand growth of 1.81 million barrels a day, bringing its forecast for average daily demand to 84.3 million barrels.

In raising its demand forecast by 330,000 barrels a

Lufthansa negotiates takeover of Swiss Air

German carrier Lufthansa said Sunday it was negotiating with Swiss International Air Lines about a possible takeover of the money-losing carrier.

In a statement, Lufthansa described the talks as "constructive" and said the two companies had come up with a business plan to integrate Swiss into its operations. It said "pillars" of any deal would be keeping Switzerland's air connections and the Swiss brand.

"The business plan that has been developed by the two companies must still be approved by the Lufthansa board of directors, the board of Swiss and Swiss shareholders," the statement said.

Should the plan meet with board approval, Lufthansa said it would make an offer to buy out smaller investors based on Swiss stock's average price in recent weeks.

Swiss posted a net loss of 140 million francs (\$118 million) for 2004, compared with a loss of 687 million francs in 2003. The company released audited results for 2004 on Friday, in line with the unaudited figures it issued last month.

The company has suffered massive financial problems since it was created out of the defunct Swissair in 2002, and has announced a string of cost-cutting programs.

Only Friday, Swiss CEO Christoph Franz said the company needed to return to profitability before making a deal with another airline.

Still, speculation of a merger has prompted Swiss' shares to climb. The stock closed up 19.5 percent at 10.40 francs on Friday in Zurich.



(L-R) Alhaji Aminu Bello Masari, Speaker, House of Representatives, Alhaji Muhammad Imam Yahaya, Chairman/Chief Executive, NUB International Bank Limited and Alhaji Sani Dauda, a director at the NUB's Customers' Forum and Dinner held in Abuja...recently.

M-tel rewards outstanding dealers

By Anas A. Galadima, Business Reporter

Telequip Systems Limited, an M-tel franchise dealer, has emerged as the best airtime distributor of M-tel selling airtime and starter packs worth over N1.76 billion in the last one year.

Presenting an award to the company, during an awards night organised on Friday, by M-tel for its franchise dealer, the chief executive officer of M-tel, Edwin Moore Monife said the purpose of the awards is to express appreciation to M-tel franchise dealers who have performed very well in the last one year.

He said the dream of M-tel, is to emerge as the most successful mobile operator, hence the need to show appreciation to all its dealers.

Also, GNJ Limited, another franchise dealer, emerged as the best logical airtime distributor selling airtime worth over N1.54 billion in the last one year.

GSM Express Limited also got an award for selling airtime worth over N1 billion in one year.

Other award winners include Don P. Communications, Blue Box Limited, Digital Telecoms Limited, Watergate, Mtech Manus Ventrues, Futrue Telecoms etc.

NCC tasks NITEL on bill collection

Executive Vice Chairman of the Nigeria Communications Commission (NCC) Ernest Ndukwe has called on the new management of NITEL to place priority on bills collection.

Ndukwe said the organisation still had a lot of potential to explore in the telecommunication market.

He however stressed that NITEL must improve on its billing structure so as to meet its challenges and obligations without delay.

The head of the telecom regulatory agency gave the advice when the new NITEL management led by its chief executive officer, Mr Albert Mashi, paid him a courtesy visit on Thursday.

A statement made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Abuja, quoted Ndukwe as urging NITEL to settle the

pending cases of indebtedness with the other networks to ensure a smooth operations.

NITEL and the other three GSM operators, MTN, V-mobile and Glomobile have been meeting to resolve conflicting figures of tariff over inter connectivity, after they had issued threats and posted adverts with counter-accusations.

Mashi had earlier appealed to the NCC to intervene in the ongoing discussions with the operators so that they could clear the backlog of debt owed NITEL on inter connectivity.

He said the new management had already started discussions with the other networks on how best to harmonise the accounts, noting that the accounts had been reconciled up to 2003.

Mashi said the company was undergoing a trying period and would need all the resources it could muster to boost its operations.

The statement, signed by

the NITEL spokesman, Mr Tayo Ekundayo, said Mashi was accompanied on the visit by the Chief Technical Officer (CTO), Mr Emmanuel Adekoya and the General Manager, Marketing and Sales, Mrs Zubaida Rasheed.

FSB leads Valucard scheme

FSB International Bank Plc has emerged as the bank with the highest number of cards primed in the Valucard scheme for the year 2004.

Valucard Nigeria Plc boss, Mr. Kyari Bukar in his letter of commendation to the bank said his organisation was proud to celebrate the performance of the bank as one with the highest number of cards primed in 2004.

The 2004 performance improved by 27% over the 2003 activities, a statement

from the company said, FSB International Bank Plc has by this feat, distinguished itself as a leader for a second consecutive year.

The Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Valucard Nigeria Plc on behalf of his management and Staff thanked FSB for its performance. He expressed hope that the bank would strive to remain in the prime position of the scheme through 2005 and beyond. He noted with pleasure, the immense contribution and unrelenting commitment of FSB International Bank Plc to the Valucard scheme.

Business Trust

Motoring

Saab's CEO

resigns over cars deal

After losing a bid to produce General Motors' midsize cars, Saab Auto-mobile AB's chief executive, Peter Augustsson said he will resign in April to start his own company.

Jan-Aake Jonsson, the current chief of sales and marketing for GM's Nordic region, on April 1, 2005 will replace Augustsson, who has led Saab since 2000.

Augustsson's announcement came five days after GM chose an Adam Opel AG plant in Rueselsheim, Germany, as its hub for production of future generations of GM's midsize cars in Europe, over Saab's plant in Trollhaettan. But the U.S.-based auto company guaranteed that the Trollhaettan plant will keep producing automobiles until 2010,

including a new Cadillac BLS model aimed at the European market.

Augustsson said GM's announcement Friday provided "a fitting moment" to end his career with Saab.

"If I was going to stay, I'd have to commit for several more years," he said. "I don't feel like I can do that. I want to do something else now."

He said he plans to start a business development company, but declined to provide details.

Carl-Peter Forster, president of GM Europe, will take Augustsson's place as chairman of the Saab board, the company said.

After GM acquired a stake in Saab in 1990, the automaker has posted profits just twice. Since 2000, when GM acquired Saab, the company has been in the red but Augustsson said, "I don't feel like I've failed."

Ford ends Thunderbird production

Ford Motor corporation said the 2005 model year will be the last for the current-generation Ford Thunderbird, a retro-styled convertible that went on sale in August 2001.

Ford had planned to discontinue the Thunderbird after the 2005 or 2006 model year but told employees Thursday production will end in July.

"We promised all along that this Thunderbird would have a limited production run, and we're being true to our word," Ford Division President, Steve Lyons said. "Thunderbird was a terrific image builder for the Ford brand showroom at a time when we needed it." The Wixom Assembly Plant northwest of Detroit, which

produces the Thunderbird, will continue to make the Lincoln LS and Town Car and also will be the final assembly point for the Ford GT supercar, which was released last year.

The Thunderbird, one of Ford's most celebrated nameplates, first went on sale in 1954. Its peak sales year was 1977, when 322,517 redesigned Thunderbirds were sold. The Thunderbird went through numerous design changes over the decades before going on hiatus in 1997.

The redesigned 2002 Thunderbird got off to a roaring start. Dealers were flooded with pre-orders and got \$10,000 premiums on top of the car's sticker price of \$30,000.



BMW 3series

BMW 3 Series: A new wave of innovative design

By Hamisu Muhammad, Business reporter, with agency report

On the roads in Spring 2005, the 3 Series is conceptually and technically an incremental development of its predecessor.

After the recent new wave of innovative designs from BMW, and particularly the 5 and 1 series, the 3 series is relatively conventional with less complex and concave surfaces, and more voluminous forms that visually increase its size relative to the 1 series.

BMW's fifth generation E90 3 Series completes the new design strategy for the main series BMW range under Design Director Chris Bangle. Now with a smaller sibling in the range, the 3 Series is no longer BMW's entry level car although it shares much of its platform with the 1 Series and it is expected to continue to account for about half of BMW's total sales.

It has revised petrol engines ranging from one 2 litre four cylinder through 2.5 to 3.0 litre sixes and continues downwards with a 1.8 litre four and upwards with a new

turbo-charged 3.0 litre six and 4.0 litre V8 (in the M3). Diesels include the current 2.0 litre four cylinder and will extend to include two 3.0 litre sixes.

Like the 1 Series, iDrive is available as an option, but so too are many features that debuted in the 5 Series, such as active steering, brake force display (extra brake lights for an emergency stop), keyless entry and run flat tyres.

With a length of 4520mm, width 1817mm, and height 1424mm, it is marginally larger than its predecessor in all dimensions except width where it is a significant 78mm larger. In length it is midway

between the 1 and 5 Series, but given that it shares saloon car configuration with the 5 whilst the 1 is a truncated estate with a very short rear overhang, the 3 is actually much closer in its overall size to its smaller sibling.

Proportionally the car is much the same as its predecessor; clearly rear wheel drive with short front overhang, lengthy hood and general cab-aft profile. It also has the same archetypal BMW DLO with 'Hofmeister kink' and, uniquely now within the range, it has a new, organic interpretation of the once-typical BMW bodyside undercut running the length of the car's flanks, that tapers in plan to the rear significantly. At the front the

kidney grille punctures a surface that runs seamless from the hood to lower front valance and is part of a more 'grown up' face than before.

Inside the car is fewer drivers orientated than the E46 (and certainly the E36) and straddles the 5 and 1 Series in theme, notably with two instrument panel designs; one for iDrive-fitted cars and a simpler design for those without.

Despite the new 3 Series being conventional relative to all other recent BMW designs, the car is fresh, continues to develop new and progress existing BMW design themes, and is clearly positioned.

Volkswagen outlook disappoints market

Hopes for a quick turnaround at Volkswagen faded as Europe's biggest carmaker underwhelmed investors with a weak first-quarter forecast and a wary 2005 operating profit target.

"Operating profit after special items will improve year-on-year in 2005, although the extent of this improvement depends on external factors that cannot be predicted at present," the

German group said.

Early in January, VW finance chief Hans Dieter Poetsch had already forecast an improved operating profit for 2005 and a clear rise the following year, when he said earnings should improve by a few billion euros.

In February, VW reported a 12 percent drop in 2004 operating profit to 2.015 billion euros (\$2.66 billion) before one-offs. The company is pinning its hopes

on the success of its "ForMotion" restructuring program and a rejuvenated model line to help it counter sluggish markets, a strong euro, high raw material prices and dwindling profits in China.

But the outlook for the first quarter sent VW's shares down nearly 4 percent and robbed the stock of its upward momentum this year as one of Europe's car sector turnaround stories.



2005 Thunderbird



VW Golf



Federal Republic of Nigeria
NATIONAL COUNCIL ON PRIVATISATION.
 Secretariat: Bureau of Public Enterprises

PRIVATISATION OF NIGERIA AVIATION HANDLING COMPANY (NAHCO)
REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

As part of the on the ongoing privatisation programme the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) wishes to divest its entire 60% holding in the Nigeria Aviation Handling Company (NAHCo) through an Initial Public Offering (IPO). Accordingly the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) wishes to engage the services of advisers to assist it in the process.

The scope of work for the selected advisors, to be led by an Issuing House shall include:

1. Assist the NCP/BPE in reviewing and executing its strategic options in the successful implementation of the Initial Public Offer (IPO) of shares in NAHCo.
2. Ensure that all FGN policy requirements, with respect to divestiture and sale of public enterprises are met.
3. To introduce NAHCo Securities on the trading floor of the Nigerian Stock Exchange.
4. To review all pertinent laws, regulations, policies and processes governing NAHCo:
5. To assist NCP/BPE in marketing the company for the IPO.
6. To register and screen all application forms and ensure all certificates, return monies are successfully dispatched.

Submission of Expression of Interest (EOI)

The Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) on behalf of the National Council on Privatisation (NCP) now invites eligible consortia to indicate their interest in providing the above-mentioned services. The firms must apply as a Consortium and should be led by an ISSUING HOUSE. The firms must have competencies covering the range of additional services contained in the scope of work above. The consortium shall include the following:

- Issuing House
- Stock Broker
- Registrar

Expressions of Interest from eligible consortia should include the following as basis for pre-qualification:

- Evidence of tract record in similar assignments in the past five years including role of firm in implementing successful IPO (in developing countries and African in Particular) description of outcome and references of officials in assignment cited;

- Profile of consortium including ownership structure;
- Names and Curriculum Vitae of firm's top executives who will work on this assignment, including qualification and individual experience in handling similar assignment preferably in developing countries;
- Overall approach to the assignment;
- Details of consortium members and a letter from each member confirming their participation in the Consortium;
- Evidence of registration with Security & Exchange Commission and Nigerian Stock Exchange;
- Evidence of registration with BPE.

The selection and contracting of the consortium will be conducted in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers. January 1997 (revised September 1997 and January 1999). Interested firms may obtain further information at the address below during office hours, Monday to Friday.

One original plus five copies (and a softcopy on CD ROM) of Expression of Interest (EOI) must be submitted in a sealed envelope clearly marked "**Expression of Interest: Privatisation of Nigeria Aviation Handling Company (NAHCo)**" and delivered not later than 17:00 hours Nigerian time on 1st April, 2005 to the address below:

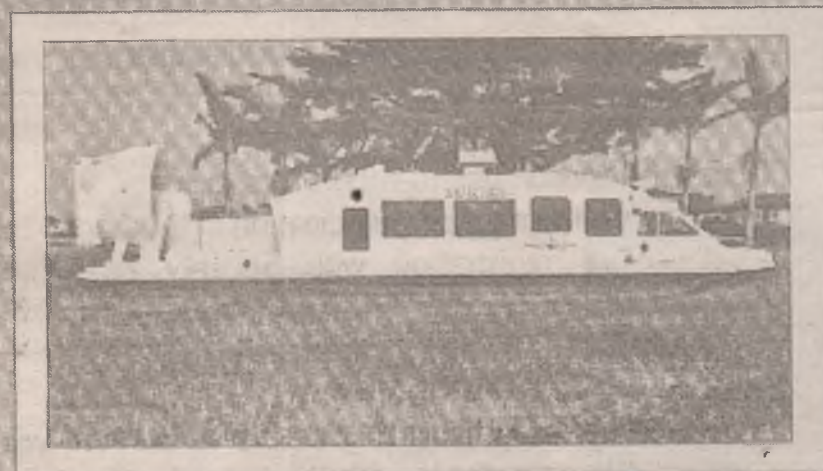
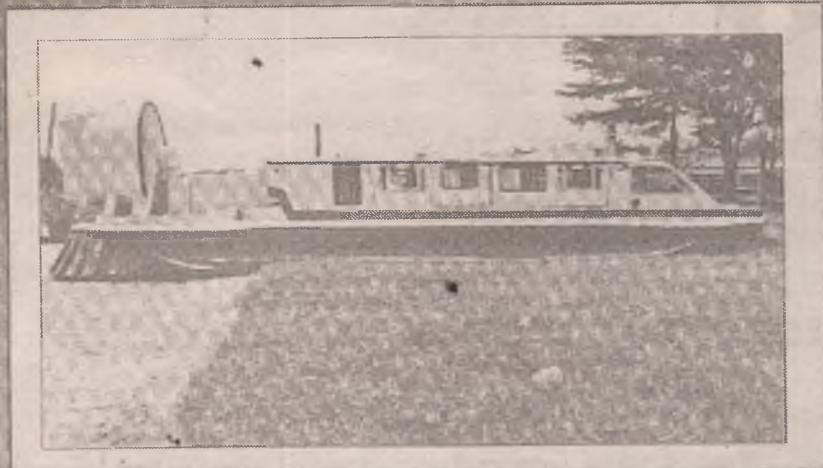
The Director General

Attention: Ag. Director (Aviation and Transports)
 Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE)
 No. 1, Osun Crescent, Off IBB Way
 Maitama District, Abuja
 P.M.B. 442, Garki
 Abuja.
 Tel./Fax: 234-9-4134664
 Tel: 234-9-4139214, 4134636-46 (Ext.1029)
 E-mail: aibeh@bpeng.org
 yadamu@bpeng.org
 Web site: <http://www.bpeng.org>

Only short-listed applicants will be issued Request for Proposal (RFPs)

PLEASE NOTE THAT E-MAIL AND / OR FAX SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

FOR SALE



BOATS: 2(Nos) SLINGSBY HOVERCRAFT

STATE:	Working Condition
MODEL:	SAH2200
YEAR BUILT:	1988
ENGINE TYPE:	Deutz (Air Cooled)
FUEL CAPACITY:	500 ltrs
ENGINE HP:	178/185 Respectively
SPEED (FULL LADEN):	25 Knots/32 Knots Respectively
PASSENGER CAPACITY:	8+2 Crew Respectively
PAYLOAD:	2200kg
OTHER SPECIFICATIONS:	Fully Airconditioned, VHF Radio, Sonar, Low Wash, Low Wake Generation.

Available for inspection @ **ALMARINE PREMISES, PLOT 28 KOLOKUMA STREET BOROKIRI PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE.**

Interested parties should contact **CORPORATE AFFAIRS/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER** on 08033070893, 08052072500, 01-2709289

or the **FACTORY MANAGER** **ALMARINE 28, KOLOKUMA STREET BOROKIRI PORT HARCOURT.**

Bids/Offer should be forwarded to **P.O. BOX 2508 LAGOS NOT LATER THAN 5TH APRIL, 2005.**

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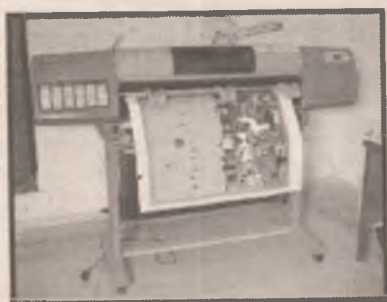
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Addresses

<p>Hezron Press/Digital Imaging Studio 15 Taskan Street, Off I.S. Taskan Street Behind UBA, Area 8, Garki, Abuja. Tel: 234-9-2342735 E-mail: 08034345308 Chin: 080227784950 Nhamd: 08032140047</p>	<p>Digital Colour Separation 19 Senanga Road, Off Azara Road, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja. Tel/Fax: 234-9-5232415 Mobile: 08037862684 Mila: 08042156784</p>	<p>Hezron Press/Post-press Suite 20/21 Area 7 Corner Shop (Beside Cultural Centre) Garki, Abuja. Tel: 234-9-2348487 Mobile: 08044180214 Somos: 08036194336, 08033140047</p>	<p>Hezron Colour Photo Laboratory and Studio 4 Suite 15 Utako Modern Market Rd. (Just Before Chisco Office) Utako District, FCT, Abuja Tel: 234-9-2342735 Mobile: 08036477082, 08037862684</p>
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FEDERAL AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF NIGERIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

INVITATION TO TENDER FOR PRE-QUALIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE MODIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL BUILDING OF MALLAM AMINU KANO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KANO

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria, in accordance with Due Process rules and regulations hereby invites interested reputable consultancy firms or consortiums for pre-qualification consideration in the provision of consultancy services to FAAN on the modification of the international terminal building of the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano.

SCOPE OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

- ▶ Architectural
- ▶ Civil & Structural Engineering
- ▶ Mechanical & Electrical Engineering
- ▶ Quantity Surveying
- ▶ Project Management

PRE-QUALIFICATION EXERCISE

In order to be considered for participation in the pre-qualification process, interested firms are required to submit the following:

- ▶ Evidence of registration with the Corporate Affairs Commission
- ▶ Evidence of registration with professional bodies
- ▶ Evidence of registration with FAAN
- ▶ Tax clearance for the last 3 years.
- ▶ Firm's profile
- ▶ Organizational structure, including names and resumes of key personnel.
- ▶ Evidence of projects executed.
- ▶ Letter of reference from firm's bank

Please ensure that your submission is in accordance with the format above.

All submissions should be well detailed, as the contents would be accordingly evaluated and only short listed firms would be considered

SUBMISSION OF PRE-QUALIFICATION DOCUMENTS

All Pre-Qualification documents are to be submitted in two copies and neatly bound in binders (A4 size) and placed in separate sealed brown envelopes marked as follows: **CONFIDENTIAL " PRE-QUALIFICATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE MODIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL TERMINAL BUILDING OF MALLAM AMINU KANO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, KANO"** and submitted to the office of The Secretary, Tenders Board, FAAN Headquarters, Ikeja, Lagos, not later than fourteen days(2weeks) from the date of this notice while all submissions will be opened on the same date, at 12noon.

NB.

- ▶ All expenses incurred and associated with the preparation of any pre-qualification response shall be borne by the prospective firm making the response.
- ▶ Notwithstanding the submission of the pre-qualification information, FAAN is neither committed nor obliged to include any firm on any shortlist or to appoint any firm.
- ▶ FAAN reserves the right to reject any/or all pre-qualification submissions.
- ▶ FAAN will not enter into correspondence with any firm or individual on why a firm was pre-qualified or not pre-qualified
- ▶ This public notice of "Invitation to Pre-qualify" shall not be construed as a commitment on the part of FAAN, nor shall it entitle the submitting firm to make any claim whatsoever and or seek any indemnity from FAAN by virtue of such firm having responded to this publication.

Signed
Management

Business Trust

1ST-TIER SECURITIES

THE NIGERIAN STOCK EXCHANGE

REPORT AS AT MONDDAY, MARCH 14, 2005

COMPANY NAME	NO OF DEALS	QUOTATION(N)	QUANTITY TRADED	VALUE OF SHARES
CUTIX PLC	2	1.24	4,200	5,208.00
Sector Totals	2		4,200	5,208.00
AGRICULTURE/AGRO-ALLIED				
OKITIPUPA OIL PALM PLC.	1	0.81	300	243.00
THE OKOMU OIL PALM COMPANY PLC	13	16.94	96,600	1,611,395.00
PRESCO PLC.	8	9.04	30,036	265,063.20
Sector Totals	22		126,936	1,876,701.20
AIRLINES				
AVIATION DEVELOPMENT COMPANY PLC.	1	1.00	600	600.00
Sector Totals	1		600	600.00
AUTOMOBILE & TYRE				
DUNLOP NIGERIA PLC.	16	1.79	73,899	130,366.06
INCAR NIGERIA APLC.	1	1.30	300	390.00
R. T. BRISCOAE PLC.	6	4.35	86,300	375,405.00
Sector Totals	23		160,499	506,161.06
BANKING				
ACCESS BANK PLC	5	3.42	51,673	176,721.66
AFRIBANK NIGERIA PLC.	27	6.63	750,995	4,979,096.85
FIRST ATLANTIC BANK PLC	2	3.41	4,000,000	13,640,000.00
CHARTERED BANK PLC	2	3.90	7,221	28,161.90
COOPERATIVE BANK PLC.	1	1.92	6,750	12,960.00
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT BANK PLC.	1	0.75	750	562.50
EIB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	1	2.26	15,000	33,900.00
FIRST CITY MONUMENT BANK PLC	2	5.18	689,995	3,574,174.10
FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	533	22.94	1,697,155	38,953,371.42
FSB INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	48	1.20	861,987	1,046,466.00
GUARANTY TRUST BANK PLC.	255	9.90	1,572,936	15,252,547.53
GULF BANK OF NIGERIA PLC	10	0.38	1,270,000	482,600.00
INTERNATIONAL MERCHANT BANK PLC.	11	0.55	659,704	371,531.28
INLAND BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	19	1.51	1,056,332	1,586,302.00
INTERCONTINENTAL BANK PLC.	1	7.81	2,800	21,868.00
LION BANK OF NIGERIA PLC.	3	0.61	28,800	16,818.00
MANUFACTURERS BANK NIGERIA PLC.	16	1.26	1,255,800	1,543,985.66
NAL BANK PLC.	1	2.80	1,200	3,360.00
OCEANIC BANK PLC	6	4.24	82,914	351,555.36
OMEGA BANK (NIGERIA) PLC.	1	1.50	1,000	1,500.00
STANDARD TRUST BANK PLC	8	7.41	21,298	157,818.18
TRANS INTERNATIONAL BANK PLC.	2	1.50	475,200	712,800.00
UNITED BANK FOR AFRICA PLC.	25	10.00	190,922	1,909,220.00
UNION BANK NIGERIA PLC.	321	18.80	1,003,346	19,062,280.41
UNIVERSAL TRUST BANK PLC	6	0.69	106,946	73,210.22
WEMA BANK PLC.	5	3.93	5,118	20,113.74
ZENITH BANK PLC	256	13.40	3,081,584	40,652,437.87
Sector Totals	1,568		18,897,426	144,665,362.68
BREWERIES				
GUINNESS NIGERIA PLC.	167	77.97	410,790	31,860,995.54
NIGERIAN BREWERIES PLC.	343	36.69	817,915	29,953,663.11
Sector Totals	510		1,228,705	61,814,658.65
BUILDING MATERIALS				
ASHAKA CEMENT PLC.	67	22.70	299,068	6,789,702.70
BENUE CEMENT COMPANY PLC.	1	4.20	17,644	74,104.80
CEMENT CO. OF NORTHERN NIG. PLC	10	6.20	51,800	326,992.00
WEST AFR. PORTLAND CEMENT CO. PLC.	6	10.35	49,100	508,185.00
Sector Totals	84		417,612	7,698,984.50
CHEMICAL & PAINTS				
BERGER PAINTS PLC.	14	4.89	91,309	437,510.04
CAP PLC.	8	6.10	15,270	93,201.00
D. N. MEYER PLC.	2	4.80	980	4,704.00
NIGERIA-GERMAN CHEMICALS PLC.	2	3.81	16,500	62,865.00
Sector Totals	26		124,059	598,280.04
CONGLOMERATES				
C F A O NIGERIA PLC.	5	4.19	22,076	92,555.72
JOHN HOLT PLC.	9	0.61	25,871	15,781.31
UNILEVER NIGERIA PLC.	179	15.23	800,996	12,140,003.30
P. Z. INDUSTRIES PLC.	76	11.19	328,691	3,644,005.84
S C O A NIGERIA PLC.	3	1.04	2,000	2,084.20
U.A.C.NIGERIA PLC.	48	14.17	237,298	3,362,512.66
U.T.C. NIGERIA PLC.	6	0.92	14,635	13,389.20
Sector Totals	326		1,431,567	19,270,332.23
CONSTRUCTION				
JULIUS BERGER NIGERIA PLC.	4	16.00	22,320	354,720.00
Sector Totals	4		22,320	354,720.00
FOOD/BEVERAGES & TOBACCO				
7-UP BOTTLING COMPANY PLC	29	21.70	52,179	1,136,926.84
CADBURY NIGERIA PLC.	116	51.00	184,111	9,348,052.76
FLOUR MILLS NIGERIA PLC.	29	16.61	170,110	2,825,527.10
NIGERIA BOTTLING COMPANY PLC.	49	50.00	75,171	3,765,170.60
NESTLE FOODS NIGERIA PLC.	62	139.99	147,575	20,589,646.48
Sector Totals	285		629,146	37,665,323.78
HEALTHCARE				
EKOCORP PLC.	2	0.85	50,281	42,738.85
EVANS MEDICAL PLC.	6	2.98	20,200	59,496.00
MAY & BAKER NIGERIA PLC.	3	4.95	4,200	20,510.00
MORISON INDUSTRIES PLC.	2	1.08	4,000	4,320.00
NEIMETH INTERNATIONAL PHARM. PLC.	11	3.25	64,800	210,375.00
GLAXOSMITHKLINE CONSUMER NIG. PLC	26	8.20	203,194	1,676,766.66
Sector Totals	50		346,675	2,014,206.51
INDUSTRIAL/DOMESTIC PRODUCTS				
FIRST ALUMINIUM NIGERIA PLC.	4	1.00	50,500	49,860.00
B.O.C. GASES PLC.	2	2.98	5,252	15,650.96
VITAFOAM NIGERIA PLC.	29	3.06	405,677	1,244,999.85
Sector Totals	35		461,429	1,310,510.81
INSURANCE				
AICO INSURANCE PLC.	7	1.66	125,200	215,197.00
CORNERSTONE INSURANCE CO. PLC.	2	1.40	242,316	339,242.40
CRUSADER INSURANCE PLC.	2	1.00	5,000	5,000.00
MUTUAL BENEFITS ASSURANCE PLC	1	0.93	1,000	930.00
NIGER INSURANCE CO. PLC.	6	2.85	13,809	38,799.41
ROYAL EXCHANGE ASSURANCE PLC.	8	2.92	542,289	1,574,013.87
STANDARD ALLIANCE INSURANCE	21	0.62	2,549,571	1,610,734.02
UNIC INSURANCE PLC.	7	0.81	150,929	121,452.49
WEST AFRICAN PROV. INS. COY. PLC.	5	2.50	62,765	158,282.92
Sector Totals	59		3,692,879	4,063,652.11
MANAGED FUNDS				
C & I LEASING PLC.	9	1.35	170,000	237,050.00
Sector Totals	9		170,000	237,050.00
PACKAGING				
NAMPAK NIGERIA PLC	1	1.66	1,500	2,490.00
BETA GLASS COMPANY PLC.	1	3.87	666	2,577.42
Sector Totals	2		2,166	5,067.42
PETROLEUM(MARKETING)				
AFROIL PLC.	1	0.75	11,055	8,291.25
AFRICAN PETROLEUM PLC.	78	55.95	247,857	13,699,639.15
ETERNA OIL & GAS PLC.	17	2.04	140,360	286,334.40
MOBIL OIL NIGERIA PLC.	40	174.04	58,078	10,054,919.41
CONOIL PLC.	80	101.00	58,457	5,915,765.45
TEXACO (NIGERIA) PLC.	42	157.00	116,177	19,419,484.90
TOTAL NIGERIA PLC	26	171.05	10,086	1,738,143.35
OANDO PLC.	240	90.00	342,974	29,954,892.92
Sector Totals	524		985,044	81,077,470.83
REAL ESTATE				
UACN PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT PLC.	29	8.30	270,950	2,238,468.70
Sector Totals	29		270,950	2,238,468.70
Overall Totals		3,559	28,972,213	365,402,758.52

TOP 10 TRADES YESTERDAY

SYMBOL	VOLUME	VALUE	TRADES
FSB	861,987.00	1,046,466.00	48
UBN	1,003,346.00	19,062,280.41	321
INLANDBANK	1,056,332.00	1,586,302.00	19
MANNYBANK	1,255,800.00	1,543,985.66	16
GULFBANK	1,270,000.00	482,600.00	10
GUARANTY	1,572,936.00	15,252,547.53	255
FIRSTBANK	1,697,155.00	38,953,371.42	533
STDINSURE	2,549,571.00	1,610,734.02	21
ZENITHBANK	3,081,584.00	40,652,437.87	256
ATLANTICBK	4,000,000.00	13,640,000.00	2

TOP 10 GAINERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
MOBIL	172.02	174.04	+2.02
CADBURY	50.00	51.00	+1.00
AP	55.45	55.95	+0.50
PRESCO	8.61	9.04	+0.43
GUARANTY	9.50	9.90	+0.40
JBERGER	15.70	16.00	+0.30
BERGER	4.66	4.89	+0.23
NB	36.50	36.69	+0.19
PFIZER	3.10	3.25	+0.15
MAY&BAKER	4.80	4.95	+0.15

TOP 10 LOSERS

SYMBOL	LASTCLOSE	YESTERDAYSCLOSE	CHANGE
TEXACO	162.70	157.00	-5.70
TOTAL	172.90	171.05	-1.85
NOLCHEM	102.05	101.00	-1.05
GUINNESS	78.99	77.97	-1.02
NBC	50.99	50.00	-0.99
UBN	19.25	18.80	-0.45
7UP	21.96	21.70	-0.26
CCNN	6.44	6.20	-0.24
OCEANIC	4.46	4.24	-0.22
RTBRISCOE	4.57	4.35	-0.22

US Dollar up against Euro

The US dollar climbed Monday against the euro, clawing back ground it lost at the end of last week after the United States reported its second-highest monthly trade deficit ever.

The euro bought \$1.3404 in European trading, down from \$1.3455 late Friday. The dollar also rose to 104.81 Japanese yen from 103.81 yen.

The British pound dropped to \$1.9185 from \$1.9264. Last week's trading was marked by worries over the US trade deficit. On Friday, the US Commerce Department reported that the January trade gap was \$58.3 billion 4.5 percent higher than December's and just below November's all-time high of \$59.4 billion.

The January figure, which exceeded economists' expectations, underlined lingering worries over the U.S. trade and budget deficits that propelled the euro from about \$1.20 last September to an all-time high of \$1.3667 at the end of December.

In Asia Monday, the dollar rebounded against the yen after falling in early trading.

The drop was triggered by revised Japanese government data that showed the economy had grown slightly in the October-December quarter, rather than contracted as it had said initially. However, markets decided later that a breakdown of the data supported worries about the health of the Japanese economy.

Bank's deposit hits N18bn

Depositors' money at Intercity Bank rose from N1.3 billion in June 1998 to N18.4 billion last June. The increase arose from steady pattern of growth of the bank, its Managing Director, Alhaji Lamis Dikko, said in Kaduna.

Dikko told newsmen that gross earning also increased from N334 million to N3.89 billion during the period.

Dikko said the bank was floating an Initial Public Offer to raise N13.32 billion to meet the N25 billion recapitalisation mark fixed by the CBN.

He said the bank could, in the alternative, merge with other banks if it failed to raise the minimum capital base from the offer.

The bank currently has 21 branches.

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

FG needs N34.2 bn to settle pension liabilities- Abacha

The federal government needs about N34.7 billion to settle pension liabilities of retired civil servants and military personnel across the country.

This amount comprises pension liabilities of N23.50 billion for military personnel and N11.2 billion for civil servants excluding pensioners with federal shares.

President of Nigeria Union of Pensioners, Alhaji Ali Abacha who disclosed this last week said the federal government is owing pensioners seven months pension arrears amounting to 11.2 billion.

According to him, pensioners were last paid in

September 2004, and the union has been up and doing in the ministry of finance, office of the head of civil service of the federation and the presidency.

"The N11.2 billion pension arrears is for us only because pensioners with federal shares have not been paid for about three years now," he said.

On its part, the military pensions board said in a document addressed to the chairman, House Committee on pensions that it required N23.50 billion to settle its pension liabilities.

Chairman of the committee, Honourable Sani Mahmud Sha'aban, said, the board informed his

committee that out of N23.50 billion, 15.4 billion would be used to settle pension arrears from June to December 2003.

He said that the board also required N6.4 billion to pay gratuities of four sets of NAFRC and N1.7 billion for newly retired armed forces officers and soldiers.

The Chairman, House of Representatives committee on pension, Honourable Sani Mahmud Sha'aban, has allayed the fears of workers on the new contributory pension scheme, saying that the scheme would assist them on retirement.

Speaking at a consultative forum with prospective closed pension fund administrators in Abuja last week, Alhaji Sha'aban, said the new pension scheme was designed to address the problems of pensioners in the country.

Pension Scheme will assist workers

-Sha'aban

By Abdullahi M. Gulloma, Labour Reporter

According to him, the contributory pension scheme was designed to provide workers in the public and private sectors a hassle-free retirement.

He said that his committee would ensure that payment

and remittance of workers' contributions to the new scheme were promptly made and the contributors receive their retirement benefits as and when due.

Alhaji Sha'aban also disclosed that the new contributory pension scheme could inject over N800 billion into the nation's economy annually.

He also called on the management of National Pension Commission to ensure that the Commission meets the objectives for which it was established.

He said that the Commission must ensure it protect the interest of Nigerian workers so as to promote sound and transparent pension administration in the country.

Labour leader cautions on NULGE impasse

As part of efforts to ensure a quick resolution of the crisis in the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), former president of the union in Ogun State, Comrade Gias Niyi Osoba has called for amicable settlement between the opposing parties.

Comrade Niyi Osoba, presently the director of information services, Ogun Waterside Local Government in Ogun State made the call in a paper tagged "Critical appraisal of the proposed impeachment of Dr. Deji Akinwalere: the crisis and the anti-dote."

The labour leader, who is presently one of the candidates gunning for NULGE's exalted position in the forthcoming convention, stated that "charity begins at home and should not end there, we cannot hide the fact that among some states within the block, there is a kind of tussle between some former leaders and present leaders or among former leaders and present executives. This is not good for our much needed unity

and stability as a people and as a unions."

While calling for both internal and external rehabilitation, the labour leader stated that moves should be advanced by any of the particular leaders in the states to resolve their various differences.

He specifically called in all the national officers, present state presidents and state secretariat and former past leaders to take up the responsibility of assuaging strained nerves.

Responding to the call by the South west leaders at its meeting in Abeokuta that if the impeached former national president, Dr. Deji Akinwalere should go, the union's general secretary, Alhaji A.A. Salem too must quit, he argued that no court or committee can sentence Alhaji Salem for an unknown alleged offence without trial.

He contended that the south west block should settle its internal problems first and then list out grievances to be



Dignity in labour: dockworkers and tally clerks offloading cargos from a ship at the Apapa port in Lagos

Sack fever grips NEPC staff

By Austine Odo, Senior Labour reporter

Unless there is an urgent intervention from either the legislative or executive arm of government, more than half of the about 700 employees of the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) may soon be thrown into the labour market, as feelers from the organisation have shown. Labour Trust findings have shown that as a result of the impending sack, the morale of workers in the establishment has reduced to an all-time low.

It was gathered that management had muted a plan to shed the staff strength since last year but that the former helmsman, David Adulugba was not keen on throwing people off their jobs. As soon as Adulugba left however, the new

management considered it wise to contract the exercise to a consultant, who is said to be seriously on the job now.

Labour Trust further gathered that the plan is to systematically phase out clerical duties and massively upgrade computer automation in the organisation, hence the "right-sizing" exercise as an official put it, would be heavy on staff on grade level 01-06. But according to our findings, those employed between 2000 and now also have every reason to fear, as the exercise is designed to wipe-out a good number of them. It was also alleged that the exercise is lop-sided in favour of an ethnic group.

Already, every member of staff has been made to fill a form on update of employee database as at February 28, 2005. The form demanded such information from the staff as name, date of birth, qualifications, date employed and current position, among others.

Our correspondent gathered that though, the council's director of administration had last Thursday attempted to douse the tension by allaying such fears during a meeting with the staff, indications are rife that the letters may soon start flying.

It was gathered from some of the staff who even attended the meeting that management was not categorical on shelving a sack, but instead, indicated that the consultants, Bumax Services Limited were carrying out an exercise to refocus and reposition

NEPC as a viable export promoter.

According to our sources, such repositioning necessitates a staff verification exercise to ascertain the current structure and workforce, but that in the course of such verification, employees found to be redundant might go.

The council's spokesman, Mr. Joe Itah told Labour Trust that management had not announced any plan to sack and that Thursday's meeting was designed to wittle down the suspicion and tension among staff as a result of the current "rumours".

The staff are however not amused, meeting not withstanding. Working without any labour union, they have resigned to fate and decided to adopt a "wait and see" attitude.

"We hear say them wan retrench, we de wait for their letters. We no get any union to fight for us, only God de fight for us", a worker said.

But if and when the letters arrive, it might be too late to cry, even as majority of the workers are alleging that should there be any retrenchment exercise, it was not done according to civil service procedure.

Labour Trust further gathered that there has been a great deal of disenchantment among the staff since the coming in of the current director general who they said had scrapped virtually every staff welfare scheme including medical and furniture allowances even as a top official's close relation is now running the NEPC as a limited liability company and handling every contract in the name of being the DG's special adviser.

NLC opens training school

The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) has formally opened the first edition of what it referred to as "NLC local school" in 36 states of the federation and FCT in order to train labour leaders and activists across the country.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the NLC local school, president of the congress, Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomole, said that the school consists of ten weekly sessions of between four to six hours weekly.

According to him, the school would take the participants through various dimensions of their responsibilities as activists and leaders of trade union organisations.

He said that the participants would be trained in areas of grievances handling, trade union history, labour laws with political economy, collective bargaining and gender mainstreaming.

"Leaders at the grassroots level are sometimes not equipped with the required skills, prospects and understanding necessary to contest with employers, run unions well and ensure that workers get value for their membership. The school system of the NLC is designed to fill this gap.

"It is also designed to generate the capacity to successfully manage union affairs, ensure that the needs of workers are properly serviced and guarantee that unions have a ready pool of competent and progressive cadres that would be useful in higher levels of responsibility," he said.

The NLC president said that the congress school concept represents an effort to cultivate a competent, progressive, militant and class conscious leadership at the grassroots level.

IAP wades into Gateway Hotels impasse

The Industrial Arbitrative Panel (IAP) sitting in Lagos has ordered the Ogun State owned Gateway Hotels and its sacked thirty four workers to resolve their labour dispute amicably or face trial.

The workers under the aegis of Hotel and Personal Services Semi Staff Association (HPSSA) had dragged the state government before the IAP over failure of the hotel management to pay them their terminal benefits, 11 months after their sack.

At the commencement of proceedings before the IAP panel, counsel for the union, Mr. Uche Wisdom Durnieke told the IAP panel headed by

Nwakanma that the management of the Gateway Hotels had sacked the thirty four workers in controversial circumstances, only to pay them a meager N250,000 each as settlement.

Arguing further, he stated that the hotel's management acted contrary to the procedure of retrenching workers.

"we do not know how they (the management of Gateway Hotels) have arrived at their entitlements figure for the workers but the N250,000, the management arrive at as the workers terminal benefits is not correct," he said.

He informed the IAP panel headed by Justice Nwakanma that the sacked workers are

ready to cooperate with the management of the hotel to rework their entitlements.

Responding to the workers' counsel's arguments, counsel to the Ogun State government, Barrister Philip Akinginbe informed the IAP that the hotel management was ready to rework the sacked workers entitlements and paid them whatever amount that it might have arrived at as the workers' authentic benefits.

After listening to the argument of the two parties, the chairman of the IAP gave the two parties till April 18, 2005 to settle their dispute amicably or be ready to face the full trial over the matter.

NATIONAL POLITICAL REFORM CONFERENCE

Celebrating Makarfi



His Excellency,
ALHAJI AHMED MOHAMMED MAKARFI
Executive Governor, Kaduna State

There is a revolution on roads projects in the history of Kaduna State, where we have roads not for roads' sake. Rather than the old tradition of confining projects to the state capital, you shifted emphasis to the deprived rural areas and today the rural populace are celebrating your heroism.

In view of your significant foot-prints, we, the people of Kaduna State stand solidly behind you and identify with all the noble objectives you stand for.

Above all, we need more of your unique leadership at the **NATIONAL LEVEL** and hope you will pick-up this challenge.

-More grease to your elbow.

Long Live the People's Governor!
Long Live Kaduna State!!
Long Live Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

No matter what those on fault-finding mission think of Governor Ahmed Mohammed Makarfi of Kaduna State, you have performed excellently as Chairman of the Committee that midwifed the on-going National Political Reform Conference, it is our fervent hope and prayer that this confab will lead us to the promise land.

We the people of Kaduna State stand solidly behind your Excellency as you serve diligently and we are confident that your kind of stewardship is what is required at the national level. You deserve a **NATIONAL ASSIGNMENT**, where you will bring your peculiar leadership style to bear.

We have not forgotten how you turned a volatile State into a haven for all. There is the exceptional feat of rural electrification, which remains unsurpassed in Northern Nigeria's history since 1999.



ALHAJI (DR.) SANI DAUDA
Garkuwan Zazzau Babba
Chairman/CEO, ASD Group of Companies

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT



NNPC headquarters, Abuja being blocked by NUPENG and PENGASSAN tankers during a protest in Abuja. Another protest is looming as NARTO has rejected a N12:00 hike in diesel price.

DIESEL PRICE HIKE

NARTO, Stakeholders to address crisis in Abuja today

A committee comprising representatives of stakeholders in the downstream sector of the oil industry which was set up last week to deliberate on the 14-day ultimatum recently issued by the National Association of Road Transport Owners (NARTO) over the N12:00 increase in the ex-depot price of diesel is expected to meet today in Abuja.

The committee which is expected to meet at the office of the NNPC managing director was constituted to find solutions to the impasse between NARTO and the PPMC and PPPRA. It was set up during a meeting with the NNPC managing director, Engr. Funsho Kupolokun in Abuja last week.

NARTO, which handles long haulage transportation in

By Austine Odo,
Senior Labour Reporter

the country, penultimate week gave the NNPC and PPPRA a 14-day ultimatum to reverse the price or face a withdrawal of their services. Vehicles such as tankers, trailers and luxurious buses which are the main vehicles for huge road passenger traffic use diesel as their fuel.

NARTO said through their national operations coordinator, Alhaji Lawal Isa last week that the price increase was unacceptable.

He said the NNPC and PPPRA must reverse the effect it would have on socio-economic activities in the country.

Alhaji Isa said in Abuja that NARTO was ready to discuss on the fundamental objectives on the basis of the

principle of deregulation which the PPPRA and PPMC should equally respect at the next meeting. While the NNPC agreed to address other industry issues that were highlighted in Wednesday's meeting, NARTO insisted on the mandate from the association's emergency meeting held in Kano on February 19, 2005.

"Until when this central issue is addressed before NARTO could be disposed to discussing any other issue for now", he said.

The NARTO delegates were led by its president, Alhaji Sani Yunusa while the managing director of Oando oil marketing company, Mr. Wale Tinubu and PPPRA executive secretary, Dr. Oluwole Oluleye represented their organisations in last week's meeting.

2,000 workers to lose jobs in Jigawa

More than 2,000 local government employees may lose their jobs in Jigawa as government plans a massive sack.

Correspondents report that the state has already stopped the preparation for the payment of March salaries to local council workers and primary school teachers.

The development came against the backdrop of

alleged indiscriminate employment by the 27 local councils in the state.

A check, by newsmen showed that the state was currently screening the list of council employees to fish out those believed to have been illegally employed.

The state's Head of Service, Mallam Ibrahim Manzo, said the councils had engaged in massive employment since March 2004 in

contravention of the state's civil service law.

Manzo explained that there was a sharp increase in council salaries from N202 million to N218 million, which he said, could not be explained.

The state government, he added, would adopt necessary measures to sanitise the workings of the councils.

Meanwhile, the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees is in support of measures to sanitise the system.

Its Secretary, Mr. Mohammed Jamilu, said the union would support any move to reinvigorate the councils and make them responsive to the people's yearnings and aspirations.

The union urged the government to exercise caution and ensure that all outstanding salaries were paid.

NUT distributes 18,000 m/cycles to Benue members

The Benue state branch of the NUT has distributed 18,000 motorcycles for distribution on loan to its members.

The state's NUT chairman, Mr. Isaac Achem, who distributed the motor-cycles in Makurdi on Thursday, said 268 were distributed in 2002, when the programme took off.

Achem said it was the desire of the union to provide facilities that would make primary school teachers comfortable.

The NUT had broadened its loan scheme to include the provision of building materials and electrical appliances.

He said he was grateful to the Benue state government for its intervention in the protracted crisis that delayed the payment of pension to retired teachers.

He urged the government to direct relevant authorities to effect yearly increment in the salaries of teachers. Increment was stopped three years ago.

Gov. George Akume restated the determination of the state to provide incentives to teachers to boost their morale

and productivity.

In a message to NUT on the occasion, he said he hoped the use of motorcycle would minimise lateness and truancy.

Monetisation: 57 parastatal agencies submit estimates

A total of 58 parastatal agencies have so far submitted estimates for the monetisation of their workers' fringe benefits to the federal government.

The estimates were submitted to the budget office of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Productivity.

Sources at the ministry told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Abuja that these was more than the initial 33 involved in the struggle for payment of the monetisation benefits.

According to the source, more were still making submissions after the March 1, deadline.

"Some of the parastatal agencies made multiple submissions and this has made the computation very difficult and cumbersome, considering the fact that the budget office has a deadline of April 1," another source said.

...warns banks against meddling in its crisis

Bankers to the crisis-ridden Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) in Delta have been advised not to meddle in the affairs of the union.

The advice was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of a National Executive Council meeting of the NUT (West) held in Asaba on Thursday.

The teachers said refusal to recognise the caretaker committee of the union in Delta amounted to meddling in its internal affairs.

The communiqué stated that the banks, Zenith Bank, UBA Plc and First Bank, had embargoed transactions with the union, and urged them not to place hurdles in the progress being made in resolving the impasse in the union.

It wondered why the banks would put up uncooperative

attitude towards the union "when the state government and its agencies have long recognised the caretaker committee and have been dealing with it in all matters affecting teachers".

The communiqué, signed by the NUT president, Mrs. Olaitan Fatunmbi; Secretary-General Victor Uchuno and publicity secretary, Yinka Akinpelu, also frowned at media reports claiming that police authorities had reinstated the former state chairman of the union.

It described the publications as the "imagination of the former chairman, Mr. Newton Odje, and stressed that the caretaker committee led by Mr. Paul Oduru, a school principal, "is firmly in control" of the state wing of the NUT.

"The caretaker committee, which was inaugurated in

February, was mandated to conduct fresh elections into the state council within three months after its inauguration," the communiqué noted.

It commended teachers in the state for their maturity and cooperation in "this trying period" and appealed to them to use their "franchise to put in place an executive council of your choice".

According to the communiqué, no one, including the former chairman, has been barred from contesting union positions in the forthcoming elections.

It also said the NEC had approved a series of workshops, seminars and general enlightenment programmes for teachers in the nine states in its jurisdiction.

The teachers would benefit maximally from the programmes, the union added.

...commends LG over incentives

From Mustapha Isah Kwaru,
Correspondent Kano

Ungogo local government area of Kano State has been applauded for promoting primary school teachers as well as the settlement of N80,000 as annual leave grant. The state chairman of the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT), Mallam Hassan Muhammad Zaura made the commendation while on a courtesy visit to the council chairman.

He expressed delight that the gesture will make the teachers to have a sense of belonging and revamp the morale as well as dedication of the teachers.

The NUT chairman, who acknowledged that teachers in the area had been enjoying democracy dividends since the assumption of office of the present administration, noted that teachers have so far passed a vote of confidence on the council.

Alhaji Zaura pointed out that the recent donation of over 60,000 exercise books in addition to other teaching materials to the primary school by the council served as a clear signal that the council is committed to the general development of education.

He enjoined the local government to maintain the standard and offer additional assistance to the union so as to carryout its activities diligently.

The acting chairman of the council, Alhaji Ibrahim Muhammad who received the NUT official reiterated that the council was poised to improve the well being of the populace.

ASUP decries south-west zone's action at confab

The national delegates conference of the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) has expressed dismay over the action of the south-west zone of the union for staging a walk-out during the association's conference held at Bori, Rivers State recently.

The south-west zone according to a statement signed by the association's national publicity secretary, Mr. Victor D. Dawu took the decision after realising that their chapter was heavily indebted and therefore not accredited to participate in both the conference and elections.

The statement which was made available to *Labour Trust* in Kano also noticed with the displeasure that the South-west refused to comply with principles of democratic elections and instead resorted to the use of blackmail and associated

By Yushau Adamu Ibrahim,
Correspondent, Kano

popular candidates to sponsorship by external persons.

The national delegates conference therefore reaffirmed its position to maintain ASUP as one single body stressing that it would not allow itself to be divided on primordial sentiments.

The statement therefore called on the South-west Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) to put heads together with the newly elected national leaders of the association to move to greater heights.

The conference ended with the election of new executives who are to project the affairs of the union with Muhammad Umar Kibiya of Kano state polytechnic and Surveyor Chris Madu of FG polytechnic Nekede as national president and vice president respectively.

LABOUR & EMPLOYMENT

Civil servants want "human face" reforms

Senior civil servants have called on the federal government to execute its on-going civil service reform programme with a "human face".

The workers who made the appeal in Lagos through their umbrella body, the Association of Senior Civil Servants (ASCS), warned that the current approach could destabilise the polity.

The workers' appeal was a reaction to alleged plans by government to lay off 74,000 workers in the federal civil service as part of its reform programme.

"The employer has the right to determine the quality and quantity of its workers, but it should be done in a way that it will not affect the polity,"

From Samson Ojo,
Correspondent, Lagos with
agency report

Mr Solomon Onaieghnon, an official of the ASCS said.

He told newsmen that government should consider the introduction of "voluntary exit incentives".

Onaieghnon said this would encourage workers to retire voluntarily, adding that the current disengagement package for civil servants was inadequate.

"If properly implemented, there are people who would be willing to go, but a situation where one is removed from service with arrears of six months salaries and without gratuity or pension, is appalling," he said.

The ASCS official urged government not to retrench workers now, noting that the employment market was already saturated with a very high monthly pensions bill.

"It will be safer and wiser for government to have the workforce as it is now instead of adding more pensioners to its list, more so when many of

the officers slated for retrenchment are able-bodied Nigerians," he said.

Onaieghnon said for government to truly eradicate poverty, it must address problems in the energy sector, stressing that no country could move forward without an efficient energy sector.

Oshimhole canvasses leadership positions for women

NLC President, Adams Oshimhole has called on the labour congress's affiliate unions to open up their leadership positions to more women.

"Our movement owes

women a lot; we must improve on our efforts at gender mainstreaming and ensure that we respond effectively to the concerns of women," Oshimhole said in Lagos to last week.

Oshimhole, who was represented by the head of the NLC Lagos office, Mr. Linus Ukamba, made the remarks at a lecture to mark the International Women's Day.

He commended women activists for their past and present contributions to the labour movement in the country.

"Under our stewardship in the NLC, women workers, activists and leaders have demonstrated profound commitment and seriousness.

"They have not allowed their unequal representation in the leadership of unions and other disadvantages to deter them," he said.

On labour schools taking off in 34 state councils of the NLC simultaneously, Oshimhole said more than 1,000 union leaders and activists would be exposed to a comprehensive and rigorous training in trade union courses.

"The schools will take the participants through various dimensions of their responsibilities as activists and leaders, especially grievance handling, organising trade union, history of labour laws and collective bargaining," he said.

Oshimhole said the vision and resolve of the NLC leadership were that trade union education must be delivered to the grass roots as the primary units of the movement.

"The NLC intends to use this process to deliver training programmes of longer duration taking into account the convenience of the beneficiaries who are workers and family members, particularly in this age of globalisation," he added.

Mrs. Oluremi Fapohunda, the Chairwoman of the Lagos State NLC Women Committee, in her address of welcome, urged affiliate unions to always release their female workers for meetings and other union activities.

"Most women do not understand what a trade union activist is all about; it is only when they are allowed to partake in meetings that they will know that it is not about adicalism," she said.

Fapohunda also urged women to always carry other women along in whatever leadership position they found themselves.

Kwara govt, labour on collision course over taxes

There may be a confrontation between organised labour and the Kwara state government over an alleged plan to introduce a new tax regime for civil servants.

The NLC chairman in the state, Mr. Emmanuel Aiyeoribe, said in Ilorin last week that the congress was aware of a plan by the government to impose certain taxes on workers and political office holders in the state.

Aiyeoribe said in Ilorin on Monday at the opening of a 10-week course for labour union workers under the first edition of the NLC Local School that workers in the state were not ready to pay any new taxes.

"Any new tax regime will definitely bring crisis and problems for civil servants and political office holders, and, as such, it should be suspended for now," the labour leader said.

"Organised labour will resist such taxation by all means."

Aiyeoribe appealed to Gov. Bukola Saraki not to allow himself "to be used by some selfish aides to go against the interest of the masses".

He said the organised labour also criticised the federal government for scrapping the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory and for planning to sack 74,000 federal civil servants.

Aiyeoribe urged the federal government to implement its monetisation policy to cover the remaining federal workers, and advised that payment should start by April as agreed "to avoid a massive indefinite strike by the workers".

The Radio, Television, Theatre and Arts Workers Union of Nigeria (RATTAWU) has restated its opposition to the federal government's plan to de-register the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and weaken trade unions in the country.

In a position paper at the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the union held recently in Enugu, the union said that it would join forces with the NLC to fight against anti-labour policies put in place by the government.

"We are opposed to government's attempt to impose centers to deliberately weaken trade unions, ban strikes and de-register the NLC," the position paper presented by the union's general secretary, Mr. Henry Odagala, stated.

"It is the position of RATTAWU that an employer should not be given the power to seize union's funds even when the worker has voluntarily decided to belong to a union and given his express consent that his union dues be deducted," the position paper added.

Citing the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Charter, the union argued that "the right to strike, the worker's right to work or refuse to work is a fundamental human right of the worker".

The union argued further that the position of the federal government offended section 40 of the country's constitution, giving the citizens the right to freedom



Houses at Gwarimpa estate in Abuja. They were originally designed for accommodation of workers. Now government has decided to sell them to those who can afford to pay. When will the average Nigerian worker ever get decent and convenient accommodation? Pix: Felix Onigbinde

Workers berate FG over labour Bill

From Abdulwahab Deji
Ajikobi, Intern, with agency
report

of association.

"We do not accept that in order to register more labour centers, the NLC must first be de-registered so, the amendment of section 16A in the Bill is unnecessary as union

membership is driven by voluntaries," it said.

The position paper also warned government that any reform imposed on the labour movement in the country with vested external interest would not only be ineffective but could also backfire.

The union members

pleaded with the National Assembly to compel the government to show reason on the matter so as to save the nation's nascent democracy.

The government, last month, distributed 10,000 motorcycles to civil servants and local government workers.

Chamber demands youth friendly policy for graduate employment

The president of Benin Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (BENCCIMA) has asked the federal government to evolve a youth friendly policy.

BENCCIMA president Mr. Alfred Iyamu made the call in an interview with the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Benin.

He asked government to grant a N2 million loan to each graduate to establish a cottage industry after the NYSC service.

Iyamu observed that such a policy would make self-employment attractive to young graduates, adding they would also be in a position to employ others.

Iyamu noted that the level of unemployment, especially among graduates, was assuming an alarming proportion, pleading that the situation be reversed.

"The level of unemployment in the country has become alarming with its attendant economic and socio-political consequ-

ences," he pointed out.

He said the crime rate had risen in recent years due mainly to the large army of jobless youths.

Iyamu noted that an enduring solution to the unemployment problem lay in an effective development of the industrial and agricultural sectors of the nation's economy.

"There is a lot of money that is being wasted and I believe the federal government can give N2 million to each graduates as a loan," he said.



Gov Bukola Saraki of Kwara



An undeveloped plot with huts and a bushy environment. Acute accommodation problem has forced some workers to take refuge in such places, even in Abuja, the nation's capital.

YOUR HEALTH

Commissioner urges caution in reporting HIV/AIDS cure

Journalists have been advised to exercise caution in publishing claims on HIV/AIDS cure. Giving the advice recently in Lafia at a one-day HIV/AIDS advocacy/sensitisation meeting with media professionals, the Nasarawa state Commissioner

for Health, Dr Mohammed Ahmed, said no cure for the dreadful disease had been found.

Represented by the chief medical director of the state's Health Management Board, Dr Thomas Affi, the commissioner said the media had been identified as a HIV/AIDS information resource in the fight against the disease.

He, however, said "it has become worrisome on how the media in recent past have contributed to the spread of false information on claims of cure of HIV/AIDS."

Ahmed stated that all claims of HIV/AIDS cure must be ascertained from authentic sources before any publicity, "no matter the associated financial gains".

He said because of the media's important role in educating, informing and entertaining the people, it needed to be well informed and educated on all issues concerning HIV/AIDS.

These, he said, included knowledge of the mode of transmission and the way it affected all aspects of human endeavour, including the economic and social life of the people.

To check the spread of the disease, the commissioner said the social environment must be transformed through the dissemination of house-to-house information about the nature of the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

He therefore, urged the media to support people living with HIV/AIDS by encouraging them to feature in programmes that could give the true picture of the virus, among others.

Niger state Govt prunes hospital fees

Niger state government has abolished the N20 fee charged for outpatient cards in its general hospitals. The state's Health Commissioner, Dattijo Aliyu announced recently in Minna that the government had also reduced ward admission fees from N500 to N200.

Folder card fees also dropped with immediate effect from N200 to N100, he said, after a tour of hospitals in the state capital. The move, according to him, was to reduce the hardship of patients and the general public.

Noting the poor sanitary condition of the Minna General Hospital, he directed the head of hospital services to ensure improved sanitary conditions within a week.

Aliyu stressed the need for improved services through the dedication of hospital staff, warning them to desist from molesting or harassing their patients.

Dr Buba Bako, the head of hospital services, in his remark, asked for improved facilities and the replacement of obsolete equipment.

Foreign mission: NOA wants wives to join husbands

The Niger state National Orientation Agency (NOA) has suggested that wives of soldiers and policemen on foreign missions should be allowed to join their spouses.

The NOA director in the state, Danladi Abdul-Ahmed, said such a concession would minimise the vulnerability of the officers to HIV/AIDS infection.

He made the suggestion in Minna on Thursday at a seminar organised for policemen and women by an NGO, Care People Foundation International. The NOA boss said

there was the need for such a policy because of the increase in HIV infection of those compelled to leave their spouses in the course of performing their duties.

He emphasised that abstinence and marital faithfulness were ways of preventing HIV/AIDS infection and suggested that guidance and counselling officers be stationed in schools to talk to youths about HIV related problems.

The founder of the NGO, Dr. Amina Rusell, in her remark, said the seminar was organised for the police because of their importance in nation building.



Dr. Sani B. Garba (ABUTH) left, discussing with Pharmacist Aliyu Jibrin at a one day sensitisation workshop on HIV/AIDS and hepatitis, the way forward, organised by the Association of Lady Pharmacists, Kaduna State chapter, held in Kaduna...recently

Cholera outbreak: Uni-Abuja medical centre cautions staff, students

Staff and students of the University of Abuja have been advised to observe basic sanitary habits and personal hygiene in view of the recent outbreak of cholera in Gwagwalada area council of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The medical centre of the university, in a statement signed by Dr. Mohammed Abdullahi, said the advice became necessary due to the alarming death rate recorded in the area as a result of the outbreak.

The statement further warned students, staff and residents of the area against drinking impure water, urging that water should be boiled and filtered before drinking. It also advised them to properly wash fruit and vegetables before consumption.

"Boiling water before drinking and washing of fruit reduces the risk of cholera," the statement added, pointing out that a clean environment devoid of flies and mosquitoes reduces the risk of infection just as it advised members of the university community to keep their environment clean.

The statement called on the member of the university community to immediately report any case of persistent

By Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter with Agency Reports

vomiting and stooling to the centre for treatment, explaining that, "immediate medication raises the chances of survival of those infected with cholera."

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) recalls that no fewer than 12 people in the council have died of cholera in the past one month.

The News Agency of Ni-

Ekiti distributes N100m medical equipment to LGs

Hospital and medical equipment worth more than N100 million have been distributed to all the comprehensive health centres in the 16 local council areas of Ekiti State.

The Commissioner for Health in the state, Dr Sola Babalola, announced this on recently in Ado-Ekiti while signing a memorandum of understanding with the coordinators of the Ekiti State Primary Health Care Agency.

Dr. Babalola said the measure would boost health care delivery in the state. According to him, the state government procured the equipment in conjunction with the World Bank-assisted Health Systems Development Project II to strengthen health systems at all levels.

He criticised past administrations in the state for ne-

glecting the health sector. The commissioner assured that the present administration would live no stone unturned in improving the health status of the people in the state.

Dr. Babalola advised the people to refrain from patronising fake medical personnel as the government was committed to making health care delivery cordial.

Delta to establish ARV treatment centre

The Delta state government is to establish anti-retro viral (ARV) treatment centre in the state before the end of this year. The state's Commissioner for Economic Planning, Clement Ofunani said the centre would take care of people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA).

Ofunani, who made the announcement in Asaba while giving a breakdown of the state's 2005 budget of over N115.9 billion also noted that PLWA currently go to Nnamdi

Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital, Nnewi, for medical attention.

The state, he also said, would establish a haemodialysis centre for patients with renal problems, adding that the state also planned to establish primary health care development agency to coordinate primary health care activities.

Delta State, the commissioner for Economic Planning disclosed, is spending more than N6.5 billion or 9.46 per cent of its budget on health.

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date: 14th March, 2005

Contract Identification No. KB/HSDPII/WK/001/NCB/05

World Bank Loan/Credit No. 3653 - UNI

World Bank Loan/Credit Name: HEALTH SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT II

- This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business, issue no. 608 of June 16, 2003.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria has received a credit from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Health System Development Project II and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for Rehabilitation of 3 Nos Primary Health Centres (PHC) at Dakin Gari, Kangiwa and Gwandu; the contract identification number is KB/HSDPII/WK/001/NCB/0-5. Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.
- The Kebbi State Health System Development Project II (KHSDPII) invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the Procurement of works as follows:

Lot 1: Renovation and Upgrading of Dakin Gari PHC
Lot 2: Renovation and Upgrading of Kangiwa PHC
Lot 3: Renovation and Upgrading of Gwandu PHC

Bidders may bid for anyone or more lots and discounts offered for the award of combined lots would be considered in bid evaluation.
- Bidding will be conducted through the national competitive bidding (NCB) procedures specified in the world bank guidelines. Procurement under IBRD loans and IDA credits is
- opened to bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the guidelines.
- Bidding documents: (and additional copies) may be purchased at *Kebbi Health System Development Project II* (KHSDPII), 2 Emir Haruna Road Birnin Kebbi for a non-refundable fee of N20,000.00 (Twenty thousand naira) or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency, for each set interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.

Bidding document should be available from 16th March, 2005.
- Bids shall be valid for a period of 90 days after Bid opening and must be accompanied by security of at least 3% of Bid price or its equivalent in a freely convertible currency and shall be delivered to *Kebbi Health System Development Project II* (KHSDPII), 2 Emir Haruna Road, Birnin Kebbi on or before 10:00am 13th April, 2005, at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
- IFB must be endorsed and authenticated by:

Project Manager,
Kebbi Health System Development Project II (KHSDPII)
21 Emir Haruna Road,
Birnin Kebbi.
Tel/Fax 234 68 320968-70
E-mail kbhsdptwo@yahoo.com

Section 1: Invitation for Bids (IFB)

The Federal Government of Nigeria

KEBBI STATE HEALTH SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT PROJECT II

Procurement and Installation of Furniture and Medical Equipment

Credit No. 3653 - UNI-IFB No. KB/HSDPII/GD/001/ICB/05

- This invitation for bids follows the general procurement notice for this project that appeared in Development Business, issue no. 608 of June 16, 2003.
- The Federal Government of Nigeria has received a credit from the *International Development Association (IDA)* toward the cost of *Health System Development Project II*, and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the contract for Procurement and Installation of Furniture and Medical Equipment.
- The Kebbi State Health System Development Project II now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply and installations.

As per bid documents:

Lot 1: Medical Equipment
Lot 2: Medical Furniture
Lot 3: Office Furniture II;
Lot 4: Cold Chain Equipment "I"
- Bidding will be conducted through the international competitive bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank Guidelines: Procurement under IBARD loans and IDA credits and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.
- Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from *Kebbi State Health System Development Project II* (KBSHSDPII), 21 Emir Haruna Road, Birnin Kebbi, Tel/Fax 234068-320968-70 and inspect the bidding documents from 10:00am to 3:00pm commencing on Monday 16th March, 2005.
- A complete set of bidding documents in *English* may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of non-refundable fee N20,000.00 (Twenty thousand naira) only or USD 150.94 (one hundred and fifty dollars, ninety four cents only). The method of payment will be in cash or bank draft payable to *Kebbi State Health System Development Project II*. The document will be collected by hand or sent by *courier services on request*.
- Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 10:00am local time on 27th April 2005. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of at least 3% of bid price or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders representatives who choose to attend at the address below.

The Project Manager,
Kebbi State Health System Development Project II
21 Emir Haruna Road, Birnin Kebbi,
Kebbi State.
Tel/Fax 234 68 320968-70
E-mail kbhsdptwo@yahoo.com

YOUR HEALTH

Minister calls for reflection on fight against HIV/AIDS

The minister of State for Health, Princes Olufunke Adedoyin has called for a reflection on the activities, interventions and the challenges associated with the management and control of the spread of HIV/AIDS in the country.

Addressing a dissemination meeting on the 4th National Conference on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria: the National Response, recently in Abuja, the minister noted that the provision of care and support to people living with the pandemic in the country need to be re-examined with a view to strengthening it.

According to Princes Adedoyin, the spread of HIV/AIDS infection has been on the increase since it was first reported in 1986 up till 2001. "It was in 2003 that there was a slight decline in the prevalence to 5.0%," adding that more than 3.5 million people aged between 15-49 years are estimated to be infected with the pandemic.

Nigeria, she said, has between 350,000 to 700,000 patients requiring anti-retroviral treatment (ART), and about 70% of HIV/AIDS reported cases in Africa. This,

Stories by Sunday Ejike Benjamin, Health Reporter

she noted, fans the embers of tuberculosis epidemic observed to be common among people living with the disease.

"HIV/AIDS in Nigeria is now in its second decade, and we have not made much progress curtailing the epidemic yet, though there seems to have been a slight drop on the national sentinel surveillance figure on HIV from 5.8% in 2001 to 5.0% in 2003," she maintained, adding that government, given the high-level moral, social and political commitment in the control and spread of the epidemic in the country, established the Presidential Action Committee on AIDS and the National Action Committee on AIDS (NACA).

These committees, Princes Adedoyin noted, have helped in strengthening the multi-sectoral approaches as well as improving response, coordination and advocacy. She pointed out that the Ministry of Health has made meaningful contributions in the provision of care and support to PLWHAs as part

of the collective national response, which she said include the establishment of 11 prevention of mother-to-child transmission centres in federal tertiary hospitals with secondary sites offering these services springing up in states like Lagos and Gombe.

Other contributions of the health ministry in the provision of care and support to PLWHAs, she said, are the implementation of the ART programmes in at least 25 institutions with about 13,888 persons receiving treatment through those institutions, collaboration with the national society for blood safety and Safe Blood for Africa Foundation (SBAF) to improve blood provision, handling and application.

According to her, the ministry is currently subsidizing ARV drugs to PLWHAs, adding that government has committed substantial amount of money to the purchase of the drugs to make this possible.

Earlier in his address, the local organising committee chairman of the 4th National Conference on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria, Professor John Idoko who stressed the need for increased commitment in the fight against HIV/AIDS in the country, also called for the construction of links for increased opportunities for political advocacy and empowerment of those infected and affected.

Prof. Idoko also maintained that the fight against HIV/AIDS pandemic needs the joint efforts of all Nigerians, just as he advocated more political commitment to achieve impressive success in the fight against the disease which has defied cure.



Princes Olufunke Adedoyin, minister of state for health

Obasanjo sets up action group on tsetse/trypanosomiasis

President Olusegun Obasanjo has approved the establishment of an inter-ministerial action group on Pan-African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication (PATTEC).

According to a statement from the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF), the seven-man action group has the minister of Science and

Technology, Prof. Turner Isoun, as its chairman.

Other members of the group include Prof. Eytayo Lambo, minister of Health; Alhaji Adamu Bello, minister of Agriculture and Rural Development; Alhaji M. Shagari, minister of Water Resources, and Col. Bala Mande (rtd) minister of Environment.

Other members of the

action group include Mrs. Nenadi Usman, minister of state for Finance, and Professor Ode Ojowu, the economic adviser to the president.

The action group will be inaugurated on Friday 18th March, 2005 by the secretary to the government of the federation, Chief Uffot Ekaette.



National president of Nigeria Red Cross, Dr. Ibrahim Tahir (l) Red Cross secretary general, Mr. Abiodun Orebiyi (m) and the society's national fund raising adviser, Dr. Harrison Bungon during the press conference on the activities of the Nigerian Red Cross society, held in Abuja. Pix: Felix Onigbinde.

FMC Gombe sets up health care fund

The Federal Medical Centre, Gombe, has set up a fund where well-meaning Nigerians and corporate organisations contribute to, for the treatment of indigent patients of the state who cannot foot the bills for their treatment.

The medical director of the centre, Dr. Aliyu Usman El-Nafaty, who disclosed this to *Daily Trust* in Abuja, also pointed out that HIV/AIDS patients on anti-retroviral treatment in the hospital sometimes benefit from the account.

Dr. El-Nafaty further noted that the Federal Medical Centre, Gombe, has about 500 patients on ARV drugs on government's list with more than 100 of them buying the drugs from the hospital for use since government's supply of the drugs to the hospital is grossly inadequate.

According to him, the demand for ARV drugs is far more than the supply by the government, pointing out that, "it is in view of this that the management of the centre made arrangement with Rambaxy to supply the drugs which are sold to patients not covered by government's programme at a subsidised rate." The drugs, according to Dr. El-Nafaty, is sold to patients for about N7,000.00, as against N10,000.00 that is the selling price outside.

He lamented the high cost of carrying out monitoring

investigation on people living with HIV/AIDS which he said costs more than the drug itself. The high cost of these tests, he pointed out, has prevented a host of patients from undergoing them, thereby jeopardising the monitoring of their response to treatments.

He charged the advocacy meeting between officials of the Federal Ministry of Health, chief medical director, medical director of government health institutions on ART and the prevention of mother-to-child transmission to fashion out ways of sustaining collective distribution of the drugs in the country.

Commenting on the prevailing illnesses in the hospital, Dr. El-Nafaty said about 30% bed space in the hospital is being occupied by HIV/AIDS patients, adding that severe hypertension, stroke and liver diseases are also common in the centre.

He commended the Gombe state government for ensuring cordial relationship between it and the health personnel at the tertiary health institution in the state.

"We get a lot of support in so many ways from the state government to be able to improve in our services and to also improve the quality of health care delivery in the state and in the country in general," he explained.

College gets listed in WHO medical schools directory

The College of Health Sciences of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, has been listed in the WHO directory of medical schools.

Dr. Onyebuchi Chukwu, the chief medical director of Ebonyi State University Teaching Hospital, Abakaliki, announced this to the fifth batch of graduating medical doctors of the school.

The WHO ranking of the medical school was due to the progress recorded in 2004, he said, pointing out "the particular efforts of Dr. Elias

Igwe and Dr. Henry Alo among others".

Dr. Chukwu noted that "with this development, the coast is now clear for those who might wish to pursue further medical studies with the school's certificate abroad".

He also announced that both the department of paediatrics, as well as obstetrics and gynaecology "now enjoy double accreditation of both the West Africa Postgraduate College, and the National Postgraduate Medical College of Nigeria".

Meanwhile, the West African College of Surgeons was set to pay "an accreditation visit to the Department of Ophthalmology," he said.

Dr. Chukwu lauded the graduating medical doctors for their success and advised them "to always uphold the ethical code of the profession".

Forty-one new medical doctors took part in the oath-taking ceremony, raising to 154 the number of doctors produced by the college since 2001.

FG to scale up access to ART drugs

In view of the increasing number of patients requiring anti-retroviral therapy (ART) drugs in the country, the federal government has commenced plans to scale up access to the drugs from the present level to 100,000 before the end of this year.

The minister of Health, Prof. Eytayo Lambo, who announced this weekend while addressing the advocacy meeting for chief medical directors and medical directors of tertiary health institutions on anti-retroviral therapy (ART) and prevention of mother-to-child transmission, said the move is to be in line with the WHO 3-by-5 initiatives.

The minister explained that with the funds from government, Presidential Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the World Bank and the Global Funds to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and other agencies, government will be able to scale up access to ART drugs with ease.

Assessment of the 25 ART and 11 PMTCT sites, he noted, showed that the two are operating parallel programmes with little or no institutional support from hospital management, pointing out that the advocacy meeting was to discuss with

CMDs and MDs of tertiary health institutions' effective mainstreaming of these activities into the overall service delivery plan of the hospitals.

"We expect that your institutions will make resources available to run some aspects of the services so that we can ensure their sustainability," the minister declared, adding that some money and materials would be made available to the centres through the Global Funds to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM).

While noting that chief medical directors/medical directors will be held accountable for these funds, Prof. Lambo also added that a memorandum of understanding will be entered in the management of the overall activities, and called for judicious management of the funds.

He further charged management of tertiary health institutions to set up HIV/AIDS committee in each site to manage the programmes and to also ensure linkages of all aspects of care, adding that an effective monitoring system should be maintained for timely and comprehensive reporting of same to the Federal Ministry of Health.

Advertorial

A MEMO TO SARKIN YAKIN KEFFI ON 2007 PRESIDENTIAL RACE

Alhaji Dr. Abdullahi Adamu does not need an elaborate introduction in this country. He is already widely acclaimed as the action governor of Nassarawa State whose unflinching efforts to the development of the state have endeared him to his subjects who unanimously returned him in the 2003 elections for a second term. Therefore since 1999, Governor Adamu has been at the helm of affairs at Lafia, working tirelessly to bring the state to the top of those created along with it in 1996 and to realize the dreams for which the state was created out of Plateau State. There is no gain saying the fact that a lot of these have been achieved more between 1999 and now than under the various military administrations before the *Sarkin Yakin Keffi* took over the affairs of the state.

Born to a humble family of the District Head of Garaku in Kokona LGA of Nasarawa State, his leadership qualities and political prowess began to manifest quite early when he was growing up under the watchful eyes of Alhaji Audu Abubakar, now of blessed memory. Late Alhaji Audu himself was an astute politician of repute in the defunct Northern Peoples Congress (NPC), which dominated the politics of Northern Nigeria before and during the first republic. After the overthrow of the first republic, Alhaji Audu continued to play active and leading roles in the politics of northern Nigeria and it is widely speculated that Governor Abdullahi Adamu might have picked up his political instincts from him, for sooner than later, he became an icon in the youth wing of the NPC even before the death of his guardian, Alhaji Audu under whom he had received practical training aside the royal blood flowing in his veins.

Dr. Abdullahi Adamu had his early education at Government College, Keffi, a college known for sound basic foundation and which has produced prominent leaders of our time. From Keffi, the gem went to Kaduna Polytechnic where he was trained as an Engineer. For his untiring efforts to be versatile, eloquent and grounded in his leadership quest, the moved on to the University of Jos to read law. With this sound educational background, he served in various places of endeavour, both in the private and public sectors, leaving behind excellent records for posterity. He served NNDC Kaduna at one time as the Maintenance Engineer, an opportunity to showcase his talent as an Engineer. In the defunct BEPCO, this amiable console served as the Executive Secretary and gave the company a befitting image.

As the second republic was fully ushered in 1979, governor Adamu's potentialities were now to be fully harnessed. He became the Secretary and later the chairman of the defunct National Party of Nigeria (NPN) in Plateau state at different times, positions occupied by only the most skillful ones, especially in a party known for its brilliant performance in winning elections during the second republic. The military intervention in 1983 interrupted his political race. The whole democratic process was put on hold and an interlude was created which gave him an opportunity to acquire more formal political training to prepare for the task ahead in the subsequent republic, but because an achiever is a gold fish that has no hiding place, the late Abacha regime fished him out to give a helping hand and which he gladly accepted to serve as the Minister of State for Works and Housing. The



*Alhaji Dr. Abdullahi Adamu
Executive Governor, Nasarawa State*

era saw major roads being dualised, rehabilitated and prototype houses built all over the country for the benefit of the Nigerian populace. He held the position until the death of Gen. Abacha.

At the wake of the third republic, new states were created which saw the birth of Nassarawa State out of Plateau state. Military administrators were appointed to man the affairs of these baby states. Nassarawa state in particular had two previous administrators before the coming of Dr. Abdullahi Adamu. He met the state in a very dilapidated condition and swung into action of transforming it to a modern-rural area, a feat he achieved with meager resources within his first tenure as an Executive Governor.

Governor Adamu made giant breakthroughs in a number of areas particularly in the educational sector with the establishment of a record number of schools, from primary to tertiary levels, an achievement that is unequalled in the history of Nassarawa state. It is no exaggeration to point out that there is a quiet educational revolution taking place in Nassarawa State under the leadership of Gov. Abdullahi Adamu. From his wide experience is convinced that education is the key to progress. Also convinced that human resources are an indispensable ingredient for rapid socio-economic development, Abdullahi Adamu has since assuming office accorded the highest priority to education. He particularly gave special attention to science education with wide ranging incentives to science teachers. For this special emphasis, he created a Ministry of Science and Technology in the state. For Governor Adamu who himself has traversed the four walls of the law school, emerging from there as a teacher aside from being a trained engineer and lawyer, committing huge sums to education is a worthwhile investment in the youths and the future of the state. His belief in the development of education culminated in the establishment of the state University at Keffi. His other breakthroughs include:

a. Total support to agriculture, industries, works, housing and commerce with the citing of industries in

Lafia, Akwanga and a couple other places to harness these areas of serious needs.

b. Health was equally viewed with serious attention as hospitals and health care centers were built and well stocked with drugs to assist the citizenry with adequate health care.

c. Tremendous achievements in the area of peace initiative and conflict resolution efforts.

d. Sports development became one of his pet programmes, a deliberate effort aimed at engaging the youths in meaningful programmes rather than engaging in unprofitable activities and social vices. A veritable example is the Nassarawa United, a team that spent only a season in Pro-League but which is now a Premiership side.

e. His organizational ability and track records earned him the position of Chairman of state Governors of Nigeria.

f. His respect for traditional institutions made him to upgrade almost all traditional stools to the next higher status and better welfare programmes for them.

g. Disbursement of N53 million under the state Women and Youth Empowerment Scheme for the establishment of various agricultural projects.

These sterling leadership qualities of Gov. Abdullahi Adamu and his commitment to his responsibilities has caught the attention and recognition of Nigerians in other parts of the country including higher educational institutions. In recognition of his untiring efforts in creating a better society for his people and the nation at large the prestigious Federal University of Technology Akure on December 4th 2004, conferred on him the honorary Doctorate Degree of Engineering.

His nationwide popularity was underscored by the students of the

institution who trooped out that day dressed in a T-shirt and face cap both of which had his picture emblazoned in academic gown, carried placards eulogizing his good works. Some of the placards read. "Gov. Adamu. Our Saviour, Emancipator". "Adamu for ever". The Yoruba race in Akure also trooped out to eulogise him in Yoruba songs some of which translated "Who says we have no father"? Abdullahi Adamu is our father.

Abdullahi Adamu's life itself is a study in the benevolence of nature, which he has tried to spread to future generations and those who cross his path.

These tremendous achievements are worthy of commendation and as a result, we in Nassarawa state are making a wake-up call to Dr. Abdullahi Adamu, (*The Sarkin Yakin Keffi*) to come out and contest for the presidency of this nation come 2007. The nation is yearning for leaders who have appetite for good governance to sail it to the promised land. Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!

Long live Nassarawa State

Ranka ya dade Sarkin Yakin Keffi

Sai Kayi

Signed

Alhaji Tanko Wambai

ABUJA TRUST

House FCT C'ttee harps on budget implementation

The House of Representatives Committee on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) has indicated its resolve to explore all avenues to ensure full implementation of budget for the territory. The chairman of the committee, Hon. Tanimu Aduda who gave the indication during a tour of the territory by the committee, said a new strategy has been adopted

to place emphasis on priority areas in the overall development of the FCT.

"The new procedure seeks to achieve priority spending, impact directly and positively on the residents and strict compliance with fiscal discipline," Aduda said, adding that the procedure was meant to treat all residents of the FCT equally.

He said the FCT committee, as one of the most important committees of the House, has discharged its duties with utmost commitment and dedication, and that the committee has passed four bills on the same day on the floor of the House.

The committee has also been monitoring the FCT budget performance and

has intervened severally in the issue of compensation to displaced indigenes. He said also that the committee is committed to leadership by good examples, because members of the committee are honourable men and women "most of whom are seasoned bureaucrats accomplished in their various endeavours".



Hon. Belle Aminu Masari

FCT inaugurates task force fake drugs

The FCT authorities have called on all dealers in counterfeit and unwholesome processed foods to desist from such illegal activities as the law will soon catch up with them.

The executive secretary for Health and Human Services, Hajiya Amina Bala Zakari, disclosed this while inaugurating the FCT's task force on counterfeit and fake drugs and unwholesome processed foods.

Hajiya Zakari, who was represented by the deputy director (Pharmacy), Mrs Nana A. Mahmoud, said the establishment of the task force was necessitated by the alarming increase in the number of persons involved in the food and drug administration business as fast means of making money. She called on the FCT residents to cooperate with the task force by providing information on illegal outlets and people suspected to be dealing in counterfeit drugs,

By Nasir Izama, Property & Environment Editor

while reiterating the importance of purchasing drugs from registered pharmacists and patent medicine dealers.

The executive secretary added that the task force is empowered by Decree 25 of 1999 to, among others, enter into any premises that is not duly licensed or registered for the sale of such medicines. It is also authorised to control and regulate the sale of drugs in the FCT.

Speaking on behalf of other members, the secretary of the task force and head of Pharmaceutical Inspectorate Branch, Pharm (Mrs) M. A. Kazzah, thanked the executive secretary for giving them the opportunity to serve, adding that they would discharge their duties without fear or favour.

The seven-member task force has Pharm. (Mrs.) Nana A. Mohamoud as the chairman.

WARNING

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A sea of heads at the appeal fund launch of the National Mosque at the Eagle Square, Abuja...Last week. Pix: Joe Oroye

UniAbuja to move to permanent site

The University of Abuja will move to its permanent site before the end of this year, the vice chancellor, Prof. Nuhu Yaqub, has said.

Yaqub, who disclosed this while speaking with student union leaders in the university on Thursday, said efforts were being intensified to achieve the objective.

He said although construction of hostels, roads and other infrastructure were ongoing at the site that is located along the Airport-Giri junction, adequate measures were being made to ensure their early completion.

He said that with the completion of some projects in the permanent site, some facilities could move there to ease the pressure on facilities at the temporary site.

"Movement to the permanent site by the end of this year will reduce the pressure on facilities at the temporary site," he added.

Meanwhile, Yaqub said that efforts were being made to improve facilities at the temporary site, adding that an additional generating plant would be provided to improve power

situation at the site.

He explained that some facilities in the campus were being renovated to improve on their service delivery capacity.

Yaqub said his administration would continue to

give priority to students and staff welfare.

"Efforts will be intensified to ensure the creation of a conducive learning and teaching environment in the university of Abuja," he said.

...medical centre advises students, staff on cholera outbreak

Following the outbreak of cholera in the Gwagwalada area council of the FCT, the medical centre of the University of Abuja has advised staff and students to take necessary precautions.

The centre in a statement issued today, said the advice became necessary due to the alarming death rate that had been recorded as a result of the outbreak.

Staff and students of the institution were advised to observe basic sanitary habits and personal hygiene.

The statement warned students against drinking water that is impure, adding

they should boil their water before drinking.

Students, staff and other residents of the council were also advised to wash fruits and vegetable properly before consumption. "Boiling water before drinking and washing of fruits reduce the risk of cholera," it added.

The statement, signed by Dr Mohammed Abdulahi, also advised students and staff to keep their environment clean.

It said that a clean environment devoid of flies and mosquitoes reduces the risk of infection.

The statement called on members of the university community to immediately report any case of persistent vomiting and stooling to the centre for treatment.

"Immediate medication raises the chances of survival of those infested with cholera," the statement added.



Prof. Fabian Osuji, Education Minister

Storm destroys property in Abaji

By Abubakar Sadiq Isah, Stringer

Property worth millions of naira were destroyed by wind on Saturday at Abaji in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The incident occurred as a result of a heavy downpour amidst powerful wind, which lasted for more than two hours. As a result, many residents were rendered homeless.

Alhaji Muhammad Angulu Loko, the chairman of Abaji area council, expressed shock over the incident and attributed the unfortunate occurrence to the act of God. He advised them to bear the loss with fortitude. Alhaji Loko further promised to set up a committee to assist the victims.

Places affected are Naharati community, Abaji Central ward metropolis and Agyana. No life was lost, but three persons sustained serious injuries as a result of the incident.

World Bank donates books to FCT schools

The World Bank has donated books worth over N3 million to schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

This was revealed by the secretary of the Nigerian Libraries Association (NLA) Abuja chapter, Alhaji Abdulrakarem Sanni while speaking at the "Library Week" of Sunrise International School, Abuja. He said library is a potent guide to discoveries adding that developed nations of the world used the library to make breakthroughs.

He noted that the library is no longer a one-way traffic, hence the emergence of electronic library.

By Salaudeen Ozigi, Intern

The NUC chief librarian disclosed that library is a continuous mechanism and that no library is "self sufficient." He therefore urged the school's head to provide a befitting library and equip it with books relevant to their subjects of study.

In his address, the headmaster of the school, Abdulkareem Suleiman, stressed the importance of library as a house of knowledge that enhances pupils' capacity and research and called for frequent reading competition to encourage pupils to strive for better reading habit.

Abuja Trust

FCT to export scrap metals

The Federal Capital Territory administration has concluded arrangements to harvest scrap metals spread all over the territory and prepare it for export. The administration has therefore made arrangements to procure an auto pound, which is to be used to crush abandoned metal scraps in the territory.

The special assistant, Social Sector to the FCT minister, Hajiya Amina Salihu, who stated this at a KEKE-NAPEP stakeholders' dialogue held in Abuja, said that the auto pound is part of the FCT administration's economic empowerment programme.

Hajiya Amina, who also presented a draft document on the FCT Economic

By Nasir Imam, Property & Environment Editor

Empowerment Development Strategy (FEEDS), said that the minister has also approved the purchase of 102 Piaggio tricycles (otherwise known as KEKE-NAPEP) from Messrs. Autobahn through NAPEP for the FCT.

She said that the tricycles, which cost N200,000 each, would be given to cooperative societies which will nominate a pool of trainees to run and manage each tricycle which would be given to 102 youth.

Hajiya Salihu said that the 102 tricycles would be given to groups, rather than individuals as this

would engender increased accountability.

The special adviser also said that the youth, who will be trained, would be drawn from the communities through a multi-stakeholders' dialogue, and would serve as drivers, mechanics and maintenance workers, to support the KEKE project.

Beneficiaries, she said, would pay directly to Aso Savings and Loans Ltd at fair and realistic rates within a time frame of 1 to 2 years, with no interest on repayment.

Hajiya Amina added that spare parts for the KEKE-NAPEP are being fabricated locally, and that some of the 24 youth who will be trained as mechanics by Autobahn will also provide services to the KEKE-NAPEP beneficiaries.

Federal Capital Development Authority (FCDA) chairman, Nasir el-Rufai, has awarded a N939 million geographic survey contract to Messrs JB Construction Company.

FCDA awards N939m survey contract

Geographic surveys are usually conducted to secure accurate information of a

given land mass, for the purpose of its physical, structural and other developments.

Speaking at the contract signing in Abuja, el-Rufai said that the exercise, which was the second of its kind, would last for 30 months.

He said that the first geographic survey contract, awarded on pilot basis at the cost of N250 million to the same company, provided aerial pictures and details on the land mass in phase one of the FCT.

An investigation by the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) at the FCDA showed that the geographic survey

details provided by the first exercise was responsible for the setting up of the Abuja Geographic Information Systems (AGIS) five months ago.

AGIS was scheduled with the responsibility of re-issuing about 30,000 certificates of occupancy issued in the last 25 years by the now defunct FCT ministry.

The investigation further indicated that when the second geographic survey is ready, certificates of occupancy issued by the six area councils in the FCT would have to be re-certified by AGIS.



el-Rufai, FCT Minister

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Jigawa swears-in 6 magistrates

As part of efforts to enhance access to justice in Jigawa, six additional magistrates have been sworn in.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that 56 lower shariah courts and 18 magistrates' courts have been established across the state in the last two years.

The state Chief Judge, Justice Tijjani Abubakar, who swore in the magistrates, said the measure was to ensure prompt and sound administration of justice.

Government, he said, attached priority to an improvement in the judicial process and the demystification of the workings of the judiciary to make justice affordable and accessible to all.

Abubakar noted that the appointment of two women magistrates was in line with government's intention "to empower mothers and protect children's rights".

He added that the state government, with assistance from the British Department for International Develop-

ment, had rehabilitated court-rooms and provided training for judicial staff.

The appointment of the two magistrates had brought the total number of women magistrates to three in the state, he noted.

Those appointed included Malam Muhammad Kaugama, Malam Nurudeen Shehu, Malam Muhammad Usman and Malam Usman Lamin. Others were Hajiya Batula Dauda, Hajiya Sa'ade Habib and Hajiya Amina Dahiru.



Emir of Kano, Alhaji Ado Bayero and ATM's chairman inspecting a newly built Mosque for workers in the factory.



NEPA zonal manager, Alh. Ishaq Usman, launching NEPA'S Rapid Response Vehicles in Kano... recently.



Yan Kura Roundabout converted to open-air toilet for kids. Would the rehabilitation work on roundabouts in Kano begin here before the rainy season? Pix. Musa Kazaure



THE FEDERAL CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY ABUJA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION BOARD (AEPB)

Block 2, Ogun Street/Moshood Abiola Road, Area 2, Section 2, Abuja,
Nigeria. Tel: (09) 2342485, Fax: (09) 2343516

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR AEPB WASTE COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL SERVICES

The AEPB invites Registered Waste Collectors to submit expressions of interest as Solid Waste Collectors in designated parts of the FCT.

Shortlisted Companies will be asked to tender for Waste Collection Services in the following areas of the Federal Capital City:

- Kubwa Main and Kubwa Village
- Nyanya
- Karu
- Dutse
- Neighbourhood Shopping Centers and Markets in Areas 1, 2 and 7
- Wuse Market, Utako Market and Garki Model Market
- Residential Estates in Lugbe, Jabi and Gwarinpa

Qualification

To be eligible, interested concessionaires must present along with their submission the following:

- Company profile;
- Memorandum and Articles of association;
- Evidence of Solid Waste Disposal Services of similar scale and type carried out in recent past;
- Certificate of Waste Collector Registration by the Abuja Environmental Protection Board (AEPB);
- Proof of financial capability/Bank statement of account;

List of equipments available for immediate inspection.

Submission Requirements

- Each interested firm is expected to pay a non-refundable fee of N200, 000.00 (Two Hundred Thousand Naira only) in bank draft in favour of Abuja Environmental Protection Board, which must be submitted with the proposal before it can be evaluated.
- Submissions must be in sealed envelopes marked clearly "TENDER FOR SOLID WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES IN THE FCT FOR...." and delivered to the address below, no later than 5.00 p.m. Wednesday 27th of April, 2005:

PPP UNIT
MINISTER'S OFFICE,
MINISTER'S BLOCK, KAPITAL ROAD,
AREA 11, GARKI, ABUJA. Attention: MOHAMMED ALIYU

EKO TRUST

15th March 2005 Time 11:00



Chief Cornelius Adebayo, Minister of Communication and Alh. Musa Argungu postmaster-Gen of the federation at the 2nd bulk post venture lecture/luncheon today...recently in Lagos. Pic: Oluwapo Odunwa.

GOOD SHEPARD ORPHANAGE

Keyamo files exparte motion

Lagos lawyer, Festus Keyamo, has filed a motion *ex-parte* in the Ikeja High Court calling for a declaration that the arrest and the continued detention of Pastor (Mrs.) Gift John, the proprietress of Good Shepard Orphanage, for alleged child trafficking is unconstitutional, illegal null and void as it violates her fundamental rights.

Keyamo is also seeking for a mandatory order, compelling the respondents, their officers, agents, servants or otherwise however to forthwith release his client from the said awful detention.

He also seeking an order of perpetual injunction

By Oluvide Bajuliaye, Correspondent (Lagos)

restraining the plaintiffs from further arresting or detaining the defendant on the facts leading to this application as well as an order compelling them to charge the embattled woman to a competent court, pending the hearing and determination of the motion on notice.

Joined in the suit are the commissioner of police, Lagos State and the attorney general of Lagos, Professor Oshibajo.

Meanwhile in a press statement made available at the weekend to newsmen, Bamidele disclosed that a

team of lawyers and officials from the state social welfare department had visited the state criminal investigation department last Wednesday to hand over additional pieces of evidence which were recovered from the orphanage to the police.

He said that contrary to newspaper reports, no investigative policemen were turned back from doing their work and that the police quizzed no official of the ministry.

He assured that the alleged illicit activities of Good Shepherd Orphanage proprietress and her collaborators would not be swept under the carpet just like the case of Clifford Orji.

LASG bans NSL operations in its territory

The Lagos State government has declared total war against National Sports Lottery Limited, (NSL) operators of Lotto Nigeria from operating within the Lagos territory for lack of valid license in the country.

The State commissioner for Finance, Dr. Ismaila Adebayo Adewusi, who addressed newsmen at the weekend, insisted that the

company NSL has no legal framework to back its operation in the state, as the federal government is yet to ascent to the law establishing it.

Adewusi who said the state had obtained court injunction restraining NSL from operating in the state, pointed out that there was no law backing its operation in the country.

According to him, the

National Assembly has passed a bill establishing the company, which the president has since refused to ascent to and had since been returned to the National Assembly.

His words: "Lagos State government late last year licensed another company to operate Lotto business in the state, Orion Technologies Limited, which is expected to start operations in the state as from April.

"Thereafter, federal government made attempts to submit to the National Assembly National Lottery Law. The president has refused to ascent the bill after the National Assembly passed it.

"Right now there is no legal framework to back the operations of NSL in Nigeria," he declared.

According to the commissioner, NSL operations in Lagos are illegal, adding that already steps have been taken to

obtain court injunction, which the court has since granted the state.

"The position of Lagos State Government is that NSL has no license to operate in Lagos. The court has stopped it from operating in the

territory. Until that injunction is discharged the company stands suspended from doing any business in Lagos including, canvassing for sales, franchising whatever it is, the company is stopped by the court right now in Lagos."

He disclosed that the department in charge of pools, lottery among others in the Board of Internal Revenue has been ordered to go round the state and confiscate all materials betor zing to NSL.

...places embargo on employment

With the workforce of over 47,000 and a wage bill of about N1.8 billion, the Lagos State government has placed embargo on recruitment into the civil service until there is improvement in its allocation.

The Lagos State head of service, Mr. Sunday Ajose, who disclosed this to newsmen on Thursday in his office, said the state is financially down at the moment, which was aggravated by the seized local government funds since last year by the federal government.

The internally generated revenue of the state is presently about N3 billion and with a new revenue drive of about N10 billion before the end of the year 2007, the state would then be able to meet all its demands.

The directive to place embargo on employment according to the head of service was from the state governor, Bola Tinubu, to the effect that no new names should be included in the pay

roll of the state until a buoyant economy is achieved to accommodate such.

But the governor has approved the appointment of 300 civil servants who hitherto were said to have been working with the state without passing through the approved procedure.

Ajose said the state government decided to take the burden in spite of the lean purse of the state in order to give hope to those concerned.

According to him, rather than reliving the workers of their jobs, government decided to absorb them by regularising their employment because they were not at fault and has been useful to the state.

He also spoke of plans by the state government to fully embrace e-governance to eliminate total paper documentation.

"If I have my way, by the end August I want us to eliminate the use of typewriters in offices within the secretariat, everybody must be able to use PC".

Task force charges two with contempt

Two officers of Magodo Plaza, one John Chike, 22 and Hosea Umar, 51 have been arraigned for contempt of court by the mobile court of the Lagos State Task Force.

The two accused persons were alleged to have conspired to break the premises of the Plaza that was sealed off by the state government last Monday on the orders of a Lagos High Court.

The legal department of Lagos Board of Internal

Revenue had last Monday sealed off the premises on the ground that the owner, one Dr. Fatai Animashun, has a tax liability of over N25 million.

Magistrate Francis Adeniyi Olusanmokon ordered the accused to be remanded in prison custody without any option of bail.

Five companies were last Monday sealed off by the state government, of which Magodo Plaza was one of them, and the only company that violated the seal off order.

Speaking shortly after the arrest of the two accused, legal adviser to the revenue board, Mrs. Mojisoluwa Olukolu said the act was illegal and such those found guilty would not go unpunished.

Meanwhile following the action of the board, the Federal Inland Revenue Service, Lagos office has gone after all the companies sealed off by the Lagos State government.

Investigations by our correspondent revealed that officials of FIR had last week upon hearing that these companies have been sealed off went to them to look at their papers to know whether they are owing the federal government.

An official of the FIR who spoke with our correspondent said since the companies are liable to tax at the state level, no doubt they will be liable to VAT and other taxes from federal government.

Mr. Tunde Eni-Akorun and Tony Ukhai from investigation department of FIR disclosed that they are only on investigation mission to ascertain whether these companies are liable to tax, adding that after looking at their papers and they found them guilty they would take all the necessary action against them.

Private schools proliferation worries LASG

Lagos State government is worried about the proliferation of private schools in the state and complained that if the trend were not checked, it would pose a greater danger to educational development in the state in particular and the country in general.

Similarly, the government is worried about infiltration of schools by miscreants which has led to high degree of truancy and hooliganism not only among students of tertiary institutions in the state but including secondary and primary schools.

Professor Kunle Lawal, the state commissioner for Education made the fear known yesterday during a press briefing at Alausa in commemoration of the second year of the second term of Tinubu's administration.

According to Lawal, the level of decay in the education system in Lagos is unbelievable to the extent that in the last couple of weeks, 40 students have been suspended for hooliganism.

He however urged parents to take good care of their words and monitor the kind of company they keep

either at school or while at home.

Giving details on proliferation of schools, Prof. Lawal hinted that teachers being used at most private schools are not qualified. He said many proprietors and proprietress of these schools were out to exploit unsuspecting parents.

"It was a known fact that most of these schools were being run at an uncondusive environment. The teachers there are mostly school drop-outs and the buildings at times are a shame to our educational system," the commissioner noted.

News

Warring communities want judicial enquiry

The four warring communities in the Joinkarama crisis in Rivers state have jointly called on the Rivers state government to set up a judicial commission of inquiry into the crisis that erupted in the area, which has allegedly claimed six lives.

Although the immediate cause of the crisis has not been ascertained, *Daily Trust* learnt that the affected communities have lost patience with the state's delay in intervening, and took to arms.

Information Commissioner Magnus Abe said it was wrong for anybody to attack his brother over the crisis, and

From Ikenna Emeka Okpani, Bureau Chief, (Port Harcourt)

disclosed that the police had already moved in to quell the situation.

The four communities of Joinkarama: Ususu, Isua, Odawu and Edagberi, were asking for the judicial commission of inquiry to cease hostilities and pursue the part of peace. In a six-point communiqué issued at the end of a meeting of the representatives of the communities at Delta Hotels, Port Harcourt, they asked the police in the state to provide round the clock patrol in the

area to forestall further outbreak of violence in the communities.

On the alleged involvement of Shell Petroleum Development Company in the crisis, the communiqué asked the "Rivers state government to investigate the role of the company since there are widespread accusations of its involvement".

The communiqué was signed by Messrs Kingdom Odoya for Joinkarama I; Fidelis Allen for Joinkarama II; O.A. Emelis for Joinkarama III; and Raymond Joinkarama IV.

The National Population Commission (NPC) has been advised to provide adequate satellite imaging equipment to ensure a successful population and housing census in the country. The deputy governor of Cross River State, Elder Walter Ineji, gave the advice in Calabar recently at the opening of a two-day retreat for the NPC officials as a build-up to the forthcoming census in the country. He added that adequate arrangements have to be done to ensure a total success.

Elder Ineji used the occasion to call on international organisations, such as the Department for International Development (DFID), which according to him, has always

NPC urged to provide satellite equipment for census

From Bassey Ita, Correspondent (Calabar)

been interested in the sound-political growth of the country, to assist Nigeria in establishing 'satellite villages' for accurate success.

The deputy governor however pledged the readiness of the state government toward ensuring a successful population and housing census, and charged the people of the state to take the exercise seriously.

In an address at the occasion, the chairman of the National Population Commission, Chief Samu'ila

Danko Makama, called for support of the government and people of the state to ensure successful and hitch-free census, saying that the state government 'stands out as principal partners' in the success of the exercise.

Chief Makama hinted that the commission was at the third phase of the build-up activity for the census with the Enumeration Area Demarcation (EAD), which involves the division of the entire land area of the country into smaller enumeration areas that could be conveniently covered by a pair of enumerators within the stipulated census period.

The NPC further disclosed that so far, about 730 local government areas of the country have been covered in the EAD, adding that the retreat was to further cement existing relationship among the staff of the commission.

He charged the commission's staff to prove themselves honourably by exhibiting transparency and honesty as they were appointed based on their good track records.

The chairman also appreciated the staff for the progress so far recorded in implementing the mandate given them, and remarked that the exercise will be completed by November this year, despite the enormous responsibilities involved.

Makama expressed appreciation to Governor Duke for his developmental strides in the state, even as he assured that his commission was determined to conduct an accurate, reliable and acceptable housing and headcounts.

Police warn against firearms possession

The police in Odukpani and Itu local government areas of Cross River and Akwa Ibom states respectively have warned that anyone caught with firearms along the Calabar-Itu River will be arrested and prosecuted according to the law.

Giving the warning against the backdrop of the recent peace initiative

From Bassey Ita Correspondent (Calabar)

organised jointly by the federal government and the two local government areas to nip in the bud the protracted boundary and communal clashes between boarder communities of the local government areas, the divisional police commands in the two council areas warned that no-

body should be seen along the river with firearms or be involved in acts of piracy in the river.

The Itu divisional police officer, Mr. Godswill Adam, who bared the mind of the state's police command in Akwa Ibom, said that although the warring communities of Oku Iboku and Ikot Offion have come to terms with each other, the police

will continue to sail the river to check intimidation by pirates from any of the warring factions.

According to him, the move is to ensure that peace is achieved and all cases of threats against peaceful co-existence of the two neighbouring communities were fully arrested before the police withdraw from the river.

The DPO of Odukpani police division, Mr. Sampson Evbota on his part, assured that he will continue to keep vigilance over the river and the Cross River territory of the bridge head to check against all acts inimical to the peaceful coexistence of the two communities.

Mr. Evbota further stated that 'now that the former warlords have resorted to peace, it behooves on them to lay down their arms completely and embrace peace'. The police boss, who stressed that the Cross River state police command was particularly appreciative of the peace effort by the two communities, however warned the youths to desist from rumour mongering which he noted was the bane of peaceful coexistence of any entity.

Ogun police kill five armed robbers at Sango Otta

Five armed-robbery suspects were shot dead during a gun duel with the men of the Ogun State police command at Sango Otta.

The robbery suspects, numbering 7, had broken into Oxbond Aluminum Company at Sango Otta, in the early hours of Sunday where they were confronted by the police who had been laying siege at the premises of the company following a tip-off.

The Ogun State police commissioner, Mr. Tunji Ahprin, disclosed that their informer was given N30,000 to join the robbery

From Kayode Ajibola Correspondent (Abeokuta)

operation, but rather, he informed the area command office of the police at Sango Otta which mounted surveillance on the company for about a week and a half.

'On the D-day, they came as we were informed, which we never thought they would. But when they came, they came into the waiting hands of our men who then opened fire on them. They realised that they have entered a security trap set up by hard working and dedicated members of the

police.

'It was during the exchange of fire with our men that five of them fell to the superior powers of the command, while two of them escaped; but we have identified them and our men are on their trail,' the police boss said.

In a related development, two robbery suspects were arrested along Lagos-Ibadan expressway by the command. The suspects, Sule Majuma, who is now dead, and two others, Mohammed Ali, 25; and Ali Juma, 45, had earlier posed as accident victims at

Dalemo area of Sango Otta where an unsuspecting police man had offered to assist them.

According to the commissioner, the 3-man armed gang claimed to be returning from a party during which they had an accident, but on a closer examination, the police man discovered guns, charms, money, cell phones, jewelries and other dangerous weapons on them. Some money was also recovered from them.

Mr. Ahprin has warned robbers in the state to pack out of the state, saying that Ogun State will not tolerate them.

FG lifts Embargo on NYSC posting to private sector

The federal government has approved the lifting of the embargo on the posting of corps members to the private sector in recognition of the strategic role the sector plays as the engine room for galvanising the potentials of economic growth and national development.

President Olusegun Obasanjo made this declaration on Monday while swearing in the 2005 batch 'A' corps members. He said the scheme was designed to serve as a medium for national unity and integration, adding that it ensures even spread of the much needed professional manpower throughout the country through the mobilisation and deployment of young graduates to states other than their states of origin.

While lauding the achievement of past corps

By Ebenezer John Buoro (Intern)

members, the president said "the contribution of your predecessors to 'Operation Roll Back Malaria' and the fight against the spread of HIV and AIDs, and other national development programmes has created indelible marks in the annals of our development efforts."

He enjoined the corps members to join hands with the present administration in pushing the frontiers of community and national development through active participation in the ongoing political reform discourse, fight against economic crimes, drug trafficking, human and child-trafficking, mass and adult literacy programmes, community health and service deliveries.



Governor Danjuma Goje of Gombe State (r) receiving the report of the 8-man Committee on Gombe Metropolitan flood disaster in Gombe... recently

News



Alhaji Aminu Dantata briefing the State House journalists during the courtesy visit to the State House, Abuja with the Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Adamu (centre) Wednesday. Pix: Joe Oroye

Ogun pledges more roads

The Ogun state government has promised to construct a good network of roads in the state this year. The state's commissioner for works, Honourable Waliu Taiwo, said that his ministry has succeeded in reducing the cost of road contracts. Making this declaration over the weekend in Abeokuta, Ogun state capital, while addressing newsmen on the activities of his ministry in the last one year, he said that the Ogun state government was resolved to construct roads to improve the social well-being of the people and attract viable investors to the state.

He said in the last one and half years of the Otunba Gbenga Daniel-led administration, many roads have been constructed and completed while some are at the edge of completion. Hon. Taiwo added that apart from the completed projects, his

From Kayode Ajibola, Correspondent (Abeokuta)

ministry has a number of on-going road projects in all the three senatorial districts of the state which are being handled by contractors. Some of the 'trunk A roads,' which are actually the responsibility of the federal government, have been handled by the state government. Hon. Taiwo believed that the construction of roads as well as the rehabilitation of bad roads in the state would boost the state's economic growth.

While giving account of money spent on road projects in the state, Hon. Taiwo said that N393.4 million was expended on the Imeko-Ilara road, Abiola Way-Sam Ewang Estate-Idi-Aba road, and the Olabisi Onabanjo University

road. He disclosed that the state government has approved a sum of N378.9 million for the Itori-Igbogila, Owode-Ofada-Mowe, Mowe township, and Ijoko-Oko, Aro-Ojodu roads, adding that bilateral relations between Ogun state government and the federal government has reached an advanced stage in respect of the completion of Isaga-Orile section of the Badagry-Sokoto road by the ministry through direct labour.

While explaining that Otunba-Daniel administration has succeeded in reducing the cost of awarding road contracts through the use of direct labour, Hon. Taiwo declared that the on-going dualisation of Sagamu-Sun-Abeokuta road only cost the state N1.9 billion as against N3 billion which some contractors demanded.

Kebbi agog for Argungu fishing festival

Arrangements are on the top gear for the successful hosting of this year's Argungu International Fishing and Cultural Festival by the Kebbi state government, which is scheduled to take place on March 17-19. Daily Trust findings showed that places like the fishing village, the Kabanchi display site, the cultural arena, and the fishing site at Matan Fada have been renovated and now wear a new look. Similarly, the

From Kabir Dogon Daji, Correspondent (Birnin-Kebbi)

emirs' palace and major streets in Argungu have been given a face-lifts to increase their lustre.

Daily Trust further observed that barely two days to the festival, Argungu town, situated in the eastern part of the state, has witnessed an increase in the number of people trooping in for business. The road linking the metropolis to the agricultural show ground is full of shops and other business stands. One of the businessmen, Alhaji Adamu who came all the way from Kano for the grand occasion as he has done in previous years, admitted to Daily Trust that he was there to make brisk business.

Daily Trust learnt that the state government has completed arrangements in the areas of security, logistics, and accommodation, as well as completed the presidential lodge in the

INNA LILLAHI WA INNA ILAIHIR RAJI'UN OUR DEAR ALHAJI



Late Amb. Muhammadu Ambursa, OON Sarkin-Yakin Kabi

Grief cannot take away the happiness we shared for years.

Our sorrow will fade in time, but our love for you remains forever.

In your quite, unassuming ways, you touched the lives of many.

So not a day has gone by that we do not recall your words and counsel.

May Almighty Allah (S.W.T.) continue to shower you with His mercy and grant you generous soul eternal rest in Al-Janna Firdausi. Ameen.

Our immense gratitude goes to all numerous friends, in-laws and relations who stood by and supported us.

Mal. Muhammad Nasir Ambursa, FCAI, MNIM
For the family

Jega title holder dies

From Kabir Dogon Daji, Reporter (Birnin-Kebbi)

The 92-year-old Sarkin Kabin Jega of Kebbi state and a one-time senator in the Second Republic, Alhaji Haruna Rasheed II, has died in his residence in Jega after a protracted illness. The death occurred on Sunday, and Alhaji was buried on Monday in Jega according to Islamic rites. He is survived by four wives, 60 children and 160 grand-children.

The Kebbi state governor, Alhaji Muhammadu Adamu Aliero, who paid the bereaved family a condolence visit, described the death as an irreparable loss and prayed Allah to grant the deceased eternal life, and the family the fortitude to bear the loss.

People from all walks of life have been trooping to Jega town to condole the family of



News

RMRDC set to boost Kilishi production

The Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) is set to improve the production of kilishi, a locally prepared dried meat delicacy. Accordingly, RMRDC is to organise a training programme and an investors forum in collaboration with the Universities of Benin and Wilberforce in the U.S. to popularise a new technology for kilishi production. A statement issued at the weekend in Abuja and made available to the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) disclosed that the forum would enable the RMRDC and the two universities to promote the adoption of the new technology and encourage the exportation of packaged kilishi.

The statement announced that a training workshop would take place on Monday, March 14 at RMRDC's audit-

orium in Abuja, while the investors' forum is scheduled for Tuesday, March 15 at the same venue. It noted that the events would feature the minister of science and technology, Prof. Turner Isoun, as the Chief Host, while the chairman of senate committee on science and technology, Prof. Iya Abubakar, would be the guest of honour.

Kilishi is a delicacy of the Hausas, which is now relished by other Nigerians and foreigners. It is made from choice cut beef and selected plant seasonings and contains no artificial flavour or colours. NAN learnt that the improved kilishi, otherwise known as 'dried processed lean beef,' contains 510 calories and 67 kg of protein per serving of 125g and is manufactured in a most hygienic environment.

Gov Daniel empowers traders with N20m

The Ogun state governor, Otunba Gbenga Daniel, has approved a sum of N20 million as micro-credit for market men and women in the state. This was disclosed by the commissioner for women affairs, social welfare and community development, chief (Mrs.) Mary Ogunjobi, during a press briefing last weekend in Abeokuta. She said that the state government also donated over N2 million as quarterly subventions for the children's home in the state capital. Mrs. Ogunjobi explained that the Ogun State Agricultural Credit Agency (OSACA) has designed soft loans for beneficiaries in the local government areas in such a way that the loans

From Kayode Ajibola, Stringer (Abeokuta)

could be paid back with ease.

Mrs. Ogunjobi disclosed that her ministry has achieved a lot in the last one and half years. She said that though the ministry was social in nature, it still generated N817,580.00 last year. The ministry's revenue target for 2005 is N1 million. She disclosed that 16 of the children at the Abandoned Babies' and Motherless Children's Home were adopted by suitable parents. According to her the home catered for 33 children, 16 of whom were adopted by suitable parents. There are currently 17 children in the home.

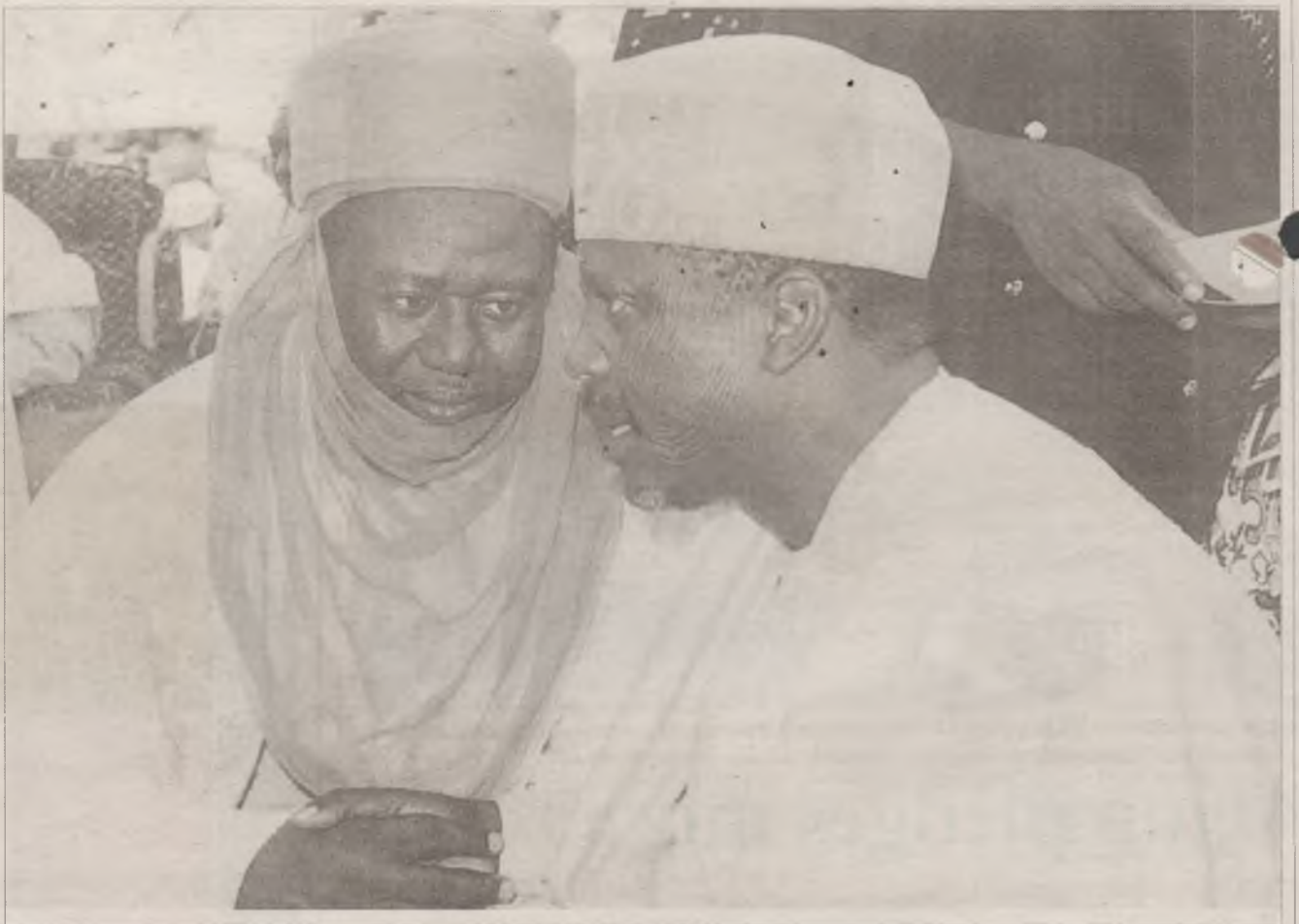
Kaduna govt braces up to fight measles, CSM

The Kaduna state government is collaborating with the



Governor Makurfi

World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and the National Programme on Immunisation to fight the current outbreak of measles and cerebro-spinal meningitis (CSM). The state commissioner for health, Mrs. Mary Dzingina, who made this known in Zaria, said that there have been sporadic cases of the two ailments in parts of the state. She however explained that such cases were expected at this period of the year. 'The



Sokoto State governor, Alhaji Attahiru Bafarawa (right) in handshake with member House of Representative, Hon. Hamisu Gambo during a function in Katsina...recently.

Obasanjo in Geneva for global digital solidarity fund

President Olusegun Obasanjo arrived in Geneva, Switzerland yesterday for the inauguration of the Global Digital Solidarity Fund (GDSF). He was received at the airport by officials of the Nigerian mission in Switzerland, the country's UN Geneva office representative, and the minister of communications, Chief Cornelius Adebayo. The inauguration ceremony of the GDSF is to be jointly chaired by the president of Senegal, Mr Abdoulaye Wade, and the GDSF president, Guy-Oliver Segond. Other dignitaries at the occasion will include the foreign ministers of the host country, Switzerland, and neighbouring France, the chairman of the AU

Commission, Alpha Omar Konare, the secretary-general of the International Telecommunications Union, Mr Yoshio Utsumi, the first lady of the Dominican Republic, and the Geneva city councillor, Mr Christian Ferrazino. The GDSF was initiated to develop telecommunications infrastructure worldwide, particularly in the third world countries of Africa and the Caribbean where the sector

is not yet fully developed. President Obasanjo, the currently chairman of AU, was specially invited to attend the inauguration and will issue a statement on the state of telecommunications in Nigeria and the continent at large.

The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) reports that President Obasanjo will proceed to London later today to participate in activities of the Commonwealth, of which he

is also the current chairman. While in London, he will receive the baton of the next Commonwealth games, meet with the secretary-general, Don Mckinnon, and also visit the Royal Commonwealth Office. He will leave London for Germany for a two-day state visit during which he will hold consultations with the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder.

President Obasanjo will return to Nigeria on Friday.

Two lawmakers apologise for unruly behaviour

Two members of the Anambra state House of Assembly who quarrelled on the floor of the House last month have apologised for their behaviour. The members, Mr Chuba Oranusi; representing Idemili South constituency, and Mr Frank Igboke; representing Njikoka constituency 11, quarrelled over the use of a microphone in the House. They separately told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) in Awka at the weekend that their misdeed,

which occurred during the passage of the state's 2005 Appropriation Bill, was most regrettable.

Mr. Oranusi told NAN that he apologised because he allowed his emotions to overpower him on that day, 'and this put a great dent on my image and integrity.' 'That definitely was a minus for the great heights which the House has attained and I realised that I was part of those who moved the House to such great heights,' he added. The legislator also

apologised to the people of Anambra state who might have been embarrassed or disappointed by his action, saying 'I have given my word to the House that I will never be involved in such an act again.'

On his part, Mr. Igboke said he apologised to the House because there was great need to ensure peace and oneness among members in order to 'thwart any attempt by opponents of the state to capitalise on the quarrel to disorganise us.'

FG saves N137bn through due process

The federal government has saved about N137 billion through the implementation of due process. The senior special assistant to President Obasanjo on budget matters, Mrs. Oby Ezekwesili, gave the figures at a three-day South/West Legislative Conference at the weekend in Akure, Ondo state. Disclosing that as much as N7 billion was saved from a

single inflated contract, she appealed to the conference organiser, the Ondo state House of Assembly, to encourage the state's executive arm to embrace due process in order to ensure the judicious use of resources.

Commenting on the consequence of corruption, Mrs. Ezekwesili said: 'Corruption is not just a domestic or global problem, but the greatest albatross

impeding our nation's development.'

In his address, the speaker of the Ondo state House of Assembly, Mr Victor Olabimtan, said that the legislature was an institution that determines the viability of a democratic government. 'To nurture our democracy, we must focus on the improvement of the quality of our services to our constituents,' he said.



NATIONAL MANPOWER BOARD

(National Planning Commission, The Presidency, Abuja).

THE STUDY OF IMPACT OF ECONOMIC REFORMS ON GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA: FOCUSING ON EMPLOYMENT

The National Manpower Board, a Federal Government parastatal is pleased to announce the conduct of the above named study.

The study is aimed at:-

- * examining the pre -and post-reform impacts on returns on investment;
- * examining the manpower structure of the privatised public enterprises before and after privatization as well as the manpower situation of those earmarked for privatisation;
- * assessing possible levels of downsizing of operation and labour in the privatized enterprises;
- * identifying key reform factors including skill requirements that must be met for better performance and enhanced productivity; and
- * assessing the impact of the reforms on Government funding of the enterprises.

The study is to cover establishments that have been fully privatized and those earmarked but not yet privatized. It will also cover GSM service providers, their selected accredited dealers and agents.

All the affected establishments are kindly requested to make available to the Board the information being requested through the enumerators that will visit them for this purpose, please.

Dr. Tom A. Miachi, mni
Acting Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer
National Manpower Board,
Plot 192, Lord Lugard Close, Off R.A.B. Dikko Road,
Off Shehu Shagari Way, Area 11,
P.M.B. 355, Garki, Abuja
Tel: 09-3142975, 3142969, 3142979



NIGERIAN EXPORT PROMOTION COUNCIL

APPROVED INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIRS/EXHIBITIONS FOR YEAR 2005

This is to inform the general public that the Federal Government has approved the participation of Nigeria in the following International Trade Fairs/Exhibitions for the year 2005 to be coordinated by the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC).

- 1) FOODEX, JAPAN (for already selected companies by JETRO) - 8th - 11 March, 2005
- 2) Contact promotion programme/Buyers-Sellers Meet - April, 2005
in Ghana, Liberia and the Gambia for Pharmaceutical products.
- 3) Solo Exhibition of Made-in-Nigeria Products Freetown ≤ - May, 2005
Sierra-Leone
- 4) Zambia International Trade Fair, Ndola, Zambia (Gen Fair) - 29th June - 5th July, 2005
- 5) Solo Exhibition of Made-in-Nigeria Products Democratic - July, 2005 .
Republic of Congo
- 6) Solo Exhibition of Made-in-Nigeria Products - August, 2005
Moscow - Russia
- 7) Solo Exhibition of Made-in-Nigeria Products - Septemeber, 2005
Barbados, Caribbean
- 8) FEBAK Bamako Mali (General Fair) - 10th - 25th December, 2005
- 9) Intemational Exhibition for Enterprises - 6th - 12th December, 2005
Yaounde, Cameroon (General Fair)

Interested participants should obtain application forms from the Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) Headquarters. Abuja or any of its Zonal Offices nationwide.

It is emphasised however that intending participants should note that Trade Fairs are not solely intended for making on-the-spot sales, but rather, they provide opportunities for product adaptation improved packing and packaging, meeting with prospective partners, generating orders etc, Consequently, only genuine and well established companies Will be considered for participation.

For further information, please contact the Director, Market Development Department at the NEPC Headquarters Tel: 09-5233387 Fax: 09-5230981, 5233387 or the Zonal Controller in any of our zonal offices shown

LAGOS 13/15 LADIPO OLUWOLE ROAD APAPA. P.M.B 2776, LAGOS TEL/FAX 01-5872335	PORT HARCOURT 8TH FLOOR FEDERAL SECRETARIAT P.M.B 5163, PORT HARCOURT TEL: 084-233826, 330620	KANO 1 ZARIA ROAD, P.M.B. 3498, KANO TEL: 064-664711	ENUGU NICON HOUSE, 2ND FLOOR 5/14 CA THEFDRAL DRIVE INDEPENDENT P.M.B 1611, ENUGU TEL: 042-457857, 455892
JOS 14 LANGTANG STREET, P.M.B. 2729 JOS TEL/FAX 073-457093, 455892	MINNA FIRST FLOOR, NIGERIA STATE, SUPPLY COMPANY COMPLEX Mali'd Mu'azu Road, P.M.B. 131, MINNA TEL: 066-221585	BENIN 5TH FLOOR, STATE SECRETARIAT BUILDING P.M.B. 1160, BENIN City Sapida Road TEL: 052 - 2551926 Edo State	AKURE ONDO STATE HOUSING CORPORATION ADO-EKITI ROAD, P.M.B. 746, AKURE ONDO STATE. TEL: 034-242249, 240236
GUSAU No. 13 Sokoto Road Opposite Janyau Hotel Gusai, Zamfara State TEL: 063- 203075, 063-203071	OWERRI State Secretariat Complex, Orlu Road, Owerri Tel: 087-654321	YOLA SIR KASHIM IBRAHIM WAY, P.M.B. 2023, JIMETA, YOLA ADAMAWA STATE, TEL: 075-62407, 075-627481	MAIDUGURI Sherifon Super Store, Bama Road, P.M.B. 1089, Tel: 076-234712, 076-230458

Members of the OPS can also contact their Associations which will be properly briefed Nigerian Export Promotion Council, Headquarters, Market Development Department, Block 312 Kumba Street, Zone 2, Wuse, Abuja.

Signed
GLADYS MODUPE. SASORE (MRS)
SPECIAL ADVISER (EP)/CEO.

Inside Politics

Marwa canvasses support for Obasanjo reform programmes

Nigerians have been urged to support President Obasanjo's economic and political reform programmes as they are aimed at repositioning the country on the path of prosperity and greatness.

Former Borno and Lagos states military administrator, Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa (rtd), who made the urge in London, also canvassed patience and understanding of President Obasanjo's policies designed to revitalise the ailing economy assuring that the full gains of the on-

going efforts will soon manifest.

Marwa, who spoke in the United Kingdom at an interactive session tagged "An evening with Dr. Buba Marwa" organised by the Europe Chapter of 'Marwa Coalition,' hailed the president for the National Economic empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) initiative, which he believes would lead the country to economic greatness.

While praising the NEEDS initiative in particular, the

former military administrator described the goals as accurate and thoughtful, stressing that their realisation would expand dividends of democracy to every nook and cranny.

"President Obasanjo is laying a solid foundation through these political and economic reforms. After a long period of decay, it will take time for changes to manifest but Nigerians will soon savour the changes," Marwa stressed further.

In his welcome remarks, Prince Adetokunbo Adejumo, who is the chairman of "Marwa 2007 Project" in the United Kingdom, described him as a gallant soldier who excelled in the acts of prudent management of human and scarce financial resources.

According to him, Marwa is eminently qualified to contest the 2007 presidential race because he is ahead of many other contenders in education, track record of performance, success in public and private life.

Ekiti lawmakers condemn attack on Gov Fayose

Lawmakers in Ekiti have condemned members of Ado-Ekiti Progressive Union (APU), the umbrella body for Ado-Ekiti indigenes for inciting members of the public against the PDP-led government in the state.

Addressing a press conference yesterday over the allegation made by the APU that Governor Fayose has completed arrangement to relocate the state secretariat from Ado-Ekiti to Afao-Ekiti, his hometown, the lawmakers described the development as misleading and capable of inciting the public against the government.

The chairman of the House of Assembly committee on information, Honourable Bunmi Olugbade, who addressed the press conference, also kicked against the statement credited to APU that Ekiti House of assembly is a tamed subsidiary of the state executive, describing it as reckless and an abuse of intellectual prowess.

The lawmakers also rejected the advise of the APU to repeal the law that directed the construction of an extension of Ekiti State government secretariat in Afao-Ekiti, saying it is not only unwelcome but equally irrelevant.

They maintained that there was no law on ground either dead or existing which states that all government structures, ministries, parastatals and departments

From Femi Oladipo,
Stringer (Ado-Ekiti)

must be erected in the state capital, saying government reserves the prerogative to site any establishment in any part of the state.

2007: Youth group supports IBB

As the National Democratic Party (NDP) announced the choice of General Ibrahim Babangida as its presidential candidate for the 2007 presidential elections, the National Youth Mobilisation Campaign (NYMC) for IBB 2007, has declared its readiness to mobilise Nigeria youths to ensure that Babangida succeeds.

Addressing newsmen in Abuja, the national co-ordinator of NYMC, Alhaji Maikudi U. Zaria explained that Nigerian youths were irrevocably committed for an IBB presidency in 2007.

Zaria, who commended NDP for choosing IBB as its presidential candidate said that NYMC would support the Minna general irrespective of party affiliation.

"Let me state here that our organisation will support IBB irrespective of the political platform he chooses to run for the presidency. Our major goal is victory for the people general.

"We have commenced talking with other youth organisations across the country on how to effectively get a powerful support for IBB. And from our talks and discussion, it is now a fact that IBB will succeed President Obasanjo in 2007," Zaria maintained.

On suggestions from some quarters that the ex-military officer be barred from participating in active politics, the NYMC boss disagreed, saying that the idea of excluding retired generals from active politics is untenable because given their contribution to our national life, the military is part and parcel of Nigeria. We cannot be simply wished away.

"The constitution is very clear on the person to be excluded in participating in the electoral process. And the retired military officers are not one of such. So far as to exclude them, we have to amend the laws of the country," explained Zaria.

Youth Forum wants Gov Abdullahi for president

The North Central Democratic Youth Forum (NCDYE) has called on Governor Abdullahi Adamu to contest for the 2007 presidential ticket to enable him render his contribution toward achieving national unity and development.

The forum spokesman, Barrister Zubairu Salihu Namama who made the call in Jos, Plateau State, described Governor Abdullahi Adamu as a sincere and respected leader who had done a lot toward ensuring real development in Nasarawa State.

According to the forum, Governor Abdullahi Adamu is the only credible person that Nigeria needed now considering his past and present records, naming Governor Abdullahi Adamu's achievements to include; setting up of a state university, state polytechnic, two health institutions, establishment of over 200 secondary schools, construction of roads, hospitals. Others are the setting up of five industries such as fertilizer blending plant, Akwanga Packaging Company, solid mineral



Member, House of Representative, Hon. Dahiru Bortnoma (third left) donating as bus to the NEPA youth development association at Yola north local government area, Adamawa State. Collecting the bus key is the local government youth leader, Mr. Abubakar aliyu during the representative's constituency tour and commissioning of projects... recently.

EXPULSION OF NGIGE

Group calls for guber polls

The national coordinator of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) youth vanguard, Mallam Yusuf Ahmed, has called for a new governorship election in Anambra State following the expulsion of Dr. Chris Ngige by the party.

When elected, the new governor, according to the group, should also conduct the local government election with the participation of all political parties.

"Above all, we want to call on the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) to take judicial notice of the expulsion of Governor Ngige and set all necessary machinery in motion for the immediate conduct of a fresh governorship election in the state where all the registered political parties including PDP should be given equal opportunity to present candidates," the group added in a statement.

The youth group however supported the decision of the National Executive Committee (NEC) of the PDP to expel Governor Chris Ngige but faulted the expulsion of Uba.

By Hammed M. Bello,
Senior Political Reporter

"We support the final expulsion of Governor Chris Ngige in particular from the party, based on the report of Governor Olagunsoye Oyinlola led panel of inquiry into the political disturbances in Anambra State which discovered that the embattled governor threw caution to the winds by entering into all manner of agreements in his desperate bid to emerge the governor not minding the

practicability or otherwise of the proposed arrangements on assumption of office.

"We however want to express reservation over the expulsion of Chief Chris Uba from the party because Dr. Ngige himself confessed that he owed his electoral victory to his wife and his godfather, Uba. We want to urge Chief Uba as a Christian to accept the decision of the party in good faith for now and see how he can appeal the decision before the appropriate party organs," declared the statement.

Youth leaders forum reaffirms support for Marwa

The National Youth Leaders Forum (NYLF) has reaffirmed its faith in the Buba Marwa presidential project in 2007 arguing that there is no better alternative to Marwa as regards the 2007 situation.

In a press statement signed by its national coordinator, Comrade Meleye Daniel Dino, the NYLF predicated its support for the candidacy of Marwa in 2007 on the fact that "Marwa is a leader with a servant spirit, he is the only trained civil administrator among the known presidential hopefuls, he is the most intellectual and educated (since education plays a vital role in the present socio-economic and technological milieu called mother earth), he has a very sound antecedent as a good administrator and manager of both human and material resources and that among all the presidential hopefuls Marwa is younger, most versatile, transparent, honest, with good sense of justice, fear of God, decisive, and a prudent manager of human

beings and resources."

According to the group, posterity will not forgive the youths if they fail to build a united, virile, strong, reliable egalitarian and just new Nigeria through the instrumentality of a Marwa presidency, adding that the youths now have the opportunity to make Nigeria great again.

The national youth leaders forum than called on Alhaji Atiku Abubakar and General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida, as true lovers of democracy and patriotic Nigerians, "to shelve their intention to run the 2007 elections and support the peoples' choice, Chief (Dr.) Buba Marwa."

The group also stressed that it would remain resolute, focused, determined and committed on its support and advocacy for a Marwa presidency in 2007 vowing that "no amount of threat, blackmail, intimidation, fear, lies and propaganda can detract our attention from pursuing this godly agenda."



Gov. Fayose

To our esteemed Readers and Advertisers

Advertorials, petitions and related materials in Weekly & Daily Trust Newspapers

Media Trust, publishers of *Weekly and Daily Trust* take very seriously, its responsibility to the public to publish all points of view, including those we do not share. We think this is the function of an independent, liberal newspaper dedicated to the pursuit of the common good. We are also conscious of the fact that it is a shortsighted business policy for a newspaper to shut out a particular point of view for its own reason or due to pressure from powerful institutions and advertisers.

But we are also aware that professional agitators can use the pages of newspapers to malign governments, companies and individuals on spurious grounds.

Caught between our desire to give voice to the concerns of the voiceless and to protect public and institutions from unfair and demoralising attacks, we have been forced to develop a more stringent policy for the placement of advertorials, petitions and other related materials in the pages of our newspapers.

The new policy is as depicted hereunder:

1. The writer(s) of such advertorials must not be anonymous but people who can stand by what they say, with their full names and addresses.
2. If there is any accusation at any person or organisation, such writer(s) must substantiate the claims with evidence, which can stand before a Court of law. For example, if they claim that a contract was inflated, they must show Media Trust, relevant documents to back this up.
3. The placement must be fully paid for, before it is carried.

4. The author(s) should be prepared to accept corrections or alterations made by us but the corrected version would be shown to the author(s), before publishing.

5. In the alternative, we are prepared to enter into an indemnity agreement with those who place such advertorial which will put the onus of proof squarely on them.

6. The publishers have the right to reject any piece considered to be libelous, containing assertion without supporting facts and figures to prove the authenticity of such claims.

7. Media trust employees that collect such materials have been instructed to contact the advert manager, who will also consult further with the relevant superior officers to analyse the piece before placement is made.

8. If the publishers of *Daily Trust/Weekly Trust* reject any materials regarded as unprintable based on the above considerations, they will not enter into any correspondence with the author(s).

Finally, we wish to assure our readers that we will not shy away from publishing fair and balanced criticisms of any government or individual, which is in the nature of free exchange of ideas.

This, we will continue to do in our free opinion columns and with advertorials where some readers feel strongly enough to pay for them. We thank you for your support and assure you that we will do our best to keep your trust.

Signed:
Management.

Sports

Inter beware Porto precedent

When FC Porto travel to Italy for the second leg of their UEFA Champions League first knockout round tie with FC Internazionale Milan, they could be forgiven for casting their minds back 12 months.

On that occasion they were playing at Manchester United FC, and despite a 2-1 lead from the first leg were expected to depart the competition, especially when Paul Scholes gave United a first-half lead. Porto did have their moments after the break, but their campaign seemed to be over until the final minute, as Tim Howard saved Benny McCarthy's free-kick and Costinha pounced.

For Porto, and their charismatic coach José Mourinho who sprinted down the Old Trafford touchline in delight, nothing was ever quite the same. The club had the previous season claimed the UEFA Cup as well as all the major Portuguese trophies, but only in defeating United did they suddenly become acknowledged as real Champions League contenders, while Mourinho was the hottest coaching property on the continent.

Porto, of course, went on to beat AS Monaco FC in the final, but the changes have continued both for club and coach. Mourinho, having been linked with several of

Europe's glamour sides, resigned to join the richest of them all - Chelsea FC - where he has already picked up the English League Cup and seems set to land the Premiership in a stunning debut campaign.

In contrast, however, Porto have found life tough, hence their status, according to most pundits, as clear outsiders in Milan. Mourinho's original replacement, Luigi Del Neri, left before taking charge of a game. Victor Fernández stepped in, and began by losing the UEFA Super Cup in August, a 2-1 defeat by Valencia CF.

Form did recover, with Porto challenging for the Portuguese title, reaching the Champions League knockout rounds with a last-gasp winner against their former coach's charges and lifting the last ever European/South American Cup in Japan. However, poor results after Christmas saw Fernández sacked last month. José Couceiro swiftly assumed charge and oversaw the 1-1 home draw with Inter, Ricardo Costa claiming the crucial equaliser.

None of those coaches has been helped by the departure of several key players from last season's squad. From the team that started at Old Trafford, Paulo Ferreira, Ricardo Carvalho,

Dimitri Alenitchev, Deco and Carlos Alberto - the latter three the goal scorers against Monaco in Gelsenkirchen - have all gone. As indeed have both second-half substitutes Edgaras Jankauskas and Ricardo Fernandes, plus Bruno Moraes, who was also on the bench. In all, eight from a selection of 16. Derlei, who was injured at the time, went too in the winter break.

In contrast, of the United starting lineup on that memorable night, only Nicky Butt and Eric Djemba-Djemba are no longer with the club. Meanwhile Inter, who were already out of the Champions League by this stage last season, have changed their coach and several players, but through deliberate rebuilding rather than the financial realities of richer clubs like Chelsea and FC Barcelona tempting their star men.

Added to all those factors, indeed, is a chilling fact for Porto that no side has ever won two consecutive Champions League titles. Not the great 1990s AC Milan team, not the 'Galácticos' of Real Madrid CF.

So, the reality that Porto face is travelling to a last-16 tie against a home team who have lost just once in Serie A this season. Not easy, to say the least. But then the situation does sound uncannily familiar.



Inter's Nigerian striker, Obafemi Martins is back in training. He is to lead Inter's attack against Porto.

English FA Cup: Man Utd avoid Arsenal

An FA Cup final between bitter rivals Arsenal and Manchester United remains a possibility after the pair were kept apart in the semi-final draw.

The Gunners were first out of the hat and were drawn

to face Mark Hughes' Blackburn Rovers.

Sir Alex Ferguson's side will take on Newcastle, who are looking to win the FA Cup for the first time in 50 years.

The semi-finals will be played on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 April at the

Millennium Stadium in Cardiff.

With Chelsea closing in on the Premiership title, both Arsenal and Manchester United will see the FA Cup as their best chance of silverware this season.

But the Old Trafford outfit must overcome the in-form Magpies, who have won seven successive matches.

Ferguson will come up against striker Alan Shearer, who they tried to sign earlier in his career and who is desperate to win a trophy with his hometown club before he retires at the end of the season.

Newcastle chairman Freddy Shepherd said he was desperate to see the Magpies avenge a defeat by Manchester United in the 1999 FA Cup final.

"It's not the draw we wanted, but it won't have been the draw Manchester United wanted either," he told the Newcastle website.

"But there's no reason why we cannot beat them. We won't be frightened.

"We owe them one for the FA Cup final defeat in 1999 - so we'll look forward to this one."

In the other semi, Arsenal faces a Blackburn side who have struggled in the Premiership this season.

But Rovers assistant boss Mark Bowen warned the Gunners not to underestimate the opposition.

"We've never felt so wanted as we have in the last 24 hours," he said.

"Everybody wanted us, but we're going to show everybody that if Arsenal take us lightly then we're well prepared and they'll come a cropper.

"We're delighted with the draw and delighted to be in the semi-final with three of the biggest clubs in Europe."

Olympic Games commission starts Moscow 2012 inspection

Moscow began a four-day courtship of Olympic inspectors on Monday, wooing them with

glitzy presentations in an uphill battle for the right to stage the 2012 Games.

The Russian capital is widely viewed as the rank outsider in the race to host the Olympics but the bid committee will use the visit by the 13 inspectors to try to shed its underdog image. Moscow is the last stop of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) evaluation commission's tour of the five shortlisted cities. Paris is the early favourite, with London, Madrid and New York the other candidates.

Bid leader Valery Shantsev, Moscow's vice mayor, will show the commission around proposed Olympic venues as well as the city's best known attractions such as Red Square.

"We would like to present to the world a new Moscow - a metropolis that carefully keeps its rich historic traditions," Shantsev said in a statement.

Many of the venues have been inherited from the city's 1980 Games, but others have yet to be built such as the 12,000-seat National Tennis Centre which is being named after former IOC chief Juan

Antonio Samaranch.

The bid committee will have to provide their Olympic visitors with answers on how to address the city's crippling traffic problem, lack of hotels and inadequate airports.

On top of this, bid representatives have said they need to rid Russia of a

Soviet-era image and overcome public prejudice associated with it.

Moscow can also count on the support of judo black-belt President Vladimir Putin, who will meet the IOC delegation at the Kremlin on Wednesday.

Ajax appoint Blind as new manager

Ajax have named former star Danny Blind as coach in succession to Ronald Koeman, who resigned after their Uefa Cup elimination against Auxerre.

Blind's appointment ends

speculation that Spurs coach Martin Jol would quit White Hart Lane and return to Holland.

Blind played more than 500 matches in 13 seasons at Ajax, ending his playing career in May 1999.

He joined Ajax's technical staff and has recently worked as head of youth development at the club.

Ajax captain Johnny Heitinga said: "He's a calm man, I had him as trainer one year in Ajax's youth program

and that's a plus."

Midfielder Wesley Sneijder is also looking forward to playing for Blind.

"Blind wasn't just a captain on his team, he was a real leader," Sneijder said. "He won just about everything there is to win with Ajax."

Egyptian council of ministers meets on ACN 2006

The Egyptian Council of Ministers met on 12 March 2006 and discussed amongst others hosting of ACN 2006 taking place in Egypt from 20 January - 10 February 2006.

The ministers present during the inter-ministerial meeting are from the Defence, Finance, Information, Planning, Military Production and representatives of sports organizations in Egypt.

The Council of Ministers spokesman, Dr. Magdi Rady, said that the government will set up an ad-hoc committee

for ACN 2006 in cooperation with CAF, according to the Egyptian French daily Progres of 13 March 2005

It was also decided to renovate the following stadia: Cairo Stadium and the Military Stadium both

located in the capital Cairo; Coast Guard Stadium in Alexandria; Port Said Stadium and the Ismaili Stadium

Tergat keeps London bid on course

Kenyan Paul Tergat delivered the perfect warm-up to his London Marathon title bid by storming to victory in the Lisbon Half Marathon on Sunday.

The marathon world record holder clocked 59 minutes, 0.9 seconds, - a performance only he has bettered over the distance.

Tergat aims to surpass his best result in London when he finished as runner-up to Khalid Khannouchi in 2002.

Compatriot Susan Chepkemei looked good for London as she won the women's race.

The Kenyan was back in action after Athletics Kenya reversed a one-year

ban it imposed on the 29-year-old runner-up for failing to turn up to a cross-country team training camp.

Chepkemei raced to victory in 68 mins 49 secs, with fellow Kenyan Margaret Okayo 30 seconds behind and Asha Gigi of Ethiopia third in 69mins 59secs.

Sports

Senior athletes protest over AFN programmes

By AbdulRabeem Aodu, Reporter (Sports)

The competition programme for 2005 athletics season recently released by the Athletics Federation of Nigeria (AFN), has met with complaints from athletes, coaches and pundits, who believed the programme does not carry along all members of the nation's athletes.

In the programme, AFN decided to organize the annual classics meets on zonal basis, rather than the former arrangement of national meets. AFN also limited the zonal classics to Under-23 athletes instead of the open competition that it used to be.

However, athletes who are above 23 years have decried the new arrangement, saying that only two competitions in a year is not good enough to prepare them for the Mobil national athletics trials and IAAF world championship billed for Helsinki, Finland, in August.

Adamu Musa, a Kaduna-based quarter miler wondered how the senior athletes are expected to survive the season. "The new programme

is good because it would encourage the young athletes, however, it would also literally kill the senior athletes because there is no adequate competition for us.

"AFN should design at least four meets for the senior athletes to allow us prepare properly for the trials and the world championship. Most of us are only training without getting to know when and which meet we would participate in. Probably they expect the senior athletes to give false ages and compete with the junior ones, maybe that is what they want," he said.

Sani Mohammed also a quarter miler, concurred with Adamu, "the programme set for the junior athletes is important as it would make them to be motivated and thus improve them but AFN has to have a rethink over the senior athletes. We would not have a good training programme because of lack of competition that will seriously jeopardize

our season, and performance in the Mobil trials. The AFN should try to organize meets for senior athletes to assist them have a good season," he said.

Richard Ogunleye, a

sprinter and African University Games (FASU) champion, also decried the situation as it is, noting that AFN should do something to provide level ground of competition between the home-based

athletes and their foreign-based counter-parts.

That is the only way, according to him, to ensure the best representation for the country in international meets and championships.



Organised local competitions produced Olympic bronze medalists Godday James (left) and Musa Audu (right).

Africa League round up

TUNISIA - A comfortable 4-0 win kept Etoile Sahel five points clear of Esperance and on course to end their arch rivals' long stranglehold on the championship.

Etoile Sahel beat struggling Etoile Ben Khalled to move on to 48 points and keep up their unbeaten record with six matches still to play.

Esperance, who fired Swiss-born coach Claude Andrey last week, won 2-0 away at Etoile Zaris with a penalty from Kamel Zaïem and another goal from Brazilian striker Marcos dos Santos.

MOROCCO - Royal Armed Forces maintained their two-point lead in the standings as the top five sides all played out goalless draws.

The army club has 40 points after their draw at Ittihad Tanger. Champions Raja Casablanca are on 38 points while Wydad Casablanca are one point further back.

EGYPT - Zamalek's winless streak in the league extended to four successive matches after a surprise 1-0 home defeat to Mansoura.

Mohamed Fawzi scored after just three minutes to leave last year's champions dropping out of contention for a place in the African Champions League.

Zamalek are fifth, six points behind second-placed ENPPI with three matches left.

ENPPI won 5-2 at home to Suez Cement and AlAhli, who clinched the title in January, maintained their unbeaten record beating Gaish 3-1.

ALGERIA - USM Alger kept up their 10-point lead with a comfortable 3-0 win over Chabab Belouizdad despite having defender Maheddine Meftah dismissed with 30 minutes to go.

Hamid Berguiga scored a hat-trick as second-placed JS Kabylie won 4-1 at home to bottom side CS Constantine.

Mouloudia Alger stayed third, a further five points back, despite losing 3-2 at home to OM Ruisseau, who moved out of the relegation zone.

COTE D'IVOIRE - Nigerian import Ishola Shaibu scored the opening goal as leaders Africa Sports beat Bouafle 2-0 to move to 10 points from four games.

Champions ASEC Abidjan, who are a point behind with a game in hand, kept up their 100 percent record with a 2-0 win over Bingerville. Ibrahima for ASEC.

CAMEROON - Champions Cotonsport made a winning start to the season with a 2-0 home win over Kadji Sports Academy.

Last year's runners-up Racing Bafoussam were held to a 1-1 draw at Fovu de Baham while promoted Foudre d'Akonolinga scored the biggest win with a 4-1 triumph over Ngaoundere University FC.

...As cheating mars zonal athletics championship

The just-concluded two-day under-23 zonal athletic championship held at the Liberty

Stadium, Ibadan for the six states in the South-West geo-political zone threw up a lot of issues, chief among which was the correct ages of participants.

As the maiden Athletic Federation of Nigeria (NAN) competition of the 2005 athletic season, the meet was significant since it served as a good testing ground for the federation's new rules restricting participation in its zonal meets to under-23 athletes.

In all, athletes and officials from Lagos, Oyo, Ondo, Ogun, Osun and Ekiti states, which make up the South west zone, were invited to compete at the Ibadan meet from March 11 to March 12.

The federation had warned that only athletes from the concerned six states would be allowed to compete rather curiously, Edo, which is supposed to be in the South-South geo-political zone showed up in Ibadan with 10 athletes.

Brown Ebeweke, Edo Director of Sports, who led the team argued that his state was grooming some of its elite athletes for the World Championships in Athletics scheduled for Helsinki, Finland between August 5 to August 14.

"We are not just looking at the zonal meets, but we are here to expose some of our elite athletes who are training for the World competition."

After some bickering, it was agreed that the Edo athletes would run a 'B' competition, should there be enough athletes to enable the AFN hold such a side competition for them in their events, while competitors from the South-West states would run the 'A' competition. Ebeweke and the athletes found that agreeable.

The screening exercise took up an entire six-and-a-half hours on the opening day. Alhaji

Abdul-Karim Amu, Chairman, Technical Committee of AFN, who supervised the exercise attributed the delay to some athletes and officials who were bent on cheating.

"We had told them earlier that we will only accept birth certificates as authentic evidence of an athlete's date of birth, but some tried to show us International Passports and sworn declarations."

In all, 44 athletes were disqualified from competing at the meet, while 174 others eventually got a clean bill.

Track and Field Athletes Association of Nigeria (TAFANN) President, Clifford Enomayo puts the age-cheating problem at the doorstep of the athletic coaches.

"They know the actual ages of their athletes, but because they want to continue encouraging their athletes to keep competing in under-age competitions, they deliberately assist them to falsify their ages."

Track and Field Coaches Association of Nigeria (TRACAN) President, Solomon Aban agrees, but blames such sharp practices on the few meets in the country.

"I agree that some coaches may indeed be at fault, but if the sports ministry and AFN are able to organise enough competitions, these athletes won't have cause to try to do things under the table to be able to keep competing."

Abari, however, added that his association was in the process

of drawing up a code for its members. "For now, we have also tried to sanction members whenever we identify them. That is even one of the reasons for my presence at the Ibadan meet. We are working seriously to reverse the trend."

The exercise clearly highlighted disparities between the passport age and the birth certificate age of an athlete.

"While an athlete's age on his international passport is usually 'doctored', the birth certificate age is not because it was issued at birth, when there was no cause to cheat," according to an up-coming international athlete.

After six-and-a-half hours of anxious waiting for some athletes and officials, which caused the re-scheduling of the Doping

Control Seminar to the next day, Amu said he was satisfied with the outcome of the exercise.

"We are trying to set a standard for other zonal meets and if we are unable to stamp our foot here, we may not be able to get it right in other zones."

AFN officials, however, would have to fine-tune their tactics as they may meet new cheating designs in each of the other up-coming five zonal meets.

"The federation needs to get ahead of the age-cheats, otherwise they will soon evolve new designs to beat the screening methods," a State Amateur Athletic Association official noted.

Benue-Taraba Unity Cup ends in Ukum

From Hir Joseph, Correspondent (Makurdi)

The 30-day inter-state unity competition between the six border local councils of Benue and Taraba states came to an end at the weekend in Zaki-Biam, Benue state.

Wukari council won the Honourable Terngu Iyorkyaa trophy after its team, Wukari United Football Club beat its counterpart at the finals, Takum United 2-0 in a penalty shootout.

The maiden competition, which was sponsored by Hon. Terngu Iyorkyaa, the Ukum local government

from the six border councils of the two states, namely Zaki-Biam United, Mbatere United, Wukari Old Stars, Wukari United and Mata-Fada United.

Others are Takum United FC, Ibi United FC, and the Morning FC of Ibi.

The final, which was graced by chairmen of the six local councils was chaired by Vice President Atiku Abubakar's special assistant on special duties, Hon. Shima Ayati, who

took the opening kick. Declaring the competition closed till next year when it would be held in Takum township stadium, Hon. Ayati commended Hon. Iyorkyaa for the initiative, saying it was a laudable project aimed at furthering the pet project he (Shima) initiated at building bridges of peace and unity

among the border people of the two states.

"I will also support any initiative that would further the bringing together of the peoples of Benue and Taraba states. If the predecessors of the present chairmen had the vision to create such innovations, the sundry crisis that bedeviled the borders of these two states would have been avoided," said Hon. Ayati, who recalled that his personal efforts at re-uniting the

people brought positive result. He advised other chairmen of the six councils to emulate the gesture while urging Hon. Iyorkyaa to sustain the initiative with the view of improving on the organization.

The donor of the trophy, Hon. Iyorkyaa had appreciated the participating local government councils and said they had collectively made history for accepting to be part of the unity course.

Uwua lauds Sardauna Memorial Stadium

Sweat merchant of Insurance Football Club of Benin, Godwin Uwua, has said he was impressed with facilities he saw at the newly renovated Sardauna Memorial Stadium, Gusau, Zamfara State.

Speaking with sports journalists in Gusau immediately after his team forced the newly promoted Premier League side Zamfara United to a barren draw, Uwua remarked "when I came into

the arena, I asked myself whether this was the same place I came with Under-23 Eagles two years ago."

"Then I saw my coming to Gusau as a punishment. But looking at the whole place, the structures, facilities and the pitch, I am highly impressed with the commitment of the state government and sports officials," he added.

On the standard of play, the former chief coach of Lobi Stars maintained that it was a good

match, saying, "both teams showed a lot of character."

"You see, like Zamfara United, our team is also young. I believe when both teams play more matches, they would understand them-selves and blend."

According to Uwua, the officiating was equally good, pointing, "the centre referee, did a marvelous job."

"I just hope these referees will keep up the good job they have started."

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TUESDAY COLUMN

Tuesday, March 15, 2005

EDITORIAL

Why is ICPC so quiet?

Not a few Nigerians are worried about the unusual quietness and seeming aloofness of the five-year-old Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), at this moment in time when it should more than ever before be challenged to redouble its efforts in cleansing the society of corruption. The question in everybody's lip is: What has gone wrong with the commission and taken the spark off the agency when younger institution like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) is making giant strides and justifying its establishment? Is the Commission's problem a matter of legal weakness or lack of strong will on the part of its leadership? Is it suffering from the self-inflicted problem arising from partisan indulgence? These and more are the questions Nigerians are asking.

The enactment of the Anti-Corruption law in 2000 was welcomed with fanfare as it was considered a turning point in our commitment to give the nation a new lease of life in all the major aspects of our lives, individually, collectively, economically, politically and socially. This is because corruption has disabled our economy and caused decay and dereliction within the infrastructure of government and the society. The establishment of the ICPC was therefore seen as a new spirit of national rebirth.

The law establishing ICPC was described as the toughest anti-corruption law in the history of our nation. And while giving assent to the bill, Mr. President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, remarked that "No Nigerian, from the President to the lowest peasant, is exempted from being investigated under this Law to a large extent, if faithfully implemented; this Act ought to substantially clean our society of the menace and evil of corruption".

It is therefore obvious that the seeming impotency of the ICPC is not due to lack of teeth to bite. As a matter of fact, it started on a good stead. But after a few battles in the court, the Commission has now settled down to a quieter routine and seems to have relapsed into quiescence. Unlike the ICPC, the newest kid, the EFCC, rages on in an unrelenting war in a sustaining momentum against the high and the mighty crooks without minding whose ox is gored. Consistent with its mandate, it is dealing with advanced fee fraudsters, investigating Governors and demystifying otherwise sacred cows that run foul of the law.

The undoings of the ICPC are indeed manifold. Through its activities between 2000 and 2003, the ICPC established for itself, a bad reputation as a willing tool of political vendetta against political foes of the Presidency. Cut in the web of partisan indulgence, the institution lost the confidence of the generality of Nigerians and thereby suffer legitimacy crisis. Because of its lost of virtue, the last National Assembly was tinkering with the idea of repealing the Act establishing the Commission.

Despite the clear pronouncement of Mr. President that nobody is immuned to ICPC investigation, a pronouncement that forms the spirit of the law, the Commission has been shying away from investigating top public officers. The excuse being that it would need a clause in the anti-corruption law, making it explicit that it has power to investigate persons constitutionally sheltered by the immunity clause. It needs no further emphasis that in the light of the Supreme Court judgment in the case of *Chief Gani Fawehinmi V Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu*, the insertion of such a clause, now being considered by the House of Representatives, is superfluous. In the said Tinubu's case, the Court made crystal clear that notwithstanding the protection granted certain persons under section 308 of the 1999 Constitution (Immunity clause), such constitutionally protected persons can still be investigated but may not be prosecuted. What this means in effect is that it is not the weakness of the law that is hindering the operations of the ICPC.

Additionally, in spite of explicit provision of Section 6 of the Anti-corruption Act, which empowers the Commission to investigate any case where reasonable ground exists for suspecting that any person has conspired to commit or has attempted to commit or has committed an offence of corruption, the Commission often waits for petition from the public before commencing investigation against any incidence of corruption. The implication of its posture is that even if it knows of a case of corruption, it may have to look at the other side so long as a petition has not come from any member of the public.

From all intents and purposes, there is nothing wrong with the statute setting up the Anti-corruption Commission but the absence of will, power and strength of character on the part of the leadership of the Commission. Time calls on the ICPC to wake up from its slumber. The organ may be weak but the need for it remains more compelling than ever before. And from the unfortunate face of the ICPC and how it lost its awesome aura, the EFCC must draw a useful lesson, to wit, that when any organ of a judicial character dabbles into a partisan arena, it thereby ask that mud be thrown at its gate and that its very throne of justice to be painted with mire.

Tafa Balogun: Politics of corruption

By Ujudud Shariff
(ujushariff@yahoo.com)

The sudden and ignominious retirement of Alhaji Mustafa Balogun as Nigeria's Inspector General of Police a couple of weeks ago must have come as a rude shock to not only himself but also to several Nigerians. His loyalty to his boss was total and never in doubt. His performance in the 2003 was by any yardstick outstanding as he meritoriously "delivered" virtually all the major constituencies. Stories abound on how police chased away voters on Election Day especially in the South-South and the South-east. In fact, there was even this television report that showed police in uniform busy stamping the ballot papers to ensure the victory of the ruling party and in obedience to their over-all boss. In a nutshell, I have no doubt in my mind that when the history of the role of the police in the rigging of the 2003 elections comes to be fully written, the name of Tafa Balogun would be written in gold defending on how you look at that history or the political party you belong.

As a student of history, I was not personally surprised in the manner he was dismissed. I have always known that he was going to be dispensed with as soon as his services were no longer required. Also with the rising wave of crimes all over the country and the number of unsolved murders and assassinations of prominent politicians, I knew his days were numbered. I even recall calling for his resignation or dismissal in this very page when all the indicators showed that his loyalty to his superiors was seriously injuring national security. What is however a little surprising for me were the reasons for his dismissal. I therefore must doff my cap for President Obasanjo for wielding the big stick against Tafa Balogun on his anti-corruption crusade. And if on account of corruption he would treat Balogun this way, I am sure he would treat any of his children, Iyabo or Gbenga in the same way in similar circumstances. So, cynics beware!

I am also not so worried with all the fairy tales about his incredible wealth stashed away in several banks running according to some accounts to over three billion Naira in several places reported in the press. Luckily for me, I have been long baptized on the incredible greed of Nigerians and their capacity to steal money that they actually do not need. Remember the Abacha Family and their treasure in Swiss Banks or most recently Governor Joshua Dariye from just Barclays Bank account in London? So when the papers went agog with the story of his bank's balance from the Fortune Bank and the seven or so companies he was trading with, my interest suddenly shifted to why would Balogun be dismissed? My mind simply went back to a publication by the NEWS magazine last year in which they not only accused him for corruption but also provided graphic details on the location of some of his assets. In that story, what really frightened me was the story about his "Jeeps Farm" somewhere in Lagos. In this farm, it appeared to the reporters that either Jeep cars were assembled there or simply "grown" because of their sheer numbers and other exotic vehicles. But what happened after this publication? To my knowledge the government did not order for any investigation to verify the authenticity of the allegations. Even after the magazine insisted on the veracity of the stories, our uncle Balogun out of the milk of human kindness that flows through his heart, simply "forgave" the magazine rather than take them to court for libel and defamation of his long and hard earned reputation. A few weeks after, the man went on the offensive to refurbish his battered public image. Since then, he never stopped and his hand never dried. Colleagues in Lagos and other places told me



Tafa Balogun, former IGP

that the man was just like Father Christmas in the realm of generosity oiling the machinery of his public relations train. Some were even-surprised that how our names and newspapers were missing even from this last Sallah largess where rams and cows were given out in the spirit of the season. While I congratulate the president for this singular feat, the EFCC for catching a big fish, am not sure whether to congratulate or commiserate with Nuhu Ribadu, the EFCC boss. For EFCC, it met the challenge thrown at it by Senator Francis Nzeribe when on a visit to the commission last year, accused the EFCC of only arresting small timers but not the "big fishes". As if by the act of providence, just a couple of weeks after this challenge, EFCC came with a storm to announce its findings of incredible sums of money and money laundering

allegations against Governor Dariye. And a few weeks later, the EFCC was again informing the bewildered nation what it found in Fortune Bank belonging to the Inspector General of Police. As investigation continues in this bank and other banks having similar Balogun's companies as customers, it is safe to assume the end of an eventful police career for Balogun. As for Ribadu, one can just also assume the moral conflict in his mind between loyalty to his job in EFCC and loyalty to his police boss, Tafa Balogun. Not many people in this world are destined to investigate and even sometimes prosecute their bosses

in line of their duties. Ribadu is today one such man in which the world would be keenly watching at which side the clock would swing. Secondly, he has just succeeded in having additional enemies to his long list of many enemies both within and outside government. Just a few days ago, there was this rumour of how a very senior journalist now on government side went to Lagos and gathered some editors and chided them for giving publicity to the fall of a fellow "Yoruba man". My senior colleague in the profession was really mad with the editors that they could not see the whole tragedy as emanating from the Caliphate in order to have a northerner become the Inspector General of Police! The meeting I was told came to a sudden end when one of the editors asked whether Balogun "stole" on behalf of the Yoruba and if so where would he collect his own share? This is Nigeria for you dear reader! There were also newspaper reports about how some Obas are interceding on behalf of Balogun so as to escape being prosecuted. I learnt that some of the royal fathers would want the presidency to give Balogun the "Abacha Treatment" where the Federal Government can take say 70 percent of the loot and leave him with 30 per cent in view of his meritorious service to the fatherland! The Oba of Lagos recently confirmed this move by the royal fathers to get one of their sons off the hook of justice.

Thus, while the nation is waiting to see Balogun brought in handcuffs to the court, there are subterranean moves to avert the course of justice. This is where one cannot understand

hard on the corrupt, they tend to have double standards. Suddenly, politics has cropped up into a purely criminal issue. Suddenly the Yorubas do not want a fellow Yoruba punished for his indiscretion. Every other person should be punished but not one of their own. If everybody would want to protect his own, when should we ever eradicate corruption in our country? Our advice to the president is to ignore these enemies of progress and ensure fairness to all Nigerians. What is good for Dariye should be good for Balogun. Ribadu should also adhere to his sworn pledge not to discriminate between Nigerians and ensure that "no one is above the law".