

Nigeria set to make history with all-female ship crew

Nigeria is set to create an enviable shipping record as the first nation to have an all-female ship crew onboard a commercial vessel in 2025.

LTT Coastal and Marine Services and its sister company Depasa Marine, which have over 30 female seafarers, disclosed

plans to attain an all-female ship crew in Nigeria is one of its goals for 2025.

MARAN News recalls that following its high-level employment of female seafarers, LTT Coastal and Marine Services and its sister company Depasa Marine were recently awarded Nigeria's

Maritime Gender Sensitive Company of the year 2024.

This award was presented at a one-day maritime seminar organized by African Women in Maritime (WIMA) Nigeria for shipping stakeholders in Lagos.

At the event themed; "Blue Economy and Professional Capacity Building for the Next

Generation" the President of WIMA Nigeria, Mrs. Rollens Macfoy, described LTT and Depasa as a symbol of triumph and an epitome of success in promoting women involved in seafaring.

While receiving the award,

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The Conscience of Nigeria's Maritime Industry January/February, 2025

Agenda 2025: Maritime eggheads outline topmost industry goals



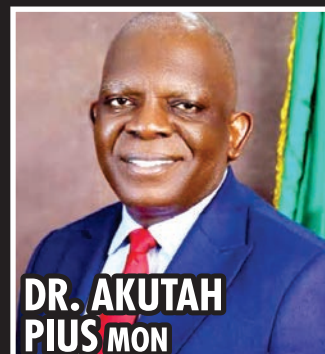
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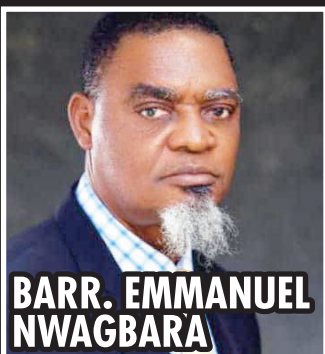
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MR. EMMANUEL MAIGUWA



MR. SONNY EJA

"Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results,"

- Rita Mae Brown

The apt saying above is credited to Civil rights campaigner and feminist writer Rita Mae Brown. While the idea of a link between repetition and insanity can be traced back to the 19th century especially when one anticipates a different outcome, this phrase became famous after Rita Mae Brown published it in her 1983 book 'Sudden Death'.

Although 2024 posed numerous challenges to the nation's maritime industry, there is an optimism that the year 2025 brings many hopes, aspirations and prospects for better success and notable

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Adeniyi chronicles Customs growth trajectory after N6.1trn milestone in 2024 —Pg 12



A well-deserved honour!



Dear Comptroller-General
of Customs,

CGC Bashir Adewale Adeniyi
MFR, as you receive this special
award as

**'Iconic Maritime Personality of
the year 2024'**

Five Star Logistics Terminal
celebrates this worthy accolade.

Your reign as Customs boss has
brought an unprecedented level
of collaboration and efficiency at
seaports with Customs playing a
key role.

Keep up the good work!

Signed:
Management,
Five Star Logistics.

BASHIR ADEWALE ADENIYI
C-G, NIGERIA CUSTOMS SERVICE



**At Five Star Logistics Terminal, we offer
maritime and logistics solutions for in-bound and out-bound
traffic for RoRo and general cargoes.**



MARINE AND BLUE ECONOMY: Much ado about absentee national policy

Barely midway into the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, the draft policy for the novel Marine and Blue Economy Ministry, has continued to gather dust at the Abuja headquarters of the Ministry.

The Ministry was set up as an offshoot of the erstwhile Ministry of Transportation to pilot and reposition the affairs of the nation's vast maritime industry in line with global best practices.

Sadly, the national policy which was aimed at driving the ministry and the entire industry remains at its draft level, while the industry continues to operate under the unenviable status of "business as usual", to the scorn and mockery of the international community which perceives Nigeria as the hub of maritime activities in the sub-region.

It took the outcry and intervention of notable non-state industry players to prevail on government, leading to a 2-day stakeholders' engagements which were held in Abuja and Lagos in November last year, ostensibly to appraise the National Policy.

It can only be hoped that the rather belated stakeholders' "hush-hush" engagements do not end up as an orchestrated gimmick to pacify public yearnings.

While the new Ministry continues to grope in the dark without a clear direction or roadmap, industry pundits have maintained that the expected policy may not have been intended to be operational under the current administration, given the rather cumbersome legislative and judicial processes the Draft is expected to pass through before it becomes operational.

Consequently, the nation's maritime sector has remained in its sorry state, riddled in the same unpopular actions, same degree of negligence and operational inefficiencies albeit with the mere change of its

nomenclature to "Marine and Blue Economy".

A peep into the framework and content of the Draft Policy has gladly revealed that the Nigerian maritime industry can indeed be great as it will address all the perceived and real setbacks that have stagnated the growth of the sector.

The policy, if implemented, will provide the necessary impetus for the successful establishment of a national shipping line as a major prerequisite to frog leap the industry back to its pride of place.

Unarguably, the policy has provided the pathways for the government's requirements in addressing certain imperatives to ensure its success, sustainability, and relevance in the comity of global maritime nations.

Sadly, the slumbering National Maritime Policy is tailored to provide a comprehensive guide for the operations of an established shipping line as well as ensuring its alignment with international maritime standards.

The policy also provided the necessary legislative backing by way of enacting laws to protect the national shipping line from undue competition and establishing its mandate, ownership structure, and funding mechanisms.

Asides from providing incentives and subsidies to the industry operators by way of granting tax holidays, subsidies, and access to government cargo to help the shipping line compete effectively, Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) regime will be encouraged with private investors and maritime stakeholders collaborating to share risks, reduce the burden on government finances, and enhance operational efficiency.

In the area of equity investment, private sector ownership will certainly be encouraged to foster transparency, accountability, and profitability. It is by so doing that sustainable financing and capital mobilization can be introduced to secure funding through government budgets, international loans, grants, and private equity to acquire and maintain a modern fleet.

With this, a viable system of transparent management of funds and proper use of resources to avoid corruption and financial mismanagement will govern the industry, away from its current state of unbridled mismanagement and corrupt practices.

Capacity building and human capital development is another major area of benefit the maritime industry stands to witness if the sleeping Draft Policy is urgently taken up and transmuted to reality as more of trained Nigerian seafarers, maritime engineers, and logisticians who daily pound the streets in search of elusive jobs will be gainfully employed to staff and operate the emergence of a viable shipping line.

Maritime institutions like the Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN) also stand to benefit from the implementation of a workable maritime policy by way of providing quality education and certifications aligned with international standards.

Allied to the above, strategic partnerships and alliances by way of international collaboration to forge partnerships with global shipping companies and alliances to gain access to trade routes, logistics expertise, and technical know-how are other benefits waiting to be tapped if the draft becomes real and operational.

To this end, the body of Maritime Reporters' Association of Nigeria (MARAN) calls on the Presidency to urgently deploy whatever is required to dust off the Marine and Blue Economy Draft Policy out of its current state of seeming abandonment and let it become effective as intended.

We strongly believe that a workable policy such as the draft portends, will promote regional cooperation and leverage Nigeria's position in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the African Union to dominate regional shipping and drive trade under the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement.

We cannot take our eyes off other notable benefits that will accrue in implementing the policy which includes; infrastructure development and ports modernization to handle large vessels efficiently, reduce turnaround times, and eliminate bottlenecks, ships building and repairs as well as the establishment and expansion of shipyards and dry docks to reduce dependence on foreign facilities for maintenance and repairs.

These derivable benefits and many more must not continue to elude Nigeria, hence it is important that there should not be further delays in continuing with the last November dual stakeholders' engagements towards rolling out the policy.

Nigeria must wake up to the reality of the fact that the country needs to be strategically focused on the ways and means of evolving a policy that mandates the use of the national shipping line for government cargo, crude oil exports, and imports.

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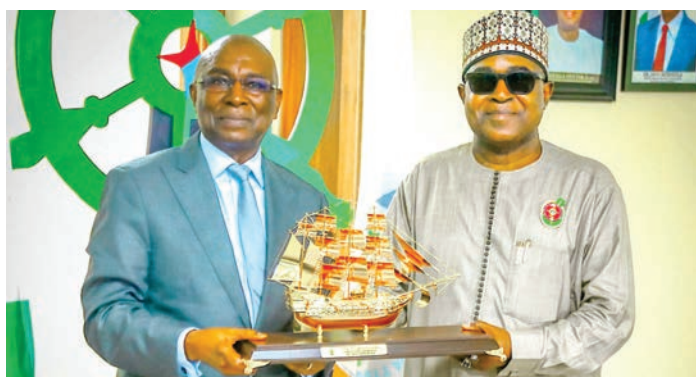
Drug Smuggling: Deep Blue Project to boost surveillance at seaports

Operations of the Deep Blue Project, a comprehensive maritime security architecture for Nigeria, will be expanded to enhance surveillance and other security measures to curb drugs smuggling via Nigerian seaports.

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) affirmed its commitment to supporting the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) with the Deep Blue Project when the NDLEA Chairman, Brig. Gen. Bubar Marwa (Rtd) paid a courtesy visit to NIMASA headquarters recently.

Deep Blue Project is a joint initiative of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy and the Federal Ministry of Defence, domiciled in NIMASA with contributions from various security agencies, including the Nigerian Navy, Nigerian Air Force, Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Police, and the Department of State Services.

Speaking during the visit, the Director General of NIMASA, Dr. Dayo Mobereola, commended the NDLEA for its remarkable



L-R: The Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, NIMASA, Dr. Dayo Mobereola presenting a souvenir to the Chairman/Chief Executive, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency, NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Buba Marwa (Rtd.), CON, OFR during a recent courtesy visit by the Chief Executive and Management of the NDLEA to the NIMASA Towers in Victoria Island, Lagos.

achievements in combating drug-related crimes across Nigeria, pledging that NIMASA would integrate NDLEA personnel into the existing maritime security architecture, particularly the Deep Blue Project.

Dr. Mobereola's words: "We are glad to welcome the NDLEA team, led by Brig. Gen. Marwa, whose exemplary leadership has brought significant progress in the fight against illicit drugs. NIMASA is firmly committed to partnering with

the NDLEA to tackle the menace of drug trafficking, particularly through our nation's Ports and Terminals. Together, we can ensure that the Nigerian maritime domain is not exploited for criminal activities."

In response, Brig. Gen. Marwa expressed his gratitude for the warm reception and emphasized the need for collaboration to address the rising threat of drug trafficking through maritime channels.

"As the agency responsible for controlling drug abuse and trafficking in Nigeria, we recognize that this task requires collaboration with critical stakeholders like NIMASA. The global maritime space has increasingly become a conduit for the illegal movement of drugs, and we are keen to work with NIMASA to address this challenge," he said.

Highlighting recent developments, Brig. Gen. Marwa noted that recent seizures of illicit drugs transported through Lagos ports underscore the need for joint efforts to secure our ports.

"Within the NDLEA, we have established a Marine Command to focus on this emerging threat. We propose close collaboration between this unit and NIMASA, particularly through the Deep Blue Project, to enhance the protection of Nigeria's maritime space," he said.

The NDLEA Chairman also pledged the agency's support in sensitizing NIMASA staff and cadets under the Nigerian Seafarers Development Program (NSDP) on the dangers of drug abuse.

NAGAFF Tincan Chapter salutes Customs CG

National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) Tincan Island Chapter congratulates the **Comptroller General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR** on his award as an 'Iconic Maritime Personality of the year 2024'

Adeniyi is an amazing personality who truly deserves this honour and more.

We equally welcome our beloved new Customs Area Controller at Tincan Island Port, Comptroller Frank Onyeka.

Signed:

Dr. Emeka Paul Chiedozie
Chairman NAGAFF Tincan Chapter
MD Seagold Maritime Services



Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR
C-G, Nigeria Customs Service

National Single Window: NPCC recommends periodic audits, KPIs for seamless operations

As part of efforts to ensure the National Single Window (NSW) project delivers the much-desired efficiency at the nation's seaports, the Nigerian Ports Consultative Council (NPCC) has recommended periodic audits and outlined key performance indicators (KPIs).

The NPCC also proposed a workable spectrum of processes with specific solutions capable of driving the NSW by leveraging data and maintaining a strong feedback mechanism.

NPCC gave its proposition during a just-concluded NSW summit convened by the Hon. Minister for Marine and Blue economy, Adegboyega Oyetola in Lagos.

The NPCC team led by its chairman, Mr. Bolaji Sunmola, and the vice chairperson, Mrs. Jean Chiazor Anishere, SAN, said that the assurance of achieving set objectives and goals of the NSW should be premised on evaluable factors.

Some of these factors, according to the NPCC team, include "Developing key performance indicators (KPIs), such as clearance time, transaction costs, and volume of processed cargo, to assess system impact. Conducting periodic audit to evaluate the system's compliance with international standards and its alignment with the goals of transparency and efficiency."

Nigeria set to make history with all-female ship crew

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the Group Human Resources Manager, LTT Coastal and Marine Services Limited, Mrs. Theodora Nwaeze, said the company has more than 30 female seafarers onboard its vessels.

Her words: "We are really excited and honoured to have been given this award. At LTT Marine, we have West Africa's first female Captain of an Azimuthing Stern Drive (ASD) tug, which is a type of tugboat with two thrusters under the stern.

"Our passion is to see that we crew one of vessels with all female seafarers. We are hopeful that we can achieve a female



L-R: Chairman, Nigerian Ports Consultative Council (NPCC), Mr. Bolaji Sunmola; Registrar, Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (CRFFN), Mr. Kingsley Igwe; NPCC Vice Chairperson, Mrs. Jean Chiazor Anishere, SAN, and the Head, NPCC Research and Training Committee, Prof. Bamidele Badejo; at the recent National Single Window (NSW) summit in Lagos.

It is also sought the establishment of communication channels for stakeholders to provide feedback on system performance and report challenges or inefficiencies.

A great deal of the foundation for a workable single window system would involve "Using data from the monitoring mechanisms to identify areas for improvement and upgrade the system as needed. Partnering with

independent third-party organizations to conduct objective evaluations of the system's impact," the NPCC submitted.

The NPCC team also proposed the importance and need for stakeholders involvement in the planning and implementation of projects to address their concerns, just as it would be important to clearly communicate the benefits of the system to the stakeholders and giving them a sense of inclusion. This should cover issues on costs, time-savings as well as improved competitiveness, ensuring data protection measures.

Other very important positions proposed by the NPCC team regarding competitiveness of the Nigerian Ports are the need for streamlining processes by reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks. This, they said, is achievable by integrating all port-related procedures and documentation into a single platform, to reduce clearance time.

Badagry Chambers boss thumbs up MARAN, canvasses objective reporting

President of the Badagry Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines & Agriculture, Retired Deputy Comptroller of Customs, DC Yahaya Idris, has hailed the consistency of the Maritime Reporters Association of Nigeria (MARAN) in objective reporting of the Maritime

Industry.

Idris who had an interactive session with the executive members of the association over the weekend during the it's retreat, said "MARAN is doing a marvellous job criticising constructively."

According to him, everybody knows where MARAN belongs and appreciates the job it is doing.

The Retired Deputy Comptroller described MARAN as a force to reckon with.

He urged its members to toe the path of 'just' reporting and avoid fake news which he said could drag the association back.

His words: "I won't talk from the angle of maybe anybody should favour you. I won't say Customs should do this for you, Immigration should do this for you. Your work is there.

"MARAN has been doing a marvellous job criticising constructively. So everybody will know where you belong. I know so many people are appreciating your job.

"So what I will want you to do

is to continue consistently on what you are doing. Like you have been doing, continue with it.

"Nobody needs to do this or that for you. You have already established yourself as a force to be reckoned with. Report just; when you (any of your members) write fake news against somebody and it is known you're dragging the association back."

On his part, the President of MARAN, Mr. Godfrey Bivbere, thanked God for His grace that brought through in all its activities of 2024.

In this 2025, he stressed that MARAN will be deliberate in all its activities of the year, stating that a lot lie ahead of the Association.

Bivbere with a loaded plan for the foremost maritime media beat association, reiterated that he is committed to repositioning MARAN with a view to take it to heights it had never attained in the past.

He sought the united support of the executives and all members to make this dream a reality.

Agenda 2025: Maritime eggheads outline topmost industry goals

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accomplishments at seaports, seafaring, indigenous shipping, inland waterways, as well as ancillary shipping services and other subsets of the blue economy.

Nonetheless, a positive shift in the anticipated industry goals would require some thoughtful changes in the mode of operations, improved soft and hard infrastructure and a shared commitment to attain the much-desired efficiency and growth in the maritime sector.

The cost of food and essential drugs remained a significant concern for many Nigerian households in 2024. In his new year speech on January 1st, 2025, President Bola Tinubu, stressed that the government is committed to intensifying efforts to lower these costs by boosting food production and promoting local manufacturing of essential drugs and other medical supplies. The President also disclosed an ambition to reduce inflation from its current high of 34.6% to 15%. Achieving these lofty national economic targets will require an equitably managed maritime sector.

In a bid to ensure the nation doesn't find itself stuck in an unpleasant cycle of repetition while expecting favourable results via the maritime sector, MARAN News engaged various categories of industry veterans who outlined some topmost goals for the blue economy and proffered a pragmatic approach to attaining them.

Nigerian Shipowners' Perspective

Sharing the views of Nigerian shipowners, the President of Ship Owners Association of Nigeria (SOAN), Mr. Sonny Eja, advised the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy and the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to learn from the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) for the disbursement of Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF).

Eja noted that under the leadership of the former Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Simbi Wabote, the Board was able to disburse the NCI fund with

an initial \$200 million and a subsequent \$150 million to operators, therefore he urged NIMASA to set clear guidelines and criteria for stakeholders to access the fund.

According to him, there are many benefits to be derived from the disbursement of CVFF loan as it will instigate growth in the sector and generate a lot of

When one wants to assess his or her situation to plan a new phase of development or know what plans to put in place, the starting point is the data to analyse the current situation

employment.

"In 2025, as a ship owner, one goal I want achieved in the sector is CVFF disbursement but for that to happen there should be clear guidelines and criteria for accessing this fund. That's what NCDMB did in partnership with the Bank of Industry (BoI). Companies that are qualified to access this fund should be able to get the money to finance their vessels. It will be a great deal for ship owners and other industry players if CVFF gets disbursed.

"There are also other things that could be done with this fund. We have several shipyards in this country, so CVFF can be channeled towards standardizing and bringing the shipyards to best standards. Today, if we have to drydock our vessels we have to go abroad despite having shipyards in-country. I believe that there are Nigerians that have a certain level of experience in terms of shipyards and shipbuilding where these funds can be channeled to standardizing the shipyards."

The SOAN President also stressed the need for more

engagements and collaborations with the major stakeholders in the likes of the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, NPA, NNPC, NIMASA, among others for the overall benefits of the nation.

Eja also underlined the need to revisit the ship registry at NIMASA with emphasis on automated processes that enhances transparency and ease of doing business as well as service-driven costs.

Port Economic Regulator

Speaking from the perspective of the nation's port economic regulator, the Executive Secretary of Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Barr. Pius Akutah MON, described the progress made with the Nigeria Shipping and Port Economic Regulatory Agency Bill, which has scaled through the House of Representatives and the Senate, as one of the biggest accomplishments in 2024.

Akutah, while speaking at the NSC management retreat in January 2025, the NSC boss expressed optimism that the bill, in few weeks, will get Presidential assent and speedily transform the nation's ports even as it avails the Council requisite legal backing to address modern issues.

The proposed bill, which is under review, is set to revolutionize Nigeria's maritime sector by reducing operational costs, attracting investments, and enhancing regulatory efficiency.

His words: "As the port economic regulator, one of our major concerns is that industry investments must yield profits and for that to happen, there has to be appropriate infrastructure. The infrastructure must be better to help the nation emerge as a shipping and logistics hub."

The NSC boss maintained that the emergence of AfCFTA and its huge market means that the country must improve its shipping services in practice and infrastructure. He remarked that maritime logistics remains a major challenge in regional trade.

AMANO / MASPAN Expectations

The President of Maritime Security Providers Association of Nigeria (MASPAN), Mr. Emmanuel Maiguwa, who also doubles as the President of the Alumni of

Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron (AMANO) shared 2025 expectations for both groups.

Maiguwa emphasised the need for data for various aspects of the maritime sector, stating that "when one wants to assess his or her situation to plan a new phase of development or know what plans to put in place, the starting point is the data to analyse the current situation."

His words: "We don't have a maritime data bank today, so it is extremely difficult to analyse with accuracy the contribution of the maritime sector to the country's GDP. There are few companies or organisations that will look at indices in their own individual data. Where there are statistics; they are existing in silos. For example, if the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) presents 3% statistics for GDP contribution and one organisation who has access to data within the maritime industry comes to the conclusion that just that sector is given 3.5%, then you can say that the NBS data is not comprehensive. It becomes an indicator that it is not complete.

"How do we collect this data? I would say that I believe it should come out of local organisations. We have a tradition of always relying on whatever International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has developed. I want to see legislation establishing a framework for collecting data in the maritime space, which would make it mandatory for certain information to be reported and documented in a certain manner. That way we can actually see what the GDP is, then we can also see the gap, and it will be very easy to know which area we should concentrate on in policy formulation and improvement."

He also expressed optimism that the National Policy for Marine and Blue Economy will be completed soonest, stressing that it will be beneficial to have the policy document ready by the first quarter of 2025.

"I would want government to pay attention to what drives the maritime economy. What drives the maritime economy is ships, and not just the availability of

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How Naval engineering could redefine Nigerian river ports — Maiguwa

Mr. Emmanuel Maiguwa is the President of Maritime Security Providers Association of Nigeria (MASPAN) and President of the Alumni of Maritime Academy of Nigeria Oron (AMANO). In this exclusive interview with MARAN News, Maiguwa speaks on a wide range pertinent maritime issues. Enjoy it:

What are your expectations for this year 2025 and which areas do you want government to pay special attention to?

I am not really particularly about the year. I think serious development will take place when government decides to wake up to its responsibilities. Whether it is 2025 or 2026, like it is said that whenever you wake up, it's your morning. Generally, I want government to pay attention to what drives the maritime economy. Ships drive this sector and it is not just the availability of ships, but the profitability of running a vessel.

It doesn't make sense if we encourage Nigeria to move from 200 to 500 ships within a timeframe when they are not operating profitably. So, it is very important that we pay attention to the issues related to operational expenses of a vessel. Today, we have a situation in Nigeria where if you acquire a vessel from outside, well, there's absolutely no way you can have a vessel here because at the moment, we don't have the capacity to build.

So, when you purchase a vessel from outside the country, you are paying about 14% in terms of Customs duty for that vessel to trade in our coastal trade. This is a huge cost that puts you 13% above your competitors that are buying the same vessel in Ghana and trading in Ghana. You also have significant port fees with a situation where the port regime, offshore charges regime for boats have not been separated from the port market. Vessels are being asked to pay green light fees similar to those that are going to operate offshore in the offshore market contract. Meanwhile, they are actually not going into



MAIGUWA

offshore field for offshore contracts.

There are equally other issues related to how vessels are bunkered, how vessels are supplied with water, food and other essentials. For example, imagine every time you are going

to board an aircraft from Abuja to Lagos or Port Harcourt, and when you get there, the aircraft has to write an application for Air Force approval before they can take fuel. Imagine if that is a process that they have introduced into

the aviation sector and for each vessel fuel bunker that you will take, you will need to do that for ships. Unfortunately, when we raise these issues that are causing bureaucratic problems in the shipping industry, people turn around to say others are stealing.

We also have it on record that people have been stealing

petroleum products from filling stations, but the solution was never to introduce police approvals before refilling or selling. Trucks loading from depot to take to a particular filling station sometimes divert it to a black market, yet we never had a

The idea of Cabotage is not to make profit out of lending out the money, but to build local capacity

situation where the country said go and get police approval before doing that business. These practices have constrained the growth of the maritime industry.

There has been lots of clamour for acquisition of Nigerian ships especially with the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF). What would you recommend as guidelines?

There should be a study that will reveal where our comparative advantage is as a country. If you want to buy ships, what kind of

ships are you going to buy? The outcome of the research should guide the choice of vessels. Perhaps, the study could find that tugboats or security vessels are better investments. What prospect do they have for us in achieving our goal? Is security vessel or tugboat and the rest going to train our seafarers? To what extent? These are smaller vessels, so are they going to help us with the biggest problem of carrying cargoes from Lagos to the other eastern part of the country? All these considerations should inform the decision for CVFF disbursement.

However, I can give you an example which is something that can stimulate the study. Vessels were built to float on water and the naval engineering factored in the depth of the water. In the past, trading in Asia was done by shallow draft riverboats to be able to assess remote areas, carry more cargoes with a lower draft to assess remote areas. But the development of deep seaports and other transport infrastructure phased those vessels out.

Who says that we cannot revive that technology, that naval engineering back. If we discover that there is advantage in moving our cargoes from Lekki deep seaport to Onitsha, to Calabar, Edo, and other places across the nation that have shallow waters, by investing in shipyards that will build shallow river vessels in Nigeria, we can generate enough tonnage. These shallow river vessels, because they are seagoing, they can load from other African countries. Automatically, you create a regional coastal trade that will overlap the maritime, I mean the Cabotage trade parameters. So, if that is what we discover, we can decide that those operating these kind of vessels could have certain guidelines to assess the fund.

The idea of Cabotage is not to make profit out of lending out the money, but to build local capacity. Building local capacity of Nigerians such that a company that has enough capacity to trade locally can use that capacity to grow into

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NSC Director 'Okam' Marks 60th Birthday, Retires In Style



One of the finest Directors at Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC), Mrs. Ada Okam, recently marked her 60th birthday and retirement party at the Council's headquarters. Until her retirement, Okam was the Director of Human Resources at the Council. Enjoy the photos:



Hearty Cheers 'CG Adeniyi'

Dear Comptroller General of
Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi
MFR,
Your award as an 'Iconic
Maritime Personality of the Year
2024' is a testament to your
exceptional leadership and
dedication to the nation's
economic growth.

As stakeholders in the maritime
industry, Ship Owners
Association of Nigeria (SOAN)
applauds your sterling
performance as Customs helmsman.

This award shows that your tireless efforts to
promote growth and development in the
maritime sector haven't gone unnoticed. We
celebrate your success and look forward to an
enhanced collaboration to advance the maritime
industry together!



Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR
CG, Nigeria Customs Service



Signed:
Mr. Sonny Eja
President,
Ship Owners Association of Nigeria (SOAN)

FG Hosts Experts On National Single Window Discourse



How I plan to meet, surpass my revenue target — *Comptroller Onyeka* Pledges to repay CGC's trust

The Customs Area Controller, (CAC) Tin-can Island Port Command, Nigeria Customs Service, NCS, Comptroller Frank Onyeka has revealed how he plans to meet and surpass the revenue target set for it by the Service.

This, he said will be made possible through trade facilitation, noting that it has to be legitimate trade and businesses.

This is even as he expressed gratitude to the Comptroller

General of Customs, CG Bashir Adewale Adeniyi for the confidence reposed in him while vowing to repay the CGC's trust..

He made this known while hosting the executive leadership of the Maritime Reporters' Association of Nigeria (MARAN) during a courtesy visit to welcome the Tin-can him to the command.

He also revealed that he has secured the buy-in of his officers to ensure that the trust reposed in him by the service's management is not dashed.

"I'll facilitate trade, but it has to be legitimate trade. That's what I feel I should do in the strict sense.

"You know, I'm coming from the aspect of revenue. So, it is my prayer and my hope to meet my target and surpass it.

"But principally, what I am going to fight is the ability to do this job without examination. I have appealed to my officers, whatever it is they have to do, let them see the containers, once we've examined them, everything should be on cruise control because if you examine, you'll now know if it's supposed to go out or

not.

"I've involved Customs Intelligence Unit, CIU, I've involved Valuation Unit, I've spoken to all relevant Units and it's my prayer, by the grace of God, that all of us will be on the same page to make sure that the renewed hope agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is brought to fruition" he noted.

Continuing, he expressed gratitude to the Comptroller General of Customs, CG Bashir Adewale Adeniyi for the confidence reposed in him and vowed never to disappoint him.

Tantita's Executive Director, Warredi, Conferred Honourary Doctorate Award

The Executive Director, Operations, Capt. Warredi Enisuoh, recently received an honorary doctorate and lifetime achievement award from Highstone Global University, Texas, USA. Enjoy the photos:



Adeniyi chronicles Customs growth trajectory after N6.1trn milestone in 2024

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) was one of the few government agencies whose performance in 2024 reflected the Renewed Hope of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

Customs remained a cornerstone of national economic development, showcasing consistent growth in revenue collection and trade facilitation. Importantly, Comptroller-General of Customs, Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR, guided the Service towards building new partnerships and deepening collaborations with national, regional and international partners.

After attaining a historic sum of over N6.1trillion amid challenges in the maritime sector, the Customs helmsman observed that Customs duties collection historically demonstrated growth since 1891 when the revenue stood at £516,817 (equivalent to ₦604.7 million today); in 1960 when the figure had grown to £55,918,367. Achieving ₦3.2 trillion in 2023 set the stage for the record-breaking performance of 2024, demonstrating the Service's ability to adapt and thrive amidst evolving economic conditions.

Unprecedented Revenue Performance in 2024

The Nigeria Customs Service achieved a historic revenue collection of ₦6.1 trillion in 2024, exceeding its target of ₦5.1 trillion by over ₦1 trillion. This represented a 20.2% increase above the



Adeniyi

target and an impressive 90.4% growth compared to the N3.2 trillion collected in 2023. Notably, October 2024 witnessed a historic milestone with the highest monthly revenue collection reaching N603.17 billion.

The 2024 revenue comprised three key components: Federation Account collections amounting to ₦3.66 trillion, Non-Federation Account levies of ₦816.9 billion, and Value Added Tax (VAT) collections on imports totaling ₦1.63 trillion. These figures were achieved despite concessions worth ₦1.68 trillion granted to stimulate economic growth, a reduction from the N3.96

concessions, and VAT relief, reflecting strategic reforms aimed at curbing abuse and ensuring genuine beneficiaries.

Trade Facilitation and Economic Growth

In 2024, the NCS demonstrated its commitment to balancing revenue generation with trade facilitation. The total trade value processed by the Service reached an unprecedented ₦196.94 trillion, a 179.3% increase from ₦70.5 trillion in 2023. This growth was driven by significant increases in both import and export values.

Imports for the year, with a Cost, Insurance, and Freight (CIF) value of ₦60.29 trillion, marked a 117.4% increase over the previous year. Despite an 8.2% decline in the volume of import transactions, the higher trade value reflected a shift towards higher-value goods. On the export side, the CIF value rose by an astounding 219.5% to N136.65 trillion, accompanied by a 234% increase in export mass, indicating the growing competitiveness of Nigerian products in international markets.

Key Initiatives and Achievements

In 2024, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) significantly enhanced its anti-smuggling and enforcement operations, achieving a 100.92% increase in the Duty Paid Value (DPV) of seizures, from ₦17.56 billion in 2023 to ₦35.29 billion. This surge reflects the Service's intensified efforts to combat

In 2024, the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) significantly enhanced its anti-smuggling and enforcement operations, achieving a 100.92% increase in the Duty Paid Value (DPV) of seizures, from ₦17.56 billion in 2023 to N35.29 billion

trillion recorded in 2023. The concessions included import duty waivers, levy

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Adeniyi chronicles Customs growth trajectory after N6.1trn milestone in 2024

Continues from page 10

economic sabotage and protect national security.

The Service implemented several strategic measures in 2024 to modernize operations and enhance trade facilitation. The introduction of the Advanced Ruling System allowed for pre-arrival classifications, reducing delays and disputes in customs clearance. The Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) program, piloted in 2024, significantly reduced cargo clearance times for certified companies, setting the stage

for its full implementation in 2025.

Technological advancements included the launch of the indigenously developed customs clearance platform, "B'Odogwu," which processed transactions worth ₦31 billion during its pilot phase. The platform underscored the NCS's commitment to leveraging homegrown solutions to streamline operations and improve efficiency.

Enhanced stakeholder engagement was another highlight of 2024. The Service collaborated with the

Healthcare Federation of Nigeria (HFN) to address challenges in clearing medical goods and engaged with Partner Government Agencies (PGAs) to enhance trade facilitation. These efforts contributed to the NCS's improved ranking in the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) evaluation, where it advanced 33 places, reflecting tangible improvements in cross-border trade facilitation.

Future Projections

Under the leadership of Comptroller-General Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, the NCS

has set a benchmark for excellence in revenue generation and trade facilitation. The Service's achievements in 2024 underscore its critical role in driving Nigeria's economic growth, fostering international trade, and supporting national development. As the NCS looks to build on its successes, it remains committed to adopting global best practices, enhancing operational efficiency, and ensuring a conducive business environment for stakeholders.

Asu Beks clocks 71 in grand style

A former President of Maritime Reporters' Association of Nigeria (MARAN) and Chief Executive of Maritime Media Limited, Elder Asu Beks recently marked his 71st birthday with an exquisite party. MARAN News brings you the photos:



An Iconic Leader



Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR
CG, Nigeria Customs Service

Africa Association of Professional Freight Forwarders and Logistics of Nigeria congratulates the Comptroller General of Customs **Bashir Adewale Adeniyi** MFR dsm fnipr PSC (+)

on his award as an Iconic Maritime Personality of the year 2024.

Indeed, you're an iconic leader who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way!

You're visionary and awe-inspiring!

Congratulations Sir!

Signed:



Otunba Frank Ogunojemite
National President,
Africa Association of Professional Freight Forwarders and Logistics of Nigeria (APFFLON)

ANLCA Tincan Chapter

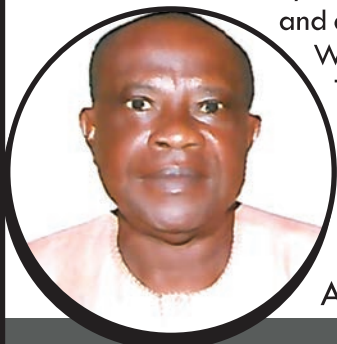
Felicitates Customs CG

The Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) Tincan Island Chapter congratulates the **Comptroller General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR**, on his award as Iconic Maritime Personality of the year 2024.

Words are not enough for me to congratulate ACG Nnadi Dera who uplifted Tincan Customs Command to an international standard before handing over to Comptroller Frank Onyeka.

CAC Onyeka is a man with wealth of experience and a goal getter!

We will give him our maximum support at Tin Can.



Signed:
Chief Sunday Oforha
ANLCA Tin Can Island Chapter



Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR
C-G, Nigeria Customs Service

APFFLON Tincan Chapter

Congratulates CG Custom



Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR
C-G, Nigeria Customs Service

Africa Association of Professional Freight Forwarders and Logistics of Nigeria (APFFLON) Tincan Island Chapter congratulates the Comptroller General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR, on his award as Iconic Maritime Personality of the year 2024.

We also kindly welcome the new Customs Area Controller at Tincan Island Port, Comptroller Frank Onyeka to Tin Can.

We look forward to a prosperous 2025 with landmark achievements for Customs and freight forwarders.

Signed:



Fwdr Alhaji Akeem ADEBAYO AYOBIOJO

Chairman
APFFLON Tin Can Island Chapter

President Tinubu Celebrates Customs CG Adeniyi's 59th Birthday

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has congratulated the 14th Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Adewale Adeniyi, on his 59th birthday on January 19, 2025.

The President commended Adeniyi for his pivotal role since taking leadership of the Customs Service in June 2023.

Under his guidance, the agency has witnessed significant progress through the steady digitalisation and automation of its operations, a renewed commitment to professionalism, and an uplift in officers' morale, enhancing high performance.

His leadership has enabled the NCS to surpass revenue targets substantially and bolstered trade facilitation, yielding widespread positive effects on the national economy.

President Tinubu applauded the innovative anti-smuggling strategies initiated by the Customs Chief. These strategies encompass equipping the youth with new skills for alternative

livelihood opportunities, fostering engagements with traditional institutions, and nurturing a culture of effective communication and mutual respect.

The President recognised the Comptroller-General's other notable achievements, including the remarkable seizures of arms and ammunition and the revitalisation of the Comptroller-General's Annual Conference, which aims to assess and enhance the agency's operations.

President Tinubu affirms that Adeniyi's extensive experience of over 30 years in service and adaptability to change has greatly enriched the Customs Service.

The President offers prayers for divine wisdom, robust health, and continued strength for Comptroller-General Adeniyi as he serves the nation.

Mr. Bayo Onanuga, Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, disclosed this in a press statement.



Customs 001

Hearty Congratulations
ON YOUR
award
AS AN

Iconic Maritime
Personality
of the year 2024

BA Adeniyi MFR dsm Inlpr PSC (+)
Comptroller-General of Customs
Federal Republic of Nigeria

YOU'RE AN INSPIRING LEADER!

WE CELEBRATE YOU SIR!

Signed By:
**Comptroller
Frank Onyeka**

Customs Area Controller,
Tincan Island Port Command

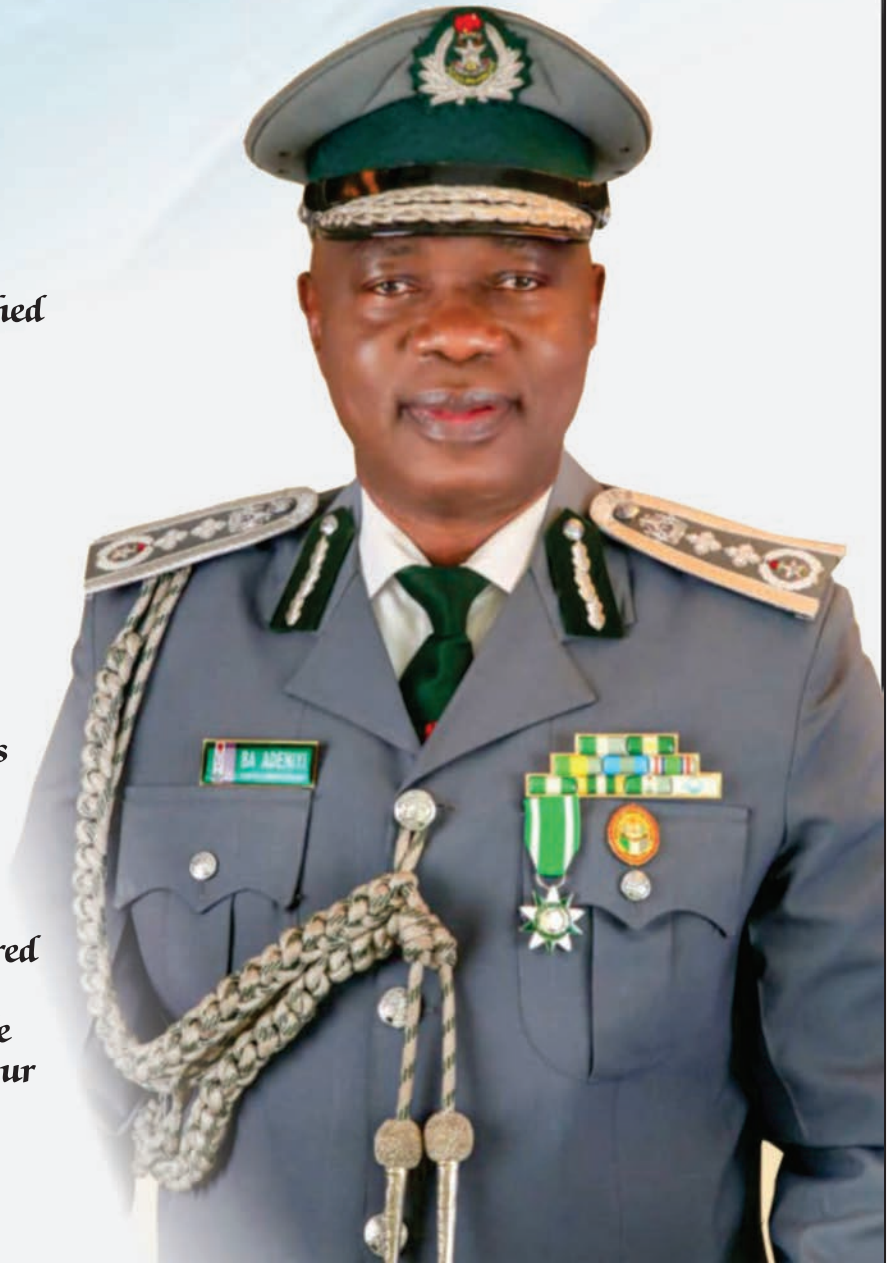
An Exemplary Customs CG!

We extend our warmest congratulations to our distinguished boss and inspiring leader, Comptroller-General of Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), **Bashir Adewale Adeniyi MFR**, being honoured with the prestigious **"Iconic Personality of the Year"** award by Nigerian Maritime Journalists.

Sir, it is a well deserved recognition for your tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to excellence.

At the Federal Operations Unit (FOU) Zone A, we are truly inspired by your achievements and the positive impact Customs has made in the Nigerian economy under your guidance.

Your visionary leadership has propelled the NCS to unprecedented heights!



**Comptroller-General
Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, MFR**

Signed:

COMPTROLLER KOLA OLADEJI

Customs Area Controller,
Federal Operations Unit
(FOU) Zone A Lagos

Agenda 2025: Maritime eggheads outline topmost industry goals

Continues from page 6

ships, but the profitability of running a vessel. It doesn't make sense if we encourage Nigeria to move from 200 to 500 ships, from 500 to 600, 700 within a milestone or timeframe when they are not operating profitably. So, it is very important that we pay attention to the issues related to operational expenses of a vessel," he added.

A Maritime Lawyer's Perspective

According to a veteran maritime lawyer, Barr. Emmanuel Nwagbara, by the end of 2025, the nation should have in place a blue economy policy driving development in the maritime industry.

This policy, he recommends, should be integrated to the overall transportation policy in Nigeria as a good holistic policy will enhance maritime business in Nigeria from all aspects of the marine and blue economy.

"With the Marine and Blue Economy as lead ministry, we expect that this policy will ensure synergy with other ministries whose functions have an impact on the marine and blue economy. For instance, the Minister of Finance and the Nigeria Customs Service are responsible for developing and implementing the proposed fixed rate of exchange for imports, which the Tax Reform Committee proposed, would come into play in 2025, and seaport operations will be largely affected by these developments," he told MARAN News.

He opined that there is a need to amend the constitution to give state governments the power to license businesses on the waterways as far as transportation of goods and persons are concerned and other businesses that can be done within the brown waters and interstate waters.

"Coast Guard Bill should be fast-tracked and implemented because it can ensure safety and security to a large extent on our waters. The Nigeria Shipping and Port Economic Regulatory Agency is another bill expected to be signed into law by the first quarter of 2025," he said.

He warned that there are grave implications of the recent Supreme Court decision that involved the Lagos State

government and National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), which ruled that NIWA has control of all inland waterways and all interstates in terms of regulation of businesses on the waterways, adding that it could dissuade states from investing in the sector.

Nigerian Chamber of Shipping

The Director General of Nigerian Chamber of Shipping (NCS), Mrs. Vivian Chimezie-Azubuike, listed the ongoing discussions on National Single Window and the National Policy for Marine and Blue Economy as worthwhile accomplishments that should be prioritised in 2025.

"For several years, industry stakeholders have been pushing for a maritime transport policy which was expected to be embedded in the nation's transport policy. However, the emergence of the Marine and Blue Economy Ministry shows that the sector is no longer subsumed under the transport sector even though maritime is also a major aspect of transport.

"We should be hopeful that with the efforts that have been made by the Minister, engaging stakeholders, that we'll see the fruition of the maritime policy this year. The policy will provide the framework as to how to navigate the industry, especially with the emergence of the marine and blue economy ministry," she said.

Vivian also extolled recent conscious efforts to have Coastguards on the inland waterways and appreciated the Managing Director of NIWA, Bola Oyebamiji for engaging experts in building the right boats to curb frequent boat mishaps.

"I think we should also be looking at sustainable transportation within the maritime sector, especially since we are now talking about greener shipping, low sulphur fuel, etc. There are still issues around the freight and insurance as it affects shipping.

"The war risk insurance is still being levied on vessels coming to Nigeria and this is a major challenge that should be addressed in 2025. I hope that strategic engagement with the international shipping community can help us to review that status because we have stabilized our territorial waters already on the issue of security

and piracy," she stated.

Freight Forwarders Perspective

A former Acting National President of the Association of Nigeria Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Dr. Kayode Farinto prioritised the attainment of the National Single Window (NSW) Project as one of his 2025 expectations.

His words: "Now, that we are seeing political will through the Presidency, I want this speedily achieved. However, if we must achieve NSW, there are things that must be put in place. There must be attitudinal change, political will, and there must be legal framework. If there is no legal framework, anybody can just take this NSW to court and reverse it.

"Generally, there must be discipline across various facets of port operations including government agencies and private sector operators."

If we must achieve NSW, there are things that must be put in place. There must be attitudinal change, political will, and there must be legal framework

Farinto, however, noted that the NSW must provide punitive measures for agencies or operators who may be responsible for delays in cargo evacuation.

"We have seen cases where some agencies or operators deliberately delay cargoes without any legitimate reason. What is the punishment that is meted to that department? There must be discipline, and that is why we need a legal framework and punishments.

"People who have their consignments unduly delayed should be able to lean on the law to demand compensation for the delays from whatever agency or organisation that has been

responsible for the delay," Farinto argued.

The veteran freight forwarder also encouraged the federal government to put less emphasis on revenue generation, but prioritise trade facilitation which in turn leads to more revenue.

Also speaking, the President of National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF), Chief Tochukwu Ezisi identified the sector's biggest need as enhancing efficiency and transparency through digitalization.

His words: "The Nigerian freight forwarding industry still relies heavily on manual processes, leading to inefficiencies, delays, and increased costs. Digitalization is crucial to streamline operations, reduce paperwork, and promote transparency."

The NAGAFF President outlined some strategies to achieve digitalization to include; implementation of Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems to facilitate the electronic exchange of documents, such as bills of lading, invoices, and customs clearance documents.

He also noted the need for regulators and port operators to invest in robust cybersecurity measures to protect sensitive data and prevent cyber threats, even as he encouraged the use of digital payment systems to reduce cash transactions, minimize revenue leakages, and increase transparency.

"The provision of training and capacity-building programs for freight forwarders to develop the necessary skills to effectively utilize digital tools and platforms should be sacrosanct. This will ensure freight forwarders are partners in the national goal of increasing efficiency and transparency at seaports.

"Digital platforms will provide real-time tracking, enabling freight forwarders to monitor shipments and communicate with stakeholders more effectively. Digital payment systems and electronic documentation will minimize revenue leakages and reduce the need for physical documentation, leading to cost savings," he asserted.

7 Landmark Issues that shaped the maritime sector in 2024

The Nigerian maritime industry witnessed several critical points in 2024 that shaped the sector's performance positively and negatively. Let's scrutinize seven issues and their effects on the sector.

1. Easy rides on Mile2/ Apapa expressway

The perennial traffic gridlock that had become the norm on the Mile 2/ Apapa expressway was effectively tackled in 2024. The platform for this success was orchestrated via robust and purposive collaboration between the Ministry of Works, Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy and the Lagos State Government.

After the federal government completed the fixing of the failed portions of the port access roads in February; Customs, NPA and Police partnered to ensure seamless traffic on the roads with only trucks with genuine business at ports plying the road and tankers operating in an orderly manner.

We learnt the importance of political will from the Presidency as well as the crucial role of collaboration between Lagos State Govt, NPA, Customs and Police in achieving this feat. Consequently, Tin Can and Apapa ports witnessed an enhanced ease of doing business, improved efficiency and higher revenue collected from the ports.

Lagos State Waste Management Authority (LAWMA) also played a crucial role in ensuring the roads remained clean as the former debris hubs on the road weren't seen in 2024.

Maritime stakeholders, however, are concerned with some early traces of traffic congestion with unruly truckers and tankers.

2. Boat mishaps and NIWA's Transportation Code



Mile 2 - Apapa Expressway

In a bid to curb the reoccurring menace of boat accidents which claimed over 326 lives in 2024, the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) launched a strategic Transportation Code for waterways operations in the country.

The Inland Waterways Transportation Regulations 2023, also known as the Waterways Transportation Code, enjoyed more efforts in sensitization, enforcement and implementation in the latter part of 2024. It represents NIWA's proactive effort to address the rising tragedies on Nigeria's waterways.

By establishing a new benchmark for safety and accountability, the framework seeks to regulate and professionalize the industry, ensuring that both operators and passengers play active roles in preventing accidents.

At the heart of this initiative are strict operational guidelines for vessel activities. All boats must now undergo mandatory registration, adhere to maintenance schedules, and comply with passenger capacity limits. Overloading, a leading cause of many tragic incidents that has been categorized as a punishable offense, signals NIWA's commitment to ensuring safer waterways.

To enforce these standards, NIWA has introduced strict penalties for violators. Operators

who neglect safety protocols, fail to provide proper documentation, or flout regulations face significant fines and the risk of having their licenses suspended.

Niger and Kwara states were the hardest hit, recording 92 and 90 fatalities respectively. These grim numbers, however, represent only a fraction of the actual toll, as many incidents go unreported. The frequency of these mishaps is expected to dwindle with the NIWA Transportation Code addressing preventable causes such as overloading, poor maintenance, and disregard for safety regulations.

3. NIMASA, NPA new bosses: more expectations, less deliveries

Two of the foremost maritime regulatory agencies - Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) and Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) recorded a change in leadership with new helmsmen in 2024.

At NPA, Dr. Abubakar Danstoho replaced Mr. Mohammed Bello-Koko as the Managing Director while NIMASA got Dr. Dayo Mobereola as the new Director General who replaced Dr. Bashir Jamoh. Expectedly, these changes did come with some tolls on the operations of both

agencies.

The exit of the former NIMASA Director General of NIMASA, Dr Bashir Jamoh is believed to have created a lull in the some projects especially the deployment of N50million floating dockyard and the disbursement of the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF) that were expected to have been completed in 2024.

At NPA, the stint of Bello-Koko as Managing Director had been portrayed as a misnomer since he replaced Ms. Hadiza Bala-Usman who was unceremoniously removed for queries linked to financial misappropriation whereas Bello-Koko's role as Executive Director, Finance didn't smear his reputation at the Authority. Meanwhile, industry observers had expected the Authority to conclude the review of seaport concessionaires agreement and also provide solutions to the ever-increasing gullies as well as decaying quay aprons at Tin Can and Apapa ports in 2024. A change in helmsman at NPA truncated these goals.

Maritime experts have repeatedly stressed that frequent changes in leadership of agencies underscores the high degree of government interference in the sector with consequent setbacks as the new sheriffs need sometime to learn the robes.

4. Minimum Standards for Workers in Shipping Companies

Maritime workers, precisely those who work with shipping companies, attained a huge win as shipping agencies under the aegis of Shipping, Shipping Agencies, Clearing and Forwarding Employers Association (SACFEA) signed a new minimum wage of N200,000 for employees and other improved standards for workers. With the new agreement between Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN) and

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7 Landmark Issues that shaped the maritime sector in 2024

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shipping companies - midwived by Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) employees at shipping companies currently enjoy new conditions of service for workers with a basic salary that is among the highest in any industry across the nation.

The President of SACFEA, Mrs. Boma Alabi (SAN), noted that while the workers were asking for N160,000, the employers went above to do N200,000 because they understand the situation in the country and wanted to ensure that everyone is happy.

"We don't just want the workers to live, but to work and save for their future," Alabi remarked. She equally expressed optimism that the new agreement would assist the nation's blue economy growth via uniformity with the minimum standards and enhanced productivity and efficiency.

It is expected that with the new minimum standards, the nation would no longer have charlatans in the maritime sector, thereby attaining an enhanced ease of doing business, with service-driven costs that will enable the nation compete favorably regionally and internationally. MARAN commends shipping lines who have honoured the new conditions even as we applaud the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy for facilitating the process.

Organisations who haven't honoured this new agreement are encourage to comply, while maritime workers have repay this good deed by enhancing their output following the better remuneration.

5. Tantita's operations sparks increase in crude oil production

In 2024, Nigeria's oil production significantly improved from that abysmal level to 1.1mbpd in January before hitting 1.4 million bpd in November, according to CEIC Data. By the end of 2024, the NNPC reported 1.8 million bpd as daily average production figure. This saw the country restoring her former glory in the committee of oil producing countries and topping the global



Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC, Mele Kyari, while announcing Nigeria's oil production figures in November 2024, lauded the Production War Room Team, which anchors the production recovery process.

"The team has done a great job in driving this project of not just production recovery but also escalating production to expected levels that are in the short and long terms acceptable to our shareholders based on the mandates that we have from the President, the Honourable Minister, and the Board," Kyari said.

At a time when the nation needs to preserve and optimise its scarce resources, Tantita's operations have become strategic and worthwhile in preventing economic losses. In 2025, industry observers can be confident that with this same momentum and the active collaboration of all stakeholders, especially on the security front, the nation can see the possibility of getting to 2mbpd.

6. Navy stops burning of vessels

After wide criticisms for its policy of burning vessels involved in crude oil theft and other illicit deals, in 2024 Nigerian Navy stopped this approach which posed environmental hazards and economic losses in the shipping sector.

The issue of burning vessels had been a problematic one in the sector with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and several stakeholders vehemently kicking against the policy.

have seen the nation retrieve the petroleum products and prevent the risk of destroying the marine environment," Omatseye recommends.

7. Pending Maritime Bills

In 2024, the National Assembly was abuzz with frenzied activities to strengthen the legal framework of maritime agencies. Many industry bills, sponsored by both the legislative and executive arms of government, were tabled at the National Assembly for discussions and passage. While some were introduced to the hallowed chambers in 2024, others predated the outgone year.

Some of these bills include Maritime Coast Guard bill, the Port economic Regulatory Agency bill, NIMASA amendment bill and Port and Harbour bill

A. The Coast Guard bill.

The maritime Coast Guard bill, first introduced in the 9th Senate in 2021 and sponsored by Senator Akon Eyakenyi, now the Deputy Governor of Akwa Ibom state, was reintroduced in the 10th Assembly in 2024.

The bill, sponsored by Senator Wasiu Eshilokun (APC-Lagos) and who is incidentally the Chairman of Senate committee on Marine and Transport, seeks to establish a military service which is a branch of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, to ensure maritime safety that will domicile under the ministry of Marine and Blue Economy.

However, the bill, which is currently on the second reading, was greeted with mixed reactions from stakeholders.

While the proponents of the bill said creation of a special entity called Nigeria Maritime Coast guard will compliment the efforts of existing maritime security outfits such as the Nigerian Navy to provide security in the Nigeria's maritime domain, a preponderance of antagonists of the bill expressed concerns over the overlapping functions of the proposed Nigeria Coast guard with the Nigerian Navy.

The opposition to the bill, which was overwhelming, cut across the legislature, maritime operators, civil society and understandably, the Nigerian Navy.

At the public hearing organized by the Senate committee on Marine and Transport in December, a strong wave of disapproval from majority of stakeholders who were present at the event resonated across the National Assembly Library where the sitting took place.

B. Nigeria Shipping and Ports Economic Regulatory Agency bill 2023

The Bill seeks to repeal the existing Nigerian Shippers' Council Act and aims to establish a more robust and effective regulatory framework to support the growth of the shipping and port sectors while safeguarding the interests of Nigerian Shippers.

Save for the pocket of opposition, the bill enjoyed an overwhelming support of majority of maritime stakeholders through the stages of its hearing at the House of Representative.

The Bill, which has been passed by the House of Representatives and awaiting concurrence at the Senate before presidential assent, proposes the creation of the Nigeria Shipping and Port Economic Regulatory Agency which is tasked with achieving ambitious objectives to create a more efficient and competitive environment for both public and private stakeholders in the shipping and port sectors.

One of the key provisions of the Bill is expanding the functions and powers of the Nigerian Shippers' Council by granting the new Agency broader authority.

This includes empowering the

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7 Landmark Issues that shaped the maritime sector in 2024

Continues from page 20

Agency to set and enforce service standards, tariffs, and licensing requirements for Public and Private Players in the sector, referred to in the Bill to as 'Regulated Service Providers' However, some stakeholders have raised concerns about overlapping regulatory functions and possible conflicts with existing agencies such as the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA).

Some of these reservations about the bill is that since it grants the Nigerian Shippers' Council regulatory authority over all public and private entities operating or providing services in the shipping and port sectors such as stevedoring, cargo handling, freight forwarding, haulage, terminal operations, and other related services.

They feared that certain functions of other government agencies operating within the port, such as the Nigerian Ports Authority ('the NPA'), the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency ('the NIMASA'), and the Nigerian Customs Service ('the NCS'), will also fall under the purview of the new Agency, which may give rise to some areas of conflict between the Agencies.

However, an elated Executive Secretary of Nigeria Shippers' Council, Barrister Pius Akutah expectedly didn't share the fears of some of the stakeholders.

He believed that, when passed into law, the bill will reposition the maritime industry for economic growth, job creation as well as promotion of efficiency that will streamline processes in the sector.

In addition, Akutah was confident that when passed into law, the bill will give the Council a strong legal backing to execute its regulatory functions.

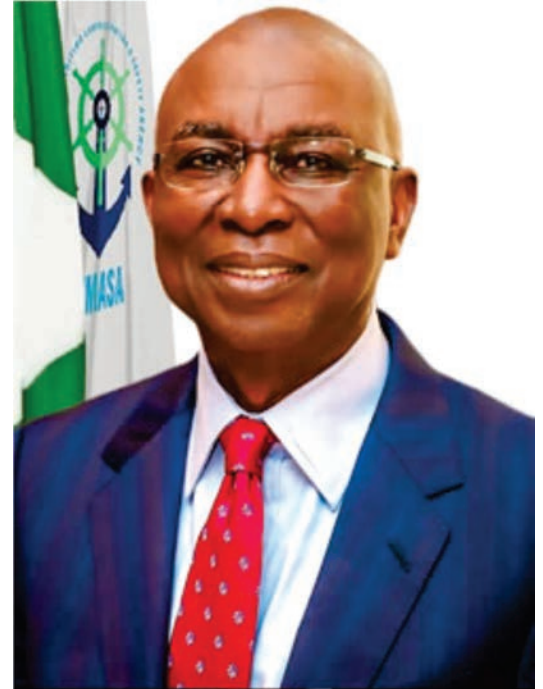
C. Nigerian Ports and Harbour bill 2016

The bill seeks to repeal the Nigerian Ports Authority Act 2004 (Cap N126 LFN) and transfers all assets and liabilities



Dr. Abubakar Dantsoho

MD/CEO, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)



Dr. Dayo Mobereola

DG/CEO, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)

vested in the Nigerian Ports Authority to the Nigerian Ports and Harbours Authority - a new entity created therein.

As provided for in Section 9 of the bill, the Nigerian Ports and Harbours Authority's functions will include developing, maintaining and implementing a national strategic port plan, providing and enforcing technical regulations on operations, construction and installations within ports and harbours, setting the overall policy for port security, health and safety, environmental protection and coastal conservation, encouraging and facilitating private sector participation and investment in the provision of port services and facilities.

Others include; approving the establishment and planning of offshore cargo-handling facilities and related services, negotiating, supervising, implementing and ensuring compliance with international maritime obligations under the applicable international conventions and protocols, providing landlord services in ports and harbours in an economically, socially and environmentally sustainable manner, ensuring that ports are effectively integrated with other

external infrastructure systems, in cooperation with other relevant bodies, facilitating the sustainable growth of trade through ports.

The bill also aims at developing and deploying resources to enhance port security, engaging in any business activity, either alone or in partnership with other parties, as approved by the minister and ensuring that private operators comply with the overall policy on health and safety, environmental protection and coastal conservation.

In 2017, the bill passed its third and final reading in the Senate but still requires concurrence by the House of Representatives before it goes to the President for his assent.

However, the bill is stucked due to the overwhelming opposition of the maritime labour.

For 19 years since the bill was initiated, it has been attacked by the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN) which felt certain provisions of the bill are anti-workers.

Specifically, the union has criticised Item 6 of Schedule 2, which essentially entitles the Nigerian Ports and Harbours Authority to retain only as many staff as it requires which to the labour union, is tantamount to giving the new body the leverage

to sack workers.

D. The NIMASA Amendment bill 2021

The bill, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) amendment bill of 2021 seeks to amend the NIMASA Act. It aims to improve the regulatory instruments in the Nigerian maritime sector. The bill included the Merchant Shipping Act, Repeal and Enactment Bill of 2021.

The objectives of the bill include improvement of the efficiency of the NIMASA Agency

To enhance the agency's capacity to regulate the Nigerian maritime industry, to support the maritime sector and enhance the potential of the maritime sector.

The area of focus of the bill are maritime safety Administration, maritime labour regulation, Marine pollution prevention and control, Search and rescue, C a b o t a g e enforcement, Shipping development and ship registration, Training and certification of seafarers and Maritime capacity development.

The bill, which suffered slow acceleration, has passed the first reading on the Floor of the Nigerian Senate in 2023.

How Naval engineering could redefine Nigerian river ports — Maiguwa

Continues from page 7

operating foreign going vessels. Of course, when such person wants to build his foreign going vessel, he is not going to assess Cabotage funding. However, because he has grown his capacity he can get foreign funds to acquire that ocean-going vessel. It starts with an improved local capacity before one begins to explore international shipping. The situation where we just want a simple guideline to show how you will assess CVFF is a difficult one.

Why has the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) been successful in collecting and disbursing the NCI fund which is similar to CVFF?

The Local Content Act collects just one percent. One percent of the contract value against the two percent that Cabotage is

collecting. I am aware that the local content arrangement is in collaboration with the Bank of Industry (BoI) and BoI is a strategic partner with clear understanding of such kind of financing.

They have been able to disburse the NCI fund to several people, about six persons that I know have assessed money from the local content funding to acquire vessels. This is because the local content is peculiar. I mean it is clear about what you are buying and for what purposes. If you are contributing to the local content and you go to buy the vessel; you are definitely buying a vessel that would work in the offshore industry. So you assess the money and you acquire the vessel, but the local content will also ensure that you get a contract in the offshore industry. This means that you are protected all through. What protection is the Nigerian

Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) going to give those who acquire vessels with CVFF? There is no protection like the guarantees that the NCDMB avails its operators.

The trade that NIMASA is supposed to guarantee you is not existing, which is coastal shipping. Coastal shipping itself, where you will carry cargo from one port to the other. If you turn to the Dangote refinery, some part of it will come back into the petroleum tanker market, where products will be picked from Dangote refinery and taken to maybe Port Harcourt to discharge in tank farms and be distributed against moving by road. Some vessels will come back into that trade, but that is very insignificant.

We need to be able to move cargoes from Lekki port. As container vessels discharge in Lekki port, a container freighter

should carry these cargoes from Lekki port to Calabar, Port Harcourt, Onitsha and other parts of the country. In cases where the cargoes are dropped in Port Harcourt, it will be transshipped in different ways including barges, smaller ships, roads, etc. But that is not existing. So I am afraid for those that will even assess the Cabotage funding if it is disbursed today. The only way to be profitable with that venture is to end up buying vessels that will work in offshore oil and gas because the protection for coastal shipping in terms of container freighting will not be sufficient for you to repay the funding.

Industry stakeholders are missing this aspect of the CVFF quagmire as we are mostly worried about the disbursement of the fund. It is important to look at the profitability of the operations.

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