Capital Importation: Nigeria Records 28% Decline in Q1 to $1.5bn
...banking sector leads with $818.84m

A report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) puts the total value of capital importation into Nigeria in the first quarter of 2022 at $1,573.14 million from the figure of $2,187.63 million recorded in the preceding 4th quarter of 2021, showing a decline of 28.09%.

However, when compared to the corresponding first quarter of 2021, the level of capital importation decreased only by 17.46% from $1,905.89 million.

The report states that the largest amount of capital importation by type was received through Portfolio Investment, which accounted for 60.87% ($957.58 million, followed by Other Investment with 29.28% ($460.59 million), while Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) accounted for 9.85% ($154.97 million) of the total capital imported in Q1 2022.

In terms of sectors, capital importation into the banking industry had the highest inflow of $818.84 million amounting to 52.05% of total capital imported in the first quarter of 2022. This was followed by capital imported into the production sector, valued at $223.67 million (14.22%) and the financing sector with $199.37 million (12.67%).

The capital importation by country of origin reveals that United Kingdom (UK) ranked top as the source of capital imported into Nigeria in the first quarter of 2022 with a value of $1.021.21 million, accounting for 64.92%. This was followed

Continues on PAGE 02

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EXCHANGE RATE

₦/$ RATE	₦/£ RATE	₦/€ RATE
414.59	507.624	436.0243

TOP GAINNERS
NIGERIAN BREWERIES ₦2.19k
Eterna ₦1.88k

TOP LOSERS
LINKASSURE ₦7.69k
REGALINS ₦8.11k

OIL PRICE
WTI $104.28
Brent Crude $110.03

COMMODITY

Uranium	$52.00
Zinc	$110.00
Coffee	$3,720.15
Tin	$31,551.00

Chagoury Connection: $537bn US Consulate Project Runs into Controversy

The $537 billion Consulate Project of the United States at Eko Atlantic in Lagos is now a subject of intense political and ethical controversy over allegation that the land for the project was inappropriately purchased from billionaire businessman, Gilbert Chagoury, who was allegedly convicted of international corruption and money laundering.

The core question at the heart of the controversy is why the United States went into a land deal at Eko Atlantic with a man (Chagoury) allegedly convicted of international money laundering.

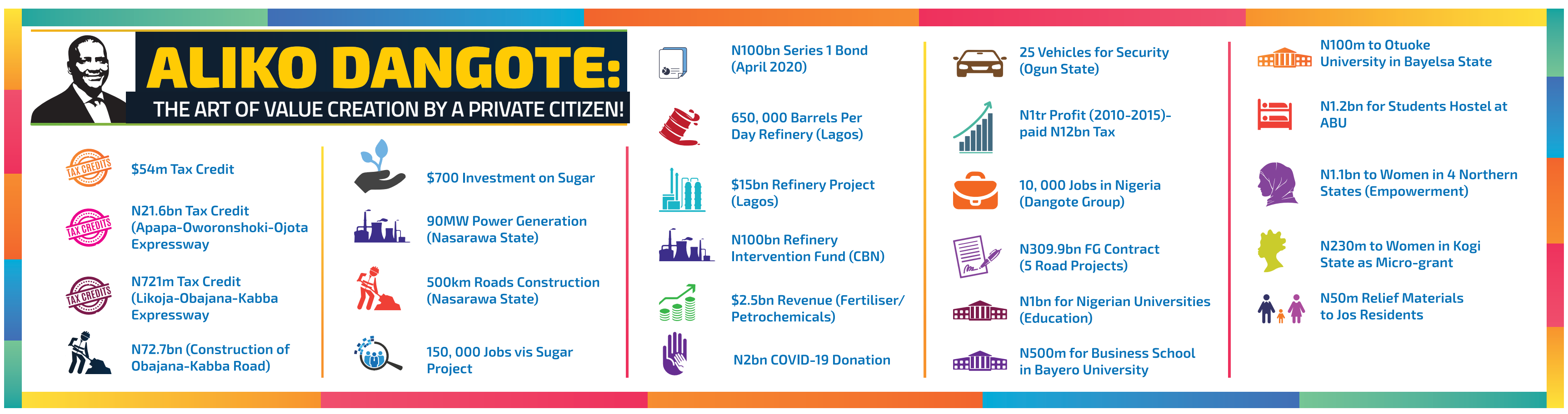
In essence, the United States Embassy in Nigeria is now a willing tenant to Gilbert Chagoury at Eko Atlantic.

A report by Quartz Africa states that while Chagoury and Claire Pierangelo, the U.S. Consul-General to Nigeria were breaking the ground on March 31, 2022 for America's largest consulate on Planet Earth, Mr. Jeff Fortenberry, a Republican Congressman from the US State of Nebraska was also resigning from office after being convicted of lying to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) in relation to alleged illegal political campaign contributions he received from Chagoury.

According to the report, Chagoury also donated $460, 000 to the US Democratic Party after attending a dinner with then President Bill Clinton in 1996 and another sum of between $1million to $5 million went to the Clinton Foundation as reported on the website of the Foundation.

Continues on PAGE 02

NCC:
L-R: Mistura Aruna, Assistant Director; Hafiz Shehu, Chief of Staff, (CoS; Grace Ojougboh, Head Media and Public Relations; Efosa Idehen, Director, Consumer Affairs Bureau, (CAB); Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta , Executive Vice- Chairman, (EVC); Reuben Muoka, Director, Public Affairs; Yetunde Akinloye , Director, Policy Competition and Economic Analysis and Yakubu Musa , SA Media to the EVC, during the 90th Edition of Telecom Consumer Parliament (TCP) in Lagos.



News
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N1.48 Trillion: The Total Amount Spent by the Federal Government (NNPC) on Rehabilitation of Refineries in Nigeria

NCC: 'We're Making Progress in Enthroning 5G for Digital Economy'

L-R: Odigie William Otaigboria Innocent, Zonal Head, Port Harcourt Region; Hon. Daniel Igali, Commissioner for Sports, Bayelsa State; Mr. Ebenezer Kolawale, Executive Director, Finance & Operations, Unity Bank; His Excellency, Lawrence Ehrujakpo, Deputy Governor of Bayelsa State; Mrs. Tomi Somefun, MD/CEO, Unity Bank Plc; Hon. Tari Porri, Chairman, House of Representatives Committee on Sports and Mr. Sunny Bakwunye, Divisional Head, Treasury, Unity Bank Plc when the Bayelsa Deputy Governor led a delegation to Unity Bank Plc.

Nigeria has made some significant success in the drive towards enthroning national digital economy for the country.

This was disclosed by the Executive Vice Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (EVC/CEO) of the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Prof. Umar Garba Danbatta in his keynote address at the 2022 Nigeria DigitalSENSE Forum series on '5G: Enthroning Internet Governance for Digital Economy' held in Lagos and powered by DigitalSENSE Africa, a project of ITREALMS Media Group at the weekend.

Buttressing his position, EVC who was represented by a Deputy Director and Head of Spectrum Database Management at NCC, Engr. Abraham Oshadami, while dwelling specifically on "5G: Enthronement in Nigeria's Telecom Sector" outlined some 11-points to drive home his assertion.

Some of these steps, he said include the creation of a full-fledged department of Digital Economy in NCC with a mandate amongst others to ensure that the programs and targets set in the NNBP 2020-2025 and NDEPS 2020 – 2030 are rigorously pursued, tracked, and attained; INFRACO Companies have been licensed to deploy fibre on an Open Access Basis in Six Geopolitical Zones of the country and Lagos State. Approval to commence rollout was given in April, 2021.

According to him, they have developed and secured the Federal Executive Council approval on Nigerian 5G Policy to guide deployments of 5G services nationwide, while acknowledging efforts of the Honourable Minister of Communication & Digital Economy, Prof. Isa Ali Ibrahim Pantami.

In addition, he said, NCC has successfully licensed 2 lots of 100 MHz bandwidth in the 3.5 GHz Spectrum band for 5G deployment in December 2021, just as they set up and expanded the Internet Exchange Point capacity of 930 MB/s for Abuja to Lagos Route, 620 MB/s for Abuja to Kano Route, 310 MB/s for Lagos.

Capital Importation...

Continued from PAGE 01

by the Republic of South Africa and the United States of America valued at $117.50 million (7.47%) and $82.07 million (5.22%) respectively.

The NBS report also stated that Company Income Tax (CIT) level in Q1 2022 came to N532.48 billion, a growth rate of 53.09% on a quarter-on-quarter basis from N347.81billion in Q4 2021.

'Local payments recorded were N209.13 billion in Q1 2022, while Foreign CIT Payment contributed N323.35 billion. On a quarter-on-quarter basis, the activities of extra-territorial organisations and bodies recorded the highest growth rate with 60.61%, followed by Education with 39.76%, and Construction with 38.98%.'

On the other hand, activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use had the lowest growth rate with -79.94%, followed by Accommodation and Food Service with -51.07%.

'In terms of sectoral contributions, the top three largest shares in Q1 2022 were Manufacturing with 21.31%, Information and Communication with 14.03% and Financial and insurance with 12.20%. Conversely, the Activities of households as employers, undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use recorded the least share with 0.02%, followed by Activities of Water Supply, Sewerage, Waste Management and Remediation with 0.19%, and Activities of Extra-territorial Organisations and Bodies with 0.34%. However, on a year-on-year basis, CIT collections in Q1 2022 increased by 35.61% from Q1 2021.'

Stanbic IBTC Boosts Healthcare Sector via N10bn Investment

In fulfilment of its corporate social investment initiative pillars in Education, Economic Empowerment and Health, Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc continued to partner with stakeholders in the Nigerian health sector to further strengthen the system and give Nigerians access to quality and affordable healthcare.

Wole Adeniyi, Chief Executive, Stanbic IBTC Bank Plc, pointed out that asides taking part in various strategic partnerships with healthcare providers in the country, the organisation had so far contributed over N10.2 billion to boost the growth of the sector.

According to Wole, Stanbic IBTC Bank had contributed immensely to growing the Nigerian healthcare sector in several ways, including through the CBN Healthcare Sector Loan, which made available flexible loan facilities to stakeholders.

He added that out of the N10.2 billion, the Bank provided a N6.7 billion loan facility for the building of BAZE University Private Teaching Hospital in Abuja in 2021, and that the Bank created a N2 billion special fund for health care providers to buy equipment and improve health care delivery.

The Chief Executive noted that Stanbic IBTC Bank recently partnered with ISN Medical to offer interest-free loans of up to N1.5 billion to clinics, medical laboratories, diagnostic centres, and other healthcare providers for the procurement of medical diagnostic and healthcare products.

He stressed that through meaningful collaborations with various stakeholders in the health sector, Nigerians would continue to benefit tremendously from easy access to quality healthcare.

Speaking on the recent ISN partnership, Wole said: "We are happy to be part of this partnership. We believe that there are several benefits that both parties can derive from this collaboration. The loan facilities will go a long way in enabling healthcare providers to have access to up to N1.5 billion in medical equipment finance.

Chagoury Connection...

Continued from PAGE 01

The report also states that Bill Clinton was present and spoke at the formal dedication ceremony of Eko Atlantic in February 2013.

In 2003, Chagoury was forced to pay a fine nearing $2 million to the US Government following investigation into his political campaign contributions that eventually resulted in the said resignation of Congressman Fortenberry.

Commenting on the controversy, Mr. Matthew Page, who was the State Department's Lead Intelligence Analyst on Nigeria from 2012 to 2015 said on a phone call from Boston on April 11, 2022:

"We did not have input into that process (purchase of land from Chagoury at Eko Atlantic), or we would have flagged that. Either the U.S. government was incompetent and didn't do that due diligence, or did that due diligence, understood who it was dealing with and basically disregarded the obvious concerns."

Page is now an Associate Fellow at Chatham House in London, UK.

In the same vein, Mr. Gary Kalman, US Director at Transparency International (TI) said the Eko Atlantic- US Consulate deal sends 'mixed signals' on the commitment of the Biden Administration to tackle the issue of international corruption around the world.

Quartz Africa reported Kalman as saying by phone from Washington D.C. on April 7, 2022:

"Couldn't you find another piece of property? This doesn't really fit."

Jessica Tillipman, Assistant Dean for Government Procurement Law Studies at George Washington University Law School was also reported to have said on a phone call from Washington D.C on April 7, 2022:

"I don't know any COs that would want to award a contract with somebody that has a checkered criminal history."

Defending the land deal, the US State Department claimed that the purchase contact was made by an international property consultant, saying via Bloomberg, that it "follows a standard and exhaustive process managed by career real-estate professionals."

A prominent Pro-Democracy and Human Rights Crusader who craved anonymity told Business Journal in Lagos:

"It is incredible that the US Government willingly inked such a land deal at Eko Atlantic with Gilbert Chagoury knowing the long history of criminal and money laundering allegations against Chagoury and his business empire in Nigeria and abroad. This is yet another reason why some accuse America of hypocrisy and double standard. They preach anti-corruption and still engage in business deals with well-known criminal elements. Very sad indeed."

The US Embassy in Abuja and management of Eko Atlantic declined response to email enquiries on the issue from Business Journal.

2023: THE COST OF PARTY NOMINATION FORMS

APC:
President: 100m
Governor: 50m
Senate: 20m
House of Rep: 10m
State House of Assembly: 2m

PDP:
President: 40m
Governor: 21m
Senate: 3.5M
House of Reps: 2.5m
State House of Assembly: 600,000

SDP:
President: 35m
Governor: 16m
Senate: 3m
House of Reps: 1.7m
State House of Assembly: 500,000

ADC:
President: 25m
Governor: 12m
Senate: 2.5m
House of Reps: 1.5m
State House of Assembly: 500,000

APGA:
President: 25m
Governor: 15m
Senate: 10m
House of Reps: 7m
State House of Assembly: 2.5M

AA:
President: 15m
Governor: 6m
Senate: 3m
House of Reps: 1.5m
State House of Assembly: 500,000

Company News

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Nigeria Air Secures Operating License from FAAN

The Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) has granted Air Transport License (ATL) to the interim management of the emerging national carrier, Nigeria Air to enable the airline commence both scheduled and non-scheduled passenger and cargo services in the country.

It would be recalled that Hadi Sirika, the Minister of Aviation unveiled the logo of Nigeria Air in July 2018 in London with a promise to actualise the process by the end of that year. But the process had been stalled since then.

Sirika said on the latest development and operating structure: "The Federal Government of Nigeria will own 5percent, Nigerians will own 46 percent and the international partner airlines will take 49 percent shares."

Reacting, Mr. Kingsley Nwokoma, President, Foreign Airlines and Representatives in Nigeria said: "The Minister has been on this for a while and apparently, it looks like one of the key projects he wants to achieve before leaving office. This has taken a long time. It is important that we have investors in place because it is not the government that is to fully run the airline and we've been told that Nigerians will also have the opportunity to invest."

FMBN Recovers N7bn out of N48.3bn Owed by Mortgage Operators

The Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN) says it has successfully recovered a total sum of N7 billion out of N48.3 billion it advanced to over 200 mortgage banks and housing developers in the country.

The breakdown of the recovery shows that the sum of N6, 462, 286, 052.87 came from estate developers that defaulted while Primary Mortgage Institutions (PMIs) repaid N626, 230, 991.80, making a total sum of N7, 088, 517, 044.67.

In a joint letter signed by Mr. Kingsley Chukwuma, Executive Director (Business Development & Portfolio Management) and Mr. Lawan Sauri, Group Head, Corporate Communications, the FMBN said: "On the Bank's efforts in recovering the outstanding debts, we have made sustained strides resulting in 29 non-performing loan accounts with a total exposure of N20, 715, 644, 546. 52 approved for closure. This was as a result of the review and approval of exit proposals from the estate developers. Secondly, the bank has taken over some funded projects (Tome Nigeria Limited, Skan Investments Limited and Hydraform Engineering Limited) from the developers in order to micro-manage the projects to completion to enable us to recover our investment on such projects. Other projects taken over by the bank include: International Business Bureau Limited, Delrot Nigeria Limited and Terraquest Development Company Limited amounting to N3, 412, 053, 708. 00."

SEC Tackles Fraud, Unclaimed Dividends via Identity System

The Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC) plans to tackle the lingering menace of insider fraud and unclaimed dividends in the capital market in Nigeria through the introduction and implementation of a unique identity management system.

Mr. Lamido Yuguda, Director-General of SEC made the disclosure during a courtesy visit to the management of Nigeria Data Protection Bureau (NDPB) in Abuja.

"The Bureau and the Commission can collaborate to ensure that institutions under my supervision should comply with NDPB as we have a lot of leverage over the institutions that work in the capital market-so, we can put more emphasis on compliance in our interaction."

In his response, Dr. Vincent Olatunji, the National Commissioner of NDPB said: "The whole world is a global village and we are constantly interacting over various issues. The sector had the highest contribution to our GDP last year and that speaks volumes. Over 104 million Nigerians go on the Internet daily and we are committed to ensuring the protection of the data of Nigerians."

Stanbic IBTC Drives Job Creation via Graduate Trainee Program

Stanbic IBTC continued to champion the job creation drive in Nigeria through initiatives such as its graduate trainee programme and various entrepreneurial programmes, which had created job opportunities for Nigerians.

Dr. Demola Sogunle, Chief Executive, Stanbic IBTC Holdings PLC commented on the financial institutions' role as a job provider in Nigeria. He said the financial services provider was always at the forefront in bridging Nigeria's unemployment deficit through its various programmes and provided necessary tools for its graduands to navigate through the 21st century job environment.

"As a financial institution that placed much value on job creation, Stanbic IBTC continued to provide various employment opportunities geared at bridging the nation's unemployment gap. Through our various graduate trainee programmes, we had ushered successful candidates out of the despair of unemployment and economic instability. Unemployment figure released by the National Bureau of Statistics was quite high, at 33.3 per cent." Demola said.

"Graduates under our trainee programmes were exposed to seasoned subject experts in artificial intelligence and machine learning, financial management, data, cloud and blockchain technology. Stanbic IBTC has enabled numerous graduates to be prepared for the future," he added.

MTN, Mafab to Commence 5G Rollout on August 24

MTN Nigeria Plc and Mafab Communications Limited are expected to rollout 5G technologies by August 24, 2022 according to the NCC while issuing final letters of license awards to the two operators, having won the Fifth Generation (5G) Spectrum Licencing auction.

The NCC said with the issuance of the final letters, MTN Nigeria and Mafab Communications are expected to accelerate the deployment of the 5G, which will "usher Nigeria into a more robust Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and a more digitized Nigerian economy."

"The 5G network, when deployed, will bring a lot of benefits and opportunities that will engender accelerated growth and smart living in the country. The technology is also expected to bring substantial network improvements, including higher connection speed, mobility, and capacity, as well as low-latency capabilities," the NCC explains.

The auction of the 3.5 gigahertz spectrum (for the 5G network) was carried out on December 13, 2021. Three operators participated, MTN Nigeria, Airtel Nigeria, and Mafab Communications Limited.

On February 22, 2022, the National Frequency Management Council (NFMC) officially handed 5G spectrum allocation and government-approved policy to the NCC which later confirmed the payment of US$273.6 million by each of the licensees.

Sovereign Trust Insurance Partners Rotary Club on Project Wash

Sovereign Trust Insurance Plc in collaboration with Rotary Club of Lagos, Lekki Phase 1 and Victoria Garden City, (VGC), have inaugurated the 'Project WASH' initiative (Water, Sanitation & Hygiene) with the commissioning of a borehole, wash hand basins, renovation of toilets and water treatment plant at Edward Blyden Memorial Nursery and Primary School, Lafiaji, Lagos Island on May 25, 2022.

Project WASH is aimed at providing education, awareness, and funding to supply clean drinking water and sanitation education to schools and children in underdeveloped regions of the world according to UNICEF.

The Commissioner of Education in Lagos State, Folashade Adefisayo, was ably represented at the commissioning of the project by an Assistant Director in the Ministry of Education, District 1, in the person of Folashade Adewuyi.

Other dignitaries included the President of Rotary Club of Lagos, Rotn. Wale Agbeyangi, the President of Rotary Club, Lekki Phase 1, Rotn. Ifeoma Anieze-Corona and the President, Rotary Club, Victoria Garden City, Rotn. Sunny Nwachukwu.

The team from Sovereign Trust Insurance plc was led by the Executive Director, Technical, Jude Modilim and the Deputy General Manager-in-Charge of Corporate Communications and Investor Relations, Corporate Spotlight

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The Official Launch of NCDMB/ NAICOM Insurance Guidelines

SPEECH BY ENGR. SIMBI KESIYE WABOTE, THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NIGERIAN CONTENT DEVELOPMENT & MONITORING BOARD (NCDMB) DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE NCDMB/ NAICOM INSURANCE GUIDELINES ON THE 8TH OF JUNE, 2022 AT THE NIGERIAN CONTENT TOWER, SWALI, YENAGOA, BAYELSA STATE.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome the Commissioner for the National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) and his team to the Nigerian Content Tower, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State for the official launch of the NCDMB/ NAICOM Insurance Guidelines.

We acknowledge the distance you and your team had to travel to make this brief but very important event a reality. This reflects the seriousness that you and your team attach to the collaboration between the Board and NAICOM. I appreciate you and your entire team. I do not take this gesture from the NAICOM team for granted.

Let me also acknowledge the presence of Management and Staff of the Board here present. Thank you all for being present here.

Today's event marks yet another giant stride in our quest to actualize the Board's mandate under the NOGICD Act, 2010, which is primarily to drive and promote Nigerian Content in the Nigerian Oil and Gas industry.

This event is the culmination of consistent, persistent and rigorous engagement between the Board and NAICOM in the last twelve months. This engagement, and the outcome, between the two agencies speak to the advantage derived from collaboration.

The success of our engagement, earmarked by this launch of the Insurance Guidelines, further attests to my belief that the local content enforcement and implementation is not a sprint but a marathon.

I am delighted to announce that this Insurance Guidelines addresses loopholes that have been identified by the Board in implementing the provisions of the NOGICD Act, particularly sections 49 and 50.

As we are aware, the combined provisions of sections 49 and 50 require all operators engaged in any form of activity or project in the Oil and Gas industry to "insure all insurable risks related to its oil and gas business…with an insurance company, through an insurance broker registered in Nigeria."

The NOGICD Act provides that where an operator seeks to place an insurable risk offshore, a written approval of NAICOM must first be sought and obtained and that NAICOM, prior to the issuance of the approval, must first determine that "…local capacity has been fully exhausted."

The essence of the above provisions of the NOGICD Act was to ensure the full utilization of available in-country capacity in the Insurance sector before seeking offshore insurance services. This is expected to support retention of capital in-country and build capacity of Nigerian insurance companies in the oil and gas industry.

It is believed that the implementation of this Insurance Guidelines will further strengthen the Board's local content drive and ensure that a greater portion of the spend in the Insurance industry as it relates to oil and gas activities in Nigeria is retained in-country.

The Nigerian Content Tower, Swali, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

I am therefore excited that this Insurance Guidelines, drawn up by the Board and NAICOM, will lead to more value addition and usage of Nigerian insurance firms and insurance brokers registered in Nigeria.

Distinguish ladies and gentlemen, I am glad to announce that today's launch of the Insurance Guidelines marks the first step in the implementation of the Guidelines. This is following the series of meetings over the past one week between representatives of the Board and NAICOM to draft the framework implementation plan, which has now been concluded.

Let me conclude by reminding us that this event is another step by the Board to attaining 70% Nigerian Content by 2027 under the Board's 10-Year Strategic Roadmap.

Finally, the Board is delighted to collaborate further with NAICOM to ensure the successful implementation of the Insurance Guidelines and every other activity that will lead to the attainment of the objectives of the NOGICD Act, 2010.

We will further dissipate information about the new Insurance Guidelines during the Nigerian Content Seminar session at the 2022 Nigerian Oil and Gas Event scheduled for next month, 4th to 7th July 2022 in Abuja. I look forward to seeing you at the event as we deepen the discussions on the requirements and benefits of the Insurance Guideline to industry practitioners.

Thank you for your kind attention.

L-R: Engr. Simbi Wabote, Executive Secretary, Nigerian Content Development & Monitoring Board (NCDMB) and Mr. O. S. Thomas, Commissioner for Insurance/CEO, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) at the official launch of the NCDMB/NAICOM Insurance Guidelines at the Nigerian Content Tower, Swali, Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

L-R: Simbi Wabote and O.S. Thomas at the launch

A cross section of the Management of NCDMB and NAICOM Delegation at the launch.

Consolidated Hallmark Insurance: N16bn Total Assets, N10.5bn Premium, N972m Profit in 2021

Mr. Obinna Ekezie, the Chairman of Consolidated Hallmark Insurance Plc said the 2021 financial year was another success story for the company despite the persisting challenges in the operating environment.

Ekezie told shareholders at the 27th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Lagos that both the top and bottom lines recorded growths as the insurer generated an all-time high Gross Premium Written of N10.5 billion. When compared with the N9.8 billion recorded in the corresponding period of 2020, this represents a growth of 7.4%.

"The Profit Before Tax grew significantly by 26%, from N772.6m in 2020 to N971.7m in 2021, while Profit After Tax grew by 17%, from N678.0 million in 2020 to N790.6m in 2021. Your company also created additional value during the year by growing the Group's total assets from N 14.3 billion in 2020 to N15.7 billion in 2021, a growth rate of approximately 10%. Also, despite the prevailing micro economic environment, Investment Income grew from N940 million to N1.2 billion in 2021."

On the future outlook, Ekezie said:

"The realities of the effects of the pandemic have since dawned on all locally and internationally, principally affecting the way operations are conducted. Your company is in tune with the new normal in the work environment.

With the full opening of the global economic space to pre pandemic levels, we are poised to take advantage of our larger size to continually grow the numbers.

2023 is another year of elections and expected democratic change, with the attendant political risks and uncertainties. We remain hopeful that with our unfolding Group structure and attendant reinvigoration of operations by all member companies, our share of the various markets we operate in shall continue to grow. Ours is a quest to become one of the top players in the financial services sector. Our emergence as a one-stop-shop for the array of services we now offer is in line with this."

Mr. Eddie Efekoha, Group Managing Director/CEO of CHI Plc said the company's investments in technological tools to aid such transactions have been a top priority.

"A self-service portal is now live and with a visit to https://einsurance.chiplc.com customers and prospects alike can access some of our key classes of insurance including Motor (Third Party, Comprehensive, CHI Prime (Third Party with limited own damage cover) and Goods-In-Transit. Motor Claims registration and tracking can also be carried out on the portal."

The 27th AGM of Consolidated Hallmark Insurance Plc

NAICOM, NCDMB Sign Mou on Insurance Guidelines

The National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) and the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) officially launched and unveiled Guidelines on Submission of Insurance Programme by Operators, Project Promoters, Alliance Partners and Indigenous Companies in the Nigerian Oil & Gas Industry recently. The ceremony took place at the Headquarters of the NCDMB in Yenagoa, Bayelsa State.

Present at the ceremony from the insurance sector were the CFI, the Deputy Commissioner for Insurance, Technical Alhaji Sabiu Bello Abubakar, NAICOM Director Policy and Regulations, Mr. Leonard Akah, Chairman, Nigeria Insurers Association, Mr. Ganiyu Musa and Mr. Tunde Oguntade who represented the President of NCRIB.

L-R: Simbi Wabote and O.S. Thomas at the launch

BudgIT Commends FG on 2021 Open Budget Survey Performance

BudgIT commends the Federal Government's performance and huge improvement in the recently released 2021 Open Budget Survey (OBS) by the International Budget Partnership (IBP).

According to the survey which was conducted in 120 countries; Nigeria, Benin Republic and The Gambia made the league of the biggest improvers in the Open Budget Index, specifically on transparency, public participation and institutional oversight.

Recall that Nigeria's performance in the 2019 Open Budget Survey was below expectation, with a total score of 21/100 in transparency, 22/100 in public participation and 55/100 in institutional oversight. However, the 2021 OBS reveals that Nigeria has made some progress based on the 3 metrics used. According to the report, Nigeria scored 26/100 in public participation, 61/100 in Oversight and 45/100 in transparency. The overall open budget index score stood at 45/100.

"This depicts an all-round improvement in the 3 metrics although some are more significant than others,"said Gabriel Okeowo, BudgIT's Country Director.

Nigeria's 2021 OBS performance can be attributed to its improved timeliness in publishing budget documents, improvements in inclusions in the budget processes, enhanced comprehensive documentation made available to the public and better institutional oversight roles in the budget process during the pandemic year, enhanced by the reviewed 2020 budget as a result of the pandemic and fluctuations in oil prices.

"We are heartened to see the progress that Nigeria and other countries have made in the survey," said Austin Ndiokwelu, Nigeria's Country manager for IBP.

"Inclusion pays dividends. We urge governments to sustain progress and engage communities more meaningfully around revenue and spending priorities. Community feedback can help governments better manage vital public resources." he added.

"We are delighted to see the commendable improvements made by Nigeria in the 2021 Open Budget Survey", Okeowo added.

"There is still a need for better transparency, enhanced mechanisms for public participation and engagements in the budget process, oversight functions performed by the Supreme Audit Institution and the Legislature, and improved timeliness in publishing detailed budget documents, especially Audit Reports."

AIICO Restates Commitment to Annuity Business for Sustainable Growth

AIICO Insurance Plc has reiterated its commitment to providing robust annuity service that meets customers' expectations as well as drives the growth of insurance business in the country.

Mr. Babatunde Fajemirokun, Managing Director/CEO, AIICO Insurance Plc made the disclosure yesterday at the 3rd Edition of AIICO Annual Media Training organised for members of the National

Association of Insurance and Pension Correspondents (NAIPCO) in Lagos.

Fajemirokun, who was represented at the occasion by the Head, Strategic Marketing and Communications, Mr. Segun Olalandu, said AIICO Insurance is doing everything possible to deepen annuity business in order to take advantage of its inherent opportunities.

While emphasising the importance of the collaboration between AIICO Insurance and NAIPCO, he said: "Our partnership with you as journalists, especially in respect of today's training on Annuity is an indication of our commitment to the growth of this business."

Speaking on the theme of the training, which is, 'Understanding Annuity Business,' Mr. Victor Owotorose, Senior Manager, Business Development, AIICO Insurance, stressed the importance and benefits of annuity to the clients and the growth of insurance industry.

"Many aspects of an annuity can be tailored to the specific needs of the buyer. In addition to choosing between a lump-sum payment or a series of payments to the insurer, you can choose when you want to

annuitise your contributions—that is, start receiving payments. An annuity that begins paying out immediately is referred to as an immediate annuity, while one that starts at a predetermined date in

the future is called a deferred annuity."

"The duration of the disbursements can also vary. You can choose to receive payments for a specific period of time, such as 25 years, or for the rest of your life. Of course, securing a lifetime of payments

can lower the amount of each check, but it helps ensure that you don't outlive your assets, which is one of the main selling points of annuities."

Earlier in his opening remarks, Mr. Chuks Udo Okonta, NAIPCO Chairman, thanked AIICO for the continued sponsorship of the training program which he said is the third in its series.

Chuks, who is also the Publisher of Inspenonline, said NAIPCO members will maximise the knowledge gained at the training to enrich the content of their reports and articles.

Only 5% of MSMEs Have Access to Credit in Nigeria–CRC GMD

Osai Igwe

Access to consumer credit in Nigeria has grown astronomically over the years. Credit bureau penetration has also grown over the years, but it is still relatively low when compared with other countries.

Tunde Popoola, Group Managing Director/CEO of CRC Credit Bureau Limited, stated the above while delivering his speech with the Theme: The Role of Credit Reporting in Facilitating Consumer Credits at the May 2022 Forum of the Finance and Business Online Publishers' Association (FiBOP) held in Lagos.

"Credit bureau penetration indicates the number of adults' population covered by credit bureau. It is a database of the number of consumers and businesses enjoying credit in an economy. Nigeria's credit bureau penetration in 2019 was 14 percent, compared with 30 per cent in Kenya, 25 per cent in Morocco, 79 percent in Brazil and 83 per cent in Malaysia. Of course, credit bureau penetration will certainly be low where credit to the private sector is low. It is just an expression of the fact that only few consumers and businesses have access to formal sources of credit in Nigeria", he said.

The low access to credit in Nigeria according to him is practically demonstrated in various ways, apart from through credit penetration and credit bureau coverage. First, only few Nigerian consumers and SMEs enjoy credit facilities from Nigerian banks. According to statistics, Nigeria could boast of over 41 million micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

"In a report jointly released by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on January 12, 2022, the MSMEs represent over 96.7 per cent of total businesses in Nigeria; they contribute about 46.31 percent to GDP and 6.21 per cent of gross exports during the year under review. However, less than 5% of Nigeria MSMEs have access to credit", he noted.

"Furthermore, Nigeria has been characterized by significant disproportionate allocation of credit to different sectors. The sectors that contribute the most are denied credit while credit goes to the sector with relatively little contribution to the GDP.

"For example, while agriculture contributed over 21 per cent to GDP in 2018, the share of bank credit to agriculture was the lowest at 3.8 per cent. On the other hand, while oil and gas received 23 percent of bank credit, its contribution to share of GDP was less than 10 per cent. In addition, the cost of borrowing is very steep in Nigeria, and this serves as a disincentive to borrowing to a lot of businesses especially the SMEs", maintained the GMD.

At the African Exchanges Linkage Project (AELP) 2022 Forum in Lagos.

Telecom Tax: LCCI Seeks Regulatory Environment that Promotes Enterprise

The Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) has called on the Federal Government of Nigeria, (FGN) to create a regulatory environment that promotes enterprise.

Chinyere Almona, Director-General, Lagos Chamber of Commerce & Industry made this call while reacting to the new telecom tax in Nigeria,

"Beyond the cost of taxation on telecoms operators, we wish to call the government's attention to creating a regulatory environment that promotes enterprise—investing more in telecoms infrastructure for a thriving digital economy and minimising the disruptions to telecoms companies' operations while enforcing tax compliance", she added.

"The realised funds must be well managed to achieve the objective of the tax. A fair and transparent system is critical in identifying the 'vulnerable group' that qualifies for the Vulnerable Group Fund. The N876 bilion allocation to health in the 2022 Federal Budget is 5.1 percent of the total budget and lower than the 15 percent minimum allocation as agreed in the Abuja Declaration of 2001. Nigeria's health sector requires and deserves more allocation considering the state of healthcare delivery in our nation today", she added.

"The recently signed National Health Insurance Authority Bill 2021 (replacing the National Health Insurance Scheme Act, 2004) by President Muhammadu Buhari, places a new telecoms tax equivalent to a minimum of one kobo per second on phone calls by subscribers. The realised funds, estimated to be about N90 billion yearly, are meant to finance free healthcare for the vulnerable groups – children under five, pregnant women, the aged, and physically and mentally challenged Nigerians.

The Lagos Chamber recognises the government's struggle with providing healthcare services in the face of the economic realities we face as a nation today."

The private sector has always shown its commitment to supporting the government's efforts in providing some public infrastructure for the common good of all or mainly for the underprivileged. Since the liberalisation of the telecoms sector in 1999, licensed GSM operators have invested heavily in infrastructure to guarantee quality service to telecom subscribers.

Due to the rising cost of operations, telecom companies under the Association of Licensed Telecommunication Operators of Nigeria (ALTON) have put a plan in place for a proposed 40% increase in the cost of calls, SMS, and data in the coming weeks.

"The implications of all of these are that subscribers will be made to pay more for telecom services. And companies that depend heavily on the telecommunication infrastructure to deliver their services will likely begin to incur an additional cost burden even as they currently struggle to comply with about thirty-six different taxes", she explained.

Finance Minister Commissions NAICOM Portal for Insurance Development

Dr. (Mrs.) Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Hon. Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning and the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and Planning has Commissioned the NAICOM Portal. The Portal is one of the initiatives of NAICOM being pursued to deepen the insurance market and increase the penetration to the level that is consistent with the nation's economy.

Mr. O. S. Thomas, the Commissioner for Insurance/CEO of NAICOM expressed delight that the Portal Project has become a reality and commended the support of the Minister in that regard.

"As some of us may be aware, the Commission in July 2009, embarked on a comprehensive computerization effort tagged project e-regulation that was meant to transform its operational procedures and the conduct of its regulatory responsibilities by providing a robust, world class ICT Infrastructure to help implement an automated business processes internally and for industry wide supervision via an integrated platform."

He said the Portal is presently made up of four systems:

The Policy System - It captures ALL insurance policies issued in Nigeria online real time via Application Programming Interface (APIs). It generates a unique policy identification number for all issued policies necessary to ensure fidelity and validity of all policies in the country and manages information on all insurance policies and premiums. It enables insurance customers and third-party entities such as Law Enforcement Agencies to query and validate insurance policies.

Licensing System- It automates the core business processes of Registration/Renewal of Licenses, New Products, AIP no objection & Attestation approvals at NAICOM. All of these application processes will proceed digitally from the application stage where all supporting documents are provided, to the review stage, the approval stage and license generation where applicable.

Complaints Management System- This is a customized solution designed to help the Commission manage complaints and handle issues seamlessly as well as ensure that insurance companies are performing highly and clients are serviced adequately. The system is also designed to integrate directly with NAICOM existing database, utilizing existing records of customers and insurance companies; it incorporates multiple channels for initiation of complaints including Social Media applications (Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter), Direct action on the complaint portal, Walk-in complainants, Regular media, Emails &SMS (Short Code) and Unstructured Supplementary Service Data (USSD)

L-R: Executive Director, Technical Operations, NEM Insurance Plc, Mr. Sunday Joshua Adebayo; Executive Director, Branch Operations & Special Assignments, NEM Insurance Plc, Mr. Momoh Abdurrahaman Odamah; Director, NEM Insurance Plc, Mrs Joy Teluwo; Chairman of the Board, NEM Insurance Plc, Dr. Fidelis Ayebae, and Group Managing Director/CEO, NEM Insurance Plc, Mr. Tope Smart, during the company's 52nd Annual General Meeting held at NEM House, Obanikoro, Lagos.

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- The sponsors of The Nigeria Prize for Science and The Nigeria Prize for Literature with cash award of **$100,000** which have grown into Africa's most prestigious awards.

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- provide employment opportunities for more than **10,000 Nigerians**
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The NAICOM Committee to Drive AfCFTA Roadmap for Insurance Sector in Nigeria

Recently, Mr. O. S. Thomas, the Commissioner for Insurance/CEO, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) inaugurated the National Action Committee (NAC) on implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) in the insurance industry in Nigeria.
Below are key segments of the initiative.

Thomas: 'The formation of the Committee is in furtherance of our resolve to ensure that the Nigerian insurance industry not only responds appropriately to developments in the larger society but is united in its responses to these developments.'

It will be recalled, sequel to the need to enhance involvement of the Nigerian insurance industry in the activities of the National Action Committee on African Continental Free Trade Area (NAC AfCFTA), it was resolved at the 9th Meeting of the Insurers' Committee held on 1st of July 2021 that each arm of the Nigerian insurance industry should nominate experienced representatives to participate on the relevant Workstream of the National Action Committee on AfCFTA (NAC-AfCFTA).

To give effect to this resolution, the different arms of the Nigerian Insurance Industry were requested to nominate/provide representatives that would work/liaise with the NAC-AfCFTA. Even though the nominations were subsequently conveyed to NAC-AfCFTA, there has been no effective engagements between NAC-AfCFTA and the representatives.

Nonetheless, implementation of the AfCFTA agreement has gained tremendous traction. In fact, the Commission has recently been requested by the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations (NOTN) to participate in several meetings including to receive/verify final Schedule of Specific Commitment, for onward transmission to the Senior Trade Officials.

The NAC-AfCFTA has also informed the Commission of its intention to organise another stakeholders' workshop for the Nigerian insurance sector.

Sequel to these developments, at the 11th Meeting of the Insurers' Committee held on 7th April 2022 in Lagos, it was resolved that a standing committee should be constituted to coordinate the Nigerian insurance industry's response as well as develop and implement strategies/measure to ensure that the Nigerian insurance industry effectively exploits the benefits of AfCFTA.

Consequently, in order to avoid duplication of committees and save time, it was resolved that the earlier representatives/nominees of NIA, NCRIB and ILAN, that were forwarded to NAC-AfCFTA, be transformed into a Standing Committee of the Nigerian Insurance Industry that will deal with matters relating to AfCFTA.

The NIA, NCRIB and ILAN were thus consulted to reaffirm or update their nominees while NAICOM also designated some of its staff as members of the Committee.

The Terms of Reference

The Committee is to co-ordinate the Nigerian insurance industry's strategic response to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as well as to liaise with relevant agencies of government and other bodies on the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in the Nigerian insurance industry.

The Terms of Reference of the Committee include the following:

- Co-ordinate and articulate the Nigerian insurance industry's response to the AfCFTA Agreement and its implementation.
- Develop and ensure implementation of measures to ensure that the industry effectively exploits the benefits of AfCFTA.
- Develop and ensure implementation of measures to protect the Nigerian insurance industry from being negatively impacted by AfCFTA.
- Engage and/or liaise with relevant bodies and agencies such as the National Action Committee on AfCFTA, Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations on implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement and any such body.
- Lead bilateral negotiations with any interested State Party regarding the Nigerian insurance sector.
- Regularly consult with relevant stakeholders to ensure that positions or views canvassed are reflective of the interest of the Nigerian insurance industry.
- Attend relevant meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, etc and articulate the Nigerian insurance industry's views on AfCFTA.
- Submit regular updates/reports regarding developments on AfCFTA and activities of the Committee to NAICOM.
- Carry out such other relevant activity(s) that the Committee may consider beneficial to the Nigerian insurance industry in respect of AfCFTA implementation.

The Commission has already informed the National Action Committee on AfCFTA of the constitution of the Committee including the membership and Terms of Reference of the Committee.

Thomas concluded: "We have also enjoined the National Action Committee on AfCFTA to collaborate with the Committee on matters relating to the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in order to ensure that it is done in the overall interest of the Nigerian insurance industry.

It is noteworthy to restate that your appointment into this Committee is in recognition of your vast experience, track record of selfless service and dedication to the cause of the Nigerian insurance industry, which the industry believes will aid attainment of the mandate of the Committee which is to ensure beneficial implementation of the AfCFTA."

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

S/N	Name	Organization	Role
1.	Mrs. Ekeoma Esther Ezeibe		Chairman
2.	Mr. Tunde Hassan-Odukale	NIA	Member
3.	Mrs. Funmi Omo	NIA	Member
4.	Mrs. Yetunde Ilori	NIA	Member
5.	Mr. Shola Ajibade	PRAN	Member
6.	Mr. SinaElusakin	NCRIB	Member
7.	Mr. Eric Omozejele	NCRIB	Member
8.	Mrs. Bimbo Onakomaiya	NCRIB	Member
9.	Mr. Bola Temowo	ILAN	Member
10.	Pst. Ikechukwu Udobi	ILAN	Member
11.	Chief LebiOmoboyowa	ILAN	Member
12.	Mr. Usman Jankara	NAICOM	Member
13.	Mr. Taiwo Adeoye	NAICOM	Member
14.	Mr. Ahmed Metteden	NAICOM	Member
15.	Mr. Lanre Ojuola	NIA	Secretary

We have also enjoined the National Action Committee on AfCFTA to collaborate with the Committee on matters relating to the implementation of the AfCFTA Agreement in order to ensure that it is done in the overall interest of the Nigerian insurance industry

Mr. O.S. Thomas, the Commissioner for Insurance/CEO, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) recently led an official delegation to the Government of Katsina State for partnership on Deepening Insurance Penetration and Implementation of Compulsory Insurances in the State.

3 Reasons Why Nigerian Entertainers Are Mostly Uninsured

Ekerete Ola Gam-Ikon

In 2002, I had the opportunity of sitting in an afternoon meeting of selected persons from both the insurance and entertainment industries at the section of the National Stadium, Surulere in Lagos used for entertainment at thw time.

As I listened to the concerns raised by the stakeholders from the entertainment side, comprised mostly of Actors, Directors, Producers and Scriptwriters, I knew that the insurance industry then could not deliver the products and even the services needed.

For example, the Actors, some of whom have become legends today, wanted to know if they would be compensated if the accident resulted from a stunt action in a film. Of course, this was (is) an exemption from a standard Personal Accident Insurance Policy, so the answer then was NO and we will only have to confirm if position has changed 20 years after.

The insurance professionals were interested to have the entertainers take the available traditional products - Life, Personal Accident, Fire and Burglary policies, which did not quite seem to connect with their critical needs.

Amongst the actors were a few who were already struggling with critical illnesses, which health insurance could address but was not part of what insurers offered then.

When Producers and Directors described in concise details their roles on the shooting locations and concerns about highly valued equipment including cameras, it was easy for us (insurers/brokers) to recommend All Risks Insurance coverage for those moveable equipment.

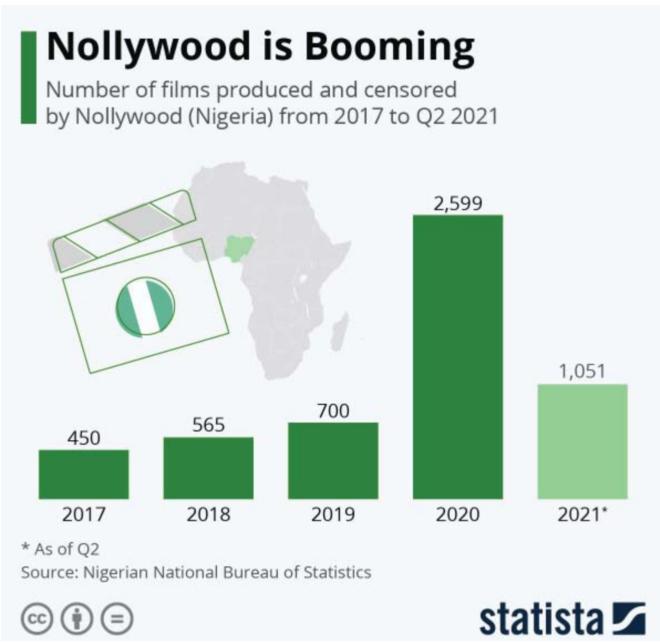
However, the discussions changed for the insurance side when it was confirmed that the Producers and Directors were not the owners of the equipment and only hired them on need basis.

In the larger entertainment industry in Nigeria with musicians, comedians, comperes, on-air personalities, dancers and skit makers, the stories are the same; 98 percent of them are not insured against common risks of death, disabilities, critical illnesses arising from accidents or attacks.

Teeming fans, followers and admirers of celebrated entertainers always do not know that they are without insurance until the unexpected occurs and some shocking piece of news get circulated, quite often, about raising funds to assist the entertainers or their immediate families.

Interestingly, managers of international entertainers coming to perform in Nigeria insist on sighting the insurance documents for the venue of the event as part of the agreement with the organizers. How many of our event centres in Nigeria where our celebrated entertainers gather are insured?

Today, whilst we continue to discuss how both insurance and entertainment can be of value to one another, we found three (3) reasons why the insurance of entertainers in Nigeria may remain challenging:



- Entertainers Think Insurance is For the Financially Disadvantaged

Quite often, when entertainers leave the starter stage and fame and money begins to come, they are secured by the protection provided by the best security outfits and technology, which they are able to afford, and life can hardly be interrupted by anything unexpected. To them, ill-health just requires medical attention which they can afford.

So as long as there are scriptwriters, they will be films to produce and direct and money to be made; similarly, once people and organizations seek to gather, they will be need to entertain them and money will change hands.

The common thinking is that the money will continue to flow so long as the entertainers show up on our TV screens or event centres; and if you have money to fix the problem that insurance is promising to attend to, why do you need to show any sign that you are financially disadvantaged.

The irony of life is that accidents and incidents, sometimes just creep into one's space and causes such havoc that many find very challenging to recover from for a long period of time.

Unfortunately, once you miss showing up where you were required to make people happy, and the news filters out that you were ill, your fame and money begin to dwindle.

When your source of income gradually disappears, while you are in need of money to help your situation, that is when your insurance kicks in. Families and friends have acted as the "insurers" in the absence of a formal insurance policy, which we have been part of without knowing.

Entertainers need to understand and embrace insurance as their long-term partners that can be their source of income when they are unable to keep performing and receiving monies.

Would you not rather have an insurance plan that will be there for you in 15 years when your followership would have changed or reduced thereby affecting your bottomline?

- There is Yet no Entertainment Insurance Product in Nigeria

As observed during the engagement mentioned at the beginning of this article, the needs of entertainers cannot be met by the current insurance products in the Nigerian market.

In more advanced insurance markets, specific insurance coverages have been offered to the entertainment industry and they have been embraced with hundreds of millions of dollars flowing into the insurance industry as premium. One of the highest claims paid to an individual policyholder in the history of the insurance industry globally was made to an entertainer!

Entertainment Insurance is not just about the liabilities of the persons, it also covers the activities of all other stakeholders in the industry including sponsors.

In Nigeria, where the entertainment industry contributes far more to the Gross Domestic Product than the insurance industry, new efforts are being pursued to ensure entertainers see insurance as a strategic tool for sustaining some acceptable level of living after attaining so much fame and wealth.

Our entertainers could be part-owners of banks, tech start-ups or something innovative in other sectors and retire young but not without strong financial planning instruments like insurance.

Hopefully, the push by some insurance players working with leading entertainers and new-thinking insurers will produce insurance coverages that finally meet the needs of entertainers importantly settlement of claims as at when due.

Entertainers are not unaware of the horrifying experiences of claimants and have even reflected these in their films and events whilst entertaining their audiences. So, it just might be helpful to see and hear them communicate better narratives regarding claims settlement.

- Entertainers Hardly Receive Financial Support from Insurance Companies for their Movies and Shows

Mutual collaboration has taken centre stage in the way businesses are conducted and managed all over the world and Africa is not an exception. The value of collaboration cannot be overstated.

However, put simply, value means different things to different people and sectors of any nation's economy. To the entertainment industry, value is represented in fame and money, so when they seek support whether through collaboration or sponsorship, they expect most of it to come as money.

Interestingly, the insurance operators, by the nature of their business, cannot afford to spend unduly from the money (premium) they hold in trust for their policyholders and apply for the payment of claims when due.

Value for insurance operators would be what translates into premium.

To achieve shared values or a win-win for both sides, there has to be an agreement to work together and extract what is desired.

The conversations would start with long term views of the relationship, seeking to understand the working patterns that deliver value to each side, and pushing towards the adoption of digitization to create and scale up the shared value system.

Though it is evident that the insurance industry stands to gain more from the entertainment industry at the initial stage of any collaboration, in the long run, it is the entertainment industry that will be glad it decided to work with insurers, generally known for their prudence and assertiveness.

The bigger winner, of course, will be the Nigerian economy, and Nigerians who would not have to mourn and brood over the untimely death or poor health condition of their celebrated entertainers.

Mutual Benefits Assurance Organises Capacity Building Program for Journalists

Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc has organized a one-day capacity building program for members of the National Association of Insurance & Pension Correspondents (NAIPCO) at the company's head office in Lagos.

Mr. Femi Asenuga, Managing Director/CEO of Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc said the company believes in developing the professional capacity of journalists that cover the insurance industry for greater performance in terms of reportage.

Asenuga described the insurance industry as the bedrock of any economy, leading to sustainable growth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of any nation.

Allianz-Sanlam Alliance: The One-Stop Insurance Shop in 29 Markets in Africa

Recently, two major operators in the African insurance landscape, Allianz and Sanlam unveiled a joint venture projected to become the single insurance on the continent of Africa. In this exclusive interview with Business Journal, ***Amine Benabbou, Head of Business Division****, Africa and Middle East at Allianz SE speaks on the core objectives of the initiative.*

Amine Benabbou
Head of Business Division, Africa and Middle East
Allianz SE

• Congrats on the Allianz, Sanlam initiative. What is the core objective of this market move?

With this joint-venture, Allianz and Sanlam aim to create a premier pan-African financial services entity with operations in 29 countries across the continent (excluding South Africa). It ambitions to be the largest pan-African insurance player with a meaningful market positioning in the majority of the markets in which it will operate. Allianz sees a number of strategic benefits in this partnership, including the ability to combine Sanlam's experience, knowhow, and footprint with Allianz's broad expertise and global capabilities. The partnership will also enable the joint venture to further strengthen its position in key markets on the continent, by achieving scale as well as improved geographic and product diversification. Ultimately, we believe the joint venture will maximize value creation for both Allianz and Sanlam and their respective stakeholders, leveraging on best practice sharing and leaner operations.

•What is the combined capital base of the new entity?

It is too early at this stage to comment on the capital base of the new entity. In any case, both partners are committed to join forces to create a financially sound and solid entity to support their strategies in Africa.

•In how many countries in Africa will you operate?

Allianz and Sanlam's respective footprints in Africa (excluding South Africa) currently overlap in 12 countries. In addition to these the joint venture will also be able to add a further 17 markets in which either Allianz or Sanlam operate. This will allow the JV, subject to regulatory approvals, to span across 29 markets on the continent, making it the largest insurance player in Africa.

• Will the Allianz and Sanlam brand identities still exist?

Yes- we do have a co-branding plan which will be rolled out in due course. Both partners have strong brands that the JV will be able to leverage on, with a best of two worlds approach.

• What is the current market share of the joint brand and future projections?

The long-term plan remains to be a meaningful market player in all key countries in which the joint venture will operate to be able to positively contribute to financial inclusion and insurance penetration.

The joint venture will be the largest Pan-African insurance player and is expected to be ranked in the top three largest players in most of its key markets.

Post implementation we expect to have leading positions in multiple markets including Morocco, Ivory Coast, Uganda and Egypt to name a few. More details will follow once the regulatory process would have advanced.

> The long-term plan remains to be a meaningful market player in all key countries in which the joint venture will operate to be able to positively contribute to financial inclusion and insurance penetration

• Do you foresee challenges from regulators and other operators in the market?

We will certainly be working with the regulators in all relevant markets affected by the proposed JV to secure the required approvals and will work hand-in-hand with them to provide them with the required information. We have already engaged with our regulators and do not foresee at this stage any major roadblock.

• How many customers are already on board and what is the projection going forward?

At this stage, it's Business As Usual (BAU) until the regulatory approvals have been obtained. In the future, customers stand to benefit from the joint expertise, products, and services of the combined abilities of Sanlam's leading African position and Allianz global insurance capabilities. We will inform clients and other stakeholders of any changes, if any, at the appropriate time.

• In which segment (s) of the market will you play significantly?

Allianz and Sanlam both currently provide life and non-life insurance products in their existing businesses in Africa. The joint venture will continue to do so and aims to be a one-stop shop for all insurance needs of its customers.

• What USP is the joint entity bringing to the African market?

We view Africa as a key growth/strategic pillar where we view our combined efforts and experience will yield the largest value creation for all stakeholders.

The JV will help us to realise our strategic ambition to take leadership positions in many of the major markets where we will operate across the continent.

The strategy for the JV is to create value for all stakeholders through leaner operations, broader geographic presence, larger market share, and a more diversifie

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2023: CBN in Show of Shame

The news that INEC will no longer store sensitive election materials at the CBN due to the political partisanship of CBN Governor, Godwin Emefiele is a show of shame for Emefiele himself and the apex bank itself. I also blame Buhari for not mustering the courage to sack Emefiele over his shameful move to contest the presidency of the country while remaining in office as CBN Governor.

The INEC decision is a BIG SLAP on the face of Emefiele and the CBN.

Honestly, I expected Emefiele to have resigned by now to preserve the sanctity of the CBN. In the alternative, Buhari should muster the guts to sack him.

The CBN is bigger than Godwin Emefiele!

---Boyle M. A.
Abuja.

Rising Oil Price & Crashing Foreign Reserves

Nigeria is indeed a country of the absurd. A paradox wrapped/enveloped in Green-White-Green flag!

How can our foreign reserves be crashing down to the earth when we are generating more foreign earnings through high oil price as a result of the Russia-Ukraine crisis? I seriously don't get it!

For the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to say our foreign reserves came down by $2.03 billion to $38.4 billion as at May 31, 2022 when the current price of oil then was hovering between $117 to $120 per barrel is really difficult to understand.

Of course, the official excuse is oil theft and not meeting OPEC quota which I doubt seriously.

We need better answers than that pls.

---Abayomi B.
Lagos

Congratulations to Atiku & Tinubu! But Nigeria is Doomed!

I wish to congratulate Atiku Abubakar for winning the PDP Presidential Primary and also Bola Ahmed Tinubu for being victorious at the APC Presidential Primary!

Unfortunately, their victories were tainted by the monetisation of the entire process to the point that delegates were bribed with a foreign currently (Dollar) to conduct presidential primary in a sovereign nation called Federal Republic of Nigeria.

I cannot think of any other country on Earth where foreign currency was used to bribe political delegates or even to conduct election.

And given the public image of Atiku and Tinubu in terms of allegations of corruption, I can say firmly that Nigeria is doomed regardless of who wins the presidential election in 2023!

---Charity O.N
Abuja

No to Telecom Tax

It is regrettable that the Buhari administration is daring to increase suffering in the country by introducing another level of hardship they call telecom tax. With the high incidence of inflation and unemployment in Nigeria today, now is definitely the wrong time to talk about telecom tax regardless of any benefit that may accrue from it. My opinion is NO to telecom tax!

------Abubaker M.S
Abuja

Telecom Tax is Wickedness!

Wickedness is not just the insecurity we are witnessing in the country in form of kidnapping for ransom and bombings. It is also in form of taxing phone calls and text messages under the guise of generating revenue. Is telecom the only avenue to raise more money for the government in Nigeria? This policy of telecom taxation is an act of wickedness.

----Mfon A.
Uyo

Goodbye to Power Sector Privatisation

The power sector privatisation in Nigeria has failed woefully. The power situation in the country will make the defunct NEPA look like a saint and angel joined together.

What is glaring is that those that connived with government officials during the Jonathan era to purchase NEPA in the name of power sector privatisation have no technical expertise/experience and capital to run the system efficiently. The situation is now worse here in Kano. And I want to believe it is also the same experience in other parts of the country.

To me, the solution is simple: reverse the power sector privatisation!

---Nasiru I.
Kano

Nigeria: The Land of Generators

We are living in the land of generators. I guess that should be the new official name of the country rather than the bogus Federal Republic of Nigeria. I can only imagine the billions we waste every day, week, month and year on buying, fueling and maintaining generators just to have electricity in our homes and offices. It's a terrible situation at the moment. I keep hearing the news of disagreement between the TCN and GenCos while we remain in darkness or at best, experience epileptic power supply.

Funny enough, we keep receiving electricity bills or recharging pre-paid meters by those lucky to have one. This is just like paying for darkness.

May God help us in this country!

---Sylvester K. O.
Jos

Let us Surrender to Corruption

When Buhari was campaigning to become president, he and his handlers promised that fighting corruption would be one of his cardinal points. And I can bet that a lot of people voted for him based on that promise, apart from the issue of insecurity which some also believed he could handle better as a former military leader and retired Army General.

Now-- we hear endless stories of missing and stolen billions of Naira and he can't do anything about it. Infact, he seems helpless in the face of mounting cases of corruption—within and outside the corridors of power.

Very discouraging indeed. Maybe, we should simply surrender to corruption and become Slaves to Corruption!

-----Abraham N. B.
Lagos

Starvation is Coming Home

To put three square meals on the table now is a huge miracle and we have a government that claims to care for the people.

The cost of food has become unbearable for millions of families in Nigeria today-no need to hide it.

To even make matters worse, our money has no value again.

It is not enough to keep blaming the conflict between Russia and Ukraine for the rampaging hunger in our land today.

The Federal Government ought to collaborate with State Governments as soon as possible to explore solutions to the problem before it becomes another pandemic.

I can tell you that starvation is coming home!

---Amaka N.
Port Harcourt

Power Shift to South Not Enough

I heard on the radio that APC Governors from the North zoned the presidential ticket to the South and asked all candidates from the North to withdraw from the presidential race.

Well-while I believe that power should also move to the South, I also believe that Southerners are not organised enough to determine which particular candidate can best serve the interest of the South and Nigeria as a whole.

The issue is that Southerners are more greedy and individualistic than Northerners.

In that respect, the shift is not enough. Let us watch and see what will happen.

--Ibrahim O.
Kaduna

Why Igbo Presidency Project Failed

Against the expectation of millions of South Easterners, no Igbo man or woman will sit in Aso Rock come 2023 as President, Federal Republic of Nigeria. The quest for Igbo President championed by Ohaneze Ndigbo and Igbo elites/politicians failed for four major reasons:

- Lack of Campaign/Structure: Apart from Peter Obi, the other Igbo presidential candidates simply bought nomination forms and stayed at home. No campaign. No structure!
- Love of Money: The South East delegates were more interested in making money than standing firm for Igbo Presidency at the primaries
- Personal Interest: The candidates refused to step down for each, thereby splitting their votes
- Insincerity of Other Regions: It was quite clear that other regions in the South (South West & South-South) did not buy into the Igbo Presidency Project

----Chief Chukwuemeka K.A
Enugu

NB: Pls send your brief comments on national issues to: comment@businessjournalng.com. Include name and location.

Editorial
www.businessjournalng.com

ASUU STRIKE: Time to End the Carnage!

The endless strike action by members of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) has gone for too long.

It is time to end it!

In the past eight or nine months, members of ASUU have been on industrial action to press the Federal Government to implement the agreement reached between them some years back.

To address the situation, the Federal Government and the leadership of ASUU have equally met at several meetings trying to iron out their interpretations and differences over the said agreement. Unfortunately, these meetings ended inconclusively, without arriving at any template to resolve the issues at the heart of the industrial dispute.

The result of that failure is the current endless strike action by ASUU, leading to thousands of university students stranded at home.

Without mincing words, education is the foundation and bedrock of any nation, especially, a developing society like Nigeria. We cannot achieve sustainable growth and development of any sector of the economy without acquisition of knowledge through education.

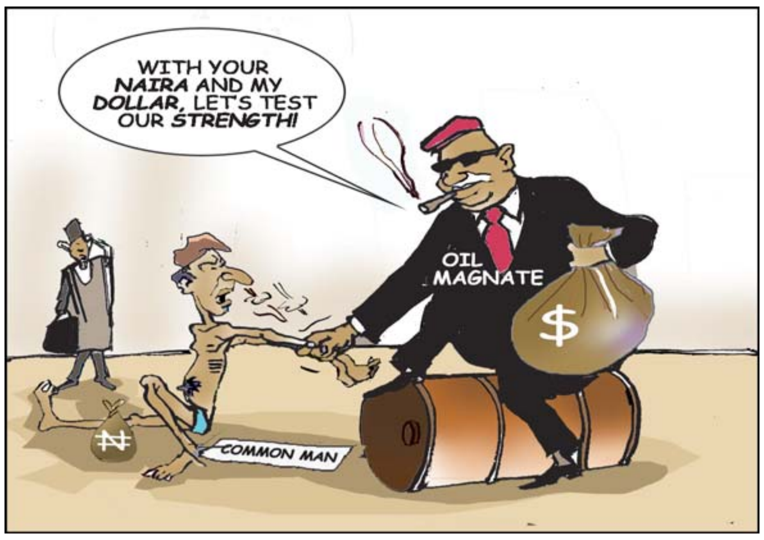
Accordingly, the current impasse is squarely at the detriment of the nation. The more the universities remain shut, the more they decay. And the longer our varsity students remain at home, the more they depreciate in terms of learning and knowledge.

Invariably, now is the right time to end the strike! Our students must return to school for their own good; for the good of their parents/guardians and for the greater good of the nation.

Regardless of the issues involved in the dispute, we implore the Federal Government and the leadership of ASUU to show flexibility to find solution to the identified problems and move the negotiation process forward.

We must state it clearly: the students are tired! The parents/guardians are tired! We also expect and believe that the government and ASUU members are also tired!

In that respect, we have the pleasure to move the motion for immediate end to the ASUU strike!



Executive Calendar

▪ **Diplomacy**
The World Forum on Cultural Diplomacy (UN) 2022
Date: September 26th - 30th, 2022)
Venue: (NYC & Washington D.C.)
Contact: www.un-cd.org

▪ **Housing**
Africa Proptech Forum 2022
Date: May 3-July 15, 2022
Venue: Virtual
Contact: www.africaproptechforum.com

3rd Annual Conference & AGM:
African Union for Finance Housing
Date: October 31-November 2, 2022
Venue: Cairo, Egypt
Contact: www.auhfconference.com

▪ **Banking + Finance**
Afreximbank Annual Meetings 2022
Date: June 15-18, 2022
Venue: Cairo, Egypt
Contact: https://2022.afreximbankevents.com/register-ic

Annual Africa Banking & Finance Conference
Date: 22-23, November 2022
Venue: Accra, Ghana
Contact: abfc@aidembs.com

▪ **Oil + Gas + Power**
NOG Conference & Exhibition
Date: July 4-7, 2022
Venue: Abuja, Nigeria
Contact: nogenq@dmgevents.com

Japan Energy Summit 2022
Date: August 2-4, 2022
Venue: Tokyo, Japan
Contact: JapanLNG@dmgevents.com

Tanzania Energy Congress
Date: August 3-4, 2022
Venue: Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania
Contact: www.tanzaniaenergycongress.com

Mozambique Gas & Energy Summit & Exhibition
Date: September 14-15, 2022
Venue: Maputo, Mozambique
Contact: www.mozambiqueenergysummit.com

Media
Public Unveiling of The Podium Magazine
Date: June 7, 2022
Venue: CLAM Events Centre, Omole (Lagos)
Contact: 08033018881

Insurance
4th Global Takaful & Re-Takaful Forum 2022
Date: August 24, 2022
Venue: Dubai, UAE
Contact: www.alhudacibe.com/gtrtf2022

The NCRIB CEOs Retreat 2022
Date: June 9, 2022
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria
Contact: 08033313433

Oil + Gas + Power
Power & Water Nigeria 2022
Date: June 21-23, 2022
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria
Contact: https://register.pnwnigeria.com

Telecom + IT
Nigerian Women in Information Technology
Date: June 7, 2022
Venue: Virtual
Contact: Zoom ID: 83509022131
Passcode: NIWIIT LAG

CYBER SECURE Nigeria Conference 2022
Date: June 21-22, 2022
Venue: Abuja, Nigeria
Contact: www.cybersecurenigeria.org

IOT West Africa Conference & Exhibition 2022
Date: June 21-23, 2022
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria
Contact: https://register.iotwestafrica.com

GSMA Mobile 360 Asia Pacific
Date: August 2-3, 2022
Venue: Singapore
Contact: www.gsma.com

ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2022
Date: September 26-October 14, 2022
Venue: Bucharest, Romania
Contact: www.itu.int

Environment + Sustainability
World Environment Day: Only One Earth!
Date: June 7, 2022
Venue: Yar'Adua Centre, Abuja
Contact: contact.es@nes.org.ng

Capital Market

www.businessjournalng.com

Investors Reap N1.1tr Dividend from NGX Listed Firms

Investors in the Nigerian capital market have earned over N1trillion from dividend payout by companies listed on Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX) year-to-date (YTD).

This was even as Dangote Cement, MTN Nigeria and 8 others emerged as highest companies in terms of total dividends paid while Nestle, TotalEnergies Plc and 8 others emerged as highest in terms of dividend paid per share.

Dividend payment is one of the very few ways available for investors to earn a constant stream of income. It is also the main reason shareholders hold onto their shares in a company. It, therefore, brings great satisfaction to investors when these companies declare dividend to their shareholders.

According to corporate action from the NGX website, 57 companies across 11 sectors of quoted companies on Nigerian Exchange Limited have so far paid out N1.107 trillion.

The data further showed that 22 companies emerged from the financial services sector, 9 companies emerged from Consumer Goods and 4 emerged from Industrial Goods.

Furthermore, 4 companies emerged from the Healthcare sector, 3 companies each emerged from the Oil and Gas sector and the ICT sector, 2 companies each emerged from the Conglomerates, Agriculture and Construction sector while one company emerged from the Natural resource sector.

The data showed that Dangote Cement in the Industrial Goods sector recorded N340.8 billion; MTN Nigeria Communications in the ICT sector posted N174.4 billion; BUA Cement in the Industrial Goods sector posted N88 billion; Zenith Bank Plc in the Financial Services sector recorded N87.9 billion while

On the other hand, Nestle Nigeria Plc topped the highest companies in terms of dividend per share with N25.50 per share. Dangote Cement Plc posted about N20 per share while Total Energies, Airtel Africa, MTN Nigeria, Okomu Oil, Presco Plc, BUA Foods Plc, Zenith Bank and GTCO followed in order.

L – R shows Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Exchange Limited (NGX), Mr. Temi Popoola; Head, Government Relations, Chalya Shagaya and Executive Commissioner Operations, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Dayo Obisan at the West African Capital Markets Conference with the theme "Deepening and Strengthening the Capital Markets across West Africa through Effective Regulation" in Accra Ghana recently.

Absa: Data is Key Component to Improving NGX, Market Participation

Absa Nigeria, a leading pan-African bank with a strong footprint across the African continent, has advised stock market investors and stakeholders to prioritize market data in order to achieve success in the capital market.

Absa's advice follows the increasing trend of data dependence in capital market participation and decision making. Globally, there is an increase in the reliance of market data as a tool for making sound financial decisions, and the Nigerian case is no different.

A study carried out by Refinitiv in 2020 shows that, 57 percent of capital markets professionals expect to spend more time analysing data, and 74 percent believe data analysis to be the most important skill that will be required to work on the future trading desk.

According to Akinkunmi Majaro, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Absa Securities, "market data is a valuable recourse for portfolio investors during a challenging cycle. Hence, capital market data is designed to provide market participants with in-depth knowledge of market conditions. Considering the various challenges besetting the global economy, these investors need accurate data to make

informed investment decisions to avoid unfavourable market moves."

The importance of data for improved participation at the NGX was highlighted by the Chief Executive Officer, NGX, Temi Popoola, (CFA) at an earlier workshop where he stated that the NGX continues to promote a high level of market transparency by enabling easy access to quality real time market data to all market participants including regulators.

He emphasized that market data such as transaction prices, bids/offers and other trading information becomes the bedrock for price discovery and investment strategies. In line with Absa's commitment to improving performance in the capital market, the bank has created an online interactive platform where updates on price movements, different investment portfolio options, data on global stock market as well as exchange-traded funds are shared to help investors make informed trading and investment decisions and manage their financial future.

This comes on the heels of the NGX and MTN Nigeria Communications Plc (MTNN) signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further promote financial literacy and enhance retail participation in the Nigerian capital market.

The Absa online interactive platform and other initiatives such as the NGX and MTNN collaborative efforts will further entrench the deployment of technology as technology as-a-service to develop capital market solutions, enhance capacity development, and ultimately promote the use of date to improve participation in the capital market.

Absa, offers investment banking and market products through its various Nigerian registered subsidiaries, namely Absa Representative Office Nigeria Limited, Absa Capital Markets Nigeria Limited, and Absa Securities Nigeria Limited.

NGX Regulation CEO Tasks Corporates on Sound Sustainability Reporting

Ms. Tinuade Awe, the Chief Executive Officer, NGX Regulation Limited (NGX RegCo), has harped on the need for corporate bodies to adopt sound procedures in their reporting on their environmental and social impact.

She noted this during a webinar hosted by Corporate Secretaries International Association (CSIA) to explore how businesses and organisations can carry a full 360 approach to Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG), from integrating into business strategies, complying with regulations and standards, themed, "Unlocking ESG for Boards from Strategy to Disclosure" on Tuesday, May 17, 2022.

Speaking on the importance of measuring and reporting sustainability performance for companies, Awe said, "Our world today is facing major sustainability challenges including inequality, overpopulation, climate change, and several environmental risks. By recognizing that capital allocation makes a real impact on the environment and society at large, investors can reap sustainable long-term investment decisions through investments in ESG-themed investments.

Furthermore, adopting an ESG-lens in our approach to investment is critical for investors to identify businesses that implement a forward-looking approach to managing long-term risks as and leveraging opportunities that ensure long-term ensure economic, environmental, and social responsibility.

Awe encouraged companies to adopt best practices in their disclosure on ESG issues by ensuring that their sustainability reports capture relevant sustainability disclosures that are relevant to their stakeholders.

In recommending critical disclosures that should be included in a sustainability report, she said, "historically, sustainability reports cover the address a company's approach to managing the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) of people, profit and planet.

However, disclosures in sustainability reports have evolved over the years to address the needs of a wide array of stakeholders. In publishing their sustainability reports, companies should consider a number of relevant disclosures including materiality, sustainability risks, and opportunities as well as a detailed explanation of how companies are addressing the risks and levering the opportunities.

In addition, a sustainability report should include disclosures on how sustainability is governed by the Board, Executive Management, and designated officers responsible for managing the organisation's impact footprint."

Absa Commends SEC for Proactive Regulation of Digital Assets

Absa Nigeria, a leading pan-African bank with a strong footprint across the African continent, has commended the Nigeria's Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for proactively providing a regulatory framework for investing and trading digital assets, including cryptocurrencies.

Sadiq Abu, CEO of Absa Nigeria, gave this commendation while speaking during the "Power Lunch Show" on CNBC Africa on Monday. He also lauded the commission for recognising digital assets as securities.

SEC, the regulator of the Nigerian capital market, had over the weekend published a new guideline on Issuance, Offering Platforms and Custody of Digital Assets, fulfilling the promise it made last year to examine the digital currency to gain a better understanding and develop regulations to protect investors.

He said: "SEC decided to be proactive around cryptocurrency and digital assets. The SEC has realised that these are rightly called securities and further created a framework to bring them within the broader securities' regulatory framework in Nigeria."

According to him, the SEC has also created a framework for protecting investors by requiring investments to be held by digital assets custodians and acknowledged that exchanges or platforms for trading digital assets needed to be regulated.

"There is also an overarching framework for regulating all participants that play in the digital assets space through a specialised license called Virtual Assets Services provider."

He pointed out that a new rule stipulating tenure and other qualifications of the Chief Executive Officer and Principal Officers of Digital Assets Offering Platforms was similar to the regulations of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

According to him, this is a clear indication that the SEC and CBN worked together to develop the new framework for the operation of digital assets.

He stated, "There is clear evidence that the SEC is working hands in glove with the CBN to create a regulatory framework for the operation of digital assets and the regulation of CEOs and Principal Officers fall under the broader approved persons regime of the SEC"

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Market Price List Jun 6, 2022 **CORONATION**

	Level	% Daily	% YTD	% LTM
All Share Index	53,086.86	+0.34	+24.28	+37.21
Market Cap (trillion NGN)	28.62	+0.34	+28.36	+41.92
Market Cap (billion US$)	67.82	+0.34		
Volume (million)	755.62	+167.03		
Value (billion NGN)	8.90	+164.04		

Top Gainers	Price (N)	%
CONOIL	32.00	9.97%
PHARMDEKO	1.75	9.38%
LEARNAFRCA	2.37	8.72%
FTNCOCOA	0.36	5.88%
CHAMS	0.25	4.17%
ETERNA	8.00	3.90%
FIDELITYBK	3.42	3.64%
ROYALEX	0.98	3.16%
NGXGROUP	24.75	3.13%
JBERGER	26.90	2.67%

Top Losers	Price (N)	%
JAPAULGOLD	0.30	-6.25%
ABCTRANS	0.31	-6.06%
UNILEVER	14.50	-3.01%
AIICO	0.66	-2.94%
JAIZBANK	0.88	-2.22%
CHIPLC	0.67	-1.47%
ETI	11.70	-1.27%
CAVERTON	1.14	-0.87%
TRANSCORP	1.26	-0.79%
NAHCO	7.90	-0.50%

Company	Previous Close	Open	High	Low	Close	Change	% Change	Volume	Value (N)
ABBEYBDS	1.80	1.80	-	-	1.80	0.00	0.00%	60	107.40
ABCTRANS	0.33	0.33	0.31	0.31	0.31	-0.02	-6.06%	598,305	185,854.55
ACADEMY	1.32	1.32	-	-	1.32	0.00	0.00%	117,236	143,291.83
ACCESSCORP	9.95	9.95	10.00	9.90	9.95	0.00	0.00%	5,455,045	54,368,262.90
AFRINSURE	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.00%	986,048	197,209.60
AFRIPRUD	5.95	5.95	5.95	5.95	5.95	0.00	0.00%	357,677	2,122,515.60
AIICO	0.68	0.68	0.69	0.66	0.66	-0.02	-2.94%	4,953,738	3,308,365.04
AIRTELAFRI	1,766.00	1,766.00	-	-	1,766.00	0.00	0.00%	514	895,417.20
ARDOVA	14.95	14.95	-	-	14.95	0.00	0.00%	492,874	7,450,628.75
BERGER	6.85	6.85	-	-	6.85	0.00	0.00%	278,260	1,906,243.75
BETAGLAS	62.55	62.55	-	-	62.55	0.00	0.00%	275,887	18,416,332.10
BUACEMENT	74.25	74.25	-	-	74.25	0.00	0.00%	22,625	1,512,481.25
BUAFOODS	59.70	59.70	-	-	59.70	0.00	0.00%	20,056	1,078,010.00
CADBURY	17.70	17.70	-	-	17.70	0.00	0.00%	212,349	3,588,987.45
CAP	20.15	20.15	-	-	20.15	0.00	0.00%	91,194	1,683,221.85
CAVERTON	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.14	1.14	-0.01	-0.87%	498,779	571,119.45
CHAMPION	3.89	3.89	-	-	3.89	0.00	0.00%	123,347	458,424.93
CHAMS	0.24	0.24	0.26	0.24	0.25	0.01	4.17%	7,091,253	1,723,504.21
CHIPLC	0.68	0.68	0.67	0.62	0.67	-0.01	-1.47%	2,301,787	1,512,206.84
CILEASING	3.50	3.50	-	-	3.50	0.00	0.00%	18,575	60,260.00
CONOIL	29.10	29.10	32.00	32.00	32.00	2.90	9.97%	1,474,031	45,424,870.50
CORNERST	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.62	0.00	0.00%	225,000	138,954.87
COURTVILLE	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.53	0.54	0.00	0.00%	731,039	388,588.43
CUSTODIAN	7.00	7.00	-	-	7.00	0.00	0.00%	27,357	195,899.35
CUTIX	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	2.90	0.00	0.00%	1,924,679	5,578,577.61
CWG	1.04	1.04	-	-	1.04	0.00	0.00%	1,632	1,827.84
DANGCEM	277.00	277.00	-	-	277.00	0.00	0.00%	561,069	145,786,724.00
DANGSUGAR	16.00	16.00	-	-	16.00	0.00	0.00%	195,930	3,123,028.25
ETERNA	7.70	7.70	8.00	8.00	8.00	0.30	3.90%	665,510	5,097,924.09
ETI	11.85	11.85	11.70	11.70	11.70	-0.15	-1.27%	683,915	8,063,968.45
ETRANZACT	3.00	3.00	-	-	3.00	0.00	0.00%	23,735	64,235.25
FBNH	11.00	11.00	11.30	11.05	11.25	0.25	2.27%	610,413,970	6,775,815,728.15
FCMB	3.27	3.27	-	-	3.27	0.00	0.00%	124,161	415,655.68
FIDELITYBK	3.30	3.30	3.45	3.36	3.42	0.12	3.64%	2,099,382	7,122,223.78
FIDSON	10.95	10.95	-	-	10.95	0.00	0.00%	175,335	1,836,567.08
FLOURMILL	35.15	35.15	35.00	35.00	35.00	-0.15	-0.43%	22,965,937	803,914,995.25
FTNCOCOA	0.34	0.34	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.02	5.88%	674,400	239,757.00
GLAXOSMITH	6.85	6.85	6.85	6.85	6.85	0.00	0.00%	264,221	1,801,530.15
GTCO	22.55	22.55	22.55	22.50	22.50	-0.05	-0.22%	6,342,087	142,722,668.10
GUINEAINS	0.20	0.20	-	-	0.20	0.00	0.00%	1,000	200.00
GUINNESS	90.50	90.50	-	-	90.50	0.00	0.00%	68,320	6,057,471.20
HONYFLOUR	3.30	3.30	3.34	3.29	3.30	0.00	0.00%	1,321,708	4,380,329.08
IKEJAHOTEL	1.24	1.24	-	-	1.24	0.00	0.00%	15,790	18,492.30
INTBREW	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	7.25	0.00	0.00%	920,424	6,665,274.20
JAIZBANK	0.90	0.90	0.88	0.88	0.88	-0.02	-2.22%	1,587,924	1,399,981.23
JAPAULGOLD	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.30	0.30	-0.02	-6.25%	1,495,789	453,315.38
JBERGER	26.20	26.20	26.90	26.90	26.90	0.70	2.67%	1,144,655	30,847,479.15
JOHNHOLT	0.71	0.71	-	-	0.71	0.00	0.00%	18,780	12,282.00
LASACO	1.05	1.05	-	-	1.05	0.00	0.00%	100,883	105,961.15
LEARNAFRCA	2.18	2.18	2.37	2.37	2.37	0.19	8.72%	252,358	597,649.78
LINKASSURE	0.54	0.54	-	-	0.54	0.00	0.00%	44,535	22,906.30
LIVESTOCK	1.60	1.60	1.69	1.62	1.62	0.02	1.25%	669,506	1,088,043.02
MANSARD	2.04	2.04	2.14	2.07	2.07	0.03	1.47%	521,181	1,096,126.86
MAYBAKER	4.01	4.01	4.01	4.01	4.01	0.00	0.00%	180,988	726,001.22
MBENEFIT	0.25	0.25	-	-	0.25	0.00	0.00%	147,476	36,137.80
MEYER	3.10	3.10	-	-	3.10	0.00	0.00%	2,712	7,908.24
MRS	16.40	16.40	-	-	16.40	0.00	0.00%	3,824	58,123.10
MTNN	230.00	230.00	234.50	234.50	234.50	4.50	1.96%	320,985	75,071,185.00
NAHCO	7.94	7.94	7.90	7.60	7.90	-0.04	-0.50%	1,794,324	13,689,874.29
NASCON	12.85	12.85	-	-	12.85	0.00	0.00%	82,222	980,026.05
NB	63.70	63.70	-	-	63.70	0.00	0.00%	355,527	22,030,416.50
NEIMETH	1.55	1.55	-	-	1.55	0.00	0.00%	76,760	120,372.80
NEM	4.20	4.20	-	-	4.20	0.00	0.00%	111,839	433,200.33
NESTLE	1,400.00	1,400.00	1,400.00	1,400.00	1,400.00	0.00	0.00%	119,742	167,694,749.10
NGXGROUP	24.00	24.00	24.75	24.00	24.75	0.75	3.13%	3,375,842	81,545,349.20
NIGERINS	0.20	0.20	-	-	0.20	0.00	0.00%	27,778	5,757.98
NNFM	10.60	10.60	-	-	10.60	0.00	0.00%	2,444	25,337.40
NPFMCRFBK	1.80	1.80	-	-	1.80	0.00	0.00%	35,075	64,740.00
OANDO	5.90	5.90	6.00	5.80	6.00	0.10	1.69%	2,403,375	14,239,895.67
OKOMUOIL	193.50	193.50	-	-	193.50	0.00	0.00%	121,660	23,777,745.30
PHARMDEKO	1.60	1.60	1.75	1.75	1.75	0.15	9.38%	205,000	358,690.00
PRESCO	162.00	162.00	-	-	162.00	0.00	0.00%	310,676	48,518,882.35
PRESTIGE	0.40	0.40	-	-	0.40	0.00	0.00%	19,906	8,042.40
PZ	12.60	12.60	-	-	12.60	0.00	0.00%	250,355	3,036,476.25
REDSTAREX	3.01	3.01	-	-	3.01	0.00	0.00%	1,126	3,470.74
REGALINS	0.28	0.28	-	-	0.28	0.00	0.00%	22,393	6,493.97
ROYALEX	0.95	0.95	0.98	0.90	0.98	0.03	3.16%	7,188,424	6,636,908.92
RTBRISCOE	0.56	0.56	-	-	0.56	0.00	0.00%	120,242	67,395.52
SEPLAT	1,289.50	1,289.50	-	-	1,289.50	0.00	0.00%	620	779,924.80
SFSREIT	77.00	77.00	-	-	77.00	0.00	0.00%	55	3,850.00
SKYAVN	6.84	6.84	-	-	6.84	0.00	0.00%	207	1,449.00
SOVRENINS	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.00	0.00%	417,730	110,909.80
STANBIC	34.00	34.00	-	-	34.00	0.00	0.00%	122,382	4,161,617.55
STERLNBANK	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	1.50	0.00	0.00%	1,624,798	2,440,819.60
SUNUASSUR	0.32	0.32	-	-	0.32	0.00	0.00%	24,069	8,424.15
TOTAL	234.50	234.50	-	-	234.50	0.00	0.00%	31,151	7,078,229.60
TRANSCOHOT	6.25	6.25	-	-	6.25	0.00	0.00%	11,559	73,862.55
TRANSCORP	1.27	1.27	1.28	1.23	1.26	-0.01	-0.79%	11,566,764	14,563,947.76
TRIPPLEG	0.87	0.87	-	-	0.87	0.00	0.00%	245,187	220,549.90
UACN	11.00	11.00	-	-	11.00	0.00	0.00%	130,161	1,457,224.60
UBA	7.75	7.75	7.90	7.80	7.80	0.05	0.65%	2,303,209	18,043,905.15
UBN	6.25	6.25	6.40	6.40	6.40	0.15	2.40%	1,355,304	8,734,252.30
UCAP	13.10	13.10	-	-	13.10	0.00	0.00%	1,299,256	17,160,016.65
UNILEVER	14.95	14.95	14.50	14.50	14.50	-0.45	-3.01%	563,922	8,374,425.50
UNITYBNK	0.49	0.49	-	-	0.49	0.00	0.00%	106,221	51,935.25
UPDC	1.02	1.02	-	-	1.02	0.00	0.00%	303,181	308,117.00
UPDCREIT	3.40	3.40	-	-	3.40	0.00	0.00%	129,748	442,785.80
UPL	2.65	2.65	-	-	2.65	0.00	0.00%	2,000	5,420.00
VITAFOAM	22.50	22.50	-	-	22.50	0.00	0.00%	88,688	1,982,507.20
WAPCO	27.00	27.00	27.20	27.20	27.20	0.20	0.74%	946,632	25,644,552.95
WAPIC	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.40	0.42	0.00	0.00%	21,604,433	8,793,993.61
WEMABANK	3.20	3.20	3.25	3.00	3.25	0.05	1.56%	3,595,185	11,129,006.52
ZENITHBANK	23.45	23.45	23.50	23.30	23.35	-0.10	-0.43%	8,917,078	208,878,867.65

Source: NGX, Coronation Research

SME+Entrepreneurship
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Digitisation: **Tackling Access to Finance for SMEs**

Michelle Knowles/
Oladapo Adeigbe

Access to finance remains one of the single biggest constraints for small and medium-sized businesses on the African continent.

Nevertheless, it is important to understand the exact nature of the financing challenges experienced in order to design the tools to build financing capacity in this key sector of the economy.

When discussing SME financing, we tend to focus on early-stage and start-up financing. While this is certainly an important topic in the small business ecosystem, this may not necessarily be where financing efforts should be focused.

Rather a concerted effort to improve the value proposition around trade finance may offer a higher impact solution, particularly in Africa where the trade financing gap has risen to $82 billion and is still widening. Trade Finance is the oil that greases supply chains and ensures that buyers and sellers can ultimately fulfil their obligations.

For instance, a construction company places an order for work overalls from a local supplier. The construction company might only pay on fulfilment of the contract. However, the supplier has to deal with manufacturing capacity, people and raw materials to fulfil the order.

This roadblock is a common issue for small businesses who receive orders but are unable to readily access the finance to fulfil these orders – it impacts not only the organisation which has received the contract, but also the downstream suppliers.

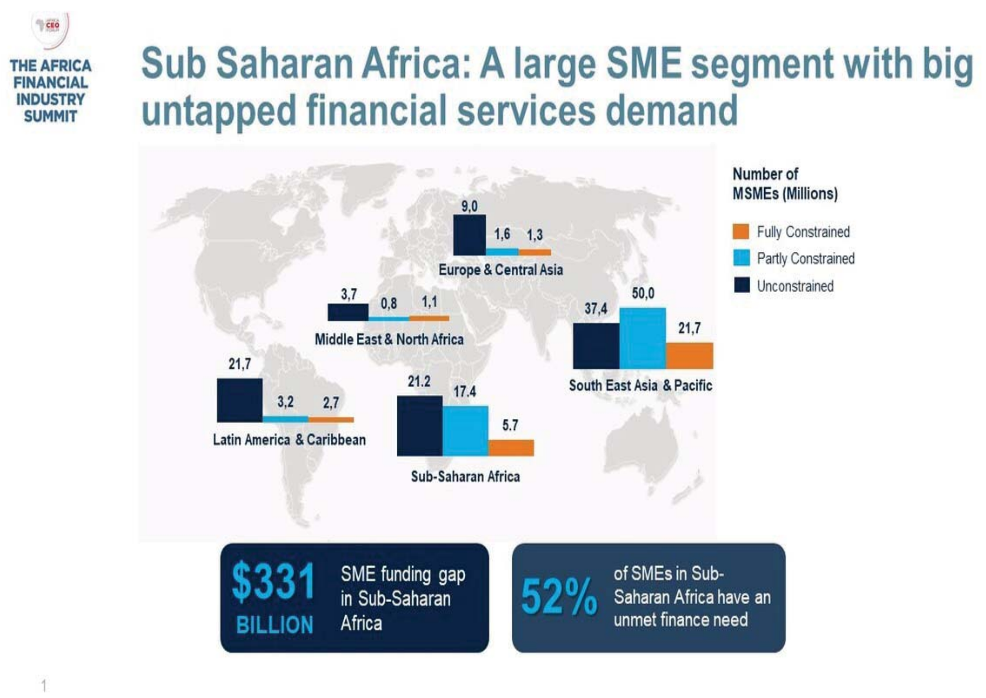
Without finance to facilitate the transaction, the entire supply chain comes to a halt.

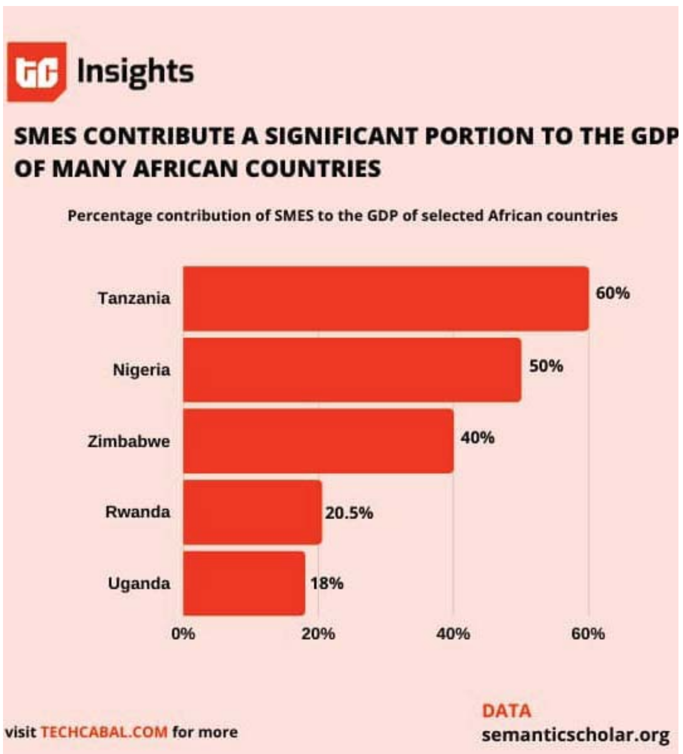
Trade finance becomes highly relevant here, by introducing liquidity into this transaction.

One of the segments that has been impacted the most by the exit of large global banks in frontier and emerging market economies (following the economic fall-out of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent impact on the availability of trade finance) is SMEs.

The reasons for this are varied but the cost of regulation in the sector has increased, the perceived credit-worthiness of SMEs and lack of credit data are issues and foreign currency availability challenges persist when it comes to trade.

Financial inclusion across Africa is yet to peak as most SMEs operate in the informal sector and are largely unbanked. Hence, their viability cannot be ascertained or assessed directly by financial institutions.





More, the hurdles that impede growth in the informal market have not been effectively tackled. For example, an average transaction that involves, for instance, customs clearance in the local ports requires tons of paper documents which slow down trade activities by forcing unnecessary supply chain bottlenecks.

These trade and finance situations form a hurdle for a larger percentage of the SMEs who require ease of doing business and the valuable financial products offered by the banks to drive their growth plans.

It is for this reason Absa is focused on powering trade finance across Africa and enhancing the role that digitisation will play in facilitating access to finance for small businesses.

Digitisation is a key enabler in democratising trade finance and the pandemic has accelerated the adoption of digital trade finance solutions by SMEs and corporates. While technology-driven solutions are becoming more and more relevant, much of the trade finance sector is still very paper-driven with manual processes slowing down the access to finance.

To digitize trade finance, the entire ecosystem needs to support and participate in re-imagining how we unlock value. This includes integrating activities between all role players including the regulators, the logistic companies, banks and other non-bank financial institutions (e.g., fintechs).

This will drive a concept that is known as "Digital Trade Ecosystems" which are secure online platforms that facilitate the exchange of data between partners in trade finance networks, and will be a catalyst for the sector.

While innovation and technological advancements are important, there are three issues that have to receive urgent attention over the coming year to leverage the positive impact digitisation could have on SMEs

The first is a focus on Interoperability of systems to facilitate coherent industry-wide solutions that can operate at scale. This will become particularly relevant in Africa with the opening up of the African Continental Free Trade Area which is expected to be a big driver of cross-border trade.

The second issue will be Standardisation. A major issue for the sector as a whole is that only parts of the Trade and Trade Finance process are subject to digital innovation, whereas the end-to-end digitalisation across the trade value chain remains fragmented. We need common language, technology and credit-scoring systems to facilitate faster access to solutions.

Thirdly, there needs to be a focus on more agility in the regulatory space. A perfect example of this is the limited acceptance of electronic documents and digital signatures on contracts by banks and other stakeholders. Millions of dollars of transactions could be freed up through the adoption of these digital tools, but there needs to be regulatory buy-in as a priority.

Digitisation must be supported by increasing foreign currency availability, and regulatory reform as it relates to the treatment of trade finance. Hence, collaboration is required between the financial industry, Fintech, DFI's and regulators.

At Absa, we have seen and continue to see, an increasing demand for these digital solutions and are accelerating our efforts to be a key driver of trade finance solutions on the continent and to be an enabler of the AfCFTA Agreement which is a critical step to building a healthy SME ecosystem for Africa.

Michelle Knowles is the Head of Trade Finance, Absa
Oladapo Adeigbe is the Head of Financial Institutions Trade Sales, Absa

Kuramo Capital Commits $10m to Fund SMEs in West Africa

Kuramo Capital recently announced a US$10 million commitment to Uhuru Growth Fund I (UGF), a private equity targeting high-growth companies in West Africa. The investment will mainly fund SMEs operating in West Africa.

"We are very excited by our commitment to UGF. Kuramo believes in indigenous teams like Uhuru whose local but global edge is critical to Kuramo's strategy of generating excellent long-term risk-adjusted returns for our investors. We believe Uhuru has a compelling investment strategy with a competitive edge in identifying relatively attractive opportunities due to their extensive local network. Additionally, the Uhuru team is expected to bring their experience in global best business practices to their portfolio companies as part of their value creation process," commented Wale Adeosun (photo), Kuramo Capital's Founder, CEO, and Chief Investment Officer.

Kuramo, which has approximately US$500 million in assets under management, says it is ready to continue its catalytic investments in sub-Saharan Africa.

KURAMO CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

HSBC Unveils $1bn Female Entrepreneur Fund in 11 Countries

HSBC recently announced the launch of a US$1 billion fund dedicated exclusively to financing women entrepreneurs in 11 countries around the world. Only Egypt was listed in Africa.

Through the fund, HSBC will provide loans to women-led businesses over the next 12 months. It will also offer technical support including networking sessions, coaching from experienced bankers, and masterclasses led by business leaders.

"The level of funding received over time by female-led businesses is significantly lower than male counterparts, while the recent impacts of the pandemic have seen these same businesses disproportionately affected. female-owned businesses are also less likely to have global networks, meaning international expansion can prove particularly challenging [...]As the global economy continues to rebuild from the impact of the pandemic, small and medium-sized businesses will continue to be the bedrock on which our economies and local communities are built, meaning we need to ensure that those led by women are given the support to fulfill their full potential," said Sam Cooper-Gray, Global Head of Market Strategy at HSBC Business Banking.

In Africa, credit access is one of the major challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. In 2019, only 3% of startup funding and 2% of venture capital went to women entrepreneurs globally.

According to a 2019 study by the Boston Consulting Group, closing the gender gap would increase global GDP by US$5 trillion.

Aviation+ Tourism

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IATA: African Airlines Record 92% Passenger Growth in March

African airlines had a 91.8% rise in March RPKs versus a year ago, improved compared to the 70.8% year-over-year increase recorded in February 2022 compared to the same month in 2021.

Air travel demand is challenged by low vaccination rates on the continent as well as impacts from rising inflation.

March 2022 capacity was up 49.9% and load factor climbed 14.1 percentage points to 64.5%.

Total traffic in March 2022 (measured in revenue passenger kilometers or RPKs) was up 76.0% compared to March 2021. Although that was lower than the 115.9% rise in February year-over-year demand, volumes in March were the closest to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, at 41% below.

March 2022 domestic traffic was up 11.7% compared to the year-ago period, far below the 60.7% year-over-year improvement recorded in February. This largely was a result of the Omicron-related lockdowns in China.

March domestic RPKs were down 23.2% versus March 2019.

International RPKs rose 285.3% versus March 2021, exceeding the 259.2% gain experienced in February versus the year-earlier period.

Most regions boosted their performance compared to the prior month, led by carriers in Europe. March 2022 international RPKs were down 51.9% compared to the same month in 2019.

Air passenger market in detail- March 2022

Emirates Extends Partnership with Huawei, Signs MoU with SA Tourism

Emirates has continued to expand its partnerships at the Arabian Travel Market in Dubai, announcing technology and tourism activities with Huawei and South Africa.

First, Emirates announced that it has extended its partnership with tech giant Huawei.

According to Emirates, signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to extend the cooperation will provide further exposure to both brands in the Middle East, China and African markets.

The extended deal includes marketing collaborations between Emirates and Huawei on joint projects and promotional activities which aim at expanding their reach in the other's home market.

In addition, Emirates said that both brands will remain committed to achieving mutual benefits, including the continued development of the Emirates Mobile App in the Huawei AppGallery.

Emirates and Huawei first collaborated in early 2020 when the Emirates App was made available on the AppGallery of Huawei's smart devices.

The collaboration was further extended in 2021 when the Emirates App became available on Huawei's smart watches.

Tourism-wise, Emirates announced that it has signed a MoU with the South African tourism board.

The airline said that the MoU will jointly promote tourism and boost visitor arrivals and inbound traffic to South Africa from key markets across the Emirates network.

Tourism: UNWTO Launches Digital Futures Program for SMEs

UNWTO has announced the launch of the Digital Futures Programme, designed to accelerate the adoption of new technology among tourism enterprises.

Developed in collaboration with some of the world's leading technology, finance and business companies as Mastercard the initiative is focused on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which make up 80% of all tourism businesses.

UNWTO aims to reach at least 1 million tourism SMEs over the lifetime of the Programme, providing them with the foundational skills and knowledge needed to harness the power of new and emerging technologies.

UNWTO Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili says: "Small businesses are the backbone of tourism. The Digital Futures Programme will help them to recover from the impacts of the pandemic and drive the sector forward, powered by innovation and new technology."

In order to provide SMEs with tailored guidance and tools, the Programme is built on a Digital Readiness Diagnostic Tool that benchmarks SMEs across five key digital dimensions – Connectivity, Business Growth, E-Commerce, Big Data and Analytics, and Payments and Security.

The launch event, held at IE Tower in Madrid, was attended by around 200 participants including the Ambassadors to Spain of UNWTO's Member States, as well as investment and promotion Agencies, and SMEs themselves.

Nigeria-based GIG Aviation to Boost Freighter Operations with 2 ATR 72s

GIG Aviation will acquire two ATR 72-500 freighters to help the cargo company expand its network in Africa.

In a statement, the regional turboprop manufacturer said it will utilize its new freighter capacity to meet the rapid growth of e-commerce in Nigeria. In particular, the airline will bolster its regional operations by strengthening "connections between communities from the different regions and sub regions".

Based in Lagos, Nigeria, GIG aviation, also referred to as GIG Logistics, is a private courier and logistics services business and a subsidiary of GIG group.

"The acquisition of two ATR 72-500 freighters demonstrates our commitment to provide high standards of delivery services to communities of Africa and Nigeria," said Adetoro Fowoshere, Chief Executive Officer of GIG Aviation, said. "We are expanding rapidly through local branches, notably in Nigeria, and the entry into service of these aircraft will be significant in allowing us to expand operations with economic efficiency and reliability, key factors for an airline. With our ATR aircraft, we will continue to meet the cargo needs of communities with increased capacity."

Tarek Ben Omrane, head of Business Development of ATR, said: "We are delighted that GIG Aviation has chosen ATR to expand its network and use its unrivalled performance to support the connectivity and e-commerce growth in Nigeria."

"We believe that ATR aircraft are the perfect fit for such needs and are happy that the customers of GIG Aviation will benefit from fast efficient services provided by GIG Aviation through the use of our aircraft," he added.

Today, GIG Aviation offers domestic and international, intra and inter-state delivery services through its local branches in Nigeria, Ghana, the United Kingdom and in the United States.

Airlines in Africa utilizing ATR aircraft models include Lagos-based Overland Airways, Angola-based airline Bestfly Worldwide, and Botswana's flag carrier, Air Botswana.

Green Africa Airways operates a fleet of three ATR 72-600. The airline took delivery of its first ATR 72-600 aircraft in April 2021. Additionally, Gabon-based Afrijet ordered three ATR 72-600s at the Dubai Airshow in November 2021 to replace its ageing fleet of ATR 72-600s.

According to a press release from the AviAssist Foundation, a non-profit that helps build, support and promote aviation safety in Africa, ATR aircraft are operated in 22 African countries by 30 airlines.

As new airlines and flag carriers emerge in Africa, fleet orders and deliveries across the continent are indicating a strong focus on airlines growing their regional fleet capacities.

Politics + Policy

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Michael Owhoko, Ph.D

Nigeria: 2023 Outlook and the Looming Danger

I am neither a prophet nor a clairvoyant, but from the manifestation in my crystal ball, I see Nigeria in 2023 being shaped by upheaval fueled by miseries and hopelessness. Agitation reminiscent of the ENDSARS protests will break out.

Primary triggers are the country's pathetic economic indices, including growing unemployment, cynical gross domestic product (GDP), inflation and the undiversified weak mono-commodity economy, lacking leadership and managerial oxygen.

Secondary triggers are the dampened economic opportunities induced by nonchalance over worsening corruption, mounting debt burden, crude oil and foreign exchange manipulation, macroeconomic flux, insecurity, hunger, poor electricity supply, and lack of constitutionalism and rule of law.

Tertiary trigger is the unresolved national question pertaining to incompatibility of the country's political system and its diverse ethnicities, which is negatively impacting on the country's fundamentals. Put differently, the country's unitary system is antithetical to a multiethnic society like Nigeria, which undoubtedly, is the root cause of the country's regression and despairs.

These concerns will transpire immediately after power transition in May 2023 with increased build-up towards the end of the year and beyond. This unprecedented development will mark a watershed in the history of Nigeria.

Nigerians are fed up. Suicide cases arising from hunger are on the increase. Over 82 million Nigerians now live on less than a $1 dollar a day. At a conservative black-market rate of N580 to a dollar, the average Nigerian survives on less than N580 daily.

This amount cannot buy a standard loaf of bread of N600. You now know why Nigerians are looking malnourished except those that have access to the country's treasury, and the privileged few who are involved in under-the-table transactions, either in public or private sector.

Nigeria was ranked 103rd out of 116 countries by Global Hunger Index (GHI) as one of the hunger-plagued countries in the world, an indication of government's failure over provision of welfare. Even the World Bank recently affirmed in its 2022 Poverty Assessment Report that 4 out of every 10 Nigerians live below the national poverty line.

The report added further that only 17 percent of Nigerian working class earn wages that can lift them out of poverty while the wages of the remaining 83 percent are too meagre to guarantee exit from the poverty domain.

This is a mirror image of the depth of poverty in the country where some Nigerians go to bed hungry while majority are unable to afford two quality meals a day, resulting in discontent and frustration. Yet, the country's GDP is said to be growing, even as poverty capital of Africa and the World.

Can a growing band of unemployed and idle youths improve a country's GDP? Majority are not employed, implicitly, are not adding value to production of goods and services. With no income earned, purchasing power is prostrate. Rather than shrink, GDP is growing. The Nigeria's economy is a study in contradiction.

It is near impossible for a country's GDP to grow in the face of a corresponding rise in unemployment, particularly among youths who constitute majority of the workforce. Data for youth unemployment rate in Nigeria is in the region of 35 percent, about the highest in the world. Obviously, this is exacerbated by lack of creative, determined and visible leadership efforts at addressing this precarious anomaly.

It is unhelpful that figures being published by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) do not inspire hope as they contradict market realities. The NBS had said Nigeria's GDP grew by 3.98 percent (year-on-year) in real terms in the last quarter of 2021. Though, an optimistic trajectory, it is a paradox when viewed against the background of alarming rate of youth unemployment whose input into GDP is paramount.

Look at the number of grad-

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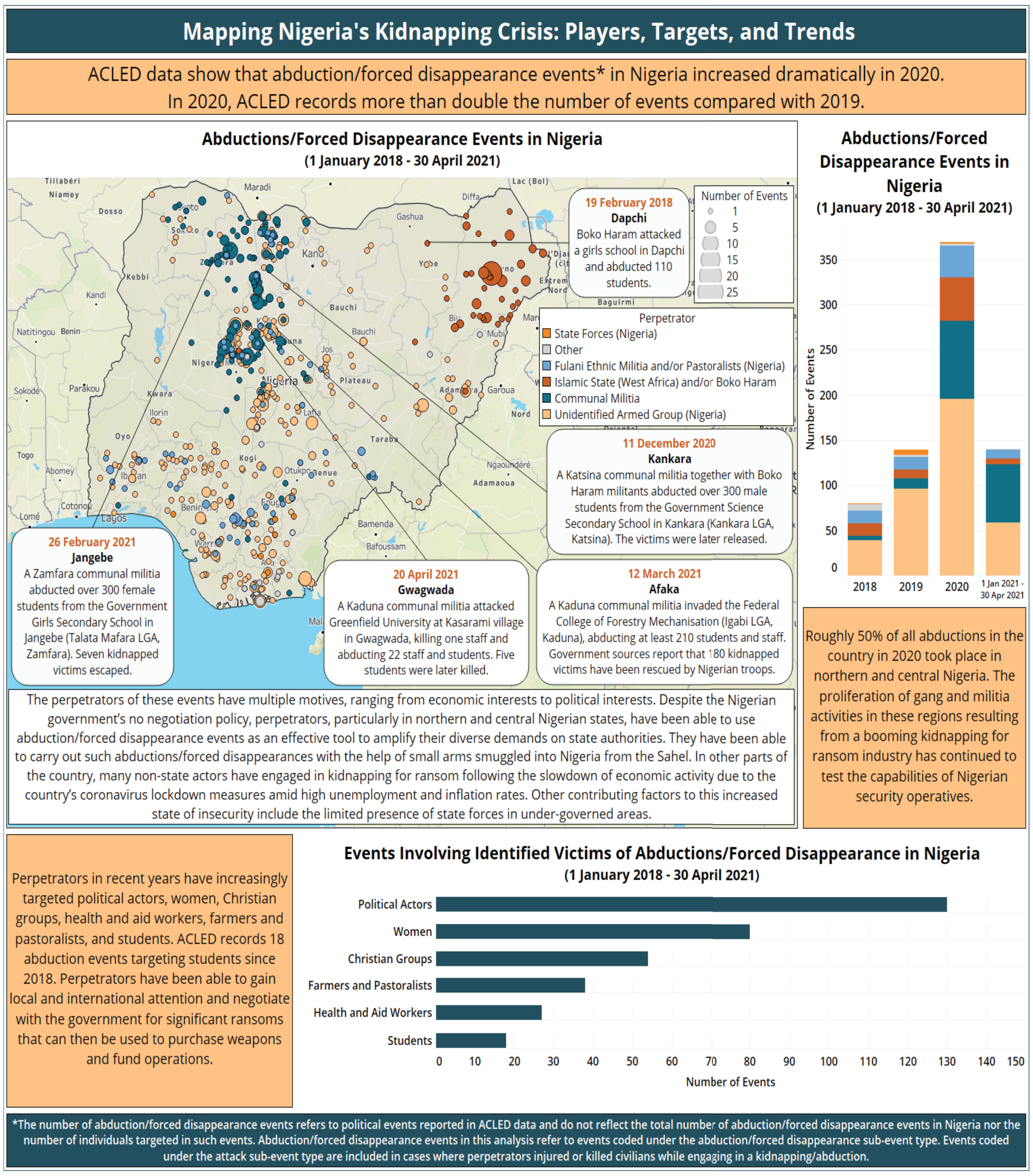


Politics + Policy

uates coming out of universities and other institutions of higher learning yearly, coupled with the country's skill-less educational curriculum, the rural-urban drift, and the astronomical rise in population, you will understand why all residential streets are busy with high presence of idle youths during working hours. This was not so in the past where the streets were empty and quiet during the day, indicative of people's presence at work. Not anymore!

Again, looking at the suffocating inflationary rate, you begin to wonder whether the data deployed by NBS are tested or are just for political show. From the consumer price index (CPI), NBS had said inflation dropped to 15.60 percent (year-on-year) in January 2022 when compared to 16.47 percent recorded in January 2021, a reduction of 0.87 percent. Really? It is imperative NBS officials go to market or grocery shops for personal purchases as part of feedback mechanism to ascertain firsthand, the real inflation texture in the country.

These economic flaws and current dysfunctional unitary system of government which has held the country down, preventing states or regions from unleashing their optimum potential, remain a major threat to unity and peace in the country.

The powers that be have conceitedly subjugated as inconsequential, the contending questions. Unfortunately, hitherto strategy of deceit, repression, oppression and domination aimed at diverting attention from the country's many woes will not work, and will be disrupted in 2023.

Having failed in all fronts of its promises to fix security, economy and corruption, the exit of this administration in 2023, will mark a new era that will usher in renewed agitation for reposition of Nigeria's polity for enduring peace and progress.

The gaps created by mismanagement of diversities and inability to convert opportunities into capital, including failure to take advantage of existing unifying catalysts to strengthen the country's unity, will deepen inclination for self-determination in 2023. This may lead to reshuffling of existing structure aimed at dousing and averting eruption of bottled-up tension next year.

The year 2023 will also mark a new consciousness among frustrated youths of the ineffectuality of internet fraud (yahoo, yahoo), betting, gambling, drugs and other pseudo-revenue generation mechanisms.

There will be a complete emotional shift based on new reality that these vices are not solution to their problems, and may elicit a resolve to take their destinies into their hands.

Indeed, the youths will be more concerned about their dimmed future, which they believe, has been sacrificed on the altar of greed by politicians and those in authorities. Impaired vision of the country's leadership and lack of capacity to design programmes and set priorities to lift the country from its current dark clouds are believed to be chiefly responsible for the deteriorating living conditions of Nigerians.

The reality is that no amount of rejigging of the country's unitary constitution can make Nigeria work, except it is replaced with a federal structure characterised by fiscal autonomy, where every state or region can freely aspire in line with its capacity and resourcefulness. The current system cannot unite and hold the various nationalities together.

What is fundamental is the real search for "solution to the disillusion", to borrow from the great reggae artist, Peter Tosh. It is not about elections and leadership change but about disillusion in the land. The solution is total restructuring based on the 1963 Constitution. This constitution had been tested, and it worked.

The current unitary structure breads corruption, ethnicism, nepotism and misery. That corruption has become a way of life in Nigeria, permeating all strata of government and society, is a proof of the country's chronic and irredeemable state of decay.

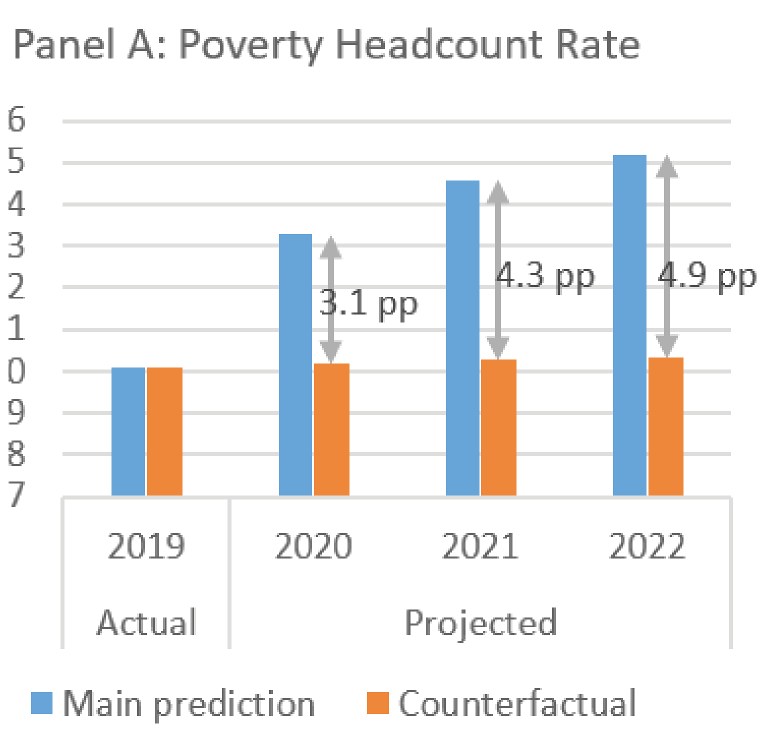
> **The gaps created by mismanagement of diversities and inability to convert opportunities into capital, including failure to take advantage of existing unifying catalysts to strengthen the country's unity, will deepen inclination for self-determination in 2023. This may lead to reshuffling of existing structure aimed at dousing and averting eruption of bottled-up tension next year.**

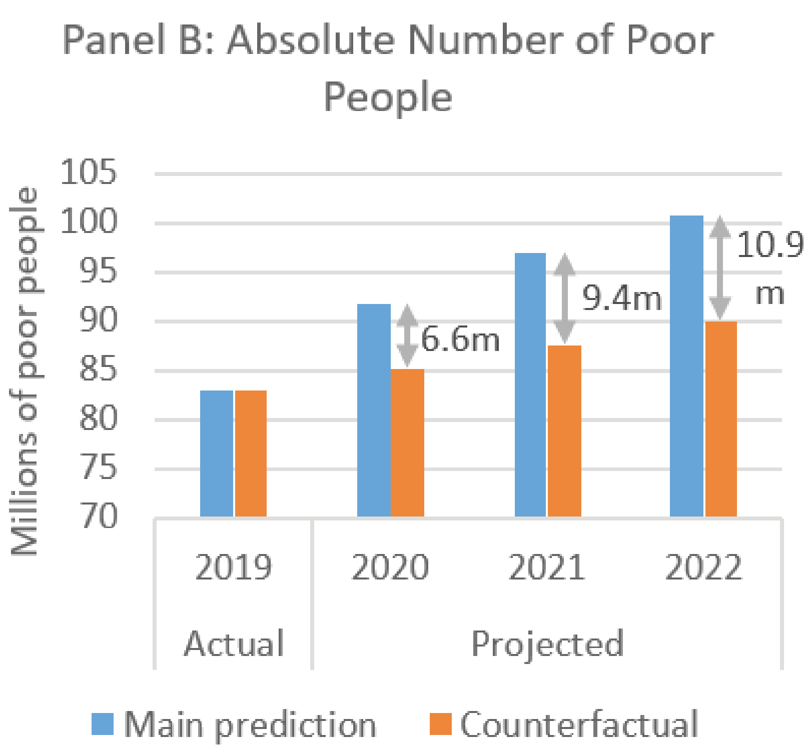
Undeniably, the current political structure cannot even pass the Rotary Four Way Test, if used to measure the sincerity of purpose. Is it the truth? Is it fair to all concerned? Does it build goodwill and better friendship? Is it beneficial to all concerned? The answer is a resonant NO.

This is also the reason why elections and national headcount are difficult to conduct in the country due to competing regional interests for national power, and fear of change to current balance of power and status quo by benefited sectional power blocs.

Until the country is restructured from the current unitary system to federalism, a game-changing disruption for the realisation of a new Nigeria in 2023 is inevitable, and the 1999 Constitution will be the first port of call.

• Dr. Mike Owhoko, Lagos-based journalist and author, can be reached at www.mikeowhoko.com.





AgriBusiness

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NIRSAL: Credit Risk Guarantee Support to Agro Processing Sector Hits N73bn

In carrying out its mandate of creating a stronger linkage between segments of Nigeria's Agricultural Value Chain (AVC) and subsequent AVC-linkage to commercial bank finance, The Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL Plc) has facilitated the flow of over ₦73 billion into Nigeria's Agro Processing industry to date from various sources, including deposit money banks, development financiers, private equity investment firms and other financial institutions.

NIRSAL Plc's strategic support to Agro Processors which operate within the midstream segment of the AVC creates a profit-driven ecosystem in which farmers in the upstream AVC segment have a reliable market in the form of Agro Processors who offtake farmers' produce, add value and satisfy consumer demand in the downstream AVC segment.

NIRSAL Plc's support comes at a time in which developing economies are increasingly shifting from only producing raw materials to both production and value addition for increased economic activity, bolstering Foreign Exchange earnings and widespread social development.

Other beneficiaries of NIRSAL Plc's finance-facilitation include pre-upstream, upstream and downstream AVC operators involved in Inputs Production and Supply, Mechanisation Service Provision, Primary Production and Logistics.

This feat, which has made a notable contribution to the Federal Government's Agric promotion drive, was achieved through NIRSAL Plc's effective deployment of its Credit Risk Guarantee (CRG) instrument.

The NIRSAL CRG is NIRSAL Plc's core product used to share agribusiness-related credit risks with commercial banks and financiers by up to 75% depending on the segment that CRG applicants operate in; the riskier the farmer group or agribusiness operations, the higher the percentage of risk NIRSAL Plc shares.

L-R: Mr Aliyu Abdulhameed, Managing Director/CEO of NIRSAL Plc and Mr Tariq Sijilmassi, Chairman of the Management Board of Credit Agricole Du Maroc (CAM) at the signing of MoU between the two establishments.

By protecting financiers and investors from possible losses in a credit transaction, NIRSAL Plc has built up their confidence to lend to players in the Agric sector, a sector once widely considered as a no-go area in finance circles.

Backed by the NIRSAL CRG, farmer groups and agribusinesses which before the introduction of the NIRSAL CRG, had found it difficult to secure loan approvals from commercial banks, now enjoy smoother approval processes for the loans they require to expand their operations, increase their profits and enhance their livelihoods.

To provide further support to Nigeria's farmers and agribusinesses, NIRSAL Plc, through its Interest Drawback (IDB) scheme, goes the extra mile to reward diligent borrower behaviour through discretionary rebates of up to 40% of interest paid on NIRSAL CRG backed agribusiness loans. To date, NIRSAL Plc has paid out over ₦1.64 billion, thereby reducing the effective interest rate for borrowers with a good credit history.

Also critical in the creation of NIRSAL CRG-backed loans is NIRSAL Plc's constant engagements with commercial banks and training of their officers.To date, over 4,250 bank officers have been trained on NIRSAL CRG guidelines and efficient Agric lending, resulting in a better understanding of the two, an improvement of banks' disposition towards Agric lending and an increase in bank lending.

FAO Approves $18m Funding for Agric Projects in Nigeria, Others

The Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) has welcomed the decision of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to approve three FAO-led projects in five countries, totalling $18 million in funding.

The three new projects – in Nigeria, Venezuela and a regional initiative encompassing Malawi, Mozambique, and Uganda – will improve the management of protected areas, protect biodiversity in lowland forests, and build water security and resilience.

"Resilient and productive land and aquatic ecosystems are the foundation of sustainable agrifood systems transformation," said FAO Deputy Director-General Maria Helena Semedo. "The approval of these three projects strengthens our ability to help countries move on a path of sustainability that leaves no one behind".

The project in Nigeria will improve the conservation, sustainable use, and restoration of a lowland forest landscape to protect globally significant biodiversity and strengthen the sustainable livelihoods of local communities.

The project will improve the management of a heavily threatened, 1-million-hectare landscape encompassing 12 forest reserves and the Okomu national park. One of the aims is to replicate successes across the full Nigerian lowland forests eco-region.

The approval of these three projects marks the end of the GEF's 2018-2022 funding cycle, the most productive four-year period in the FAO-GEF partnership to date, with over $600 million in grant financing secured for member countries. These grants support 96 countries in tackling the most pressing issues at the intersection of agri-food systems and the environment.

The past four years of investments from the FAO-GEF partnership will support member countries to improve the management of 150 million hectares of landscapes and seascapes, restore nearly 4 million hectares of land, and change over 2 million tons of overly exploited fisheries to sustainable levels.

The investments will also mitigate over 570 million tons of greenhouse gas emissions. More than 13 million women, men and children will directly benefit from the investments.

The GEF is a partnership of 18 agencies, including FAO, and 184 countries that addresses the world's most challenging environmental issues related to biodiversity, climate change, land degradation, chemicals, and international waters. It provides grants to countries to meet these challenges while contributing to key development goals, such as food security.

NBS: The Price of Beans Rose by 37.22% in May 2022

Selected Food Price Watch for the month of May 2022 shows that the average price of 1kg of beans (white, black eye, sold loose) rose on a year-on-year basis by 37.22% from N382.37 in May 2021 to N524.70 in May 2022.

Also, on a month-on-month basis, this increased by 1.09% from N519.05 in April 2022.

The average price of 1kg of a Yam tuber increased on a year-on-year basis by 37.87% from N269.98 in May 2021 to N372.23 in May 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, the average price of this item increased by 3.05% in May 2022. Similarly, the average price of 2kg of Wheat flour: prepacked (golden penny) on a year-on-year basis, rose by 34.92% from the value recorded in May 2021 (N785.87) to N1,060.26 in May 2022.

On a month-on-month basis, it increased from N1,047.74 in April 2022 to N1,060.26 in May 2022 indicating a 1.20% growth. In the same vein, the average price of Palm oil: (1 bottle, specify bottle) increased by 42.81% from N593.36 in May 2021 to N847.39 in May 2022.

It also grew by 0.55 % on a month-on-month basis. The average price of 1kg of beef (boneless) rose by 34.11% on a year-on-year basis from N1,513.43 in May 2021 to N 2,029.59 in May 2022. In addition, the average price of Groundnut oil: 1 bottle, specify bottle stood at N1,040.88 in May 2022, showing an increase of 47.99% from N703.36 in May 2021.

On a month-on-month basis, it rose by 3.29% from N 1,007.68 in April 2022. At the state level, Ebonyi recorded the highest average price of beans (white, black eye, sold loose) with N899.79, while the lowest was reported in Borno with N262.79.

The highest average price of 1kg of a Yam tuber was recorded in Akwa-Ibom with N804.45, while the lowest was recorded in Bauchi with N134.17. In addition, Abia State recorded the highest price of Wheat flour: prepacked (golden penny 2kg) with N1,393, while Yobe recorded the lowest with N755.03.

NIRSAL: Partnership with Morocco's Agric Bank for Inclusive Growth

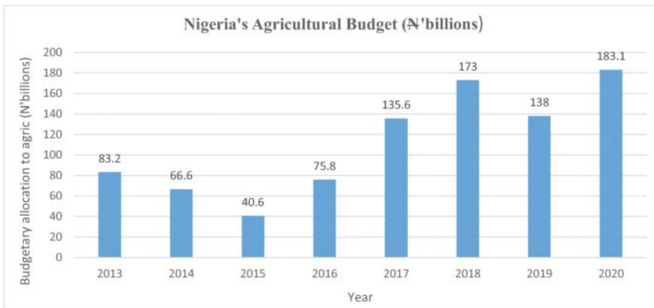
In a development that has rekindled their six-year partnership, the Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending and the Credit Agricole Du Maroc (CAM) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that is geared towards the promotion of inclusive growth and sustainable development of the agriculture sectors of both countries through the facilitation of finance; investment, trade and support systems across agricultural value chains, with emphasis on smallholder farmers.

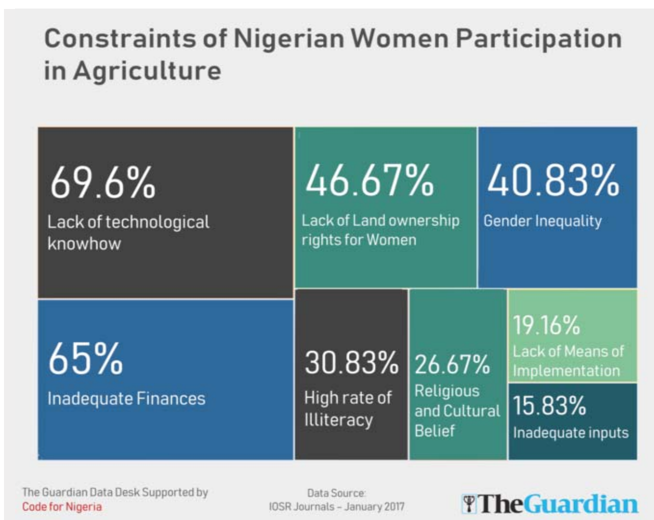
Among the short and medium-term undertakings outlined by the MOU, NIRSAL Plc and CAM will work towards presenting a common front to the managers of the Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) Fund in a bid to attract global finance for sustainable agribusiness investments.

CAM's deep experience in developing solutions for the financial integration of smallholder farmers in Africa would also benefit NIRSAL Plc in opening up more pathways for critical finance to enter the agricultural primary production sub-sector in Nigeria.

On behalf of their institutions, Managing Director/CEO of NIRSAL Plc, Mr Aliyu Abdulhameed, and the Chairman of the Management Board of Credit Agricole Du Maroc (CAM), Mr Tariq Sijilmassi, signed the MOU, thereby committing to the mutual prospecting and implementation of agriculture-oriented projects that benefit both organisations and their host countries.

During the MOU signing event, Mr. Abdulhameed elaborated on NIRSAL Plc #39 areas of need to include the development of financing products that suit the seasonality of agriculture and other farming contexts, emphasising the difficulties smallholders experience in keeping to the terms of conventional bank financing products.





Executive Motoring

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Russia-Ukraine Conflict to Lower Global Vehicle Production

The war in Ukraine is expected to lower global light-duty vehicle production through next year by millions of units, according to S&P Global Mobility.

The automotive research firm, formerly known as IHS Markit, downgraded its 2022 and 2023 global light vehicle production forecast by 2.6 million units for both years, to 81.6 million for 2022 and 88.5 million units for 2023.

The conflict has caused logistical and supply chain problems as well as parts shortages of critical vehicle components.

The problems add to an already strained supply chain due to the coronavirus pandemic and an ongoing shortage of semiconductor chips.

European auto production is expected to experience the most disruption, according to S&P. The firm cut 1.7 million units from its forecast for Europe, including just under 1 million units from lost demand in Russia and Ukraine. The rest of the cuts are from parts shortages involving chips and wiring harnesses caused by the war.

That compares to S&P cutting its North America light-duty vehicle production by 480,000 units for 2022 and by 549,000 units for 2023.

Tesla Recalls 130,000 Vehicles over Touchscreen Display Malfunction

Tesla Inc. is recalling about 130,000 vehicles in the United States following an overheating issue that may cause the center touchscreen display to malfunction, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) said.

A report by Reuters states that the recall covers Tesla's S and X from the 2021 and 2022 model years and its 3 and Y from the 2022 model year. The electric vehicle maker will provide an over-the-air software update to resolve the issue, according to the NHTSA.

Tesla recalled 48,000 Model 3 Performance vehicles in the U.S. in April for an issue that may not display the speedometer when in "Track Mode."

Tesla has issued a number of recalls for camera-related issues. In March, Tesla recalled 947 vehicles in the United States because the rearview image may not immediately display when they begin to reverse.

In December, Tesla recalled 356,309 of its 2017-2020 Model 3 vehicles to address rearview camera issues.

The NHTSA said "the rearview camera cable harness may be damaged by the opening and closing of the trunk lid, preventing the rearview camera image from displaying."

Tesla has issued 11 recalls this year, tied with Chrysler parent Stellantis for fourth most in 2022.

Saudi Arabia Announces Adoption of 1st Insurance Plan for Self-driving Vehicles

The Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) has announced the adoption of the first insurance product to cover the risks involved in using self-driving vehicles in the kingdom, in a move that supports innovation in the insurance sector.

Drive Your Dream: The 2023 Cadillac Escalade-V

The Features

• HAND-BUILT 6.2L SUPERCHARGED V8 ENGINE

Command the road with a 6.2L supercharged V8 engine. A testament to legendary Cadillac craftsmanship, this mega-output engine is built entirely by hand.

• 682 HORSEPOWER

Heart-pounding power once reserved for the track is now available for daily drives. The awesome force of 682 horsepower patiently awaits your every command

• 653 LB.-FT. OF TORQUE

The greater the torque, the greater the ability to perform. A monstrous 653 lb.-ft. of torque helps Escalade-V easily accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in under 4.4 seconds.

VW Scout Electric SUV due in 2026

Volkswagen didn't yet reveal any details about the electric powertrain in the 2026 Scout SUV.

However, considering that the automaker highlights its off-road capabilities, the SUV will undoubtedly have an all-wheel drive system. Power will likely come from two electric motors, with one motor at the front wheels and the other at the rear wheels.

The output of the electric motors is unknown. However, Car and Driver suggests that it would be advantageous for the Scout SUV to offer "various levels of performance."

This includes a powerful variant that could compete with serious off-roading SUVs like the Land Rover Defender V8 and the Ford Bronco Raptor, as well as electric SUVs like the Rivian R1S and the GMC Hummer EV.

The battery capacity and the driving range of the Scout SUV are unknown as well. However, the Scout SUV will likely have an integrated battery pack, with an estimated range of over 300 miles

Telecom + IT

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ITU: Affordable Access to Internet Leads Poll to Connect Everyone by 2030

In the last 30 years, the number of Internet users worldwide has surged from just a few million to almost five billion today. But with one third of humanity still offline, huge connectivity potential remains untapped.

United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres recently reaffirmed the urgent need to connect everyone, everywhere to the Internet by 2030.

"Leaving no one behind means leaving no one offline," Guterres said on 17 May in his World Telecommunication and Information Society Day message.

The upcoming World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) – set to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, from 6 to 16 June – is a key opportunity to accelerate progress towards a fully connected planet.

But what are the concrete steps that governments, businesses, and society could be taking to achieve truly universal connectivity?

In the run-up to the conference, the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) turned to Twitter and LinkedIn to find out what our online community thinks.

The ITU asked poll participants what needs to happen to connect the unconnected by 2030.

- **Poll Results**

Affordable access to the Internet was a clear winner on both LinkedIn and Twitter, with 44 and 49 per cent of the vote, respectively.

Coming in second place for LinkedIn respondents was digital literacy at 24 per cent, while Twitter respondents felt investment was second-most important in the quest for universal, meaningful connectivity with 22 per cent of the vote.

For some respondents, all four approaches – ensuring digital literacy, affordable access, partnerships and investment – are equally important. For many, they seem symbiotic.

According to LinkedIn commenter Amal Punchihewa, a mix of "partnerships, investments and programmes to enhance digital literacy with some regulatory mechanisms will assure meaningful connectivity." The mix would vary from country to country, he added.

- Pathways Forward

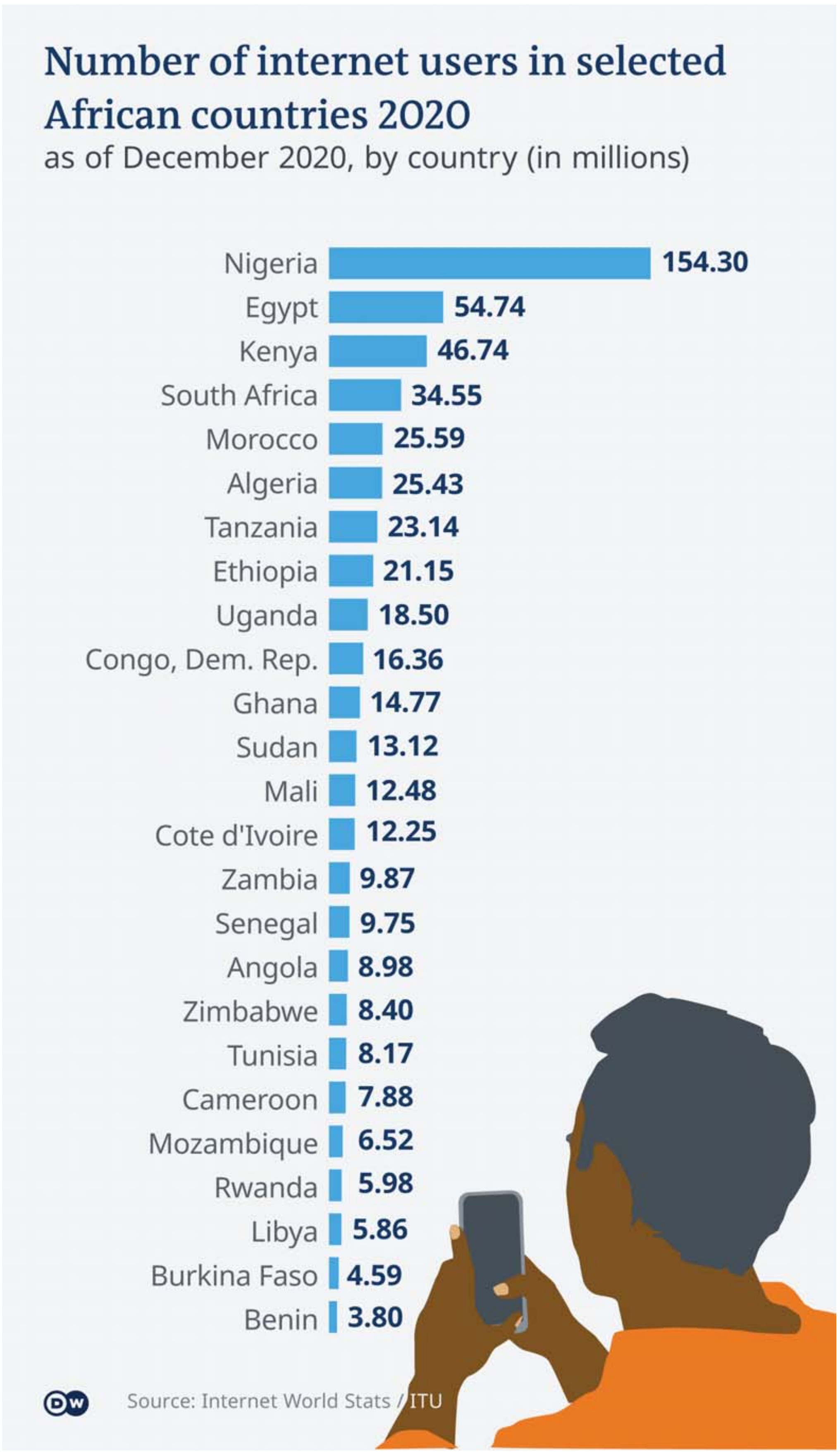
An estimated 4.9 billion people were online in 2021, according to ITU's Facts and Figures report. But many of them only have limited or basic connectivity.

Often, even entry-level mobile-broadband access is unaffordable. In low-income countries, as a percentage of monthly income, basic mobile broadband costs 21 times more than in high-income economies.

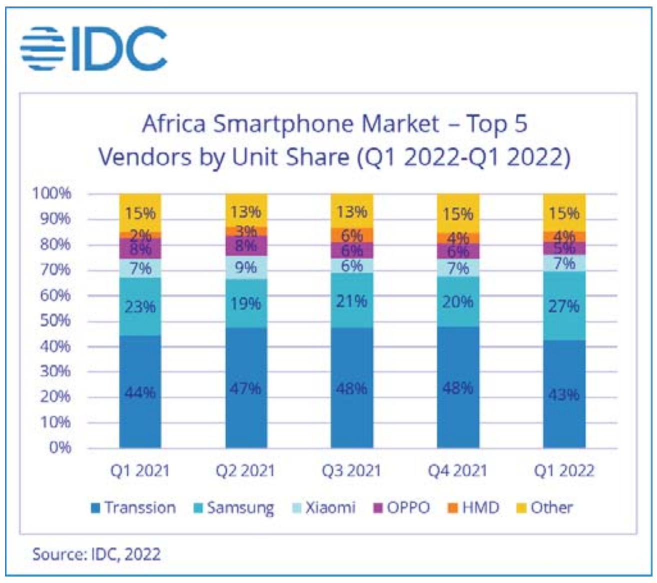
The ITU Global Connectivity Report, set for release on 6 June, dives into the data to take stock of such disparities and help chart a path to universal and meaningful connectivity.

At the Partner2Connect Digital Development Roundtable, which will take place during WTDC, ITU member states, as well as entities from the private sector, academia, civil society, and international organizations, will announce their pledges to advance digital transformation and meaningful connectivity for all.

Courtesy: Orbitt



Nigeria's Smartphone Market Down 20% in Q1, 16% in Africa



Smartphone shipments across Africa declined year on year (YoY) in the first quarter of 2022 (Q1 2022), marking the third straight quarter of negative growth.

The latest Quarterly Global Mobile Phone Tracker from International Data Corporation (IDC) shows that smartphone vendors shipped a total of 19.7 million smartphones across Africa in Q1 2022, down 15.7% YoY. In the feature phone space, shipments were down 26.6% to 21.9 million units as vendors are transitioning away from these devices toward entry-level smartphones.

"While ongoing supply and logistical challenges were expected to cause some declines in Q1 2022, things seem to have taken a turn for the worse, with concerns around inflation and economic instability dampening consumer sentiment and spending," says Arnold Ponela, a Senior Research Analyst at IDC. "This situation has been further exacerbated by the rising costs of components and transportation, as well as by the recent lockdowns in China."

Egypt, which accounts for nearly 10.5% of the African smartphone market, saw the biggest declines, with smartphone shipments down 43.2% YoY in Q1 2022 as the government moved to introduce new import regulations on all goods and a new 10% customs on mobile phones.

The Nigerian smartphone market was down 19.6%, and the outlook for many African markets remains uncertain. South Africa and Kenya were the only markets to post YoY growth in Q1 2022, with shipments up 3.7% and 4.5%, respectively. But this was off a low base from Q1 2021 when these markets were severely hampered by stock shortages.

Despite the challenging market conditions, vendor rankings in the smartphone space did not change much in Q1 2022. Transsion brands (Tecno, Itel, and Infinix) led the way with 42.7%unit share, its lowest since Q2 2020.

Samsung placed second with 26.8% share, while Xiaomi (6.6%), OPPO (5.4%), and HMD (3.7%) rounded out the top five. Transsion brands (Tecno and Itel) also dominated the feature phone landscape with a combined share of 67.6%. Nokia placed third with 12.6% share.

In terms of price bands, the share of smartphones priced below $100 decreased from 45.4% in Q4 2021 to 37.2% in Q1 2022, while the share of devices priced $100–$200 increased from 35.7% to 41.4% over the same period.

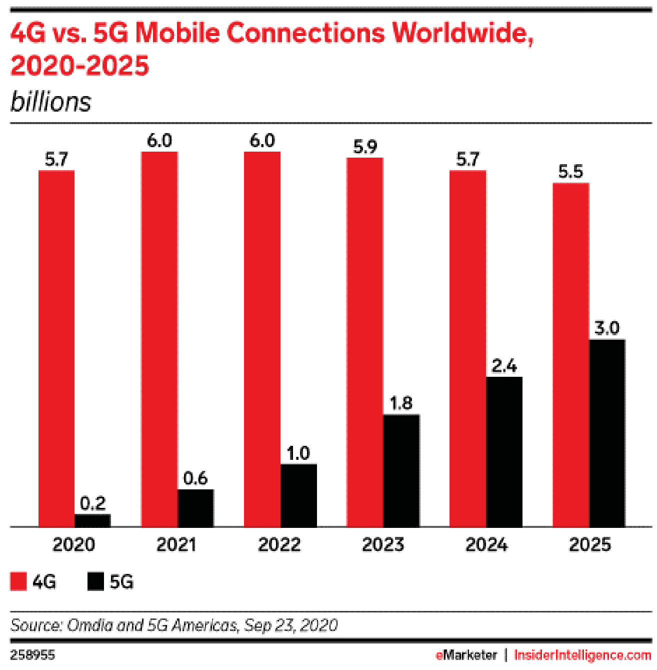
The midrange segment ($200<$400) also benefited from the decline in the $0–$100 price band, with its share increasing from 14.1% to 16.9%.

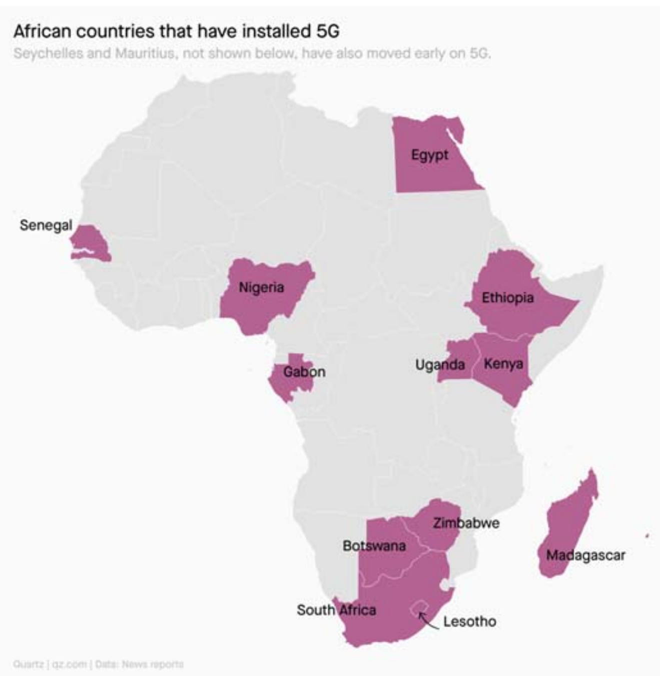
"Given the ongoing supply and logistical challenges, the average selling price of smartphones has risen in Africa, with the share of 5G devices being shipped across the region rising from 4.3% in Q4 2021 to 5.6% in Q1 2022," says Ramazan Yavuz, a Research Manager at IDC.

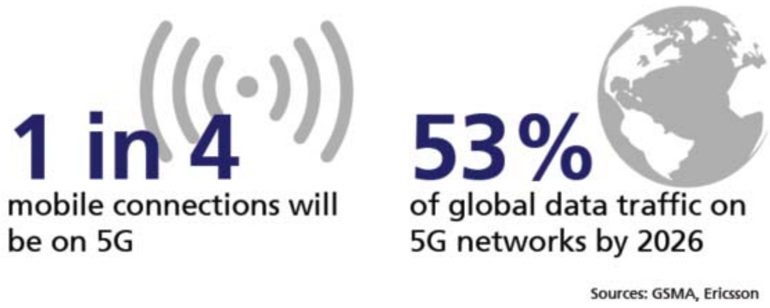
Much Ado About 5G!

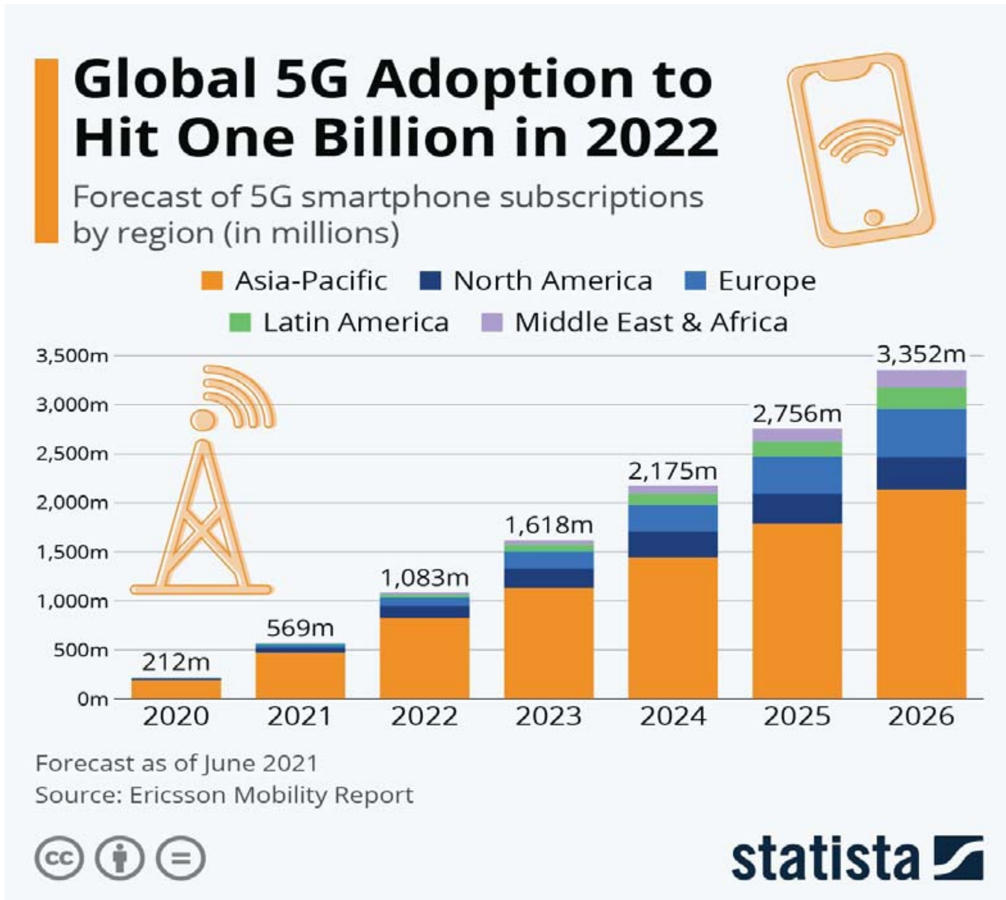
Elvis Eromosele

R-L: Prof. Umar Danbatta, Executive Vice-Chairman/CEO, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and Dr. Abimbola Alale, Managing Director/CEO, Nigerian Communications Satellite Limited (NigComSat) at the Signing of MoU on 5G Spectrum to Propel Nigeria's Digital Economy.









Today, technology is changing the world's economic models.

And 5G is one of the most talked-about technology in the world today, one that continues to elicit strong emotions. Governments and businesses are focused on the potential benefits while a segment of the population is wary of the alleged health implications.

In many ways, 5G is in the eye of the storm. At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, people were caught on camera destroying 5G infrastructure.

But what is 5G?

5G, described as the 5th generation mobile network, is a new global wireless standard following on the heels of 1G, 2G, 3G, and 4G networks. The unique selling point of 5G is that it enables a new kind of network; one that is designed to connect virtually everyone and everything including machines, objects, and devices.

Now, the first generation (1G) was introduced in the 1980s and delivered analogue voice. The second-generation (2G) developed in the early 1990s introduced digital voice (aka CDMA-Code Division Multiple Access). The third-generation (3G), which came on stream in the early 2000s delivered mobile data (also called CDMA2000). This led to the fourth generation (4G LTE) in the 2010s which ushered in the era of fast mobile broadband.

Experts say that with high speed, superior reliability and negligible latency, 5G will expand the mobile ecosystem into new realms. 5G, like others before it, is expected to impact every industry, transform several sectors and revamp economies.

Its low latency, which measures its response time, is one millisecond, while that of 4G is measured at 10 milliseconds. 5G may well be the fulcrum in actualising the much talked about digital society.

The Nigeria Communication Commission (NCC), the regulator of Nigeria's burgeoning telecommunications industry, agrees that the benefits would be transformational.

The consensus among experts is that 5G will drive a portfolio of new opportunities and services for businesses keen to leverage the technology. Every sector will be impacted, from health to finance, agriculture and education. Entertainment (music and movies) particularly will get a massive shot in the arm.

The understanding is that while 4G can accommodate 100,000 device connections in one square kilometre, 5G can connect a million devices within the same space. This makes it a viable platform to power the Internet of Things (IoT); IoT describes the digitally connected universe of everyday physical devices.

In addition, the peak data rate with 5G is 20 gigabits per second for download, and 10GB for upload, which is higher than the 100 megabytes per second download and 50MB upload offered by the 4G network. Now, that is a lot of difference.

True, there are concerns, health and safety concerns around the use of 5G technology. There were reports of people burning down 5G infrastructure out of fear in the recent past. But the World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant institutions have stated repeatedly and unequivocally that any electromagnetic radiation that is 10 watts per metre squared and below does not pose any threat to humans. 5G, like other generations before it, falls in this range. 5G is safe.

In this age of climate change, "resilience, the capacity to persist, adapt and transform in the face of change", according to the Global Resilience Partnership, "is a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development and achieving the SDGs."

5G is not just about high speed and ultra-low latency capability, it is equally about the provision of climate-resilient technology and platforms. In Nigeria, it is expected to help drive the government's much-vaunted digital economy agenda.

The NCC believes that the rollout of 5G will enable the nation to attain record Broadband penetration without having to rely on fibre infrastructure. This is because the 5G network will bridge the nation's fibre connectivity gap and enhance Internet penetration with its wireless broadband connectivity across the nation. This is a huge deal. Experts suggest that any increase in mobile Broadband penetration would yield a corresponding increase in the nation's GDP per capita.

One of the most significant values of 5G is the ability to connect devices. It will be able to power a host of applications and innovations- including smart cities, telemedicine, Internet of Things (IoT), autonomous vehicles, security architecture and much more.

Telecommunications network operators are therefore expected to gain new revenue streams. This may completely transform their operations by revealing opportunities in gaming and entertainment, especially live broadcasts.

Anxieties about the price of 5G devices and associated equipment are billed to be short-lived. Experts project that the prices will likely reduce drastically as the number of users climbs astronomically. Reports indicate that there will over one billion 5G devices in use in the next two years.

Going forward, businesses and corporations in Nigeria should be warming up to leverage the high-speed and low latency features of 5G.

Indeed, two operators, Mafab Communications Limited and MTN Nigeria have been licensed to push 5G services in a way that should further expand offerings by businesses leveraging the new technology.

The numbers around 5G are impressive. Two licensees have already paid almost $550 million into government's coffers. The number of jobs that will be created, and the way it will transform businesses, improve productivity and contribution to GDP are incalculable.

Today, we say that technology is changing the world's economic models. Tomorrow, we will look back and say 5G led to the emergence of a new society.

5G is here for good. It can boost productivity, improve the quality of human existence and change the dynamics of the world. With 5G, the digital age is here!

• *Elvis Eromosele, a Corporate Communication professional and public affairs analyst lives in Lagos.*

'NCC Committed to Promoting Organisational Efficiency, Capacity Building' – Danbatta

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) has once again reiterated its stance on professionalizing its workforce and strengthening collaborations with strategic partners such as the Nigerian Institute of Management (NIM) in order to enhance operational efficiency.

The Executive Vice Chairman (EVC) of NCC Prof. Umar Danbatta, stated this while receiving a delegation led by the Acting Registrar and CEO of NIM, Jude Iheanacho, who paid a courtesy visit to the NCC Head Office recently.

Director, Human Capital and Administration, Usman Malah, who represented the EVC at the event, noted that the Commission places a high premium on capacity building and is implementing policies geared towards achieving this vital objective. Malah also said that it was in the Commission's best interest to deepen its collaboration with NIM, through strategic partnering, so that NCC can improve organisational efficiency and regulatory excellence.

Speaking further, Malah declared that the Commission's faith in the transformational capacity of skilled human resources is demonstrated by the Commission's support to staff who are members of the Institute. The support includes prompt payment of membership fees for its staff; and subscription to and participation in NIM's mandatory capacity building programmes for members.

Malah promised to make recommendations to the Management of Commission to take additional steps in solidifying the strategic relationship, such as setting up a joint committee of the two bodies to draw up modalities for inter-agency collaboration.

Iheanacho, in his response, lauded NCC for its positive contribution to the telecommunications sector and also said a highly-skilled, highly professional workforce was needed to regulate the dynamic, competitive, and highly intellectual world of telecommunications.

The NCC, Ihenacho observed, has been an exemplary public sector institution noted for its proactive, all-inclusive engagement of stakeholders in the telecoms sector.

The NIM Chief Executive, who acceded that there was a need for strategic partnership between the two organisations, also declared that there were a variety of emergent upskilling programmes by NIM aimed at ensuring that Nigeria was in tune with global trends.

L-R: Folorunso Mesele, Principal Manager, Human Capital, Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC); Tony Iloabachie, Assistant Manager, Abuja Office, Nigeria Institute of Management (NIM); Ibrahim Dogarai, Head, Administration, NCC; Emeka Iwelunmor, Head, Abuja Office, NIM; Usman Malah, Director, Human Capital and Administration, NCC; Jude Iheanacho, Acting Registrar/CEO, NIM; Nancy Usman, Secretary, Maitama Chapter and member of the Faculty, Tunji Jimoh, Deputy

Ghana Welcomes OneWeb's 1st West African Satellite Network Portal

Satellite operator OneWeb announced the successful installation of 15 OneWeb antennas and related equipment at a satellite network portal (SNP) in Accra, Ghana.

The new infrastructure is OneWeb's first SNP in West Africa. It is built and installed in collaboration with communications solution provider TinSky Connect,t will be operational by the end of this year.

"The site is now commissioning and will be ready for service later in 2022. Tinsky understood the complexity of the multiple satellite 'hand offs' each gateway has to achieve per second and deployed a highly experienced team of field engineers that provided advanced system engineering and technical services addressing OneWeb's mission-critical SNP gateway needs, at low risk and within budget," said Alan Geldenhuys, Executive Director of TinSky Connect Group.

The partnership comes in a context marked by strong competition in the satellite telecommunication segment in Africa where demand is high, in rural areas notably.

OneWeb wants to deploy a mega-constellation of at least 650 mini-satellites in low earth orbit to meet the growing demand for internet connection and outrun the competition. However, its initial plan was slowed by the coronavirus pandemic, which thwarted a number of funding promises.

Rescued from bankruptcy by Bharti Airtel and the UK government in July 2020, the company has been ramping up investments as part of its goal. By May 2021, it crossed the 200-satellite mark in space.

This new infrastructure is OneWeb's second SNP gateway in Africa. The first one is located in Hartebeesthoek, South Africa.

Other SNPs are being set up in Senegal and Mauritius. Once completed, they will enable the satellite operator to extend its African coverage with high-speed Internet and support the digital transformation that is accelerating on the continent.

WEF: Nigeria to Host 1st Global Digital FDI Project

A pioneering effort to facilitate cross-border investment in the digital economy was launched at the recent World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2022.

The new initiative on Digital Foreign Direct Investment, the Digital FDI initiative, will implement projects in several countries to help grow Digital FDI, as the reforms to attract such investment must take place at a country level.

The first digital FDI project will take place in Nigeria.

Over the past few years, the Forum has worked to find the right partners to guide the work, develop principles published in the white paper launched in 2020 and share the potential for co-operation at the G20 and other platforms of corporation.

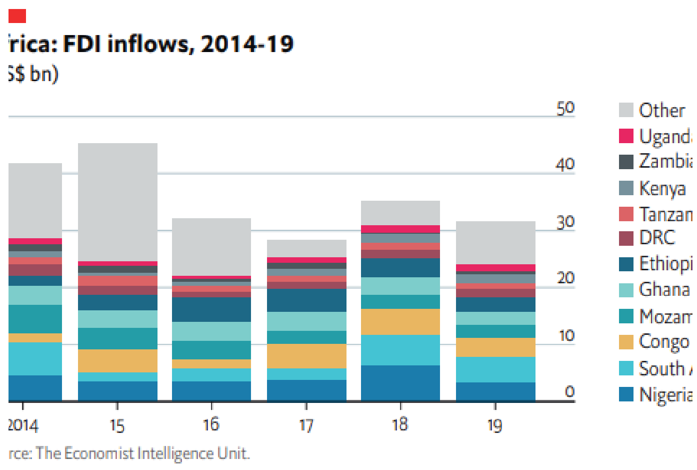
Attracting Digital FDI requires creating digital-friendly investment climates through targeted and country-specific policies, regulations and measures. These investments involve new business models, often based on data and technology, and platform economies, as well as using non-traditional assets.

The Digital FDI initiative will aim to identify and implement enabling reforms through public-private projects in emerging markets and developing countries.

"Global FDI is rebounding, following the COVID-19 pandemic, and investment in the digital economy could not come at a better time. These country projects will help grow FDI into the digital economy, which is key for long-term growth, competitiveness and sustainable development", said Børge Brende, President, World Economic Forum.

The Digital FDI initiative will be delivered as a joint effort between the World Economic Forum and the Digital Co-operation Organisation (DCO), a new international organisation that seeks to enable digital prosperity for all.

"As the first and only global multilateral focused on enabling digital prosperity for all, the DCO is partnering with the Forum on a Digital Foreign Direct Investment initiative to help countries develop digital FDI-friendly investment climates. We invite digital innovators with a commitment to economic development and inclusion to join us," said Deemah Al Yahya, Secretary-General, DCO.



• Pantami

Healthcare

www.businessjournalng.com

5m Nigerians enrolled with HMOs for Medicare

Mrs. Oladotun Adeogun, Managing Director/CEO, Hallmark Health Services Limited (Hallmark HMO) says the number of Nigerians registered and receiving medical treatment through the services of Health Management Organisations (HMOs) has risen to over five million.

In an exclusive interview with Business Journal, she said: "It is estimated that we have between 3-5million registered private patients with HMOs, that is not considering lives seeded from government schemes. HMOs have helped more people get access to quality healthcare. The entrance of HMOs into the health sector has helped to improve the health seeking behaviour of Nigerians. This has in turn helped to improve the outcome of a few conditions."

On the challenges facing HMOs, she added: "The most challenging aspect of HMO business is staying in business, considering the rising cost of medications, reagents, and hospital equipment which has necessitated a very huge demand on tariff increase by providers while clients wish to drive premium further down yet hoping to enjoy more benefits."

She therefore called on the government at various levels (Federal-State-LG) for support to ensure that Nigerians receive the best medical services available at affordable costs.

"We will be grateful if the government can help to ensure co-payment options, regulate premium and tariff for certain plans."

Mrs. Oladotun Adeogun
Managing Director/CEO, Hallmark Health Services Limited (Hallmark HMO)

COVID-19 Claims 6m Lives Worldwide

A GRIM MILESTONE

	Worldwide deaths (in millions)	Days
Sep 18, 2020	1.000	242
Jan 11, 2021	2.009	115
Apr 09, 2021	3.013	88
Jul 07, 2021	4.005	89
Nov 01, 2021	5.006	117
Mar 07, 2022	6.000	126

Leading health experts at the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Meeting 2022 said that over six (6) million people died from the COVID-19 pandemic and called co-ordinated efforts to fight against future pandemics.

"We must not lose this moment of potential transformative change in building preparedness," said Helen E. Clark, Board Chair, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health, World Health Organisation (WHO). "Unfortunately, political resolve to solve COVID is beginning to fade."

Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda, pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic is still raging in many countries. "To date, the African continent has fully vaccinated just 18% of its adult population." This is mostly due to the lack of virus testing and vaccine administration capacity, he said.

"Investing in health systems and regional bodies like Africa CDC and African Medicines Agency must be a key priority. We have to act in the full expectation that there will be another pandemic."

Bill Gates, Co-Chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said it was critical to identify and isolate viral outbreaks early. "Infectious disease is an exponential phenomenon and less than 2% of overall deaths occur in the first 100 days."

"Unfortunately, much of the world's pandemic risk resides in countries which don't have the capacity to respond quickly and effectively," he said. "You have to have global capacity if you are serious about pandemics."

Peter Sands, Executive Director of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, argued for the need for "multi-pathogen infrastructure and capacity".

The Success of Health Tech Startups in West Africa

Esohe Braimah

In the past decade, Africa has been moving in a fast-paced technology environment where almost all industry is being replaced or will soon be replaced with technology.

Health tech startups refer to businesses that develop technology to improve several aspects of the healthcare system. Technology has become a huge part of human life and it is having a huge impact on certain sectors of the economy, one of which is the health care industry.

The health tech startups have recorded immense success in the last eight years. A report by Techpoint Africa showed that Nigeria's health tech startups experienced a boost in funding activities second to financial services. These health tech startups raised about $32.5 million across seven deals. The adoption of technology by healthcare startups has had only positive impacts, some of which includes;

- Easier purchase of drugs from online platforms.
- Provision of health insurance at your fingertips.
- Telemedicine
- Medical consultation from the comfort of your home.

All these advancements outrivals the traditional healthcare system. They have made life easier for people and reduced the risk of people contacting germs found in hospitals.

Although the health tech startups have a long way to go, here is a list of eight health tech startups that are making waves in the industry.

▪ WASPITO

Waspito released on April 2020, is a revolutionizing health tech startup founded in Cameroon. It is a telehealth app that brings both the users and doctors together. Their service ranges from telemedicine, drug delivery, and consultation.

Waspito aims to use the application to provide loyal Africans with affordable and accessible quality healthcare services. Waspito got about 30,000 signups despite its lack of advertisement, and it has also been able to successfully draw the attention of several investors like the French mobile operator, Orange.

▪ mPharma

mPharma was created in 2013 by an outstanding Ghanaian entrepreneur, Gregory Rockson. It is an online pharmacy that is well stock with several drugs for different health complications. They saw the problems faced by most Africans when it comes to purchasing drugs. Through their platform, they have found a way to reduce the purchase price of drugs for their users.

According to their websites, their innovations have helped over 40,000 patients to make savings on expensive medicines.

This innovative tech is available in six African countries. They also have 155 hospital partners, 850 pharmacies and drug stores, and 2 million patients and growing. To add to their remarkable achievements at the peak of the pandemic, they were able to close a $17 million deal with the British International Investment.

▪ 54gene

54gene is a top-of-the-line health technology startup that discovers drugs, diagnose molecules and conduct clinical trial programs. The goal of 54gene is to unlock scientific discoveries as well as improve diagnostics and treatment outcomes within the African community.

It was founded in 2019 by Dr. Abasi Ene-Obong. It is located in Lagos, Nigeria, and Washington, DC, USA.

▪ LifeBank

Lifebank was launched in 2016 by Temie Giwa Tubosun. Lifebank is a medical delivery service that transports medical supplies like blood, oxygen, and medical samples that are rare to find across Africa. The main mission of life bank is to make sure blood is available when needed.

This award-winning health tech startup is available in only two African countries at the moment and they have moved over 25,000 products and have saved over 10,000 lives. Lifebank has won several reputable awards and funds. The startup has appeared on global news media like CNN, Google, Bloomberg, etc. Lifebank is, no doubt, making waves in the health tech industry.

▪ Healthlane

Healthlane is a tele-consultation platform that was established in Nigeria in 2020. The app provides appointments and booking for patients. It has interactive tools that help patients manage their lifestyles and give tips on how to achieve their health and fitness goals.

The app offers services such as; body analysis, heart health, diabetics check, kidney check, and liver check. Healthlane is fast and accessible. Some of its tops investors are CRE Africa, Y Combinator, and Musha investors.

▪ Rema Medical Technologies

Rema Medical Technology is an innovative startup that is created for medical practitioners to exchange their knowledge and feedback with each other. The app contains thousands of medical studies and research papers.

It prides itself as the number one medical community in Africa with over 10,000 plus verified doctors, available in 20 plus countries and it is 100 percent secured. They have also been featured on several media outlets like BBC Africa.

▪ Safermom

Safermom is a revolutionary health tech startup that was built to help mothers on their journey through pregnancy and early baby care. It was founded in 2014, in Lagos, Nigeria.

It provides nursing mothers and pregnant moms with important health information through SMS in the three top languages in Nigeria which are Yoruba, Hausa, and Igbo.

This special feature makes it very helpful for mothers who don't have access to good maternity healthcare, and it breaks the barrier of the language challenge.

▪ Helium Health

Helium Health is a cutting-edge technology that transforms and improves how records are kept and managed in hospitals. Helium health services range from electronic medical records management, telemedicine, financial management, and administration.

This health tech is trusted by more than 300 providers, it is used by 5,000 health professionals and it manages over 165,000 patients monthly. It is located in Lagos, Nigeria, and in 2020 the CEO Adegoke Olubusi raised a $10 million Series A round.

Executive Chat

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‘eNaira Will Succeed- Cash is No Longer King’

As smartphone ownership continues to grow across the entire continent, digital banking is set to become the primary form of money management. The effect on the future of the sector and the economy is huge, says **Roy Zakka**, CEO and Founder of Layer in an exclusive interview with Business Journal.

Roy Zakka, CEO & Founder, Layer

What is responsible for the rise of digital banking in Nigeria and Africa?

When it comes to telecommunications, much of Africa simply bypassed landlines and went straight to mobile. Mobile penetration is much larger than landlines, and that includes computing using a desktop and fixed-line. When you factor banking into that, we see that internet banking is immediately one of the most convenient things a person can do using their smartphone, so it really has been embraced large swathes of the population for that reason. Around half of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa now have a mobile phone subscription. Currently, just 1 in 6 of these users have access to 4G, but that number is forecast to double to 28% of the population by 2025. Nigeria has roughly 170 million mobile phone users, but only 10 to 20 percent of these are smartphones while the rest rely on more traditional mobile phones.

What was the current scope/volume of digital transactions in Nigeria and Africa in 2020 and 2021?

There's two ways of putting this. Because much of Africa's population is largely unbanked, if you drill down into those who do use banks, and then further into those whose customers use smartphones, then you can see that a very high percentage of those transactions will be mobile money and not traditional banking. But because those banks are still in the minority, for now, as are the number of users with the smartphone capability, but that is set to rise sharply in the next few years.

Does Nigeria/Africa possess the technical/technological expertise to sustain the digital trend?

At Layer, when we were building our platform for the United Bank for Africa, we developed a team of highly skilled engineers in Nigeria, including CIOs, CTOs and more. The platform now serves 22 million UBA customers across 20 countries, so there is an enormous talent pool in Africa. There are also a large number of multinational companies, that are helping to train a new generation that will be vastly more technologically aware and capable than the one that came before.

In addition to this, the FinTech scene is exploding in Africa, including a thriving ecosystem for investment, that is creating jobs skilled jobs and allowing young companies to expand beyond their borders. There is enormous opportunity and potential in the region, for indigenous companies as well.

What are the key challenges of sustaining and growing digital transactions in Nigeria/Africa?

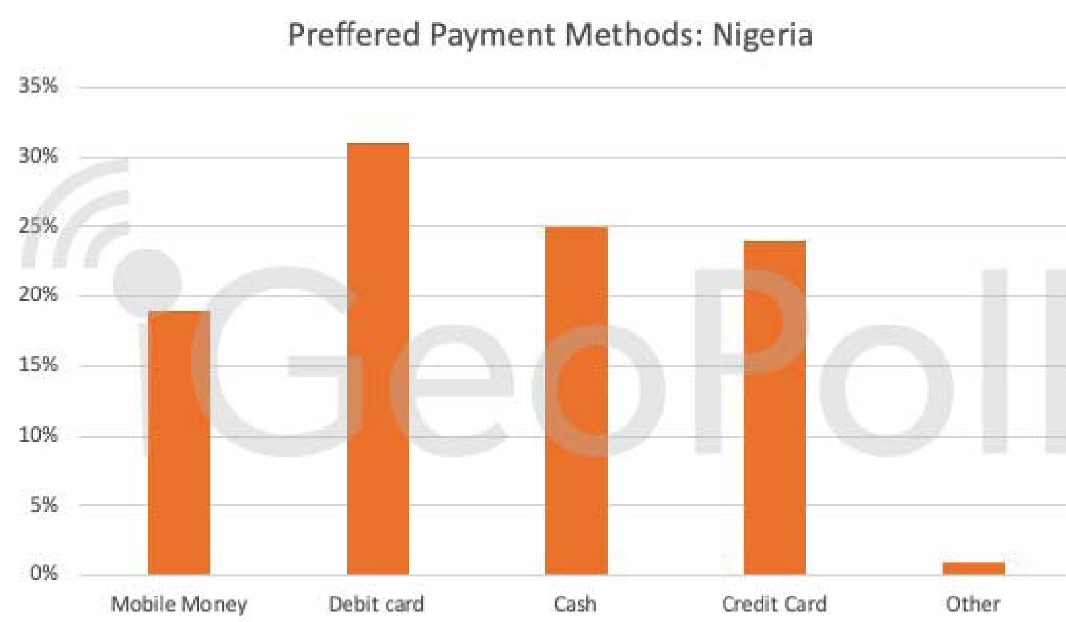
Mobile transactions in Nigeria alone grew by 83% in 2020, so African banks are currently locked in a race to position themselves as innovative and frictionless, in order to secure market share. One interesting development is the Nigerian government launching eNaira, Africa's first digital currency. This will enable further access to banking, enable more remittances and help grow the economy by billions of dollars.

At the same time, Nigeria's young and tech-savvy population has eagerly adopted digital currencies, including cryptocurrencies, despite the Central Bank's skepticism. To answer your question, innovation isn't always about a complex solution, it's about identifying what a customer base wants and needs, and being in a position to provide it to eliminate those pain points before they occur.

What do you believe is the right regulatory framework for digital banking in Nigeria?

That's something that is a real opportunity for the operators. There are a lot of Neobanks emerging across Nigeria and Africa, three or four in the last year alone. Going back to the smartphone growth, these banks have direct access to new customers in a way the traditional banks do not. As a result, the traditional banks are

> ***Mobile transactions in Nigeria alone grew by 83% in 2020, so African banks are currently locked in a race to position themselves as innovative and frictionless, in order to secure market share. One interesting development is the Nigerian government launching eNaira, Africa's first digital currency. This will enable further access to banking, enable more remittances and help grow the economy by billions of dollars***



Executive Chat

facing huge competition, and the regulator needs to be in a position to ensure that competition remains fair, especially as the price of individual smartphones gets lower and lower.

In this rising era of digital transactions, what is the fate of cash going forward?

I believe that due to the pandemic and those other factors we're talking about here, cash is no longer king. We have seen in Singapore, for example, the government introduced a central database where everybody just had to go on once and verify their name and phone number, and transferring money from one person to another became completely frictionless in a system managed by the state, as opposed to any neobank or fintech app. I have no doubt that this is the future, sending money via the phone. Whether that is through a certain app or some other way, I can't tell, but the days of cash are in decline and they are not going to come back.

How should regulators respond and counter cybercrime in the digital banking space?

Well, at Layer we provide very tight security, which includes digital onboarding, identity verification and two-factor authentication. All this goes towards anti-theft, fraud and money laundering, which in the new era of online banking is the most important way to build customer confidence and loyalty. Of course, cybercriminals are always evolving in their sophistication too, so there is a big onus on companies like ours to never rest. That said, it is of utmost importance that African nations continue their work in passing digital privacy and data protection laws, so individuals have cast-iron rights to be protected in the first place.

What is the level of investment on digital banking in Nigeria by operators?

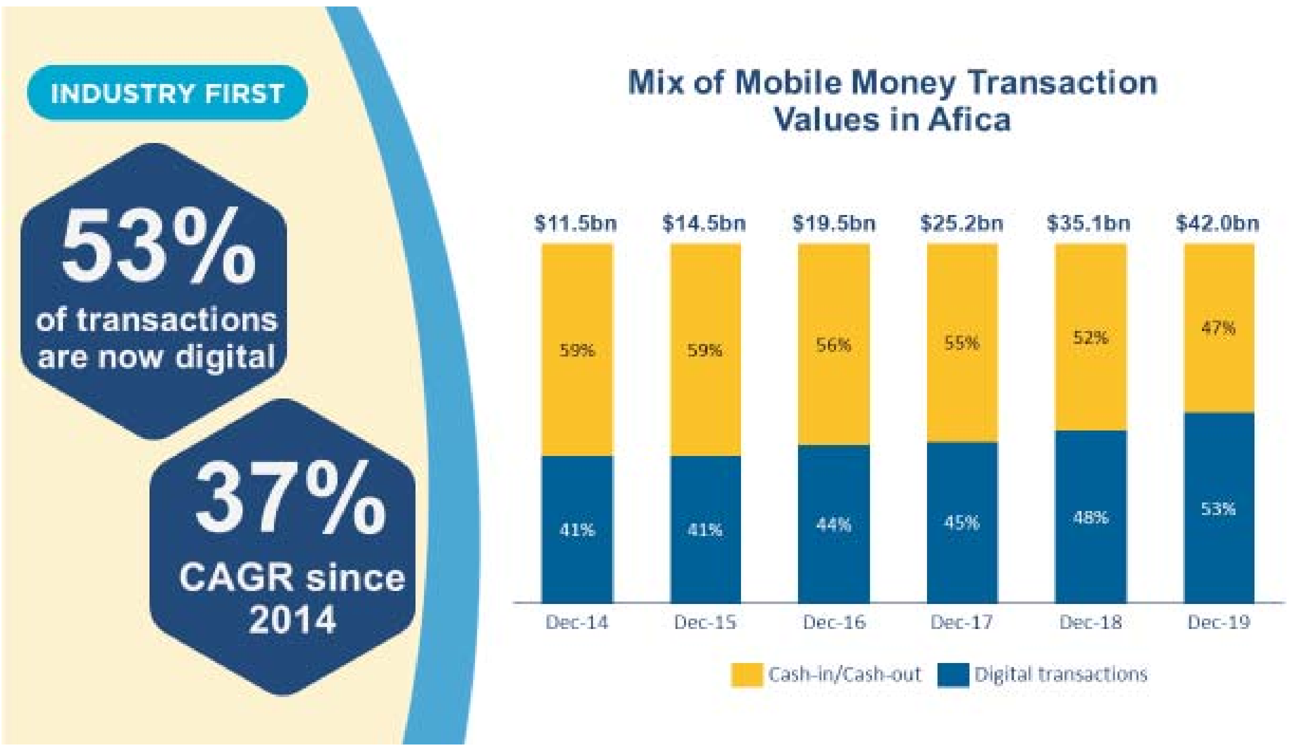
Well, that depends on how much drive a financial institution has to drive a full digital transformation for their customers. In the case of our work with UBA, we built their entire digital platform from the ground up, and this of course required significant investment. But one of the biggest things holding banks back is the perception that the process will take years and vast levels of investment. Following significant digital transformation, annual operating expenses can go in the other way, falling by up to 40% in the first year alone. So- it's not about investment, it's about the value that it brings, long-term.

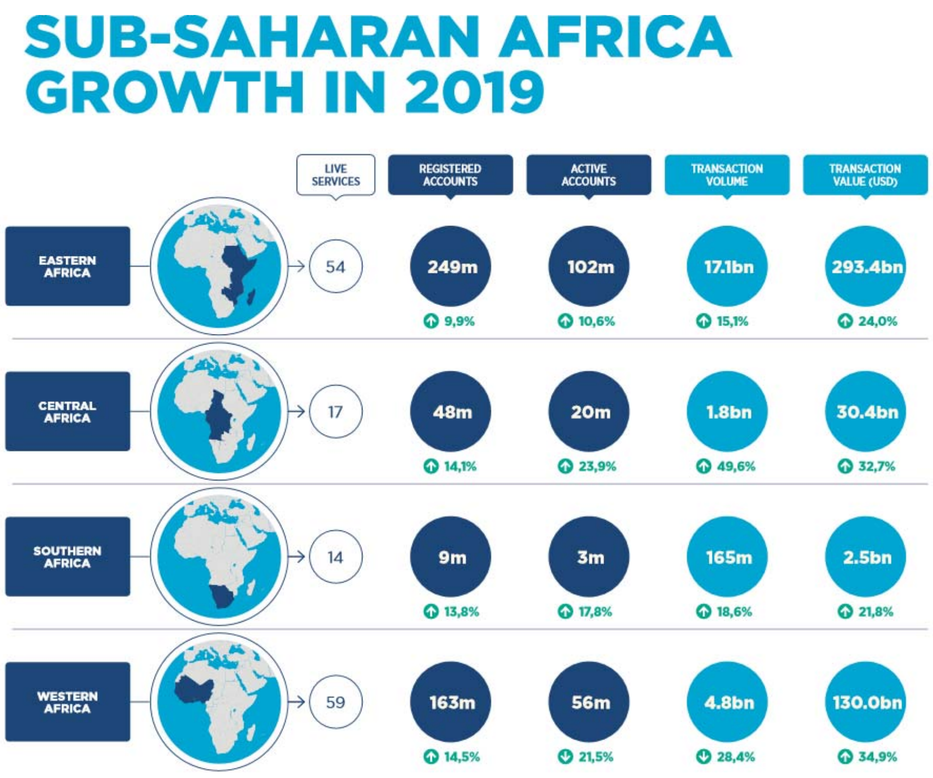
What is the future of digital banking in Nigeria/Africa?

Well, this is what we've been discussing all along isn't it. I can't stress enough that the government issuing banking licenses to fintech startups and neobanks is opening up the field completely. The playing field is now so large, and suddenly the ability for non-traditional banks to enter into the market to provide financial services is huge. I believe that what we're going to see is a lot of partnerships happening, whether it's between traditional banks and mobile operators, fintechs and traditional banks, mobile operators, fintechs and traditional banks. We'll see is all these parties coming together, and that's where we come in. We can stand things up within just six months, whereas the traditional core banking systems to replace them can take three to five years.

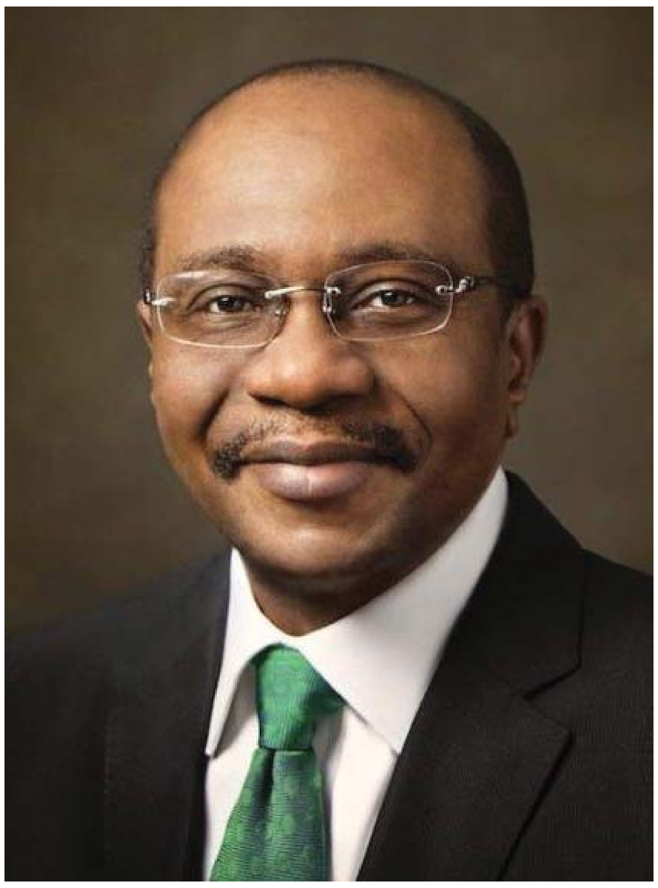
The Central Bank of Nigeria recently launched a digital currency called eNaira. What is the prospect and challenges of eNaira in the short and long terms?

Well, yes- we played a role in this by building and deploying the eNaira wallet for Zenith, and because the Layer platform is built on Open architecture, the UBA team was able to add eNaira capability in record time. It's still early stages for the eNaira, but I believe that due to the growth we're seeing in other areas, it will be a huge success.





***Roy Zakka** is CEO and Founder of Layer, which facilitates digital transformation for traditional banks and financial institutions, enhancing the customer and back-office experience.*



• Emefiele

About Layer

Layer was founded in 2011 to solve the technology problem in financial services. Our aim was to equip banks with the tools necessary to accelerate financial inclusion. We started small and focused on solving a variety of specific issues for banks. We worked tirelessly helping banks to digitise and automate their old systems and processes, helping them keep up with the pace of innovation and consumer demand.

Social Media, National Security and Social Change: **Bridging the Gap for Development in Africa**

Lecture by Dr. Akinwumi A. Adesina, President, African Development Bank Group at the NECCI PR Roundtable on Thursday, October 28, 2021 in Lagos, Nigeria.

Good morning everyone!

I would like to heartily congratulate Nkechi Ali-Balogun for convening the 21st NECCI PR Roundtable.

For more than two decades, you have played a strong leadership role in the sphere of Public Relations in Nigeria. Congratulations!

I can see why you are so successful Nkechi: You are one very determined person. You are smart. You are creative. You are dynamic. And you are resilient, and very prayerful. It was not easy being here for me today, with several competing commitments, globally.

But I decided to be here physically, in person, because I wanted to specially honor you, and all of your colleagues who work so tirelessly to brand our nation.

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on the theme "Social Media, National Security and Social Change: Bridging the Gap for Development in Africa."

Eight years ago, I did something that would change one of the ways in which I interact, first as a Minister in Nigeria, and later as President of the African Development Bank: I created my own Twitter account. Since then, I have posted close to 2,000 messages and had the privilege of engaging with more than half a million followers.

I wanted to connect with people. Social media offered me the perfect platform: to interact, to engage, to inform, to hear perspectives and to "stay connected".

Bureaucracy and the hierarchical nature of societies, makes it easy for leaders to become far removed from those they are called to serve. A letter written to them may get to their attention, if lucky, or you may receive a computerized reply. That is no longer the case with social media. Today, leaders have no choice. They must engage.

Citizens now have social platforms to speak, vent and engage in the public sphere. Leaders, who are far from their people, no longer have a place to hide. The people are at their gates, daily, with inquiries, views, opinions, vitriol and sometimes sarcasm.

We are all in a new world of rapid social dialogue. From Twitter to TikTok or any other social media platform for that matter, our lives would not be the same without them. Just a few weeks ago, Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, experienced a global outage that cut off users from the platforms. By the time the services returned to normal hours later, billions of people and business users were already hyperventilating about the disconnection from their virtual worlds.

Today, billions of people have unprecedented power to communicate and transcend boundaries and barriers, right in the palm of their hands, via smart mobile phones. It is a new world and one in which citizens wield influence that was not possible just a little over 15 years ago. The 'power in the palm', has democratized communication and given users transformative platforms to communicate their ideas, promote goods and services, and build social, professional, and business relationships globally.

The number of social media users in Africa is rising rapidly. The estimates for 2021 are that 45% of the population in northern Africa use social media, 8% in central Africa, 10% in eastern Africa, 16% in western Africa, and 41% in southern Africa.

According to the International Finance Corporation, Africa's Internet economy contributes close to $115 billion or about 4.5% of the continent's total gross domestic product (GDP) and could reach $180 billion, or 5.2% of GDP by 2025.

There are around 40 million social media users in Nigeria today. While those are large numbers by any standard, it is still less than 20% of the population. By comparison, Taiwan has a social media penetration of more than 88%.

But Nigeria is catching up fast: last year, the number of users increased by a whopping 22%. WhatsApp is now the most popular social media platform in the country (93%), followed by Facebook (86.2%) and YouTube (81.6%). Twitter used to have a 61.4% share of Internet users in the country, prior to the ban imposed by the Federal Government.

Today, social media has become the place where positions are claimed, disputes and discussions are led, communities are built, business is conducted, and information is shared. Its influence and reach in terms of real time communication and messaging are unprecedented.

The ability to reach millions of people in an instant is already well established by the 'twitterati,' 'glitterati,' businesses, public servants, political figures, and the public alike.

•Adesina

In contrast to traditional media platforms of television and radio, social media platforms are participatory systems of communication. Audiences that were once simply passive consumers of whatever was available on television or radio, now have mind-boggling choices whenever and wherever they want to access online content.

Today, backseat audiences are now in the front seat, driving content, news, and information. And in many instances social media audiences have been known to break news stories even before traditional TV and radio platforms are able to do so. So, welcome to the world of "user-generated content," whether it be Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, or Tik Tok, the world of media and communication has changed.

- But the "network society" is not without shortcomings.

Powerful algorithms developed by social media platforms are not necessarily neutral; they control, shape and define what we see and the ideas we engage with. The psychological and addictive powers of social media are already well established by analysts.

Beyond seemingly harmless "likes" resides the power of social media platforms to track preferences, behaviors and personalities. The end result is a powerful analytical tool that allows companies to market and sell your information and details, whether you recognize it or not. Therein lies the power and profitability of the business models of social media platforms.

A 2019 survey by the Pew Research Center across 11 emerging economies found that many respondents were worried about the risks associated with social media and other communication technologies, even though they cited the benefits of social media in other respects.

Simply put, they were concerned that social media had amplified politics in both positive and negative directions. On the one hand, making them more empowered politically and potentially more exposed to harm at the same time.

- Nigeria was not included in the survey, but it is safe to assume that even here opinion is divided.

Opinions about the merits or demerits of social media will be debated for ages to come. For now, young, savvy, and empowered youth have leveraged the amazing power of social media platforms to fashion together networks for information, business, and social interaction. Many influencers, or young entrepreneurs have been able to scale their businesses and break into global value chains.

On the flip side, in developed and developing economies, not all traditional gatekeepers of information and communication have been happy to lose considerable control and influence over how information and content is distributed and consumed.

However, even in countries where governments have clamped down on social media platforms, users have simply masked their identities and bypassed denials of access by using Virtual Personal Networks, otherwise known as VPNs, to protect their data and online privacy.

We do not need to be reminded of the power and influence of social media, for better and for good. From Korea to Kenya, or Laos to Lagos, the innovative disruptions of social media are vividly on display.

During the #EndSARS protests last year, Twitter was banned indefinitely by the Federal Government of Nigeria and placed out of reach for most Nigerians. Support for, or the storm against the banning of a social media platform, demonstrates the very difficult dilemma governments face as they seek to strike a balance between freedom of expression and national security.

Nigeria, like many other democracies, has three arms of government: The Legislature (the power to make laws), the Executive (the power to execute and enforce laws), and the Judiciary (the power to interpret and apply laws).

Respectively, they are also known as the First Estate, the Second Estate, and the Third Estate of the Realm. Traditional media, sometimes referred to as the Fourth Estate, refers to their explicit capacity for advocacy and implicit ability to frame political issues.

Social media has given rise to what is now described as the "Fifth Estate": 'people power', fully independent from any government control or vested interests.

For the Record

Some commentators suggest that the Fifth Estate will be as important in the 21st century as the Fourth Estate has been since the 18th century.

The Fifth Estate can and should be a win for democracy and human rights protections. In many parts of the world, we see this on display all the time. Whether it be live streamed political debates or discussions on critical issues or exposes on the tragic killing of George Floyd, or corrupt law enforcement officers caught on camera soliciting bribes on highways and byways, social media continues to play a role in protecting rights and ensuring the rule of law.

But as security scholar Velichka Milina observes, the power that social media wields in facilitating the instantaneous dissemination of information, also means that fake news, watered down stories and propaganda, can also easily be passed around at lighting speed without checks and balances.

Milina argues "Power is no longer legitimized through expertise. There is a new understanding about truth, characterized by the notion that there are no traditions and no experts. The truth is moving away from expertise. The opinion of any blogger-amateur could be 'liked' more than that of a university professor. Whoever tells a better story gains the most trust."

▪ That again is the power of the platform.

Social media, depending on how it is used and who it is used by and for what purpose, has tremendous power for good or for bad. But the constant reality is that we live in a binary world of truth and misinformation.

Social media apps, as with other cyber platforms, are not immune from malicious attacks. The recent global shut down of Facebook, Whatsapp and Instagram are precursors of greater risks of disruption that could even be at a much larger and systemic scale.

Simply put: the private data and information of millions of users can potentially be hacked into or compromised. For individuals, businesses, and governments that depend on these platforms, vulnerability assessments and cyber security are necessary in order to protect data, privacy and information, for individuals, businesses and governments.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

As technology advances, so too do the challenges to national security in the virtual space. Technology is neutral. It is the use that it is put that defines acceptable and unacceptable boundaries. Ultimately the vital question of who owns, controls and spreads information will arise. Today, the owners of social media platforms wield unprecedented power.

Concerns about social platforms stem from the powers of monopoly and the ability of the controllers of platforms to influence societies, or creators of content to use them to drive wedges in societies, cultures, and religion or create misinformation or give oxygen to fake news.

Despite the many benefits of social media, because it is possible to hide identities, it is very common to have abuse of social media. If rules are not well established, and norms of conduct well enforced, misuse of social media could cause discord, unravel societies due to susceptibility to foreign influence, social engineering and cyber-attacks.

▪ The network society cannot be ignored.

Given the power and pervasive influence of social media, every level of government must recognize the power of homegrown, or global social media platforms as strategic instruments for direct communication with the public they serve, in a way that is more consistent with the day-to-day realities of citizens.

The rise of the "network society" therefore offers those in power a unique opportunity to engage in real-time meaningful dialogues with constituents, involve them in policy making and address genuine grievances, long before they become toxic.

When I look at the rapid uptake of social media by millions of mobile phone users in Nigeria, I cannot see why communication should not be at the heart of development policies and good governance. It is an excellent platform for policy makers and public officials to engage with the citizenry.

To do so, information and communication must be fact based, devoid of propaganda, short and straight to the point, informational, educational, and inspiring. Anything short of this is bound to be rejected by savvy social media users. The effective use of social media platforms therefore requires clear distinctions between political advertising and public service information and the temptation to blur the lines for political gain.

Communication for development and good governance requires innovation, creativity, and an astute understanding of the felt needs and grievances of citizens. Development and policy communication via social media also requires restraint and proactive responses, in order to avoid a firefighting approach.

In a social media world, a vacuum cannot exist. Governments must be proactive and responsible users of the space to effectively fight for the hearts and minds of those they are called to serve.

▪ As such, social media should be utilized sensitively by governments — and not politicized.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Google's motto used to be "Don't be Evil. Now, it is "Do the right thing." That is exactly the point I am trying to make. Do the right thing: follow the law, act honorably, and treat each other with respect. Social media empowers citizens to say "yes" or no" on issues. It provides the opportunity for (hopefully, but sometimes, rarely) constructive feedback, solutions, and a re-focusing of priorities.

From a national security perspective, the biggest promise of social media lies in the technological capabilities that could facilitate direct, constructive, creative, and mass political involvement.

Social media does have clear benefits for development and democracy. Whether this be rallying citizens for worthy causes; inspiring action; providing millions who were once voiceless with a voice and a platform to do so; and for providing access to information for many who were once marginalized and cut off from traditional TV broadcasts or print publications.

Social media and development have entered an exciting phase. Aside from self-advocacy and the creation of platforms for people to speak for themselves, the opportunities for wealth creation in application and content development, marketing, branding, e-commerce, and Business-to-Business opportunities are mind-boggling.

At the African Development Bank, we realisze the value of social media.

We are active on multiple platforms, including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Each has shown steady growth over the past four years, in terms of followers and engagement. Twitter has emerged as an important podium for us to disseminate information rapidly to a large global audience.

Our Twitter follower count recently surpassed 400,000 and keeps on growing. In the past month alone, our impressions have increased by close to 35% and our mentions have gone up by 30%.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Since I was first elected as President of the African Development Bank six years ago, together with our partners, we have made a difference in the lives of 335 million people across the continent.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the Bank moved very rapidly and launched a $10 billion Crisis Response Facility to provide support to countries to address the fiscal challenges they were facing. The Bank launched a

Communication for development and good governance requires innovation, creativity, and an astute understanding of the felt needs and grievances of citizens. Development and policy communication via social media also requires restraint and proactive responses, in order to avoid a firefighting approach

$3 billion Fight COVID-19 social bond, the largest ever US dollar denominated social bond in world history. Such was the audacity of our response.

▪ We provided $289 million to Nigeria to support its efforts to tackle the pandemic.

We are a 'people-centered Bank' – a 'solutions Bank' for Africa.

And our efforts are being recognized globally. In 2021, Global Finance, the globally renowned financial magazine rated the African Development Bank as the Best Multilateral Financial Institution in the world.

The African Development Bank has maintained its stellar AAA-rating by the major global credit rating agencies for the past six years.

We will keep communicating our achievements on social media. But more importantly, we will continue to use social media to win even more support for our High-5 agenda, which seeks to Light Up and Power Africa, Feed Africa, Industrialize Africa, Integrate Africa, and Improve the Quality of Life of the People of Africa.

▪ These High 5s of the Bank are changing lives in Africa, at scale.

In the past five years, the Bank helped to connect 21 million people to electricity. Over 76 million have benefitted from access to improved agricultural technologies for food security. 12 million people have received access to finance through our investee companies. 69 million people have benefitted from access to improved transportation through our investment in infrastructure. And over 50 million people have benefitted from access to improved water and sanitation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Results matter for institutions. Results matter for businesses. Results matter for governments. And those results must be at scale that impacts on the lives of people. When the gap between the expectations of citizens and promises of governments widen, the gulf of mistrust or distrust deepens, and social media becomes an avenue in which people vent their frustration or dissatisfaction.

Sometimes the platforms are used to organize collective action when the public space for social-political discourse shrinks, or democracy is threatened. The Arab Spring revolution showed the power of social media to organize for democracy, human rights and better living standards for the population.

Social media is nothing short of a revolution. It will equally play a definitive role in Africa's transformation and economic evolution: To reap the benefits of this revolution, countries, including Nigeria, must work on the "analog complements" by strengthening regulations that ensure competition among businesses, by adapting workers' skills to the demands of the new economy, and by holding institutions to account.

▪ Africa has a task of titanic proportions on her hands.

That's because an unemployed generation of young men and women is probably a nation's greatest security risk, and not the use of social media per se. The kind of social change we would like to see is only possible, if the youth have hope, jobs, and confidence in the future.

Considering that almost 70% of Nigeria's population is under the age of 35, the impact of development or the lack thereof, is critical to the future of Nigeria, its stability and prosperity.

▪But as a Bank we are optimistic.

We are working to create 25 million new jobs by 2025.

We are also investing heavily in quality infrastructure to transform the backbone of Africa's technological revolution.

To support Nigeria, the African Development Bank is preparing investments in the country's Digital and Creative Enterprises (i-DICE), a $500 million investment program to be co-financed with several partners.

i-Dice will promote entrepreneurship and innovation in the digital technology and creative spaces.

It will help create sustainable jobs and make Nigeria a global powerhouse in these industries. This program will boost innovation, especially in the tech-enabled business and e-commerce space, where new and successful ventures are being launched in Nigeria.

The nation stands poised to be a key player in developing Africa's technological enterprises. Start-ups run by young Africans, are already attracting millions of dollars in investment capital. Expensya, Gro Intelligence, Tyme Bank, and Flutterwave, just to name a few, Flutterwave, to name a few, are well on their way to becoming billion-dollar companies.

Today, Yabacon Valley has emerged as one of the leading tech hubs in Africa with between 400 and 700 active start-ups worth over $2 billion—second only to Cape Town. Andela, a global technology start-up based in Yabacon Valley, recently attracted $24 million in funding from Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Banking + Finance

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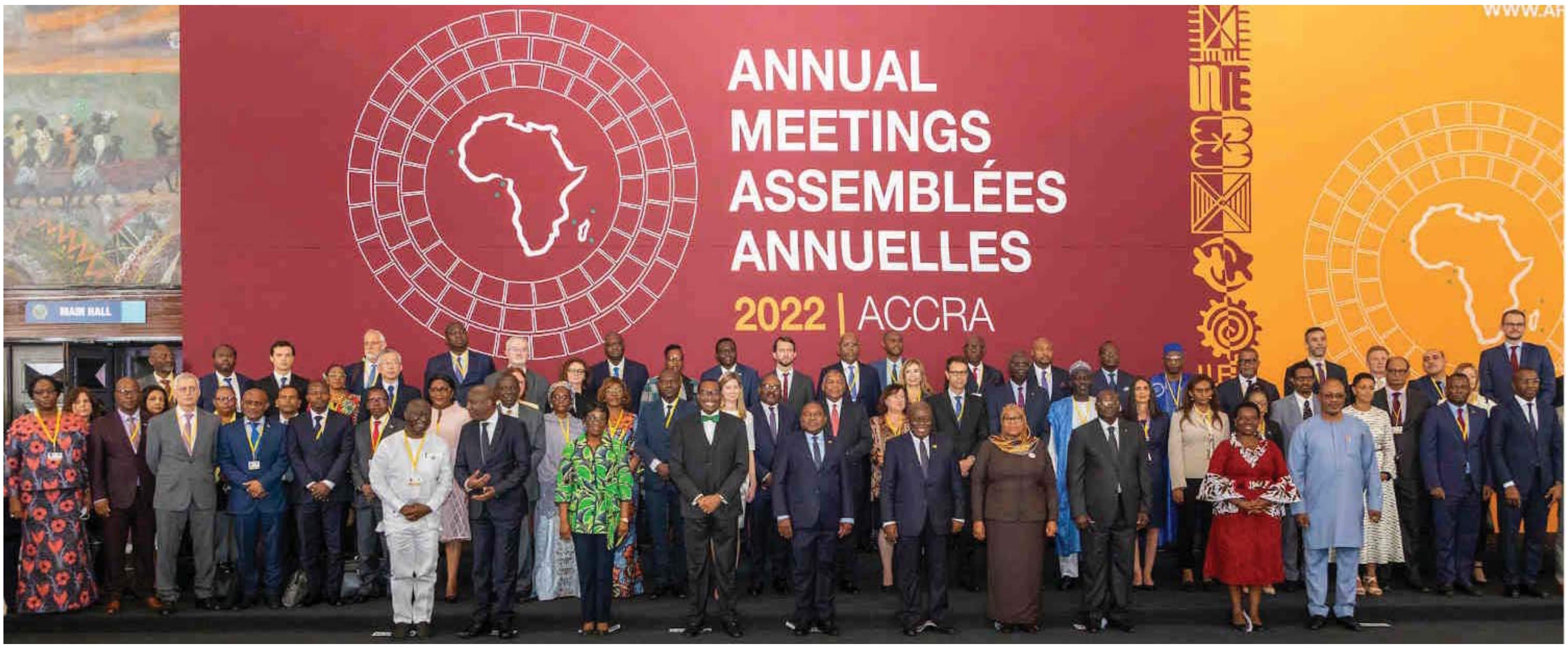
Post-MPC Meeting: **Is CBN's Hawkish Tilt Sufficient to Tame Stubborn Inflation?**



The 2022 Annual Meetings of the African Development Bank (AfDB) at Accra, Ghana

According to Afrinvest Weekly Market Report, taming the fast-rising inflationary pressure post-pandemic has become the major focus of central bank chiefs across the world, including the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN).

Currently, the spotlight is on the expected implication of the outcome of the 285th Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting of the CBN held recently.

In the preceding week, we projected in our pre-MPC report that the Committee would raise the monetary policy rate (MPR) by 50bps, given weak domestic macro fundamentals and the aggressive hawkish trend globally.

Even more than our projection, the MPC raised the benchmark rate by 150bps to 13.0% - the first-rate hike since July 2016 - and retained other parameters (CRR at 27.5%, Liquidity ratio at 30.0% and Asymmetric corridor at +100/-700bps).

The MPC's sharp hawkish tilt was due to need to curb the runaway domestic inflation rate (April 2022: 16.8% y/y), checkmate liquidity build-up due to aggressive pre-election spending, and slow the Naira depreciation rate. In addition, external environment dynamics constrains the CBN's capacity to sustain a dovish policy stance any further.

For instance, the foreign reserves have declined 4.7% YTD due to imbalances between inflows and outflows of FX, resulting in a 7.4% YTD depreciation of the Naira in the parallel market to ₦610.00/$1.00 though the Naira appreciated at the official window by 3.7% to ₦419.50/$1.00.

The increase in MPR is expected to spur an improvement in yields as investors seek higher returns to pare negative real return. Traditionally, the hike would have provided incentive for offshore capital flows, however the bitter experience of unclear FX policy direction and tight capital control measures would likely hinder improve inflows.

Meanwhile, rate reversal in the fixed income space would likely result in sell pressures on equity assets (equities lost 1.8% after the rate hike announcement) though strong corporate fundamentals could provide respite.

The hike is also expected to tame demand-driven inflation pressure and aggregate demand as households' marginal propensity to consume moderates, although, the foreign reserves have declined 4.7% YTD due to imbalances between inflows and outflows of FX, resulting in a 7.4% YTD depreciation of the Naira in the parallel market to ₦610.00/$1.00 though the Naira appreciated at the official window by 3.7% to ₦419.50/$1.00.

The increase in MPR is expected to spur an improvement in yields as investors seek higher returns to pare negative real return. Traditionally, the hike would have provided incentive for offshore capital flows, however the bitter experience of unclear FX policy direction and tight capital control measures would likely hinder improve inflows.

Meanwhile, rate reversal in the fixed income space would likely result in sell pressures on equity assets (equities lost 1.8% after the rate hike announcement) though strong corporate fundamentals could provide respite.

The hike is also expected to tame demand-driven inflation pressure and aggregate demand as households' marginal propensity to consume moderates, although inflation is majorly pressured by supply shocks.

A major trade-off to this policy switch is the expected increase in borrowing cost (for the government, businesses & households), weak job creation potential, and slowdown in economic growth. For economic growth, the Q1:2022 GDP numbers released by the NBS already indicated a noticeable moderation in growth momentum from 3.98% in Q4:2021 to 3.1% y/y.

We believe the MPC's decision is a step towards curbing spiraling inflation which could possibly lead to stagflation (high inflation & unemployment rates and slower growth), eventually pushing the economy into a recession in the medium term.

Nevertheless, we do not expect inflationary pressures to moderate significantly despite the MPR hike as the pressure on prices is majorly fueled by structural constraints.

'Looking ahead, we anticipate that continued hawkish undertone by global systemic central banks and increased liquidity build-up due to pre-election spending could compel the CBN to further hike the MPR before year-end.'

$226 Trillion: The Current Level of Global Debt

N814 Billion: The Current Level of Non-Performing Loans in 9 Banks in Nigeria
N1.48 Trillion: The Total Amount Spent by the Federal Government (NNPC) on Rehabilitation of Refineries in Nigeria
$3 Trillion: The Amount that Metaverse Will Add to Global GDP in 10 Years

Nigerian Banks: **The Q1 2022 Earnings Review**

According to Coronation Research, it has been a challenging 2022 thus far for Nigerian banks' stocks. Year-to-date, the sector index has returned a disappointing 7.4% and has grossly underperformed the broader equity gauge (NGX-ASI: +24.3%).

Notably, it is the second-worst performing sector index. Stock performance within the coverage universe tells a similar story: FBN Holdings (+4.8%) and Access Holdings (+3.8%) have recorded small gains, UBA has been flattish, while GT Holdco (-8.1%), Stanbic IBTC Holdings (-8.3%), Zenith Bank (-2.6%) have fallen.

Nigerian Banks Q1 2022 performance

Ticker	Q1 22 Growth (y/y)			NIM		Cost of Funds		Cost-to-Income		RoAE	
	NII	NIR	EPS	Q1 21	Q1 22	Q1 21	Q1 22	Q1 21	Q1 22	Q1 21	Q1 22
ACCESS	-7.0%	54.9%	9.4%	5.8%	3.8%	2.6%	3.4%	55.8%	59.8%	27.2%	21.4%
GTCO	9.1%	8.1%	-5.6%	6.8%	7.0%	0.8%	1.3%	41.7%	46.4%	22.1%	19.3%
STANBIC	47.7%	40.2%	35.4%	4.3%	5.3%	1.4%	2.1%	69.2%	63.8%	12.5%	16.2%
UBA	14.1%	27.1%	9.6%	4.0%	4.2%	2.0%	2.1%	60.2%	61.5%	20.6%	20.4%
ZENITHBANK	20.9%	11.8%	9.5%	5.5%	5.5%	1.1%	1.3%	51.7%	52.6%	19.2%	17.8%
AVERAGE	**17.0%**	**28.4%**	**11.6%**	**5.3%**	**5.2%**	**1.6%**	**2.0%**	**55.7%**	**56.8%**	**20.3%**	**19.0%**

NII= Net Interest Income; NIR=Non-Interest Revenue; NIM= Net Interest Margin; RoAE = Return on Average Equity
Source: Company Data, Coronation Research

▪ Wigwe

▪ Ovia

▪ Hassan- Odukale

Q1 22 was a decent quarter in terms of earnings for our covered banks. Four of the five banks which published results reported EPS growth; GTCO surprisingly reported an EPS decline. Notably, most of the growth across our coverage was driven by increased funded income, following the expansion in banks' loan books and some upward repricing of loans.

Higher yields in Q1 22 (vs Q1 21) also saw banks earn higher interest on their investment securities portfolios y/y. Overall, banks' Yields on Assets (YoA) were much improved compared with the prior year.

Elsewhere, banks' Cost of Funds faced some upward pressure: however, they were able to keep rises below the rise in yields. As a result, Net Interest Margins (NIM) were resilient. Non-interest revenues (NIR) also continued on their upward trajectory.

The narrative that the fundamentals of the banking sector are compelling has persisted, even as investor apathy around bank stocks remains.

"In our view, although bank margins and profitability have come down slightly in recent years, bank stocks have been oversold. In an environment where negative inflation-adjusted yields remain the theme, bank dividends continue to offer more attractive yields than Treasury Bills. In addition, with yields on the rise, we think FY 21 may have been the bottom in terms of banks' profitability. The valuations of our coverage banks remain compelling and hold value for long-term investors, in our view."

Emefiele on Diversification: 'Nigeria Needs Help to Reset Economy'

The Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Godwin Emefiele says Nigeria needs to be given a chance to reset and diversify its economy, just as he reiterated the determination of the CBN to address identified deficiencies in the Nigerian economy.

He stated this in Abuja while playing host to the Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala at the Bank's headquarters.

Emefiele, who congratulated Dr. Okonjo-Iweala on her new position, said her emergence as the Director-General of the WTO was in recognition of Nigeria as the largest economy and most populated country in Africa. He noted that Nigeria, with an estimated population of over 200 million, remained a major player in global trade.

L-R (Front): Permanent Secretary, Trade & Investment Dr. Nasiru Sani, DG, FSS, Mrs. Aishah Ahmad, DG, WTO, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Governor, CBN, Mr. Godwin Emefiele, Rep. of Barbados to WTO, Ambassador Chad Blackman.

The Governor, acknowledged that Nigeria needs help to achieve her goals in the areas of trade and export finance logistics, stressing that Nigeria's stance on trade was necessitated by the drive to protect local industries to create jobs and employment as well as create an enabling environment for them to live meaning lives.

Continuing, the Governor cited the provision of stimulus and interventions packages, restructuring of loans and the reduction of interest rates on loans as part of the Bank's response towards ameliorating the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Nigerian businesses.

He added that through partnership with the private sector, the Coalition against COVID-19, CA-COVID raised about N40 billion to support the efforts of Government to combat the pandemic in Nigeria.

While expressing the Bank's willingness to work with the WTO, he disclosed that the CBN was determined to address the inefficiencies that led to the closure of pharmaceutical companies and other businesses that hitherto operated in the country.

With the establishment of the Infrastructure Corporation of Nigeria Limited (InfraCorp.) Mr. Emefiele expressed optimism that the infrastructural deficits in the country would be addressed coupled with an improvement in the country's ease of doing business index.

In her response, the visiting WTO DG, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, commended the CBN Governor and his team for their assistance to the country towards receiving the first set of doses of the COVID-19 vaccines with another 12 million doses to follow.

She also called for an urgent transition of Nigeria's economy from fossil fuel-based economy to one that is dependent on other sources of revenue and job creation. She equally stressed the need for Nigeria to urgently improve its trade logistics index as well as the quality of its exports.

Okonjo-Iweala urged the country to take advantage of the WTO trade remedies, which can, without placing ban or restrictions on any sector, help protect local industries against dumping and cheap imports among others.

The visiting WTO DG and her delegation were received by the CBN Deputy Governors: Mrs. Aisha Ahmad (Financial System Stability), Mr. Edward Adamu (Corporate Services), Mr. Folashodun Shonubi (Operations), Special Adviser to the Governor on Financial Markets, Mr. Emmanuel Ukeje and some Departmental Directors.

Sterling Launches Imperium Platform for Solar Energy Consumers

Sterling Bank Plc has launched a new and innovative digital product, known as the Imperium Platform, in a bid to connect consumers and providers of renewable energy (solar solutions) as a viable solution to Nigeria's electricity crisis.

The Imperium Platform was launched following the unveiling of the Nigerian electricity industry report entitled, "Powering Nigeria: How Solar Energy Can Become a Sustainable Electricity Alternative."

The report was produced by Sterling Bank in partnership with Stears, a digital information company.

Dele Faseemo, Group Head, Renewable Energy at Sterling Bank, said in a statement issued by the bank that the Imperium Platform seeks to provide clean and affordable energy solutions to interested customers while providing different financing options to customers purchasing the solution outright or paying for the installation and operation of the solution.

Faseemo explained that Sterling Bank, in partnership with Stears Data, the data collection, analytics, and data access division of Stears, embarked on the study to tackle the problem of providing solar energy in the country.

The report showed that despite the privatization of Nigeria's electricity industry, the country still has one of the lowest electrification rates in the world, as 43 percent of its population has no access to grid electricity, an indication that 85 million Nigerians are not connected to – and cannot receive electricity from – the Nigerian transmission grid.

He said the Imperium would provide a range of purchase options to consumers because solar energy solutions are not one-size-fits-all, so purchasing options should not be either.

According to him, Sterling Bank employs several purchase models to provide renewable energy solutions for its customers. This ensures that customers with different needs and purchase abilities can access solar energy solutions.

He listed the options to include outright purchase, lease to own, and power as a service. Using outright purchase as an example, he said that energy consumers could purchase products directly from vendors via the Imperium Platform, a dedicated e-commerce platform hosted by Sterling Bank.

In lease to own, Imperium provides financing at competitive interest rates for consumers with good credit scores or clean credit checks who are keen to own the assets. Under power as a service, Imperium offers fixed monthly energy-charge options to consumers, but the underlying assets are owned by Imperium as it (Imperium) purchases and owns the assets.

This saves clients huge capital outlay and maintenance worries, while the monthly energy charge is based on the capacity deployed.

In this regard, the bank has recently partnered with the Nike Art Gallery to install solar panels at the gallery via the bank's Imperium outlet as part of its commitment to a renewable energy-powered Nigeria and the development of the nation's tourism sector.

The development is a sequel to recent partnerships with the gallery to drive an appreciation and spotlight the investment opportunities available in Nigeria's arts and tourism sectors.

The Nike Art Gallery, owned by Chief Nike Okundaye, is one of the largest of its kind in the West African sub-region, with a collection of about 8,000 diverse artworks from various Nigerian artists.

FBN Holdings Plc recently announced its audited results for the financial year ended 31 December 2021.

Highlighting revenue and profitability, the Group delivered a stellar performance growing gross revenue by 28.2% to ₦757.3 billion and profit before tax by 99.1% to ₦166.7 billion.

The 30.0% growth in loans and advances to ₦2.9 trillion and 16.2% growth in total asset to ₦8.9 trillion reaffirms our commitment to drive revenue and profitability as we complete the balance sheet clean-up.

Commenting on the results, Dr. Adesola Adeduntan, Chief Executive Officer of FirstBank Group said:

"Following years of strategic restructuring of the Bank's balance sheet and operations, the Commercial Banking business is beginning to transition into a sustained growth phase delivering performance commensurate to the size of our business and capabilities of our people. Profit before tax is up 77.9%, gross earnings 30.3%, total assets 15.9% and customer deposits up 19.5%.

Gross earnings grew by 28.2% to ₦757.3 billion (Dec 2020: ₦590.7 billion). Interest income remained challenged given the moderated interest rate environment negatively impacting yields; as a result, interest income declined 4.1% to ₦369.0 billion (Dec 2020: ₦384.8 billion).

In 2021, FBNH operated in a challenging operating environment that was pressured by high inflation and currency devaluation, the effect of which increased operating expenses by 14.2% to ₦334.2 billion (Dec 2020: ₦292.5 billion). However, this 14.2% is below the inflation level (Dec 2020: 15.6%) whilst regulatory cost also rose during the period, up 23.2% y-o-y.

Despite the inflationary push factors, operating income grew 35.5% to ₦592.8 billion (Dec 2020: ₦437.6 billion), resulting in an improvement in cost to income ratio to 56.4% (Dec 2020: 66.8%).

Going forward, we will sustain our focus towards further improving efficiency by containing cost and increasing revenue.

Banking + Finance

Ecobank Group: $1.7bn Net Revenue, $357m Profit in 2021

Ecobank Transnational Incorporated (ETI), the parent company of the Ecobank Group, the leading pan-African bank with operations across 33 African countries, recently held its 34th Annual General Meeting (AGM) in Abidjan, Côte d' Ivoire.

Alain Nkontchou, Chairman Ecobank Group said: "2021 was a transformational year for the Group and the Board is pleased to be rewarding shareholders with a dividend for the first time since 2016. Our results show that we are maximising operational efficiencies and successfully transforming our business for sustainable long-term growth. As we continue to deliver on our strategic imperatives, we are firmly positioned as the ideal partner for households and businesses to grow and succeed, and to foster Africa's economic development, while continuing to grow our revenues and value."

Ade Ayeyemi, Chief Executive Officer, Ecobank Group, further observed: "The Group's years of consistent and disciplined management, decisive action, investments in people and innovative technology are producing tangible results with 2021's record growth in profits. Our scalable payments ecosystem endows us with low cost-to-serve and the readiness to facilitate the expected huge growth in payments and collections. This, coupled with our intent to be the trade bank for sub-Saharan Africa, makes us a key player in helping Africa's businesses and economies to maximise the huge opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)."

Ade added that the Bank's first quarter results for 2022 provided a clear confirmation of Ecobank Group's continuing strong and sustained performance trajectory reinforcing the Bank's reliability and capacity to successfully deliver on its Africa-focused purpose and support for the continent's economies, regardless of the prevailing challenges. "We are steadfast in our determination to win for all our stakeholders," he noted.

Shareholders applauded the Group's impressively strong performance in 2021, which was achieved despite the challenging environment.

The Group's profit for the year was $357 million compared with $88 million in 2020, although the latter was adversely affected by a goodwill impairment charge of $164 million. The Group's net revenues increased by 4.6 per cent to $1,757 million.

Ecobank's 'One Market. Endless possibilities.' AGM theme underlines the infinite possibilities offered by the African market, especially in the era of the AfCFTA. The Bank is ready to maximise this one market with endless possibilities with its customers and clients by providing support to trade and satisfying the financial needs of customers and clients, using its innovative solutions and services.

With an unrivalled African footprint, strong balance sheet and ability to tap capital markets as necessary, Ecobank's Commercial, Corporate and Investment, and Consumer Banking division's continued and effective growth and impact is assured.

'Unity Bank Yanga Product Positioned to Empower Underbanked Women Entrepreneurs' – Olufunwa Akinmade

Olufunwa Akinmade

Divisional Head, Retail, SME Banking and E-Business, Unity Bank Plc, Mr. Olufunwa Akinmade has explained that the "raison d'etre for launching the Bank's latest retail product called Yanga is to create a unique product proposition aimed at empowering the underbanked women entrepreneurs in Nigeria."

Akinmade, who stated this during a chat with the media, citing a recent EFInA report, said that "there are 51 million Nigerian women above 18 years of age, with over 41% of the unbanked. Out of these figures, it is estimated that there are 14-18 million female entrepreneurs – mainly in the micro-SME category".

Recall that Unity Bank launched the women-focused Yanga account in November 2021 to promote financial inclusion and cater to unbanked women entrepreneurs across Nigeria in the MSME space.

Therefore, the new retail product is designed to deepen its beneficial impact on Micro Small and Medium Enterprises, MSMEs operated by women in the mass-market retail space.

According to Akinmade, "Recent research has shown that Nigeria has the highest number of women entrepreneurs in the world, with an estimated 40 million SMEs, of whom women constitute approximately 42%.

"These women have proved beyond reasonable doubt that they have the capacity to create wealth and contribute productively to the economy. However, a lot more needs to be done and it starts with empowering them with the right tools to harness this entrepreneurship potential.

"Currently, they face many institutional and cultural hurdles while starting or running their businesses. For instance, a recent report shows that only 22% of female entrepreneurs have access to finance against 34% of males.

"This is part of why we have introduced Yanga to bridge this gap while also narrowing the population of underbanked women entrepreneurs".

Akinmade further explained that the Unity Yanga product will play a critical role in boosting financial inclusion and narrowing the underbanked women population as the account comes with a unique product proposition that includes an easy to operate and free to open a Savings account, with no identification required, customized debit card, dedicated sales officers.

He identified other unique features including special banking agents in each market location and quarterly Seminars at main market locations anchored by Unity Bank and its alliance partners.

"By rolling out this scheme across all geopolitical regions, Unity bank's objective is to work assiduously towards reducing the huge numbers of underbanked women in the country," he added.

A key part of the Yanga Product experience is (1) micro-loans and (2) HMO-offering

The micro-loan would be availed with time-tested Credit Policies, backed with technology-based credit scoring. These would help detect frivolous applications as well as reduce NPLs.

Yanga is available to all women entrepreneurs nationwide. The Bank is currently conducting market activations in strategic locations across the country with its brand ambassador, popular Nollywood actor, Sola Sobowale. So far, the Yanga activation train has been to Gombe, Akwa Ibom, and Ibadan and is currently in Lagos and en-route Port Harcourt.

FBN Holdings: N9Tr Total Assets, N757.3bn Revenue, N167bn Profit in 2021

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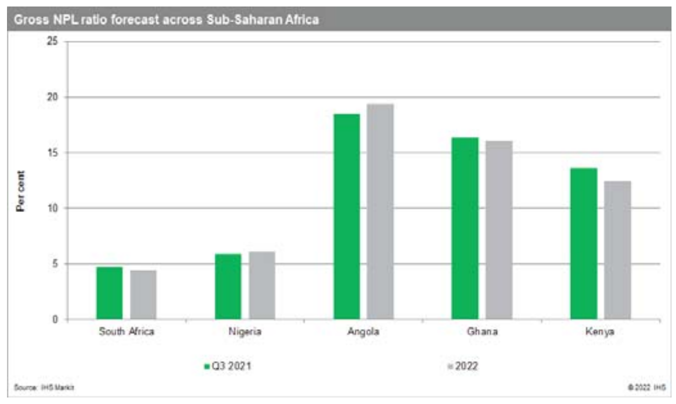


The Rise of Mobile Money: 'Most notably, 2021 saw the mobile money industry become instrumental in helping small businesses operate more efficiently and improve the customer experience. Mobile money-enabled merchant payments almost doubled in value from 2020, reaching a global average of $5.5 billion in transactions per month.'

--Ashley Olson Onyango
Head of Financial Inclusion
GSMA

GTCO Deploys *squad* to Reshape Nigeria's Digital Payment Space

• Fragmentation in the Nigerian payment space has served more as a constraint than an enabler; Squad by GTCO positions to lead with innovation and efficiency

Without a doubt, digital payment is the next growth frontier for financial services. Amongst other extenuating factors, growing digitalisation, mobile penetration, and evolving consumer behaviour have accelerated the shift towards cashless thereby creating entirely new business models and solutions built around payments.

Given the key role digitalisation plays in the financial lives of many people today, electronic payments are at the core of the payment ecosystem. As is the case with all things economic, Nigeria remains a most attractive market.

Over the past years, we have seen largely foreign investors make a play to participate in the Nigerian technology and financial sector with considerable investments in FINTECH companies creating so-called "unicorns" of these establishments. This is helping to generate needed cohesion within the payment landscape and putting it at the forefront of innovation.

The gains from the payment sector will serve to spur the global remittance industry as well as enhance financial inclusion. Increasingly, it is expected that newer, more efficient form factors and product offerings will look to enhance the digital payment experience for consumers and merchants alike.

Despite this trend, a more critical assessment of the payment industry shows that existing FINTECHs are merely scratching the surface of the payment landscape and its massive potential for financial inclusion. If anything, the fragmentation of the merchant-facing payments value chain has served to dampen the massive prospects of this sector. Available research point to the fact that asides security and privacy concerns, a major challenge presently facing the mobile payment ecosystem is the high level of market fragmentation as seen in multiplicity of platforms and the different service configurations on offer.

With consumer adoption stalling, mobile payments still represent a small portion of total consumer payments. The complexities around payments and the rapid evolution of merchant services require a re-evaluation of business focus and value propositions.

• In Comes Squad by GTCO

It is against this backdrop that the launch of Squad, a full-service digital payment company conceived by Guaranty Trust Holding Company Plc (GTCO Plc), is a most welcome development. For one thing, GTCO Plc is renowned for its strong corporate governance culture, bias for innovation and superior financial performance.

Segun Agbaje
Group CEO, GTCO

Miriam Olusanya
Managing Director /CEO, GT Bank

Few financial institutions in Nigeria, and indeed Africa, can boast of GTCO's impressive credentials. From its humble beginnings in 1990 as a pure-play banking institution, the company has morphed into a fully-fledged financial services powerhouse in a little over three decades.

Under-pinning this remarkably successful transformation is GTCO's rich history of firsts: from pioneering industry-wide innovations in Online/Mobile Banking, USSD Banking, Instant Card issuance, and Fingerprint Banking to creating free business platforms to support small and medium-sized business owners in the food and fashion industries and revolutionising consumer lending with QuickCredit, GTCO has differentiated itself from other financial institutions by a mile.

With the launch of Squad, GTCO Plc aims to deploy its trademark efficient operations and innovative capacity to drive adoption in payment services and enhance financial inclusion. With the overarching goal to be the most efficient off-line and online merchant acquiring platform in all of Africa, Squad is well positioned to serve four important enterprise verticals namely: micro- businesses (kiosks), online sellers, digital natives, and corporates.

• Reinventing the In-store Payment Experience, No Longer Limited to POS

Squad's top offerings will include a payment gateway and the Soft POS. While most are familiar with the functionalities of payment gateways, the Soft POS solution is as cutting-edge as it is simple-to-use.

The Soft POS is a multi-form-factor white-label solution that enables a smartphone to function as a merchant acceptance device. Essentially, the Soft POS allows any mobile phone with the NFC feature to be used as a point-of-sale.

While this service is enjoying growing acceptance and use in other parts of the world like America, Europe, and Asia, Squad will be amongst the very first financial payments service in Africa to introduce this unique payment functionality.

Merchants who have traditionally accepted cash payments or struggled with the sub-optimal nature of physical POS terminals, now have a simpler and more secure way to manage their transactions.

The solution effectively addresses the needs of micro and small businesses as it provides a cost-efficient card acceptance solution as well as complete visibility of merchant transactions making reconciliation and decision making faster and easier.

With Soft POS, the consumer experience is elevated as it facilitates line-busting to streamline check out queues and eliminates friction. How does the Soft POS work? Quite simple and fast. Sellers can start accepting contactless payments in just few minutes by downloading the app from Google Play Store and completing the registration process.

Squad would also be offering other high-impact, value-adding services to merchants and corporates in various sectors of the economy to enhance their business operations and propel wide-scale growth.

• What Makes Squad Unique?

As the name suggests, Squad denotes the power of a TEAM. The team at Squad is peopled by young, dynamic professionals who have imbibed GTCO Plc's culture of innovation and efficiency to power next-generation payment solutions.

If GTCO's track-record of trailblazing achievements is anything to go by, Squad will in no time set the marker for merchant and customer fulfillment in payments. Squad is backed by a successful 'Proudly African, Truly International" brand in GTCO Plc and is run by well-trained, digital-savvy minds with a keen understanding of market needs and trends.

This is markedly different from what currently obtains where one or two founders set up and struggle to balance vision with ambition, and ultimately, falter off-course.

With no less a visionary than Segun Agbaje leading the Holding Company, we can be sure that values like transparency and integrity, which have become synonymous with the Guaranty Trust brand, will come on to define the payment space resulting in more clarity of purpose and extensive trust in the reliability of digital solutions.

At a recent Forum to review GTCO Plc's prior year financial statements and projections for the 2022 financial year, Mr. Agbaje pledged to disclose the performance of the Group's new businesses on a quarterly basis.

This is a rarity in today's clime. It is exactly what one would expect from a brand looking to champion Africa's growth as it serves to enhance competitiveness and value creation for all stakeholders. You would recall that the Group recently started Guaranty Trust Fund Managers Limited and Guaranty Trust Pension Managers Limited to compete in the Asset Management and Pension sectors. These, alongside the new payment company, will certainly add to the viability of GTCO Plc long-term.

• The Future of Payment is Digital

To reference one of Segun Agbaje's seminal submissions, 'the future of payments is digital.' The launch of Squad is timeous if Nigeria, and indeed Africa, must ride the wave of continued cash displacement and go on to drive digital payment adoption and financial inclusion. And, if there is a question of how to radically transform Africa's payment space, Squad is the answer.

Culled from Proshare

N7.35 Trillion:
The Expected Amount of FG Deficit in 2022 (4% of GDP)

Oil Theft: The $1.5bn Daily Menace Drilling Nigeria's Economy Dry

Crude oil theft has grown into a huge monster threatening the Nigerian economy.
This has grown to an alarming proportion and dimension as this goes on in almost all the oil producing states and the states that have oil pipelines in their geographical areas.
Nigerians all called to rise against this menace as it is capable of shutting down the nation's economy.
***Osai Igwe** takes a look on the current situation of the menace called oil theft.*

The recent clampdown on illegal refineries by the Rivers State Government is commendable but more needs to be done by the State Governments of other oil producing states in the country.

This is not Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) or Federal Government's problem but Nigeria's problem as the shortfall on government's revenue affects her ability to provide infrastructural facilities that should be provided for the masses (Nigerians). So, it is Nigeria's problem.

The Group Managing Director/CEO of NNPC, Mallam Mele Kyari, has described oil theft as a national emergency on account of the proportion, dimension and sophistication it has taken in recent times.

"Nigeria, as an oil producing country, ought to be enjoying a windfall now with the sudden rise in the price of crude oil in the international market due to the Russia-Ukraine situation. Before the Russia-Ukraine crisis, crude was selling between $96 and $97 per barrel. It shot up to $105 per barrel the following day after the conflict began. It has since then been hovering between $110 and $125 per barrel since then. Nigeria is not reaping as much as it should from this because it is not able to meet its OPEC production quota", he said.

"In fact, crude oil production has dropped to an all-time low of 1.29 million barrels per day (without condensate). The addition of condensate brings Nigeria's current production to 1.49mbpd", he added.

A look at production figures from 2020 till date him shows in stark reality how much of a monster the menace of crude oil theft has become. The average production in 2020 was at 1.77mbpd.

Challenges

Explaining the situation recently, the NNPC GMD said it got to a point where, if you inject 239,000 barrels of crude oil into either of the Trans-Niger Pipeline or the Nembe Creek Trunk Line (these are some of the major pipelines that convey crude oil to the terminals for export), you will only receive 3,000 barrels.

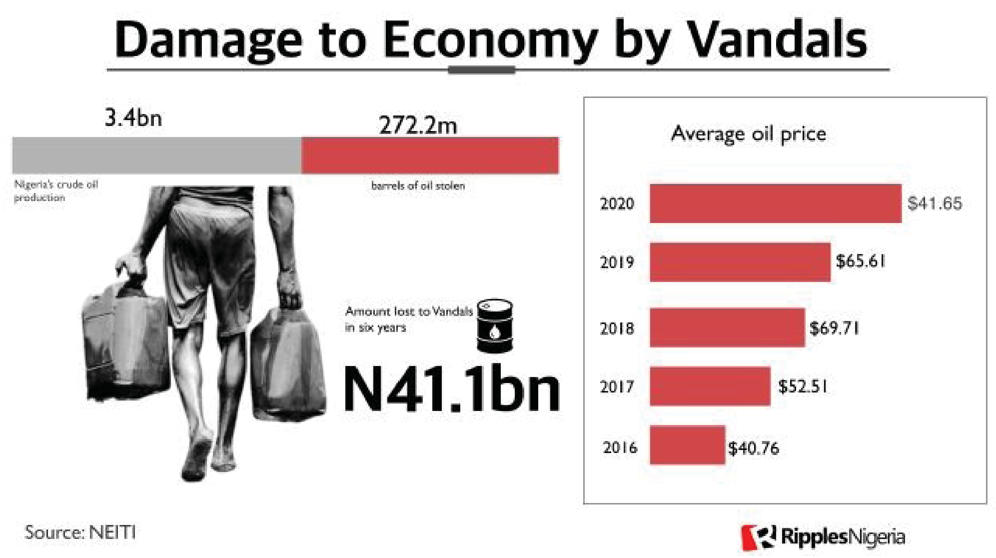
It got to a point where it was no longer economically sustainable to pump crude into the lines and a force majeure was declared.

In 2021, a similar trend was observed. In January of that year, out of about 239,000bpd pumped into the line, only 190,000bpd was recovered putting the loss at 19,000bpd.

The rate of oil theft kept increasing as the price of crude oil was rising in the market until March 2022 when there was zero recovery from all the volumes that was pumped into the line.

"Another noticeable pattern in the trend of oil theft is that it is more endemic with Joint Ventures assets and those that belong to the Independents than with Production Sharing Contracts assets. This is likely because of the nature of the JV assets which are mainly onshore or in swamp/shallow waters. This makes the evacuation pipelines more accessible than those of the PSCs which are offshore and in deep waters."

There is also a pattern in the way the theft is carried out. This can be discerned from the size of pipes inserted on the lines and the technology deployed in carrying out the insertion.



"In some cases, the pipes inserted to steal crude oil from the lines are small and fitted in an amateurish way. This is an indication that those involved are small time criminals, more likely artisanal refiners who operate the slew of illegal refineries that dot the creeks of the Niger Delta from Akwa Ibom to Rivers, and from Delta to Bayelsa", NNPC explained further.

> The rate of oil theft kept increasing as the price of crude oil was rising in the market until March 2022 when there was zero recovery from all the volumes that was pumped into the line.

In terms of the financial loss to the nation, in 2021 according to NNPC Limited, the total volume of crude oil stolen is put at 200,000 per day. At an average price of $55 per barrel, the total loss came to about $4bn (from January to December 2021).

"In 2022, between January and April alone, the volume of crude stolen has risen to about 250,000 barrels per day putting the total loss at about $1.5bn (at the rate of $100 per barrel).

"Another way to look at the virulent nature of the crime is to look at the rate at which the crude pipelines are breached with insertions. On a stretch of 20 kilometers pipeline, there were 85 insertion points in three weeks!

The Trans-Forcados Pipeline, which is about the most reliable of all the land lines, is not spared. It records about 19,000bpd losses day.

There are also cases of sheer vandalism where the lines are just blown out with explosives resulting in spillages and environmental hazard, causing losses of lives, properties and degradation of the vegetation which may not be productive in the next 100 to 150 years.

Most recent is at Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State where an illegal refin-

Oil+ Gas+ Power

ery exploded and killed over 110 people.

"Yet another area where oil theft is affecting the economy is the area of investment. It has slowed down the gains the PIA is supposed to bring about in the area of investment. Potential investors now ask how they can recoup their investment when crude oil is stolen."

In curbing the menace, the NNPC has also deployed community-based security to monitor the pipelines while it is working on deploying technological tools for more effective surveillance and monitoring of the lines and facilities.

Both the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) are also tracking movement of funds relating to oil theft criminality.

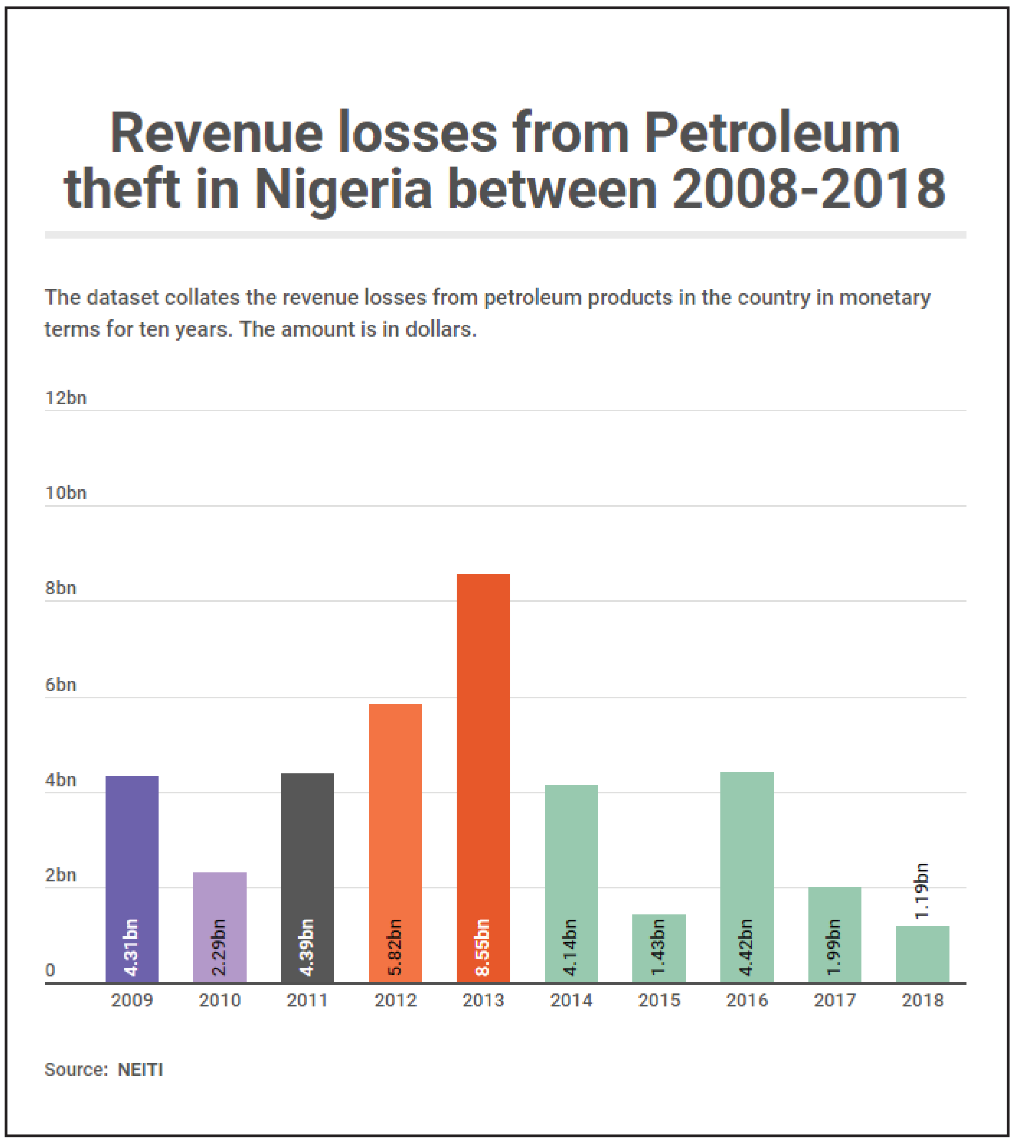
The Lamentation!

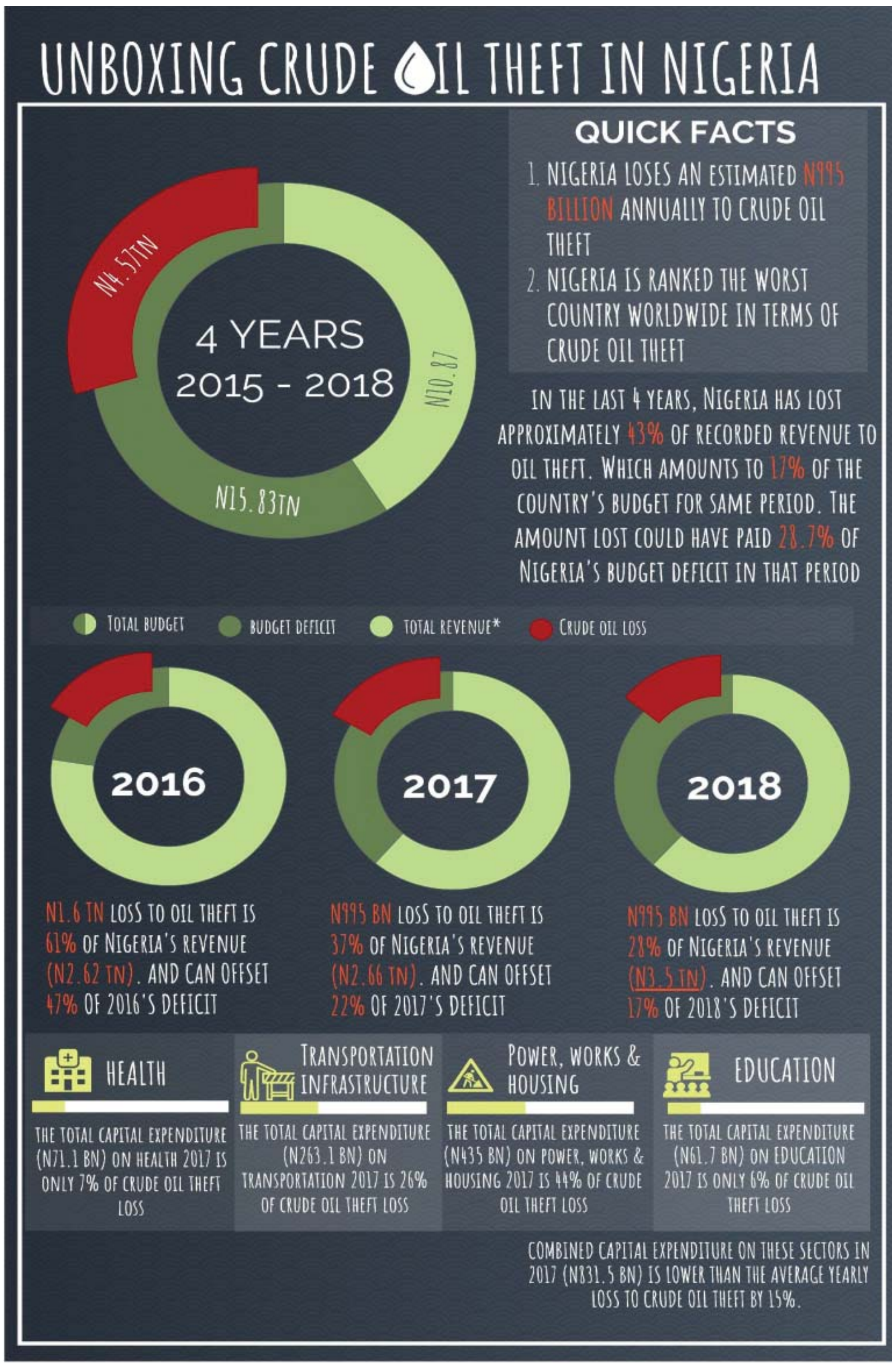
"Nigeria, as an oil producing country, ought to be enjoying a windfall now with the sudden rise in the price of crude oil in the international market due to the Russia-Ukraine situation.

Before the Russia-Ukraine crisis, crude was selling between $96 and $97 per barrel. It shot up to $105 per barrel the following day after the conflict began.

It has since then been hovering between $110 and $125 per barrel since then. Nigeria is not reaping as much as it should from this because it is not able to meet its OPEC production quota. Infact, crude oil production has dropped to an all-time low of 1.29 million barrels per day (without condensate). The addition of condensate brings Nigeria's current production to 1.49mbpd."

- Mele Kyari
Group Managing Director/CEO, NNPC





The Way Forward

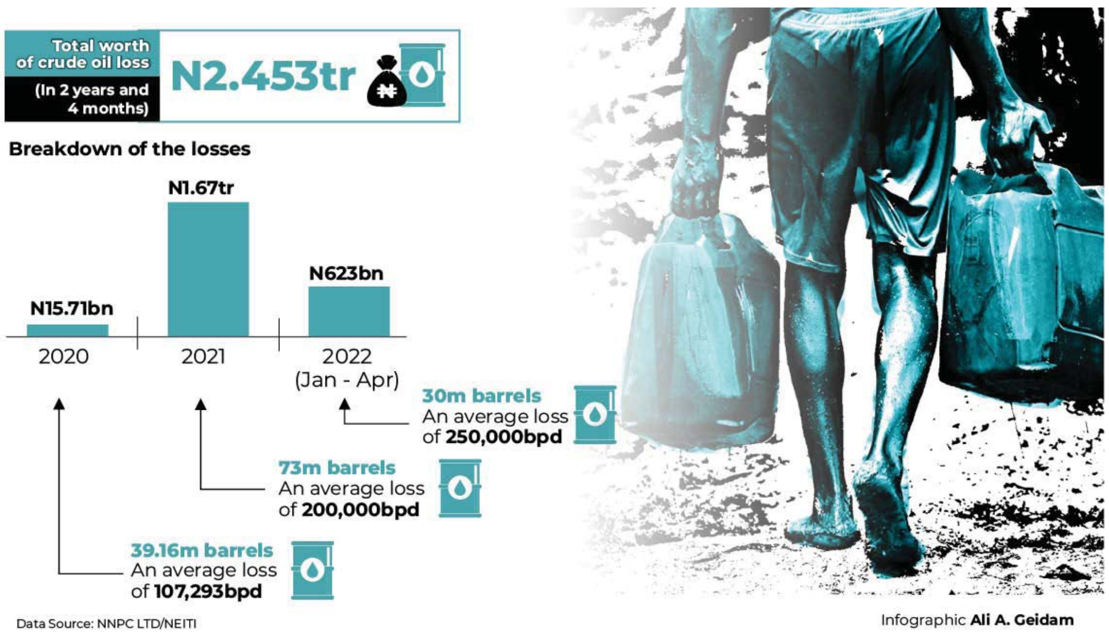
While there is hope that all the measures that have been deployed so far will begin to yield results within the next two months, it must be pointed out that oil theft and pipeline vandalism are problems for everyone.

Apart from the host communities that are directly affected by the environmental degradation, every citizen suffers the loss of national revenue when government does not have enough financial resources to provide social amenities and infrastructure to improve the quality of life in the country.

It is alleged that the cartel involved in oil theft employ the services of security agents, "but if you see oil theft going on anywhere, report it to the media; the media will call the attention of the government by publishing the story, the government will investigate and arrest the culprits, so if you see something say, something."

Conclusion

It is therefore, imperative for all Nigerians to rise up against those behind crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism with a view to stamping them out so that the oil and gas industry can yield the fullness of its benefits to the nation and the citizenry.



Infographic **Ali A. Geidam**

Another noticeable pattern in the trend of oil theft is that it is more endemic with Joint Ventures assets and those that belong to the Independents than with Production Sharing Contracts assets. This is likely because of the nature of the JV assets which are mainly onshore or in swamp/shallow waters. This makes the evacuation pipelines more accessible than those of the PSCs which are offshore and in deep waters

Rural Electrification: GEF, UNDP Kick-start $2.9m Off-grid Lighting Project

Osai Igwe

The Rural Electrification Agency with funding support from the Global Environment Facility and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has kicked off a five-year rural electrification project.

Tagged, 'Derisking Sustainable Off-grid Lighting Solution in Nigeria', direct beneficiaries of the $2.9 million project are estimated at 96,380 persons out of which 47,540 are expected to be women.

At the official launch of the project last week in Abuja were the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Rural Electrification Agency, Ahmed Salihijo Ahmed; Executive Director, Rural Electrification Fund, Sanusi Ohiare; representative of the UNDP, Mohamad Yahya, as well as the Project Manager, 'Derisking Sustainable Off-grid Lighting Solution in Nigeria', Bala Tyoden.

The partners disclosed that the project was financed by GEF with $2.6 million and supported by UNDP.

In his address of welcome, Ahmad expressed the need for effective collaborations in achieving rural electrification project.

While commending the financial support from GEF and UNDP, he reiterated the imperative of rural electrification to national development and beckoned on the private sector for investment collaborations in renewable energy in the country.

The Executive Director, Rural Electrification Fund, Sanusi Ohiare, also elaborated on the objectives of the programme as well as its immense positive impacts on the socio-economic development of rural dwellers, and tasked the technical working groups to ensure the project succeeds.

Global Gas Flaring Tracker Reports 144bn BCM in 2021

The 2022 Global Gas Flaring Tracker, a leading global and independent indicator of gas flaring, finds that reductions in both absolute flare volumes and flaring intensity have stalled in the last decade, despite strong early progress. Impressive reductions in some countries have not offset concerning increases in others.

The top 10 flaring countries accounted for 75 percent of all gas flaring and 50 percent of global oil production in 2021. Seven of the top 10 flaring countries have held this position consistently for the last 10 years: Russia, Iraq, Iran, the United States, Venezuela, Algeria, and Nigeria. The remaining three; Mexico, Libya, and China, have shown significant flaring increases in recent years.

In 2021, 144 billion cubic meters of gas was needlessly burnt in flares at upstream oil and gas facilities across the globe, resulting in approximately 400 million tons of carbon dioxide (CO_2) equivalent emissions, of which 361 MMtCO2e was in the form of CO_2 and 39 MMtCO2e was in the form of methane.

Ending this wasteful and polluting practice is central to the broader effort to decarbonisation oil and gas production.

Flaring and venting reduction play a critical role in mitigating emissions of methane, which is a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide: A kilogram of methane emitted into the atmosphere can trap more than 25 times more heat than a kilogram of emitted carbon dioxide.

This raises the often-overlooked importance of integrating the decarbonization of the oil and gas sector into wider climate initiatives and discussions.

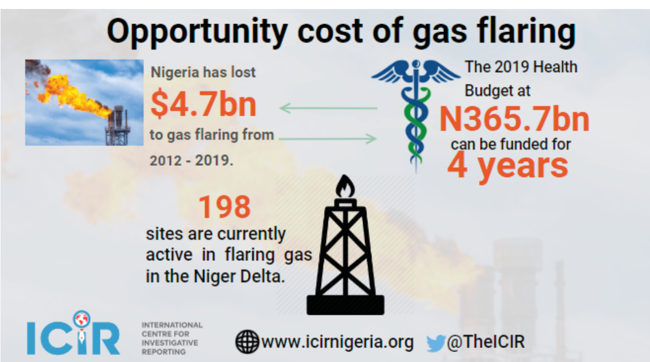
During flaring not all of the associated gas is burnt, and a relatively small amount of methane is released uncombusted. As such, efforts to reduce flaring leads to a direct reduction in methane emissions.

However, flaring elimination and gas utilization also play an important role in enabling the effective reduction of methane from other sources, such as venting and fugitive releases.

In the absence of a strategy to manage and utilise the gas, these recovered emissions will ultimately be sent to flare and this important energy source will be wasted.

Ending routine flaring at oil production sites is vital, both to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to conserve the gas for productive purposes—for example to generate electricity in poor communities who rely on dirtier fuels for their energy needs.

Further analysis of the policies driving successful flaring reduction can be found in GGFR's latest review of Global Flaring and Venting Regulations.



Shell Inaugurates Phase-2 of Oloibiri Health Programme

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has congratulated an indigenous shipping company, Temile Development Company on the contract signing agreement with Hyundai Mipo Dockyard (HMD) for the construction of a new 23,000 cubic meters Liquefied Petroleum Gas Carrier Vessel.

The indigenous company also signed a separate agreement with NSML – an integrated maritime services subsidiary of Nigeria LNG Limited for the construction supervision of the vessel.

The LPG carrier vessel is the second that is being constructed by the Temile Development Company and is a sequel to the first vessel which was constructed in 2018 and is currently chartered to Nigeria LNG Limited for domestic LPG supply.

In a video message he delivered to the agreement signing ceremony held on the sidelines of the 2022 World Gas Conference in Daegu, South Korea, Simbi Wabote, the Executive Secretary of NCDMB saluted Temile Development Company for its bullish initiative in investing in an area that is regarded as off-limits for local players.

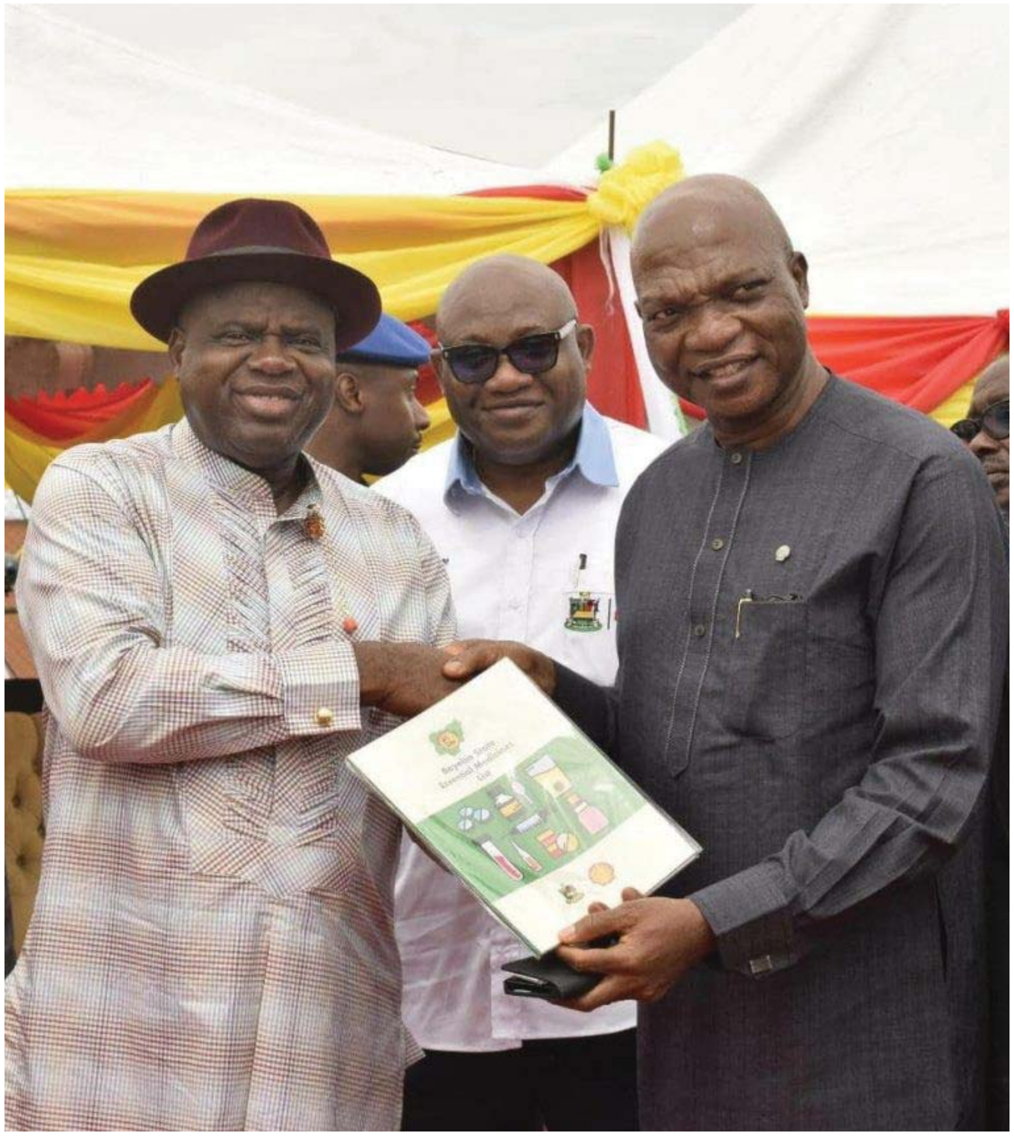
He described the accomplishment as evidence of significant growth in capacity and confidence of local companies to play in the international arena and in complex areas of the oil and gas industry.

The new 23,000 cubic LPG/NH3/VCM Carrier to be constructed is a high-end specification vessel that has been designed by NSML in accordance with bespoke requirements using HMD's highly efficient eco-design. The new LPG carrier is expected for delivery on July 26, 2023 at HMD in Ulsan, Korea.

Wabote indicated that the agreement signing event and subsequent construction and supervision of the contract aligns with the Board's strategic plan of maximising the potential in the Midstream and Downstream Sectors of the Nigerian oil and gas industry, especially as the oil and gas industry strives to actualise the Decade of Gas policy of the Federal Government.

According to him, "this project clearly supports our LPG penetration initiative in Nigeria and will further close the gap in LPG penetration in Nigeria."

He stated further that the project will bring invaluable local content opportunities in technology and innovation, human capital development and research and development.



L-R: Governor of Bayelsa State, Douye Diri , Shell Corporate Relations Manager, Evans Krukrubo and The Managing Director, The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Limited, SPDC and Country Chair, Shell Companies in Nigeria, Osagie Okunbor at the inauguration of the SPDC-sponsored Oloibiri Health Programme.

Housing

FG Unveils New FMBN Board to Drive Housing Vision for Nigerians

The Honorable Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Raji Fashola SAN, has officially inaugurated the newly appointed members of the FMBN Board and Executive Management Team.

They include Hamman Madu as the Managing Director/ Chief Executive Officer, Umar Zubaida, Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Services, Chukwuma Kingsley, Executive Director, Business Development & Portfolio Management (BD&PM); Mustapha Lukman Olayiwola, Executive Director, Loans & Mortgage Services (L&MS); Asein Abimbola representing the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing; Ejezie Sandra Nkechi, representing the Public.

The event took place at the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing Headquarters, Mabushi, Abuja.

The Hon.Minister in his address impressed on the new FMBN Board and Executive Management Team to work within the conceptual framework of FMBN as a specialized banking institution that was established to deliver on a specialised job of driving affordable housing for Nigerians nationwide.

He advised them to confront all inherited pre-2015 liabilities resulting from the over-extension of FMBN's mandate, bring to a lawful end venture which FMBN had entered into that are not supported by law, complete reform initiatives that have started including the computerization of the Bank and work together harmoniously as a team to deliver on FMBN's mandate.

Your primary mandate is to reposition FMBN as a pre-eminent mortgage Bank. This is why you will see that majority of the Board members are either bankers by training or bankers by work experience spanning several decades. This is perhaps, the largest collection of bankers on the FMBN that I can remember in a long time. Babatunde Raji Fashola SAN, Hon. Minister of Works & Housing.

Fashola also advised the Board and Management to promptly engage with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and ensure FMBN's compliance with regulatory stipulations for operating as a Bank. He mandated them to work speedily to complete the over 2000 housing units at different levels of completion under the Ministerial Pilot Housing Scheme.

Furthermore, the minister expressed appreciation to the immediate past Board and Executive Management Team for their service saying their efforts cannot be forgotten.

In his response, the new FMBN Managing Director/Chief Executive, Madu Hamman on behalf of the newly inaugurated Board members and Executive Management Team thanked President Muhammadu Buhari for the privilege and opportunity to serve the nation.

He expressed his profound gratitude to the minister of Works and Housing for finding them worthy to serve the country in those capacities and promised that the team will work harmoniously within the framework of the Acts establishing the FMBN to reposition the Bank to deliver on his mandate.

"We are humbled and excited to be chosen to undertake this onerous responsibility. We would maintain a high level of corporate governance in line with best practices while delivering enhanced performance towards repositioning the Bank to play its primary role as the apex Mortgage Bank in Nigeria. We would leverage all our competencies to ensure that we restore FMBN on the path of growth and increased impact in line with its mandate and expectations of the government Madu Hamman, FMBN MD/CEO.

He further added that they would count on the support of the Hon. Minister to achieve all the desired results at the Bank.

The Board Chairman, Mr. Ayodeji Ariyo Gbeleyi, in his remarks at the event assured the Hon. Minister of Works and Housing that the Board is clear on the impact and strategic importance of housing and will work hard to deliver on the mandate bestowed on them and meet government expectations.

The Address Homes: **Pushing the Frontier of Luxury Houses in Nigeria**

'There's no place like home,' or 'Home is where the heart is.' These popular sayings affirm the truth that a home is a place that is always desirable. It exists in the mind's eye as much as in a particular physical location. Home, in essence, is a shelter, providing an escape from the intrusions of the busy world.

Interestingly, in Nigeria, most cities are fast becoming homes to a huge number of individuals due to the rural-urban influx of people, as well as the rapid-growing population, especially, the working class; and of course, rapid urbanisation, among other factors.

However, much thought about, in seeking for homes, regardless of economic conditions of the nation and the citizens, researches have shown that many are not just complacent with living in 'any kind of home'. This category of patrons or home-seekers, this medium observes, wants more than just four walls and a parking lot. Simply put, they desire to live in the premium or what many call luxury homes, rather than 'normal' homes.

For these home buyers, specifically, the affluent, the desire for luxury homes that provide all the modern comforts cannot be overemphasized. The homes, especially in the urban areas, afford the owner to provide his/ her family quality habitat with security, health, and privacy, all guaranteed.

Notably, however, affording a luxury home does not come cheap. With the poor state of the economy, galloping inflation and falling values of the naira and associated effects on the fortune of the nation, prices of luxury properties have climbed steadily over the years.

But, while it might seem to have a luxury home cannot be achieved in one's lifetime, the good news is here.

In battling the housing deficit in the country, a top-notch real estate development firm, The Address Homes, has reiterated its resolve toward tackling Nigeria's housing deficit by providing affordable homes that meet the benchmark of modern real estate development.

Having stamped its authority in the luxury property market within the shortest time of coming into the real estate industry through the successful completion of about 54 units of mid-luxury detached and semi-detached properties in Osapa London, 31 units of luxury homes at Ilasan, opposite Ikate, in Lekki, Lagos, the firm has added two new home schemes christened The Luxuria by The Address Homes and Dan & Dan Apartments in Ikoyi and Banana Island to its stables.

Abbey Mortgage Bank Names Mobolaji Adewumi as Acting MD

In the wake of her 30th Anniversary, Abbey Mortgage Bank Plc announces the appointment of her MD/CEO Mr. Madu Hamman by President Muhammed Buhari, as the new MD of Federal Mortgage Bank, the apex Mortgage Bank in Nigeria.

Mr. Madu Hamman has over 34 years of banking experience in Mortgage and Credit Analysis, Banking Operations, Business Development, Business Support Services, and Human Resource Management. He has anchored and directed the planning, integration, and implementation of critical projects for the Bank. In the past 2 years under his leadership, the Bank has moved into profitability with a balance sheet size of N34.46bn.

In addition, the CBN recently approved the Bank's Rights Issue of 3.692bn ordinary shares of 50keach at N0.82 per share. This appointment is indeed an endorsement of the Abbey brand.

Consequently, at an emergency meeting held on the 14th of April 2022, the Board named Mr. Mobolaji Adewumi, the current ED Finance & Admin as the Acting Managing Director of the Bank. Mobolaji Adewumi is an experienced professional with a deep knowledge of the financial services industry. He possesses an extensive working knowledge of sub-Saharan Africa.

He obtained his MBA (specializing in Finance) from Judge Business School, University of Cambridge, UK, and his BSc in Management and Accounting from the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. Bolaji became a Chartered Accountant (ACCA) in 2007. He worked for KPMG as Audit Senior between 2006 to 2009 before joining UBA from 2009 to 2011 where he worked in various capacities.

Mr. Adewumi also worked for Africa Finance Corporation, Egon Zehnder International London Office, and Fairtrade International before joining Aso Savings and Loan Plc as Special Adviser to the MD/CEO & Head, Strategy between 2012 to 2015. Bolaji Adewumi later moved to First Bank of Nigeria Limited, where he was Special Assistant to the MD/CEO between 2016 to 2019 and later joined VFD as the Group Executive Director, Finance from April 2019 to March 2020.

The Bank + Telecom + Insurance Experience Centre

www.businessjournalng.com

NCC NIGERIAN COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION

As a response to endless allegations of pilfering/manipulation on accounts against banks by customers, incessant complaints of poor quality of services (voice & data) by telecom subscribers and allegations of non-payment of claims against insurance firms, Business Journal has taken a decision to establish The Bank - Telecom - Insurance Experience Centre to give such dissatisfied customers of banks, telecom firms and insurance companies the opportunity of telling their stories by airing such grievances in an open and transparent manner.

Accordingly, Business Journal newspaper has committed to publish such service experiences every week to give VOICE to customers. We shall also publish the experience stories in our online platform: www.businessjournalng.com.

Commenting on the initiative, Prince Cookey, Publisher/Editor-in-Chief of Business Journal said:

"The essence of The Centre is to provide an avenue for bank depositors, telecom subscribers and the insuring public to freely discuss their experiences in the course of doing business or patronising the services of banks, telecom operators and insurers. We shall publish such experiences for the benefit of the public and as a form of feedback to the banks, network operators and insurance companies. We believe that The Centre will give service providers unfettered access to the opinion of their customers, create an avenue for dialogue and lead to better understanding between the service providers and their customers. The initiative is a win-win situation."

Accordingly, members of the public are enjoined to send their service experiences to: experience@businessjournalng.com and also provide name, phone contact, location and email (where possible).

ZENITH

Fraud/Poor Service: Customers Bomb Zenith Bank!

My Zenith Loan (Sponsored on Facebook)

- Scam XXXXXXXX!
  ---El Haroon Abdulkadir

- Scam beware!
  --Umufo Edward

- Why is everything in the country a scam. You people wrote 0.01% here and 0.3% on your loan page. Imagine a retailer paying interest of #3000 on every one million he/she collects from your bank.
  --Anasonye Patrick

GRANT Zenith Loan (Sponsored on Facebook)

- Zenith scam is too much. Stealing people's is their handwork. Zenith pls return my husband's money oooooo
  They also withdrew my husband's #500, 000 naira on 17th December 2021 without returning it up till today. Don't open account with Zenith bank please
  ---Ogbuji Philomina
  June 13, 2022

- Scam indeed. They just withdrew all I have in my Zenith account.
  --Adedeji Oluwaseun Temitope

- DON'T GIVE OUT YOUR ATM PIN.
  --Oriyomi Olalekan

- Scam alert.

--Ezihe Chibueze

- Them be thief!
  --Happiness Forsure

access

- Something is terribly wrong with Access Bank online platform. It has been down since afternoon. It's even affecting POS services. The bank ought to treat this as grade one severity yet nothing seems to be going on with a view to fixing the problem.
  ---Tony Opara
  Facebook Post
  June 7, 2022

airtel

- The problem I have with Airtel Nigeria is their data service.
  For instance, I usually recharge the sum of N1, 500 for 6 GB that lasts for a period of seven days.
  Suddenly, it doesn't reach the 7th day before they cut me off and I can't remember changing my usage of the data service in terms of volume or downloads to warrant such situation.
  All the efforts I made by calling their customer service were just in vain.
  Really frustrating!

  --Michael Folorunsho

MTN

- A good number of my family members, even some friends are now regretting using MTN
  because of the way and manner they steal your call credit once you recharge.
  They keep claiming that you're owing them and I cannot remember borrowing credit from them.
  Even if you call their customer care from now till end of the month, they will keep claiming that you are knowing them. I don't get it.
  --Iheanacho Igwe

kuda.

- wThey are 419 people. They are good in blocking people's account when they discover huge amount of money in the account
  --Ajileye Tolulope Adegboye

- Kuda, please, make yourself accessible to your teeming customers. We have a case of double transfers to your bank and all efforts to recover a tranche of that money has proved abortive. No access to your people. Please, be more people-reachable.
  --Otseme SimonPeter Egwurube

- Bank for the Free has been used to further cyber crimes times without number. I hate it!
  --Izaya Obi

- Since I lost the first app after depositing, trying to get it back is a big problem since last year. Y!!!!
  -Blessing Uwazie

- This bank is not safe, shine your eyes.
  --Mathew Stephen Yayo

- Between Kuda and Piggyvest, which is better in terms of being secured?
  --Lovelyn John

UBA
United Bank for Africa

Hacking of Leo Chat Box?

- The management of Uba Plc should take note of Leo chat banking in "Facebook". It has been hacked by unscrupulous elements.
  There was a time I made complaints to Uba about using Leo chat box online on Facebook. I was asked to state my debit card type, master or visa and at the same time, I was asked to enter my last four digits number on my debit card which I did. Lastly, I was asked to enter my debit card pin.
  It was then I became suspicious that it was not legitimate Uba chat banking Leo.
  Next message they sent to me was:
  "Dear customer, kindly note that all provided credentials are safe with Leo and will be deleted from our system immediately your request is confirmed and resolved."
  What comes to my mind was that financial institutions always warn us not to disclose our pin at any given time.
  I believe some people might have fallen victim of this Leo chat.
  I wish to call on Uba management to take control of this illegitimate Uba chat banking Leo on Facebook online.
  ---Fajemirokun Michael Adewale

Uba Easy Loan (Sponsored on Facebook)

Scammers!
--Innocent Ibeh

UBA Active LOAN (Sponsored on Facebook)
This is scam
--Ubong B. Akpan

It's a scam
--Ibrahim Mohammed

They are scammers, beware
…is a personal blog
--Muhammed Muhammed Aliyu

NB: Pls send your experience to: experience @businessjournalng.com. Include name

Brand + Marketing + Media
www.businessjournalng.com

6 PR and Business Lessons to Learn from Liverpool Football Club

Phil Osagie

Liverpool is easily one of the most successful football clubs in the world, both off and on the pitch.

It recently won the English Emirates FA Cup.

Beyond football, Liverpool also has a well-oiled public relations and marketing machine, as outlined by Matt Scammell, the Club's Commercial Director.

Here are some valuable business lessons Nigerian companies and brands can learn from Liverpool Football Club:

▪ Deliver on Your Core Purpose

A brand must deliver on its core purpose in order to be adored by its target audience.

The purpose of football is to entertain and Liverpool knows this fully well.

Matt Scammell said the best way to grow your fan base around the world is by playing entertaining and engaging football that people want to watch. It seems like a cliché but it's true.

If you play entertaining football, the fans will follow.

▪ Authenticity

Liverpool is a strong believer in being authentic and it reflects in its partnerships and marketing.

The Commercial Director said: "Liverpool FC is strongly committed to doing things very authentically. "A great example is a partnership that we just entered with SC Johnson. It was aligned with our beliefs on sustainability and thinking about the planet. We also have a program called 'The Red Way' which aligns with the thought of doing things more sustainably. We also showcase authenticity in our interactions with our fans. We want to be close to them and we see them as the heart of our club. We want to do things that demonstrate the value of the global fandom we enjoy."

▪ Continuous Pursuit of Success and Excellence

Liverpool is mindful of Bill Gate's lesson that "success is a lousy teacher. It seduces smart people into thinking they can't lose."

For Liverpool, "It does matter to be successful, however, appealing to partners is a blend of many factors. It's about a blend of success, having a high-quality team with skills, and playing an exciting brand of football that engages viewers.

The history as well is massively important. Even before we won the UEFA Champions League two years ago, we were the most successful English team in Europe. It's great that we are continuing to build the trophy cabinet, but we have a strong supporter base on the back of earlier successes and the exciting football we play.

"So- success is an important factor, but it's not the only thing."

▪ Resilience Helps Strong Brands Survive Hard Times

When the going gets tough, tough brands keep going. During Covid-19, many businesses around the world lost huge revenues and even artists and comedians in Nigeria felt the punch.

About resilience, Liverpool explained: "With regards to the sponsorship community, our partners have been incredibly resilient. If we look at the last year, we have signed on several new partnerships, even though we had the underlined challenge of the pandemic going on.

"Commercially, we are now more successful than we have ever been. We would have preferred Covid not happening, but the appeal and resilience of Liverpool FC has been great during the time and thankfully we have been able to grow our partner base."

▪ Have Strong Partnerships and Give them Value

Liverpool has carved a reputation for managing its partners and sponsors strategically and ensuring they give them increasing value. This is another valuable public triathlons' lesson from Liverpool.

Carlsberg, Standard Chartered and Nike are all reaping huge brand dividends from their sponsorship of Liverpool.

Scammell said: "Our synergies with partners are very strong and it's all about making sure we deliver up to their objectives.

"At the same time, we know that when partners invest in the club, it ultimately comes through to the field of play and investing in talent, which plays the entertaining style of football that Liverpool FC is known for. It's this football that encourages our fans around the world to support the club and also bring in more fans which benefits our partners. "

The Nigerian Football Federation can learn some valuable lessons here. Are sponsors of the Super Eagles such as Coca-Cola, Nigerian Breweries, Dettol, Air Peace and Nike getting maximum return for their investments?

▪ See Challenges as Opportunities

Nigerian companies facing a wide variety of challenges have often resorted to cost cutting, lowering product quality, increasing prices or just folding up the businesses.

Perhaps, the genesis of the problems arises from how the affected business owners define challenges, as a result of which the challenges become amplified.

For Liverpool, there's no such thing as a challenge, it's always about an opportunity! There are plenty of opportunities in the market, but the big opportunity now is harnessing digital so that you can engage with fans across new demographics and take them on a journey, outside of what normally happens on a match day.

I'm excited about these opportunities and they crossover to the world of partnerships as well.

Thought for the Road

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance, you must keep moving."

"We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them."

- Albert Einstein

M&C Saatchi Abel, 1st African Agency to Open Office in Metaverse

South African advertising agency, M&C Saatchi Abel, has purchased 'land' in the newly created Africarare metaverse – Ubuntuland – marking its move as the first South African and African agency to set up shop in this digital world.

Africa's first digital domain Africarare, is a 3D virtual reality immersive hub that houses a metaverse marketplace set in Ubuntuland.

Ubuntuland will showcase some of the best of African art, fashion, entertainment, sport, tech and creativity and will provide a platform for artists from across the continent to showcase their work.

"The unique afro-themed metaverse establishes local representation in a growing global digital universe and will open our continent up to significant digital and economic growth opportunities for both talent, clients and industry colleagues to come together to solve business and even societal challenges with creativity," says Mike Abel, M&C Saatchi Group South Africa Founding Partner and CEO.

As the Cookie Crumbles, 3 Strategies for Advertisers to Thrive

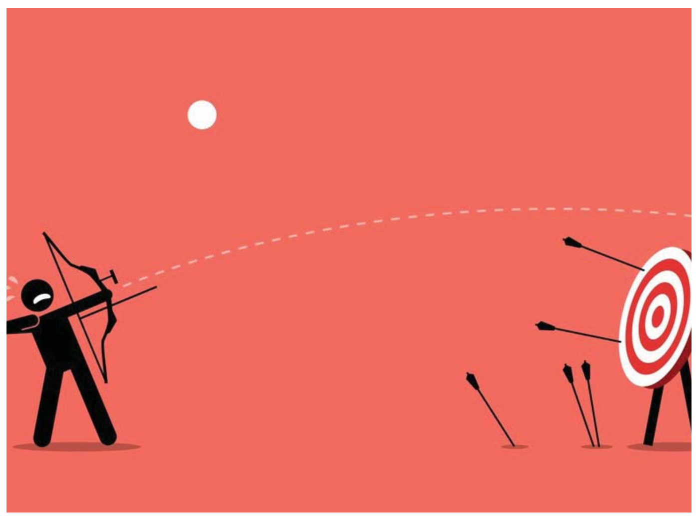
▪ *The path forward for advertisers*

McKinsey Report: Most observers believe that in the short term, the phasing out of third-party cookies and device identifiers will have a detrimental effect on advertising efficiency and thus on advertising ROI.

The ban is particularly challenging for brand marketers in sectors that are removed from the customer transaction, such as consumer packaged goods, automotive, and pharmaceuticals.

That said, advertisers have several opportunities to balance the precision of targeting and impact measurement with the privacy of consumers. In general, increasing transparency and providing value in exchange for data will be winning strategies, because many users don't mind personalised advertising as long as they are not kept in the dark or deceived about the mechanisms that drive it.

This has the positive and important side effect of building



consumer trust in the respective brand.

As third-party cookies and device identifiers become obsolete, advertisers that pursue the following three strategies will gain an advantage:

- Use their own consumer touchpoints to collect first-party data
- Create partnerships to leverage second-party data
- Experiment with contextual advertising, which displays ads based on the content a user is viewing, and explore the evolution of interest-based advertising, which targets consumers based on their recent top categories of interest

Oga Sabinus Might Successfully use Peak to Milk Gala, and You Can't Blame Him!

Ikem Okuhu

If there is one thing that will be standing between advertisers and success in this digital era, it has to be the speed with which they strive to take advantage of trends.

It will land many brands into the sort of avoidable trouble that the good old methodical approaches of traditional agencies mostly navigated successfully because they have enough time to think thoroughly.

"As e dey hot" appears to be the core driver of brands that have embraced social media advertising. To arouse the consciousness, and attract the attention of members of the public, brands crawl around the social media space, baying for trending issues, events and people that they could latch onto in order to be a part of conversations, and, if you like, gain the sort of recognition that could help rivet footfalls.

In an article I published on May 20, 2020, titled, Prognosticating PR Practice Post-Pandemic: The New Realities That Needs Preparing For, I did say that, "The post-COVID-19 business environment will be lean and nimble and fired by a race-to-recovery adrenaline. This means that speed in decision making, expedited roads-to-market and lots of "thinking and activating on the feet" will likely be the new normal."

This article was written in response to what many in the Nigerian Public Relations industry were putting forward as the nature the business was going to take after the then raging pandemic.

With what is happening now, I am inclined to add that what I said of the PR business also affects the advertising industry even more strongly. The need to work faster has become critical, and with the social media playing greater roles in the business of selling, advertisers are being made to be on the speed mode almost permanently.

But this comes with very tough challenges. With increased speed of deployment of advertising material comes the erosion of the traditional thoroughness that was the hallmark of traditional advertising. The faster agencies act in order to be at pace with emerging trends, the more they are prone to mistakes that could adversely affect the successes of campaigns.

This is exactly the mire that Peak Milk and Gala have run into. Speed, which took the place of thoroughness and discretion in their marketing has pitted them against rave-making skit-maker, Emmanuel Chukwuemeka Ejekwu, better known as Oga Sabinus.

The skit maker, a report by popular business and economy blog, Nairametrics says, is demanding "a respective N1 billion and N100 million from Friesland and UAC in compensation and damages for the consequent use of the catchphrase, something hooge," in advert on its social media handle and the use of his picture in an ad campaign."

Oga Sabinus has, through his lawyer, written a notice to the companies, threatening litigation. The letter sates in part that the said slogan was trademarked on the 26th of November, 2021 with the file number: NG/TM/O/2021/48316. 10, and went on to demand for the payment of the sum of "Five Hundred Million Naira (N500m) as compensation for the unauthorised use of the intellectual property belonging to our client, and another Five Hundred Million Naira for damages for the trauma; emotional, physical, psychological, and mental trauma our client has suffered for the Trademark theft and infringement of his intellectual property rights."

> If you want your Trademark to have much strength, you can register in multiple classes. That gives your brand leverage. So, if I'm doing a Trademark on class 1, and it most likely applies on 5 other classes, I can apply for those five classes, and if anyone uses that word or phrase within the 5 classes scope, trust me, you can sue and bank plenty money

UAC Foods, on the other hand, was asked to pay N100 million for what the comedian alleges to be its own breach.

Across varying communities in the social media and marketing professionals, the debate has been raging, with people popping their eyes at the numbers as if the comedian had already won the case.

While the jury is still out on the matter, there are those who already expressed belief on the futility of victory for the skit maker, who became more popular with his recent win at the Africa Magic Viewers' Choice Awards (AMVCA). One of those I engaged on this was tech and social entrepreneur, Emmanuel Iwuchuckwu, better known as Emmanuel Bountiful on the social media.

Bountiful believes that Oga Sabinus committed a serious error of judgement by threatening court action against the brands. For him, the outcome of the matter, good or bad, might limit the relationships between the comedian and those who would demand his services for endorsements.

He adds that there are also other errors in copyright registration that could also stand against his victory. According to him, Oga Sabinus registered his trade mark on a class that does not apply to the brands he is claiming infringed on them.

Continuing, he told me that Trademarks have classes and the one Oga Sabinus claims to have registered does not cover Class 29, which includes products such as, meat, fish, poultry and game; meat extracts; preserved, frozen, dried and cooked fruits and vegetables; jellies, jams, tomatoes; eggs, milk and milk products; edible oils and fats.

"If you want your Trademark to have much strength, you can register in multiple classes. That gives your brand leverage. So, if I'm doing a Trademark on class 1, and it most likely applies on 5 other classes, I can apply for those five classes, and if anyone uses that word or phrase within the 5 classes scope, trust me, you can sue and bank plenty money," he said.

Given this scenario, it will be interesting how Peak and Gala responds to the matter. Would they apply the, "see you in court" approach and dare the comedian or would they seek amicable settlement?

The problem is that whichever means these brands adopt in tackling the issue, there has been a lot of reputational damage already. The matter is already in the public glare and everyone seems to believe that these brands acted wrongfully, even if there are legal stumbling blocks against successful prosecution. The injuries already done to their reputation cannot be repaired by lawyers and judges.

Brands earn their respect by being seen as solving problems not by finding ways around trademarks and copyrights.

What Peak Milk and Gala did in the case of Oga Sabinus presents them as dishonest, lazy and opportunistic. These are not pretty associations and cannot in any way support the positive top of mind that aid marketing.

Issues such as this raises serious questions on how brands should approach their engagements on the social media. The demand for speed and the challenge of thoroughness has to be examined and re-examined by these players.

In this period of lean marketing budgets, marketers should also know who they hire for their campaigns, even if such campaigns are fleeting social media projects with lifespans as long as the trends they were designed to take advantage of.

It might be nearly impossible to sell the idea of brands refraining from latching unto trends and buzzwords for marketing capital. If you take that away from them, you've taken away the opportunities to ease into conversations and enhance the talkability that potentially rivet footfalls.

But the idea of jumping into nearly every pool without finding out how deep is always going to be suicidal. Except the idea was to extend the conversations around he brands, Peak and Gala would already have lost everything they gained from those now controversial advertisements.

As I said earlier, brands will not let go of the trends train. It's nearly impossible these days, because the social media has become the place where "everything" happens. Tact and discretion are what would save the day.

Social media conversations shift by the second, and the brand that wins is the one that is fastest in crafting clever copy while the trend lasts. But in doing this, attention has to be paid to the minute details to avert what situations such as the one Peak and Gala ran into.

I also believe that marketers should begin to invest in a lot of user generated content. Instigating this might be tough and a bit more costly.

But in the end, you are better assured of creating your own community through active engagement of the audience. This has greater chance to create real-time experience because of the interface it orchestrates with the brand in question.

$3 Trillion: The Amount that Metaverse Will Add to Global GDP in 10 Years

N730 Billion: The Annual Spend on Sports Betting in Nigeria (Daily Investment of N2 Billion)

60 Million: The Estimated Number of Nigerians (Age 18-45) Involved in Sports Betting Daily in Nigeria

$84 Billion: The Amount of Revenue Generated by Global Carbon Pricing According to the World Bank

Sports Business
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%40: The % of Workers for Sack by Aero Contractors Airline out of 700 Staff
67%: The Rise in Cost of Clearing Containers in Nigerian Ports

The 2022 UEFA Champions League Prize Money Tree: Which Team Made the Most Money?

The UEFA Champions League is the pinnacle of cup football, altering the financial stratosphere of the clubs who are able to qualify for the competition through their domestic leagues.

The 2022 Champions League final will herald an enormous package for the winners, though slightly reduced compared with the last campaign's prize money because of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The two 2022 finalists — Real Madrid and Liverpool — know that they can nearly double their knockout round prize haul should they hoist the title. While the quarterfinalists settled for $12 million of additional prize money, the winner of the tournament comes away with an extra $23 million.

Stage	Prize Money
Winner	$22.69 million
Runner-up	$17.59 million
Semifinalists	$14.18 million
Quarterfinalists	$12.02 million
Round of 16	$10.89 million
Group-stage wins	$3.17 million
Group-stage draws	$1.05 million
Group stage	$17.74 million

Rank	Team	Revenue
1.	Liverpool	$91.44 million
2.	Real Madrid	$89.32 million
3.	Manchester City	$67.51 million
4.	Villarreal	$65.39 million
5.	Bayern Munich	$59.67 million
6.	Chelsea	$54.38 million
7.	Benfica	$49.09 million
8.	Atletico de Madrid	$48.04 million
9.	Ajax	$47.65 million
10.	Juventus	$44.48 million
11.	Lille	$40.24 million
	Manchester United	$40.24 million
	Paris St Germain	$40.24 million

Champions League teams pick up money all along the way in the competition. The group stage comes with a baseline prize package with teams adding to that total with every win or draw during that group stage. Then every round of the knockouts comes with a fresh bonus.

Champions League 2022 prize money

The Champions League finalists in 2022 will each receive a prize of $17.59 million simply for reaching the final two of the competition. The winner of Europe's premier competition is set to pick up an extra $5.1 million due to qualifying for August's UEFA Super Cup, a one-off final which pits it against the winners of the 2022 Europa League (Eintracht Frankfurt).

- Champions League Winners: $22.69 million
- Champions League Runner-Up: $17.59 million
- The full picture of the prize winnings for the 2021-22 Champions League is outlined in the table below.
- For making the group stage alone, the 32 clubs involved each took home a minimum of $17.74 million. They were able to add to that with every win and draw in the group stage.

Football Has Biggest Gender Gap in Sports Prize Money -Study

The majority of sports now offer equal winning prize money at the top level, but the biggest gaps between male and female athletes are in soccer, golf and basketball, a BBC Sport study has found.

Of the 48 sports surveyed, 37 offered prize money – of which only three did not offer parity at any of its major championships or events.

It is the third time BBC Sport has carried out its global study, with the previous editions coming in 2014 and 2017.

The 2021 study focuses on the prize money awarded to competition winners and does not include wages, bonuses or sponsorship.

Since the 2017 edition, sports including hockey, cliff diving, surfing and wrestling have achieved parity in at least one major competition. However, BBC Sport noted that cricket has taken 'the biggest strides' to narrow the gap.

The Hundred, the UK tournament set for its inaugural season this summer, will offer equal prize money in the men's and women's competitions. This follows on from the men's and women's Big Bash Leagues in Australia achieving parity in the 2017/18 campaign.

The 2020 Women's T20 World Cup saw champions Australia awarded a purse of US$1 million. This is equal to what the winners of the men's tournament will win in 2021, although the International Cricket Council (ICC) has not yet confirmed the prize pot.

The total prize money for the 2022 Women's Cricket World Cup has been increased to US$3.5 million. In 2017, England women won US$660,000 from a total prize pot of US$2 million, compared to the US$4 million England men won in 2019 from a total pot of US$10 million.

In hockey, the inaugural Pro League in 2019 saw the men's and women's winning teams each receive US$250,000, while a women's Euro Hockey League was introduced for the 2019/20 season offering equal prize money to the men's league.

Wrestling's Ranking Series also made prize money equal in 2018, while the World Surf League (WSL) achieved parity in 2019. Cliff diving's World Series will offer equal prize money of €7,085 (US$8,409) to its male and female athletes from 2021.

In road cycling, the Tour of Britain and the Women's Tour races have had equal prize money since 2018. Stage winners receive €3,615 (US$4,290), while the overall champions get €14,460 (US$17,163).

That said, the study reveals that the majority of road races still do not pay equal prize money. This disparity was further highlighted at last month's Omloop Het Nieuwsblad. In winning the men's race, Davide Ballerini took home €16,000 (US$18,991), while Anna van der Breggen, the women's champion and the Olympic and World Road Race gold medallist, won €930 (US$1,103).

This year's Rugby League World Cup has yet to confirm its prize money, but it will award prize money to the winning women's and wheelchair teams for the first time. Additionally, all teams will get equal participation fees.

Despite the progress, BBC Sport highlights the stark difference in prize money handed out in soccer.

The 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup's prize fund was more than nine times less than the male equivalent, despite its projected overall total audience reach of 1.12 billion being a third of Russia 2018.

The US women's national team (USWNT) won US$4 million, compared to France men's 2018 takings of US$38 million. The women's prize money was double that of the previous tournament in 2015, and Fifa, the sport's international governing body, has said it will double it again for the 2023 edition.

In the Uefa Champions League, the prize money earned by the women's winners has been decreased from €250,000 (US$296,740) in 2019 to €150,000 (US$178,044) in 2020 and 2021. The men's prize fund has remained level at €19 million (US$22.5 million).

Uefa, European soccer's governing body, told the BBC that prize money for earlier rounds in the competition has increased, so the winner receives more than in previous seasons.

In the FA Cup, the winning men's club in 2021 will earn UK£1.8 million (US$2.4 million), while the women's winners will get UK£25,000 (US$34.5 million).

Disparities also remain in golf. Though female golfers are among the highest earners in elite sport, they still earn considerably less than their male counterparts at majors.

At June's US Open, men will compete to win US$2.25 million, whereas the top prize for the US Women's Open that month stands at US$1 million. In 2014, the difference between these two figures was less, standing at US$900,000.

While figures for the 2021 tournaments have not yet been released, a spokeswoman for the R&A, which organises The Open and Women's British Open, said its "stated aim" is to close the prize money differential.

An encouraging sign, however, is the mixed tournament at the ISPS Handa World Invitational in Northern Ireland this summer. The US$2.35 million purse will be divided evenly as the men and women compete for two equal prize funds.

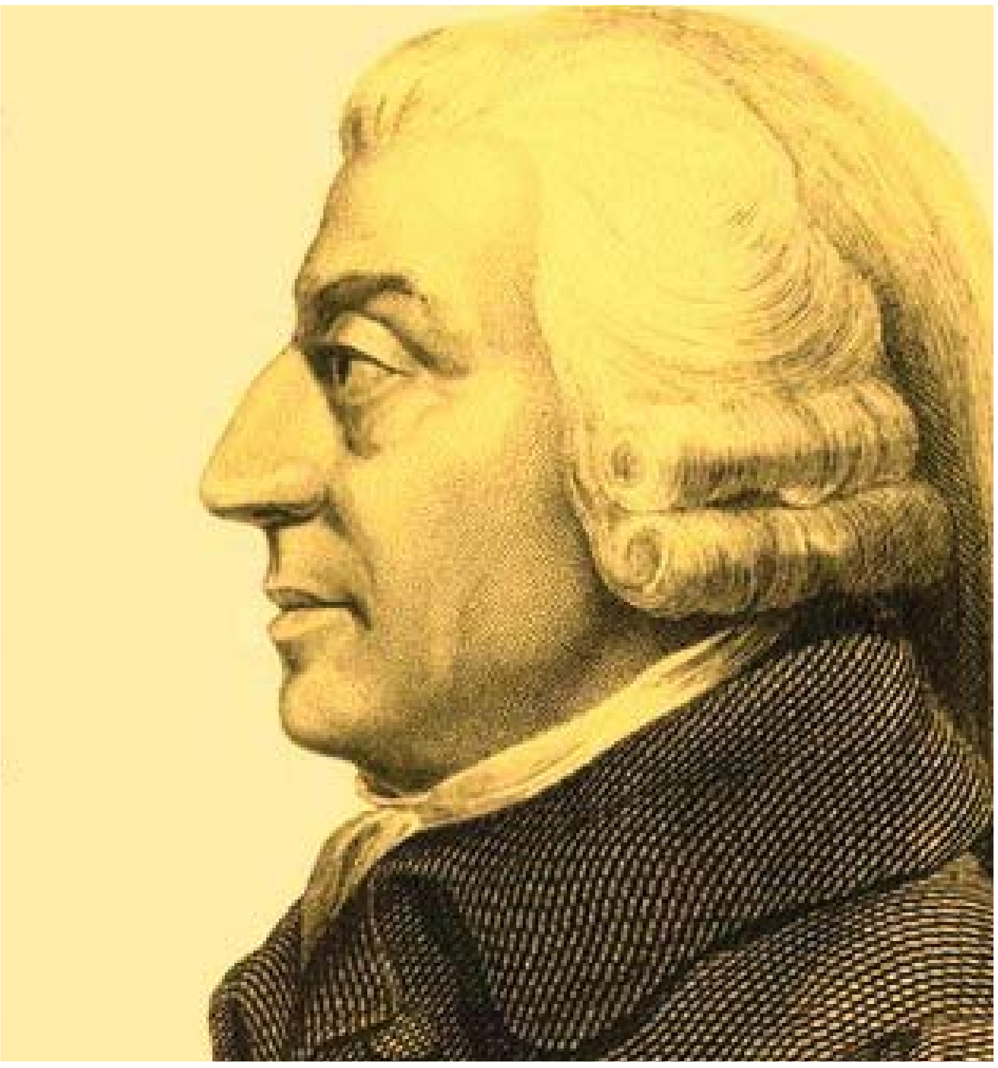
Economic Thought Series

www.businessjournalng.com

THE UNFORGETTABLES

BY ANTHONY KILA

ADAM SMITH:
An Accidental Economist



Our unforgettable today is Adam Smith.

He died 232 years ago in 1790 at the age of 68 in Scotland where he was born.

Many agree in describing him as the father of modern economics and he is arguably the most quoted and referenced economist. Naturally he has been misquoted and misrepresented many times by both admirers and critics.

I have argued elsewhere (in my "Trilogy of Economics") that the three most important economists of all times are Adam Smith, Karl Marx and John Maynard Keynes.

Let's have some fun here: Who is your favourite of the three? Yes, you can only choose one.

Readers of this series are invited to take note and keep a table of their favourite unforgettables, let us see if unforgettable after unforgettable you will change your mind and reclassify your favourite unforgettables.

Today is about Adam Smith, so back to him.

Adam Smith is one of those personalities of whom little is known and said about his private life. We know a lot about his thoughts and ideas and rather little about the man.

The greatness of ideas and thoughts are enough to overshadow the story of the man, many can hence be forgiven. A closer look at his life will however reveal a lot more about his ideas, their formation and how the thinker was shaped.

The concept of "the invisible hand" is perhaps the most popular concept for which Adam Smith is known. With the notion of the invisible hand, Adam Smith laid the foundations for market economy and laissez-faire economic system that advocates that amongst individuals, negotiations and affairs should be free from government interference.

He explained to us that production, distribution and prices will be automatically decided, as if by an invisible hand, if customers were allowed to freely decide what they want and who to buy from and producers allowed to freely decide what to produce and how.

This clarified that, with freedom and diversity, the collective good will be taken care of if individuals were allowed to pursue their own individual interests. The producer will adopt more efficient means of production in order to gain more market share and profit at lower prices and this will ultimately benefit consumers.

It is safe to say Adam Smith invented or at least introduced the concept of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to the world. He showed us then that wealth of nations should not be measured through accumulation of balances as the leaders of the world were doing then under the influence of the mercantilists theory that prevailed for over 300 years.

He proved that mercantilism was wrong and that the wealth of nations was not by stocking gold and silver or taxing imports and subsidizing exports but by boosting production and encouraging trade.

The wealth of a nation, he taught us, is not to be measured by the total amount of gold and silver a nation has but by the total of its trade and production: The GDP.

> **"The concept of "the invisible hand" is perhaps the most popular concept for which Adam Smith is known. With the notion of the invisible hand, Adam Smith laid the foundations for market economy and laissez-faire economic system that advocates that amongst individuals, negotiations and affairs should be free from government interference**

General education is unfair to Adam Smith's legacy in its teaching of the industrial revolution and industrialization in general as it ascribes all the merit to legislation and technology leaving out the thought that laid the foundations.

With his ideas on labour as a factor of production in general, and the theory of division of labour in particular, Adam Smith was the first to articulate the idea that efficiency in production, productivity and indeed prosperity will increase by getting each worker to specialize in a small task or part of the whole process of production.

Before Adam Smith, thanks to the physiocrats, labour was not considered as part of the contributing factor to production and wealth creation. It was with Smith that we were first exposed to the idea that there is a key correlation between the amount of labour value put into the production of goods or services and their prices. The ideas of Adam Smith on labour were very influential in the move the world has made from wealth based on land ownership and management to wealth based on production and assembly line manufacturing.

Overall, it is easy to understand why many consider Adam Smith just as the economist behind theories of capitalism, wealth generation and how some writers have dared to term him the economist of the rich. A closer look at his life, influences and intention will however lead to scaling back if not discarding such thoughts. As said, not much is discussed of his personal life, these little considerations might help.

Adam Smith was born in 1723 into the second marriage of another Adam Smith, the father, to Margaret Douglas, the mother. His date of birth does not seem certain but he was baptised June 5,1723.

The first remarkable thing that happened to our own Adam Smith was that at four years old, he was taken away by gypsies who later abandoned him when they realised that a search party was after them. In his "Life of Adam Smith" John Rae his principal biographer, noted that "He would have made, I fear, a poor gipsy".

At the age of 14 he went to the Glasgow University to study logic, metaphysics, mathematics, physics and moral philosophy. This was in 1737 and his university was already considered an important part of what will later be known as the Scottish Enlightenment Movement.

The young Smith studied under some of the leading scholars of the day and he was highly influenced and shaped above all by Francis Hutcheson, a professor of moral philosophy.

His academic brilliance at Glasgow gave him a scholarship to Oxford to study social philosophy, but his time there was not great for Smith. He complained the teachers were not interested in teaching and he did not find them inspiring. He left Oxford before the end of his tenure and was never conferred a doctorate at Oxford.

Adam Smith however did not let his schooling get in the way of his education. He read and self-taught a lot and one of the influences he discovered on his own whilst at Oxford was the social philosopher David Hume, another figure we shall look at in this series. Smith was reprimanded for reading Hume.

Contrary to what many assume and imagine, Adam Smith was above all a social philosopher and an accidental economist interested in finding out the origin and process of morality; he wanted to explore and explain what lead people to do what they did.

He was a naturalist and an optimist that wanted to establish the path to prosperity for many. He taught us that diversity, freedom, collaboration and merit decided by the market were the away to prosperity.

Adam Smith knew and articulated why monopoly was bad for all and that privilege for the few was not good for the many and even for the privileged in the long term. Smith's discoveries and teachings are still valid today as we face issues of corruption, unemployment, failing governments and poverty.

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He is currently Director of studies at CIAPS; the Centre for International Advanced and Professional Studies. He is a regular commentator on the BBC and he works with various organisations on

International Development projects across Europe, Africa and the USA.

He writes from Cambridge in England, UK.

Join me if you can @anthonykila to continue these conversations.

Prof Anthony Kila is Centre Director at CIAPS Lagos.

Dangote Cement Reports N538bn Profit in 2021, 25% Rise in Dividend

Shareholders of Dangote Cement Plc have commended the Management of the company for an impressive performance despite the economic challenges in the year under review.

Unanimously, the shareholders approved N20 per share for the year ended December 31, 2021, as against the N16 paid in the preceding year. This represents a 25 per cent increase in dividend compared to the 2020 dividend of N16.00 per share, reinforcing the Company's commitment to maximising shareholder value.

The shareholders gave their approval at the 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) held in Lagos. They commended the management for the impressive performance recorded in the year under review. They also applauded the company for its efforts in reducing the unclaimed dividend of the company.

Dangote Cement in the year under review achieved its highest profit before tax in its history at N538.4 billion. Also, the Company recorded Group volumes of 29.3Mta, up 13.8 per cent. Exceptional EBITDA of N684.6 billion was achieved, up by 43.2 per cent owing to strong cost control measures.

Chairman of the company, Aliko Dangote, said that "Over the last decade, Dangote Cement has recorded exponential growth across all areas."

According to him, Group volumes are now at almost 30Mta, our capacity has tripled to 51.6Mta and we export cement from five countries across Africa.

"As the volatile global environment propels us into a new era of uncertainties, we are fortunate that the last two years have taught us resilience, adaptability and grit. These values are what we need to face unpredictable times in the future.

"Dangote Cement remains the leading cement company in Africa, well-positioned for a positive and sustainable future. We are resolute in transforming Africa, while creating sustainable value for our stakeholders."

The 13th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Dangote Cement in Lagos recently.

Dangote said in January 2022, the Company completed the second tranche of its buy-back programme as Dangote Cement has now repurchased 0.98 per cent of its outstanding shares, saying this share buy-back programme reflects the Company's unwavering commitment to creating value and identifying opportunities to return cash to shareholders.

"In 2021, we exported seven ships of clinker out of Nigeria and exported cement from five of our operations. Our vision is for West and Central Africa to be cement and clinker self-sufficient while making the regional and continental free trade agreements a reality."

He emphasised "We continue our sustainability and governance efforts with our 7 Sustainability Pillars – 'The Dangote Way'. The 7 Pillars: cultural, economic, institutional, financial, environmental, operational and social, provide the appropriate framework in which we have embedded our corporate values and strategic objectives."

He said "Our strategy in 2021 focused on energy transition, which is a crucial enabler of sustainable development and climate resilience on the continent. We have increased our focus on alternative fuels in our energy mix. We are actively investing in installing mechanical multi-fuel systems that can process diverse types of wastes."

Guinness Nigeria: N159bn Revenue, N15bn Net Profit in Qtr 3, 2022

Guinness Nigeria, a subsidiary of Diageo Plc, and the leading total beverage alcohol company in Nigeria has continued its impressive growth trajectory, posting a revenue of N159,444,503 for its third quarter period ended 31 March, 2022, which represents a 39% growth over the same period last year.

The Company reported a Profit After Tax of N15,278,335,000 in the period under review which represents a 731% growth over same period last year.

The results show an impressive performance and a significant improvement when compared to the same period last year, a testament to an unwavering commitment to meeting consumer demands as well as the company's resilience in a challenging operating environment.

Commenting on the announcement, Mr. Baker Magunda, Managing Director/CEO, Guinness Nigeria Plc said:

"In the first nine months of fiscal 22, Guinness Nigeria continued to grow on the back of the strong recovery in the first half of fiscal 22. The business has delivered growth in the face of the challenging operating environment characterized by rising inflation and forex challenges in the 3 months ended 31 March 2022. Revenue grew by 39% to N159.4 billion benefitting mainly from price increases across all brands, as well as from favorable brand mix and resilient consumer demand."

"We have delivered revenue growth across all key categories driven by our strategic focus brands, Malta Guinness and Guinness, as well as strong growth in local and imported spirits and the ready-to-drink category. This has further showed that our strategy is sound, and we are unwavering in our commitment to ensuring our long-term competitiveness in Nigeria." Magunda said."

Nestlé Ghana Unveils GHS 175.4m Infant Cereals Plant in Tema

Nestlé Ghana Limited has unveiled a GHS 175.4 million expansion of its Infant Cereals Plant in Tema. The expanded plant was commissioned by Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo, President of the Republic of Ghana on June 8, 2022.

The expansion will increase the production capacity of CERELAC by 6,700 tons and will make Tema Factory, the primary hub for producing and supplying infant cereals in Ghana and 24 other countries in Central and West Africa.

In a keynote address delivered at the commissioning event, President Akufo-Addo revealed that "This investment by a major multinational company does not only underscore the confidence that Nestlé and its shareholders have in the Ghanaian economy, but it is also a signal to the global business community that the Ghanaian economy is recovering to its pre-COVID-19 levels."

The Managing Director of Nestlé Ghana Limited., Mr. Georgios Badaro in his remarks, noted that the investment was a reaffirmation of Nestlé's commitment to Ghana, adding that, "The next phase of the plant's expansion, which will be completed in 2024 at an additional cost of GHS 56 million, will add another 6,700 tons of production capacity through which we will continue to provide the right nutrition for the healthy growth of children in the country and beyond."

Mr. Mauricio Alarcón, Chief Executive Officer for Nestlé Central and West Africa Region (CWAR), the business entity that oversees Nestlé's operations in 25 countries across Central and West Africa, also highlighted some benefits of the expansion stating, "With production growing to about 13,700 tons annually, additional income opportunities for local farmers and suppliers in Ghana and the region of Central and West Africa are guaranteed."

NBC Unveils Plan to Transition Operations to Renewable Energy

The move is expected to bolster its solid credentials in pioneering sustainable manufacturing in Nigeria and comes on the heels of a series of steady investments the company has made towards sustainable manufacturing.

Speaking on during a media tour of its Ikeja plant, Managing Director of NBC, Matthieu Seguin, disclosed that the Company has made significant investments in optimising its energy mix to incorporate more renewable energy sources.

As a business, we have made an uncompromising commitment to minimize our environmental footprint whilst enriching the communities where we operate. It is clear that one of the major challenges facing sustainable manufacturing is Carbon emissions from non-renewable energy sources.

We have taken this challenge heads on and over the years, we have invested in solutions which deliver significant advancements in energy use reduction, water use reduction, emissions reduction, and waste generation reduction.

From 2020, NBC commenced the process of migrating its manufacturing plants to solar energy sources. Today, of the eight NBC manufacturing plants in Nigeria, the Challawa (Kano), Asejire (Oyo), Maiduguri and Abuja plants have adopted the innovation.

According to Matthieu Seguin, Managing Director of NBC, "today, we can celebrate the fact that 50% of our manufacturing plants are now powered in part by solar energy from photovoltaic cells which deliver up to 3,640-Kilowatt peak power output (KWp) to the facilities. The power delivered by these installations can power over 2,100 three-bedroom homes."

In line with a commitment to achieve its target of Net Zero emissions by 2040, Nigerian Bottling Company Limited (NBC), the leading consumer packaged goods company and strategic bottling partner of The Coca-Cola Company in Nigeria, has unveiled its roadmap to renewable energy transition in its manufacturing operations.

The hybrid power set up in these NBC plants allow them to substitute the national power grid and generator backups to the extent of available solar generated power, thereby reducing the consumption of power from less environmentally friendly sources.

With further installations expected to continue through this year 2022, to ensure even more sustainable growth across its ecosystem, NBC will be implementing solar power solutions in its Ikeja, Benin, Owerri and Port Harcourt plants; bringing its total installed capacity to 15,947 KWp from solar energy alone which is equivalent to saving over 167,000 trees.

The existing solar power installations translate to an annual carbon footprint reduction of over 3,600 tons, with the capacity for expansion in the future. Beyond the direct impact on reduced emissions, the project also supported 300 jobs with an additional 480 jobs forecasted to be created across the value chain this year.

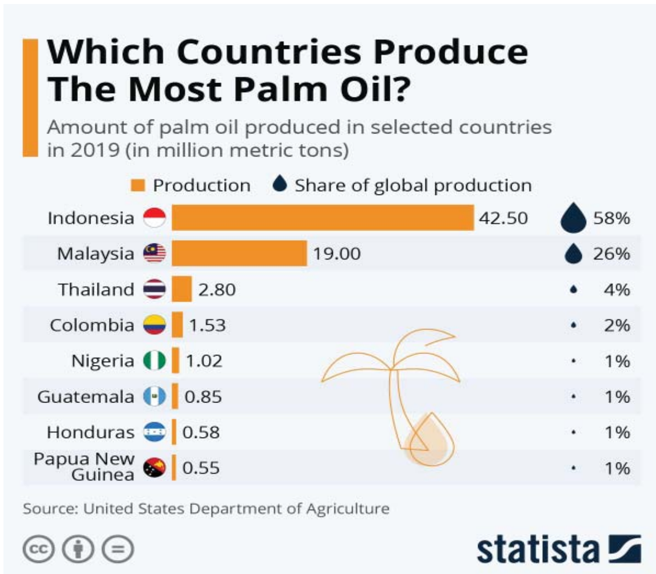
- #NetZeroBy40: Our Renewable Energy Transition - The Journey So Far

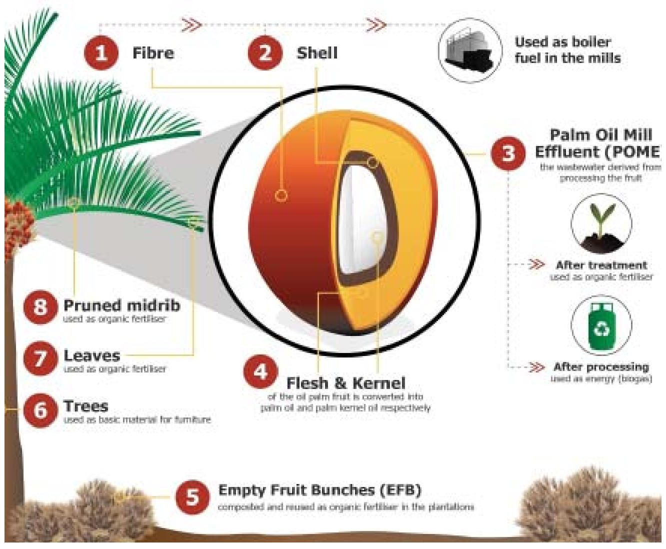
Federal Controller of Environment in Lagos State, Federal Ministry of Environment, Mrs. Oluwatoyin Agbenla, commended NBC for leading the charge to strengthen sustainable manufacturing in the country.

Unilever: **The $120m Biotech Alternative to Palm Oil by 2023**

Unilever is partnering with San Diego (US)-based bio-technolohgy specialists, Geno to jointly invest $120 million (€114 million) in a new venture to commercialise plant-based alternatives to feedstocks like palm oil and fossil fuels that are used to make cleansers for home care, beauty and personal care products.

The venture has huge potential to help power our growth and strengthen our supply chains by creating cost-competitive alternatives and reducing our dependence on a small number of feedstocks that can have high levels of volatility. Geno is already starting to scale up the process for its advanced technology to produce the exclusive ingredient.





▪ Effective, Sustainable, Resilient

So how does it work? Using cutting-edge biotechnology, Geno has established a fermentation process that uses sugar to convert microorganisms into an ingredient needed to make key cleaning agents called surfactants. These are integral to all cleansing products – across the home, personal care and beauty industries – to help them foam, lather, and lift dirt.

'We've committed to ensuring a deforestation-free supply chain for palm oil by 2023.'

While offering incredibly effective cleansing properties, these ingredients are predominately made using fossil fuels and palm oil with few viable substitutes that can be manufactured at scale.

That's why this initiative could be a game-changer for the combined $625 billion (€594 billion) home, beauty and personal care markets. Better yet, initial estimates have shown it could reduce the carbon footprint of palm-derived ingredients by up to 50%.

As one of the world's biggest soap and detergent manufacturers, we're excited to be part of this innovation at an early stage, which marks our biggest collaboration in biotechnology alternatives to palm oil to date. Further strategic investors are expected to join in time.

▪ Marrying Science and Nature

While palm oil will remain an important feedstock to Unilever, alternative ingredients can play a growing role in diversifying supply chains to offer greater choice alongside sustainability, cost efficiencies and transparency.

This new venture will sit right at the intersection of science and sustainability.

"Biotechnology has the potential to revolutionise the sourcing of our cleansing ingredients and ensure Unilever is a future-fit business – for consumers, shareholders and the planet we all share," explains Unilever Chief Research & Development Officer, Richard Slater.

"This new venture will sit right at the intersection of science and sustainability, meaning we can continue to grow our business without relying on palm oil or fossil fuel derivatives, while making our supply chains more resilient from having access to alternative ingredients.

Sourcing a diverse range of feedstocks to power our formulations is key to supporting current and future growth."

"We will be marrying science and nature to make sure there is no trade-off for our consumers between the efficacy and sustainability of their products. We are building this innovative new venture to have the scale to drive real impact and change in our industry, helping to reinvent the chemistry of home and personal care products for the 21st century," he adds.

"The best supply chains balance resilience and cost effectiveness," agrees Peter ter Kulve, President of Unilever's Home Care division.

"A business like ours is highly reliant on a few commodities, such as oil, therefore sourcing a diverse range of feedstocks to power our formulations is key to supporting current and future growth. The power of biotechnology to aid this is something we are particularly excited about. Working together with Geno, we look forward to scaling the next generation of ingredients that do not increase the use of fossil fuels or add further pressure on land use."

He continued:

"We've developed technology in response to our planet's urgent climate crisis and have proven that biotechnology can replace traditional methods to produce ingredients with bio-based sources that deliver both high performance and sustainability," says Christophe Schilling, CEO of Geno.

"Creating new bio-based materials will help us make the planet positive personal care products of the future," adds Fabian Garcia, President of Unilever Personal Care.

"Collaborating with scientific partners is essential to accelerating our progress, bringing to market cutting-edge, cost effective and sustainable solutions that our business and consumers will benefit from."

▪ Sustainable Palm Oil

Our ambition is to make sustainable palm oil commonplace. To achieve this, we're stepping up our work with partners to create a deforestation-free supply chain by 2023.

▪ The Importance of Palm Oil

Palm oil is a highly versatile crop. It has many uses – like foaming, binding and stabilising – which is why it's a key ingredient in so many products from food and beauty to household cleaning. It's the most land-efficient oil crop – with a much greater yield per hectare than other oils like sunflower, rapeseed or soy. For these reasons, it's now the most commonly produced vegetable oil in the world.

The palm oil industry brings money, trade and jobs to producing economies and employs millions of smallholder farmers. In Indonesia and Malaysia, 4.5 million people rely on the palm oil industry for their livelihood.

▪ Issues Facing the Palm Oil Industry

Palm oil has grown into a major global industry over recent decades. Farmers today produce over 70 million tonnes of palm oil each year – that's more than double what they were producing just 20 years ago. Palm oil plantations now cover an estimated 27 million hectares – an area bigger than the size of New Zealand.

But palm oil only grows in tropical regions, which are also home to a number of local and indigenous communities and a host of flora and fauna. Rising demand has meant that, in some areas, rainforests are being cut down to make way for new planting – driving climate change and biodiversity loss. And the expansion of palm oil plantations has led to a range of human rights issues including land conflicts between plantation companies and local communities.

These are all major challenges that must be urgently addressed – by us, and by everyone involved. Palm oil brings economic benefits to millions of people, but to be truly sustainable, the industry needs to change. As a major palm oil buyer, we have an important leadership role to play in transforming the industry for the better.

▪ Why Doesn't Unilever Just Stop Using Palm Oil?

Stopping the use of palm oil simply shifts the problems elsewhere.

According to the WWF, palm oil supplies 35% of the world's vegetable oil on just 10% of the land. To get the same amount of oil from other sources like soybean or coconut, you would need anything between four and ten times more land.

By staying connected with the palm oil industry, we can help address its problems, rather than simply shift the problems elsewhere. We are committed to procuring a sustainable supply of palm oil that is both positive for people and nature.

▪ Our Approach to Sustainable Palm Oil

For more than 15 years, Unilever has been at the forefront of driving industry-wide change to ensure a sustainable future for palm oil.

INNOSON MOTORS:
Driving Local Manufacture of Automobiles in Africa!

IVM
INNOSON VEHICLE
INNOSON VEHICLE MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.

The Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Limited (Innoson Motors) is an enviable Nigerian and African success story!

It represents a sense of pride and inspiration, not only in terms of indigenous manufacture of vehicles, but the Spirit of Entrepreneurship in Nigeria and Africa.

Despite the widespread cynicism and challenges of the Nigerian operating environment, the automobile entity has continued to excel and expand its market models to the admiration of well-meaning Nigerians and Africans.

And when they rolled out their IVM tricycle model-the famous Keke Marwa few days ago into the market, the history of their enterprise became a legend!

Pls-read their unique story of inspiration, perseverance and achievement:

OUR STORY

…we've done it before for motorcycles; we are doing it again for automobiles!

- In the beginning…

The year was 1978; a commercial town situated in the Eastern part of Nigeria, called Nnewi was the central hub for motorcycle importation. As it is today for tokunbo (foreign used) cars, so it was then for tokunbo motorcycles, they were the status quo.

By 1987, a brand-new motorcycle sold for N150,000 and a tokunbo one sold for N100,000 – N90,000. Things would have continued this way to this day, but for the intervention of a 25 years old Nigerian named Innocent Chukwuma, the founder of Innoson Motors (IVM).

Driven by his passion for people and his core business philosophy of bringing down costs and passing the gain to customers, he pioneered the first Made-in-Nigeria Motorcycle brand that sold for as low as N60,000.

By year 2002, he had successfully driven out tokunbo (foreign used) motorcycles out of Nigeria forever!

▪ Chukwuma

- **The Present…**

We are manufacturing durable and affordable brand-new automobiles for Africans. Our brand-new automobiles are selling for almost the cost of their tokunbo equivalents. And they are as good as any foreign automobile brand you know.

The statistics are alarming. According to a recent research report by Pricewatershouse-Coopers (PwC), the ratio of brand-new automobiles to foreign used ones on Nigerian road is 1:131. Meaning that for every brand- new car bought, there are 131 tokunbo ones!

OUR VALUES

– the principles that guides us:

- Cost – always reduce costs to increase sales.
- Honesty – honesty is the best policy.
- Innovation – to be ahead, always break new grounds.
- People – any work that a person can do well should be given to a human being, not a machine.

What does this tell you?

Nigeria is among the biggest consumers of automobiles in the world without manufacturing its own cars. Africa has literally become a dumping ground for foreign used automobiles. We are not second-class people that should only drive second hand vehicles. This is our mission, to change this just as we did for motorcycles in the past.

We are not just another made-in-Nigeria automobile brand; we are the 1st Made-in-Africa automobile brand. 8 years after launch and 10,000 automobiles sold, we are still committed to our purpose of eradicating "tokunbo" (foreign used) automobiles from Africa.

We deserve better, and it's not up to the foreigners to change, it's up to us. When we patronise made-in-Nigeria vehicles, all the money being wasted on importation of vehicles will remain in the country. We will have more money in our hands to develop our country.

Be part of history in the making… this is OUR OWN, drive with pride!

- Rugged Performance

Innoson motors are automobiles made for African roads. They are rugged by nature.

- Fuel Economy

The fuel consumed is nothing compared to the distance you cover while driving an Innoson automobile.

- Low Chances of Overheating

Our vehicles are specially manufactured to reduce their chances of overheating despite the hot African weather.

- Reinforced shock absorber

Our vehicles are specially engineered with reinforced shock absorbers to withstand the unending potholes prevalent on African roads.

- Available Spare-parts

Our car parts are available nationwide through our network of sub-dealers.

- Auto Finance

We've partnered with some Nigerian banks to ensure that you have access to car loans.

OUR BRAND

…who are we?

The 1st Made-in-Africa automobile brand

OUR PURPOSE

…Why do we exist?

To eradicate "tokunbo" (foreign used) automobiles from Africa

Maritime

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NNS KADA Will Strengthen Our Maritime Security Architecture - Jamoh

Dr. Bashir Jamoh, Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA said the arrival of Nigerian Naval Ship NNS KADA will greatly enhance security in the Nigerian maritime domain, and commended the Chief of Naval Staff Vice Admiral AZ Gambo for this achievement.

Jamoh who joined the Chief of Naval Staff at the Naval Dockyard in Lagos to witness the arrival of the Ship from the United Arab Emirates commended Nigerian Navy, which he described as a critical partner in actualisation of the Agency's maritime security mandate.

He said, "The platform would also help in consolidating on the safer passage being recorded for vessels, cargoes and crew members transiting through the Gulf of Guinea while also fighting oil theft and other maritime related vices within the country's maritime domain".

Speaking during a tour of the vessel, the NIMASA DG assured the Chief of Naval Staff that the Agency is committed to strengthening the collaboration between both organs of Government by providing logistics support for the maintenance of the NNS KADDA.

NNS Kada

The newly acquired warship arrived at its new home port in Apapa after 56 days voyage and port call to about five countries.

NNS Kada was ordered from Damen Group in 2019 and built at Albwardy Damen shipyard in Sharjah, UAE. It was laid down in December 2019, launched in June 2021, and handed over to the Nigerian Navy in Sharjah on March 30.

The vessel departed for Nigeria on April 1 and prior to its arrival in Lagos, made stopovers in five countries: Angola (Luanda), Gabon (Port Gentil), Kenya (Mombasa), Oman (Port of Duqm), and South Africa (Cape Town).

Based on Damen's LST 100 design, the ship will be used for a range of duties including strategic transport of equipment and troops, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations, and to project maritime security into the Gulf of Guinea.

With 1,300DWT, an overall length of 100m and a 16m beam, the LST can carry a crew complement of 32 plus 16 embarked marine forces (EMF) in the deckhouse, with accommodation for an additional 234 EMF at mid-ship below the main deck.

NNS Kada is powered by two Caterpillar 3516 diesel engines and four Caterpillar C18 generators to provide a top speed of 16kt and a standard range of 4,000 nmiat 15kt.

It features a bow ramp and davits for two landing crafts, a 540-m² roll-on/off (Ro-Ro) deck, and a 420m² cargo deck for dry stores and ammunition. The ship deck has the capacity to carry a medium-sized helicopter.


L-R: Dr. Bashir Jamoh, Director General, Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and Vice Admiral Awwal Zubairu Gambo, the Chief of Naval Staff during the arrival of the Nigerian Navy Ship, NNS Kada at the Naval Dockyard in Lagos.

Allianz: 54 Large Ships Lost Worldwide in 2021, Down 57% in 10 Years

The international shipping industry is responsible for the carriage of around 90% of world trade, so vessel safety is critical.

The sector continued its long-term positive safety trend over the past year but Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the growing number of costly issues involving larger vessels, crew and port congestion challenges resulting from the shipping boom, and managing challenging decarbonisation targets, means there is no room for complacency, according to marine insurer Allianz Global Corporate & Specialty SE's (AGCS) Safety & Shipping Review 2022.

"The shipping sector has demonstrated tremendous resilience through stormy seas in recent years, as evidenced by the boom we see in several parts of the industry today," says Captain Rahul Khanna, Global Head of Marine Risk Consulting at AGCS.

"Total losses are at record lows – around 50 to 75 a year over the last four years compared with 200+ annually in the 1990s. However, the tragic situation in Ukraine has caused widespread disruption in the Black Sea and elsewhere, exacerbating ongoing supply chain, port congestion, and crew crisis issues caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. At the same time, some of the industry's responses to the shipping boom, such as changing the use of, or extending the working life of, vessels also raise warning flags. Meanwhile, the increasing number of problems posed by large vessels, such as fires, groundings and complex salvage operations, continue to challenge ship owners and their crews."

The annual AGCS study analyses reported shipping losses and casualties (incidents) over 100 gross tons. During 2021, 54 total losses of vessels were reported globally, compared with 65 a year earlier. This represents a 57% decline over 10 years (127 in 2012), while during the early 1990s the global fleet was losing 200+ vessels a year.

The 2021 loss total is made more impressive by the fact that there are an estimated 130,000 ships in the global fleet today, compared with some 80,000 30 years ago. Such progress reflects the increased focus on safety measures over time through training and safety programs, improved ship design, technology and regulation.

According to the report, there have been almost 900 total losses over the past decade (892).

The South China, Indochina, Indonesia, and the Philippines maritime region is the main global loss hotspot, accounting for one-in-five losses in 2021 (12) and one-in-four-losses over the past decade (225), driven by factors including high levels of trade, congested ports, older fleets, and extreme weather.

The Arabian Gulf (46) and West African Coast (38) are fifth and sixth respectively over the same period. Globally, cargo ships (27) account for half of vessels lost in the past year and 40% over the past decade. Foundered (sunk/submerged) was the main cause of total losses over the past year, accounting for 60% (32).

While total losses declined over the past year, the number of reported shipping casualties or incidents rose. The British Isles saw the highest number (668 out of 3,000). Machinery damage accounted for over one-in-three incidents globally (1,311), followed by collision (222) and fires (178), with the number of fires increasing by almost 10%.

Globally, most incidents, over the past decade, have been caused by machinery damage or failure (9,968), followed by collision (3,134), contact (2,029), piracy (1,995) and fire/explosion (1,747).

$358.23 Million: The Amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Attracted by Nigeria in Q4 of 2021

$33 Billion: The Global Spend on Apps in Q1 2022

N28.4 Trillion: The Total Value of Stocks in the NGX

5 Billion: The Total Number of Global WhatsApp Downloaded as at May 9, 2022

8.5 Million: The Number of Airtel Nigeria Customers that Failed to Link their SIMs to NIN

Obituary

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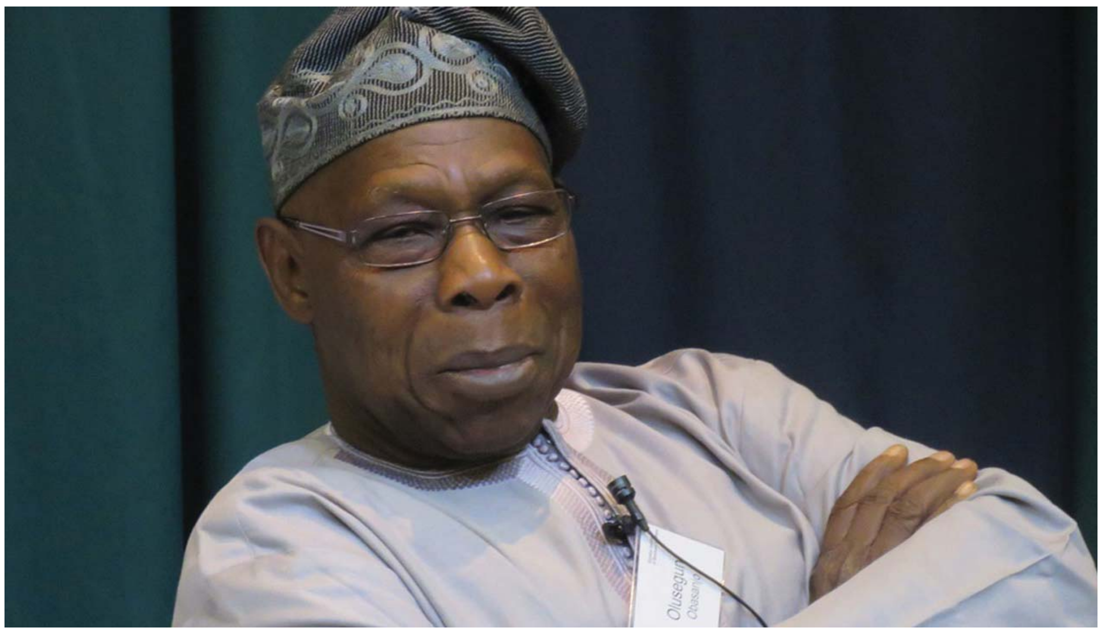
Nigeria Airways: **Why the Flying Elephant Died**



•Obasanjo

Chris Aligbe

This is the story of a national titan, who offered service to the nation for over 40 years.

In these years, in keeping with the social responsibility philosophy of its establishment, "WT" (Whisky Tango), as it was fondly recognised in the global aviation circle, flew daily sorties in addition to scheduled operations to advance the aspirations of a new nation.

Between 1960 – 1975, Nigeria Airways announced, publicised and projected the image of a new independent black African nation.

From Europe to America, from Africa to Middle/Near East, the Nigerian flag flew on WT. It not only brought pride to the nation and its people, but also raised their profile globally at a time when very few nations of the world were in the global air space.

Between 1975 and 1985, at the height of the struggle for African liberation when Nigeria's vibrant foreign policy and role made her a frontline-state in the struggle against apartheid, WT was one of the sharpest instruments of our foreign policy.

From Angola to Mozambique and Tanzania, the erstwhile national carrier carried out supportive operations to re-enforce Nigeria's role in the liberation struggle. Between 1985 and 2000, it operated flights to Australia, New Zealand, America, China and Africa carrying Nigerian sports men and women for Commonwealth, Olympic and All-African Games as well as FIFA World Cup.

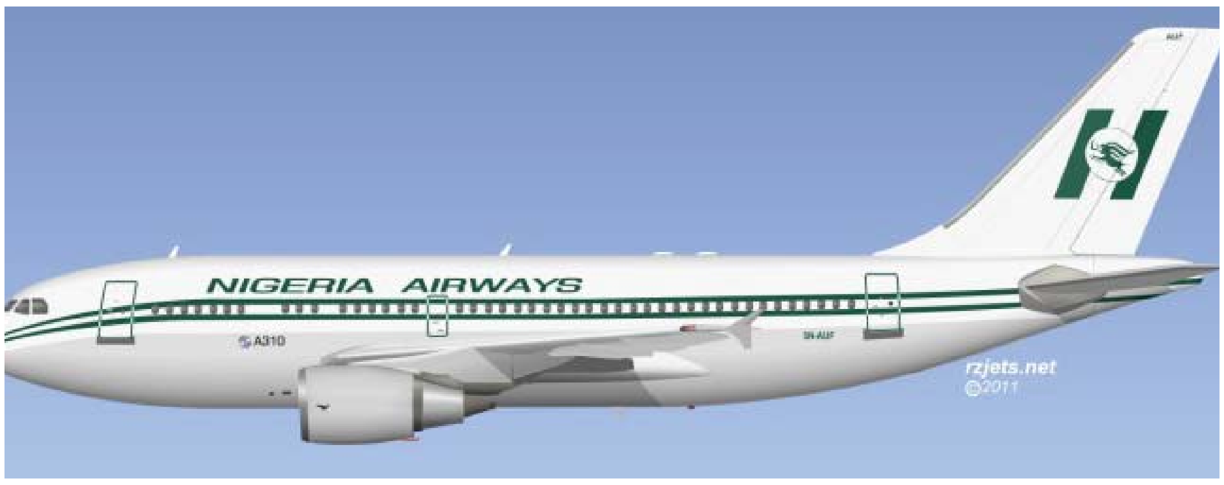
It flew rescue flights for stranded and injured Pilgrims back from Israel and Jeddah. For over three decades, like a colossus, it bestrode the nation's aviation industry, connecting cities and towns across the country, West and East Coasts of Africa.

This is the story of Nigeria Airways (WT) that built a very firm foundation for the vast and highly reputable technical manpower upon which the nation's aviation industry rests even up till now.

This is the story of a national carrier that was sacrificed at the altar of ego, personal interest and inordinate ambition and aspirations of those who desired, not only to create their own airline but also plunder the vast properties of an airline whose assets were three times its liabilities at the time of its liquidation.

The story is one of a sad commentary on the Nigerian nation.

In May 2003, at the valedictory meeting of the Federal Executive Council, marking the end of the first term of the Obasanjo administration, against the usual traditions of such end-term meetings which normally would be for reflections, banters and well wishing, two memos of far-reaching consequences were tabled for deliberation.



The first of the twin memos was for the liquidation of the then national carrier "Nigeria Airways" and the second was for the floatation of a replacement national carrier named "Nigerian Global". It was the then Minister of Aviation, Dr. Kema Chikwe, who, certain of a return, still as Aviation Minister in Obasanjo's second term, pushed the memos for FEC's approval.

The timing was very strategic because all Ministers were already "psychologically away" from the affairs of government as they no longer had any stake. Their tenure had ended and so, they no longer had any interest or obligation to Nigerians except very few of them who were absolutely sure they would be in the second term team or "Legacy" politicians who, in or out of government, believed they owe the society some obligations. This was the setting when Chikwe presented her twin memos.

The first was for the liquidation of Nigeria Airways. The memo contained over 18-point justification for the action sought. Accounts of eye-witnesses who were at the Council Chamber, in their narratives gave insight of the proceedings of that fateful day.

The justifying points were mostly outright untruth, others half-truth while about only four of them could pass as facts.

Dr. Chikwe diligently and flawlessly presented her memo after which the President asked for comments. Surprisingly, there was no single response. The general silence, to Obasanjo, was consent and he then affirmed the Council's decision to liquidate the national carrier.

•Kema Chikwe

The second memo for the floatation of "Nigerian Global" was equally eloquently presented by Chikwe. But the passivity which attended the first memo was not to be, as Ciroma and Danjuma vehemently rejected her argument. Obasanjo tried to reinforce the minister's position but when he turned to Atiku for concurrence, the game changed. Atiku, who throughout the arguments had bent his head to the table in seeming resignation, raised up his head and said, "it was better to leave the issue to the National Council on Privatisation [NCP].

At this point, other ministers found their voices as they, in unison supported Atiku. So Nigeria Airways was liquidated without any replacement.

Brief as it reads, Kema's liquidation memo was just the culmination of a carefully designed and executed process which started in the year 2000.

In the first Cabinet re-shuffle Obasanjo carried out, Chikwe was brought from Transport to Aviation where she took over from late Olusegun Agagu. As at the time she assumed office in 2000, Nigeria Airways, though debt-stricken, was breathing some fresh air from its Joint-Venture with British Airways on the Lagos-London route.

The Joint-Venture, put in place by Jani Ibrahim, probably the sharpest and most business-minded Chief Executive that ever ran Nigeria Airways, was earning net revenue of N100 million monthly which was enough to pay salaries and pension.

More critically, the Privatisation Programme of Nigeria Airways which was being handled by International Finance Corporation (IFC), an agency of the World Bank, had advanced to a reasonable stage.

The 147-page document prepared by IFC had been presented to the BPE, NCP and the Presidency and had been approved. It was also approved by the Aviation Steering Committee (ASTRIC), first under Agagu, then under Chikwe. Everything appeared to be going on well until Chikwe terminated the Joint-Venture with British Airways.

In truth, Chikwe cannot be wholly blamed for this termination. Rather, much of the blame should go to the then Managing Director of Nigeria Airways, Yomi Jones, who took over from Jani Ibrahim. Jones was the Lufthansa General Sales Manager for Nigeria and West Africa as at the time the Joint Venture between Nigeria Airways and British Airways came into being. He was openly very critical of the Joint Venture, which he felt impacted on Lufthansa market share.

On assumption of duty, Jones showed unhidden determination to annul the JV which he hated with a passion. He did not seem to understand that the JV was the cash-cow of the beleaguered airline in spite all counsels. For though, Jones was impeccably honest and straight and did not understand the language of illicit incentive or corruption, he was too simple and inadequately exposed to the complexities of an airline management, more so in a country like ours where "outside managers" were the de facto CEOs of Nigeria Airways. Thus, his appointment signaled the beginning of the down-turn in the fortunes of the ill-fated Nigeria Airways, at the onset of this democratic dispensation.

By 2001, Chikwe had sought and got approval for a facility of $30 million from the Cairo-based Afrexim Bank for the revamping of the sick airline. But before she could process it, the IFC, BPE and NCP raised serious objections to the President on the grounds that it would further increase Nigeria Airways liability and make it unattractive to investors.

More so, as the privatisation document already approved stated clearly that no facility above $2 miilion should be sought for the airline-in-privatisation. The blocking of this facility was the beginning of the end.

The Minister felt sorely abused (and resolved) that, since IFC, BPE and NCP stopped her from acting on Nigeria Airways, a major Parastatal under her because of privatisation, "that she would scuffle the entire privatisation process by ensuring there will not be any airline to privatise."

From that moment, Chikwe set out to undermine all the factors laid out in the IFC document to guarantee successful privatisation of the then National Carrier. These included, but not limited to, exclusivity on five key routes for the new airline that will come out of the privatisation, retention of the staff of Nigeria Airways, particularly the highly trained technical and flight crew and engineers, retention of single designation on BASA, guided Open Skies with the US as well as single entry point, into Nigeria by foreign airlines.

The IFC, in Page 78 of its report, states, inter alia, "further liberalisation on Lagos-London, at this point in the development of the Nigeria air transport market would essentially reduce the prospects for orderly development of the national aviation sector, put Nigeria at a competitive disadvantage…; increase Nigerian travellers' reliance on foreign carriers, reduce Nigerian air transport contribution to the GDP and realistically eliminate two direct potential investors in Nigerian air transport sector – British Airways and Virgin Atlantic."

In Pages 109, 110 and 111, IFC further gave a deft analysis of the consequences of Liquidation, some

Chris Aligbe
Former GM, Public Affairs
Nigeria Airways


You'll Succeed...
LET NEM PROTECT YOUR PLANS.
The best plans can fail if they are not backed up with solid insurance plans. That's why we offer sure insurance policies to protect your plans for success.
Your future's precious. Protect it with NEM.
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FIRSTBANK:
L- R: Seyi Oyefeso, Group Executive, Retail & Commercial Banking (Lagos & West) FirstBank; Ini Ebong, Executive Director, Treasury & International Banking, FirstBank; Gbenga Shobo, Deputy Managing Director, FirstBank; Olumide Akpata, President, Nigerian Bar Association (NBA); Seni Adio, Chairman, NBA Finance Committee and Tobenna Erojikwe, Chairman, NBA Continuous Legal Education Committee during the signing ceremony of the MOU on the collaboration of FirstBank and Nigerian Bar Association to provide facility to members of the bar.

MTN:
L-R: Ralph Mupita, CEO/President, MTN Group; Ernest Ndukwe, Chairman, MTN Nigeria; Thamsanqa Dennis Mseleku, South African High Commissioner to Nigeria; Mcebisi Jonas, Chairman, MTN Group, and Karl Olutokun Toriola, Chief Executive Officer, MTN Nigeria, during the MTN Group Leadership's recent visit to the South African High Commissioner in Abuja.

DANGOTE GROUP:
L-R: Olakunle Alake, Group Managing Director, Dangote Industries Limited: Aliko Dangote, President/CE, Dangote Industries; Buba Marwa, Chairman/CE, National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), and Adenike Fajemirokun, Group Executive Director, Dangote Industries, during the NDLEA Chairman's visit to Dangote head office, where Alhaji Dangote was honoured as the Grand Ambassador of War Against Drug Abuse (WADA) of NDLEA in Lagos.

NAICOM:
The National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) recently commissioned the NAICOM Portal in Abuja. The ceremony was attended by the Hon. Minister of Finance, Budget & National Planning, Dr (Mrs) Zainab Ahmed and Mr. O.S. Thomas, Commissioner for Insurance, NAICOM.

NOMBA:
L-R: Jeffrey Williams-Edem, Vice President, Business and Operations, Nomba; Hameed Lasisi, super aggregator and winner of the grand cash prize, and Toluwani Odukoya-Ijogun, Vice President, Brand, Marketing and Communications, Nomba, during the prize presentation ceremony of the Nomba Partner Reward Event.

MOBIL:
L-R: Abdulkadir Aminu, Non-Executive Director, 11Plc (formerly Mobil Oil Nigeria Plc); Olumayowa Meseko, Company Secretary; Paul Chukwuma Obi, Non-Executive Director, and Tunji Oyebanji, Managing Director, during the company's 44th AGM in Abuja.

STERLING BANK:
L-R: Olapeju Ibekwe, Chief Executive Officer, Sterling One Foundation; Kemi Jeje, Team Lead, Wholeeats; Temitope Akinyemi, Chief Executive Officer, Marvel Natural Products, and Omolara Sholaja, representative of Director, LASUTH, during the Community Pot pilot launch by Wholeeats in Lagos.

SYSTEMSPECS:
L-R: Marvelous Gbevberie, Lecturer, Industrial Relations and Human Resource Management (HRM) Unit, Covenant University; Samuel Ibe, 300-level student of the unit; Eniye Alile, Head, Human Resources and Admin, SystemSpecs; Demola Igbalajobi, Managing Director, SystemSpecs Technology; Teniola Akanbi, 400-level student, and Odunayo Salau, Head, Industrial Relations and HRM Unit, Covenant University, during the Industrial Relations and HRM Unit students' visit to SystemSpecs in Lagos.

BUA CEMENT:
Lai Mohammed, Minister of Information and Culture (middle), flanked by Yusuf Haliru Binji, Managing Director/CEO, BUA Cement, Sokoto (second left); Jack Piekarski, Chief Finance Officer, BUA Cement (second right), and others, during the minister's visit to BUA Cement plant in Sokoto recently.

PWC:
L-R: Seun Jolayemi, Executive Director, Special Projects, Daily Need Group; OluRanti Bankole, Head of Schools, Greensprings School; Esiri Agbeyi, Partner, Private Clients and Family Business Leader, PwC Nigeria; Tomi Otudeko, Head, Corporate Services, Honeywell Group; Cosmos Junior Maduka, Executive Director, After Sales, Coscharis Motors Plc, and Ade Ogunsanya, Associate Director, PwC Nigeria, during the launch of the PWC's Nigeria NextGen Survey in Lagos.

MUTUAL:
Mr. Femi Asenuga, Managing Director/CEO, Mutual Benefits Assurance Plc (3rd Right), Ellen Offo, Head of Corporate Communication (2nd Right) and other management staff at a seminar for journalists at the company's head office in Lagos.

TAX:
L-R: Executive Chairman, LIRS: Mr. Ayodele Subair, Chairman, Code of Conduct Bureau: Professor Muhammed Isah, Chairman of INEC: Professor Mahmood Yakubu, Executive Chairman FIRS: Mr. Muhammed Nami and Executive Chairman, KADIRS: Dr Zaid Abubakar during a collaborative meeting for Effective Tax Compliance of Political Office Holders held at INEC Head Office in Abuja.

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Coronation Research

Nigeria & JP Morgan:

'Contrary to a widespread media report that Nigeria was delisted or removed from the JP Morgan Bond Index. The truth is that- that is very untrue- Nigeria is still on the Index.'

-Godwin Emefiele
Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)

FBN Holdings: **Funded Income Drives Strong Q1 2022 Earnings Growth**

Following the release of its FY 21 results, FBN Holdings (FBNH) released its long-awaited Q1 22 unaudited results before trading hours. The Group reported Pre-tax profit (+93.2% y/y) and Net profits (+105.8% y/y) growth during the period.

On balance, earnings were driven primarily by growth in Net Interest Income (NII), specifically Interest income following substantial growth in customer loans during the period.

The stock gained 7.0% in the last trading session and is up 0.9% y-t-d.

Solid Loan Growth Buoys NII

Interest income rose by 39.7% y/y in Q1 22, primarily on 24.4% y/y increase in Interest earned on loans to customers. The rise came as the Group recorded a substantial 6.0% growth in gross loans.

We estimate that the average yield on customer loans fell by 57bps y/y, however, the growth in absolute customer loans (+171.75bn y-t-d) offset the yield drop and drove interest income higher.

Interest expense grew by 43.4% y/y driven by a 72.7% rise in Interest on customer deposits as the group grew term deposits more than Current and Savings Account (CASA) deposits. The slight deterioration in CASA mix to 81.8% (FY 21: 82.8%) led to a 36bps y/y increase in the group's cost of funds to 2.0%.

Nonetheless, Net Interest Income grew by 37.9% y/y with the Net Interest Margin (NIM) expanding by 20bps to 5.4%, on our calculations.

Trading Revenue Supports NIR

Non-interest revenues (NIR) grew by 23.0% y/y in Q1 22 (8.9% higher than our forecast when annualised) and was driven by a 254.2% surge in Trading revenues.

The key driver on this line was Fair value gains from financial instruments at fair value through profit or loss which came in at N15.86bn in Q1 22 compared with N2.88bn in Q1 21.

Elsewhere, Operating expenses (Opex) grew by 25.7% y/y, mostly on regulatory costs and maintenance expenses.

Adesola Adeduntan
Managing Director/CEO, First Bank Nigeria

However, following the larger growth in Net revenues (+30.5% y/y) than Opex, operating efficiency improved, with the Cost-to-Income ratio falling to 67.1% (Q1 21: 69.6%).

Consequently, Pre-provision operating profits grew by 41.3% y/y. Further down the P&L, Loan loss provisions fell by 33.6% y/y (Cost of Risk fell to 1.1% vs 2.3% in Q1 21), while the group recorded N72m in Share of loss of investment in Associate.

Overall, the Group's Pre-tax profit rose by 93.2% y/y to N36.52bn in Q1 22.

Balance Sheet Restructuring Bearing Fruit

Asset quality trends remained positive, as the group's NPL ratio improved to 6.0% (FY 21: 6.1%; Q1 21:7.9%). Although this ratio is still above the regulatory limit, we note that this is a significant improvement from 3 years ago when the NPL ratio was at 25.9%.

Notably, a 6.0% NPL ratio is at par with Guaranty Trust Holdco's (GTCO) NPL ratio (Q1 22: 6.0%).

Conclusion

The group's strong start to the year is encouraging – Q1 earnings were impressive and are tracking ahead of our forecasts for FY 22 by 55%.

We are encouraged by the substantial growth in customer loans. If the pace of growth is sustained, this, combined with the rise in market rates, is likely to bode well for funded income.

FBNH's share price remains elevated following the last year's rally in the stock. This rally was inspired by a struggle for control over the Group's Board and does not reflect the Group's fundamental value, in our view.

Fig 1: FBN Holdings Q1 22 results

Income Statement (Naira millions)	Q1 2021	Q1 2022	y/y	Q4 21	q/q
Interest income	78,357	109,448	39.7%	108,929	0.5%
Interest expense	(25,563)	(36,652)	43.4%	(43,648)	-16.0%
Net interest income	**52,794**	**72,796**	**37.9%**	**65,281**	**11.5%**
Fees & commissions	28,427	27,323	-3.9%	30,739	-11.1%
Trading revenues	5,800	20,541	254.2%	25,130	-18.4%
Other income	18,391	16,856	-8.3%	159,240	-89.4%
Total operating expenses	(73,331)	(92,175)	25.7%	(104,728)	-12.0%
Pre-provision operating profit	**32,081**	**45,341**	**41.3%**	**175,712**	**-74.2%**
Loan loss provisions	(13,175)	(8,751)	-33.6%	(65,092)	-86.6%
Associate	-	(72)	na	109	-166.1%
Pre-tax profit	**18,906**	**36,518**	**93.2%**	**110,729**	**-67.0%**
Tax	(3,285)	(4,076)	24.1%	(3,433)	18.7%
Minorities	(80)	(459)	473.8%	(707)	-35.1%
Net profit	**15,520**	**31,942**	**105.8%**	**109,531**	**-70.9%**
EPS (basic, Naira)	**0.43**	**0.89**	**105.8%**	**3.05**	**-70.8%**
DPS (Naira)	-	-		0.35	na

Balance Sheet (naira millions)	FY 2021	Q1 2022	y/y
ASSETS			
Net Loans	2,881,916	3,053,665	6.0%
Gross Loans	3,004,177	3,187,924	6.1%
Interbank	1,015,122	981,172	-3.3%
Securities	2,308,624	2,548,223	10.4%
Interest Earning Assets	5,190,540	5,601,888	7.9%
Total Assets	**8,932,373**	**9,205,828**	**3.1%**
LIABILITIES			
Customer Deposits	5,849,487	6,139,215	5.0%
Interbank Funding	1,098,107	1,018,627	-7.2%
Long-term Funding	405,304	438,564	8.2%
Interest Bearing Liabilities	7,352,898	7,596,406	3.3%
Total Liabilities	**8,052,517**	**8,298,150**	**3.1%**
Shareholders' equity	**879,856**	**907,678**	**3.2%**

Ratios	Q1 2021	Q1 2022	y/y
Net Interest Margin	5.2%	5.4%	20bps
Cost of Funds	1.6%	2.0%	36bps
Cost to Income	69.6%	67.1%	-250bps
Cost of Risk	2.3%	1.1%	-112bps
NPL Ratio	7.9%	6.0%	-190bps
ROAE	8.2%	14.5%	634bps
ROAA	0.8%	1.4%	63bps

Source: Company data, Coronation Research

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