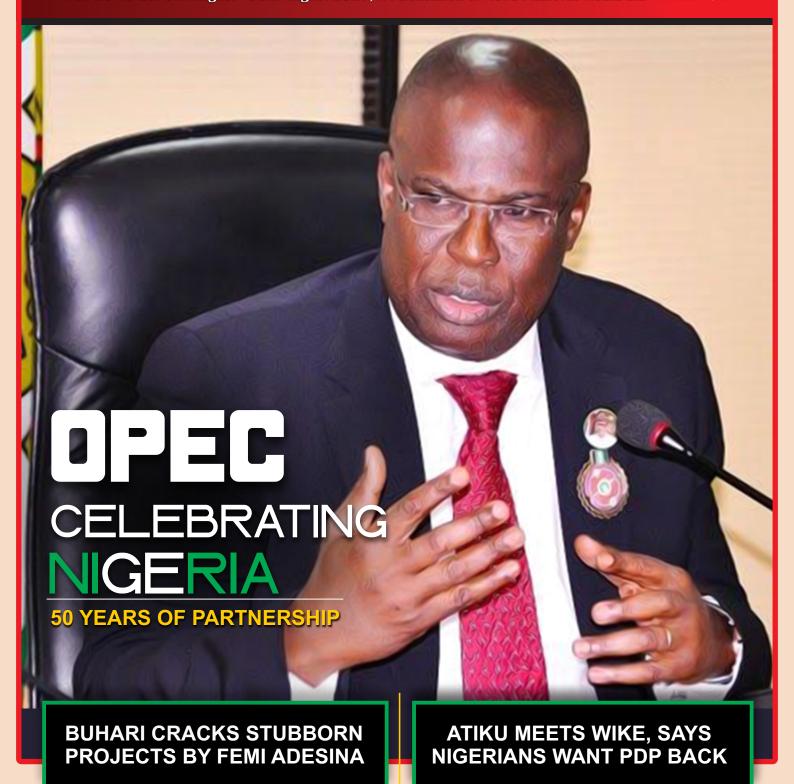
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ormer Vice President and Presidential candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in the 2019 Presidential election Atiku Abubakar has called on the Federal and state governments in Nigeria to set a food security task force to provide security for the Nations farmers.

The former Vice President who spoke recently with newsmen said 'What ought to happen is that the Federal and State governments should establish a Food Security Military Taskforce to work in farming clusters, to provide security for the nation's farmers. We must give confidence to our agriculture workers, so that the sector can get

on with the job of feeding the nation.'

He said In addition to this, the Federal and State governments ought to place a temporary moratorium on all loans to the agricultural sector in the affected states, by declaring a Force Majeure in the sector. We cannot expect small, medium and large scale farmers to service debts when they are not even able to access their farms and other businesses in the agricultural value chain.

Thirdly, the Federal Government has to intervene by providing free seedlings and fertilizers to the end users. This is a policy that worked to reduce hunger levels in Nigeria when Dr. Akinwumi Adesina introduced the e-wallet policy. Perhaps



it is time to reintroduce and ramp up that scheme. He said the warning given by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations on Wednesday, July 29, 2021, of a looming acute food crisis in Northern Nigeria should not be ignored.

'That dire warning should be seen and heard as a whistleblowing moment that ought to draw the focus of the Federal Government, being that Northern Nigeria is the food basket of the nation, and any famine there will have a national impact on the rest of the country and cross border impacts in the West African sub-region.'

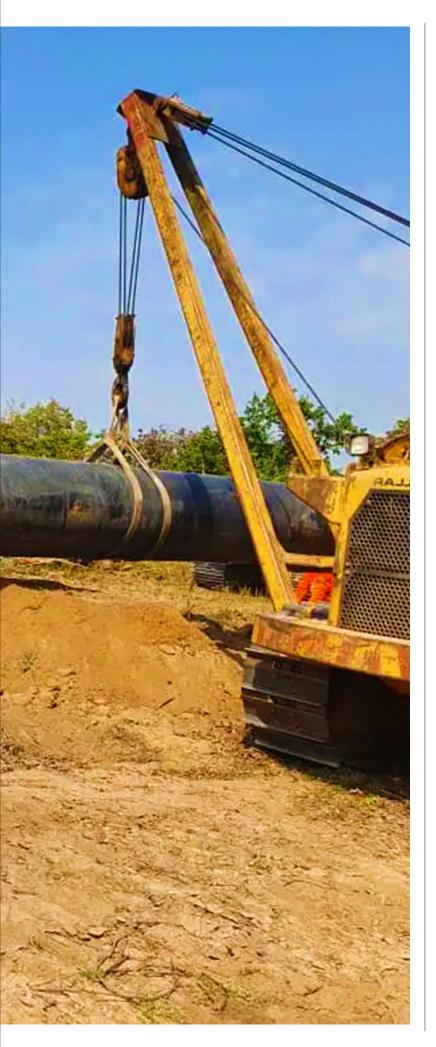
The laissez-faire approach taken by the Federal

Government to this most important issue is regrettable. Food security is a vital part of national security, and where this issue is not resolved, the resultant crisis may unsettle the nation and her immediate neighbours.

Now is the time to proffer solutions, so that our countrymen and women do not starve in a land with so much prospective abundance.

Atiku said the major cause of the present and looming dearth of food is insecurity. Farmers and other agricultural value chain workers cannot go to their farms due to the crisis of insecurity. I should know. I am heavily invested in large scale farming, and employ a workforce of over 10,000 in the endeavour.





resident Muhammadu Buhari says successful completion of the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano, AKK Project in 2023 would enhance domestic gas utilisation as the mainstay for national industrialisation.

Buhari stated this at the opening ceremony of the 2021 Gas Sector Stakeholders (AKK) Forum organised by the Gas Aggregation Company Nigeria (GACN) in Kano.

He was represented by the Minister of State for Petroleum, Timipre Sylva.

"Today's event reinforces our commitments to realizing the inherent potentials of gas usage as a national catalyst for achieving economic diversification from crude oil and as transition period to the renewable energy," he said.

He revealed that the project would also increase government revenue and create more jobs opportunities for the unemployed Nigerians.

The President said that many companies had been shut down due to power supply problem across the country.

He explained that it would take two to three years to reactivate those industries to their optimal performance.

Buhari also said that the Federal Government has reduced the price of gas from 2 dollars 50 cents to 2 dollars 18 Cents.

"Let me use this medium to announce that following successful negotiations between Federal Government of Nigeria and organized unions, the price of gas has been reduced from \$2.50 Cents to \$2.18 Cents, with immediate effects," he said.

He said that all the relevant stakeholders had been communicated on the issue.

Also speaking, the Group Managing Director of NNPC, Mr Mele Kyari, said that the AKK project had been on the drawing board for the past 30

Kyari said when completed, it would provide enough gas for both domestic and export purposes.

"Nigeria has huge gas resources, gas means prosperity and delivering gas is an opportunity creation," he said.

He pointed out that the project would revive about 232 industries along AKK corridor.

In his remarks, the Emir of Kano, Alhaji Aminu Ado-Bayero, commended the Federal Government for the project, which he said, would also assist to enhance socioeconomic activities in the state.

He said that using gas for domestic purposes would assist to create more job opportunities, reduce deforestation and enhance livelihood of people.

Ado-Bayero called on Nigerians to continue to pray for leaders to enable them continue to execute development projects. (NAN).



ATIKU MEETS WIKE, SAYS NIGERIANS WANT PDP BACK

ormer Vice President, Alhaji Atiku Abubakar, and Rivers State Governor', Nyesom Wike held a private meeting in Port Harcourt, the state capital.

The meeting took place at the private residence of the Governor.

After the meeting, Atiku said Nigerians are waiting eagerly for the Peoples Democratic Party to take over power at the federal level in 2023.

The former Vice President said this in a statement issued by the Special Assistant to the Rivers State Governor on Media, Kelvin Ebiri, titled Nigerians are waiting for PDP to take over power in 2023 -Atiku.

Atiku while speaking to journalists at the Government House, Port Harcourt and also said his meeting with Wike



He explained that party affairs brought him to Port Harcourt, and he had spent the time reconciling touching issues with Governor Wike.

According to him, the issues bother on how to ensure unity and stability in the Peoples Democratic Party, which are critical for the party in clinching electoral victory in 2023.

The statement read, "Well, I came here to reconcile with the governor on party affairs and how we can ensure that there is unity and stability in the party.

Atiku described the prevailing insecurity challenges in the country as bad.

He urged Nigerians to wait for the appropriate time when PDP shall unveil its policies on how it wants to address the issue of insecurity across the country.

"I have never seen it (insecurity) this bad. I am 70 years plus. I have never seen it this bad in terms of security challenges, in terms of economy, in terms of unemployment. This is the worst.

"Why can't you give us time. We will come up with our policies. We will present them to Nigerians when the time comes.

"We have done that before. Under PDP, we recorded the highest economic growth, the best foreign reserves, we reduced unemployment. You know that we can do it?



We can take over Government in 2023. I believe that Nigerians can't wait for 2023 to come so that PDP will return.

The 1,000 Bed Students Hostel Being Built Will Be A First Of It's Kind In The Region. It Will Have 500 Bed **Spaces For Male Undergraduates And 500 Bed Spaces For Female Undergraduates And Will Include Recreational** Spaces As Well.



NDDC SET TO COMMISSION UNIUYO 1,000 - BED MODEL



he Interim Administrator of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Mr. Efiong Akwa, has assured that the 1,000-bed space hostel at the permanent site of the University of Uyo, UNIUYO, will be completed and commissioned soon.

Akwa spoke during a courtesy visit to the Vice Chancellor of UNIUYO, Professor Nyakudo Ndaeyo, at the Senate Chambers of the University.

He stated that the NDDC's commitment to the completion of the students' hostel project was a result of a directive from President Muhammadu

Buhari through the Minister for Niger Delta Affairs, Senator Godswill Akpabio to the Commission to ensure the completion of projects in the Niger Delta region which touch the lives of the people of the region.

He gave credit to President Muhammadu Buhari for directing the NDDC and the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs to ensure that all on-going projects in the Niger Delta region was completed and commissioned.

He noted that the university was playing a crucial role in the economy and lives of the people of Akwa Ibom State and the South-South region.

The NDDC boss observed that in an era of Covid-19 pandemic, it was necessary to assist universities to properly and comfortably accommodate students in order to ensure



sufficient provision for social distancing in the hostels.

Speaking after inspecting the hostel, the NDDC boss assured that NDDC would assist universities in the region to ensure that their students undertake their studies in comfort, stating: "We are committed to doing whatever has to be done within our capacity to ensure that we add value to the educational system in the Niger Delta."

He said that the project had reached 95 per cent completion, leaving only external works and landscaping. The Vice Chancellor of UNIUYO, Professor Nyaudoh Ndaeyo, thanked the NDDC for assisting the university to ease the pressure of accommodation by building a modern hostel for the students.

Receiving the visitors from the NDDC, Ndaeyo noted that the need for the new students' hostel has taken on an urgent note due to the prevailing need to provide the University's undergraduates with a conducive learning and living environment in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. "We need to pull out our students from the surrounding villages where they currently reside and host them in a conducive environment fit for learning."

He commended the Interim Administrator for reviewing NDDC's policy regarding foreign post-graduate scholarship programme, stating that the previous system where the Commission sponsored students on foreign scholarships for post graduate studies was not sustainable, adding that it was better to train the students in universities in the Niger Delta region.

OIL AND GA CONFERE SAYS

he Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has expressed optimism that the country would soon find a solution to the challenges of energy transition in the country.

Chief Operating Officer (COO), Upstream, NNPC, Mr Adokiye Tombomieye said this on the sidelines of the Nigeria Oil and Gas (NOG) Conference in Abuja.

Tombomieye said government and stakeholders in the oil and gas industry had intensified effort to find solution on how the country would move from transit fuel to other areas that were of lower carbon credit.

"The expectation on this conference is that we need to know where the challenges are because currently, we are having challenges in terms of energy transition.

"So, what do we do beyond now moving from transit fuel to other areas that are of lower carbon credit.

"To this end, our expectation is that Nigerians should fully participate in all the aspect of the oil and gas industry and add value not just to the Nigerian economy but economy all over the world."

Speaking at the same fora, Mr Patrick



Obah, Director, Planning, Research and Statistics, Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB),

said government was undeterred to

MATIONAL

promote local content practice in the oil and gas industry even in difficult circumstan

ces.

Obah noted that efforts had been made by the board bring succour to local companies that needed financial support to deliver services to their clients.

He explained that among other things, the succour provided veritable avenue for the companies to make policy inputs in Federal Government's realisation of gas utilisation in Nigeria.

"Our strategy is to ensure that COVID-19 did not slow down the growth of local content in Nigeria.

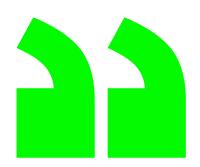
"The NCDMB's 10-year strategic roadmap is targeted at increasing the local content values at 70 per cent within 10 years from 2017.

> "We are creating 300,000 jobs to push the effect of COVID-19 behind us and retain 14 million dollars out of the annual 20 million dollars fund.

This is to increase activities in the manufacturing and marine industry production and so on by 2027," Obah said.

He added that NCDMB had a role of impacting on gas value chain working-group and made them to understand the importance of gas to be utilised in the industralisation process in the country.

"We impacted on them the role of gas in the development of our key sectors and support to economic development," he added.



To this end, our expectation is that Nigerians should fully participate in all the aspect of the oil and gas industry and add value not just to the Nigerian economy but economy all over the world.



ack in 1960 when OPEC was founded on the 14 September in Baghdad, Iraq, 'Mother Nigeria' was then heavily pregnant with the future 'Independent Baby Nigeria'. Less than three weeks later in fact, on the 1 October 1960, Nigeria acquired its rightful status as an independent sovereign nation. The histories of OPEC and Nigeria have been inter-linked ever since.

In fact, we should recall that OPEC was founded just after Nigeria joined the ranks of oil producers in 1958, having discovered oil in 1956 at Oloibiri in the Niger

It was therefore not surprising that, 15 years after first discovering oil, 13 years after first producing it, and just over ten years after becoming an independent nation, Nigeria joined OPEC as its 11th Member Country on the 12 July 1971.

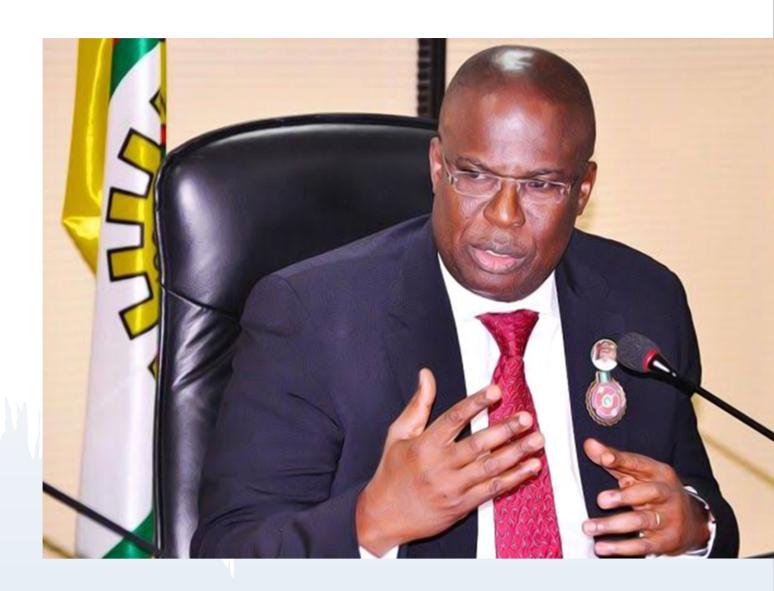
It was clear then that Nigeria, as a new oil exporting country, saw the benefits of becoming a Member of the Organization so as to ensure the stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, a steady income to producers and a fair return on capital for those investing in the petroleum industry. As an established producing country, fifty years later, these benefits are still clear.

This makes the 12 July 2021 the Golden Anniversary of the successful Nigeria-OPEC partnership. This relationship, spanning five blissful decades, has stood the test of time and proved to be mutually beneficial. It has supported the growth of the oil industry in Nigeria through the harmonization and adoption of relevant policies among OPEC Member Countries, as well as through the sharing of knowledge and technical expertise.

The partnership has also allowed Nigeria to contribute to the efforts geared towards stabilizing the oil market for the benefit of all - producers, consumers and investors alike. Nigeria, as a key player in the oil industry, will continue to lend its full support to the efforts of the Organization to balance and stabilize the oil market.

Over the past 50 years, Nigeria has ably presided over 28 Ordinary and Extraordinary OPEC Conferences. Among the notable Nigerian public servants who have served as President of the OPEC Conference are HE Shettima Ali Monguno (1972/73), HE Mallam Yahaya Dikko (1982/83), HE Dr Rilwanu Lukman (1986-1989 & 2002), HE Prof Jibril Aminu (1991), HE Dr Edmund M. Daukoru (2006), and HE Dr. Emmanuel Ibe Kachikwu (2015).

It is also appropriate to mention that our President, HE Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, who served as Head of Nigeria's delegation to OPEC from 1976- 1978.



Moreover, President Buhari has continued to engage with the Organization, and has always lent his support to OPEC's laudable endeavours. His invaluable role in the negotiations that birthed the 'Declaration of Cooperation' in December 2016 was a key factor in its success. His consensus building, his integrity, and his voice of reason have proven invaluable to Nigeria and OPEC.

Nigeria has also provided four Secretaries General. These are Chief M.O. Feyide from 1 January 1975 to 31 December 1976; Dr. Rilwanu Lukman from 1 July 1986 to 30 June 1988 and from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 2000; Dr. Edmund M. Daukoru from 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2006; and the incumbent. Mohammad Sanusi Barkindo who was Acting Secretary General from 1 January 2006 to 31 December 2006 and has been Secretary General since 1 August 2016.

This amounts to about 15 years of managing the affairs of the OPEC Secretariat on behalf of all its Members. Nigeria has played a vital role in the evolution of the Secretariat, and the development of the Organization.

Many Nigerian citizens have also been seconded to work as staff members at the OPEC Secretariat. They have all contributed immensely to the high-quality work of the Secretariat, and many have returned home to utilize the knowledge and experience gained to further the development of the industry in Nigeria. Others have served in various other capacities too, as OPEC Governor, National Representative and Technical

Coordinators. They have all have made valuable contributions through their dedication and service to OPEC.

Let me at this juncture express my profound respect to the five founding Members of this Organization – IR Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Venezuela - for their foresight and steadfastness in establishing and nurturing OPEC to become an enviable and globally respected organization with noble aims.

It is now widely acknowledged that if OPEC had not existed over the past 60 years, the global oil market would have been in perpetual chaos that would have hindered the steady growth of the global economy. The laudable role played by each founder, and every Member Country that has joined since, is both impressive and highly commendable. We would not have gone this far without walking, and working together.

Cooperation is what brought us together, and cooperation is what keeps us together. This also goes to the heart and the ethos of the country I represent, Nigeria.

I believe that the Golden Anniversary of Nigeria's Membership of OPEC calls for celebration. I invite you all to celebrate with us by savouring our past collective successes, strategizing on how we can weather the oncoming challenges, and build a more prosperous future together.

NWOOD HAILS NODE DIRECTOR'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO LITERARY WORLD

The NDDC Interim Administrator, Mr. Efiong Akwa, (middle) speaking during the public presentation of "the love canticles" at the Dome event centre in Port Harcourt. First left is the NDDC Director of Human Resources. Mr Silas Anyanwu.





I am completely hypnotized by the intelligence, innovation, clarity in expression of Amu Nnadi. He has shown that he is gifted. He is able to translate his thoughts. emotions and perception of other people's emotions into very vivid dramatization.

he former President-General of Ohanaeze Ndigbo and two-time minister in the country, Chief John Nnia Nwodo, has described the Director New Media of the Niger Delta Development Commission, NDDC, Mr Chijioke Amu Nnadi, as a gifted writer and a beacon for the youths.

Nwodo spoke during the public presentation of "the love canticles", the new book by Amu Nnadi, at the Dome event centre in Port Harcourt. The ceremony was attended by many dignitaries, including the NDDC Interim Administrator, Mr. Efiong Akwa and directors of the Commission.

The former Ohanaeze leader advised the young people to discover their talents which, he said, could manifest in many ways. He explained: "Life is not a stereotype, so, you don't have to ape other people. You have to look inside you and see what gift God has given you and know how best to use it.

"I am completely hypnotized by the intelligence, innovation, clarity in expression of Amu Nnadi. He has shown that he is gifted. He is able to translate his thoughts, emotions and perception of other people's emotions into very vivid dramatization."

Nwodo said that life should not be defined by material appurtenances, stating: "Life is defined by who you are, your way of life, how you interact with people and how you make those around you happier."

In his remarks, the NDDC Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Akwa, extolled Amu Nnadi as one of the finest literary minds in the Niger Delta, noting that such talents need to be celebrated. "It is good to celebrate excellence, hard work and great achievements," he said.

Akwa expressed joy in participating in the unveiling of "the love canticles," acknowledging Amu-Nnadi as an award winner both at the local and international levels. He affirmed: "He has won many laurels and recognitions in the South-East, South-South and indeed Nigeria. I enjoy his poetry."

Welcoming his guests, Amu Nnadi said that although "the love canticles" was his seventh book, this was the first time he would publicly present any of his literary works.

He said: "My book, "the fire within", winner of the ANA/Gabriel Okara Poetry Prize, was published in 2002. My third, "through the window of a sandcastle", published in 2013, rode a wave of international attention, particularly following its emergence as the inaugural winner of the Glenna Luschei African Poetry Book Prize in 2014.

"I was introduced to poetry in a rather rude fashion. I was on my way to Damascus. And I got my rude awakening. In 'the fire within,' I had acknowledged that a friend said I was dead without poetry and I chose to live."

Amu Nnadi said that besides unveiling a book of poetry, he introduced songs created from his poetry by some members of the Port Harcourt Literary Society. "This was beyond poetry rendered to music and choruses. This was beyond spoken word or performance poetry. This was pure music. This is "everything beautiful," he said.

According to the author: "You do not light a lamp and keep it under wraps. For you will discover, through these songs, through these words, through these poems, everything beautiful about art. And life. As I have."

NIGERIA TO SUPPORT SENEGAL IN OIL PRODUCTION —FG



he Federal Government promised that it would support Senegal by sharing Nigeria's oil exploration experiences with the West African nation as the foreign country intensified its production of oil and gas.

Minister of State for Petroleum Resources, Timipre Sylva, made the promise in Abuja, while playing host to a delegation from Senegal, led by the country's Minister of Petroleum and Energy, Aissatou

"This is the best time to incorporate some of the experiences that we have had and that is why it is very important that you came now. I want to assure you that we will work with you," the minister stated.

Gladima.

Sylva further said, "In the oil sector, we have some advantage as a country because we've been in this sector for a very long time and a lot of lessons have been learnt. Oil production in Nigeria started as early as 1927 but no commercial production was made until the 1950s."

He charged the delegation from Senegal to work with Nigeria, stressing that it was high time African countries came together to develop the continent.

The minister said, "It is important for us as region to come together. We as Africans must work together in order to chart a way forward. We cannot continue to depend on Europe and the outside world.

"In fact, it had been proven over and over again that they cannot be responsible for our development. We have to take full responsibility for our development and that is why we are happy that you are here today."

Responding, Gladima described Nigeria as a good place for Senegal to learn about the production of oil since Nigeria had been producing crude oil for over 50 years, as she alluded to the position of Sylva that Africans must work together



laws, as long as British colonies remained loyal to the government of, and contributed to the economic growth of their parent country.

Some historians have argued that it was a deliberate--though unwritten- policy. And that the then Prime Minister, Robert Walpole was content to ignore the illegal trade if the ultimate result was greater profits for Britain.

Others, however, argue that a greater cause of salutary neglect was due to incompetence and self-interest of unqualified colonial officials, who were cronies of Walpole.

But whatever the reasons were, America fought and detached itself from that unwholesome exploitative relationship, liberated itself, and became a sovereign nation in 1776.

Since then, America has remained the world symbol of liberty, of sovereignty and of freedom, for all people who are held in bondage by tyranny and by political and economic injustice.

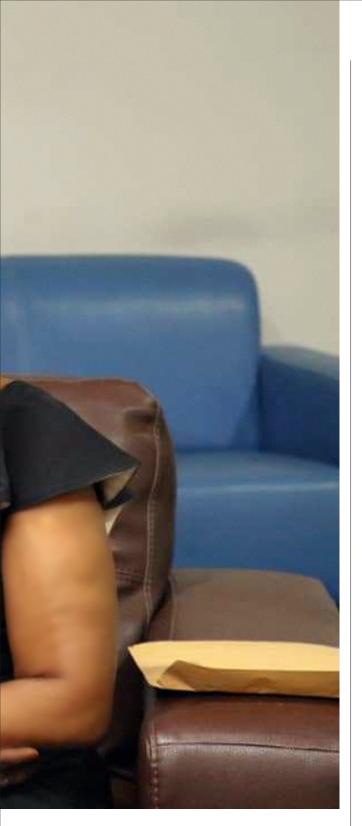
AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

Today, American Independence Day, also called Fourth of July in the United States, is the annual celebration of nationhood. It commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence.

The vision of the founding fathers of America, placed above all other considerations, the full attainment of the fundamental freedom, equality and the rights of the citizens towards the full realization of common good.

Harvard historian, Alex Keyssar dates America's rise on the international stage to the Spanish-American War at the end of the 19th century, followed by its intervention in the First World War. America had to intervene again in the Second World War which, the historian observed as follows:

"The Second World War is the turning point; it's when America becomes a superpower. By the end of the conflict, it's clear that America has the



strongest military force in the world, it has nuclear weapons technology, which no other country had at the time, and its economy is booming".

I do not wish to veer into the billions of dollars which America channelled into the Marshall Plan to help rebuild Western Europe among others.

Ever since then, whenever America sneezes the world catches cold.

It may be instructive to note that America's compelling need for world peace for instance, and of spreading the ideals that make for peace, has seen it defending powerless nations, promoting and protecting human rights of all people, regardless of race, color, place of birth, sexual orientation, language, religion, political persuasions and other

opinions.

It does appear that the tonic for America's role as a big brother in global affairs stemmed from an amiable chord of benevolent instinct, well summarized as both vision and thesis statement, and deeply enshrined in the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights and in the Constitution, as sine qua non for shaping the consciousness of the

But what is more relevant here is that, although the international order which America has built and led may have not been perfect, but it has certainly served mankind especially in challenges of security and prosperity yet to be matched in the course of human history.

Many nations have in one way or another benefited from the investments which America has made and continued to make in global security and prosperity, including aids.

It may also be important to acknowledge the fa.ct that America, in its strongest moments in history, had used its political advantage to try to create a benevolent world. One in which even other powers also acknowledged the predominance of America as being beneficial to people in the world.

But today, the value of America's global engagement has come under attack by various interests, both internally and from external forces.

From externalities, some critics of America are viewing America's benevolence with suspicion and apprehension, others are nursing resentment that too much freedom in America has become a serious course for concern in the sense that excessive use of right and freedom $\,$ is tampering with the essence of God's creation of man and undermining the course of nature. Yet some further argue that American way of life is diminishing their culture and tradition.

There is also subtle and overt political campaign and conspiracy theories against America by other super powers in the struggle for supremacy.

Then from within America itself, a section of American nationals are feeling that the activities of the United States in other countries constitute a drain on the resources meant for their wellbeing.

For instance, a significant number of Americans claim that their lives and livelihoods have been threatened rather than enhanced, by their country's involvement with other nations. They view the issue of immigrants to America as short-changing them and weakening their standard of living; they consider foreign aid support as misapplication of their tax revenue and even view globalization as destabilization of

This popular displeasure and grumbling need to be understood and acknowledged especially when viewed from the standpoint of the fact that many developing countries receiving assistance are not managing the resources well.

But then again, it is instructive to recognise that a significant number of humanists within America strongly believe in supporting friends and allies, because if peace prevails, there will be fewer refugees to contend with, there will be less pressure from asylum seekers, it will also contain the challenges of influx of terrorists from all corners as well as help in fighting organized crime.

By contributing to global health, it will be a lot easier to get rid of other problems like tackling the spread of infectious diseases, which can put the world in danger, including America, as infections move across national borders without visa.

This is particularly true of COVID 19 pandemic which particular origin is stills a subject of controversy. It started somewhere but spread the world over and from that alone, America had suffered great loss of human capital.

So, it is clear that America cannot just back out because the consequences of disengagement will still remain costly.

WORLD PEACE IN THE FACE OF CRISIS AND VIOLENCE

There is no doubt that peaceful and stable environment is a precondition for healthy human existence. World Peace conjures a state of happiness, freedom, and tranquility within and among all people and nations on Planet Earth symbolizing the presence of equity, social and economic justice.



The pursuit of World Peace is a collective responsibility. Peace is not always the absence of war. If it were, Africa could have been one of the most peaceful regions of the world. But then no region has seen more suffering, death and hunger than the regions of Africa and Asia. These have continued to precipitate crisis and unrest at every corner. The roots of this crisis lie in a long history of poor governance by the leadership of many of the countries in Africa and Asia.

A lot has happened in the recent past where leaders sought to invalidate popular dissatisfaction and protests by force, the result in most cases was civil unrest and in some circumstances outright wars. This is not the world we want!

Whether it is the civil wars raging in the Middle East - in Syria, Iraq, Libya, and Yemen or the poverty, hunger and unemployment devastating the people in Africa and Asia - all have had destabilizing consequences for the various other regions and beyond.

Most often, it is the suffering and hunger arising from poverty and unemployment that tend to trigger restiveness and violence across the globe. They have created environments and grievances that have allowed different categories of terrorist groups to initiate and instigate attacks which are threatening not only the peace of the region but snuffing life out of all and sundry, while spreading fear and panic across the globe. Africa has had its fair share of these acrimonies.

Circumstances such as this have created the greatest worldwide refugee crisis, internally displaced persons, hunger and devastating human and environmental costs. This is therefore making peace more and more elusive.

IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES

Most men and women of goodwill have always longed for egalitarian society.

There will be peace across the globe if we are able to overcome the threats to humanity's survival, generated by exploitation, poverty, hunger, global warming, pollution, etc, Peace will be possible if we can conquer all narrowmindedness- racism, intimidation, injustice etc

But the question is, can we ever achieve world peace when the population of the extreme poor is increasing at exponential dimension?

Can there be peace when the super powers of this world are spending half the world resources in creating nuclear weapons in the struggle for political and economic supremacy at the expense of human and environmental casualties? The pursuit of world peace should start by mitigating the current human suffering. The future of global society and of world peace will depend to a high degree, on the political and economic development of inclusive society, led by America over which other democracies can lean upon.

Reducing violence, poverty and insecurity will matter most to the world's poorest population who are the first victims in times of crisis. All these are impediments to world peace and its sustainability.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWING YOUTHFUL WORLD'S POPULATION

For some time now, the world has been filled with apprehension concerning the fate of future generation in the face of unemployment, dwindling resources, climate change, oil pollution, environmental degradation, carbon emission, water pollution and destruction of aquatic lives.

The youths of our generation have all gone berserk on a moral rampage due

to excessive (lack) and uncertainty for the future. They neither understand morals nor respect ethics in their state of anger. Many are desperate. For them, the future is so bleak. There is therefore, a valid reason for apprehension.

The United Nations Sustainable Development goals hinges on the (5 Ps) of People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace and Partnership. The concern here has to do with economic justice that is taking into account the imperatives of meeting the economic and social needs of the present times and save some for those of the future generations, such as the preservation of the environment and other natural resources. The present circumstance should be of grave concern to world leaders.

So, Sustainable development pursues the idea that humanity must live to meet their needs without compromising the ability of subsequent future generations to meet their own needs. Specifically, it is a way of organizing society such that it can exist in the long term for the benefit of every generation. This generation must regulate over consumption and pursue stable economic growth.

These challenges and the other concerns of youthful population are more pressing in developing nations and needs to be addressed to determine the new shape of leadership, and how governments will interact with their people, assure them of the need for sustainable development initiatives, so that countries will be less prone to subversion, and also to mediate conflicts and completely prevent all-out war in the coming years due to lack and scarcity of especially natural resources. Young people are becoming more and more restive and violence gets ignited at the slightest provocation.

The America's influence should relate to helping the vulnerable nations to move from the current vicious cycle in which they find themselves, to a more honourable one. The young people need something more sustainable than ad-hoc type of aids and charity grants. What is even more critical is addressing the root of the problems, because unless systematic steps are taken to resolve some of the raging and burning issues that directly affect human life, even if the groups making demands have to disappear today, tomorrow, others would spring up in their place as long as the underlying grievances that led to the crisis remain unresolved. This is principally the core ideology of sustainable development goals -People, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership.



FORMATION OF OLD SEMINARIANS ASSOCIATION IS A DIVINE CALL ... AMB (DR) MARTIN UHOMOIBHI

Former Nigeria's Permanent member to the United Nations Amb (Dr) Martin Uhomoibhi has said the formation of Old Seminarians Association of Nigeria (OSAN) is a divine call. Dr Uhomoibhi stated this in his office in Abuja when a delegation of Old Seminarians Association of Nigeria paid him a courtesy visit stressing that the formation of the Association is a good idea.

He said OSAN is not an accident but an ideology whose time has come, pointing out that he is forever grateful to God for the training and Education he got from the seminary which he said is an exemplary of integrity and character.

Dr Uhomoibhi who was also a former Permanent Secretary in the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs said 'we are lucky and blessed for the kind of Education we got from the Seminary.

He said the problem of Nigeria persists because Nigerians have not taken up the challenge to address it, stressing that No country in the world is more blessed than Nigeria pointing out that OSAN has an important role to play to move the country forward, 'but we must move out of our tepidity." He promised to do his best to make the Association take its rightly place in the society.



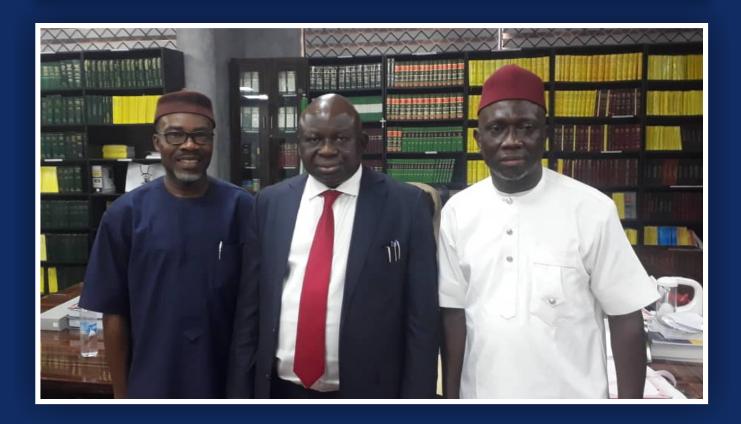
Ambassador Dr Martin Uhomoibhi , former Permanent Secretary Ministry of Foreign Affairs at his the Pan-African Institute for Global Affairs and Strategy office (PAIGAS) in Abuja where he gave us his warm reception and threw alot of historical illumination on the idea and work of the Old Seminarians Association of Nigeria(OSAN).

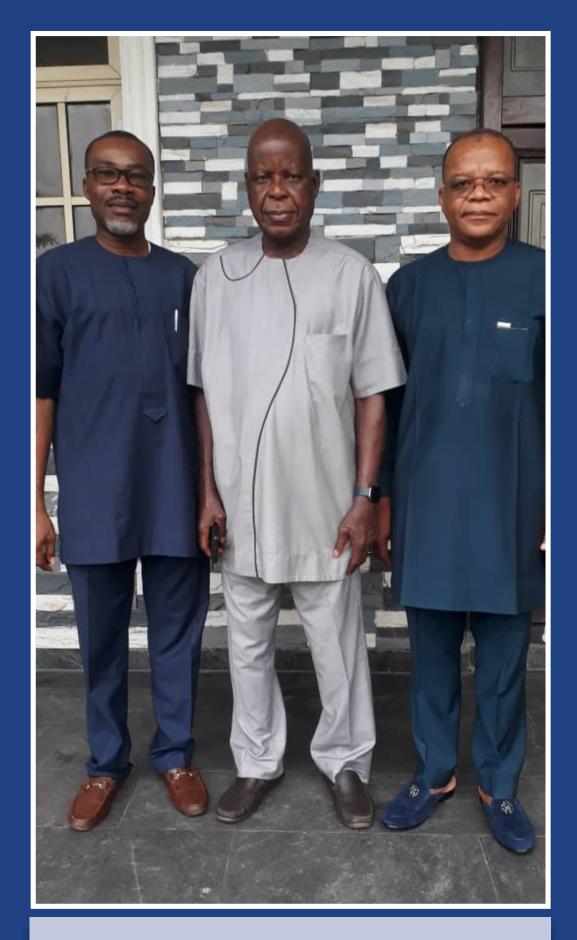


From L-R. Vincent Egunyanga, Chairman, Information & Publicity Committee of Old Seminarians Association of Nigeria (OSAN)and Class of 1980, Anthony Ologunagba Esq, Class of 1963, Sir C.K. Alabi, Class of 1967 of St Theresa Minor Seminary Oke-Are Ibadan both Patrons & Ancestors of OSAN and Ugo Jim-Nwoko of the Class of 1986 St Peter Claver Seminary, Okpala- Owerri and Chairman, Contact & Mobilson Committee of OSAN at Our Lady, Queen of Nigeria Pro-Cathedral Area 3 Garki Abuja Sunday 18th July 2021.



We continued our Courtesy Visits to our elders and esteemed members of OSAN to brief and acquaint them with the plans and programmes towards the Inauguration on the 4th/5th of September 2021. Sir Callistus Kayode Alabi of the Class of 1967 St Theresa Minor Seminary Oke-Are Ibadan received us first today in his Office this afternoon 4th August 2021 exactly one month today from the Inauguration of OSAN.





Chairman Contact and Mobilization OSAN Dr. Ugo Jim-Nwoko, Former Inspector General of Police Sir Mike Okiro and President of OSAN Barr. Chinedu Akubueze.





Chairman Contact and Mobilization OSAN Dr. Ugo Jim-Nwoko, Justice C.C. Nweze of the Supreme Court of Nigeria and President of OSAN Barr. Chinedu Akubueze.

FALANA, OKIRO, OMAN ENO, OTHERS RALLY OLD SEMINARIANS FOR NATIONAL UNITY

Former Inspector General of Police, Sir
Mike Okiro, the
renowned human
rights lawyer, Femi
Falana (SAN), and
APC chieftain
a n d

Governorship candidate in 2019 election in Cross-Rivers State, Senator John Owan -Enoh are expected to play key roles at the official inauguration of Old Seminarians Association of Nigeria, OSAN in Abuja.

The Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chief Falana is expected to serve as Chairman of the occasion, while the erudite Jurist, Centus Nweze of the Supreme Court is slated as one of those to deliver the keynote speeche which will center on the unity of Nigeria and discipline among the citizenry.

A statement issued by the Association, signed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Publicity Committee Mr. Vincent Egunyanga and Comrade Johnbosco Agbakwuru, respectively, stated that the body was formed to propagate national integration and cultural cohesion.

According to the statement, other prominent members of OSAN expected to play key roles at the inauguration are the President of Industrial Court, Justice Benedict Kanyip, as well as a former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Amb. Joe Keshia.

Others include the Clerk of House of Representatives, Chinedu Akubueze, a Commissioner Federal Civil Service Commission, Obong Simon Etim, the Vice Chancellor, Veritas University of Nigeria, Professor Hycinth Icheoku, the Chief of Staff to the Adamawa State



Governor, Professor Maxwell Gidado (SAN), Ambassador Mike Kurforiji, Senator Ikechukwu Obiora and Dr. Ndubuisi Osuagwu of University of Calabar.

The statement further stated that the coming together of Old Seminarians was also "to use our intrinsic values and training to promote national harmony, good ethics and selflessness in Nigeria's public life. The association which draws its membership from former students of

membership from former students of Catholic Seminaries across the country and beyond was formed for "the fellowship of love and solidarity among Old Seminarians in Nigeria, irrespective of ethnic and cultural background."

The statement quoted Chairman of Contact and Mobilization Committee of the association, Dr. Ugo Jim Nwoko as saying that "it's high time Old seminarians from all over Nigeria came together to put into practice and promote the good values which they were brought up with as young people in the seminary for a better Nigerian society."

He bemoaned the sorry state of Nigeria especially on leadership failure and dearth of good values



among citizens.

On his part, the Vice - Chairman of the OSAN Inauguration Committee, Ambrose Obioha said the association will utilize its rich and wide membership to provide a new orientation and value -redirection for the country in all spheres of national life. He further enjoined all Old seminarians from all across Nigeria to be part of the association especially now that it is at its formation stages.

Speaking further on membership criterion, Dr Jim-Nwoko explained that membership is open to all old Catholic Seminarians across Nigeria.

He noted that, "Whereas it is a very well-known fact that education is power, and qualitative education becomes a veritable instrument for social transformation; no version of educational curriculum and system assumes superiority to Catholic education.

"Catholic education has been adjudged an outstanding variant of human development package and formation all over the world. This is why most families globally crave for Catholic education through catholic schools for their children and wards, irrespective of their belief systems.

"They may be Hindus, Atheists, Muslims, Buddhists or Christians of other denominations; Catholic schools as run by the likes of the Jesuits, the Dominicans, the SMA Father, St Patrick' missionaries, Spiritans, Franciscans, Vincentians congregations, Marist Brothers, Reverend Sisters of diverse Order, Catholic Diocesan and/Arch-diocesan Presbyteries; to mention but a few, attract a lot of patronage from people of diverse religious and belief systems.

"This is also enhanced by the non-discriminatory practices, systems and policies of the Catholic Church in dispensing its social services or in the exercise of the Church's social teachings and responsibilities.

"Catholic education and civilization is attractive to both the poor and the rich globally; because of its richness and embodiment of values that make for the total man-modelled after the values propounded by Jesus Christ.

"Values that have been tested and trusted over the ages and several centuries, which have stood the test of time. Education, that is relevant and impactful in all societies and in all circumstances; and imbues in its beneficiaries values of respect and dignity for the human person.

"Progressive, developed and modern civilizations have copied a lot from the Catholic values and civilization. The Catholic Church as the oldest institution in the world is a testimonial to its enduring virtues and values; and the reason, modern human institutions in the world admire to emulate it.

"The staying power, values and modest virtues that beautify catholic education are certainly, diluted abstractions from the curriculum and formation handbook of the Catholic seminary.

"The seminary is not a secondary school; it rather has secondary education as its integral part, it is much more than the usual secular post-primary institution. It is a nursery home, separated from the secular world for the formation of new human persons who will function as the light of world and a salt of the earth. A Day In The Seminary Is Never A Joke!

"It is therefore necessary at this stage of Nigeria's social, political and economic history and development for those who were opportune and privileged to receive the seminary training to boldly come out and put to use their capacities, competences and character in favour of the larger Nigerian society and its people; just like Jesus Christ our Master admonished. "You are the light of the world. A city seated on a mountain cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but upon a candlestick, that it may shine to all that are in the house.

IJAW ELDERS LAUD SYLVA FOR GIANT STRIDES AS PETROLEUM MINISTER



jaw elders, leaders and critical stakeholders representing different groups and organizations all over the liaw nation have commended Chief Timipre Sylva for his outstanding petformance as Minister of State, Petroleum Resources. They said they are proud of him for bringing about unprecedented reforms in the petroleum industry especially the radical expansion of the gas sector which they say is reflective of current global standards.

Members of a 33- man delegation led by Chief T.K Ogoriba who paid a solidarity visit to the Minister in Abuja gave the commendation on Thursday.

On the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) which had lingered for about 20 years, the delegation lauded the Minister for handling the very herculean task of working with the 9th National Assembly towards its eventual passage.

They expressed the believe that by this great feat, Chief Timipri Sylva's footprints in the sands of time would remain indelible. However, the elders and stakeholders advised that it is necessary for Government to sustain its enlightenment efforts on the three percent (3%) component of production cost standing as host Communities Development Trust Fund in the

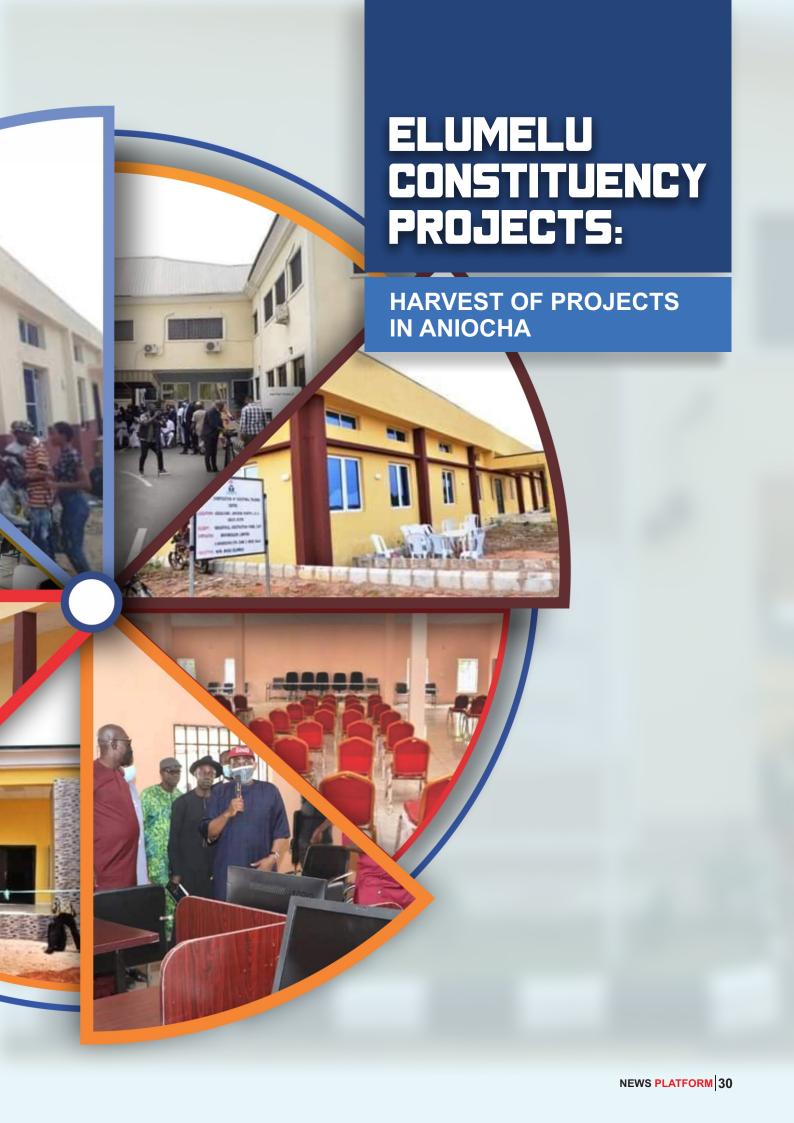
They emphasized that knowledge and understanding of the magnitude of socio- economic benefits the trust fund will bring would go a long way to assuage fears and concerns. The elders decried the unhealthy tradition of always fighting to pull down their Sons and Daughters in public Offices, saying that the best way to go is to support their representatives at all levels to succeed.

In his remarks, Sylva indicated that the 3% equity share for host communities would be paid under the operational cost and not profit adding that it is most reliable.

"So much debate has trailed the passage of the PIB, especially on the provision made for host communities, but my elders, we must realize that a bird at hand is far better than the two in the forest, don't because of the two in the forest let go of the one with you. 3% is a confortable start.

"One more thing, let's try to accommodate each other, let there be no rancor when this money start coming, let's invest it properly for the development of the oil producing communities" chief Sylva told his kinsmen.

Chief Sylva advised the ljaw elders to promote peace in the Niger Delta and support the noble policies and programs of the Federal Government in redefining the fortunes of the region which has suffered great neglect.



t was a harvest of people oriented projects on Thursday, 29th July, 2021 as the Delta State Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa continued with the commissioning of Constituency Projects executed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Ndudi Elumelu for the people of Aniocha Oshimili/ Federal Constituency of the State.

The Governor, represented by the State Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, Delta State, Olorogun Barr. Kingsley Esiso was at Aniocha South Local Government Area where a total number of six projects were inaugurated for the use of the people in five communities.

Projects commissioned included; one comprehensive ICT Centre and an ultramodern Civic centre at Ogwashi-Uku, ultramodern town hall each at Ewulu and Ejeme-Aniogo, an ultramodern Civic centre at Ubulu-Uku and one vocational Centre at Ubulu-unor

Commissioning the projects on behalf of the Governor, Olorogun Kingsley Esiso marveled at the level, quality and nature of the projects provided for his people by Rt. Hon. Elumelu, describing them as 'people oriented projects' that have direct bearing to the lives of the people in the various communities.

He commended the Elumelu for remembering the people and giving them quality and proactive representation at the national Assembly, describing him as the jewel and pride of the people in Abuja.

"I want to thank the Minority Leader who is our jewel and pride in Abuja for doing what it takes to be a leader.

"Yesterday we were in Oshimili South and today we are in Aniocha South commissioning projects. This is harvesting of Projects courtesy of our pride, Rt. Hon. Ndudi Elumelu.

"It is not easy, because we have been in this business and we know what our representatives can do and what they cannot do. Today, Elumelu is doing it differently, doing it in such a way and manner that is so exceptional and I want to believe that you are proud of him because we in our party are very proud of him.

"It is not easy for such a person in his position to be building and constructing projects. Our leader, we appreciate your efforts. You know that you are not only the leader of your colleagues, you are a leader in the Peoples Democratic Party. Your performance has attested to it, it has shown it and we respect you for it.

"I want to appeal to you that whatever you are doing to attract this caliber of people here; you must continue to do it.

"Projects are being scattered all over the place and the thing that amazed me is that all the projects we commissioned yesterday, today and will commission tomorrow, are projects of the year 2020. That is to say that the projects of 2021 are coming.

"I want to thank you on behalf of our people in Aniocha/Oshimili Federal Constituency and to encourage you and pray that you will continue to do more."

He however called on the council Chairman and the various communities where the projects are located to manage them effectively while urging them to

guide and protect them as their own properties.

Earlier, Rt. Hon. Ndudi Elumelu who represents Aniocha/Oshimili in the House of Representatives, said that the projects were in consonance with his campaign promises to the people of his Constituency and in compliance with the Stronger Delta Mantra of the State Governor, Senator Dr. Ifeanyi Okowa, saying that the facilities are meant for the direct benefit of the people

"It is in compliance with his Excellency's desire that infrastructure should be scattered all over the grassroots, not only in the State Capital. So the ICT Centers, the Civic Centers and the Community town Halls are meant for the direct benefit of our people," the Minority Leader stated

He called on the Aniocha North Council Chairman, Hon Jude Chukwunwike to join forces with the traditional institution in the various communities to manage the facilities with a view to benefiting the people effectively.

In appreciating the Minority Leader, on behalf of the people of Aniocha South, the Executive Chairman, Hon. Jude Chukwuwike, commended him for his service to humanity in the cause of his representation and his stewardship as the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

"You have through your diligence, dedication and fearlessness brought enviable results to Delta State generally and Aniocha/Oshimili in particular.

"Sir, your outspokenness on national issues and resolute approach not to compromise the interests of your people have endeared you to many as a vibrant and articulate leader.

"The commissioning of these facilities will indeed be of great value not just to the people of Aniocha South, but citizens from other neighbouring local Government Areas.

"These are huge facilities for meetings, social events, recreation, training and empowerment of our youths. We sincerely commend your wonderful gesture in providing these quality facilities.

"You are truly a role model and we are very proud of you", the Council boss said.

Also in appreciation of the quality and proactive representation of his people at the National Assembly, Rt. Hon. Ndudi Elumelu was honoured with a chieftaincy title of Okaomei of Ejeme-Aniogo kingdom by the Traditional ruler in conjunction with his Council.

Also at the event included, the Member representing Aniocha South State Constituency in the State House of Assembly, the State Commissioner for Art, Culture and Tourism, Some members of the State Executive of the PDP, and notable leaders of the Federal Constituency.





he Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) said it was committed \$332 million to attract multi-billion dollars developmental projects valued at \$3.7 billion to the country through its partnership in the nation's oil and gas sector.

Executive Secretary, NCDMB, Engr. Simbi Wabote, stated this in Abuja during the opening section of the bi-annual Nigerian Oil & Gas Opportunity Fair, NOGOF, 2021 held virtually for the first time.

Wabote said the NCDMB is opening the nation's oil and gas up for local participation to encourage investment in the sector for the benefit of all Nigeria through its commercial ventures partnership programme.

He posited that some of the partnerships the board had undertaken have led to the establishment of of the 5,000barrels per day Waltersmith Modular Refinery at Ibigwe, Imo State which was recently inaugurated by President Muhammadu Buhari.

The Executive Secretary noted that the partnership has also given birth to NEDO Gas Processing Company in Kwale, Delta State for the establishment of 80million standard cubic feet per day gas processing plant and a 300MMscfd Kwale Gas Gathering hub.

Other investments include the development of 5,000 metric tons LPG Storage and loading terminal facility by Triansel Gas Limited in Koko, Delta State and construction of Energy Park, inclusive of a modular refinery, power plant and 40MMscfd gas processing facility at Egbokor, Edo State by Duport Midstream.

Wabote also explained that the Board also partnered Brass Fertiliser for the development of a 10,000MT/day Methanol Plant and 500MMscfd gas processing plant at Odiama in Brass as well as with Rungas Group for the manufacturing of 1.2million composite LPG cylinders annually in Bayelsa and Lagos States and with Butane Energy to deepen LPG utilization in the North with the roll-out of LPG bottling plants and depots in Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Bauchi, Nassarawa,

Zamfara, Niger, Plateau, Gombe, Jigawa states and Abuia.

He pointed out that some of the Board's partnerships would be completed and commissioned with the next two years, notably a modular refinery in Edo and Bayelsa State.

He stated: "We shall complete and commission composite LPG cylinder manufacturing plants with combined capacity of 1.2million cylinders per annum. We shall commission three other projects dedicated to gas processing, LPG bottling, and production of base oil.We shall also commission and commence operations from our industrial parks at Odukpani and Emeyal-1 and we shall commercialize at least one R&D project and close skills gaps in under-water welding and any other core skill required in the industry."

Wabote hinted that the roll-out of new policies and enactment of laws open new vista of opportunities for discerning investors.

According to him, the declaration of a Decade of Gas by President Muhammadu Buhari, the impending passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill, the amendment of the NOGICD Act, the ratification of the AfCFTA agreement and the recently approved and gazetted Ministerial Regulations are some of the policy and regulatory-driven opportunities in the coming years.

Also speaking at the fair, the pioneer Executive Secretary of NCDMB, Engr. Ernest Nwapa stated that the oil and gas industry had experienced remarkable and sustainable growth in the last 15 years through local content and no other sector in the Nigerian economy had recorded comparable development.

On his part, the Group Managing Director of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, Mele Kolo Kyari expressed the corporation's willingness to partner with potential investors towards value creation and a fair share of return on investment in the exploration of frontier basins, development of upstream gas fields and financing of greenfield/brownfield additional production on derisked assets.

He also confirmed that opportunities abound in Gas & Power infrastructure development, expanding Gas Pipeline networks, development of Gas based industries as well as the Integrated Power Plants.





TOP U.S. OFFICIALS VISIT PETER OBI, BRAINSTORM ON GLOBAL ISSUES



he Vice Presidential Candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) during the 2019 elections, Mr. Peter Obi, received six high-ranking members of the USA Consulate in Nigeria in his Onitsha residence, Anambra State.

The team visits Obi routinely in Lagos or Onitsha to exchange ideas with him on events around the world, especially Africa.

A statement by Obi's Media Office said "it was a fruitful discussion on world economies and the need to improve education and health care delivery in Africa, as the critical components of economic development."

"They see him as best-placed for such an interaction going by what he did as the Governor of Anambra State," the statement said.

It disclosed that the discussion was gradually narrowed to Nigeria and the South-East, adding that "Obi insisted that Nigeria remained a great country that is temporarily set back by cumulative effects of bad leadership.'

The statement quoted Obi as telling his august visitors: "When we get the effective leadership we desire, the dynamics will change," while calling on them to encourage equity and justice in Nigeria as possibly as they can.

On the situation in the South-East, Obi said it was actually wrong to narrow it to the South-East as the entire country is troubled.

He told the delegation: "The situation in the South-East is not as bad as it is portrayed. I can tell you that the actual cause of the crises are the leaders of this country, including myself.

"If the leaders have done well for the country, nobody will be agitating. We have so many youths that do not know where the next meal will come from. The solution will be by the leaders – all of us – reviving the economy, increasing support to education and promulgation of policies that will lift our people out of poverty."

The team was led by the Head of Economic and Political Team of the USA Embassy in Nigeria, Mr. Brandon Hudspeth.

His Excellency, Mr. Peter Obi, with the high-ranking members of the USA Consulate in Nigeria in his Onitsha residence.



MINISTER, DR. RAMATU BAGS EBIRA CHIEFTRINCY TITLE OF ONYIZE; TURNS 51

he minister of State for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Dr. Ramatu Tijjani Aliyu has been conferred with a chieftaincy title of Onyize (mother of wealth) of Ebira land in Kogi State.

The conferment was done by the Ohinoyi of Ebira land, Dr. Ado Ibrahim in his Azad Palace, Okene, at the time she clocked 51 years. This was even as President Muhammadu Buhari congratulated her for the double celebration.

The congratulatory message which was issued by a presidential spokesman, Malam Garba Shehu, said that the President celebrated Dr. Ramatu "whose antecedents as former Women Leader of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and President of Council of African Political Parties continue to inspire and attract more women into governance."

The President commended Dr. Ramatu for her loyalty and steadfastness in pursuing development, especially at grassroots level, describing the recognition for the traditional title as well deserved and reflective of her diligence.



He wished the minister all the best in her endeavours, urging more dedication and sacrifice for the good of her community, country and humanity.





Under Buhari, the Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) was energized, and it began to fund critical projects round the country. Lagos-Ibadan Expressway was one of them. The project was augmented to include upgrades like interchanges and underpasses, and expected completion date is 2022.

As someone that hails from the western part of the country, the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is my natural terrain. From Lagos to my homestead of Ipetumodu in Osun State used to take me two hours of steady driving. But as the road deteriorated, it became three, four, five, six hours. At a point, you only knew when the journey started, and not when it would end. I'd slept on that road a couple of times, after crashes and gridlocks ensued in the middle of nowhere, with the attendant security challenges. I also lost a sister on the road, a Professor of Dramatic Arts at Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife. The tears have not dried six years after.

Now, a completely refurbished Lagos-Ibadan Expressway is due for commissioning in months, rebuilt by a Fulani man from Daura, in Katsina State. Are some people not trying to sell the narrative that ALL Fulanis are herdsmen and criminals? What other Presidents from South-west, North-west, and South-south could not do, the so-called cattle rearer from Daura has accomplished. Holy Moses!

The people of Bonny never had a road across the Opobo Channel in Rivers State since the beginning of time, when Adam and Eve lived. The Bodo-Bonny road had been conceived for decades, and many administrations, military and civilian, had come. None was able to build the road. Unsuccessful attempts were made in 1997, 1999, and 2002, to kick off the project, but all failed. Now, the cattle rearer is set to deliver the multi-million dollars road in 2022.

Work began in 2015 under a financing cooperation between government and the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG), and massive construction challenges are being surmounted. The 39 kilometers long road is being built over swampy terrain and water, with many cross culverts, mini bridges, and creek bridges. Only a leader with the heart of lion could dare the project. Buhari did, and he would deliver next year, by the grace of God.

The big elephant. Second Niger Bridge. We know the story, after the existing bridge was built in 1965. Many governments had attempted to build a second one. For 16 years, three administrations of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) built it with their mouths. Whenever it was time for elections, they would go to the site with cutlasses and hoes (as if that was what you needed to build a bridge of such magnitude), but after collecting the votes of the people, they retrieved their hoes and cutlasses.

Till the next election.

The second Niger Bridge was conceptualized in 2005, an attempt was made to start work in 2014, but it was not successful. In 2016, under Buhari, the project roared to life. Funded under PIDF, the project is expected to be delivered in 2022, that year of massive projects commissioning. A Fulani man has made a difference, where all the others before him failed.

Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano. Another famished road, where scores of lives are lost on regular basis. The Abuja-Kaduna section was completed in 1996, the Kaduna-Zaria section in 1991, and Zaria-Kano portion, also in 1991. Since then, only minor repairs were done over the years. But under Buhari, rebuilding work commenced in 2018, funded by PIDF, and the main carriageway is expected to be delivered in 2023, and the ancillary components completed in 2025. Only a President who doesn't pocket the country's resources attempts huge projects like this.

Over 800 contracts have been awarded for projects by the Works and Housing Ministry round the country, but let's look at one more stubborn project being cracked. The Apapa-Wharf road, and construction of Apapa-Oworonshoki-Ojota Expressway.

Hmmmm. Those of us that used that road for more than a decade, going to work daily in Apapa area of Lagos have stories to tell. Getting to the office was horror, getting home at night was close to hell. Three hours after leaving the office, you were still stuck in craters and ravines, trying to meander your way. How many times were we robbed in the traffic gridlock? In January 2003, robbers fired into my car, the bullet ripped through my clothe, nicked my shoulder, and buried itself in the chest of my co-worker, whom I had given a ride. The life of Bashiru Adeyemi, retired soldier and computer operator in our office, was never the same again, till he died some years later. Due to a bad road, neglected over the years by successive governments.

Now, all the way from Daura, succor has come for Lagosians. After three failed attempts at rehabilitation in 2009, 2012, and 2016, full reconstruction of the road began in 2018. Rigid pavement is being used due to traffic volume and haulage activities to and from the ports. The Apapa-Oworonshoki-Ojota Expressway is expected to be delivered later this year. What a relief it would give.

Amidst all these great works by the self-effacing man from Daura, evil hearts are engaged in war of tongues, saying they do not see what the government is doing. Yes, there are serious security challenges in the country, which are being tackled, but they want to make it seem that only insecurity is the thing happening. The PDP shouts itself hoarse daily, trying to knock off the party that removed its snout from the honeypot in 2015. But why do the heathens rage, and the people imagine vain things? He that sits in Heaven is laughing at them.

As Works and Housing Minister, Fashola is doing great things for Nigeria, under the inspiration and leadership of President Buhari. Many are the projects considered stubborn over the years, which President Buhari has cracked. I am glad the cattle rearer came our way. We will never forget his good works.





SECONDUS BATTLES FOR SURVIVAL, TAMBUWAL RALLIES SUPPORT AS WIKE PLOTS POP CHAIRMAN'S REMOVAL

BY VINCENT EGUNYANGA



he Chairman of the Peoples Democratic Party, Uche Secondus, is battling to retain his position as opposition to his chairmanship mounts. It was gathered on Wednesday that Rivers State Governor, Nyesom Wike, and other party chieftains opposed to Secondus were bent on removing him before the National Executive Committee meeting of the party, which would hold anytime from now.

It was learnt that the plot to remove the chairman before the NEC meeting was part of moves to thwart his reelection at the party's national convention, which would hold in November.

As the plot to sack Secondus thickened on Wednesday, we gathered that the Chairman of the PDP Governors' Forum and Sokoto State Governor, Aminu Tambuwal, had started mobilising support for him.

But sources in the PDP told one of our correspondents that Secondus's opponents feared that if the chairman was allowed to convene the NEC meeting, where members of the convention/election committee would be chosen, he would plant his loyalists in the committee thus paving the way for his reelection.

Recall there were reports that a crisis had hit the PDP National Working Committee following the resignation of seven members.

It was gathered that the anti-Secondus forces thought the mass resignation would force the chairman out of the office or lead to the setting up of a caretaker committee to replace the NWC before the national convention where new national officers would emerge.

The crisis is about the control of the party ahead of the 2023 elections. Wike and others, who are opposed to Secondus strongly believe that if he is allowed to convene and preside over the NEC meeting, where the national convention/election committee members will be chosen, he will ensure that his supporters are members, thus his re-emergence as the national chairman will be easy. They believe that Secondus should not preside over his reelection."

A couple of weeks ago, Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State hosted Wike and Secondus in what was widely believed to be a move to reconcile the two political leaders from Rivers State.

Though the outcome of the meeting was not made public, it was reported that Ortom reconciled Wike and Secondus.

But Tambuwal also started rallying support for the embattled chairman.

One of our correspondents gathered Tambuwal cut short his visit to Ghana to rush down to Abuja for an emergency session with some of his colleagues.

However, Secondus fingers unnamed party

leader over travails

Commenting on the move to sack him, Secondus alleged that an unnamed party leader was behind his travails.

Secondus said this in a statement titled "Who is after Secondus and Why is somebody in love with a caretaker?" signed by his Media Adviser, Ike Abonyi, in Abuja.

He alleged that the disquiet within the PDP barely four months to the national convention of the party was because "somebody is rooting for a caretaker committee to run the affairs of the party."

The statement further read, "The media office of the National Chairman is privy to an intelligence that the strong party chieftain bent on hijacking the party structure for destruction is still on the loose with the main agenda of denting the image of Prince Uche Secondus the National Chairman.

"Reports reaching this office show clearly that this character is deploying all devious means to try and diminish the person and character of the National Chairman with a view to having his way of ultimately hijacking the structure for his disproportionately large ambition."

Secondus assured all stakeholders in the party that steps were being taken to ensure that the image of the party was not injured.

On his part, former Governor of Bayelsa State and lawmaker representing Bayelsa West, in the Senate Seriaki Dickson has defended Secondus.

He said rather calling for the setting up of a caretaker committee for the party, members of NEC, who resigned should be replaced.

He stated, "An emergency NEC meeting should be convened which should take appropriate decisions to stabilise the party. And if there is any member of the working committee who wants to resign, such a person should consider the overall interest of the party and have a rethink."

According to him, if the PDP shrinks from a party for all to a party for a few, it will lose its selling point and many members and leaders will have no option but to review their membership.

" We don't have the time, resources and mechanism to resolve problems that will arise from a caretaker committee which will throw up more problems before the party convention and primaries at the centre and across the states.

"I caution all those behind this crisis not to leave any opening to the APC to exploit with its control of the resources and machinery of government.





We should all learn from the challenge the APC has found itself with the appointment of a caretaker committee which is still unfolding. With only four months to the end of the tenure of the current working committee, it does not make sense to either push for and force a resignation, or to force the appointment of a caretaker committee on a party with officers who have a constitutionally guaranteed tenure.

PDP CHAIRMAN UCHE SECONDUS DEFENDS HIS TENURE

... Says his opponents jittery about his rising profile.

Prince Uche Secondus was elected as the National Chairman of PDP on December 10, 2017 at a National Convention of the party at Eagles Square, Abuja.

He resumed on December 11, 2017 promising to run a system run that will open the party up to the real owners the Nigerian people in line with his campaign promises upon which the party delegates chose him above all other candidates. And also in tandem with the aspiration of the founding fathers of the party.

A Statement by Ike Abonyi of his media team roled out his achievement

What Secondus met in 2017

It has been 42 months of ups and downs and I am proud to report that the party is not at the level where we met it on December 11, 2017 when we resumed office.

We took over the party when it was still trying to come out of the trauma of losing election and being in opposition for two years under an intolerant ruling party, the APC.

We met a psychologically traumatized party struggling to adjust to being in opposition after 16 years in power

We inherited party that had issues with internal democracy, delegates were not having the final say in party primaries to determine who flies the flag of the party in an election.

Names of winners were randomly and blatantly changed in Abuja with disregard to the people and the requirements of our constitution.

Our Promise.

The delegates of our party across the country had given us the mandate to lead believing in our rebranding campaign message of 3Rs, Reposition, Rebuild to Regain which were designed to recreate and rebrand the party

We quickly hit the ground running in our reform policy. We organized a rebranding conference and embarked on extensive consultations across the country.

Our sensitization program took us to rallies in all the geo-political zones. We had identified where erred to Nigerian people and apologized to them publicly which they graciously accepted because they saw our sincerity and open heartedness.

By the time our reform program came on stream, the party had become an attractive brand to accommodate the influx of new members that included the entire leadership of the two chambers of the National Assembly then, the Senate President and The Speaker of the House of Representatives, others members of the parliament



at federal and state levels as well as three incumbent state Governors of Benue, Kwara and Sokoto who joined us.

Internal Democracy.

As we approached the general election of 2019, our party was already the party to beat. The internal democracy promised in our reform package was already in place.

Powers were effectively decentralized to flow from the people. Party tickets were gotten at the congress venue not at party headquarters at state and National levels. Popular and more acceptable candidates emerged at state congresses and National Convention.

Our National Convention in Port Harcourt, Rivers state in October 2018 became the first of its kind in Nigeria. It was so transparent that there was no complaints from anybody, instead all the other 11 contestants resolved to support the winner. All these helped to engender confidence and trust in our leadership.

2019 National Campaign.

Nigerians had earlier realized their mistakes of 2015 and also accepted our apology for any short coming. We carried out one of the most effective campaigns going to the people with issue based messages not propaganda. Nigerians accepted these messages and were ready and charged to vote out the APC whose incompetence and incapacity to govern had become apparent.

But what Nigerians never envisaged was that the APC and President Muhammadu Buhari who came to power through a



transparent and credible election was not going to conduct free and fair election in 2019.

As a prelude to their agenda of holding on to power when it was obvious that Nigerians did not want them, all institutions of democracy, the legislature, the judiciary, the opposition and the media were made targets of intimidation and harassment.

You all could recall the shocking and unprecedented unilateral removal of the Chief Justice of the Federation, Justice Walter Onnoghen, you also recall that midnight attack and arrest of some Judges and Justices by security operatives of state in the name of fighting corruption.

We all are witnesses to the intimidation meted out to the parliament, how the then Senate President, Bukola Saraki was subjected to all kinds of harassment, how the mace the symbol of the Senate was stolen in a broad daylight and how the entrance to the National Assembly was blocked by masked security operatives to prevent members going in. We also saw how security men were deployed to help the ruling party have an advantage over other parties in elections.

Our Record of Performance.

That notwithstanding, PDP under Prince Secondus leadership had through its reform

packages significantly enhanced the image and status of the party. All over the country the party remains the bride. States under the party's control rose from 11 to 16 and it could have been more if not for the shameless ambush of the APC in Osun, Kano, Kogi and Imo states.

Internally, the party has also used its in-house means to resolve issues making PDP the right party to belong in this country today.

Nothing supports this assertion more than that after five and half years, the ruling APC instead of trying to put their tattered house in order is busy begging and coercing our members to join them with fake and unrealistic promises.

At the risk of being seen as blowing our own trumpet, it's necessary to note that this NWC is the first in transparency and accountability. The first to function effectively for three years without any scandal or dent of corruption. The first also to successfully render account of its monetary expenditures to both NEC of our party and to INEC as statutorily required of us to do.

Our Governors Performance.

Another thing that helped us as a party while in this opposition is the exceptional performance of PDP governors. Throughout all the PDP controlled states is glaring evidence of delivery of democracy dividend. This has helped to engender confidence on the party about democracy. APC performance in the area of delivering democracy benefits at federal and state levels has been awful and demoralizing. As a party we are proud of the performances of our governors and Nigerian are also happy with them



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- Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, Catholic Bishop of Sokoto.

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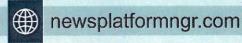
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