How Exports from Dangote Refinery Shake Up Global Fuel Market

Kragha Leads Charge for Energy Security, Sustainability in Africa

The Valuechain
Energy Magazine
www.thevaluechainng.com Vol. 7 | Issue: 12

2024

A Mixed Bag for Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry

"We Must Act Now to Address Energy Poverty in Nigeria"
— Austin Avuru

ISSN 2636-6312
9 782636 - 63122
| DEC. 2024 | ₦4000 | $10.5 |

SEAL OF THE VALUECHAIN STAR OF THE INDUSTRY

Engr. Farouk Ahmed, Chief Executive, NMDPRA

DECEMBER 2024 VOL. 7 NO. 12

The Valuechain

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From the Publisher/Editor-in-Chief

As we bid 2024 farewell, it is significant to appreciate some major milestones achieved during this 52-week journey of turbulence, which was quite tough from both micro and macroeconomic indices. Nigeria made significant strides in refining capacity, considering that this year the much-anticipated 650,000-barrel Dangote private refinery commenced production, thereby easing the pain of persistent fuel scarcity in the country due to the paucity of FX used in importing petrol. The Port Harcourt and Warri government-owned refineries also resumed function after many years of inactivity, boosting the supply that not only brought about a marginal reduction in the cost of PMS per liter but also eliminated the scarcity that usually accompanies the festive season of Christmas and New Year due to mass movement of people.

Another significant improvement was recorded in adopting Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as an alternative to petrol, with several CNG-backed initiatives and incentives for infrastructure development. Also, Nigeria's oil production hit a new peak towards the fourth quarter of the year, with output reaching 1.8 million barrels per day, due to improved security measures and the deployment of advanced security and surveillance monitoring.

Another major development was Shell's announcement of its Final Investment Decision (FID) on the $5 billion Bonga North deep-water project, while the NNPC-TotalEnergies JV announced a FID on the $550 million Ubeta Field Development Project. Additionally, the much-awaited African Energy Bank (AEB) was established, with Nigeria hosting its headquarters, to provide financing for energy projects in Africa. Several big projects made progress, including the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) gas pipeline project, the Assa North-Ohaji South Gas processing plant, and the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline project.

Also, in the year, President Tinubu signed three Executive Orders to improve the investment climate and position Nigeria as a preferred investment destination for the petroleum sector. These orders included the Oil and Gas Companies (Tax Incentives, Exemption, Remission, etc.) Order, the Presidential Directive on Local Content Compliance Requirements, and the Presidential Directive on Reduction of Petroleum Sector Contracting Costs and Timelines. International oil companies continued to divest from Nigerian assets, with several notable deals consummated in 2024.

Overall, 2024 was a pivotal year for Nigeria's oil and gas sector, with significant developments in policy reforms, project milestones, and investment decisions. While our cover report was dedicated to the year's review, we also have for you in this edition some interesting industry reports, interviews, and other regular columns for your updates and relaxation. It is with this that I, on behalf of the ***Valuechain*** Media Group team, wish to thank you for your support and friendship as we cross over to another promising year. Thank you a million!

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The Deadly Impact of Gas Flaring on Environment

By Oyekunle Jide Adeyemi

dw.com

The significant implication of CO2 and methane emitted by gas flaring accelerates climate change and endangers communities, animals, soil, water and air.

According to a recent study, methane emissions from flaring in the US are estimated to be five times greater than currently reported in the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

The Niger Delta region of Nigeria is of great socio-economic importance due to its huge crude oil deposits, but the process of exploration has been of great detrimental effect on the physiochemical properties of the soil, water and air quality in the region and has caused several public health and environmental issues.

Gas flaring is one of the major environmental issues in Nigeria and the major source of sulphur dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane, carbon dioxide and particulate matter.

The effects cannot be over-emphasised most especially in the region of Nigeria. These emissions have a series of public health issues in the region coupled with the occurrence of acid rain, the greenhouse effect and corrosion of roofing sheets.

In addition to warming the planet, gas flares expose people to noxious gases. In the United States, an estimated 18 million people live within 2 kilometres (km) of an oil and gas well and half a million people live within 5 km of an active flare in the Permian and Eagle Ford basins (in Texas and New Mexico) and the Bakken basin (in North Dakota and Montana).

Flares and their associated emissions are known to cause preterm births, paediatric asthma, exacerbate pulmonary problems, and form smog, which is linked to cardiovascular, nervous system, and reproductive health issues. Some of the gas burned in flares like benzene are known carcinogens linked to birth defects. People of colour are disproportionately impacted, elevating EJ risks.

Gas flaring has negatively impacted the physical and chemical properties of soil, water and air components of the environment, and most especially impacting areas very close to the flaring site.

Gas flaring has been illegal in Nigeria since 1984, yet the country still ranks among the top 10 gas-flare countries with about 7.4billion cubic meters of gas flared in 2018 and about 425.9billion standard cubic feet of gas flared in 2019.

The health risks associated with gas flaring are glaring. In the oil-rich Niger Delta, 2 million people live within 4 kilometres (2.5 miles) of gas flare, which makes them more vulnerable to several health issues including cancer and lung damage, as well as deformities in children, asthma, bronchitis, pneumonia, neurological and reproductive problems.

Relatively, agricultural productivity (in the oil-producing areas) has been severely hampered by gas flaring. The combustion process raises the soil temperature, with a decline in crop yield and acid rains as its two major ripple effects. The smoke emanating from the flares also leads to black rainfall and water bodies which affect aquatic and Wildlife.

The most flaring site in gas production flow stations is the ten-meter-high flame that burns continuously from vertical pipes at the many facilities owned by oil companies. One of such is located at Ebocha in Egbema in the Niger Delta. There, the vertical pipes are fed with gas given off during production. Carbon dioxide and methane are the major greenhouse gases emitted in flaring and they make up to 80% of global warming.

Impact on Public Health

The public health effects posed by gas flaring and the resultant air pollution cannot be over-emphasized. Gas flare contains recognised toxins which are confirmed carcinogens such as benzene, benzopyrene, toluene, mercury and arsenic. In 1995, PN Ede monitored the air quality at Agbada, Bonny, Bomu, Tebidaba and Obagi in the vicinity of gas flaring. Results showed high concentrations of nitrogen dioxide (NO2), sulphur dioxide (SO_2), carbon monoxide (CO) and suspended particulate matter above international standards and CO and suspended particulate matter were the greatest pollutants. This result is supported by the increasing cases of respiratory and skin disorders in the region. Other cumulative impacts of these emissions include acid rain, reduction of soil fertility and global warming.

Impacts on the Environment

Carbon dioxide and methane are the major greenhouse gases emitted in flaring and they make up 80% of global warming. According to experts, natural gas, propane, ethylene, propylene, butadiene and butane constitute 95% of the waste gases flared and CO2 gas is produced when these gaseous hydrocarbons react with atmospheric oxygen. According to a World Bank-sponsored study, gas flaring is one such anthropogenic activity defined as the wasteful emission of greenhouse gases (GHGs) that causes global warming, disequilibrium of the earth, and unpredictable weather changes. It is a major natural disaster because it emits a cocktail of benzene and other toxic substances that are harmful to humans, animals, plants and the entire physical environment. Other impacts are:

Acid rain: The unethical practice of gas flaring releases sulphur dioxide, carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide which are the major causes of acid rain. Not only that, gas flaring degrades the air quality with acid rain, but it also causes smoke, heat stress, soil bacteria reduction, destruction of forests and wildlife, deterioration of infrastructure and poor agricultural harvests.

Impact on Economy

During rainfall, these gaseous oxides react with water to form sulphuric, carbonic and nitric acids respectively which get to the soil thereafter. The effect of this can be seen in plant succession where only acidic soil-adapted plants can grow in the area. The areas close to flare sites are now inhabited by grasses that can adapt to the heat generated and acidic soil from the acid anhydrides, VOCs and hydrogen sulphide gas. This situation has shown biodiversity loss. The soil is no longer fertile for cultivation as the nutrients are depleted.

There is an additional economic consequence of acid rain as it causes corrosion to corrugated roofing sheets such as zinc-plated sheets and consequently reduces their life span. The sheets usually lasted over 20 years earlier, but now last for 5 years. These sheets are commonly used in housing developments within the Niger Delta region. The house owners change the rusted and damaged sheets more often than expected and the aluminium roofing sheets which are highly resistant to acid rain are very expensive.

Thermal pollution: About 45.8 billion kilowatts of heat is discharged into the atmosphere from 1.8 billion cubic feet of gas every day in the Niger Delta region, leading to temperatures that render large areas inhabitable. Gas flaring causes elevated temperature in the vicinity of the flares, killing vegetation, reducing agricultural yield, suppressing the growth and flowering of some plants and driving away nocturnal animals.

To address the issues caused by gas flaring, several solutions can be implemented. Implementing flare gas utilisation projects can capture and utilise the flared gas for power generation, industrial use, or other purposes. This approach can help reduce the amount of gas flared and provide economic benefits to local communities.

Increasing transparency and accountability is also crucial in addressing gas flaring. Establishing a robust monitoring and reporting system can help track gas flaring activities, emissions, and compliance with regulations. This can help identify areas where improvements can be made and ensure that companies are held accountable for their actions.

Enforcing existing regulations and providing alternative energy sources can also help reduce gas flaring. Governments can strengthen enforcement of existing regulations and impose penalties on companies that fail to comply. Additionally, promoting alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power, can help reduce the demand for fossil fuels and minimise gas flaring.

Investing in gas infrastructure is also essential in reducing gas flaring. This includes developing pipelines, processing plants, and storage facilities to reduce gas flaring and promote the use of natural gas as a cleaner energy source. Promoting gas-based industrialisation can also help utilise the flared gas and create economic opportunities.

Developing carbon capture and storage (CCS) technologies can also help address the issue of gas flaring. CCS technologies can capture and store CO2 emissions from gas flaring and other industrial sources, reducing the amount of greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere.

Fostering international cooperation is also crucial in addressing the global challenge of gas flaring. Collaborating with international organisations, governments, and industries can help share best practices, technologies, and expertise to reduce gas flaring and promote sustainable energy development.

Engaging local communities in decision-making processes and providing them with benefits and opportunities from gas flare reduction projects is also essential. This can help build trust and ensure that local communities benefit from efforts to reduce gas flaring.

Providing compensation and support to communities affected by gas flaring is also necessary. This can include providing financial compensation, medical support, and other forms of assistance to communities that have suffered health impacts, economic losses, or environmental damage due to gas flaring.

Finally, promoting community-based initiatives, such as sustainable agriculture, forestry, and eco-tourism, can help promote economic development and environmental conservation. These initiatives can provide alternative livelihoods for local communities and help reduce their dependence on fossil fuels. By implementing these solutions, we can reduce the negative impacts of gas flaring and promote sustainable energy development.

As the world continues to grapple with the challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, and energy sustainability, it is imperative that we address the issue of gas flaring with urgency and collective action. By implementing the solutions outlined above and working together, we can reduce the negative impacts of gas flaring and create a more sustainable future for all.

Looking ahead, gas flaring is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to resolve. By addressing the technical, economic, and social factors that contribute to gas flaring, we can reduce the environmental and health impacts of this practice and promote sustainable energy development. It is time for governments, industries, and communities to work together to end the scourge of gas flaring and create a better future for ourselves and future generations.

Ultimately, the elimination of gas flaring requires a fundamental shift in how we think about energy production and consumption. It demands that we prioritise sustainability, environmental stewardship, and social responsibility over short-term economic gains. As we move forward, let us commit to creating a world where energy is produced and consumed in a way that is equitable, sustainable, and just for all.

The time to act on gas flaring is now. We owe it to ourselves, our children, and future generations to take bold action to address this critical issue. By working together and implementing the solutions outlined above, we can create a more sustainable future and ensure that the devastating impacts of gas flaring are relegated to the past.

Experts Weigh in on Tax Reform Bill

By William Emmanuel Ukpoju

The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) recently held its 2024 Annual Public Lecture/AGM and Awards, focusing on the crucial role of public relations in fostering constructive dialogue for national economic renaissance, particularly in the context of the new tax reform bill before the National Assembly. The event, which took place in Kaduna on December 7, 2024, at the Stonehedge Hotel, brought together experts and stakeholders in public relations, taxation, and economics.

The topic of tax reform has been a subject of intense debate in Nigeria, with many arguing that the current taxation system is outdated and in need of reform. The Nigerian taxation system has been criticised for being complex, with multiple tax laws and regulations confusing taxpayers. This complexity has led to a lack of trust and compliance among taxpayers, resulting in significant revenue losses for the government.

In recent years, the Nigerian government has made efforts to reform the taxation system, to increase revenue and promote economic growth. One of the key initiatives in this regard is the proposed tax reform bill, which seeks to harmonize the country's tax laws and regulations. The bill has been the subject of much controversy, with some arguing that it will lead to increased taxation and others arguing that it was designed to favour a section of the country and put others at disadvantage.

Against this backdrop, the NIPR's 2024 Annual Public Lecture/AGM and Awards provided a platform for experts and stakeholders to discuss the role of public relations in fostering constructive dialogue for national economic renaissance, particularly in the context of tax reform. The event commenced with a welcome address by Malam Haroun Malami, Chairman of the Kaduna State chapter of the institute. Malami emphasised the need for fostering constructive dialogue that breeds trust in institutions and the role of public relations in promoting national growth and development.

Dr. Ike Neliaku, President of the

NIPR, delivered the keynote address, highlighting the importance of public relations in facilitating purposeful communication, building mutual understanding, and promoting ideas. He stressed that public relations practitioners can help create a culture of collaboration and progress in the country.

The Honourable Minister of Information and National Orientation, Mohammed Idris, commended the NIPR for providing a platform for engaging Nigerians on the tax reform bill. He emphasised the importance of taxation in providing social services and amenities to citizens, noting that the Nigerian taxation system is long overdue for reform.

An Assistant Director of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mr. Kayode Adesola, presented an in-depth analysis of the new tax bill, highlighting its benefits and how it will affect Nigerians. He explained that the bill seeks to harmonise over 30 tax laws into four bills.

The presentation was followed by respondents from religious and traditional leaders, including academics in the field of taxation. First of the respondents was Sheik Ahmed Gumi, who opined that government should have embarked on massive advocacy to educate and enlighten Nigerians on the bill before it was introduced to the National Assembly. This, he said would have allayed the fears of many Nigerians.

Reverend John Joseph Hayat, former President of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), urged the people in leadership positions to be accountable and trustworthy and for Nigerians to begin to see themselves first as Nigerians, devoid of religious or ethnic division for the progress of the nation. Reverend Hayat urged the NIPR to extend the advocacy to the grassroots in the six geopolitical zones of the country to get more people sensitized on the subject matter.

Professor Bagudu Muhammad of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, the lead discussant, expressed concerns that the government may privatise public universities in the long run, which would negatively impact the common man. However, he assured that the fears of Northerners are unfounded, as the new tax bill does not pose a problem for the region in terms of production and consumption. Instead, he encouraged the North to increase production and integrate more small businesses into the tax system for a more sustainable economy. He also stressed the need for digitalization in the north.

The panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Ahmed Auwal Haruna, featured five panelists who shared their insights on the tax reform bill. Senator Shehu Sani regrated how the reform that is intended for the general well-being of Nigerians, was unfortunately politicized and people who ought to lend their voices are afraid to speak out because of fear of intimidation. He gave full support for the reform and enjoined well-meaning Nigerians to do same. Prof. Okey Ikechukwu noted that the bills are focused on development, investment and human capital development. He said any leader who is passionate about development will be compelled to make their environment attractive to investment, following this tax reform bill.

Professor Hauwa Evelyn Yusuf emphasized the need for public relations through dialogue to foster trust and accountability between citizens and the government. Professor Cosmos Eze discussed controversies surrounding the VAT clause and fears of north-eastern states affected by insurgency and natural disasters. Dr. Ahmed Sajo highlighted the lack of knowledge as a challenge facing the tax reform bill and emphasized the need for criticism based on facts rather than malice.

Kragha Leads Charge for Energy Security, Sustainability in Africa

By William Emmanuel Ukpoju

In an exclusive interview with ***Valuechain,*** Anibor Kragha, Executive Secretary of the African Refiners and Distributors Association (ARDA), shared his expertise on the downstream oil industry, highlighting the importance of refining, investments, and sustainability in ensuring African energy security.

As the continent's population is projected to grow significantly by 2050, with Nigeria, Ethiopia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) ranking among the top ten countries globally, the energy demand is expected to increase. Kragha emphasised the need for Africa to refine its own oil, ensuring that the continent maximises the production and refining of African crude oil.

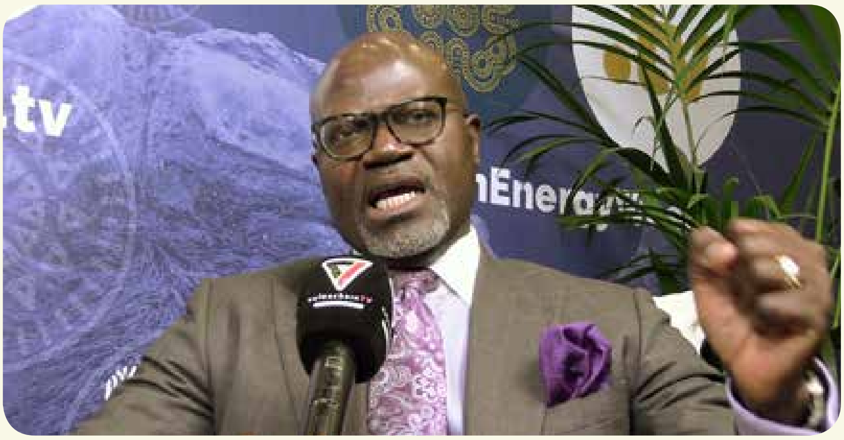
"We must add value to our crude oil on the continent by ensuring that we put in place the right refining, storage, and distribution assets to deliver it to various parts of the world," Kragha stated. "This will not only create jobs and stimulate economic growth but also reduce our reliance on imported fuels."

The Dangote refinery in Nigeria, which has recently come on stream, is a significant step towards achieving this goal. Kragha noted that the refinery is set to produce Africa-6, 10 ppm sulphur fuels, which will be a game-changer for the continent's clean fuel agenda.

"ARDA is committed to promoting investments in the downstream oil industry, and the Dangote refinery is a shining example of what can be achieved with private sector investment," Kragha said.

However, Kragha acknowledged that there are challenges facing public refining companies in Nigeria and the rest of Africa. He attributed these challenges to funding, citing the issues with debt to GDP durations of many governments on the continent.

"To ensure a robust industry, you need to attract investments," he explained. "The private sector has access to funding, but the public sector faces challenges in this regard. This is why ARDA is working closely with governments, private sector companies, and international organisations to promote investments in the downstream oil industry."



Anibor Kragha

Kragha outlined five key steps to ensure robust investments in the industry. Firstly, a clear, supportive regulatory environment is essential to support investments over the long term. Secondly, adequate project preparation is necessary to clearly define the scope, cost, and schedule of projects. Thirdly, a clear understanding of the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) imperative is crucial to attract funding in today's world.

"ESG is no longer a nice-to-have, it's a must-have," Kragha emphasised. "Investors are increasingly looking for projects that not only generate returns but also contribute to sustainable development."

Fourthly, Kragha stressed the importance of developing local content and capacity in the downstream oil industry. "We need to develop the skills and expertise of African professionals in the industry, so they can take ownership of projects and drive growth," he said.

He further stressed the need for regional cooperation and integration in the downstream oil industry. "We need to work together as a continent to develop a robust and integrated energy market," he said. "This will enable us to share best practices, reduce costs, and increase efficiency."

Kragha also highlighted the importance of decarbonization in reducing the existing carbon footprint of refineries. He cited an example of ARDA's work with Vitol and SR Refining in Cote d'Ivoire, which identified projects to reduce the carbon footprint of the refinery by 29%.

"Decarbonization is a critical component of our sustainability agenda," Kragha said. "We need to work together to reduce our carbon footprint and promote cleaner fuels."

Overall, Kragha emphasised the need for Africa to take control of its energy destiny. He stressed that the continent must work together to ensure energy security, promote investments, and prioritise sustainability.

"The time for Africa to take control of its energy destiny is now," Kragha declared. "We must work together to ensure that we can deliver increased petroleum product demand while minimising imports as much as possible. This will require a coordinated effort from governments, private sector companies, and international organisations. But I am confident that together, we can achieve our goal of energy security and sustainability for Africa."

How Exports from Dangote Refinery Shake Up Global Fuel Market

By Gideon Osaka

nairametrics.com

Significant changes are expected in the global fuel supply market when the 650,000 Dangote refinery fully ramps up refining activities; according to ***Valuechain*** projections, with insights from traders and shipping data.

Even as the Dangote plant, the world's largest single-train refinery, is operating at 85% capacity with plans to reach full capacity next year, the refinery's output is already reportedly putting pressure on a number of European refineries, which are at risk of shutting down due to heightened competition.

The Refinery began processing crude in January into products including diesel, naphtha and jet fuel and started processing petrol in September. Once fully operational, most gasoline from the plant is expected to be retained for domestic markets but the majority of diesel and jet fuel are likely to be exported.

In February, the refinery achieved a significant milestone with the successful shipment of its first jet fuel cargo to Europe. The 45,000 metric tons of jet fuel cargo export, marked another first for the complex since its launch in April 2023.

According to ***Valuechain's*** findings, diesel and jet fuel shipments to Europe and other parts of the world have since accelerated.

Vortexa data showed that fuel oil cargoes from the refinery were shipped to the US from March until late April, followed by exports to the Caribbean and Europe in mid-May. Fuel oil cargoes have also been heading East of Suez to hubs such as Fujairah and Singapore.

Additionally, naphtha cargoes have also been moving both east and westward from the refinery. From the beginning of March to late June, the refinery exported seven cargoes to Europe, mainly to Antwerp, and five to Northeast Asia, mostly South Korea.

The refinery's entry into the global market is already causing ripples. Its strategic location on the Atlantic coast allows for easy access to international shipping routes, making it a competitive supplier to Europe, South America, and parts of Asia. Analysts predict that the refinery's high-quality products, compliant with Euro-V standards, are a challenge to traditional suppliers, particularly in Europe, where stricter environmental regulations are reshaping demand.

Dangote's inroad into Africa

For decades Africa has been a net importer of refined petroleum products despite being rich in crude oil. The continent's refining capacity has been hampered by outdated infrastructure, political instability, and underinvestment. For decades, European refiners have enjoyed a lucrative market in Nigeria as the lack of supply from the local refineries forced Nigeria to rely heavily on imported refined products with a net value of $17 billion annually.

However, the emergence of Dangote Refinery is set to change this narrative, particularly for West Africa.

Since the commencement of operations, the Dangote refinery has been ramping up gasoil exports to West Africa, capturing market share from European refiners. Kpler's data revealed that European Union and UK gas oil exports to West Africa fell to a four-year low of 29,000 bpd in May, while Russian exports to the region dropped to an eight-month low of 87,000 bpd in the same month. Analysts say European refineries' loss of market share to Lagos-based Dangote Refinery will be problematic for them

The refinery could reduce West Africa's reliance on the import of petrol from Europe. About a third of Europe's 1.33 million barrels per day (bpd) average gasoline exports in 2023 went to West Africa, a bigger chunk than any other region, with a majority of those exports ending in Nigeria, according to Kpler data.

In what was described as a landmark move for regional energy integration, Dangote Refinery in December exported its first-ever consignment of petrol to Cameroon with plans to establish a reliable supply chain that will create new economic opportunities across the region.

The refinery had between April and May, shipped six cargoes of jet fuel/kerosene to Senegal, Togo, or Ghana, according to CAS data.

Ghana is set to buy petroleum products from the refinery once the facility is operating at full capacity, cutting more expensive exports from Europe.

Implications for Europe

At least 90 European refineries are at risk of closure from heightened competition with upstarts in other parts of the world.

Gunvor Group recently announced it was temporarily halting its Rotterdam oil refinery, the latest sign plants in the continent were struggling to compete. With a processing capacity of 75,000 barrels a day, the plant is relatively tiny, but it joins a growing list of other European refineries with plans to either halt or downsize operations.

Scotland's last remaining oil refinery, the Grangemouth Refinery, is scheduled to cease operations by June 2025, and Germany's Wesseling refineries could close as a result of looming gasoline oversupply and consequent pressure on refining margins.

In October, American multinational energy company Phillips 66 announced plans to shut down a Los Angeles-area refinery by the end of 2025, citing market concerns. The refinery which accounts for about 8% of California's refining capacity, said it was shutting down operations due to uncertainty and market dynamics.

Around 30 European refineries have reportedly shut down since 2009, data from refining industry body Concawe showed, with nearly 90 plants of various sizes and complexities still in operation.

Closures have been brought on by competition with newer and more complex plants in the Middle East and Asia and more recently, Nigeria's giant new Dangote refinery. The rival fuel makers can send what they make to Europe and also compete for market share elsewhere in the world.

The Dangote Oil Refinery is a 650,000 barrels per day (BPD) integrated refinery situated in the Lekki Free Zone near Lagos, Nigeria. It is Africa's biggest oil refinery and the world's biggest single-train facility.

The pipeline infrastructure at the Dangote Petroleum Refinery is the largest anywhere in the world, with 1,100 kilometres to handle three billion standard cubic feet of gas per day.

Since 2016, Europe has lost 1.52 million barrels per day of operational crude distillation which currently stands at 13.93 million bpd, consultancy IIR's data showed, Reuters reported.

According to OPEC's 2024 Oil Market Report, the supply of diesel and jet fuel from the Dangote Refinery is poised to disrupt distillation in Europe.

With Europe being one of the world's largest purchasers of refined petroleum products, the entry of the Dangote Refinery into this market is expected to have far-reaching consequences.

The refinery has already made a significant impact, with the Dangote refinery exporting 90 per cent of its 3.5 billion litres of jet fuel and diesel to Europe.

"As much as 300-400,000 barrels per day (bpd) of refining capacity in Europe is at risk of closure because of rising global gasoline production," Andon Pavlov, an analyst at Kpler, a global trade intelligence platform, said in a note reported by Bloomberg.

Kpler's data revealed that European Union and UK gasoil exports to West Africa fell to a four-year low of 29,000 bpd in May, while Russian exports to the region dropped to an eight-month low of 87,000 bpd in the same month. Analysts say European refineries' loss of market share to Lagos-based Dangote Refinery will be problematic for them.

"The loss of the West African market will be problematic for a small set of refineries that do not have the kit to upgrade their gasoline to European and U.S. specification," Eugene Lindell, head of refined products at FGE, a global energy consultancy said, referring to more stringent environmental standards for other markets.

The Dangote Refinery is set to become a major force in the global oil industry, challenging established markets and redefining Nigeria's role in the international energy landscape. As production ramps up and the refinery expands its reach, the world will be watching closely to see how this ambitious project reshapes the dynamics of global oil supply and demand.

Whether it's disrupting traditional markets, reshaping regional economies, or setting new benchmarks for industrial projects in Africa, the Dangote Refinery is poised to be a transformative force in the global fuel refining market.

YEAR IN REVIEW:
Key Oil and Gas Milestones of 2024

By Ese Ufuoma

businessday.ng

The year 2024 has been a landmark period for Nigeria's oil and gas sector, filled with game-changing discoveries, bold policy reforms, and significant progress in energy transition initiatives. These milestones not only reshaped the domestic energy landscape but also reinforced Nigeria's role in global energy discussions. Below are accounts of the events and achievements that shaped the sector from January to December 2024.

Launch of the Energy Transition Plan Implementation Framework

The Federal Government of Nigeria kick-started the year with the unveiling of its Energy Transition Plan (ETP) implementation framework. Aimed at achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, the plan included actionable measures to enhance renewable energy integration while maximising gas as a transition fuel. There are plans to attract $10 billion in clean energy investments over the next decade.

Significant Oil Discovery in the Niger Delta

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), in collaboration with a leading private exploration firm, announced a breakthrough discovery in the Niger Delta. Estimated reserves of over 500 million barrels of crude oil were found in the OML 73 field, marking one of the largest discoveries in recent years.

This discovery sparked optimism within the industry, with the potential to boost production output and reinforce Nigeria's standing as Africa's top oil producer. The discovery also drew interest from international oil companies (IOCs) seeking exploration partnerships.

Passage of the Downstream Deregulation Act

A major legislative milestone in March was the passage of the Downstream Deregulation Act, which officially deregulated Nigeria's petroleum downstream sector. The Act removed government subsidies on fuel, allowing market forces to determine fuel prices.

While the policy initially faced resistance from labour unions and civil society, it was lauded by industry stakeholders for creating a level playing field for private investment in refining and distribution. Analysts project this reform could save the government over 4 trillion naira annually and attract much-needed foreign direct investment into the downstream segment.

Groundbreaking of Nigeria's First Modular Gas-to-Liquid Plant

Nigeria's first modular Gas-to-Liquid (GTL) plant was launched in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The plant, a joint venture between the federal government and a consortium of local investors, is designed to convert natural gas into cleaner liquid fuels such as diesel and kerosene.

This initiative is part of Nigeria's broader strategy to monetise its abundant natural gas reserves and reduce gas flaring, a persistent issue in the oil-rich Niger Delta. The GTL plant is expected to be operational by 2026, with a processing capacity of 30,000 barrels per day.

NAPE and PTDF Collaboration on Exploration Technology

The Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE) and the Petroleum Technology Development Fund (PTDF) announced a collaboration to develop refined exploration technologies. The initiative included funding research projects, establishing innovation hubs, and organising capacity-building programs for young professionals.

This collaboration seeks to address declining exploration activities by leveraging advanced geophysical techniques and data analytics, ensuring sustainable resource discovery and production for the future.

NAPE 2024 Annual Conference

The highly anticipated NAPE 2024 Annual Conference was held at the Eko Hotel & Suites in Lagos from November 10 to 14. With the theme "Resolving the Nigerian Energy Trilemma: Energy Security, Sustainable Growth, and Affordability", the event brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and international experts.

Key discussions revolved around addressing Nigeria's energy challenges, diversifying revenue streams, and creating synergies between fossil fuels and renewables. The conference concluded with a roadmap for achieving sustainable energy development in Nigeria.

The Nigerian International Energy Summit (NIES)

Held at the Presidential Banquet Hall in Abuja, NIES 2024 convened over 1,000 energy sector stakeholders under the theme, "Navigating the New Energy World Order: Security, Transition, and Finance." The summit emphasised Nigeria's role in global energy transitions, focusing on renewable energy integration and fossil fuel optimisation to ensure long-term sustainability.

Reforms in Oil Theft Prevention

September marked a turning point in the fight against oil theft, a challenge that has plagued Nigeria for decades. The federal government deployed advanced aerial surveillance drones and real-time monitoring systems across key oil production regions, significantly reducing illegal bunkering activities.

NNPCL reported a 25% increase in crude oil output following the reforms which restored investor confidence in the sector. This achievement was further bolstered by partnerships with international security firms and local communities.

Nigeria Joins Global Carbon Capture Partnership

Nigeria made history by becoming the first African nation to join a global carbon capture and storage (CCS) initiative led by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

This partnership underscores Nigeria's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while maintaining its role as a leading energy producer. The country also announced plans to establish its first CCS pilot project by 2027, a move that could position it as a leader in climate-friendly oil and gas production.

Dangote Refinery Launch

The Dangote Refinery, a $19 billion project with a production capacity of 650,000 barrels per day, officially began operations in January 2024. Located near Lagos, this facility started producing diesel and jet fuel and is set to expand to gasoline. The refinery is pivotal for Nigeria, reducing the need for fuel imports and enhancing energy security. This marks a historic step towards self-sufficiency in petroleum products, as the country had long relied on costly imports despite being a major crude oil producer.

Port Harcourt Refinery Resuscitation

The rehabilitation of the Port Harcourt Refinery saw notable progress in 2024, with some units beginning test runs and limited production. This refinery revival aligns with the government's broader goal of improving local refining capacity to reduce fuel imports and enhance energy affordability. The project is closely monitored as part of Nigeria's plan to modernise its existing refineries.

Partnerships and Investments

Global and regional partnerships flourished in 2024, with international oil companies (IOCs) committing to upstream projects in Nigeria. Investments were also directed toward innovative technologies for cleaner and more efficient operations. Key partnerships focused on expanding Nigeria's LNG capacity to enhance its export capabilities

Overall, 2024 is a testament to Nigeria's resilience and ingenuity in the face of evolving global energy dynamics. The milestones achieved reflect a sector that is increasingly focused on sustainability, technological innovation, and economic diversification. As we look forward to 2025, the challenge remains to consolidate these gains and ensure that the oil and gas sector continues to drive national development.

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NCDMB Advances Local Content with New Industry Initiatives at PNC 2024

By Ese Ufuoma

pindfoundation.org

The 13th edition of the Practical Nigerian Content (PNC) Forum 2024 concluded with the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) reaffirming its commitment to fostering deeper collaborations with communities and industry players. Held over four days at the Nigerian Content Tower in Yenagoa, the forum focused on advancing Nigerian content policies, addressing key challenges, and identifying pathways to strengthen local participation in the oil and gas sector.

At the closing ceremony, NCDMB's Executive Secretary, Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe expressed deep appreciation for the contributions of industry stakeholders, vendors, and NCDMB staff whose participation enriched the discussions. "Your active involvement has paved the way for new strategies as we explore the next frontiers for Nigerian content implementation," he noted.

Expanding Community Engagement through Key Initiatives

A significant highlight of the forum was the introduction of several initiatives aimed at integrating local communities into the oil and gas value chain. One such initiative is the Back-to-the-Creeks Policy, which seeks to empower youths by improving basic educational facilities and providing support to teachers. This initiative underscores the commitment to equip local youths with the necessary skills to meet industry demands.

Additionally, the Revised Nigerian Content Community Contractors Financing Scheme was spotlighted. The scheme has now increased its single obligor limit from N20 million to N100 million, giving local contractors access to higher funding to execute significant oil and gas projects. Engr. Ogbe emphasised that this move would ensure that the benefits of local content are extended to host communities.

Furthermore, the Nigerian Content Academy was introduced as a capacity-building platform. Engr. Ogbe highlighted that the academy leverages NCDMB's years of experience and expertise to train participants in Nigerian content practices. This development aims to enhance workforce capacity and industry participation, creat-

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Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe

ing opportunities for skilled workers in the energy sector.

Key Discussions on Policy, Economic Integration, and Workforce Development

The PNC 2024 Forum also featured insightful panel discussions addressing critical industry topics. A major session focused on Nigerian Content Beyond Borders, exploring barriers to cross-border value chains and strategies for Nigeria's standardisation efforts in international markets. Another session delved into Community Capacity Development, examining the socio-economic impacts of local content policies on host communities and the role of shared asset responsibility.

On the economic front, discussions such as the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) were addressed by Mr. Olusegun Olutayo, Senior Trade Policy Expert at the Nigeria AfCFTA Coordination Office. He highlighted how the eight AfCFTA Protocols could catalyze economic growth, industrialisation, and prosperity through improved trade among African nations.

Another strategic presentation was the Marine Accelerator Programme (MAP). Sponsored by the Oil Producers Trade Section (OPTS) in collaboration with NLNG Shipping and Marine Services, MAP has addressed persistent challenges in the marine services sector by improving training and safety standards. The programme's next wave is anticipated to roll out in the first quarter of 2025 following the pilot programme's success.

Youth Empowerment and Employment Pathways

The Youth Empowerment Pathway session presented a forward-looking vision of workforce development. Mr. Tunji Idowu, Executive Director of PIND, emphasised strategies for tackling workforce gaps, fostering government engagement, and expanding opportunities for youth in the oil and gas sector.

Final Tour and Reflections

The PNC 2024 concluded with a site visit to the First Marine and Engineering Services Limited (FMES) shore base facility in Yenagoa, offering industry leaders an on-ground perspective of operational advancements in the sector.

NCDMB's General Manager for Corporate Communications and Zonal Coordination, Barr. Esueme Dan Kikile represented Engr. Ogbe at the event's closing, emphasised that partnerships such as those with the Bank of Industry and other stakeholders would support local contractors' access to funding and optimal performance levels.

As the oil and gas sector continues to evolve, the practical outcomes of PNC 2024 serve as a foundation for strategic industry growth, collaboration, and the continued strengthening of Nigerian content across local and global markets.

pindfoundation.org

From Farm to Fashion: The Role of Agriculture in Nigeria's Textile Industry

By Ese Ufuoma

The journey from seed to style is fascinating, weaving agriculture seamlessly into the fabric of Nigeria's rich fashion landscape. At first glance, agriculture and fashion may seem like two distinct industries, but delve deeper, and you'll find a strong, intertwined connection, one that begins with humble crops like cotton and leads to vibrant patterns, innovative designs, and economic opportunities.

Nigeria's textile industry owes much of its history and success to the foundational role of agriculture, with crops such as cotton and other raw materials driving this creative sector. Today, the link between the farm and the fashion runway is being rebranded as the nation embraces sustainability, technology, and local production.

Nigeria has a long history of cotton farming. Once a major exporter of high-quality cotton, the country has the potential to reclaim its position as a textile hub with its fertile lands and hardworking farmers. Cotton, often referred to as white gold, is more than just a crop; it's the backbone of an industry that has historically employed thousands and shaped cultural identity through traditional and modern designs.

To truly understand this connection, ***Valuechain*** spoke with Dr. Adebayo Olayemi, an agricultural economist with extensive experience in Nigeria's cotton value chain. His insights reveal the transformative power of integrating agricultural growth with modern industrial strategies.

"Cotton farming was once Nigeria's economic pride, the Nigerian textile industry can thrive again if we support local farmers, improve infrastructure, and modernise farming methods. Agriculture is the gateway to innovation in the fashion industry, from the cotton fields to the tailoring workshops."

ca.pinterest.com

His words highlight the truth: sustainable farming and fashion innovation are not just interconnected, they are necessary to address the supply chain and economic challenges in Nigeria.

While policymakers and economic analysts discuss solutions, Maryam Suleiman, a cotton farmer from Katsina State, offers a personal perspective on this dynamic connection. A smallholder farmer with over 10 years of experience, Maryam has seen the highs and lows of agricultural life. Yet her passion for her work never wavers.

"Every thread starts with a seed," she says. Maryam describes how farming cotton is both an art and a responsibility. "My father taught me to respect the earth and to listen to the seasons. When the cotton blooms, it feels like magic knowing that this simple plant will eventually make its way into clothes, markets, and runways." Maryam's story is a testament to resilience. Despite challenges such as fluctuating market prices, climate change, and lack of access to modern farming technologies, she and her peers persevere, knowing their hard work has far-reaching economic and cultural impacts.

The journey from farm to fashion is far more than just a supply chain; it's a story of culture, resilience, creativity, and sustainability. As farmers like Maryam toil in their fields, designers like Lisa bring their hard work to life on the runway. Entrepreneurs like Chijioke use innovation to bridge the gap between the earth and the marketplace, while policymakers and private investors shape the future of this promising industry.

This journey reminds us that agriculture is more than a means of survival. It's the foundation of style, creativity, and economic growth. From the hands in the soil to the hands that stitch patterns into garments, every step of the journey is part of a story, a story that Nigeria is beginning to rewrite with every thread, every design, and every dream. From cotton fields to catwalks, Nigeria's textile journey proves that fashion begins with the earth. As this journey continues, it brings hope, innovation, and style to the nation's heart.

The Hidden Cost of Food:
How Transportation, Logistics Shape Nigerian Agriculture

By Ese Ufuoma

agramondis.com

Nigeria's agricultural sector is a cornerstone of its economy, employing over 36% of the workforce and supplying food for millions. However, beneath the promise of growth lies a significant challenge; transportation and logistics. The cost of moving food from farms to markets is a hidden but powerful driver of the rising prices Nigerians pay for their daily staples.

From the moment crops are harvested or livestock are ready for the market, they must navigate a complex web of roads, ports, warehouses, and supply chain bottlenecks to reach consumers. This journey, frequently hampered by poor infrastructure, inadequate funding, and logistical delays, contributes to high food prices, food shortages, and the overall vulnerability of Nigerian farmers.

Poor infrastructure remains a major issue for Nigerian farmers. Many rural areas are inaccessible due to bad roads, and this has a direct impact on agricultural supply chains. In states like Borno, Yobe, and Ebonyi, the dilapidated state of roads means that perishable goods such as vegetables, fish, and poultry cannot make it to market quickly.

To illustrate, a truck transporting agricultural produce from the northern states to Lagos might encounter multiple hours of delays due to logistical bottlenecks or checkpoints. These delays increase both the financial burden and the risk of spoilage, forcing farmers and transporters to make difficult decisions: prioritise speed but risk higher costs or face infrastructure-related setbacks.

The journey of agricultural goods from the farm to the plate is much more than just a supply chain, it's a lifeline. Solving Nigeria's logistical challenges could reduce food prices, cut waste, create employment opportunities, and secure a more stable agricultural future for all.

Logistics Bottlenecks: The Warehouse Challenge

Even when goods make it through the treacherous journey from farms to market centres, they encounter another hurdle; insufficient storage and warehousing infrastructure. The lack of modern, well-maintained warehouses often leaves goods exposed to the elements, pests, or theft. Crops stored under substandard conditions lose their value, creating waste and further driving up costs for farmers and consumers alike.

Warehouse challenges compound the financial difficulties for Nigerian farmers. While logistics hubs like Lagos or Abuja are major distribution centres, inadequate cold chain infrastructure for perishables like dairy, fish, and vegetables further compounds market access issues. Without these facilities, supply chains falter, leaving farmers unable to capitalise on their efforts, and consumers unable to access affordable, fresh produce.

The High Cost of Fuel and Transportation

The rising cost of fuel is another hidden yet devastating player in the agricultural supply chain. With Nigeria's reliance on diesel and petrol for transportation, price fluctuations directly affect how much farmers pay to move their goods. Every increase in fuel costs trickles down to the consumer, pushing food prices higher.

Fuel scarcity, frequent roadblocks, and inefficiencies at ports also exacerbate these costs. Moving goods across Nigeria is no small feat when each checkpoint or fuel station delay can compound the expenses. A farm truck transporting cassava or maize from the rural plains to urban centres could see costs double, depending on fuel availability and transportation inefficiencies.

Innovations and Solutions: Can Logistics Change the Game?

Despite these challenges, innovative solutions are emerging to tackle transportation and logistics in Nigerian agriculture. Some state governments and private sector players are investing in road rehabilitation, modern warehouses, and transportation technology. The goal is to reduce costs and make it easier for farmers to access local and international markets.

Public-private partnerships are becoming vital, with efforts like improved access to credit for logistics companies and the creation of cold storage supply chains to ensure perishables stay fresh. Organisations are also leveraging technology, such as GPS tracking and modern supply chain software, to improve the efficiency of delivery routes and reduce waste.

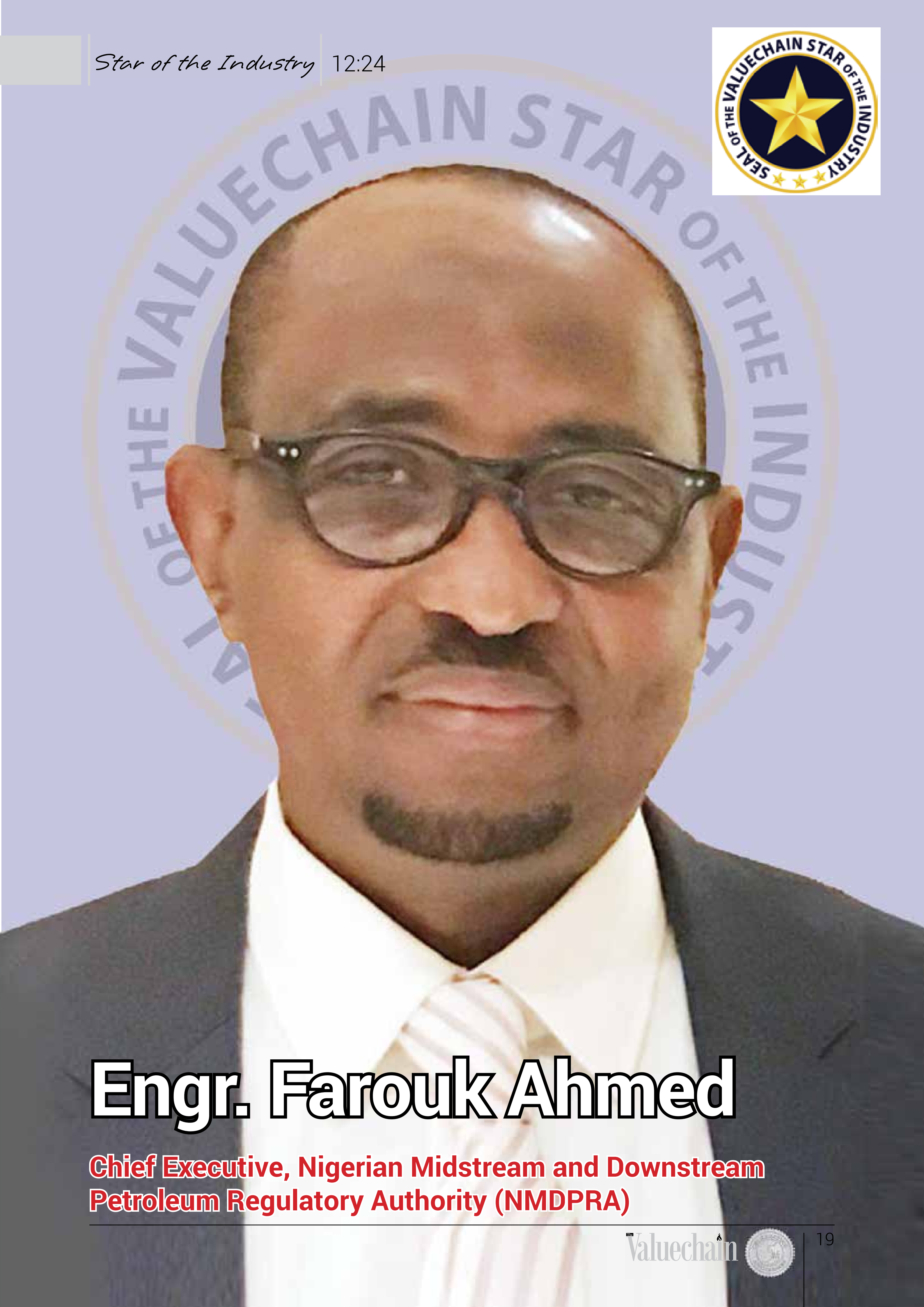
Government policies such as subsidies for transportation, road rehabilitation programs, and logistics hubs could reduce these costs and open new opportunities for farmers. Additionally, strengthening partnerships with international and local development organisations could support technological advancements and modern storage solutions.

The Way Forward

Agriculture in Nigeria has the potential to feed not just the nation but the entire continent. However, addressing the challenges of transportation and logistics is critical to achieving this vision. From improving road conditions to investing in cold chain logistics and fuel subsidies, Nigeria's policymakers and private actors must prioritise these solutions to ensure a fair and efficient system for all players in the agricultural value chain.

The journey of agricultural goods from the farm to the plate is much more than just a supply chain, it's a lifeline. Solving Nigeria's logistical challenges could reduce food prices, cut waste, create employment opportunities, and secure a more stable agricultural future for all.

By recognising the hidden costs of food and addressing them head-on, Nigeria can build a resilient agricultural sector that not only sustains its population but strengthens its economy.



Engr. Farouk Ahmed

Chief Executive, Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA)

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Chief Executive, Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA)

By Danlami Nasir Isah

Whilst the ISI incubates, Engr. Ahmed and his team at NMDPRA are unlocking investments in gas by determining the appropriate tariff methodology and setting benchmarks for operations in the sector the agency regulates.

Engr. Farouk Ahmed is the Authority Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA). He has a sound commercial and trading background, holding top management positions in the process, both within Nigeria and outside the country. His rich professional background, complementing his equally sound educational background arising from his studying at schools in Nigeria and abroad, such as the Sokoto Teachers College, Kaduna Polytechnic, Gulf Coast Community College, USA, and Southern Illinois University Carbondale, USA, equipped him with the technical and administrative skills needed for the complex terrain of the petroleum sector regulation industry. Not satisfied with the knowledge acquired from these institutions, Engr. Farouk further attended the International Petroleum Exchange, UK, New York Mercantile Exchange, College of Petroleum Studies, Société Financiers Privee, Switzerland, New York Institute of Finance, Oxford Institute of Petroleum Studies, UK, and the CWC Consulting, Houston, Texas. These are in addition to the numerous seminars and conferences he has attended around the world. Engr. Farouk, an oil and gas expert commenced his career as a Logic Board Verification Engineer at Apple Computer Incorporated, which was later changed to Apple Incorporated, in Dallas, Texas, USA. From there, he later returned to Nigeria to participate in the mandatory one-year National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) scheme. Thereafter, he joined the then Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), now Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), where he grew through the ranks to hold top management positions in the organisation. Engr. Ahmed has a sound commercial and trading background and has held several senior positions over the 34 years spanning his

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professional career in the oil and gas industry, some of which include: Senior Crude Oil Trader, Duke Oil Incorporated; Manager, Crude Oil Export Programming and Nominations, Shipping and Terminals (Crude Oil Marketing Division-NNPC); Executive Director, Commercial, Petroleum Products Marketing Company (PPMC); Managing Director, NiDAS Marine Limited; Executive Secretary, Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Authority (PPPRA); Managing Director, PPMC; and Special Adviser (Downstream) to Group Managing Director (GMD), NNPC. The NMDPRA Boss was a member of the Governing Board of the Nigerian Shippers Council and has also been the MD/CEO, Hauwath Consulting Limited. Engr. Ahmed is a Member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) as well as a Member of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE-USA). He is also a Registered Member of the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN). In December 2023, the NMDPRA Authority Chief Executive (ACE) as he is officially known assured the world that Nigeria can attract $575 billion in investments. Engr. Ahmed speaking through Dr. Mustapha Lamorde, Executive Director of Health, Safe and Environment Division of the agency at the United Nations (UN) Climate Change Conference (COP 28), said the plan is possible through the NMDPRA's Industry Sustainability

https://x.com/NMDPRA_Official

Initiative (ISI). Breaking down opportunities for investment per sector, he said $272 billion is in power, $127 billion in infrastructure, $96 billion in oil and gas processing optimisation, $80 billion in industry and $2.8 billion in clean cooking noting that making this possible will enhance government's commitment and collaboration with the private sector through technological innovation.

Whilst the ISI incubates, Engr. Ahmed and his team at NMDPRA are unlocking investments in gas by determining the appropriate tariff methodology and setting benchmarks for operations in the sector the agency regulates. Recently, the agency announced the establishment of the 2024 Domestic Base Price and applicable wholesale price on natural gas for the strategic sectors. This led to an increase in the price of natural gas for the strategic domestic sectors including power generation companies by 11 per cent. The increased gas pricing is expected to stimulate gas suppliers to bring on-stream gas from higher-cost fields. Without significant new gas development, the shortfall in gas supply by 2030 is expected to be as high as 3 BCF per day, worsening gas challenges for the power sector, and severely affecting facility utilisation for commercial, GBI sectors, and export markets. This is a new beginning for the midstream and downstream sectors of Nigeria's oil and gas industry. With Engr. Ahmed Farouk at the helm of affairs, the sector will witness remarkable gains such as the disappearance of fuel queues during festive periods especially during the yuletide season.

2024 A Mixed Bag for Nigeria's Oil and Gas Industry

By Gideon Osaka

The year 2024 was pivotal for Nigeria, as the nation's oil and gas sector witnessed many upswings and challenges from the previous year. From policy reforms to groundbreaking projects, some developments in the industry reflected the country's ambition to diversify its energy portfolio, attract investments, and enhance sustainability. As 2024 grinds to a close, expectations are very high for the sector in 2025. In the following analysis, ***Valuechain*** highlights some of the most significant developments that shaped the industry in 2024.

Slow but steady transition to CNG

Many significant developments occurred in 2024 concerning the country's transition to natural gas as an alternative energy source. To mitigate the impact of the removal of fuel subsidies, the federal government in 2024 made significant strides in the adoption of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as an alternative to petrol, with several CNG-backed initiatives spearheaded by the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGi). Several incentives for CNG infrastructure development, including tax holidays and grants for investors were rolled out, part of the component of the palliative intervention directed at providing succor to the masses in view of the hardship caused by the removal of fuel subsidies.

Recognising the need to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, the president mandated that all future vehicle, generator, or tricycle acquisitions by the government and its agencies must utilize either CNG, solar power or electric energy sources. Over 800 CNG buses, 4,000 CNG tricycles, and 100 electric buses are said to have been rolled out, with over 2,500 CNG tricycles expected to follow suit. Several state governments launched CNG-powered mass transit systems, reducing reliance on petrol.

By year-end, over 200 CNG refuelling stations would have been operational nationwide. In the next one year, NNPC through its retail arms, would have launched over 100 CNG sites. Already, Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC Limited), in partnership with NIPCO has developed an Auto-CNG rollout plan for construction of thirty-five (35) CNG stations across the various geographical zones of Nigeria.

There is also the Vehicle Conversion Incentive which the government, in partnership with the private sector, is offering subsidies and financial incentives to help vehicle owners convert their petrol engines to CNG. The government has also announced a payment plan to facilitate the conversion to CNG at "competitive rates."

kogistate.gov.ng

Dangote, Port Harcourt refineries & matters arising

In a groundbreaking move poised to revolutionise Nigeria's energy landscape, the Dangote Refinery was inaugurated a year ago and commenced supply of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) to the NNPC Limited on September 15, 2024. The event which symbolised the first supply of PMS otherwise called petrol to the domestic market signalled a new chapter in Nigeria's domestic refining and marked a significant milestone for the nation's energy sector in 2024.

However, the release of the products to the domestic market did not come without several issues that dominated national discourse during the year.

On the same day that the Dangote refinery launched its first PMS volumes into the market, NNPC Ltd announced a sudden increase in petrol prices by over 100%. While Nigerians were struggling to get over the shock from the increase, it was announced that a litre of the Dangote fuel, if sold in Lagos, was estimated at N950 per litre.

The price hike caught Nigerians off guard, coming as an unpleasant shock to most Nigerians who had anticipated relief from the soaring high costs of PMS with the refinery's entry into the market. The price increase had a momentous impact on the already challenging inflationary situation and led to some businesses scaling down operations and cutting down their workforce.

Again, the refinery's entry into the market caused some public disagreements with the industry regulator over-supply and pricing, as well as the continual granting of import licenses to marketers.

The feud between the regulator and Dangote over supplies and pricing rumbled and morphed into another row with independent marketers refusing to buy from the new refinery. The mudslinging also included allegations, that some traders have been buying substandard fuel from Russia, which is blended with other products before being shipped into Nigeria.

Months after the rollout of the much-expected fuel from the Dangote Refinery, the disquiet that the pricing template that accompanied its arrival into the market is far from abating. The debate around Dangote's petrol pricing continues to gain momentum even as 2025 beckons.

Barely two months after the Dangote refinery commenced PMS supply to the domestic market, the NNPC Ltd in November announced it had re-streamed the Port Harcourt refinery, signalling the commencement of crude oil processing from the plant and delivery of petroleum products into the market. Trucks immediately began loading petroleum products, which include petrol, diesel, Kerosene, and other product slates from the refinery.

Valuechain reports, however, that the flag-off of operations at the refinery generated controversy amidst doubts in some quarters over the functioning of the refinery, but NNPC maintained that reports insinuating the shutdown of the refinery were totally false, insisting that the plant was "fully operational."


africaoilgasreport.com

Oil Production boost FID on major oil projects

Nigeria's oil production hit its highest level this year in November with a total output of 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude oil and condensate, according to the NNPC Ltd, who are poised to ramp it up to 2 million bpd by the end of 2024.

Production rose in November by over 13 % compared to the 1.5 million bpd output in the same month of 2023, according to data from the monthly output report by the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC).

The recovery of Nigeria's oil production came as good news for the 2025 budget based on the 1.7 million bpd of oil production and oil prices at $75 per barrel. The jump in production has been due to authorities ramping up security measures at oilfields to crack down on pipeline theft and sabotage.

...Shell's FID on $5bn Bonga North Deep-water project

In a major step towards boosting oil and gas production, Shell announced on December 16 a final investment decision (FID) on Bonga North, a deep-water project off the coast of Nigeria.

Bonga North is Nigeria's first deep-water oil project in over a decade, marking a significant step forward in expanding the nation's offshore production capabilities.

The Bonga North oilfield, located 130 kilometres offshore in Oil Mining Lease (OML) 118, represents an impressive estimated $5 billion investment and is expected to yield approximately 350 million barrels of crude oil.

The FID signalled renewed confidence in Nigeria's energy sector and demonstrated the government's strategic focus on engendering a robust and competitive investment climate.

...NNPC/Total FID on $550m Ubeta field

Earlier this year, the Ubeta oilfield, the first blueprint project under the government's initiative of spurring investment in the sector, achieved a Final Investment Decision (FID).

In a major step towards boosting oil and gas production, the NNPC-TotalEnergies JV in June, officially announced the $550 million FID on the Ubeta Field Development Project.

The Ubeta field discovered in 1964, North-West of Port Harcourt in the eastern part of the Niger Delta will, once on stream, produce about 350MMScf/day of gas and 10,000 BBLS/day of associated liquids.

Located in OML58, the Ubeta gas condensate field will be developed with a new 6-well cluster connected to the existing Obite facilities through an 11km buried pipeline. Production start-up is expected in 2027, with a plateau of 300 million cubic feet per day (about 70,000 barrels of oil equivalent per day including condensates). Gas from Ubeta will be supplied to NLNG.

With both blueprint projects (Bonga & Ubeta) now achieving FID, the success of these initiatives underscores the effectiveness of the government's strategic vision for Nigeria's energy future.

Onslaught against oil theft, pipeline vandalism

The year 2024 saw an increased onslaught against crude oil theft and pipeline vandalism which reportedly yielded improved growth in the nation's crude oil production to a new peak which hasn't been seen in the last three years.

This is clearly related to the sustained efforts by the armed forces and other security agencies to protect critical assets, particularly the pipeline infrastructure in the Niger Delta

The Presidential mandate to mitigate security-related challenges affecting the nation's crude oil production led to the deployment of advanced security and surveil-

In June, Nigeria LNG Limited disclosed that the $4.3bn Train 7 gas project on Bonny Island, Rivers State, had reached 67 per cent completion. The company noted that the project was already delivering on one of its benefits with over 9,000 Nigerians working on the project, and numerous indirect jobs and businesses emerging and booming as a result of the construction.

lance monitoring, coupled with collaborations with private security outfits and local communities, which led to a 40% reduction in crude oil losses.

The recent increase in crude production which now averages 1.8 million barrels per day compared with 1.3 million (bpd) in March, has been attributed to the improved security measures.

African Energy Bank finally a reality, Nigeria hosts HQ

Two years after the signing of the founding protocol, and requisite charter for its establishment, the African Energy Bank (AEB), came to life on June 4, 2024, with plans to start full operations later in the year. Structured as a Pan-African energy development bank, AEB is a partnership between the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) and the African Petroleum Producers Organization (APPO), with planned participation from, national oil companies, and African investors as shareholders. The new institution is expected to provide financing for projects that international lenders are shunning for reasons related to energy transition.

The announcement of the full take-off of the Bank was solidified later on July 4, 2024, with the decision to site the Bank in Nigeria; a resolution that has been described as a transformative moment for the continent's energy landscape. The decision to site the headquarters of the Bank in Nigeria was made during the 45th Extraordinary Session of the APPO Ministerial Council chaired by the Minister of Hydrocarbons of the Republic of Congo Mr. Bruno Jean Richard Itoua.

Nigeria emerged as the preferred host nation amid stiff competition from Ghana, Benin, Algeria, South Africa, and Cote d'Ivoire. The thorough selection process underscored the careful consideration of Nigeria's capabilities and strategic importance.

Big ticket projects make progress

Aside from the gigantic Dangote refinery which kicked off PMS production and sales, many big projects hit major milestones in the year 2024 despite significant construction delays.

For instance, major segments of the $2.8 billion Ajaokuta–Kaduna–Kano (AKK) gas pipeline project were completed this year as the NNPCL has expressed confidence the project will be delivered by the first quarter of 2025. The 40-inch by 614 km AKK pipeline is the first phase of the 1,300km Trans-Nigerian Gas Pipeline and a key element of Nigeria's plan to develop its gas resources.

The Assa North-Ohaji South Gas processing plant was one of the three critical gas infrastructure projects commissioned in May 2024, in a move to leverage the country's huge gas reserves to boost the economy. The 23.3km, 36-inch Gas Pipeline from the Assa North-Ohaji South (ANOH) Primary Treatment Facility to the OB3 Custody Transfer Metering Station in Rivers State aims to improve the availability of natural gas for power generation whilst accelerating Nigeria's transition towards cleaner fuels.

The gas processing plant will process non-associated gas from the Assa North-Ohaji South field in Imo State, producing dry gas, condensate and LPG. This will significantly increase the domestic gas supply, leading to increased power generation and accelerated industrialisation.

Also, the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline project progressed steadily, with several international partners joining the venture. In the course of the year, a memorandum of understanding on the Nigeria-Morocco gas pipeline project (NMGP) was signed by NNPC Limited, the Moroccan Office of Hydrocarbons and Mines (ONHYM) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) signalling the take-off of the project with a final investment decision expected in early 2025.

The proposed US$25bn 5,600 km gas pipeline project connecting 13 countries, when completed, will provide gas from Nigeria to the West African countries up to Morocco and subsequently to Europe.

In June, Nigeria LNG Limited disclosed that the $4.3bn Train 7 gas project on Bonny Island, Rivers State, had reached 67 per cent completion. The company noted that the project was already delivering on one of its benefits with over 9,000 Nigerians working on the project, and numerous indirect jobs and businesses emerging and booming as a result of the construction.

The Train 7 project is expected to increase NLNG's production capacity by 35 per cent from the current 22 million tons per annum (mtpa) to 30mtpa.

Another notable development within the gas space during the year was the official issuance of the "License to Construct" (LTC) for Nigeria's first Floating Liquefied Natural Gas (FLNG) facility to UTM FLNG Limited. The granting of the license opened a new economic chapter for Nigeria in the global gas market.

The UTM Offshore Limited FLNG plant with a capacity of 2.8 million tons per annum (MTPA), will produce Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), LPG, and condensate from re-injected gas at the OML 104 Yoho Field. The issuance of the LTC by the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) in September represented a significant step forward in Nigeria's energy sector. The project is projected to come on stream by Q1 2026 and is reportedly backed by a $5 billion loan signed with Afreximbank.

Presidential Directives (PDs)

Another year into the implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) saw the passing of some key implementation milestones. On 28 February 2024, the president signed three Executive Orders as part of the government's commitment to improve the investment climate and position Nigeria as the preferred investment destination for the petroleum sector in Africa. The three Orders included the Presidential Directive on Local Content Compliance, Presidential Directive on Reduction of Petroleum Sector Contracting Cost and Timelines, and the Presidential Directive on Oil and Gas Companies (Tax Incentives, Exemption, Remission, etc.).

The Presidential Directives reinforced the government's commitment to fast-tracking regulatory approvals, reducing operational costs, and introducing competitive fiscal incentives.

These directives, which aim to enhance regulatory clarity, accelerate project timelines, and incentivise investment in Nigeria's energy sector, have yielded remarkable results as they were said to have eliminated middlemen from the oil and gas industry value chain and contributed to shortening the oil industry contracting cycle to six months.

A year of divestments

The trend of sales by the oil majors of sizeable stakes in Nigerian assets continued with some notable deals consummated in 2024.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) in October, announced the approval of the assets sale of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU) to Seplat Energy Offshore Limited, Equinor Nigeria Energy Company Limited to Project Odinmin Investments Limited, Nigerian Agip Oil Company Limited to Oando Petroleum and Natural Gas Company Limited and TotalEnergies EP Nigeria Limited to Telema Energies Nigeria Limited. The sales were concluded after years of regulatory approval delays.

Although the divestment of Shell's assets to Renaissance could not scale the regulatory test, the interest expressed by Shell in divesting from onshore fields in Nigeria remained strong.

In recent years, international oil companies (IOCs) in Nigeria have been divesting significant portions of their onshore and shallow water assets as part of a broader retreat by the oil majors as they focus on newer, more profitable operations and renewable energy projects. The trend is accelerating as the international firms, though not entirely leaving Nigeria, are focused on deep-water projects in Africa's largest oil producer.

The developments in Nigeria's oil and gas sector in 2024 reflected a dynamic interplay of policy reforms and global energy trends. As the country continues to navigate the challenges of energy transition and economic diversification, these milestones underscore the country's sector resilience and potential to remain a key player in the global energy landscape.

Barely two months after the Dangote refinery commenced PMS supply to the domestic market, the NNPC Ltd in November announced it had re-streamed the Port Harcourt refinery, signalling the commencement of crude oil processing from the plant and delivery of petroleum products into the market. Trucks immediately began loading petroleum products, which include petrol, diesel, Kerosene, and other product slates from the refinery.

"We Must Act Now to Address Energy Poverty in Nigeria"—Austin Avuru

As Nigeria continues to navigate the complex landscape of the global energy market, one thing is clear: the country's future prosperity depends on its ability to unlock its vast energy potential. With decades of experience in the Nigerian oil and gas sector, Mr. Austin Avuru, Founder and Executive Chairman of AA Holdings, offers a unique perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing the industry. In this interview with ***Valuechain*** and other Energy Correspondents, Avuru shares his insights on the future of Nigeria's energy sector, the role of independents, and the government's efforts to address energy poverty.

What are your views concerning the upstream, midstream and downstream as we begin to see a revival of the midstream sector in Nigeria? Your response should be channelled towards domestic supply and the entire chain of energy security.

The emphasis of government across the entire value chain from the upstream all the way down to product distribution emphasizes domestic energy security. So we're seeing a regulatory direction that will move us away from revenue from oil and gas activities to utilizing oil and gas productivity for energy security to cure our energy poverty. So you're seeing first, from the upstream point of view, you're seeing a regulatory push that now recognizes that there is homegrown independence who are likely to be operating mainly in the near term in the onshore and shallow water while the IOCs move into deep offshore and that this shared responsibility among Independent and IOCs will complement the entire Nigerian economy. What we will then see is that collaboration and shared responsibilities will lead to a reinvigorated industry. Optimum production coming from both the matured fields in the onshore, fields in deep offshore and additional exploration effort across all the basins. That should lead in the medium term to optimum production. Then you go to

Austin Avuru

the mid-stream, and you see a lot of gas processing development going on, particularly with OICs intended to supply the 3-4bcf per day of gas that the domestic economy requires both for power generation, for heavy industries, fertilizer and so on. That is beneficiation; enabling the oil and gas business, particularly the gas business to be a major contributor to our GDP. Then you go further into the mid-stream, and you are now seeing the country becoming a refining hub, so, we're going to a point where the next three years, would probably have a refining capacity in excess of 1.2 million bpd. Even at the 2.5 million bpd production; if we get there, you'd see that half of our production is being refined locally. Now, if you're doing 1.2 million barrels refining capacity within the country, our consumption would probably not be much more than 400-500, 000 bpd; which means we have a huge export potential for our refineries across the sub-region and beyond. Then, further down, you're now seeing, particularly independents, in the product distribution and gas distribution business. In summary, what you're seeing is an integrated business that earns revenue for the economy, but more importantly, supports the industrialization of the economy and contributes much more to our GDP than what we've seen in the past sixty years.

What are the prospects for further in-

vestments in the local supply of gas, given the limited capacity in the local market?

The demand capacity in the local market is not limited, what is limited is the level of growth and stability of that market. For instance, we're still struggling with the power industry, by the time we have sustained 20GW of power (sustained), when that power market is developed to the point where it is reliable, you'll need more than 2pcf of gas pd just for the power industry. Once you have a stable demand, then investment into the supply angle will also lead to stable supply. When that market matures and becomes stable, you are going to see an equilibrium between demand and supply which will then give you more confidence in investing in the supply side, but the pricing is already commercial, those who are producing gas today, whether to industries or to power and so on, are selling gas domestically above 2 USD per MMBtu and really, anything above 2 USD per MMBtu, can sustain the gas business, those who are in it, companies like Seplat and even platforms at the small level will tell you that their gas business is commercially viable and that the market is there. All I'm saying is, that we just need the market to develop to the level of stability where both supply and demand are stable enough to be predicted.

You are a geologist; what is the outlook for further production from the mature fields especially in the Niger Delta and the decline we see in the deep water; where will the additional one million bpd come from?

This time, I will talk as a Geologist and Explorationist: if you look at the marginal field operators that have bought assets, almost every marginal field operator will tell you that, for instance, we were assigned a marginal field with 2p reserves of 7 million barrels, we have produced 12 million barrels and we're still producing, that is the story you keep hearing across boards. What we call mature fields, from a geological point of view, are those assets where easy discoveries have been made, the easy-to-develop fields have been developed, but there are still substantial reserves. They require more technology, higher costs, and more diligence to develop them, but it is there. So when you see an asset that you think holds a hundred million barrels, by the time you bring in technology for secondary recovery, you'll probably recover 180 million barrels. So, we're now in phase two of the Nigerian oil and gas play, where we are going to squeeze out the remaining barrels, it's not that they are not there, they are there, but they were not captured in our original 2p, but which is why in every reserve play you have 2p and 3p. We're now going to be converting the 3p and 2p into one 1p and producing them. So, almost in every basin, when you say it is matured, you probably have as much left as you have produced, but you will require more intense technology, and more prudence to then produce it usually at a higher cost.

We have seen an era where we have very big discoveries, today we no longer hear about these announcements of big discoveries. What we see are appraisals. Does this mean that the Atlantic has given us all it has?

In the Nigerian deep-water basin, as you heard in one of the presentations by the Presidential Adviser on Energy, we haven't had any exploration work done in the deep water in the past 13 years. So after the first rash of exploration that discovered about 8 billion barrels, they have all gone into production mode and that's the production you are saying is now declining. Again, with the kind of policy thrust we have today, they are now incentivised to go into exploration mode both for oil and natural gas. You're going to see some additional discoveries, either near field appraisal discoveries or even exploration discoveries and that will happen even onshore that is so matured, like 60 years old; you heard Chevron the other day say that the field has been in production for over 45 years; there was a near field appraisal discovery, so those potentials are still there and those are the potentials that new players are going to be chasing because they are commercially viable.

In the past two years, the conversation has been about attracting investments. Do we have the right policies and commitment to achieve these aspirations? Secondly, about the divestment by the IOCs, some players are concerned that those who acquired these assets cannot maintain them. What are your views regarding this?

Capacity, there is a regulatory tool for ensuring that only those that have the capacity play in the industry, just like you have it in the banking sector. There's always a regulatory tool to wean away those without capacity and ensure that only those that have capacity; to answer the question roundly, there are regulations and laws in place that enable the regulator to ensure that if you do not implement the work programme that you have submitted and the FDP that you've submitted, the regulator can take back your asset. That's why I'm saying there's a regulatory tool to ensure that over time, those who have the capacity and can implement the work programme that has been approved for them are the ones who will continue to be in business. Those who do not have the capacity will have their assets taken away from them, it will take some time, and it will take regulatory courage, but the regulatory tools are there to ensure that only those with capacity are left in the industry. Now to your second question; I'm confident among the divested assets, you're going to see both those who have demonstrated capacity and can grow even better capacity and those who probably do not have the capacity. But over time, those with capacity will overtake those without capacity and you're going to have a robust industry. The oil and gas industry would not be an exception, we had it the same way in the banking industry; from a hundred and twenty-six banks, we came down to about twenty-four banks, with five that are very viable and very active across entire Africa. This won't be any different, I can tell you from my experience in the next five years, we're going to come up with our five strong Independents and about another 8 – 10 smaller Independents in the marginal field

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play, but together, they will account for 80% of the production from Independents and probably about 50% of the entire production for the country, I'm confident that that's what's going to happen.

It is companies with capacity that will bring investments, that's what capacity is about; I don't like to be specific, but I can tell you that in the past ten years, Seplat has drilled almost on average, 7 – 12 wells each year, that's investment. If you go and read the annual report you would see between 2010 and now, how many billion USD they have spent and invested in the assets that they have. So, capacity is what gives rise to investments in the assets; so those who have capacity are those who are going to invest in the assets and grow production, that's what you're going to see.

At some point, we were hoping to bring the cost of fuel production to about 10 USD pd, given what the Federal Inland Revenue stated at the National Assembly saying the average cost is about 40 USD pd. Also, the indigenous companies have just taken over these divestments, what does this mean for the market?

First of all, I don't think the average cost is 40 USD, there are costs as high as 40 USD, and there are some costs as low as 10, or 12; so the average can't be 40 USD. However, especially where we are coming from 30 years ago we were averaging 3 USD pb in Nigeria, even 15 USD is a high cost. When you look at the physical details of the PIA, you'll find out that every decent operator, who knows what he's doing; you don't need the government to force you to reduce your cost. To remain in business and be profitable, the PIA is modelled in such a way that low-cost operators have the highest tax incentives; high-cost operators will be punished. Again, coming back to capacity, by the time these Independents grow sufficiently capacity, they on their own will have to reduce their cost to the barest minimum in the interest of their own business practices so that they will make the most profit.

Yesterday in one of the sessions, you expressed optimism that the government is moving in the right direction but you didn't elaborate due to time. What really gives you the hope that the government is doing the right thing?

Take these divestments, divestments that we participated in, at Seplat then, that was 2010, that's 14 years ago. Between 2010 and the last two years, there really was no regulatory framework for divestments, you simply went and did transactions with the IOCs and it is only when you brought it to the table for approval that they will start dancing around. The result has been that in the last 5 years, those who are divesting are hung in there, they haven't left, those who are coming in haven't been able to come in and what has then happened is that there is no investment because both those who are leaving and those coming in, none has been able to invest. But for the first time, we now have a regulatory framework, it may not be perfect, but, at least today, in any divestment process, the NUPRC has a framework to say this is how it should be done; these are the terms upon which we do approvals. So, it's now been streamlined and you are beginning to get consent that wasn't seen in the last five years or so.

The so-called ease of doing business presidential directive and the development of deep offshore gas, are policy directives that are unlocking things that have been stuck there for the past 15 years or more. What I meant yesterday, is I wasn't just patronising the government because the government people were there, I am seeing for the first time what we saw in 1991 under Professor Aminu, when he came out directly and said we want to achieve reserve base, these are the things we're going to do, and that was how he unlocked the deep-water. So today, we're seeing a recognition by government, particularly the office of the adviser, that there are things to be done to unlock the bypass place in the matured basin that you're referring to, and those policy thrusts are what are put in place; because you cannot wish away the Independents, the Independents that will play a really matured basin, Nigeria is not an exception; whether you go to the North Sea or; look at Perenco is in Gabon, Shell pegged ten in Cameroon. Matured basins belong to Independents; once we have now reached that point of recognition that Independents have to be supported to grow capacity, then you're doing the right thing because it is these Independents that will unlock additional production from these assets.

Let's look at how all these translate into prosperity, especially for the average Nigerian. Will the divestment address the energy poverty of Nigerians?

I started by saying that we've run an industry that for 40, 50 years, was addressing the energy security needs of other countries around the world, and all we were interested in was revenue. We are moving away from that now into addressing our own energy poverty and when you address energy poverty, it will eventually filter down to the common person. For instance, I believe that with some of the gas developments that we are seeing by Independents, we're moving to a point where we have enough LPG production in the country to meet local needs and the growing demand. So when you see most of the gas plants now being built, each one has an LPG component. Before now, LPG could only be produced by refineries, once the refineries were down, there was no LPG and LPG is for the masses and that addresses clean cooking. Now, gas-to-power; if we achieve power solution in the next five years, the greatest beneficiaries are the ordinary poor people; it goes down to almost every basic thing that they do. Again, once we're moving the industry towards solving our energy poverty problems as a country and as a continent, then really, we're now turning the industry around to benefit even the poorest person on the street.

What does the future hold for the independents?

Independents must have to decide the most appropriate geography to operate in, otherwise, I can tell you that in the next five years, a company like Seplat can operate anywhere in the world; and can operate at the level of an IOC. As a matter of fact, once they integrate the Exxon Mobil assets into their current operations…let's define the scale, once Seplat integrate Exxon Mobil assets into their operations, operated production will be in excess of 200,000bpd. As an IOC what was Texaco producing? What was ENI producing? Their operated gas processing capacity will be about 1bcf/pd. They currently have 465 million, they are developing 300 million scuffs in Anoh, they've just started gas in their Sapele and is 85 million scuffs. If you add all of that up, we're close to 1bcf/pd. So a company that is capable of delivering 1bcf/pd and over 200 thousand oil bpd; there were no more than two IOCs in our history that will have that capacity. So yes, we're developing Independents in Nigeria and we should be very proud of that. Independents in Nigeria that are operating at the level that IOCs were operating in Nigeria and those days we grew up thinking that they alone and God were capable of what they were doing, but we're seeing it happening now in Nigeria.

The biggest concern for players and those who can invest is access to assets. Most people are of the view that the entry barrier is too hard to break. How do we leverage the thirst for more production and reserves by opening up the assets to people who can handle the investments?

It is a regulatory duty; if a regulator knows that his job is to emphasize vibrancy in the industry and it's implementing what I described earlier, in the PIA as drill or drop, if you don't develop your assets they will take it away from you. Then you're going to be seeing regular bid rounds and then people who have the capacity will have more and more opportunity to participate in those bid rounds. And so over time, those who have the thirst will participate in these bid rounds and acquire more assets and those who do not have the thirst and capacity will fizzle out. So, it is the primary regulatory function to ensure that their regulations and the implementation of their regulations are targeted at ensuring vibrancy in the sector. If they do it well, you'll see vibrancy and if they don't do it well, we'll go back to redundancy.

Looking at the viability of investments in certain areas, especially in gas, the biggest challenge there is the power sector; their capacity to invest. The level of return on investment in that area is very poor and that has prompted regular interventions from the government. In your opinion, how can we model the power sector to be more responsive?

It is already modelled that way; the power sector, the way it is modelled can pay, what we've not seen in the past is a stable market and that stable market didn't grow because, at the power end, we stifled the tariff. So when we didn't have a market-driven tariff regime in the power sector the distributors didn't earn enough revenue to pay the generating companies and the generating companies didn't have enough money to pay for gas. Now, if you look at what they are doing in terms of deregulating the power sector, is to achieve a market-driven sector where the entire value chain from gas to generation to distribution is serviced by the revenue that comes from there. I've always emphasized market stability in everything I've tried to explain. Once you achieve that market stability at the demand side, which is power and industries, you're also going to achieve stability at the supply side because then the entire revenue will be enough for the entire value chain. So the structure is there, it is just to achieve market stability so that the market itself pays for every service within the value chain, that's where we are heading.

Austin Avuru is the Founder and Executive Chairman of AA Holdings. A Geologist by training, he spent over 40 years in the Nigerian oil and gas sector and was Managing Director of Platform Petroleum Limited in 2010, he later became the pioneer CEO of Seplat Ltd, a company he co-founded. Under his leadership, Seplat was dually listed on the London Stock Exchange and Nigeria Stock Exchange. He retired as CEO of Seplat in 2020 and remains on the Board. He is also the Chairman of AA Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to creating social-economic change in education and healthcare.

He is a fellow and past President of the Nigerian Association of Petroleum Explorationists (NAPE), a member of the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG), a member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) and a recipient of the Aret Adams Award. He is the author of "Politics, Economics & the Nigerian Petroleum Industry" and co-author of "Nigerian Petroleum Business, A Handbook". He won the 2013 Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year award in the Master class category for Nigeria & the West African Sub-region.

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Petroleum, Energy, and Nigeria's Economy: Reevaluating the 2024 Issues

Professor Omowumi O. Iledare

PREAMBLE

Nigeria has abundant liquid petroleum resources, estimated at thirty-seven billion barrels. This is equivalent to about fifty reserves-life years at the current extraction capacity rate of about two million barrels per day. The dependability of the economy of Nigeria on petroleum for economic growth, development and enhanced social well-being is significantly conspicuous. Additionally, natural gas resources are in abundance. Nigeria ranks among the top ten nations with an estimated 209 TCF-proof natural gas reserves at the beginning of 2024. Experts, in fact, have opined that Nigeria is majorly a natural gas province with just pockets of liquid petroleum fields. This op-ed aims to review matters arising in 2024 with inferences to facilitate their resolutions. These issues and implications affecting the petroleum, energy and economy nexus in Nigeria include but are not limited to – petroleum assets divestment, oil and gas sector governance, presidential executive orders, Dangote refinery and wholesale market conduct, the. evolving energy landscape and global oil and gas dominance and navigating the energy transition trilemma.

DIVESTMENT OF PETROLEUM ASSETS BY THE INTERNATIONAL OIL COMPANIES (IOCS)

Divestments are deliberate business decisions, majorly, for restructuring business operations to maximize value for all stakeholders. Of course, a forced assets divestment can also occur because of regulations or bankruptcy. Thus, it is amazing, the way people look at ongoing oil and gas divestment processes in Nigeria. Quite often people seem oblivious to the capital risk and uncertainty inherent in the upstream business in terms of cost, price, and rewards. Stakeholders outside the petroleum sector and transfer payment recipients from petroleum revenue seem not able to comprehend the complexity of the market structure driving investments for petroleum resources development.

Divesting from less profitable assets and reorganizing portfolios for business longevity is a prerogative adopted worldwide in the oil and gas business; it is a global best practice usually adopted to maximize corporate value. It is an established long-term business strategy. Thus, the recent divestment decisions by Shell, Mobil, Agip and Total, are purely business decisions, and a good one for that matter for Nigeria, in terms of maximizing government access to revenue from those assets. Usually, identifying laudable buyers is very

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crucial in asset divesting to minimize opportunity cost, such that any foregone value relative to the divested asset aggregate value received are, at least equilibrated. Of course, government access to revenue from these assets must not be compromised and operating these assets with minimal environmental hazards is important as well.

The Conglomerates approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria to purchase the shares of the IOCs in these JV assets have the requisite skill sets and professional acumen to operate them. The technical, managerial, and financial competency of these conglomerates are not in doubt to operate these assets for maximum economic and social value. Thus, lessons from asset divestments in the US offer a gutsy optimism that the sales of these assets to indigenous investors could add significant value to the economy of Nigeria and enhance energy security in the evolving global energy landscape. These possibilities are evident, so far, in the contributions from the emerging indigenous players in the Nigeria oil and gas industry to date.

However, there are legitimate concerns and apprehensions with respect to these transactions. First, there is a wishful desire for NNPCL to reduce its majority share in these JV assets to minority ownership, using the NLNG Model. Fortunately, with the approval of the Federal Government and the endorsement of the National Economic Council, NNPC Limited can sell shares held by the Government. Luckily the Government needs a lot of money and selling its share in NNPCL is preferred to borrowing with a high capital cost and foregone future earnings in my opinion.

Secondly, there is the prospect of diminishing government access to petroleum revenue from these divested IOC assets. The sensibility of this apprehension may not necessarily be premised on business failure on the part of the Consortia purchasing these assets but on the PIA fiscal terms of onshore and shallow water assets. There is empirical evidence to suggest that the PIA royalty schemes, the hydrocarbon resource tax, and other instruments in the PIA 2021 may limit capacity expansion thereby significantly reducing government access to revenue. Perhaps, Schedule Seven of the PIA and the royalty regulations fashioned by the Petroleum Commission can be amended to enhance the profitability of onshore and shallow assets development. As mentioned in several discussions, the fiscal terms in the PIA 2021 are relatively skewed and understandably in favour of deep offshore assets compared to shallow or onshore assets.

PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER 2024 ON NAG

The Presidential Executive Order (PEO) 2024 to incentivize non-associated gas (NAG) Greenfield Development has received great acclamation among industry stakeholders and energy analysts. The oil and gas companies operating in the shallow-water and onshore terrains in Nigeria are majorly thrilled at the ease at which the NAG order came to pass. The PEO 2024 aims to make investments in NAG projects competitive and attractive to investors. Interestingly, Nigeria has done laudable things in the past to spur gas development within the context of investment attractiveness and competitiveness. But not much empirical evidence is there to suggest such incentives for gas development have contributed meaningfully to the national economy in terms of the total value of goods produced and services provided in Nigeria. Excellent examples of past incentives include NLNG fiscal incentives, the Associated Gas Flaring Act incentives, the Gas-to-Liquid incentives, and the many incentives in the PIA targeted at natural gas development.

Fiscal incentives to expand the development of non-associated gas have intergenerational implications implying it should not be about investment attractiveness and competitiveness alone. Understanding the dynamism of mutuality interests among the stakeholders—investors, government, and the society--competing for the huge economic rent from petroleum resources development is critical. The desire to grow and sustain economic development using oil and gas wealth optimally must always be part of the objectives in the long run. Interestingly, Nigeria has done laudable things in the past to spur gas development within the context of investment attractiveness and competitiveness. But not much empirical evidence is there to support that such incentives for gas development have contributed meaningfully to the national economy in terms of the total value of goods produced and services provided in Nigeria. It is quite understandable to identify with the public affirmation and acclamation PBAT received for issuing PEO 2024. Honestly speaking, however, and even if I am the only Jeremiah in town, targeting NAG with PEO 2024 instead of amending the PIA 2021 is, perhaps, ill-advised judging from the state of the economy of the Federation.

THE EVOLVING ENERGY LANDSCAPE AND OIL AND GAS GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

The evolving energy from fossil-fuels-dominated energy supply mix to zero-carbon emission sources is one of the most widely debated topics across the globe. The rapidity of the switch with a set date is very fundamental to energy equity, security, and sustainability, christened as the energy trilemma dimensions. Setting the rapidity of the energy evolution with a predetermined date is very disconcerting. This is more so in developing economies, like Nigeria, with an abundant endowment of petroleum resources. According to EIA estimates, the share of fossil fuels in the global energy supply mix is to drop from the current 90 % to about 50% by 2050 to reach the 2-degrees centigrade global warming target.

While the desire, determination, and diligence to switch are not conjectural, the implications of a homogeneous rapidity to and inefficaciousness of energy transition are unsettling. Disruption in the global economies, expansion of energy poverty, and enhanced energy predicament, especially in emerging petroleum economies are plausible. Paradoxically, Nigeria has significantly low energy access and high energy costs with low oil and gas production despite abundant petroleum resources (liquids and gaseous). Thus, Nigeria may experience a reduction in productivity and international trade competitiveness with rapid transition. Meanwhile, oil and gas production and export remain the economic linchpin and Nigeria latches dependently on the oil and gas industry

Regarding oil and gas governance, it is noteworthy that the PIA 2021 has provisions on institutions and governance, which seek to reverse the perpetual comatose and negative challenges bedevilling the Nigerian petroleum industry and its future. The provisions tried to create and strengthen institutions, which support industry governance with transparency, accountability, and value delivery.

as a fundamental part of its industrial strategy.

Regarding oil and gas governance, it is noteworthy that the PIA 2021 has provisions on institutions and governance, which seek to reverse the perpetual comatose and negative challenges bedevilling the Nigerian petroleum industry and its future. The provisions tried to create and strengthen institutions, which support industry governance with transparency, accountability, and value delivery. The principles of clear separation of roles focus keenly on transparency and good governance across the entire value chain. This is the main thrust of the provisions on governance and institution in the PIA 2021.

To achieve the goal of the separation of roles, the governance and institutional framework to drive the process hinges on the Office of the Minister, two regulatory Institutions (the Commission for the upstream and the Authority for the downstream), and one commercial nagging institution. These three PIA institutions are critical to effectively manage into the future of oil and gas in Nigeria as the global energy landscape evolves. The framework for creating a single commercial entity set up and limited by shares under the Companies and Allied Matters Act is one of the four key aims of the PIA 2021. There are innovative provisions in the PIA on Host Community development to foster sustainable prosperity in the host communities as well as enhance harmonious and peaceful coexistence among stakeholders with less disruption of operations.

Additionally, Nigeria, as a nation, has over the last few decades made attempts to reform its petroleum fiscal system to attract investors and create stability in the oil and gas sector. The fiscal aims, structure, and schemes follow global best practices in fiscal systems design in the PIA 2021, with the future of the industry in focus. Thus, the combinations of the fiscal instruments and terms in the PIA 2021 are glaringly investor-friendly to a fault, making the optimization of mutuality of interests in an aggregate sense conflicted. Remarkably, there are emerging rewarding results from the delayed reform efforts. The five-billion-dollar investment by Shell and allies is laudable, and the approvals granted to local indigenous consortia to buy divested IOC assets in onshore and shallow water terrains suggest that the PIA fiscal incentives based on performance are effectual, despite the apparent inefficacy in the system. The hydrocarbon bidding round efforts, the first since 2007 have rekindled the optimism of Nigeria as an enviable oil and gas bride, the destination of choice in the Gulf of Guinea in 2024.

It is certainly very commendable when it comes to natural gas development within the context of energy transition. The fiscal framework disavowed optimization of revenue extraction as the key aim of natural gas development. Using natural gas as the engine to propel the national economy, this decade is a wise decision complementing the decade of gas mantra of the Federal Government. Of course, it reflects a great determination to reduce the carbon footprint in Nigeria. PIA 2021 certainly ended the petroleum industry reform journey in and out of the National Assembly, since 2008.

As I have instructively alluded to in many fora, the oil and gas sector cannot run in isolation. Its macroeconomic impact on the society's economic welfare when any of the four macroeconomic markets - goods market, money market, labour market, and resources market - is in disequilibrium is consequential. The consequences include social welfare losses, intractable misery index—high inflation, high unemployment, negative economic growth, and criminality. Interestingly, however, in a petroleum-dependent economy, like Nigeria, inappropriate government interventions in the resources market, the crude oil market to be specific, energize the wheel that propels the four macroeconomic markets into disequilibrium.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND ELECTRICITY MARKETS

The petroleum products market structure in Nigeria is an amalgamation, a mixture of oligopolistic competition at the retail end for PMS and diesel with high concentration ratios for the top four firms and top eight firms. It is oligopolistic because the top four sellers/firms in the market exert considerable influence over the market behaviour in that segment of the petroleum value chain. However, in the retail diesel product market for end-users, pricing is also oligopolistic with interdependency. Whereas in the PMS wholesale market, the dominant firms before until Dangote Refinery became operational, the NNPC Limited, tended to influence the market pricing dynamic as the principal importer of PMS.

The influence of NNPC Limited, as the dominant firm in the PMS market, occurs because of its near absolute monopoly market power in the PMS wholesale market even as Dangote Refinery is competing for a larger wholesale PMS market share. It is the sole importer of PMS, even if there is room for disagreement, which made it enjoy a pseudo-monopoly market power. Dangote refinery is, however, diminishing the market power of NNPCL.

Regarding the role of Government, the PIA 2021 provides three anchor institutions to improve competitiveness in the petroleum market in terms of structure, conduct and performance. Unfortunately, the obsolete Petroleum Act of 1969, the Petroleum Pricing Regulatory Agency Act of 2003, and the NNPC Act of 1977 remain imminent and looming larger than life in the contemporary petroleum products market governance and regulatory dynamics. No wonder, every feature of market failures, such as illegal markets, PMS shortages, subsidies, long queues at retail stations, and social welfare losses existing before PIA 2021, still characterize the petroleum products market, two years later. However, things are changing fast as two dominant firms in the wholesale market are competing among themselves for processes. There is the audacity of hope that the Petroleum Authority will be a trusted watchdog in the battle for dominance in the PMS wholesale market between Dangote Refinery and NNPCL.

The power market also has three segments—generation, transmission, and distribution. Each segment is a standalone business in Nigeria. The Electricity Act 2023 has the enormous potential to rekindle the electric power industry. The decentralization of the governance of the electricity supply industry with state participation is laudable, commendable, and incredible. Of course, there is an apprehension that state governments may create government-owned power companies, and this is plausible. However, it is so amazing to read from media sources the willingness of NERC to surrender regulatory functions to agencies in the constituent states in the Federation to regulate the power market in the state. Indeed, the dawn of a new era in the power sector in Nigeria. Perhaps taxation, policing, education, banking and other sectors of the economy that are currently centralized may become decentralized during this administration as well.

The segment of the power value chain with the direct link to end-users and suboptimal business performance is the power distributing companies. This segment of the power industry value chain has implications for the entire value chain. The market structure in this segment of the power value chain is not a natural monopoly in the real sense but a territorial monopoly. Unfortunately, too, the territory assigned to each Disco is quite heterogeneous in terms of market features—income, social structure and culture, and status and fundamentals—access to the national grid, affordability, and adaptability. The suboptimality of this segment explains the overall delimited access to power in Nigeria at an affordable price. This is clear when you compare the 4000-5000 MW electron transmission capacity to 10,000 – 15,000 MW generating capacity. It becomes obvious that the availability aspect of the energy supply security is unachievable. There is a clamour to revisit the sales agreement with Discos in Nigeria to reevaluate the sale agreements and revoke the licenses of all nonperforming Discos. This is really a promising idea in addition to the ongoing decentralization of the power regulatory functions to constituent units.

The new electricity tariff embraces a price discrimination mechanism, and it is not a new phenomenon in the power sector worldwide. The precision of the band A tariff started recently is, however, conjectural because of supply uncertainty and the assumptions and facts within the context of the pricing model applied. As more facts become available and assumptions reevaluated for real, the pricing model can then be recalibrated in a self-adjusting manner. Also, there must be a way to protect the consumer surplus of customers affected because of affordability and metering issues because of this new tariff. Assuming the reports published in the print media are correct, then the ongoing price discrimination application is based on daily supply hours for selected users. Such a mechanism is not unusual in the power market, the airline industry does the same thing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The nexus between petroleum, energy and the economy in Nigeria is not conjectural. Empirical evidence since the 1970s shows that the structure of Nigeria has been significantly altered because of economic rent extraction from petroleum resources development. There seems to be limited understanding that domestic energy production for export does not create the type of multiplier effects domestic energy conversion processes and consumption have in a petroleum-producing economy. It is therefore not surprising that access to affordable secondary energy sources—electricity, cooking gas, motor fuels, jet fuels, etc., are very prominent among the other issues, and has been quite consequential in terms of the relatively high misery index, which is a combination of high inflation, high unemployment and low economic growth.

Under the circumstances, the evolving energy landscape may not necessarily be a trilemma in the actual sense of it but an opportunity for Nigeria to expand its energy resource base. The word transition is an abnormality in the characterization of the emerging energy evolutionary process. It is an era that comes with challenges and opportunities, hence if high-cost petroleum producers can manage a reduction in cost of production then, they can receive help from the evolution and extend the oil market era in an environmentally sustainable manner using advances in technology.

Empirical evidence supports the assertion that the displacement of a dominant energy source does not automatically cut that energy source from the energy supply mix. Thus, as the global energy systems attempt to evolve from fossil fuel dominance, Nigeria is at a critical juncture. A good understanding of the imperative of good governance, transparency and accountability in the energy sector, especially, in the petroleum value chain remains the necessary condition to maximize social and economic value for Nigeria.

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What has COP 29 Achieved?

Ismaila Umaru Lere

The 29th Conference of the Parties (COP 29) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change has concluded, bringing with it a series of significant agreements and achievements aimed at addressing the pressing issue of climate change. Held in Baku, Azerbaijan, from November 11 to November 22, 2024, COP 29 witnessed global leaders and negotiators come together to discuss strategies and frameworks that could potentially shape the future of our planet in the face of a climate crisis.

There is great optimism about the outcome of the summit. As the world grapples with the escalating impacts of climate change, the outcomes of COP 29 are particularly salient for Nigeria and the broader African continent, which face unique challenges and opportunities in the context of global climate action.

The Baku summit occurred against a backdrop of increasing climate emergencies, including rising sea levels, desertification, and extreme weather events. For Nigeria, a country that has been severely affected by climate-related issues such as flooding, drought, and the encroachment of the Sahara Desert, the urgency of climate action cannot be overstated. Africa, home to some of the most vulnerable populations, has been advocating for more substantial commitments from developed nations, particularly regarding financial support for adaptation and mitigation efforts.

One of the central themes of COP 29 was the necessity for developed countries to fulfil their financial commitments to developing nations. This included discussions on the

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$100 billion per year pledge made during the Paris Agreement. The Nigerian delegation emphasised the need for these funds to support adaptation measures, which are critical for food security and sustainable development across Africa.

Moreover, the summit underscored the importance of technology transfer and capacity building. For Nigeria, which is striving to transition to a low-carbon economy while addressing its developmental needs, access to clean technologies and expertise is vital. The promotion of green technologies aligns with Nigeria's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan, which seeks to enhance economic growth while promoting environmental sustainability.

A notable aspect of COP 29 was the solidarity exhibited by African nations. The African Group of Negotiators (AGN) presented a united front, advocating for the continent's interests. This collective action was evident in the push for climate justice, particularly regarding loss and damage due to climate impacts. Nigeria, alongside other African nations, called for mechanisms to compensate countries that suffer disproportionate climate impacts, highlighting the disparities between the contributions to climate change and the effects.

Additionally, the summit addressed the need for a Just Transition, particularly concerning fossil fuel dependency. Nigeria, a major oil producer, faces a challenging path as it seeks to balance economic growth with environmental sustainability. Advocating for a Just Transition means ensuring that communities reliant on fossil fuels are supported through retraining and job creation in green industries. The discussions at COP 29 provided a platform for Nigeria to showcase its commitment to diversifying its energy sources, including investments in renewable energy.

Another significant outcome of COP 29 was the recognition of the importance of indigenous knowledge and local communities in climate action. In Nigeria, traditional practices and local knowledge play a crucial role in sustainable land management and biodiversity conservation. The summit's emphasis on integrating indigenous perspectives into climate strategies resonates with Nigeria's need to empower local communities in environmental governance.

African countries, including Nigeria, are increasingly recognising the role of local communities in climate resilience. The summit provided an opportunity to showcase successful local initiatives, such as community-based adaptation projects that harness traditional ecological knowledge. This approach not only fosters resilience but also enhances community engagement in climate action.

One of the most notable accomplishments of COP 29 was the establishment of a new financial commitment. Developed nations agreed to channel a minimum of $300 billion annually into developing countries by 2035 to bolster their climate resilience and adaptation efforts. This decision, addressing the urgent need for financial resources in vulnerable nations, is crucial as these countries often bear the brunt of climate impacts despite contributing least to the problem. The commitment underscores a recognition that financial support is imperative for helping less affluent nations protect their economies and communities from climate-induced disasters.

Additionally, COP 29 fostered discussions surrounding climate finance, which remains a core component of global climate agreements. The summit reaffirmed the pledge to triple climate finance, signalling a robust approach to addressing the escalating impacts of climate change. The funds will not only assist in adaptation strategies but also aid in transition efforts towards sustainable energy systems, aligned with the goals of the Paris Agreement. This development has been hailed as a substantial step forward in establishing equity in climate responses, ensuring that wealthier nations take responsibility for supporting those most at risk.

Moreover, negotiations at COP 29 initiated crucial dialogues on key frameworks to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions. Various coalitions were formed to discuss the integration of robust mechanisms to foster accountability among nations concerning their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to climate goals. The discussions led to the inclusion of a new language that emphasises urban design within future NDCs, showcasing a holistic approach to climate action (Source: Architectural Record). The summit emphasised the necessity of not only formal agreements but also of actionable plans and clear commitments that are transformable into real-world impacts.

While COP 29 yielded promising discussions and commitments, the challenge remains in the implementation of agreements. Nigeria, like many African nations, has often faced difficulties in translating international commitments into local action. Issues such as governance, corruption, and inadequate infrastructure can impede progress. Thus, the emphasis on accountability mechanisms at COP 29 is critical.

With financial pledges, climate adaptation was a core theme of the summit. Increased funding is aimed at helping nations bolster their adaptive capacity to cope with extreme weather events and climate disruptions. This focus on resilience building is especially pertinent in light of recent data indicating 2024 is likely to be the hottest year on record, bringing forth severe weather events that threaten both ecosystems and human livelihoods (Source: World Economic Forum). The discussions at COP 29 honed in on establishing frameworks that not only provide immediate financial assistance but also ensure that long-term strategies are put in place to combat climate adversities effectively.

While there were significant achievements, COP 29 was not without its challenges. Negotiations were often fraught with tensions and differing priorities among nations, as was evident in the contentious discussions surrounding financial commitments and accountability measures. Nevertheless, the agreements reached signal a collective understanding that the climate crisis transcends national boundaries and requires a united global response

The summit highlighted the necessity for a balanced approach, recognising both the impressive progress made and the hurdles that remain on the road to climate action. With a clearer picture of responsibilities and expectations established, it sets a hopeful tone for future negotiations. As world leaders left Baku, it became evident that while COP 29 made vital strides towards enhancing climate finance and adaptation commitments, continuous collaboration and determination will be essential to realise the ambitions outlined in these agreements.

COP 29 has heralded a range of promising agreements, particularly concerning climate finance and adaptation strategies tailored to support vulnerable nations. While challenges remain, the summit's outcomes indicate a growing consensus on the collective action needed to confront climate change. Moving forward, it will be imperative for countries to uphold their commitments and work towards tangible, long-lasting solutions in combating climate change. As global awareness around climate issues elevates, COP 29 stands as a testimony to the resolve of nations to confront the challenges that lie ahead

The emphasis on financial commitments, technology transfer, and the integration of indigenous knowledge aligns with Nigeria's climate action strategies. However, the path forward requires strong political will, enhanced governance, and collaborative efforts among African nations.

As Nigeria prepares for its role in future climate negotiations, it must leverage the outcomes of COP 29 to advocate for its interests while contributing to a unified African voice on the global stage. The need for urgent action is paramount; climate change is not just an environmental issue but a developmental one that requires immediate and sustained responses.

For Nigeria and Africa, the outcomes provide a framework to advocate for equitable and effective climate action that prioritises the needs of vulnerable populations while fostering sustainable development. The journey toward climate resilience is long, but with concerted efforts, it is a journey that can lead to a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

Open Forum with Decade of Gas Initiative

The "Decade of Gas" was launched with a clear vision of transforming Nigeria into a gas-powered economy by 2030. What are the key milestones or achievements of the Decade of Gas initiative to date?

The past year has been very exciting for the Decade of Gas Initiative marked by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's commitment to ensure that Nigerians during this decade can enjoy prosperity from its huge Gas resources themed by the "Gas to Prosperity " Message. The appointment of a dedicated Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Gas) in August 2023 has created a lot of focus on gas sector development.

Under the Leadership of the Hon Minister of State Petroleum Resources (Gas) significant progress has been made by all stakeholders (Presidency, Regulators, Public Private Sector Players) around Gas Supply, Gas Pricing & Economics, Gas Infrastructure Development.

Over 4.5 bcfd of Gas Supply Projects (20) have been identified with 1bcfd of firm Supply unlocked in 2024.

The Presidency has issued fiscal executive orders for onshore, shallow water and deepwater which has made Gas investment more attractive for investors.

Gas to Power arrears (circa $1bln) which have been the thorniest issue in the gas value chain for the past 12 years has been resolved by the President creating more confidence in the Gas to Power market.

The regulators NMDPRA, NUPRC, NCDMB have worked together with industry to support increased Gas production and investment in new Gas projects (3 FIDs already taken this year).

There is now clarity around Gas Pricing across all sectors (Power, GBIs, Commercial / industrial manufacturing) following the announcement of a domestic base Price (DBP) by NMDPRA in line with the PIA

NNPC continues to make progress on the critical AKK project, and we expect the completion of the pivotal OB3 River crossing before the end of 2024.

One of the goals of the initiative is to expand the domestic gas utilisation. What has been done to promote the adoption of gas for power generation, transportation, and industrial use?

The domestic base price (DBP) of natural gas announced by the regulator has made power more attractive for gas supply and in conjunction with the inroads made towards extinguishment of legacy debts will have positive impact on availability of gas to power generation companies, reducing downtime and improving overall availability.

The Midstream and Downstream oil and gas regulator has also taken steps to ensure that the network code, which guides the operation of the gas transportation network is operationalised. This has enhanced the needed transparency on the network towards improving system efficiency and investor confidence.

Regarding end users' adoption of gas, its environmental benefits and cost advantages over petrol and diesel make it a compelling choice for both off-grid power generation (domestic and industrial) and Autogas applications. The focus is primarily on ensuring sufficient safety awareness and enabling ease of transition to gas.

How does the Decade of Gas align with Nigeria's national energy policy and development goals?

The Decade of Gas aims to close the gas supply-demand gap by adding 3-5bcfd by 2030 which could potentially reduce emissions significantly, in alignment with Nigeria's Energy Transition Plan

What role do you see private sector participation playing in the realization of the Decade of Gas vision? How have you engaged with local and international investors to achieve this?

The success of the decade of gas initiative cannot be realised without the support and full participation of the private sector. In fact, the sector has played and continues to play a critical role in the initiative, without which certain milestones would not have been achieved.

The private sector has taken ownership alongside the public counterparts and has continued to leverage on the initiative to collaborate with the regulators and other agencies of government to ensure that the vision of the decade of gas materialises. It is testament to their conviction in the success of the initiative that companies have taken FID for new projects this year, with more expected in the coming year.

The decade of gas is in touch with local and international investors, creating awareness via local and international platforms to speak about the enormous opportunities in the Nigerian gas space. We believe our voices are going far and wide and the required investment in the gas sector will surely follow.

What opportunities will the project create for local businesses and entrepreneurs?

The Decade of Gas seeks to transform Nigeria to a gas-powered economy by 2030. This presents numerous opportunities for local businesses and entrepreneurs at various points along the gas value chain and even in other sectors. These include infrastructure development, manufacturing, Autogas conversion, LPG distribution, agriculture and many others.

The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) pipeline is a major project under this initiative. What is the current status of this project, and how will it benefit Nigeria's industrial and economic growth?

The importance of having an efficient gas transportation system cannot be overemphasised and the initiative understands that this is a key deliverable if we are to be seen as successful with our gas utilisation drive. Hence, the AKK pipeline project is a priority project for Nigeria as it will provide access to natural gas to the northern part of the country and even beyond Nigeria as part of the Trans-Niger pipeline project development, which aims to help deliver natural gas to the sub-Saharan African countries. This provides a huge opportunity to jumpstart economic activity across the region.

The AKK pipeline project is currently at 65% completion. The project, like every project of such magnitude has witnessed some setbacks and deviated a couple of times from the original timeline. However, the government is committed to ensuring its prompt completion by allocating necessary resources to the project.

What regulatory framework supports the Decade of Gas project, and how will it ensure investor confidence?

The Decade of Gas is a collaboration between the private and public sector - key government agencies including the regulators across the gas value chain and other government MDAs with critical roles to play in the attainment of the aspirations of the initiative.

This means that proposed solutions and initiatives are tested against regulatory requirements and ultimately jointly owned by relevant regulatory or governmental entities, ensuring that investors can be confident that their investments align with established frameworks and are supported by the necessary regulatory oversight.

How will the project align with Nigeria's Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and other relevant laws?

The decade of gas project serves as a unifying nexus amongst all major stakeholders responsible for the upholding, implementing and complying with the PIA and all other laws of Nigeria.

DECEMBER SHORT TAKES

Compiled By Saidu Abubakar

N16trn debt burden outstrips security, infrastructure, education budgets

...Experts fear budget may not deliver 'tangible gains' ...Tinubu, Shettima to spend N8.74bn on local, international trips

Nigeria plans to spend N15.81 trillion or 45 per cent of its entire revenue to service debt obligations in the next fiscal year, which is higher than N14.97 trillion earmarked for security, infrastructure, education and health combined – four top priorities of the federal government in 2025

Dangote Refinery, others coming on stream, will reduce the pressure on naira – Tanimu Yakubu

The Nigerian government is planning to leverage increased crude oil production to help finance the 2025 budget, according to Tanimu Yakubu, Director General of the Budget Office of the Federation.

Northern stakeholders end Review, Demand changes to Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills

Northern stakeholders, under the aegis of the League of Northern Democrats (LND), have called for amendments to President Bola Tinubu's Tax Reform Bills.

Despite FG's N199bn electricity subsidy, grid collapse, epileptic supply persist

Interventionist payments in the power sector by the Federal Government as electricity subsidies increased to N199.64 billion in December 2024, according to data sourced from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC).

Two million barrels per day oil production target realisable – Lokpobiri

The Minister of State Petroleum (oil), Heineken Lokpobiri has said that the 2.06 million barrels per day oil projection in the 2025 budget is realisable.

Shell's Onshore exit approved: Local firms take over $1.3 billion assets

The Federal Government has approved the purchase of Shell Plc's onshore assets in Nigeria to a group of local companies for $1.3 billion.

Northern Governors forum

pmnewsnigeria.com

Landing cost of petrol drops to N970 per litre — Marketers

In a sign of stability in the downstream sector, the Major Energy Marketers Association of Nigeria, MEMAN, has said that the landing cost of Premium Motor Spirit, PMS, also known as petrol declined marginally to N970 in December 2024, from N971 per litre in November 2024.

Nigeria currently running on N7 trillion fiscal deficit as of Q3 2024

Nigeria's fiscal deficit reached N7.05 trillion by the end of the third quarter of 2024, according to figures disclosed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu during his presentation of the 2025 Budget of Restoration to the National Assembly on December 18, 2024.

Nigeria's Electricity Subsidy payment nears N200bn in December 2024

**Edun Expresses Worry Over Africa's $74bn Debt Servicing Burden*

The Minister of Finance and Co-ordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Wale Edun, has called for necessary steps to manage ballooning debt and its servicing on the continent.

2025 budget: N13trn deficit to be financed through borrowing — Edun

•FEC approves 2025 budget proposal •Presentation to NASS shifted to Wednesday

Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Mr. Wale Edun, on Monday said the N13 trillion deficit in the N48 trillion 2025 budget would be financed through borrowing.

Oando PLC posts N13.6 billion third quarter profit amid increase in supply, trading revenue

Oando PLC reported a post-tax profit of N13.6 billion for the third quarter of 2024, ending September 30, a significant improvement from the N2.2 billion loss recorded in the same period last year.

Bill to ban use of Dollars, foreign currencies in Nigeria passes first reading at Senate

... The proposed legislation is aimed at ensuring all payments including salaries and other transactions are done using the local currency, naira

A bill seeking to prohibit the use of foreign currency in Nigeria has passed first reading in the House of Senate.

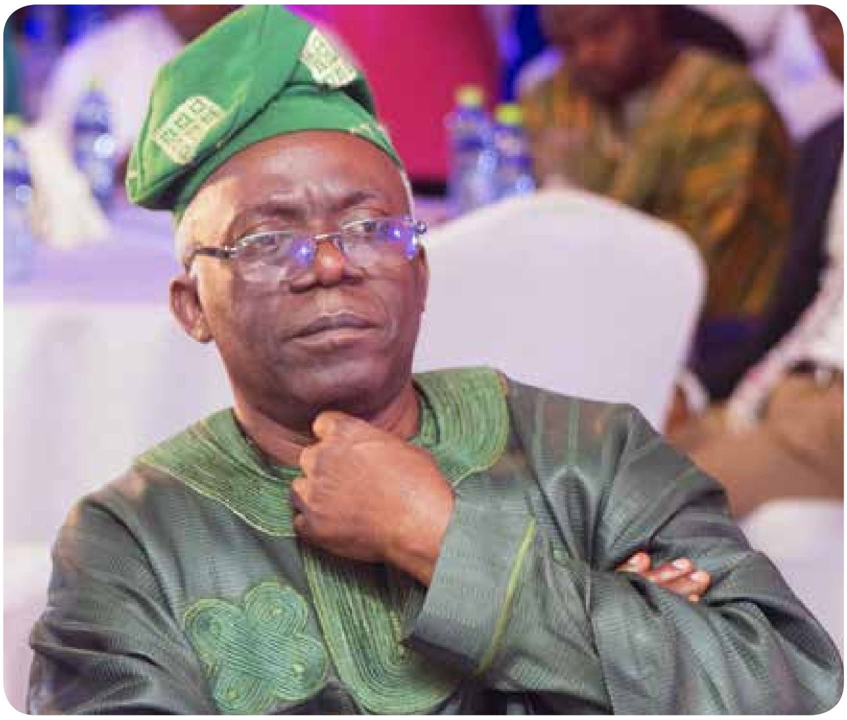
Reps empower SEC to regulate online forex trading platforms, others

•Provides for five years imprisonment, N10m fine for erring CEO/MD

The National Assembly has granted unfettered regulatory powers to Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to register and regulate online forex trading activities, platforms and intermediaries.

FEC okays 161.3m euros for Phase 1 Siemens Power Project

The Federal Executive Council, FEC, meeting presided over by President Bola Tinubu approved the sum of 161,328,228 euros for the execution of contracts in the first batch of the Phase 1 of the Siemens Power projects across the country.



Mr. Femi Falana

Shell invests in Bonga North deep-water project, Nigeria

Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company Limited (SNEPCo), a subsidiary of Shell plc, has announced a Final Investment Decision (FID) on Bonga North, a deep-water project off the coast of Nigeria.

Shell assures oil exports unaffected by Bonny Terminal Spill

The Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) has confirmed an oil spill at its Bonny export terminal in Rivers State but assured stakeholders that the incident will not disrupt oil export operations.

Nigeria's inflation rises to 34.60% in November

Nigeria's inflation rate has surged to 34.60% in November, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). This represents a 0.72% increase from the 33.88% recorded in October 2024.

NNPC surpasses 2024 profit projections, vows to strengthen Nigeria's energy sector

The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Ltd (NNPC) has said that it has already exceeded its 2024 profit estimate, and it is working to deliver more value to Nigerians and other stakeholders.

Fuel subsidy removal, floating of Naira sparked inflation in 2024 – CIBN

The Chattered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, CIBN, has stated that some government policies such as the removal of fuel subsidy and floating of the Naira, impacted negatively on the banking sector and the Nigerian economy at large.

Federation account netted N3.14tr highest inflow in November

Nigeria's Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) reported a record-breaking revenue inflow of N3.143 trillion for November 2024, marking the highest figure in recent years.

Dangote exports petrol to four African countries

The 650,000-barrel Dangote Refinery and Petrochemicals has confirmed exports of premium motor spirit (pms) to no fewer than four African countries including Cameroon, Ghana, Angola, and South Africa.

Okwok FPSO "Done" to arrive Nigeria before March

*First Oil Expected in July 2025

The Nigerian independent, Oriental Energy Resources (OER) has commissioned its new Okwok Field's Floating Production Storage and Offloading (FPSO) vessel in Dubai.

FAAC: FG, States, LGs share N1.727trn November revenue

The Federation Accounts Allocation Committee (FAAC) has shared a total sum of N1.727 trillion, being November 2024 Federation Accounts Revenue to the Federal, States and the Local Governments.

Price War: Imported vs Locally Refined Fuel

Not a few Nigerians have noticed the recent price war of sorts between imported fuel and locally refined variety, which has ensued with the new dispensation of increase in local refining capability by Nigeria.

CBN reiterates validity of old Naira notes

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has said that the subsisting Supreme Court ruling granted on November 29, 2023, permits the concurrent circulation of all versions of the N1,000, N500, and N200 denominations of the Naira indefinitely.

Coalition backs Falana, demands explanation over $2.9bn approved for Refineries

A coalition of civil society (CSO) groups has given amplification to the question raised by human rights lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana (SAN), over the $2.9 billion released for the rehabilitation of three local refineries in Nigeria.

Reps question NUPRC over N88 Billion staff salaries, decline in Non-Tax remittances

The House of Representatives Committees on Finance and National Planning questions the Nigeria Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) over its financial practices, particularly the high personnel costs and a significant drop in non-tax remittances.

Oloibiri Museum: NCDMB executes Construction Contract with Julius Berger

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) has recently executed the engineering, procurement, and construction contract with Julius Berger PLC for the development of Oloibiri Museum and Research Centre (OMRC), to be located at Otuabagi, Ogbia Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Nigeria adds 150,000 b/d Crude Production in November 2024

Nigeria added 150,000 barrels per day to its crude production in November 2024 as it continues to pursue an ambitious 2 million barrels per day target.

Telemedicine:
Healthcare Delivery Transformed

By Adaobi Rhema Oguejiofor

blog.24by7security.com

In the healthcare sector, the introduction and advancement of technological innovations is unending. For instance, the concept of telemedicine has evolved in recent years from just a niche technology to becoming a central pillar of modern healthcare. As a result of technological advancements, there exists a growing demand for more accessible healthcare and telemedicine is playing a significant role in reshaping how patients and healthcare providers interact. From virtual consultations and remote monitoring to mental health services and chronic disease management, this innovation has and is still proving to be a powerful tool that helps healthcare delivery, especially in underserved and rural areas.

The United States of America's National Library of Medicine (NLM) reveal that for more than 30 years, clinicians, health services researchers, and other medical professionals have been investigating the use of advanced telecommunications and computer technologies to improve health care. These numerous investigation efforts birthed telemedicine, a combination of mainstream and innovative information technologies.

Telemedicine involves using electronic information and communications technologies to provide and support healthcare practices when distance separates the participants. The practice employs digital technologies, like phone or video calls, mobile apps, remote monitoring devices (where a device takes a patient's vital signs and sends them to their doctor), emails and other communication tools to provide medical care remotely. It allows healthcare providers to consult with patients, diagnose conditions, prescribe treatments, and even monitor chronic conditions without patients needing to leave their homes to be in the same room as the doctor.

This innovation encompasses a variety of services, including virtual consultations with doctors, remote patient monitoring (RPM) for chronic disease management, and telehealth platforms offering mental health services. As the practice benefits both health and convenience, it is increasingly being used across various specialities, from primary care and paediatrics to cardiology and psychiatry, thereby offering a more convenient and often cost-effective way to access healthcare.

Key Applications of Telemedicine

The concept of telemedicine has over the years been applied across the broad scope of the healthcare system. Some of these applications have occurred in different areas such as:

Virtual Consultations

One of the most common areas where telemedicine is used is that of virtual consultations. With the help of video conferencing tools, patients can consult with healthcare providers regarding a variety of issues, from routine check-ups and follow-ups to special consultations for minor ailments. This modality is not only convenient but is also highly effective for managing non-emergency medical conditions.

Remote Patient Monitoring (RPM)

In the area of RPM, telemedicine is revolutionising the management of chronic diseases, allowing patients to monitor their health at home with the help of connected devices. These devices can track vital signs such as blood pressure, glucose levels, heart rate, and oxygen saturation, and then send the data to healthcare providers in real-time. The continuous stream of information enables doctors to detect early warning signs of health issues and intervene before they become more serious.

Mental Health Services

Telemedicine has also proven to be an effective medium for delivering mental health care. With the stigma surrounding mental health, telehealth platforms have played a crucial role in providing therapy and counselling remotely. With the introduction of virtual therapy sessions, patients can now receive care from the comfort and privacy of their homes, increasing access to services for individuals who might otherwise be hesitant to seek help in person.

Teledermatology

In this area, the application of telemedicine allows patients to send photographs of their skin conditions to dermatologists for proper medical evaluation. This method has proven highly effective in diagnosing conditions such as acne, rashes, and suspicious moles. Patients can also receive treatment plans and prescriptions without waiting for an in-person consultation through this process.

Telecardiology

Telecardiology entails remote monitoring and management of heart conditions, which enables patients with cardiovascular diseases to manage their conditions without frequent in-person visits to the hospital. Patients can wear heart rate monitors, smartwatches, and electrocardiogram (ECG) patches to transmit vital information to their cardiologists.

Research conducted by the American Heart Association found that telecardiology services reduced hospital re-admission rates and helped patients with chronic conditions like heart failure to better manage their treatment plans. These services offer convenience and peace of mind to patients, who can be continuously monitored from home.

Benefits of Telemedicine

Telemedicine as a medical practice offers numerous benefits to both patients and healthcare providers. Brian Hasselfeld, M.D., an assistant medical director for digital health innovations at Johns Hopkins Medicine, provided insights into the far-reaching benefits of telemedicine. They include:

Convenience and Accessibility

With telemedicine, patients can access healthcare from the comfort of their homes, eliminating the need for travel and reducing waiting times for appointments. These virtual visits also easily fit into patients' and healthcare providers' busy schedules. It is particularly beneficial for those in rural areas or with mobility issues.

Improved Health Outcomes

By providing continuous monitoring, early interventions, and more frequent check-ins, telemedicine helps to improve patient outcomes, especially for those with chronic conditions.

Better Assessment

Telemedicine gives some speciality practitioners an advantage because they can see patients in their home environment. For instance, allergy experts may be able to identify clues in a patient's surroundings that cause allergies.

Cost Savings

Telemedicine helps to reduce the costs of healthcare services by eliminating the need for physical office space, reducing emergency room visits, and allowing healthcare providers to manage more patients in less time.

Enhanced Patient Satisfaction

Telemedicine improves patients' satisfaction. Many patients have reported higher satisfaction with telemedicine because of the convenience and flexibility the innovation provides. It offers greater privacy and comfort, which can reduce anxiety, especially for those seeking mental health services.

Challenges and Limitations

Despite its many advantages, telemedicine faces several challenges including:

- Technology Barriers
- Limited Scope for Certain Conditions
- Privacy and Security
- Licensing and Regulation
- The Future of Telemedicine

In the future, telemedicine is expected to become an even more integral part of healthcare delivery. Innovations such as AI-powered diagnostics, wearables, and virtual reality are set to further enhance the capabilities of telemedicine, making healthcare more personalized, efficient, and accessible. Also, the continued expansion of 5G networks will enable faster and more reliable telemedicine services, especially in remote areas.

According to a 2023 report by McKinsey & Company, the global telemedicine market is projected to reach about $459.8 billion by 2030, with significant growth driven by demand for remote care, especially in chronic disease management and mental health services.

Telemedicine is not a replacement for traditional in-person care but rather a complement to it; offering patients more flexible options and empowering healthcare providers to deliver more timely, effective care. This medical practice is fast revolutionising the healthcare sector, offering greater access, convenience, and quality of care to patients worldwide.

Fare Slash: Aero Contractors' Strategic Move to Stimulate Demand and Drive Economic Growth

By Patience Chat Moses

dailytrust.com

In an unprecedented move aimed at bolstering Nigeria's aviation sector, Aero Contractors has announced a significant fare reduction, a strategy designed to stimulate demand and fuel economic growth. This bold initiative comes as part of the airline's broader efforts to make air travel more accessible, improve passenger volumes, and contribute to the recovery of Nigeria's aviation industry, which has faced numerous challenges in recent years.

A game-changer for the Nigerian aviation industry

Aero Contractors' decision to reduce airfares is timely, coinciding with an ongoing recovery phase for the aviation sector. The Nigerian airline industry, once plagued by high operating costs, rising fuel prices, and fluctuating currency values, has struggled to maintain stability. However, with airfares skyrocketing in the wake of these challenges, many travellers have had to abandon their plans to fly, opting for alternative, more affordable travel methods.

By cutting fares, Aero Contractors is positioning itself as a key player in changing this narrative. The move is expected to drive significant increases in passenger traffic, benefiting not just the airline, but the broader economy. With reduced airfares, business and leisure travellers alike can access the skies more easily, leading to an influx in tourism and trade, both crucial drivers of Nigeria's economic growth.

The economic impact of lower airfares

The reduction of airfares can have profound economic implications for Nigeria. Lower airfares create opportunities for increased connectivity within Nigeria and across the African continent. According to the International Air

With reduced airfares, business and leisure travellers alike can access the skies more easily, leading to an influx in tourism and trade, both crucial drivers of Nigeria's economic growth.

Transport Association (IATA), air transport supports 4.4 million jobs in Nigeria and contributes over $1.7 billion to the country's GDP annually. By lowering ticket prices, Aero Contractors is likely to stimulate demand, thereby increasing passenger volumes and driving economic activity in sectors such as tourism, hospitality, and business services.

The fare reduction also benefits businesses by making it easier for companies to conduct face-to-face meetings and establish partnerships, which are vital for trade and investment. Additionally, as more Nigerians travel for leisure or family visits, the tourism sector stands to gain, bringing in revenue and contributing to job creation.

Furthermore, the airline's move could also result in a positive multiplier effect across the economy. For example, an increase in domestic travel can lead to greater demand for services such as hotels, taxis, restaurants, and tour guides, which can create job opportunities for many Nigerians. As a result, Aero Contractors' fare slash might catalyze growth in the broader service sector.

Stimulating demand: A step towards economic recovery

Experts agree that reduced airfares have the potential to jumpstart economic activity, especially in sectors reliant on business travel and tourism. According to aviation analyst Emmanuel Ojemhen, "Affordable air travel opens up opportunities for increased connectivity, fostering trade and commerce, and encouraging investment in both local and international markets."

For Aero Contractors, this fare slash could be a game-changer. By making air travel more accessible to a larger segment of the population, the airline stands to expand its customer base, thereby improving profitability. This, in turn, could lead to job creation, especially in tourism-related industries, as more people travel for business, leisure, and education.

The strategic implications for Aero Contractors

For Aero Contractors, the fare reduction is not just about expanding market share; it's a long-term strategy aimed at strengthening brand loyalty and positioning the airline as a leader in the Nigerian aviation market. This initiative also reflects the airline's response to changing market dynamics and evolving consumer expectations.

The Nigerian airline industry is competitive, with a mix of international and local players vying for a share of the domestic and regional markets. By lowering its fares, Aero Contractors aims to differentiate itself from its competitors, particularly in an environment where consumers are increasingly price-sensitive. The strategic fare reduction also positions the airline as an advocate for affordability and customer satisfaction, key factors that can influence consumer decision-making in an industry where options are abundant.

Challenges and opportunities ahead

While the fare reduction is expected to yield positive results, Aero Contractors must navigate several challenges. Maintaining profitability while offering lower prices is a delicate balancing act, especially with rising fuel costs and inflation. However, if executed correctly, this strategy could pave the way for broader economic benefits, not only for Aero Contractors but also for the aviation industry and Nigeria's economy as a whole.

According to a report by PwC, the Nigerian aviation industry has a strong potential to drive economic growth, contributing to job creation, tourism, and international trade. By making air travel more affordable, Aero Contractors could play a pivotal role in unlocking this potential, creating an environment conducive to both short-term economic recovery and long-term growth.

Looking ahead

As Aero Contractors continues to innovate and adapt to a rapidly changing market, the fare slash strategy could prove to be a model for other airlines in the region. With the potential to stimulate demand, increase tourism, and support economic recovery, Aero Contractors' bold decision reflects a forward-thinking approach to business in an unpredictable economic environment.

By focusing on affordability and customer accessibility, Aero Contractors is setting the stage for a new era of air travel in Nigeria, one that supports the growth of both the airline and the wider economy. As the country continues to rebuild and recover, initiatives like these play a crucial role in stimulating economic activity and driving the aviation sector towards sustainable growth.

FG to Optimise Revenue Collection from Federal Lands, Houses

By Adaobi Rhema Oguejiofor

As part of efforts to address Nigeria's housing deficit, the Federal Government has announced that about 10,112 housing units are currently under construction at 14 active sites across the country.

The Minister of Housing and Urban Development, Mr. Ahmed Dangiwa, revealed this while speaking at the 6th Africa Housing Awards and Industry End of Year Dinner in Abuja. He explained that these ongoing projects include 12 Renewed Hope Estates, comprising 250 housing units each, across 12 states, with two states selected from each geo-political zone.

Dangiwa also pointed out larger urban projects being developed in different parts of the country including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) with about 3,112 units, Kano with about 2,000 units, Lagos with about 2,000 units and additional cities planned in Enugu, Borno, Rivers, as well as Nasarawa.

The Housing Minister, while appreciating the Housing Africa Group and Festus Adebayo, the organisers of the award, for putting together the initiative, said that recognising the efforts of key players in the sector and encouraging them to do more was a great way of bringing about growth and development.

He maintained that the housing sector's potential as a driver of economic growth remains evident in the job opportunities that the programme has created, highlighting that with an average of 25 jobs per house, the ongoing projects have both directly and indirectly generated over 252,800 jobs for Nigerians, including skilled and unskilled labourers.

According to him, in just over a year, the ministry has been able to adopt a range of creative and diversified funding strategies in order to create the impact required. He listed the commencement of reforms in land administration, social housing and building materials

"As part of these efforts, we have provided a N100 billion off-takers guarantee to facilitate the development of the Renewed Hope Cities and Estates across Nigeria, beginning from the Renewed Hope housing project in Karsana, Abuja. We are also introducing new products like Rent Assistance, Non-interest Mortgage and Diaspora NHF Mortgage amongst others", he stated.

manufacturing, housing data and several other aspects of the housing and urban development value chain as some achievements of the ministry.

The Chief Executive of the Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (FMBN), Shehu Osidi, while also speaking at the event, said that through strategic partnerships, innovative financing models, and stakeholder engagement, the bank was deepening access to affordable housing and supporting Nigerians to achieve their homeownership aspirations.

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Osidi also thanked Adebayo and the Housing Development Advocacy Network (HDAN) for being steadfast and invaluable partners to the FMBN and their commitment to promoting sustainable housing development success.

On his part, the Former Minister of Mines and Solid Minerals, who was also the Chairman of the occasion, Musa Sada, noted that housing for some people is a human right and as such it is something that needs to have all the attention that it deserves. He stated that one area that should witness discussions and generate ideas on how to move forward is the one that has to do with building materials development, adding that the issue remains crucial to moving the sector forward.

"For us as professionals, design innovation is very important. We do not just design beautiful houses, we have to design affordable houses and we can only do it by sharing ideas by cross-referencing ourselves as professionals and seeing what we can do. For the contractors that build for us, construction techniques are also very important. We need to start discussions on producing houses, not building them.

"How do we produce houses just like any other product that we put out in the market? These are areas of discussion that I think an avenue like this can afford us and can generate ideas for us to be able to use. And for the regulators of the government, we have to start looking at the issues of very strong policies and regulations. The policies need to be made stronger. We need to come up with regulations that will give us the pleasure and the comfort to be able to operate in the sector," Sada explained.

Meanwhile, Dangiwa, in a related development, urged owners of Federal Government-owned lands and houses in Lagos State to remit their ground rent to the government's coffer.

The Minister made the call during a stakeholder-citizens engagement on land administration and a physical assessment of Banana Island, Osborne, Phase one and two, Park View/ Foreshore Estates and Shorelines.

He stated that the ministry planned to optimise its revenue collections by ensuring that all the occupiers of the Federal Government's assets pay their ground rent to enable it to improve the facilities, adding that while the Federal Government is committed to renovating, safeguarding and optimizing the value of its assets nationwide, it will also enforce strict compliance to its land and estates administration laws.

Dangiwa explained that the Ministry of Housing under the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu, had resolved to restore order in federal land and asset management, directing the estate associations to stay within their limits, as they have the right to collect facility management fees based on agreement with the occupants of the estates.

He warned that whatever the occupants agreed to pay should be used to maintain the estates in terms of electricity, roads and all other facilities utilized in the estate.

Dangiwa expressed that the stakeholder engagement on land administration provided an opportunity to share insights and contribute to the Federal Government's strategy for sustainable urban development, adding that the interactive session was a critical step toward improving land administration in Lagos and delivering on the ministry's promise of affordable housing and urban development for all Nigerians.

Onchocerciasis:

The Neglected Tropical River Blindness

By Adaobi Rhema Oguejiofor

Over the years, onchocerciasis, also known as river blindness, a parasitic disease transmitted by infected black flies has remained a major public health concern in Nigeria, significantly impacting communities, particularly in rural areas. According to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) program, Nigeria is home to the largest population at risk for river blindness globally, with over 100 million people in 32 states and the Federal Capital Territory affected. This finding makes the nation the global epicentre of the disease. Despite this, Nigeria has made remarkable progress in the worldwide effort to tackle and eliminate the river blindness disease.

Onchocerciasis, caused by the on*chocerca volvulus* worm transmitted to humans through the bites of infected black flies, causes severe visual impairment and can lead to actual blindness. It remains one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in the world, primarily affecting rural populations in sub-Saharan Africa, with small numbers of cases in Latin America and Yemen.

The Disease and Its Transmission

Onchocerciasis is transmitted through the bite of infected blackflies (Simulium species), which breed in fast-flowing rivers and streams. The blackfly vector ingests microfilariae (immature worms) when it bites an infected person. Inside the fly, the micro-filariae develop into infective larvae that are then transmitted to another human during subsequent bites. When the blackfly bites a person it injects larvae into the skin, which matures into adult worms, forming nodules under the skin. These adult worms can live for up to 15 years in the human body, during which the female worms can release millions of microfilariae migrating into the bloodstream, skin, and eyes, causing intense itching, and severe damage, including blindness.

The World Health Organization (WHO) revealed that the most devastating consequence of onchocerciasis is on the eyes. When microfilariae migrate to the eyes, they can trigger an immune response, leading to the ocular tissues' inflammation and damage. Over time, this can result in vision impairment and eventually blindness. It is estimated that onchocerciasis is the second leading infectious cause of blindness worldwide, after trachoma. It is responsible for more than 99% of cases of blindness caused by parasitic infection. However, the disease's impact is not only physical but also social and economic, as individuals with river blindness may face both stigmatisation and limited opportunities due to their disability.

Symptoms and Health Consequences

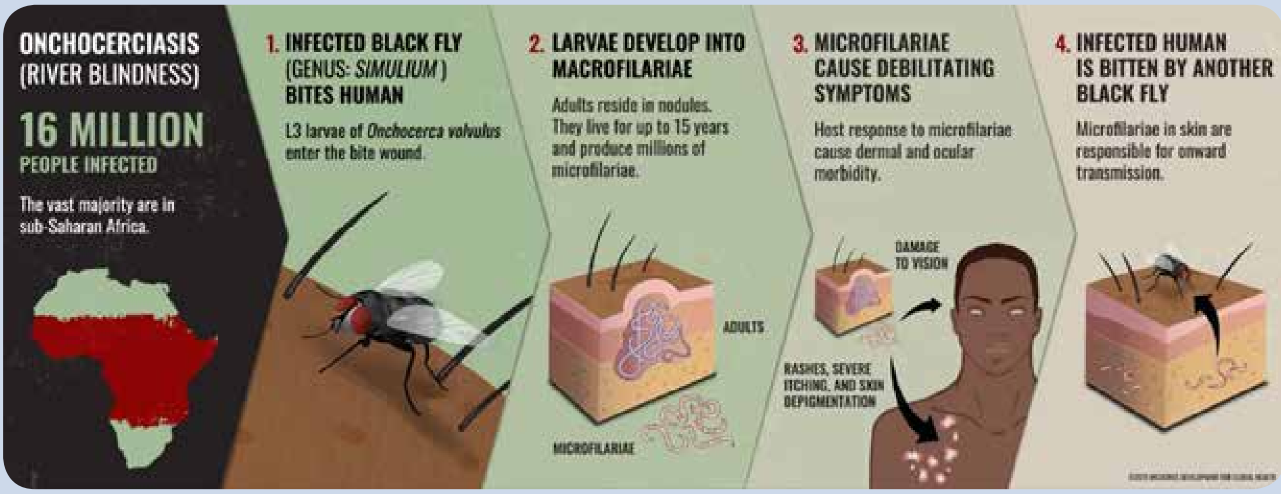
The symptoms of onchocerciasis differ depending on the stage of the infection and the organs involved:

- ***Skin Symptoms:***

The most common symptom of the disease on the skin is intense itching, which can lead to skin damage over time. This skin damage comes in the form of skin thickening and discolouration known as "leopard skin". The skin can become wrinkled, rough, and infected, causing disfigurement. Chronic inflammation can also cause atrophy, resulting in lizard skin-like changes.

- ***Eye Symptoms:***

When it comes to the eyes, the migration of microfilariae to the eyes can cause inflammation and lesions, ultimately leading to blindness if untreated. River blindness is one of the



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However, challenges remain, and continued investment, collaboration, and innovation are essential to completely eradicate this debilitating disease. In 2023, the Federal Government of Nigeria disclosed that it successfully achieved the criteria necessary to stop the treatment for river blindness in Imo, Abia, Enugu, and Anambra states, representing more than 18.9 million people.

most debilitating forms of blindness. This is because it often affects individuals in their productive years, severely limiting their quality of life.

- ***Nodules:***

Adult worms form subcutaneous nodules that can be felt under the skin. These are generally not painful but are visible and can be very disturbing.

In the long run, river blindness can have significant impacts on its victims like impairing their ability to work and perform daily activities. This, in turn, leads to loss of income and increased dependence on others, perpetuating cycles of poverty in affected communities. The stigma associated with the visible manifestations of the disease also contributes to social exclusion. Also, early exposure to onchocerciasis in childhood has been associated with epilepsy, known as onchocerciasis-associated epilepsy.

Efforts have been ongoing to eliminate the disease and its impact on communities. Thanks to large-scale public health interventions, including the mass distribution of ivermectin and increased community awareness, Nigeria has emerged as a global leader in the fight to eliminate the disease. These efforts have not only helped reduce the prevalence of river blindness but have also contributed to the country's broader goal of eliminating neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) by 2030.

However, challenges remain, and continued investment, collaboration, and innovation are essential to completely eradicate this debilitating disease. In 2023, the Federal Government of Nigeria disclosed that it successfully achieved the criteria necessary to stop the treatment for river blindness in Imo, Abia, Enugu, and Anambra states, representing more than 18.9 million people.

The Federal Government explained that the states joined 10 others that had achieved intermittent transmission of river blindness, enabling Nigeria to stop treatment for more than 28 million people, more than any other country in the world. The chairperson of Nigeria's Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee, Professor Bright Nwoke expressed how pleased that the nation, once again, served as a beacon of inspiration not only for river blindness elimination globally but also for all the countries around the world working to eliminate neglected tropical disease.

Prevention

The best way to prevent onchocerciasis is to avoid bites from blackflies. However, one can protect themselves by:

- Using the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-registered insect repellents containing N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide (DEET) or another EPA-registered active ingredient.
- Wear loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and trousers, especially during the day because that is when blackflies bite.
- People can be protected by keeping windows and doors closed or covered with screens to keep biting insects out.

Treatment

Although there is no vaccine or drug to prevent onchocerciasis infection, there are anti-parasitic drugs like ivermectin that can kill the immature worms (microfilariae). These drugs will help prevent symptoms of the disease from further developing. However, the medication will not kill adult worms or prevent them from reproducing. As a result, a person will need to take the medication every 6 months for 10 to 15 years, which is the potential lifespan of the parasite.

According to ***Medical News Today,*** there is also an off-label medication like doxycycline that has the ability to kill adult worms. Prescribing a drug off-label means using it in a way that differs from its approved use. This antibiotic essentially starves the worms to death by killing the bacteria they feed on.

There is a global campaign to eliminate onchocerciasis transmission in endemic areas. The campaign focuses on controlling blackflies and giving medicine that kills the microscopic worms to entire affected communities. Successful campaigns to eliminate onchocerciasis have taken place in some countries, including countries in the Western part of the world.

Concerns have also been raised about the long-term sustainability of ivermectin treatment, particularly as drug resistance in blackflies and parasites may develop over time. Continued research into vaccines and new therapeutic strategies is therefore critical to achieving the goal of global eradication.

The World Health Organization has set an ambitious goal of eliminating onchocerciasis as a public health problem by 2030. To achieve this, comprehensive strategies must continue, focusing on expanding access to treatment, improving surveillance systems, and increasing community awareness. The partnership between governments, international organisations, and local communities will be crucial in overcoming the remaining barriers.

As progress continues, the long-term vision for onchocerciasis is not just control but complete eradication, eliminating the disease's devastating impact on the lives of millions and restoring sight to those who have lost it.

NAJA Auto Awards 2024: Celebrating Excellence in Nigerian Auto Industry

By Adaobi Rhema Oguejiofor

Coscharis Motors, Globe Motors, Toyota Nigeria, CFAO, Weststar Associates and Lanre Shittu Motors (LSM) have emerged as big winners at the 2024 Nigerian Automotive Journalists Association (NAJA) Auto Awards

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The Honorary Awards event, which took place at Oriental Hotel, Victoria Island, Lagos, recognized various categories within the industry, ranging from vehicle innovation to excellence in service.

Globe Motors emerged as the Most Resilient Company of the Year, while Coscharis Motors was crowned the Multi-Luxury Brand of the Year along with the luxury SUV of the Year with Range Rover Autobiography. Meanwhile, Toyota Nigeria Limited (TNL) and the Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer of Lanre Shittu Motors (LSM) were honoured as Auto Company of the Decade and Auto Personality of the Year respectively.

CFAO on the other hand, won the Outstanding After-Sale Service, Product Launches of the Year with the Toyota Land Cruiser Prado and Suzuki Vitara, and the Most Enterprising Auto Company of the Year, while Chief Chidi Anyaegbu MFR (Founder, Chisco Motors) was recognised as the Transport icon of the Year. Also, Mrs. Karima Okunola of Mikano Motors bagged the Auto Marketing Manager of the Year.

The high-flying companies were commended for their commitment to providing quality vehicles and top-notch aftersales services, which have contributed to their solid reputation in the Nigerian auto market over the years.

Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing was also celebrated for its pioneering role in local vehicle production, while Nord took home the CNG-powered mini bus brand and A9 launch recognition. Weststar's Mercedes-Benz S-Class won luxury car of the year.

Similarly, Carloha with its handling of Chery was adjudged the most innovative company of the year, while Dangote Sinotruk won the Heavy-duty Truck Manufacturer of the Year, and Lanre Shittu's JAC was again awarded the Heavy-duty Truck of the Year.

Meanwhile, Coscharis Motors Plc., a leading automobile dealer and the exclusive representative of the Renault brand in Nigeria, has recently launched into the Nigerian market, the new Renault Taliant, a car known for its frenzied fuel efficiency.

The Branch Manager, Coscharis Motors Abuja, Leticia Onuzulike, while speaking about the car at the recently concluded Abuja International Motor Fair, where the vehicle was unveiled, highlighted the Taliant's unique features, including fuel efficiency, safety, comfort, ample storage capacity, high ground clearance, and a reliable suspension system.

"The major challenge amongst automobile enthusiasts in our market right now is the high cost of fueling their cars. Taliant has come to address that with its 1.0-litre turbocharged engine. This means that Taliant consumes far less fuel per kilometre compared to other cars in its class, helping you save significantly on fuel expenses," she said.

Onuzulike, as part of the launch, announced an exclusive 10% discount for customers purchasing the Taliant or any other Renault variant displayed during the fair, reaffirming Coscharis Motors' commitment to delivering quality, efficiency, and innovation.

Netflix's Potential Exit: A Blow to Nigeria's Booming Entertainment Industry?

By Patience Chat Moses

The Nigerian entertainment industry has been abuzz with rumours of Netflix's impending exit from the country. As the global streaming giant considers leaving the Nigerian market, concerns are growing about the potential impact on local creators, streaming services, and the economy as a whole. Reports that Netflix may be pulling out of Nigeria have generated reactions through the country's entertainment sector. With the streaming giant's presence, opportunities have opened for Nigerian creators and audiences alike, its potential departure raises important questions about the future of the industry. While Netflix has not officially confirmed this, the news has sent shockwaves throughout the Nigerian entertainment industry. If true, Netflix's exit from Nigeria would have significant implications for the country's entertainment sector. Here are a few possible consequences:

Loss of opportunities for Nigerian creators: Netflix has been a major platform for Nigerian creators to showcase their work to a global audience. If Netflix exits Nigeria, these creators may lose a significant outlet for their content.

Reduced access to international content: Netflix offers a vast library of international content, including popular TV shows and movies. If Netflix exits Nigeria, Nigerians may lose access to this content, which could be a significant blow to fans of international entertainment.

Impact on Nigeria's growing streaming market: Netflix's exit could also have a negative impact on Nigeria's growing streaming market. Other streaming services may be deterred from entering the market, and existing services may struggle to fill the gap left by Netflix.

telegraph.ng

Economic implications: Netflix's exit could also have economic implications for Nigeria. The company has invested significantly in the country's entertainment industry, and its exit could lead to job losses and a decline in economic activity.

However, it's worth noting that Netflix's exit from Nigeria may also create opportunities for local streaming services to fill the gap. Nigerian streaming services such as Iroko TV, Africa Magic, and Showmax may see an increase in subscriptions and revenue as Nigerians turn to local alternatives for their entertainment needs.

Overall, Netflix's rumoured exit from Nigeria has significant implications for the country's entertainment industry. While there are potential negative consequences, there are also opportunities for local streaming services to grow and thrive. As the situation develops, it will be important to keep a close eye on the impact of Netflix's exit on Nigeria's entertainment sector. The potential exit of Netflix from the Nigerian market raises important questions about the future of the country's entertainment industry. While there are concerns about the impact on local creators and streaming services, there are also opportunities for growth and innovation. As the situation develops, stakeholders in the industry must come together to discuss the implications and explore ways to mitigate any negative effects. By working together, Nigeria's entertainment industry can continue to thrive and provide opportunities for local talent to shine. In the end, the potential exit of Netflix from Nigeria is a complex issue with both positive and negative implications. While it is true that the departure of a major player like Netflix may have a negative impact on local creators and streaming services, it is also important to recognize the opportunities that exist for growth and innovation. By taking a balanced perspective and considering all the factors at play, stakeholders in the industry can work together to build a vibrant and sustainable entertainment sector that benefits everyone involved.

Decision Making: Your Power, Your Choice

By Abdulhafiz Mohammed

Life is full of decisions. From the moment we wake up, we're faced with choices—what to eat, what to wear, whether to study or binge-watch our favourite series. While some decisions feel small, others like relationships, or future goals, appear overwhelming.

As teenagers, life can feel like one big decision tree—what to wear, what courses to take, or even what snacks to grab. Let's talk about how to navigate this wild maze called decision-making.

For most teenagers, making decisions feels like standing at a crossroads with no map. Why is it so tricky?

1. Fear of Regret: What if you make the wrong choice? That "what if" can be paralysing.

2. Too Many Options: Sometimes, the sheer number of choices makes it hard to pick just one.

3. Perfectionism: The desire to make the "perfect" decision can leave you stuck. Instead of choosing and moving forward, perfectionism often leads to endless analysis and self-doubt.

4. Lack of Confidence: When you doubt your judgment, every decision feels like a potential mistake. This insecurity can stop you from trusting your instincts.

5. Fear of Judgment: Worrying about what others will think of your decision can make the process harder. You might prioritise approval over what's genuinely best for you.

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Types of Decisions You'll Face

- Everyday Decisions: What to eat, what to wear, or which activities to join. These might seem small, but they reflect your priorities and help you build habits.
- Future-Focused Decisions: What subjects to study, what career to pursue, or what goals to set. These might seem far away, but small choices now build the foundation for your future.
- Social Decisions: How to handle conflicts, or whether to stand up for someone. These choices shape your relationships and values.

How to Make Better Decisions

1. Know Yourself

Understanding your values is key. What matters to you? Is it honesty, loyalty, creativity, or success? Knowing this makes it easier to choose what aligns with your goals.

2. Don't Rush

Sometimes the best decision is made after you take a moment to think. Pause and ask yourself: Does this decision reflect who I want to be?

3. Consider the Long-Term

Sure, skipping that project might feel good now, but how will it affect your grades? Always think about how today's choices impact your future.

4. Seek Advice

Talk to people you trust. They don't have to decide for you, but hearing different perspectives can help.

5. Learn from Your Mistakes

Not every decision will be perfect—and that's okay. Mistakes are part of growth. What matters is that you reflect and try to do better next time.

Finally, one of the most empowering things about being a teenager is realising that you're in control. Sure, adults might have more say right now, but your decisions today pave the way for your independence tomorrow.

So, the next time you're stuck on a choice, remind yourself: it's your life, your decision, your power. And whatever you decide, own it like the boss you are.

Teenage years are messy, but they're also magical. Embrace the chaos and grow into the person you're destined to be.

You've got this.

Abdulhafiz Mohammed writes from Kaduna

DEAL OF THE MONTH

FIFA Confirms Saudi Arabia as 2034 World Cup Host in Landmark Decision

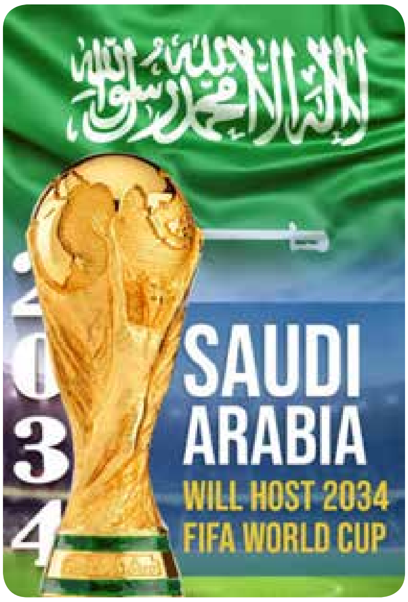
By Ibrahim B. Muhammed

The Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA) has officially awarded Saudi Arabia hosting rights for the 2034 FIFA World Cup, marking a monumental achievement for the Gulf nation and solidifying its growing global sports influence. The confirmation came in December 2024 after Saudi Arabia's sole bid proceeded unchallenged following Australia's withdrawal.

Saudi Arabia's successful bid is the culmination of its broader Vision 2030, a national initiative to diversify its economy through sports, tourism and infrastructure. Hosting the World Cup places the kingdom firmly at the centre of the global football map. Saudi officials have already committed billions of dollars to modernise stadiums, enhance transportation networks and develop state-of-the-art facilities to welcome fans, players and media from around the globe.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman called the decision a "transformational moment for Saudi football and global sport." The tournament is expected to showcase Saudi Arabia's technological advancements, drive economic growth, boost tourism and strengthen international ties.

This announcement cements Saudi Arabia's emergence as a major sports player. Over the past decade, the country has hosted numerous high-profile events, including the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, heavyweight boxing title fights, and golf tournaments like LIV Golf. It has also invested heavily in football, highlighted by Cristiano Ronaldo's move to Al-Nassr FC with other top international stars joining the Saudi Pro League.



The World Cup will follow the successful 2022 tournament in Qatar, which demonstrated the Middle East's capability to deliver globally watched events. FIFA President Gianni Infantino emphasised that Saudi Arabia's infrastructure, resources and growing football culture make it an ideal host for the 2034 event.

While many stakeholders celebrated the announcement, concerns remain regarding human rights, workers' welfare and the tournament's environmental sustainability. FIFA has encountered much pressure in recent years to ensure transparency and adherence to its sustainability goals, especially in regions with significant climate challenges.

Critics have pointed to labour conditions and the treatment of migrant workers during infrastructure projects. Saudi Arabia has responded with promises of labour reforms, rigorous oversight and a commitment to delivering a socially responsible and sustainable tournament.

Global reactions have been mixed. Football fans across the Middle East have hailed the move as a proud regional achievement, while human rights organisations have urged FIFA to hold Saudi Arabia accountable for ethical labour and human rights standards.

Hosting the World Cup is projected to bring billions in economic benefits. Infrastructure upgrades, increased job opportunities and a tourism boom are key elements of the anticipated impact. Saudi Arabia's central location also positions it as an ideal host, connecting fans across Asia, Europe and Africa.

Broadcasters and sponsors are set to benefit from unprecedented viewership and commercial opportunities, further driving football's growth in new markets. Additionally, the tournament aligns with FIFA's ambitions to expand its global reach, particularly in Asia and the Middle East.

As preparations begin, Saudi Arabia will focus on delivering a tournament that meets FIFA's ambitious standards. With state-of-the-art stadiums planned, including newly built and upgraded venues, the kingdom aims to set a new benchmark for modern football tournaments.

The 2034 FIFA World Cup promises to be more than a sporting event. It represents a turning point for Saudi Arabia as it continues its journey to becoming a global leader in sports, tourism and entertainment. For football fans worldwide, it marks another chapter in the sport's growing global footprint.

ATHLETE TURNED INVESTOR

Serena Williams: From Tennis Icon to Global Business Mogul – Inside Her Financial Empire

By Ibrahim B. Muhammed

Serena Williams, widely regarded as one of the greatest athletes of all time, has not only redefined women's tennis but also carved out an impressive legacy off the court. With an estimated net worth of $300 million in 2024, Williams continues to expand her influence as a global businesswoman, investor, and cultural icon.

On-Court Success: A Foundation of Excellence:

Williams' illustrious tennis career, which includes 23 Grand Slam singles titles and four Olympic gold medals, laid the foundation for her financial success. Over two decades, she earned over $94 million in prize money, the highest of any female tennis player to date. Her dominance on the court made her a magnet for endorsements and sponsorships, cementing her position as a marketable force in global sports.

However, for Serena, success on the court was just the beginning. Even before retiring in 2022, she had already positioned herself as a savvy investor and entrepreneur, preparing for life after tennis.

Major Endorsement Deals: Nike and Beyond:

Serena's marketability transcends sports, making her a favourite for global brands. Her long-term partnership with Nike remains one of her most iconic deals. Valued at around $55 million initially, the collaboration has included signature clothing lines and footwear collections, further solidifying her presence in the fashion and fitness industries.

In addition to Nike, Serena has maintained lucrative endorsement partnerships with brands like Gatorade, Pepsi, Beats by Dre, Wilson Sporting Goods, and Chase Bank. Her endorsements have brought her over $200 million in career earnings, showcasing her appeal as a household name worldwide.

Entrepreneurial Ventures: Serena Ventures Leading the Way:

Beyond endorsements, Williams has emerged as a formidable entrepreneur through her investment firm, Serena Ventures, which she launched in 2014. The firm has a clear mission: to support startups led by women and underrepresented founders. To date, Serena Ventures has invested in over 60 companies, spanning industries such as health, e-commerce, and fintech. In 2022, Serena announced that her firm raised $111 million to invest in early-stage businesses, signalling her commitment to diversifying investment opportunities.

Serena Williams

Serena Ventures' portfolio includes companies like Daily Harvest, MasterClass, and Andela, many of which have grown into billion-dollar enterprises. Williams' keen eye for innovation and her dedication to empowering marginalised communities have distinguished her as a trailblazer in venture capital.

Fashion, Wellness and Media: Expanding Her Influence:

Serena's passion for fashion led her to launch her clothing line, S by Serena, which celebrates inclusivity and empowerment. The line has garnered praise for its bold, stylish designs that cater to diverse body types.

In the wellness space, Williams co-founded Will Perform, a startup offering muscle recovery products, including topical pain relief and cooling gels for athletes and fitness enthusiasts. This venture underscores her commitment to health and recovery, themes she prioritized throughout her career.

Her influence transcends into entertainment as well. Serena and her sister Venus are part-owners of the Miami Dolphins, one of the first major NFL ownership stakes by women. Additionally, she co-produced the critically acclaimed film "King Richard", which highlights her family's extraordinary journey in shaping two tennis legends. The movie received widespread acclaim and reinforced Serena's cultural impact beyond sports.

Real Estate and Personal Investments:

Serena Williams has also built an impressive real estate portfolio, with properties in Beverly Hills, Palm Beach Gardens, and Paris. These multimillion-dollar investments reflect her business acumen and strategic approach to wealth management.

Her homes are often featured in lifestyle media, showcasing her taste for luxury and design while highlighting her ability to balance life as a mother, wife, and global icon.

A Legacy Beyond Tennis:

At 43 years old, Serena Williams remains an unparalleled example of how athletes can transition from sports stardom to business success. Her empire continues to grow through ventures that reflect her passion, intelligence, and commitment to driving meaningful change.

Whether through Serena Ventures, her fashion brand, or groundbreaking endorsements, Williams' influence is felt across sports, business, and philanthropy. With a net worth of $300 million and still growing, she stands as an inspiration for athletes, entrepreneurs, and future generations worldwide. Serena Williams has proven that winning off the court can be just as impactful as winning on it.

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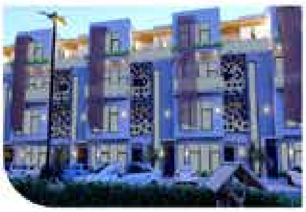




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