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Against the perennial problems of unreliable and epileptic electric power supply in Nigeria, the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) by President Buhari-led government is, of course, a strategic and systematic approach to solving the country's power challenges. ***Enam Obiosio*** *looks at the development, so far, with the initiative and here reports.*

The federal government has assured that the collaborative effort with the implementing partner, Siemens, on the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) is on track. The government said the project was to bring positive change to the Nigerian power sector.

According to the Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, the government had been driving the process by coordinating key stakeholders' input and working with the Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, to secure financing and enter into efficient commercial and contractual arrangements to deliver the PPI.

Analysts believe that one of the most important ongoing interventions to support the grid will be the delivery and installation, later this year, of 10 mobile transmission substations and 10 mobile transformers, "to resolve capacity constraints in the transmission network across the country."

Last December, the Federal Executive Council (FEC) approved the purchase of the mobile substations and transformers from Siemens (for an initial intervention). The government has made 15 percent down payment, and raised letter of credit (LC) for the balance. Reliably, delivery is expected from Q3 2022.

Recall that the federal government not long ago said that its electricity deal with Siemens was on course, stating that the first phase of the programme under the Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) would increase power supply to about 40 million Nigerians.

In addition, the contract which would see the eventual ramp up of the country's generation capacity to 25,000 megawatts, the government stated, would create at least 11,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Then, speaking at the commencement of the PPI training on network development studies, by FGN Power Company, the firm overseeing the Siemens power project, in Abuja, Mrs. Ahmed said that the unveiling of the training session was a milestone under the initiative.

The training aspect of the PPI, she said, was to empower engineers with tools and training on network modelling and system development studies.

The flag-off of the training, she noted, was intended to deliver capacity development for engineers in network development, using proprietary simulation software by Siemens.

"The first phase of the PPI will provide over 40 million people with more reliable electricity supply, create 11,000 direct and indirect jobs for Nigerians from power system engineers to electricians and contractors.

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DEBT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

NIGERIA

PRESS RELEASE

NIGERIA RAISES USD 1.25 BILLION THROUGH EUROBONDS

Nigeria has today priced a USD 1.250 billion 7-year Eurobond in the International Capital Market (ICM). This development makes Nigeria the first African country to access the ICM in 2022. Nigeria's ability to access the ICM at this time is a confirmation of her established presence in the ICM and engagement with investors on a continuous basis.

The Offer was launched at an Initial Price Thoughts of 8.75% per annum and on the back of strong investor demand, Nigeria was able to revise the price guidance to 8.5% per annum. The Order Book continued to grow, reaching a peak of USD 4 billion. The Order Book included many quality investors in the United States, Europe and Asia. With this strong investor interest, the price was tightened to 8.375% per annum, the Order Book still remained high at USD 3.676 billion and retained the quality investors. Nigerian investors also participated in the Offer with a total subscription of USD 60 million.

The proceeds of the Eurobond will be used to finance critical capital projects in the Budget to bridge the deficit in infrastructure and strengthen Nigeria's economic recovery. Equally important, it would contribute directly and in full to the level of Nigeria's External Reserves.

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March 17, 2022

FG Assures Of Efficient Commercial, Contractual Arrangements...

CONTINUED FROM COVER

"This will in turn improve the standard of living while providing homes and businesses with constant, reliable and affordable electricity supply," the minister said.

While lauding President Muhammadu Buhari, "for his tireless effort in supporting the efforts of sector improvements, in particular the PPI," Ahmed explained that the first phase would witness the immediate rise in generation by 2,000 megawatts.

The Honourable Minister is the chairperson of the board of FGN Power Co, while members are the Ministers of Power, Works and Housing as well as the Minister of Justice, the Director-General (DG) of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE).

In his remarks, the Minister of Power, Mr. Abubakar Aliyu, who was represented by the Minister of State, Power, Mr. Goddy Jedy-Agba, reiterated that in 18 months, the Siemens project would add 2,000 megawatts to the national grid, raising it to about 7,000 megawatts.

"The objective of the PPI is to increase the end-to-end grid operational capacity of the power system in Nigeria to 25 gigawatts, but the focus in the next 18 months is to deliver the first additional 2,000 megawatts.

"This will create a rapid transformation in the on-grid electricity value chain, spur economic growth, create jobs and opportunities for Nigerian youth and enterprises," he noted.

He pointed out that the government was prepared to solve the problems of epileptic power supply in Nigeria once and for all, stressing that it is the reason the federal government launched the programme.

Mrs. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Hon. Minister Of Finance, Budget And National Planning

According to him, the initiative would help to achieve commercial autonomy by facilitating investments in critical infrastructure for power delivery and service to Nigerians.

"This project is expected to modernise, rehabilitate and expand the national grid by investing in the electricity value chain (generation, transmission, and distribution systems) of the power sector.

"Our implementing partner, Siemens will assist with world-class experience in power system reforms like they have done recently in Egypt," he noted.

Commenting, the Project Director, Siemens Energy, Nigeria, Sean Manley, said that Siemens had brought in trainers from Germany, explaining that the company would not relent until the different phases were executed.

Also speaking, the Managing Director (MD) of FGN Power, Kenny Anuwe, said that the training was the first Power System Simulation Software (PSS) session under the Power Technology International (PTI) from Germany.

He noted that the training would cut across the power sector value chain comprising the generation, transmission and distribution to be handled by the National Power Training Institute of Nigeria (NAPTIN).

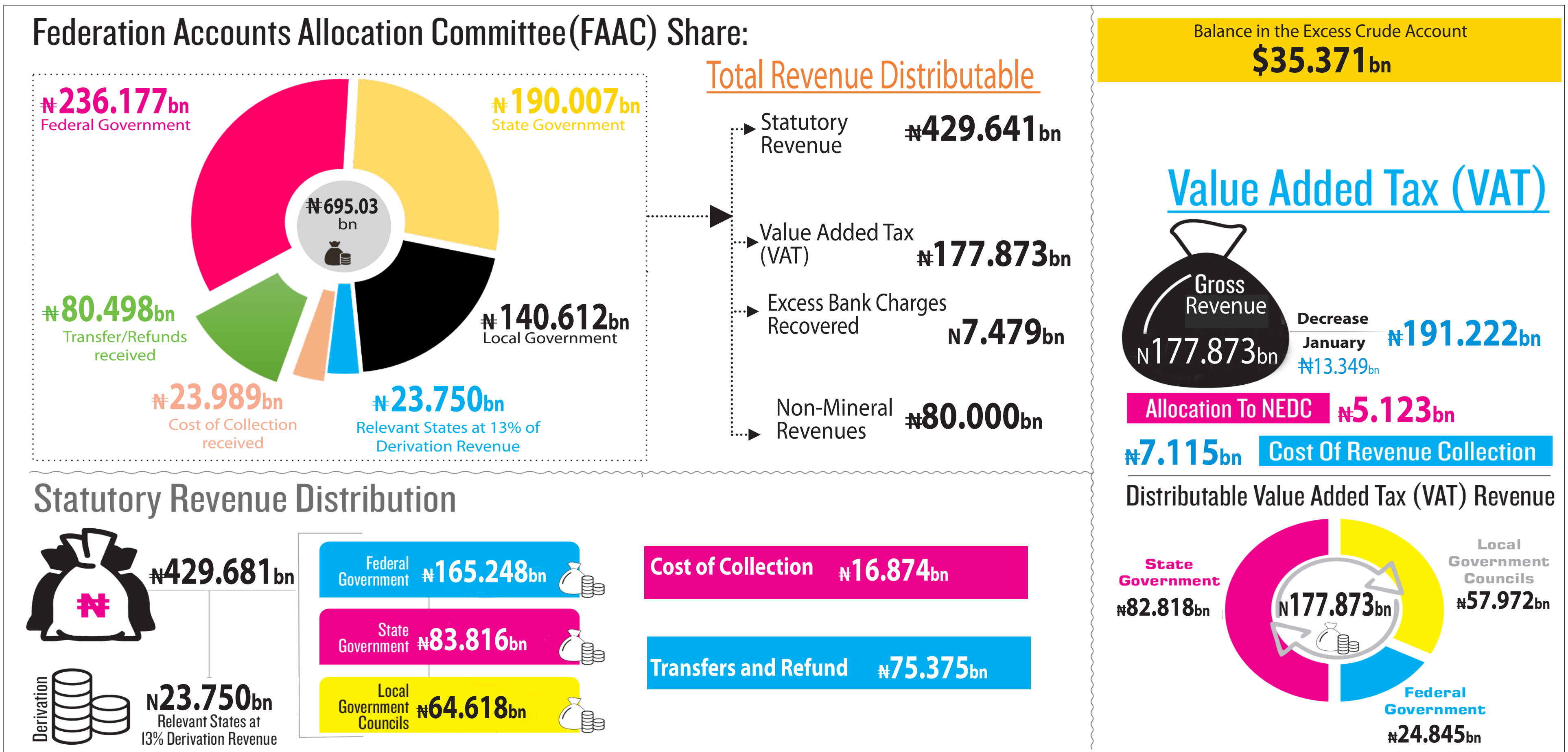
According to him, the training would happen over the next four years on different levels to ramp up the competency of those that will be involved in handling the project.

Mr. Anuwe assured that the project will resolve the existing bottlenecks in transmission and distribution networks, which will increase electricity access across Nigeria.

"It is important to stress that the benefits of constant and reliable electricity will boost economic activities; improve the lives of small, medium and micro enterprises across and deliver the much-needed power supply across the country.

"I want to assure you that FGN Power Company will do its best to deliver on this project to ensure greater success and sustainability," he stated.

FAAC: FG, States, LG Receives N695bn For February



According to the Communiqué, in the month of February 2022, Companies Income Tax (CIT), Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT) and Oil and Gas Royalties decreased significantly while Value Added Tax (VAT), Import and Excise Duties decreased marginally.

THE PRESIDENTIAL POWER INITIATIVE (PPI)

The Presidential Power Initiative (PPI) - aka "Siemens" - has 5 workstreams:
—Transmission (substations, transformers, transmission lines)
—Distribution (substations, transformers, etc)
—Network Simulation
—Meter Data Mgt (revenue transparency)
—Training / Capacity Building

FGN Power Company
PRESIDENTIAL POWER INITIATIVE

Overview of PPI Workstreams

Transmission Projects

- Brownfield: Upgradation of transmission substations and transformers.
- Greenfield: Building new substations & installing transformers
- Transmission lines

Distribution Projects

- Brownfield: Upgradation of distribution substations and replacement of transformers.
- Greenfield: Building new substations & installing new transformers
- Distribution lines
- Loose equipment like OVCBs, AR, Relays, DTs etc.

Network Simulations (PTI)

- Deployment of power system simulation software to all utilities
- Data collection for all utilities
- Training of utilities in the areas of network planning and simulation.

Meter Data Management System (MDMS)

- Provision of a Central Meter Data Management System that will integrate the metering systems for all utilities.
- Eliminate Revenue leakages
- Ensures transparency and accountability

Training for Local Engineers

- Train Local Engineers in partnership with NAPTIN
- Train Engineering Students in our Universities
- Train Engineers from Utilities

PPI Achievements

- **Procured Transmission Mobile Substation and Transformers:** The FGN Power Company identified high-impact targets, including the delivery of 10 mobile transmission substations and 10 mobile transformers in Q3, 2022. The equipment will serve as intervention facilities to resolve capacity constraints in the transmission network across the country that align with the distribution network requirements. The first tranche is expected to be delivered in Q3 of 2022. Discussions on the main transmission scope of the project has advanced.
    - Secured Federal Executive Council Approval: The FGN Power Company has secured FEC approval for the purchase of mobile substation and mobile transformers from Siemens.
    - Following the Council's approval of the purchase, FGNPC has paid 15% of the contract sum as down payment to Siemens. The production has since commenced, and delivery is expected from Q3 of 2022.
    - FGN Power Company has raised a Letter of Credit for the outstanding 85% of the project cost in favour of Siemens. The LC is expected to be swapped with the proceeds from financing upon reaching financial close, which is expected in May 2022.
- **Negotiated Pilot Project Term Sheet:** FGNPC, through the Transaction Adviser – Africa Finance Corporation (AFC), negotiated the pilot project's financing term sheet for the supply of mobile units with the German Banks, Euler Hermes, Ministry of Finance and Debt Management Office. The Pilot Project Term Sheet is expected to be concluded in May 2022.
- **Engagement of Transaction Advisors:** FGNPC has engaged and onboarded African Finance Corporation (AFC) as transaction advisors for the PPI implementation. The engagement of AFC includes that of third-party consultants for the international and local legal advisory services, Environment and Social Consultant, Security Consultant, Insurance Adviser as well as Tax and Model Auditor.
- **Ongoing Training for Network Studies (PTI):** Power Company and Siemens have commenced the PTI Training program. The beneficiaries of the training programs include TCN, DisCos, NAPTIN, FGN Power Company and NERC. The PTI training will be for a period of 4 years. This workstream is intended to provide engineers with capacity building on power system simulations, network studies, and system planning skills. FGN Power Company has also deployed the simulation software to all utilities and relevant Government agencies.
- **Presidential Approval of Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) companies:** Following the submission of Siemen's nominations of EPC companies for consideration, Mr. President had graciously granted approval for the Distribution onshore EPC companies alongside EPC's for execution of line projects. The onboarding process for the EPCs is currently underway.
- **Submission of Offers by Siemens:** Siemens has submitted indicative offer to the distribution offshore activities. The detail breakdown of the prices of individual equipment will be shared with the DisCos in due course.

Tomato Jumps 46.03%, Bread 34.1% In Feb – NBS

Albert Egbede

The price of 500g bread, a popular food amongst Nigerians jumped 34.11 percent in February, signifying the astronomical increase in the price of food items in the country.

Also, the average price of 1kg tomato increased by 46.03 percent to N393.08 in February 2022 from N269.18 reported in February 2021 according to the Selected Food Price Watch report for the month of February 2022 released Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

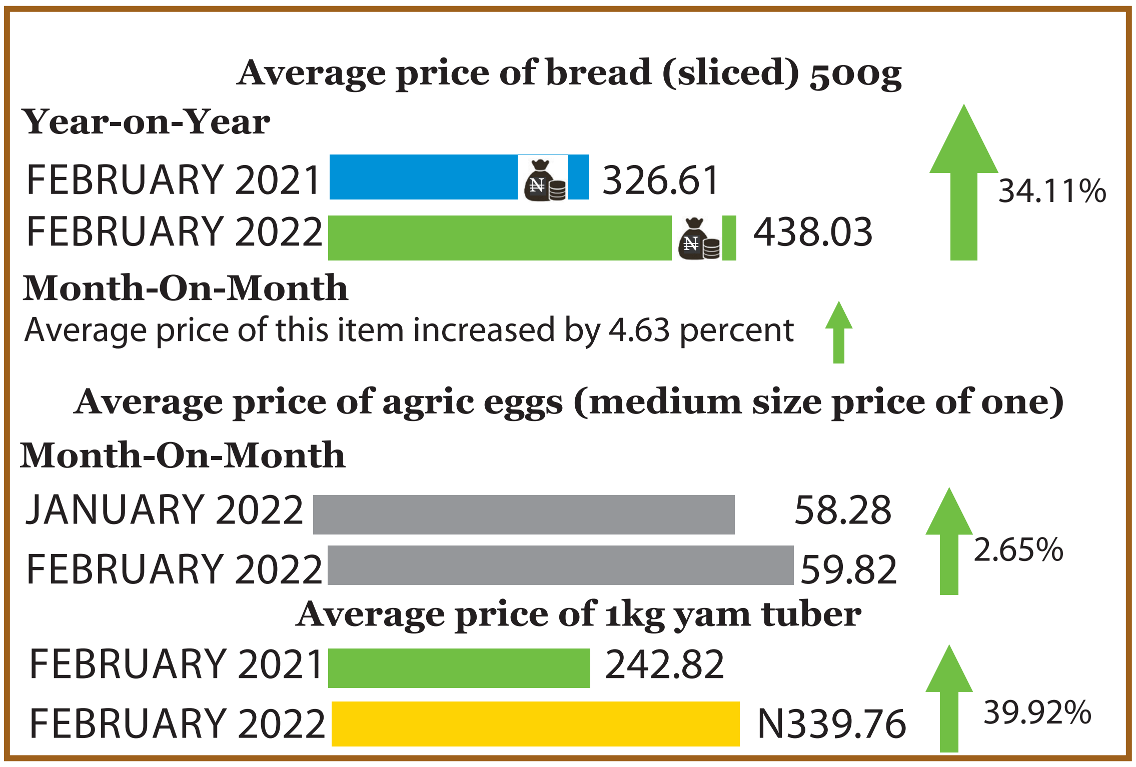
The NBS also noted that other food items like beans, eggs and groundnut oil also recorded price increase.

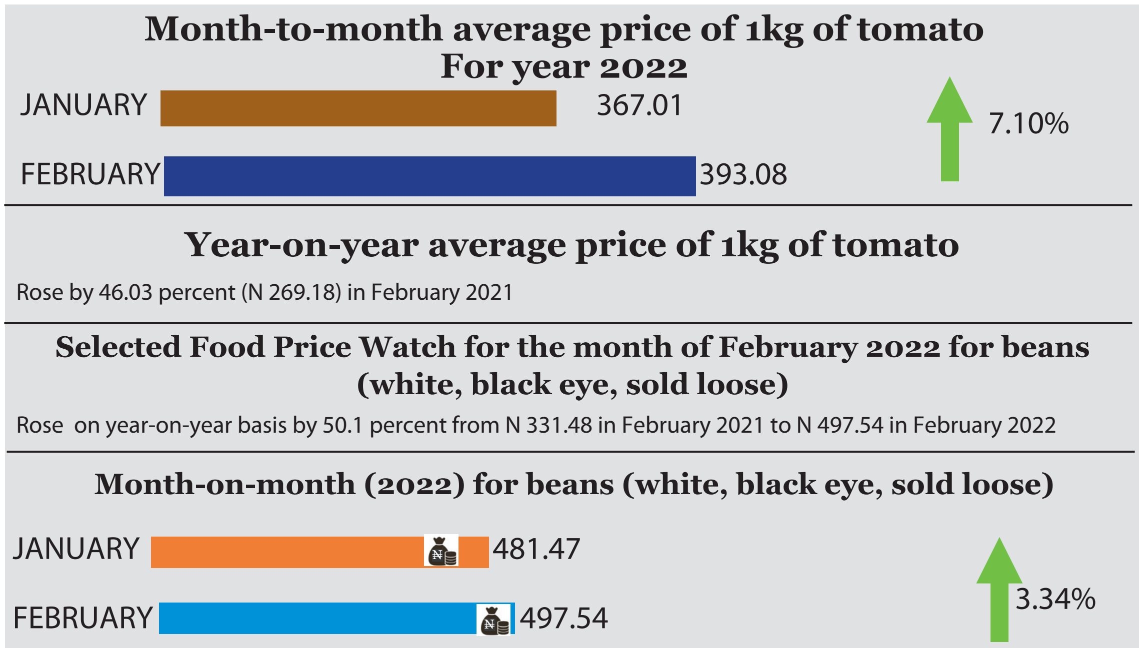
"The average price of 1kg tomato increased from N367.01 in January 2022 to N393.08 in February 2022 indicating 7.10 percent rise. Year-on-year analysis shows that the average price also rose by 46.03 percent (N 269.18) in February 2021," the NBS stated.

"Selected Food Price Watch for the month of February 2022 shows that the average price of 1kg of beans (white, black eye, sold loose) rose on year-on-year basis by 50.1 percent from N 331.48 in February 2021 to N 497.54 in February 2022.

"Similarly, there was an increase of 3.34percent month-on-month from N 481.47 in January 2022 to N 497.54 in February 2022.

The average price of bread sliced 500g, also, increased year-on-year by 34.11 percent from N 326.61 in February 2021 to N438.03 in February 2022. On month-on-month, the average price of this item increased by 4.63 percent (N418.65) in February 2021."





The Bureau added, "Likewise, the average price of 1kg tomato increased from N367.01 in January 2022 to N393.08 in February 2022 indicating 7.10 percent rise. Year-on-year analysis shows that the average price also rose by 46.03 percent (N 269.18) in February 2021.

"In the same vein, the average price of agric eggs (medium size price of one) increased by 2.65 percent from N58.28 in January 2022 to N59.82 in February 2022. Also, the average price of 1kg yam tuber rose by 39.92 percent from N242.82 in February 2021 to N339.76 in February 2022.

"Similarly, the average price of groundnut oil: 1 bottle, specify bottle stood at N971.01 in February 2022; this shows an increase of 3.18 percent (N941.10) in January 2022. In the same way, the year-on-year analysis shows an increase of 43.46 percent (N676.87) in February 2021.

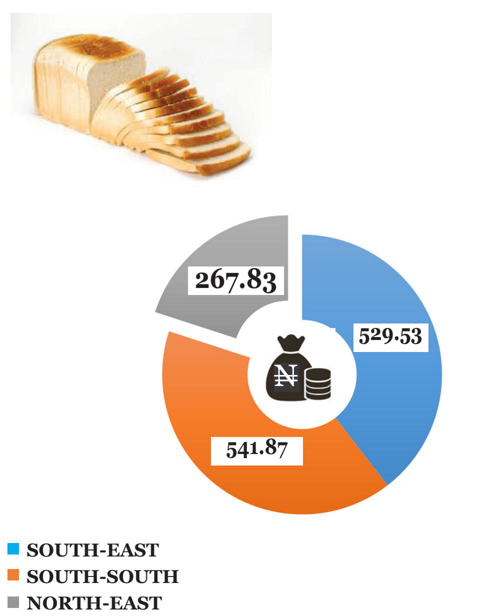
The reporter noted that Ebonyi recorded the highest average price of beans, with Bauchi recording the lowest, while Abuja and Gombe recorded the highest and lowest average prices of sliced bread respectively.

"State price distribution shows that Ebonyi recorded the highest average price of beans (white, black eye, sold loose) with N880.59 and the lowest was reported in Bauchi with N243.67. Furthermore, the highest average price of bread sliced 500g was recorded in Abuja with N630.33 while the lowest was recorded in Gombe with N255.2. Taraba recorded the lowest price of 1kg tomato with N133.39 while the highest price was reported in Edo with N711.67

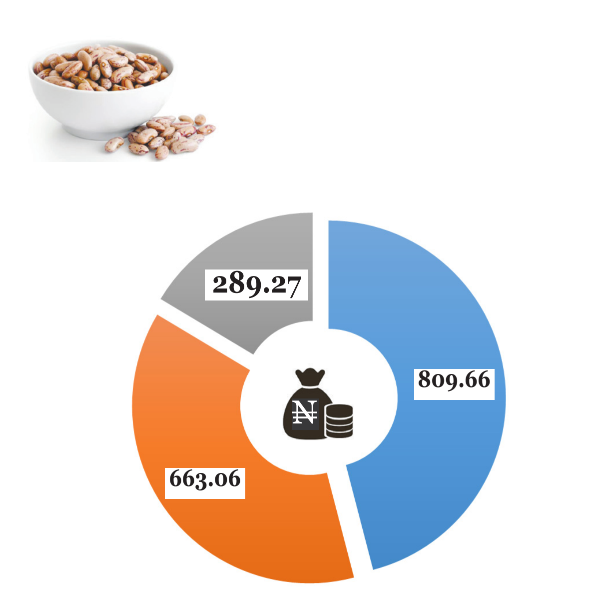
"Analysis by zone shows that South-East recorded the highest average price of beans "brown sold loose" with N809.66 followed by South-South with N633.06, while the North-East recorded the least price with N289.27. Also, South-South and South-East recorded an average price of bread sliced 500g with N541.87 and N529.53 respectively whereas the lowest average price was recorded in North-East with N267.83. The average price of 1kg of tomato was highest in South-East with N637.92 followed by South-South N630.72 while the lowest price was in North-East with N151.56."

ANALYSIS OF ZONES

AVERAGE PRICE OF 500g OF BREAD

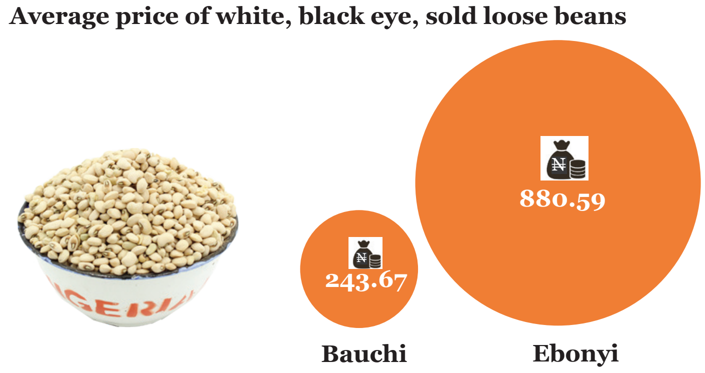


AVERAGE PRICE OF BEANS (BROWN SOLD LOOSE)



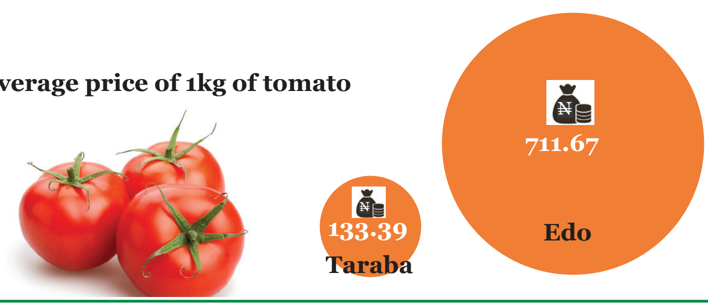
STATE PRICE DISTRIBUTION

Average price of white, black eye, sold loose beans



Average price of 500g sliced bread

Average price of 1kg of tomato



DMO Gives Rationale Behind Rising Debt

• Floats Eurobonds In International Capital Markets

By Musa Ibrahim

The Debt Management Office (DMO) has explained the rationale behind Nigeria's rising debt, saying that country's total public debt as December ended 2021 stood at N39.556 trillion or USD95.779 billion.

This amount represents the total external and domestic debts of the federal government, 36 state governments and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). The comparable figure for December, 2020, was N32.915 trillion or USD 86.392 billion.

Director-General (DG) of DMO, Ms. Patience Oniha, at the public presentation of the nation's debt data in Abuja, stated that the public debt stock for December, 2021 includes new borrowings by the federal government and the sub nationals.

The DG recalled that for the federal government, the 2021 Appropriation and Supplementary Acts, included total new borrowings from domestic and external sources of N5.489 trillion to partly finance the budget deficit.

She said: "Borrowings for this purpose and disbursements by multilateral and bilateral creditors account for a significant portion of the increase in the debt stock. Increases were recorded in the debt stock of the states and the FCT".

Continuing, Ms. Oniha further explained that new borrowings were raised from diverse sources, primarily through the issuance of the Eurobonds, Sovereign Sukuk and FGN Bonds, adding that "these capital raising were utilised to finance capital projects and support economic recovery".

"With the total public debt stock to gross domestic product (GDP) as at December 31, 2021, of 22.47 percent, the debt-to-GDP ratio still remains within Nigeria's self-imposed limit of 40 percent. This ratio is prudent when compared to the 55 percent limit advised by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for countries in Nigeria's peer group, as well as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convergence Ratio of 70 percent".

● **Ms. Patience Oniha,** Director-General (DG) of DMO

"The federal government is mindful of the relatively high debt-to-revenue ratio and has initiated various measures to increase revenues through the Strategic Revenue Growth Initiative (SRGI) and the introduction of Finance Acts since 2019", she added.

In another development, Ms. Oniha said that the federal government has successfully floated its Eurobonds and with the feat, Nigeria has become the first African country to access the international capital market (ICM) in 2022.

According to her, the country's ability to access the Eurobonds at this time was a confirmation of Nigeria's established presence with the ICM and engagement with investors on a continuous basis.

She said that the proceeds of the bonds would be used to finance the budget and bridge infrastructural deficits.

"The offer was launched at an initial price of 8.75 percent per annum and on the back of strong investor demand, Nigeria was able to reverse the price guidance to 8.5 percent per annum. The order book continued to grow, reaching a peak of $4billion," she said.

She also said that the order book included many quality investors in the United States (U.S.), Europe and Asia.

"With this strong investor interest the price was tightened at 8.37 percent per annum, the order book still remained high at $3.67 billion and still retained quality investors," she said.

She further said that Nigerian investors also participated in the offer with a total subscription of $60 million.

She added that the Eurobonds would also strengthen economic recovery and contribute directly and in full to the level of Nigeria's external reserves.

DMO had earlier revealed that Nigeria's total debt stock as at December 2021 was N39.55 trillion.

The DMO said that the country's borrowing profile is mainly used to finance capital projects and human capital development.

Ms. Oniha said that the various social challenges in the country, as well as global occurrences had also increased the country's debt. "Borrowings are essentially for capital expenditure and human capital development as specified in the Fiscal Responsibility Act 2007.

"Having witnessed two economic recessions, we have had to spend our ways out of recession, which contributed significantly to the growth in the public debt.

"It is unlikely that our recovery from each of the two recessions would have been as fast without the sustained government expenditure funded partly by debt," she said.

According to her, the insecurity situation has also resulted in increased borrowings.

"To compound matters, the country has technically been at war with the pervasive security challenges across the nation. This has necessitated massive expenditures on security equipment and operations, contributing to the fiscal deficit. Defence and security sector accounts for 22 percent of the 2021 budget," she said.

Ms. Oniha also said that the most viable solution to the country's fiscal challenge was to grow sources of revenue and plug all leakages. "We must, however, continue to rationalise our expenditure as we cannot afford waste.

"In reality, our largest expenditure items are currently personnel cost, debt service and capital expenditure, which between them account for 85 percent of the 2022 budget.

"There is very little scope for cut in any of these over the medium term," she said.

According to her, revenue generation remains the major fiscal constraint of the federal government. "Systemic resource mobilisation problem was also compounded by the recent economic recessions.

"Several measures are being instituted under government's Strategic Revenue Growth Initiatives (SRGI) to improve revenue and entrench fiscal prudence with emphasis on achieving value for money," she said.

FG Prioritising Fiscal Policies, Reforms Addressing Challenge Of Revenue Mobilisation

Recognising that Nigeria is contending with increasing fiscal and domestic revenue constraints, the federal government is prioritising fiscal policies and reforms aimed at not only providing short and medium term relief but also at sustainability to address the longstanding challenge of domestic revenue mobilisation.

The Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, in her goodwill message at the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) International Day Commemorative event themed, 'Gender Equality Today for A Sustainable Tomorrow', said: "The economic and social empowerment of women and girls is critical to our collective vision of a prosperous and resilient Nigeria."

In her words: "If we are to have a stronger and more inclusive economy, it is crucial that we take a long term and strategic approach to ensuring that women are economically empowered. We must continue working towards the development and implementation of policies, regulatory frameworks, and programmes that are inclusive and gender-sensitive; and we must remove the socio-economic and cultural barriers that prevent women from participating fully in society and from reaping the economic benefits of their participation."

Mrs. Ahmed said that funding and gender sensitive fiscal policies are critical, as are credible disaggregate data and impact monitoring and evaluation.

She stated that the government is also prioritising work towards improving internally generated revenue, blocking tax leakages, creating new tax sources, and promoting effective tax collection.

According to her, this is being achieved in part through continued implementation of the Strategic Revenue Generation Initiative (SRGI), and through continued incremental fiscal reforms via the introduction of annual Finance Bills, as well as reducing administrative inefficiencies and lowering the overall cost of governance.

"Through the implementation of the annual Finance Acts, we are providing tax relief and other support to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), many of which are women-owned," she said.

Additionally, the recently finalised medium term National Development Plan (NDP), she also stated, was developed with a gender lens, as will be the long term NDP.

"We at the Ministry of Finance Budget and Finance are focusing on comprehensive gender mainstreaming across fiscal policy and public financial management. This wholistic approach represents a critical paradigm shift towards systematic and scalable reforms, and leverages the coordination benefits of having the finance, budgeting and planning functionalities under the same federal ministry for the first time in Nigeria's history.

Mrs. Ahmed also stated: "The interventions include gender responsive budgeting, and assessments of the gender responsiveness of key fiscal interventions (including fiscal stimulus packages) with specific commitments aimed at improving the safety, livelihoods, and economic status of women and girls.

Stating further, she said: "We have formally introduced a gender lens for our national budgets, with an express provision in the 2022 Budget Call Circular mandating the use of gender responsive budgeting in the preparation of the national budget.

Mrs. Ahmed noted that the county is developing an Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) to strengthen our planning processes; and strategically identify and mobilise the resources required to finance our most recent medium and long term development plans.

"We are committed to ensuring that the INFF is gender responsive, in line with overall government commitments around gender responsive national development planning and financing.

She concluded that women's social and economic empowerment remains critical to ensuring inclusive, resilient, and sustainable development in Nigeria, and to achieving a shared goals as a nation. "By empowering women and girls, and promoting their full participation in society (particularly in leadership and decision-making roles), we will be ensuring improved economic development outcomes for all.

Nigeria's Foreign Trade Jumps 57.6% To N39.8trn In 2021

By Felix Omoh-Asun

Nigeria's total foreign trade for the fourth quarter of 2021 grew by 57.6 percent to N39.8 trillion, up from N25.22 trillion recorded in 2020.

Foreign trade is the exchange of capital, goods, and services between two or more countries. It's important to a country because it provides foreign exchange and availability of market for a nation's goods.

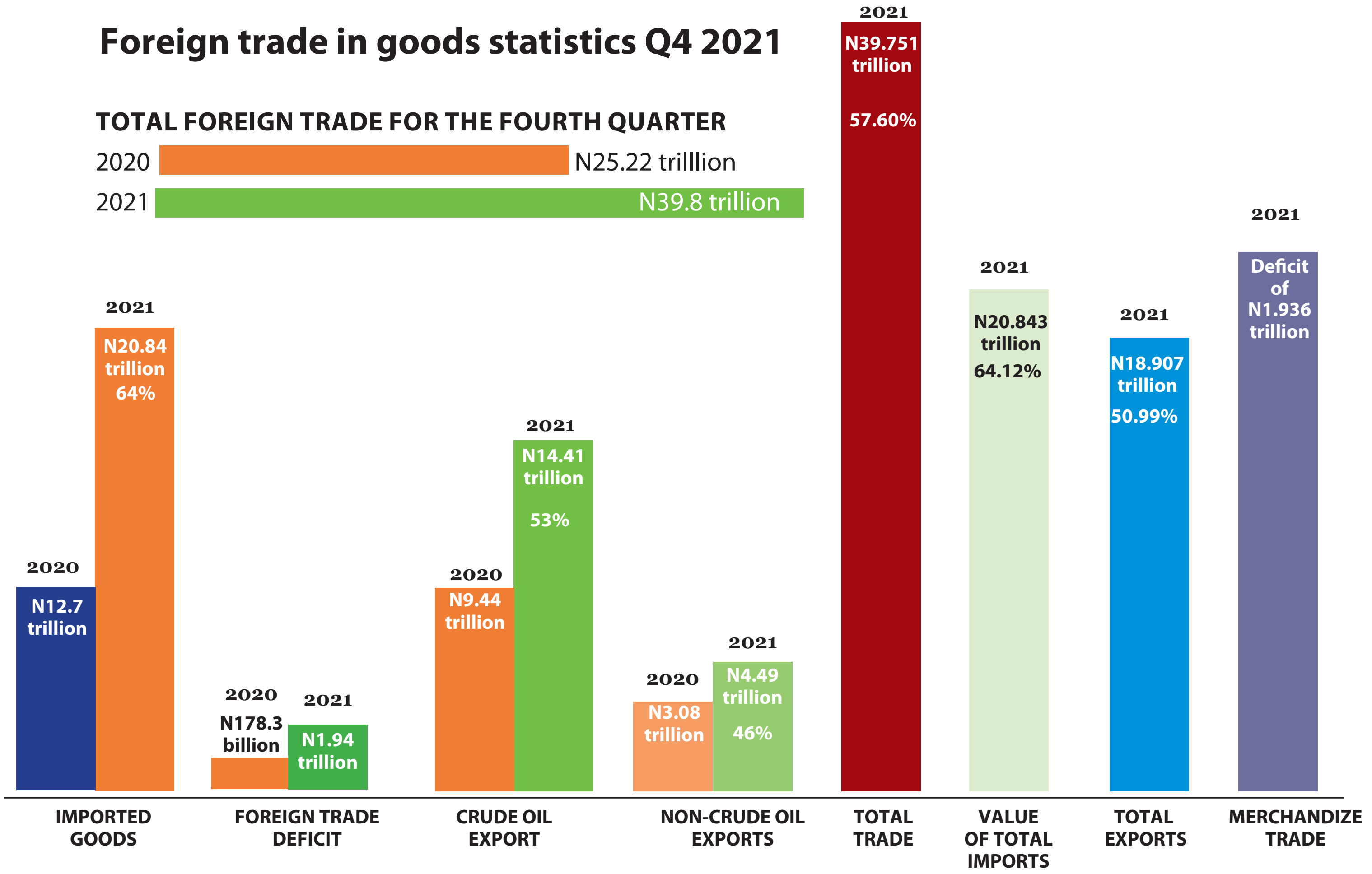
The foreign trade in goods statistics Q4 2021 report released by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on Tuesday, shows that Nigeria imported goods worth N20.84 trillion in the review period, 64 percent higher than the N12.7 trillion recorded in the previous year.

However, the country recorded a foreign trade deficit of N1.94 trillion, rising from a deficit of N178.3 billion recorded in the previous year.

The Bureau noted that crude oil export increased by 53 percent to N14.41 trillion in 2021 from N9.44 trillion recorded in 2020, while non-crude oil exports stood at N4.49 trillion, 46 percent higher than the N3.08 trillion recorded in 2020.

"In 2021, the value of total trade stood at N39.751 trillion which is 57.60 percent higher than the value recorded in 2020. The value of total imports in 2021 stood at N20.843 trillion which is 64.119 percent higher than the value recorded in 2020, while total exports was valued at N18.907 trillion showing an increase of 50.99 percent than the value recorded in 2020. Overall, in 2021, merchandise trade recorded a deficit of deficit (N1.936 trillion," the report stated.

"Export in the fourth quarter 2021 was still oil-dependent. Crude oil exports recorded N4.269 trillion and it remained the major product in total exports (74.04 percent), while non-crude oil was valued at N1.497 trillion or 25.96 percent of total exports of which non-oil products contributed N810.88 billion representing 14.06 percent of total exports during the quarter under review. "The balance of trade improved in the Q4 though it remains negative: Total trade



in Q4, 2021 was 11.79 percent higher when compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2021 and rose by 74.71 percent compared to the value recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2020. Annual comparison shows that total trade was 57.60 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of total imports in Q4, 2021 increased by 11.33 percent compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2021 and by 69.41 percent against the same quarter in 2020 while total imports were 64.11 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020."

According to NBS, "value of agricultural imports grew by 38.35 percent in Q4, 2021 compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2021 and it also increased by 118.51 percent than the value recorded in the corresponding quarter of 2020. Annual growth shows that the value of agricultural imports was 71.76 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of raw material imports grew marginally by 3.80 percent in Q4, 2021 when compared to the value in Q3, 2021 but was 35.03 percent higher compared to the value in Q4, 2020. The annual comparison reveals that the value of raw material imports was 37.90 percent higher than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of solid minerals imports was 0.42 percent lower in Q4, 2021 than the value in Q3, 2021 but increased by 69.73 percent than the value recorded in Q4, 2020 while the value of solid mineral imports was 54.12 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of energy goods imports was 507.38 percent in Q4, 2021 higher than in Q3, 2021 and 124.10 percent higher than the value recorded in Q4, 2020 while the value of energy goods imports was 86.19 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of total exports in Q4, 2021 increased by 12.27 percent when compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2021; it also rose by 80.52 percent compared to the value Q4, 2020. Annual values of total export were 50.99 percent higher in 2021 than recorded in 2020.

"The value of agricultural goods exports in Q4. 2021 grew by 67.12 percent compared to Q3 2021 and by137.93 percent compared to Q4 2020. Annual comparison shows that the value of agricultural exports was 57.02 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of raw material goods exports in Q4, 2021 was 65.06 percent higher than the value the recorded in Q3, 2021. The value recorded in Q4 2021 increased by 429.85 percent when compared to its value in Q4 2020. In addition, the value of raw material goods exports was 325.54 percent higher in 2021 than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of Solid minerals exports in Q4 2021 decreased by 25.95 percent compared to the value recorded in Q3, 2021 but increased by 201.41 percent against the corresponding quarter in 2020. The annual comparison of the value of solid mineral exports in 2021 was 320.27 percent higher than the value recorded in 2020.

"The value of exports of energy goods in Q4, 2021 rose by 7.17 percent compared to its value in Q3 2021. This also increased by 308.04 percent compared to the value recorded in Q4, 2020. In 2021, the value of energy goods exports was 376.52 percent higher than the value recorded in 2020."

AfDB Offers To Boost Wheat Production With $1bn To Prevent Scarcity In Africa

By Albert Egbede

The African Development Bank (AfDB) said it is planning to boost wheat production in Africa with $1billion to avert potential food shortages arising from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

According to the president of the continent's biggest multilateral lender, Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, AfDB is raising the funds to help 40 million African farmers utilise climate-resilient technologies and increase their output of heat-tolerant wheat varieties and other crops.

Wheat imports account for about 90 percent of Africa's $4billion trade with Russia and nearly half of the continent's $4.5billion trade with Ukraine, he said.

"We are going to be really ramping up our efforts to mobilise that money," Adesina said. "If there was ever a time that we needed to really drastically raise food production in Africa, for Africa's food security and to mitigate the impact of this food crisis arising from this war, it is now."

The war in Ukraine and sweeping sanctions imposed on Russia have upended grain shipments at a time when global stockpiles were already tight, raising the risk of a full-blown hunger crisis. Together the two nations produce more than a quarter of global wheat exports, and the United Nations has warned that already high food costs could surge another 22 percent as the fighting stifles trade and cuts future production.

The risks are particularly acute in Africa, where the Adesina said that about 283 million people were already going hungry before the onset of the war.

The lender's plan aims to increase the production of wheat, rice, soybeans and other crops to feed about 200 million Africans. Adesina is planning a meeting of the continent's finance and agriculture ministers to discuss how best to finance it.

New methods have already helped Ethiopia raise its wheat production and it now expects to be self-sufficient in supplying the grain within three years, according to Adesina. Surplus production could then be exported to countries like Egypt, the world's top wheat importer, he said.

Besides bolstering food production, the AfDB has embarked on a drive to accelerate the financial closure of 42 deals worth about $58billion that are already in the pipeline – an initiative that will be discussed in an online forum that starts on Tuesday.

They include a $3.2billion East African railway project linking Tanzania to mining areas in Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo, and a $15billion highway corridor running from Lagos, Nigeria's commercial hub, to Abidjan in Cote d'Ivoire.

"We want to help to reverse some of the decline in investment that happened as a result of Covid-19,' Adesina said. 'Project finance declined by about 49 percent, which impacted infrastructure."

He AfDB focuses on infrastructure boosting intra-African trade, which constitutes today about 15 percent of the continent's overall trade.

EDITORIAL

For There To Be 24-hour Port Operations In Nigeria

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Niyi Adebayo, has said that plans are in progress for the ports in Nigeria to operate 24-hour.

We are pleased that the federal government, according to Adebayo, is spending a lot of money on infrastructure and the road to the port.

We learn that before the end of the year, the new port at Lekki, Lagos State, will be operational. Moreso as plans are already underway to fix the road network to those ports so that there will be quick evacuation of goods at minimal cost and minimal effort for both imported and exported.

It is very pleasing too that efforts are being made, such that the challenges are being addressed; in that apart from Apapa and Tin Can, there are plans for a new port to come up in Badagry after the new port in Lekki, all in Lagos State.

It is a welcome development that the government is looking at improving the road network at Port Harcourt and Onne ports, so that it can ease the congestion of Lagos; also looking at the possibility of utilising Warri port, and others.

We recall that on Tuesday August 11, 2020, major agencies in the Federal Ministry of Transportation namely, Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC); Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA); Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA); Nigeria Inland Waterways (NIWA); Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarders in Nigeria (CRFFN); and Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron (MAN) held an inter-agency collaboration meeting with a view to finding out areas that will strengthen and develop the Nigerian maritime sector for economic sustainability. This meeting came on the heels of an earlier one held at the corporate headquarters of NSC, Apapa, Lagos State.

After the meeting, the Director-General of NIMASA, Dr. Jamoh, said that the discussion highlighted issues bordering on maritime safety and security, port efficiency, intermodal transportation as well as synergy among agencies in the sector on how to contribute and grow Nigeria's economy.

In her contribution, the then Managing Director (MD) of Nigeria Ports Authority, Ms Hadiza Usman, noted that the NPA and other sister government agencies were set to commence 24-hour port operations, but this could not be done in isolation of other agencies of government and other critical stakeholders in the sector.

Then the Executive Secretary of NSC, Hassan Bello, noted that the meeting was a significant building block for efficient economic activities within the country's maritime domain. Therefore, we note that since the concession of the ports in 2006, the aggregate contribution of Nigeria ports to gross domestic product (GDP) growth has tripled, unlike the pre 2006 regime. But since then, 24-hour port operations in Nigeria has been a mirage. In making it possible for the country to have a 24-hour port operations, it is our opinion that Nigeria should ensure that the rails function effectively. We ask that the issue of warehousing deficit in our port environment is addressed, the ports are fully automated to reduce human contact, there is also enough or sufficient scanners at the ports as examination of cargoes are still done manually, and road network has to be drastically improved upon to serve as complementary to rail.

The country must embrace technology as a means of fast-tracking development in the sector and to the larger economy. We call for unity among all stakeholders in the maritime sector for proper integration.

Government agencies must work assiduously to the completion of the US$94 million Ibadan dry port because of its strategic position. The Jos dry port, Funtua, Kano, Isiala Ngwa dry ports must be completed to await the upsurge or boom in trade.

The interface between the government agencies and the private sector operators must be taken seriously, so that series of meetings with shipping companies and concessionaires would mean to address some concerns, especially in the area of security, acquisition of state-of-the-art equipment, cargo dwell time issues, arbitrary tariffs, pilferage and other envisaged attempts that may want to scuttle this noble initiative.

Senate Passes Bill To Establish Agricultural Development Fund

By Albert Egbede

The Senate, on Tuesday, passed a bill to establish the National Agricultural Development Fund.

The passage of the bill followed the consideration of a motion for re-commital of the National Development Fund (Establishment) Bill, 2022.

The motion was sponsored by the Senate Leader, Yahaya Abdullahi (APC, Kebbi North).

Senator Yahaya Abdullahi, in his presentation, recalled that both chambers of the National Assembly passed the National Development Fund (Establishment) Bill, 2022, and transmitted the same to the President for assent.

He noted that after critical examination of the Bill by President Muhammadu Buhari, some fundamental issues which required fresh legislative action on some Clauses were observed.

He explained that against the backdrop, a Technical Committee of the Senate and House of Representatives met and worked on the affected Clauses of the Bill, "desirous of the need to assess the observations by the Committee and make necessary amendments."

Accordingly, the chamber rescinded its decision on the affected Clause of the Bill as passed and re-committed same to the Committee of the Whole for reconsideration and passage.

The bill was passed by the chamber after the affected Clauses were reconsidered by the Committee of the Whole.

In a related development, a total of three bills scaled second reading during plenary on Tuesday.

The bills are for an Act to provide for the facilitation and coordination of public infrastructure development; to amend the Provisions of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission Act; and to Repeal the Quarantine Act and Enact the National Health Emergency Act.

The bills were sponsored by Senators Sadiq Suleiman Umar (Kwara North); Uche Lilian Ekwunife (Anambra Central); and Chukwuka Utazi (Enugu North).

The Deputy Senate President, Ovie Omo-Agege, who presided over plenary on Tuesday, referred the bills after consideration to the Committees on National Planning; Trade and Investment; and Primary Healthcare and Communicable Diseases.

The Committees were given four weeks to report back to the chamber in plenary.

NDIC

Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation

Protecting your bank deposits

> "ENGENDERING **CONFIDENCE** IN THE BANKING SYSTEM, PROMOTING **FINANCIAL INCLUSION** AND EXCELLENT IN CORPORATE SOCIAL RESONSIBILITY ACTIVITIES TOWARDS **SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT** IN NIGERIA"

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) is an agency of government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It was established in 1988 and is responsible for administering deposit insurance in the country. It protects depositors and guarantees payment of insured funds in the event of failure of an insured licenced deposit-taking financial institution, thereby helping to maintain stability in the financial system.

The NDIC's Public Policy Objectives (PPOs) are: To Protect depositors by providing an orderly means of compensation in the event of failure of an insured financial institution; Enhance public confidence by providing a framework for the resolution and orderly exit of failing and failed financial institutions; and Contribute to financial system stability by making incidence of bank runs less likely. The NDIC had achieved these PPOs through the implementation of its following Mandates:

DEPOSIT GUARANTEE

Insurance of deposit liabilities of licensed deposit-taking financial institutions (banks) and guaranteeing payment to a maximum amount as stipulated in the NDIC Act, in the event of failure of a licensed financial institution. Thus, the sum of N500,000.00 or US$1,613 is paid to each depositor of Deposit Money Bank, Primary Mortgage Bank and Non-Interest Bank while the sum of N200,000.00 or US$645 is paid to each depositor of a Micro-Finance Bank;

BANK SUPERVISION

Supervision of banks to reduce the potential risk of failure, ensure effective payment system and healthy competition in the banking system; hence contributing to financial system stability;

DISTRESS RESOLUTION

Provision of financial and technical assistance to failing or distressed eligible insured institutions, in the interest of depositors; and

BANK LIQUIDATION

Orderly and efficient closure of failed institutions with minimal disruption to the banking and payment system.

NDIC's activities over the years had contributed to the development of the Nigerian economy through the promotion of soundness and safety of the banking system thereby enhancing confidence in the country's financial system.

More adult Nigerians now have access to formal financial services and are deriving numerous benefits through access to savings, credits, insurance and pension. NDIC, in collaboration with other Safety-net Players such as the Central Bank of Nigiera (CBN), has contributed to reducing the percentage of adult Nigerians that do not have acess to financial services from 46.30% in 2010 to 39.50% in 2014 (EFInA Financial Inclusion Study, 2014) in line with the Financial Inclusion policy of the Federal Government.

NDIC is also involved in social and developmental endeavours. Over the years, it has supported many community-based projects. Most of the projects were in the areas of Education and Human Capital Development.

OUR CORE MANDATES

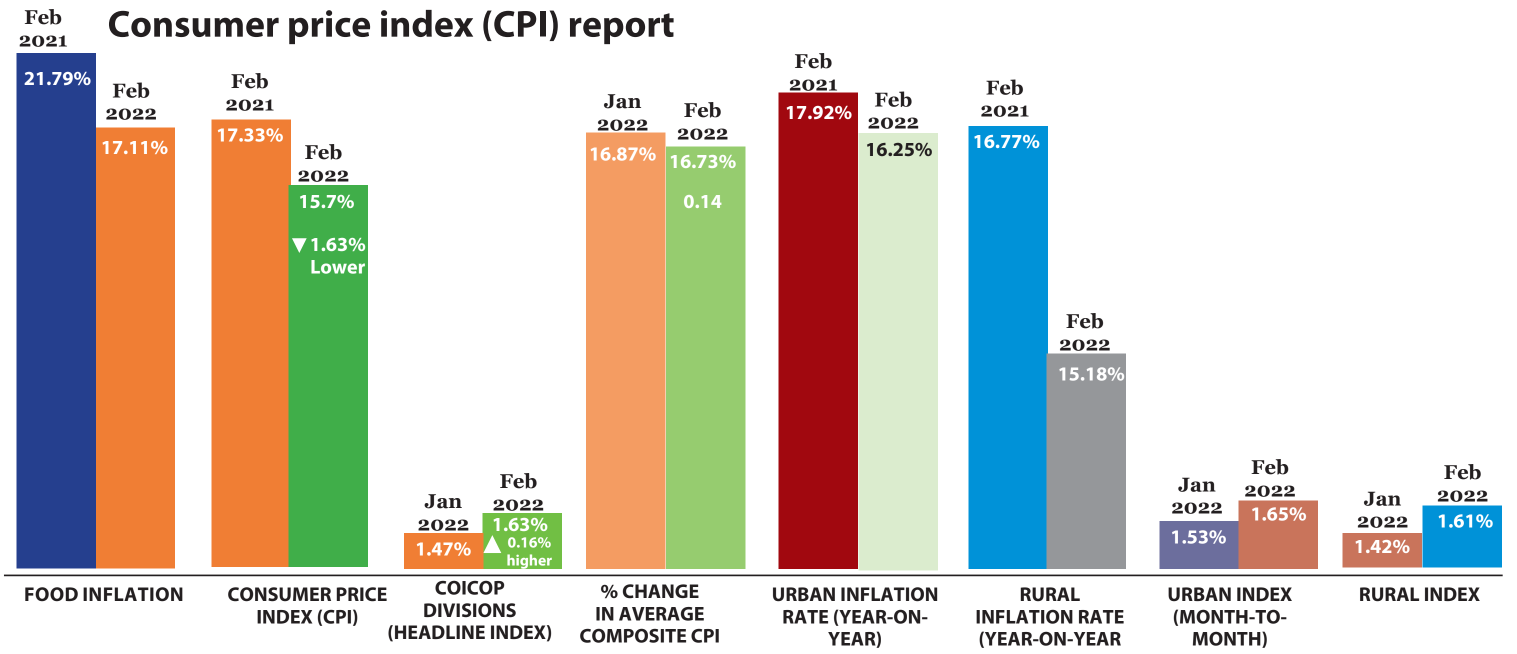
- → Deposit Guarantee
- → Bank Supervision
- → Distress Resolution
- → Bank Liquidation

NEWS IN PICTURE

The Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget & National Planning, **Mrs. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed**, with other delegates at an event on ‘Regional value chains and their importance in increasing trade and investment flow between Arab and African countries’. In her submission at a round table discussion, Ahmed shed more light on the importance of deepening African financial markets to promote growth and investment.

Rising Food Prices Push Nigeria's Inflation To 15.7% In February

By Albert Egbede



As expected, Nigeria's inflation jumped to 15.70 percent in February, owing to rising food prices, resulting from the spike in petrol price.

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in its latest Consumer price index (CPI) report released on Tuesday noted that the February rate represents a 1.63 percent decrease year-on- year.

The current inflation figure in February is higher than the 15.6 percent recorded in the previous month, indicating a 0.1 percent increase compared to the rate recorded in January 2022.

According to NBS, food inflation rose 17.11 percent in February 2022 compared to 21.79 percent in February 2021."

"In February 2022, the consumer price index (CPI) which measures inflation increased to 15.70 percent on year-on-year basis. This is 1.63 percent points lower compared to the rate recorded in February 2021 (17.33) percent. This means that the headline inflation rate slowed down in February when compared to the same month in the previous year," the report reads.

"Increases were recorded in all COICOP divisions that yielded the Headline index. On month-on-month basis, the Headline index increased to 1.63 percent in February 2022, this is 0.16 percent rate higher than the rate recorded in January 2022 (1.47) percent. The percentage change in the average composite CPI for the twelve months period ending February 2022 over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 16.73 percent, showing 0.14 percent point from 16.87 percent recorded in January 2022. The urban inflation rate increased to 16.25 percent (year-on-year) in February 2022 from 17.92 percent recorded in February 2021, while the rural inflation rate increased to 15.18 percent in February 2022 from 16.77 percent in February 2021."

According to NBS, "the percentage change in the average composite CPI for the twelve months period ending February 2022 over the average of the CPI for the previous twelve months period was 16.73 percent, showing 0.14 percent point from 16.87 percent recorded in January 2022.

"The urban inflation rate increased to 16.25 percent (year-on-year) in February 2022 from 17.92 percent recorded in February 2021, while the rural inflation rate increased to 15.18 percent in February 2022 from 16.77 percent in February 2021.

On a month-on-month basis, the NBS said, "the urban index rose to 1.65 percent in February 2022, up by 0.12 the rate recorded in January 2022 (1.53) percent, while the rural index also rose to 1.61 percent in February 2022, up by 0.19 the rate that was recorded in January 2022 (1.42) percent.

"The twelve-month year-on-year average percentage change for the urban index is 17.29 percent in February 2022. This is lower than 17.44 percent reported in January 2022, while the corresponding rural inflation rate in February 2022 is 16.18 percent which is lower to 16.31 percent recorded in January 2022.

"The composite food index rose by 17.11 percent in February 2022 compared to 21.79 percent in February 2021. This rise in the food index was caused by increases in prices of bread and cereals, food product, potatoes, yam and other tuber, oils and fats and fruit.

On month-on-month basis, the food sub-index increased to 1.87 percent in February 2022, up by 0.25 percent points from 1.62 percent recorded in January 2022. The average annual rate of change of the Food sub-index for the twelve-month period ending February 2022 over the previous twelve-month average was 19.69 percent, 0.40 percent points from the average annual rate of change recorded in January 2022 (20.09) percent.

The "All items less farm produce" or Core inflation, which excludes the prices of volatile agricultural produce stood at 14.01 percent in February 2022, up by 1.63 percent when compared with 12.38 percent recorded in February 2021.

On month-on-month basis, the core sub-index increased by 1.33 percent in February 2022. This was up by 0.08 percent when compared with 1.25 percent recorded in January 2021.The highest increases were recorded in prices of gas, liquid fuel, wine, tobacco, spirit, narcotics, solid fuels, cleaning, repair and hire of clothing, garments, shoes and other foot wear, other services in respect of personal transport equipment, clothing materials, other articles of clothing and clothing accessories and other services.

"The average 12-month annual rate of change of the index was 13.46 percent for the twelve-month period ending February 2022; this is 0.13 percent points higher than 13.33 percent recorded in January 2021," NBS added.

With Cooperation, We Can Improve Revenue Mobilisation For Our Two Nations - Nami Tells Niger Tax Authority

The revenue mobilization of Nigeria and Niger Republic can be improved if the revenue authorities of both countries work together to deepen their relationship, share tax information and engage in mutual administrative assistance, Muhammad Nami, Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has stated.

Mr. Nami stated this while receiving his Niger Republic counterpart, the Director General of the Niger Tax Authority, Mallam Ousmane Mahamane and his delegation at the Headquarters of the FIRS, during a cooperation visit to the Service yesterday.

Recognizing the long-standing relationship and shared culture and languages of the two countries, Muhammad Nami noted that it was important for the FIRS to work with the Niger Tax Authority given the "presence of high-net-worth Nigerian individuals and companies trading in Niger with significant tax implications, which is of great interest to the FIRS."

Muhammad Nami, Executive Chairman of FIRS

The FIRS Executive Chairman also highlighted the working relationship enjoyed by the Service and the Niger Tax Authority in the past particularly on the community rule on double taxation and transfer pricing.

He stated that there was the need for further cooperation in the areas of sharing of tax information and mutual administrative assistance, especially in the face of increase in trans-border tax within the context of ECOWAS and AFCFTA.

Muhammad Nami used the occasion to share with his Niger Republic counterpart some of the success stories achieved by the FIRS and the contributors responsible for these milestones.

"We have focused on non-oil tax collection and indirect taxes, particularly VAT as well as on the deployment of technology for the automation of FIRS' processes and procedures for effective tax administration and greater revenue yield, including e-stamping, e-registration, e-filing, e-payment, e-receipt, e-Tax Clearance Certificates, automation of Stamp Duty and VAT, the deployment of VATrac—an automated VAT filing and collection system in the wholesale and retail sectors—and the deployment of a home-grown, integrated tax administration system, the TaxPro Max.

"One of the contributing factors to our improved revenue is the taxation of the digital economy through the implementation of relevant policies, legislations and administrative processes for the collection of taxes (both income taxes and VAT) from the digital economy. This ensures that Nigeria is able to collect taxes on non-resident companies that derive income from the Nigerian market, without physical presence. This further ensures tax equity for local businesses." He stated.

The Executive Chairman FIRS also stated that "the Service has evolved into a data centric organization, leveraging on data in revenue forecasting, planning, tax policy formulation and driving compliance and enforcement."

He also added that one of the contributors to the FIRS successes was the exchange of information it had with other tax authorities, both internally and in other countries as well as the FIRS being a customer focused institution that has put measures in place to make voluntary compliance easier than ever for taxpayers.

Mallam Ousmane Mahamane, the Director General of the Niger Tax Authority, in his remarks stated that there was the urgent need for international tax cooperation between the two institutions.

He noted that his Tax Authority was seeking a relationship with the FIRS that would cover cross border trade, the oil sector, the telecommunications sector the digitalization of tax procedures, exchange of tax information, assistance with tax audit, separation of administrative procedures, modernization of tax administration and human capacity development.

He commended the FIRS Executive Chairman, Muhammad Nami for his "outstanding performance" in mobilizing over N6.405 trillion in revenue for the Government of Nigeria.

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Karameh Industrial City

MIKANO INTERNATIONAL LIMITED

With a legacy of over 29 years, Mikano has stamped its authority as a leader in providing reliable, quality solutions for the Nigerian economy. The Mikano mark of excellence is evident across our five divisions, which cut across various economic sectors; Steel Fabrication, Electrical & Lighting Solutions, Heavy Construction Equipment & Forklifts, and General Civil Works and most notably, Power Generation.

Mikano is currently the largest Assembler of power generating sets in West Africa, with offices in all the major cities in Nigeria, excellent 24-hour support service centers established in over 20 branches and a dealer network in strategic locations nationwide.

Recently, Mikano International ventured into the automotive industry; setting up one of the largest Auto-Assembly Plants in Nigeria, situated in Karameh Industrial City, Wawa, a short five-minute drive from the city of Lagos.

Mikano products and services out across 5 sectors classified as divisions; namely:

- POWER GENERATION
- STEEL FABRICATION
- ELECTRICAL & LIGHTINGS SOLUTIONS
- HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT & FORK LIFTS
- MOTORS

> "Mikano is currently the largest Assembler of power generating sets in West Africa.

POWER GENERATION

Mikano is the retailer of choice for authentic Perkins (UK), YORC and MTU Onsite Energy diesel (9KVA to 5,000 KVA) and gas (500KVA and above) generators for residential and industrial purposes. Our services include the maintenance of these units by our professional and dedicated aftersales team who ensure that our customers experiences with our generators post purchase are highly satisfactory.

The YORC diesel generator sets have been proven to demonstrate up to 10% fuel efficiency compared with other recognized brands and they come with a 4-year extended warranty.

Our relationship with MTU Onsite Energy involves the installation, commissioning and operation of large-scale systems in strict accordance with MTU's high quality standards. We are currently running sizable projects across the country; delivering uninterrupted power supply to our respective clients, with the potential to supply any capacity of power required. Our recent projects include operations where we provide power capacities of 20MW and above.

Mikano is the retailer of choice for Perkins, YORC and MTU Onsite Energy diesel and gas generators

STEEL FABRICATION

As one of the largest steel fabrication companies in West Africa, Mikano is well equipped with hi-tech machinery that ensure precision in the fabrication process to produce the best steel products. Our engineers are well trained and skilled at crafting simple steel to the most intricately designed products for dt'cor, modelling and more.

The fabricated oven-baked steels delivers strong, long-lasting and rust-free products such as Steel furniture, Lockers, Supermarket shelving, Street-light poles, Cabinetry, Storage racks, Storage (Diesel) tanks and a variety of other designs based on our clients specifications and needs. If you can dream it, we can steel it.

Our well-equipped steel fabrication production delivers the best steel products

ELECTRICAL & LIGHTING SOLUTIONS

Mikano is a major hub for one of the world s top lighting brands - Philips Lighting (Signified), supplying quality lighting items such as LED bulbs, LED Tubes, LED panels, Down lights and Spotlights, Waterproof and Non-waterproof Battens, High bays and Low bays, Floodlights, Streetlights, Canopy lights and much more.
We have partnered with renowned brands in the electrical sector - ABB and Schneider Electric to provide Low Voltage (LV) and Medium Voltage (MV) equipment such as Transformers and RMUs. We also deliver Feeder Pillars, Distribution Boards, Customized panels, Breakers (MCB S, MCCB S RCCBs and ACB S), Changeovers (Manual and Automatic), Control products (Timers and Relays), Electric Motors, Contactors and Manual Motor starters, Variable speed drive and soft starters (VFD), Wiring devices, Enclosed switches and Signalling devices, UPS, Fuse etc. Mikano now proudly manufactures its own brand of unique Circuit Breakers - The Mikano Electric Circuit Breaker; which comes in MCCB and MCB.S

ELECTRICAL & LIGHTING SOLUTIONS contd

Mikano Circuit Breakers, DBs and Lighting solutions

We have partnered with renowned brands in the electrical sector - ABB and Schneider Electric to provide Low Voltage (LV) and Medium Voltage (MV) equipment such as Transformers and RMUs. We also deliver Feeder Pillars, Distribution Boards, Customized panels, Breakers (MCB S, MCCB S RCCBs and ACB S), Changeovers (Manual and Automatic), Control products (Timers and Relays), Electric Motors, Contactors and Manual Motor starters, Variable speed drive and soft starters (VFD), Wiring devices, Enclosed switches and Signalling devices, UPS, Furse etc. Mikano now proudly manufactures its own brand of unique Circuit Breakers - The Mikano Electric Circuit Breaker; which comes in MCCB and MCB.S

Panel Building: Extending our provision of functional and quality solutions within the electrical space, Mikano uses its unique LV products such as breakers to design and custom build a wide range of type-tested high-quality Low Voltage Switch Boards (LVSB S) with outstanding reliability and functionality.

Customized Panels and Compound Sub Station built by Mikano

This highly technical and technological sub- division of Mikano s, is certified by both ABB and Schneider Electric to offer Form ratings from Form 1 through to Form 4.

Each LVSB can be custom built to conform to clients' specific and general stipulations, incorporating- where applicable- all international standards including ISO/ASTA certificates + MAAN.
Our Panels construction is available in a variety of configurations including front and rear access, top and bottom cable entries, etc. Mikano also manufactures custom Compact Substations under license from Siemens and has become a leading name in the Nigerian market for delivering optimized solutions.
"Whatever your Electrical Control Panel needs we have the in-house expertise to design from scratch a system to match your application needs, or to build bespoke panels to your existing requirements".
Our customized Panel types include Automated & Manual Transfer Switch Panels, Single & Dual Automated main failure boards, Unlimited multiple generating MV &LV synchronizing & load sharing systems, Totalizing Panels (Common Busbar), Main Distribution Boards (MDB) & distribution Board, Type- tested panels, Motor Control Centers (MCC): DOL, Star-Delta, Soft starter and Speed drives, Distribution Panels, Lighting Panels and Power factor correction panels.

HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT AND FORKLIFTS

Mikano is the sole distributor of Hyundai Heavy Industries in Nigeria

Heavy Construction Equipment and Forklifts: Mikano is the sole distributor of Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) in Nigeria; distributing and servicing the full range of its HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT& FORK-LIFTS. We have recently partnered with CAMC and KAMA to distribute and maintain their Heavy-duty and Light-duty line of trucks. We are passionate about providing quality equipment, tailored for the Nigerian topography and climate, making jobs faster and more convenient.

We provide and deliver: Crawler Excavators, Wheeled Excavators, Wheeled loaders, Motor graders, Backhoe loaders, Skid steer loaders, and Forklifts

MIKANO MOTORS

The GEELY Coolray and Emgrand 7 SUV are proudly assembled and distributed in Nigeria by Mikano Motors

Our determination to continually provide world-class solutions has prompted our desire to provide Nigerians excellent, durable and reliable vehicles, further extending our product portfolio. Mikano International has partnered with the world's most innovative and fastest growing automobile brands; Geely Automobile and Zhengzhou Nissan Auto (ZNA). A partnership agreement was signed with GEELY Automobile International Corporation as the strategic and Exclusive Partner of Geely Autos in Nigeria. The Geely brand is one of the fastest growing global auto brands, having 100% full ownership of Volvo Autos, the largest shareholding at AG Daimler; the parent company for Mercedes- Benz, 100% ownership of LEVC- makers of the Black London cabs. In 2021, Geely was made the only Asian auto manufacturer to be included in the IATF (International Automotive Task Force), joining other names such as the BMW Group, Renault Group, Volkswagen.
Our venture into the Auto Industry has seen Mikano International place a substantial investment in the development of a World- class assembly plant, State- of- the art service centers and Showrooms nationwide. The Mikano International- Motors Division, currently sells and services the ZNA Rich 6 line of pickup trucks, Geely's Coolray SUV and Emgrand 7 Sedan and soon, the Maxus/ LDV brand of autos, with its roots in the United Kingdom will join the Mikano Motors portfolio.

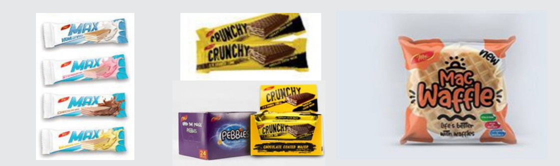
In addition to Mikano International's five divisions are our three 3 sister companies: Afri-Medical Limited, Mikano Foods Limited and Mikano Construction.

AFRI-MEDICAL LIMITED

Afri-Medical produces high-quality medical equipment including syringes, surgical and non-surgical face masks

Currently providing a portfolio of premium, user-friendly solutions that help protect against virus-related infections, the Afri-medical factory, also situated at Karameh City, manufactures a wide range of products. These include our SMART SANITIZING TUNNEL and SMART SANITIZING FRAME (an automatic 360¡ disinfection barrier that kills 99.9% of germs and viruses), Surgical and Non-Surgical disposable face masks and Sterile hypodermic syringes for Single Use. These are all produced with strict adherence to the most stringent quality assurance standards, adding to our catalogue of indispensable products.

MIKANO FOODS LIMITED



A range of products from Mikano Foods

Gathering from years of hard work, passion and perseverance, our umbrella brand - MAC, has become one of the most expertly produced brands in the line of wafers, chocolates and confectioneries within the region. We offer premium snacks and treats to our consumers. The MAC umbrella brand currently produces; Mac Crunchy Wafer; Mac Max Wafer; (available in Vanilla, Strawberry, Banana, and Chocolate flavours); Mac Pebbles Mac Waffles a totally unique product in the Nigerian Market.

MIKANO CONSTRUCTION

With a clear vision of attaining excellence in the Nigerian construction industry, the Mikano Construction Company is successfully delivering several Residential; detached high-rise buildings, Industrial; warehouses, and Commercial property development projects. Our portfolio includes, Luxurious Waterside Residences, Ultra-modern showrooms and massive Industrial Cities; the Karameh Industrial City being one of them.
Mikano International's vision to expand even further is already underway with the addition of more product segments. With a plethora of completed projects and notable projects in the pipe-line, Mikano International Limited has emerged a leading name in all related sections of its operations cementing its name "THE ONE STOP SHOP FOR YOUR LIFESTYLE SOLUTIONS".

For more information on Mikano International, visit www.mikano-intl.com.

fmfinsights

Economy & Investment

ADVERT RATE

COLOUR

PRODUCT

Size	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
F/P	557,916.68	41,843.76
H/P	316,462.50	23,734.68
Q/P	152,770.00	11,457.76
14.5x5	452,218.76	33,916.40
14.5x3	271,293.26	20,347.00
10x6	374,250.00	28,068.76
10x5	311,875.00	23,390.62
10x4	249,500.00	18,712.50
9x6	336,825.00	25,261.88
9x5	280,687.50	21,051.56
9x4	224,550.00	16,841.26
9x3	168,412.50	12,630.94
8x6	299,400.00	22,455.00
8x5	249,500.00	18,712.50
8x4	199,600.00	14,970.00
7x6	251,975.00	18,898.12
7x5	218,312.50	16,373.44
7x4	174,650.00	13,098.76
7x2	172,150.00	6,549.38
6x4	149,700.00	11,227.50
6x3	112,275.00	8,420.62
6x2	74,850.00	5,613.75
5x6	187,125.00	14,034.38
5x5	155,937.50	11,695.32
5x4	124,750.00	9,356.26
5x3	93,562.50	7,017.18
5x2	62,375.00	4,678.12
4x4	99,800.00	7,485.00
4x3	74,850.00	5,613.76
4x2	49,900.00	3,742.50
3x2	37,425.00	2,806.88
2x2	24,950.00	1,871.26
2x1	12,475.00	935.62
1x1	6,237.50	467.82

PUBLIC NOTICE POLITICAL

Size	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
F/P	578,838.55	43,412.90
H/P	328,329.84	24,624.74
Q/P	158,498.88	11,887.42
14.5x5	234,558.65	35,183.80
14.5x3	284,858.44	21,364.38
10x6	388,303.80	29,122.78
10x5	323,586.50	24,268.98
10x4	258,869.20	19,415.20
9x6	349,473.42	26,210.50
9x5	291,227.85	21,842.08
9x4	232,982.28	17,473.68
9x3	174,736.70	13,105.26
8x6	310,643.04	23,298.22
8x5	258,869.20	19,415.20
8x4	207,095.36	15,532.16
7x6	271,812.66	20,385.94
7x5	226,510.55	16,988.30
7x4	181,208.44	13,590.64
7x2	90,604.22	6,795.32
6x4	155,321.52	11,649.12
6x3	116,491.14	8,736.84
6x2	77,660.76	5,824.56
5x6	194,151.90	14,561.40
5x5	161,793.24	12,134.50
5x4	129,434.60	9,707.60
5x3	97,075.95	7,280.70
5x2	64,717.30	4,853.80
4x4	103,547.66	7,766.08
4x3	77,660.74	5,824.56
4x2	51,773.84	3,883.04
3x2	38,830.38	2,912.28
2x2	25,886.92	1,941.52
2x1	12,943.46	970.76
1x1	6,471.72	485.38

BLACK AND WHITE

PRODUCT

Size	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
F/P	366,792.56	27,509.44
H/P	198,423.18	14,881.74
Q/P	95,782.00	7,183.66
14.5x5	283,950.60	21,296.30
14.5x3	190,000.00	14,250.00
9x6	234,993.60	17,624.52
9x5	176,245.20	13,218.4
9x4	140,996.16	10,574.72
9x3	105,747.12	7,931.04
8x6	187,994.88	14,099.62
8x5	156,662.40	11,749.68
8x4	126,329.92	9,474.74
7x6	164,495.52	12,337.16
7x5	137,079.60	10,280.98
7x4	109,663.68	8,224.78
7x2	54,831.84	4,112.38
6x4	93,997.44	7,049.80
6x3	70,498.08	5,287.36
6x2	70,498.08	5,287.36
5x6	117,496.80	8,812.26
5x5	97,914.00	7,343.56
5x4	78,331.20	5,874.84
5x3	58,748.40	4,406.14
5x2	39,165.60	2,937.42
4x4	62,664.96	4,699.88
4x3	46,998.72	3,524.90
4x2	31,322.48	2,349.18
3x2	23,499.38	1,762.46
2x2	15,666.24	1,174.96
2x1	7,833.12	587.48
1x1	3,916.56	293.74

PUBLIC NOTICE POLITICAL

Size	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
F/P	435,178.08	32,638.36
H/P	254,538.96	19,090.42
Q/P	131,226.90	9,842.02
14.5x5	38,040.56	2,853.04
14.5x3	232,825.87	17,461.94
10x6	319,512.00	23,963.40
10x5	266,260.00	19,969.50
10x4	213,006.00	15,975.46
9x6	287,560.80	21,567.06
9x5	239,634.00	17,972.56
9x4	191,707.20	14,378.04
9x3	143,780.40	10,783.54
8x6	255,609.60	19,170.72
8x5	213,008.00	15,975.60
8x4	170,406.40	12,780.48
7x6	223,658.00	16,774.36
7x5	186,382.00	13,978.66
7x4	149,105.60	11,182.92
7x2	74,552.80	5,591.46
6x4	127,804.80	9,585.36
6x3	95,853.60	7,189.02
6x2	63,902.40	4,792.68
5x6	159,756.00	11,981.70
5x5	133,130.00	9,984.76
5x4	106,504.00	7,987.80
5x3	79,878.00	5,990.86
5x2	53,252.00	3,993.90
4x4	85,203.20	6,390.24
4x3	83,902.40	6,292.68
4x2	42,601.60	3,195.12
3x2	31,951.20	2,396.34
2x2	21,300.80	1,597.56
2x1	10,650.40	798.78
1x1	5,325.20	399.40

SPECIAL POSITION	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
FPS 6x2	1,291,193.44	96,839.50
BPS 6x2	923,375.00	69,253.12
STRIP (FRONT) 2X6	1,322,912.50	99,218.44
STRIP (BACK) 2X6	1,037,500.00	77,812.50
STRIP (INSIDE) 2X6	218,460.38	16,384.52
EARPIECE (FRONT) 2X2	517,094.30	38,782.08
EARPIECE (BACK) 2X2	405,145.10	30,385.88
EARPIECE (INSIDE) 2X2	240,000.00	18,000.00
CENTERSPREAD (FULL)	3,320,000.00	249,000.00
CENTERSPREAD (HALF)	1,992,000.00	149,400.00
CENTERSPREAD (STRIP)	594,300.00	44,572.50
DOUBLESPREAD	2,982,952.00	223,721.40

WRAP	Rate	Vat (7.5%)
FULL WRAP	41,500,000.00	3,112,500.00
10 X 6	28,620,690.00	2,146,551.76
HALF PAGE (FRONT)	20,800,000.00	1,560,000.00
5X6 (FRONT)	14,312,344.00	1,073,425.80
4X6 (FRONT)	11,448,274.00	858,620.56
2X6 (UNDER MASTHEAD	7,262,500.00	544,687.50
2X6 (FRONT POLITICAL)	1,560,000.00	117,000.00

LOOSE INSERT	
RATE PER 1,000 SHEETS	60,000.00
HANDLING CHARGE (SINGLE)	1,000,000.00
HANDLING CHARGE (SINGLE)	1,000,000.00

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To Divest From Nigeria IOCs Must Address Issues Of Abandonment, Decommissioning, Says NNPC

...as NAPIMS Forsees Oil Growth Over Rising Prices

Mele Kyari, Group Managing Director (GMD), Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)

By Felix Omoh-Asun

The Group Managing Director of Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), Mallam Mele Kyari, has said international oil companies (IOCs) that want to divest from Nigeria's upstream sector must address issues of abandonment and decommissioning of oil assets.

Kyari said this in Abuja at the opening session of the 5th edition of the Nigerian International Energy Summit.

This is even as the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) projected that the demand for oil would continue to climb till 2050.

The comment by the NNPC boss comes about six months after he had highlighted key guidelines that would guide the evaluation of would be replacement of divesting partner in the oil and gas industry.

The GMD had in August last year, while speaking at the Nigeria Annual International Conference and Exhibition said learning from previous experiences, the NNPC had developed requisite divestment policy that will provide clear guidelines and criteria for divestment of partners' interest in all its joint venture and production sharing contracts arrangements.

To ensure that the NNPC sustains a prosperous business environment for Nigeria, he had said the national oil company would pay particular attention to abandonment and relinquishment costs; severance of operator staff; third party contract liabilities; and competency of the buyer.

On the wave of divestment of international oil companies from Nigeria's upstream sector, the NNPC boss told participants at the conference that while the country understands the right of companies to freely divest, it was, however, critical to ensure that the right thing is done so as to avoid disruption.

He further said that issues and obligations related to abandonment and decommissioning must be fully addressed and discharged in line with global best practices, regulations, convention, and law. He said,

"Companies that are divesting, they are leaving our country literarily and that's the way to put it. But they are not leaving because opportunities are not here, these companies are shifting their portfolios where they can add value and not just that but where they can add to the journey of net carbon zero emission.

"We understand this very perfectly. But also, we cannot afford to realise that this country must benefit from the realities of today.

"We will work with our partners, we understand the necessity for their investments, we do know that there are issues, we understand that this must take place, but also it must be done in such a way that we are able to deal with issues around abandonment and decommissioning.

"We will also make sure that whatever arrangement that is put in place, will show that we are also alive to the energy transition journey that we have embarked on."

The NNPC CEO acknowledged the need for cleaner energy globally, but said that the African continent must shape its narrative to reflect on its realities, including the high level of energy poverty, deficiency of critical infrastructures for electricity and transportation.

He confirmed that NNPC with partners were working together to ensure the attainment of Nigeria 2060 target for carbon neutrality.

He gave some of the measures so far taken to include adoption of low carbon technology across operations, deepening natural gas utilisation to reduce energy poverty – via the National Gas Expansion Programme, and intensifying the use of petrochemicals.

He also stated that the NNPC was making concerted efforts in the gas sector through various projects – NLNG Train 7, AKK, OB3, ELPS and others. He added that the expansion and integration of domestic/ regional power grids and growing the domestic gas markets via Autogas/ Compressed Natural Gas/ Liquified Petroleum Gas to power vehicles remain key to revitalising the industry.

He noted that passage of the PIA remained a key enabler and laudable reform in the Nigerian energy sector clearly delineating various stakeholders' roles to enhance value realisation in the sector.

The NNPC GMD explained further that government has also intensified policies to increase gas utilisation and eliminate flaring in recognition of the transition from carbon intensive production towards cleaner alternatives.

Within the last decade, the Nigerian upstream sector had witnessed significant transactions involving the sale of interests in oil licences.

Some of these transactions were concluded in the time of high oil prices and in some instances involved asset transfers from international oil companies with long years of carrying on exploration and production activities in Nigeria, to smaller indigenous companies with limited experience in the upstream sector.

Expectedly, decommissioning obligations and the potential liabilities are also transferred to the new holder of the licence.

Meanwhile, as the price of crude oil continued its rise due to the conflict between Ukraine and Russian, increasing to $113.06/ barrel, the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS) has projected that the demand for oil would continue to increase till 2050.

NAPIMS, a subsidiary of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, a corporate services unit of NNPC mandated to manage the company's upstream business, the demand for oil will continue to grow.

Speaking at the Nigeria International Energy Summit 2022, the Group General Manager, NAPIMS, Bala Wunti, said the products from fossil, particularly the demand for crude oil, would not slow down but continue to climb.

He said, "You have nuclear also growing, natural gas will grow, the oil will grow. Up to the year 2050, the oil will continue to grow, obviously not at the one or two per cent that we used to know.

"Gas will continue to grow and it, therefore, means that up to 2050 hydrocarbons will continue to grow. So we better do something with the supply.

"When you look at the energy mix equation, we think over 50 percent of the global energy will be met by hydrocarbon oil and gas."

He added, "It is precisely about 52 percent, and specifically when you talk about oil and gas, that will constitute almost 57 percent. Therefore, for the world to think that they can ignore and overlook hydrocarbon, it is to put in place a recipe for social destabilisation.

"It is a recipe for bringing down development and growth, causing shortfall in energy supply and that's why we need investments. However, the reality today is that there's no investment."

Wunti told delegates at the summit that Nigeria was sitting on 28 billion barrels of liquid oil reserves and about 160 trillion cubic feet of gas being managed by NAPIMS both in terms of liquid and gaseous forms.

"We manage 75 percent of the nation's hydrocarbon reserves," he stated, adding that there was a need for robust investments in the sector to adequately take advantage of its potentials.

BNCH: CBN Releases Guidelines For Operations

By Felix Omoh-Asun

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has released guidelines for the operations of Bank Neutral Cash Hubs (BNCH).

The bank said this was in bid to ease huge cash management and deepen financial inclusion.

According to a statement on its website, the CBN said that the release of the guidelines is in furtherance of its mandate to promote a sound financial system in Nigeria.

This guideline aims to provide minimum standards and requirements for BNCH registration and operations for effective supervision.

The apex bank said the BNCH cannot carry out investing or lending activities. Also, BNCH cannot receive, disburse, or engage in any transaction involving foreign currency.

The Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) and Cash Processing Companies (CPCs) are eligible to apply for the BNCH.

The BNCH would be able to receive naira denominated deposits on behalf of financial institutions from individuals and businesses with high volumes of cash.

CBN has the right of access to the BNCH facility for the purpose of compliance monitoring of activities and examination of records/books.

BNCH shall comply with the reporting requirements and timelines specified in the Cash Activity Reporting Portal (CARP) Industry Handbook by providing data and information

CBN said it is part of its collaborative efforts with the Banker's Committee to reduce cost and improve operational efficiency in the country's cash management.

"The CBN, in collaboration with the Banker's Committee, initiated the Nigerian Cash Management System which seeks to reduce cost and improve operational efficiency in the country's cash management value chain.

"One initiative towards the stated goal is the introduction of BNCH.

"BNCHs are cash collection centres to be established by registered processing companies or Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) based on business needs.

"They will be located in areas with high volumes of commercial activities and cash transactions," the apex bank said.

It added that the hubs would provide platforms for customers to make cash deposits and receive value irrespective of the bank with which their accounts are domiciled.

"This guideline aims to provide minimum standards and requirements for BNCH registration and operations for effective supervision.

"The key objective is to reduce the risks and cost borne by banks, merchants, and huge cash handlers in the course of cash management activities.

"It will also deepen financial inclusion and leverage on shared services to enhance cash management efficiency," it said.

According to the CBN guidelines, a BNCH is permitted to carry out activities like receipt of Naira denominated deposits on behalf of financial institutions from individuals and businesses with high volumes of cash.

"It can also carry out high volume cash disbursement to members of the public on behalf of financial institutions, and any other activities that may be permitted by the CBN.

"But it is not permitted to carry out investing or lending activities, or receive, disburse, or engage in any transaction involving foreign currency," it said.

It called on eligible promoters like DMBs and Cash Processing Companies (CPCs) to apply for registration of BNCH.

"Prospective promoters of BNCH shall apply in writing to the Director, Currency Operations Department," it said.

How FG Is Improving Ease Of Doing Business

● 11 Firms Get Tax Holiday ● NIPC Partners Greenwich Bank To Boost FDI

By Musa Ibrahim

● **Mrs. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed**, Hon. Minister Of Finance, Budget And National Planning

● **Mr. Emeka Offor,** Acting Executive Secretary/CEO, NIPC

As part of efforts to boost ease of doing business, the federal government, through the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), has approved a tax holiday for 11 more firms under its Pioneer Status Incentive (PSI) programme.

The approval, granted in the fourth quarter of 2021, is to exempt the companies from paying taxes for the next three years.

Aside from the 11 firms, 13 other companies were also granted Approval-in- Principle, which is subject to the payment of application fee. A pioneer status incentive grants companies making investments in qualifying industries and products a tax holiday of three years from the payment of company income tax.

The three-year tax holiday has the possibility of an extension for one or two additional years to enable the industry concerned make a reasonable level of profit within its formative years.

According to the Q4'21 PSI report just released by NIPC, the new beneficiaries of the tax incentive include First Independent Power Company Limited, a power generating company; Cormart Nigeria Limited, manufacturer of styrene acrylate copolymer, adhesives, casein glue and caramel; Premium Agro Chemicals Limited, a fertiliser company; West African Soy Industries Limited, which produces edible oil; and Prudent Energy and Services Limited, a gas processing and distribution company.

Others are Checkers Africa Limited, a custard producing company; West African Cubes Limited, seasoning cubes producer; FBB Rice mill Limited; Awka Millennium City Development Company Limited; Palazzo Versace Hotel & Suites Limited; and Pedestal Hospitality and Allied Services Limited, all hotel development companies.

NIPC further disclosed that the 11 firms had so far invested a total of N157 billion in the country's economy.

With the new approvals, NIPC said that the total number of beneficiaries of the tax incentive as of December 31, 2021, stood at 46, while a total of 186 applications are pending.

According to the commission, the 46 companies have invested over N1 trillion in the economy and have over 6,000 employed staff.

The commission disclosed that within the last quarter, 22 new applications were received from firms intending to get PSI in their respective industries.

Aside from the new applicants, the commission said that four companies had also filed for an extension of their tax holiday within the period under review.

In the same period, a tax holiday extension was granted to three companies.

According to NIPC, one application from Boden Industries Limited, a company manufacturing plastic cans and printed aluminum packaging products, was declined in the period under review. It noted that the company's application was declined because its activity was not on the PSI list.

Meanwhile, the federal government had recently inaugurated a Joint Committee of Staff of NIPC and the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) on PSI.

The Committee was set up to review the current guidelines for administration of PSI, validate the cost of the incentive to Nigeria and recommend changes to the qualification and administration. Commenting on the move, NIPC's Acting Executive Secretary/ CEO, Mr. Emeka Offor, stated that the commission understood the responsibility it shoulders in relation to administering the PSI and exercises great diligence in processing applications.

Overtime, Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, maintained that one of the provisions in the Finance Bill 2020 and 2021 is that firms with an annual turnover of less than N25 million ($68,500) do not have to pay CIT as required by the federal government.

"For medium-sized firms with an annual turnover ranging between N25 million ($68,500) and N100 million ($274,000), a lower CIT of 20 percent will be paid, while larger companies with an annual turnover exceeding N100 million will pay the standard 30 percent CIT," she said.

The Honourable Minister insists that being tax-exempt, small businesses would invest more in themselves, become more productive, get more employees, and grow to become medium-sized businesses, at which point they would begin to pay taxes, albeit at a lower rate than larger companies.

In the same vein, the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) recently identified five priority reform areas for its current 7th 60-day Nation Action Plan (NAP 7.0).

The NAPs are homegrown internationally recognised 60-day accelerators, developed to coordinate the effective delivery of priority reforms implemented by select ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs), to drive ease of doing business in Nigeria.

Speaking at the focus group session with key stakeholders, to mark the launch of the Council's 7th National Action Plan (NAP 7.0), the Special Adviser to the President on Ease of Doing Business, Dr Jumoke Oduwole, said that the priority reforms area include the trade/ ports reform, automation reforms, regulatory reforms, legislative/ judicial reforms and Executive Order 01/reportgov.ng compliance reforms.

She said that this became imperative as the performance of relevant MDAs in NAP 5.0 and NAP 6.0, held in the first quarter of 2020 and 2021, were below 50 percent.

"Therefore, the 7th National Action Plan (NAP 7.0) is especially designed to break away from the lackluster performance of our last two outings, NAP 5.0 and NAP 6.0, held in Q1 of 2020 and 2021, which saw the relevant MDAs perform below par at 44 percent and 43 percent respectively for a variety of reasons," she said.

Oduwole said that although there were improvements in particular areas, especially in the initial years of the PEBEC's intervention, several bureaucratic and regulatory challenges remain at all arms and levels of government.

She stressed that this has continued to affect the speed, cost and transparency of doing business in Nigeria.

The presidential aide, however, further stressed the need for all relevant MDAs to strive, deliver and exceed reform target expectations during the 60-day accelerator.

She expressed hope that at the end of the 60-days acceleration, the NAP 7.0 would have delivered reform results that are a remarkable improvement over the performance of previous MDA outings.

Meanwhile, Greenwich Merchant Bank Limited (GMB), one of Nigeria's bespoke financial solution providers, has officially signed a partnership agreement with the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) to further encourage and promote both local and foreign investment initiatives in Nigeria.

This was disclosed by Bayo Rotimi, Managing Director (MD) of Greenwich Merchant Bank, where he said that the move is to promote GMB's commitment to continuously help structure and raise long term capital for diverse investments in Nigeria. Its partnership with NIPC aims to execute several initiatives to position Nigeria as the preferred investment destination of choice in Africa.

Mr. Rotimi stated that he was excited about fostering and building an ecosystem for investment collaborations to thrive in Nigeria.

He stated: "As a financial solution provider, GMB understands the importance of strategic alliances, especially the ones that cater to improve our socio-economic development in the country. We are very excited and optimistic about this partnership as we both intend to cover significant activities that will focus on our core services and offerings to both domestic and foreign investors.

"If you look into our history, you will see that we started as an investment banking firm and what the investment bank does is to provide bespoke financial advisory financial services. So, we are almost like your in-house strategy consultant to say, this is the most efficient way to grow your business; or if your business has reached maturity, you need to diversify into other areas.

"As an institution, we are saying that we will go beyond just lending you money. We have an investment banking team, we have an asset management team, we have research capability, we have studied and understudied your industry."

He also expressed the bank's commitment to supporting the Nigerian economy, particularly in the area of infrastructure development and economic diversification through its bespoke financial solutions.

To provide holistic financial services to its diverse clientele, he said that GMB transitioned from a pure-play investment banking firm to a merchant bank duly licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in October 2020.

He said: "Given the inadequacy of consistent, long-term and sustainable financing in Nigeria, a merchant bank must provide customised financing solutions for infrastructure projects, business expansion, and diversification. This is our core area of focus as GMB."

According to the Executive Director, Benson Ogundeji, efficiency is one of the core values of the bank and that is why it is deliberately driven digitally.

"We remain agile and respond to the needs of the market and we put ourselves at that top edge of the market where we can compete effectively, not only in the knowledge of the products we sell but also in pricing," he said.

Why NAICOM's Efforts In Insurance Penetration Is Yielding Results

• As Commission Eyes N6 trn Gross Premium By 2030

NAICOM, under the leadership of Mr. Sunday Thomas, has been dogged in facilitating insurance penetration, especially at the grassroots. In this report, our correspondent, ***Musa Ibrahim****, highlights the efforts and how they are yielding results.*

• **Mr. Sunday Thomas,** Commissioner For Insurance/Chief Executive, National Insurance Commission (NAICOM)

The National Insurance Commission (NAICOM) is the sole regulator of the insurance sector in Nigeria and as part of efforts in enforcing its regulatory mandate, it has urged insurance companies and operators in the industry to be proactive in ensuring that insurance penetration reaches the grassroots.

The Commissioner for Insurance, Mr. Sunday Thomas, has stressed in different fora the need for insurance companies to deploy the necessary technology required to boost penetration.

Speaking recently at a retreat organised by the commission for insurance journalists, Mr. Thomas said: "We expect the industry to respond to these efforts by bridging the supply gap and ensure they follow up on the commission's move to create awareness among high-ranking policy makers in order to prove that the industry is ready for the booming opportunities awaiting them across the country."

While agreeing to some inherent challenges, he affirmed that "the Nigerian insurance market has undergone substantial structural and regulatory reforms over the years following the market development initiatives being implemented and the evolution of Nigeria's financial sector in the last decade which has been characterised by digital transformation."

Mr. Thomas said that the improvement so far recorded is a tripod - comprising the regulator, operators and the media.

Acknowledging the media dimension, he said: "Our (the commission and the media) collective efforts at ensuring the development and growth of the insurance sector will definitely translate to the growth and development of the nation's economy."

According to him, the workstation of the commission has been implementing various market development initiatives to lift the insurance sector to a global standard and, top of the six listed initiatives is, risk based supervision framework followed by its spinning investment in digital capabilities and automation - e.g. launching of NAICOM portal, launch of the Bimalab project on the 9th of February 2021, and enforcement of the compulsory insurance products in Nigeria - via partnership with agencies and states.

"The rest are capacity development programmes - actuarial, competency framework etc; sensitisation of various stakeholders – micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) on benefits of insurance, ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) insurance desk officers etc and; introduction of regulatory reforms and policies, e.g., issuance of web aggregators guidelines," he further stated.

Synergy with Development Partners

Also as part of synergy to boost digital operations, NAICOM and FSD Africa launched BimaLab, an accelerator programme designed to boost the development and adoption of digital solutions for the insurance sector. BimaLab Nigeria aims to address gaps in the insurance market by educating, nurturing and promoting innovators and Insurtech start-ups.

The programme will borrow from Kenya's BimaLab , BimaLab II and global best practices with a focus on local experience to provide Nigeria with the most competitive and attractive start-up accelerator programme.

Accordingly, 10 companies will be selected to participate in the 10-week programme that will provide them with the expertise, resources, and support to develop and scale market-ready solutions that bring social and/or commercial value to Nigeria's insurance sector.

Across the continent, little knowledge of the insurance industry, coupled with low income, has affected the rate of insurance penetration in the mass market. Yet, a recent report by Deloitte indicates that affordable insurance products play a crucial role in mitigating the effects of negative financial shocks and in doing so reducing financial vulnerability.

To widen insurance coverage, FSD Africa has recently rolled out a similar accelerator programme in Ghana (InnoLab). The solutions being supported through the accelerator programmes will be expected to also speak to the needs of populations beyond their borders of origination.

Among the success stories from previous BimaLab Accelerator programmes include Bismart, a Kenyan insurance agency that has partnered with Britam to launch a short-term school fees insurance cover called Elimu Smart. The cover protects school-going children from dropping out of school in the event their parent or guardian becomes critically ill or dies, safeguarding the future of the children even in cases of incidents.

Commenting on the launch of the BimaLab Accelerator Programme: Kelvin Massingham, Director – Risk and Resilience, FSD Africa said: "We believe that this programme will enhance the development of a vibrant ecosystem of start-ups; through collaboration with corporate partners, investors and research institutions to accelerate and scale innovation in the insurance industry in Nigeria. We have successfully implemented the programme in Kenya, and are commencing the same in Ghana."

Also, CFI stated that: "As a key driver of change in the financial sector, innovation has led to immeasurable efficiency and gains.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 18

...the Nigerian insurance market has undergone substantial structural and regulatory reforms over the years following the market development initiatives being implemented and the evolution of Nigeria's financial sector...

House Of Reps Wants CBN To Regulate POS Business Operators

By Albert Egbede

The House of Representatives has called on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to put in place stringent measures to guard against using the Point of Sale (POS) by unscrupulous Nigerians to defraud.

The House said it has become necessary to regulate operations of POS business in the country to save Nigerians from the hands of bad elements in the society.

Moving the motion at the plenary, Hon. Jimoh Olajide said the POS is where customers make payments for products or services rendered, and so needed to be carefully regulated.

The House then resolved and urged, "the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to, in the public interest, introduce stringent Regulations and Guidelines including sanctions on the Point of Sale (POS) business operations in Nigeria."

It also mandated its Committee on Banking and Currency to organise stakeholders meeting for the purpose of tackling the menace of the Operation of POS in Nigeria.

Olajide in moving the motion on the urgent need to regulate POS business operations in Nigeria and seconded by Muraina Ajibola, said due to many factors, POS has been turned into a lucrative business and has provided jobs for millions of unemployed Nigerians that see it as a good alternative to white-collar jobs in the country.

Olajide said, "While many Nigerians are making legal money from this lucrative business, some are using it for fraudulent acts to create fake credit alerts to defraud innocent customers hence the need for government intervention to rescue the rising business sector in the country."

The lawmaker expressed worry that POS merchants in Nigeria are not only licensed by Commercial Banks, other private companies are currently in the business of giving POS for business purposes, thus, making the business to be more porous and ambiguous.

Olajide argued that at the moment, no financial regulatory bodies in Nigeria can precisely ascertain the total number of POS machines and their Operators in the country.

He recalled that on December 21, 2021, a national daily reported an allegation by the residents of Aniocha South Local Government Area of Delta State, alleging that the Aniocha branch's Union Bank and First Bank Staff deliberately sabotaged the Banks Automated Teller Machines (ATM) on non-availability of cash, thus leaving customers with no choice than to patronize the alleged banks staff owned POS centres around the banks.

Olajide said, "Worried that some of the POS operators fraudulently charge exorbitant amounts of money from their customers' bank accounts, while some retain vital information from customer's ATM cards in the course of making the financial transactions."

Why NAICOM's Efforts In Insurance Penetration Is...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Even though these changes can sometimes be accompanied by uncertainty and hesitation, there is evidence of great success. I have no doubt that with such collaborations, Nigeria is set to be a successful case study on insurance innovation across the continent."

Also, NAICOM in partnership with the Kano State government, organised a sensitisation workshop geared towards attracting insurance investments in the state.

The Kano State Governor, Umar Ganduje, affirmed at the workshop that "In the long run, they (investors) will have to be insured as well and that will give them the safety required in case of any eventuality.

"The compulsory insurance policy adopted by Kano State government is deliberate because we know that in the long run, we stand to mutually benefit: the insurance companies; the State government and the people of Kano."

The Kano State government Secretary added that the compulsory insurance policy was adopted by the state government in its quest "to make Kano a better state, develop economically and move to the next level".

He said that the policy would guarantee "the protection of the people of the state and their businesses, by ensuring they are insured and in the event of any eventuality, they can get relief".

Also, Mr. Thomas said that the steps taken by the Kano State government on insurance was a testament that insurance could indeed thrive anywhere in Nigeria.

He said that the objective of the retreat was to equip members of the committee with requisite information and knowledge to enable them maximise opportunities that would help grow and develop insurance culture amongst Kano State citizens.

He stated that the Kano State insurance policy would help the state "generate more revenue and serve as social protection mechanism that would assist both government and citizens in the event of any disaster."

Making Claims Settlement a Priority

In a commendable move, NAICOM in recent times has now made claims settlement in the insurance industry one of its major priorities.

According to NAICOM Boss, the commission would soon begin ranking insurance firms based on the number of claims received and settled annually which would be published.

He lamented that though the industry was progressing in huge claims payments, the activities of some of the operators remained a task.

"Claims payment has always been one aspect the industry is battling to balance.

'We all agree that we cannot claim ignorance of the fact that the industry is paying huge claims out there, even though activities of few amongst the operators is jeopardising the efforts of the majority.

"We had before now agreed to start ranking companies on the number of claims received and settled on an annual basis, and we intend to publish such ranking for the insurance consumers. 'It is always an issue that puts the entire industry on the edge", he said.

"The commission is doing all it can to see that the non-settlement of claims is brought to its barest minimum in the sector,' he stated.

He explained that the commission has been implementing various market developmental initiatives to lift the insurance sector to a global standard through Risk Based Supervision Framework; Encourage investment in digital capabilities and automation like launching of NAICOM portal, the launch of the Bimalab Project on the 9th of February, 2021; enforcement of the compulsory insurance products in Nigeria – via a partnership with agencies.

The commission would also publish such ranking for the insurance consumers. He said that although claims payment was an issue in the industry, the commission, he added, was doing all it could to bring non-settlement of claims to its barest minimum.

According to him, the commission is trying to open up the market across the geo-political zones by reaching out to the states where insurance penetration is perceived to be very low. "We expect the industry to respond to these efforts by bridging the supply gap, and ensure that they follow up on the commission's move to create awareness, among high-ranking policy makers.

N238 billion Paid as Claims in 2021

In another development, NAICOM revealed that the insurance industry has paid the sum of N238.05billion as insurance claim in the year 2021.

The figure was released recently by the Head, Corporate Communications and Market Development, NAICOM, Mr. Rasaaq Salami.

The Nigerian insurance industry's asset rose from N2.02trillion in 2020 to N2.13trillion in 2021.

During the period, Nigerian insurance companies earned a total gross premium income of N630.36billion as against the N520billion recorded in 2020.

Projections for the Future

In the same vein, NAICOM has said that it is expecting the insurance industry Gross Premium Income (GPI) to hit N6.0 trillion by year 2030.

The Head, Corporate Communications & Market Development, NAICOM, Mr. Salami said this in a paper entitled: 'NAICOM's Market Development Initiatives: The Journey So Far' delivered at the just concluded NAICOM 2022 retreat for Financial Journalists in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.

Mr. Salami said that NAICOM has put in place structures to promote insurance as a tool for stimulating growth of other sectors and raise funds for project development at the federal and state levels, so as to create over 250,000 new jobs.

He added that the structures would also see to improvement of insurance consumer trust and confidence in the sector, increase insurance contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from 0.4 percent to over 3.0 percent; lower insurance gap from 94 percent to 70 percent and increase Industry gross premium income from N630 billion in 2021 to N6.0 trillion by 2030.

He noted that market development is a costly affair and requires huge capital to keep going. Thus, funding is critical, adding that NAICOM, however, would continue to work with all stakeholders to develop strategic, sustainable and implementable initiatives for deepening insurance penetration to enable optimal contribution to the Nigerian economy.

Mr. Salami submitted that various actions to expand the reach or tap into a different segment/ unexplored market (retail end) and other activities aimed at achieving insurance market development have been put in place.

Ahmed Harps On Financial Mechanisms Needed To Strengthen Inter-Regional Trade

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On the financial mechanisms needed to be put in place to strengthen inter-regional trade and promote regional value chains, Mrs. Zainab Ahmed, Honourable Minister of Finance, Budget and National Planning, has harped on measures that will attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and diversify the economy from producer of primary goods to finished product.

At a recent round table discussion in Cairo, Egypt, on 'Regional value chains and their importance in increasing trade and investment flow between Arab and African countries', she shed some light on the importance of deepening African financial markets to promote growth and investment.

She said: "A lot of resources are required before African countries can accelerate their industrialisation and structural changes. Infrastructure which is a pillar of growth is inadequate in Africa. To address this problem, there is the need to put in place measures that will attract foreign direct investment and diversify the economy from producer of primary goods to finished product.

Other measures, according to her, include addressing regulatory bottlenecks by putting in place and enforcing laws aimed at fostering confidence in investors and banks through the creation of credit bureaus that oversee repayment records.

Mrs. Ahmed also said that there is need to reorganise the banking system through opening the sector to competition, reviewing prudential ratios and putting in place innovative savings and borrowing instruments adapted to local needs.

She called for the development of capital markets and particularly bond markets for long-term financing needs by setting up adequate guarantee schemes against currency and other types of risks.

She stated that the gap has to be bridged "between the informal and formal financial sectors by formalising microfinance institutions to help them scale up activities while developing financial products geared towards Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Innovative financial tools that use technology such as mobile banking can also help leapfrog traditional finance services and reach a larger population.

On trade financing, "it is important to continue addressing the trade financing gap in Africa, estimated at USD 82 billion in a joint 2019 African Development Bank (AfDB) and Afreximbank Trade Finance Survey. Trade financing supports two critical aspects of the trade process: risk mitigation, and liquidity; and is therefore important both for regional trade in Africa as well as inter-regional trade.

According to her, "Critical steps that have been taken in recent years to close the trade financing gap in Africa include programmes created by multilateral banks to de-risk banking transactions (e.g., AfDB's Trade Finance Programme; IFC Global Trade Finance programme); leveraging technology – e.g., Afrexim's Mansa due diligence platform (introduced in 2018) provides a single platform for due diligence checks in African counterparties; introduction and adoption of the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA).

Mrs. Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Hon. Minister Of Finance, Budget And National Planning

The Honourable Minister highlighted continued mitigation of the impact of COVID-19 on access to trade financing (i.e., through interventions such as Afreximbank's Pandemic Trade Impact Mitigation Facility (PATIMFA). Furthermore, "interventions such as Afreximbank's Pan-African Payment and Settlement System (PAPSS) and the Afreximbank Trade Finance and Trade Facilitation (AFTRAF) programme are aimed at reducing liquidity constraints and increasing African trade.

On PAPSS, she also said: "The new African payment system was officially launched on January 13, 2022, in Accra, Ghana. According to Afreximbank, PAPSS provides the solution to the disconnected and fragmented nature of payment and settlement systems that have long impeded intra-African trade. PAPSS is a cross-border financial market infrastructure enabling payment transactions across Africa, bridging trade challenges in a continent with over 40 known currencies.

...there is need to reorganise the banking system through opening the sector to competition, reviewing prudential ratios and putting in place innovative savings and borrowing instruments adapted to local needs

According to Afreximbank, participants pay in local currency, while a seller in another country receives payment in their local currency.

On AFTRAF, she further said: "The Afreximbank Trade Facilitation Program enhances the confidence of counterparties in the settlement of international trade transactions and improves correspondent banking relationships. It supports critical imports into Africa, boosts intra-African trade and facilitates the purchase of equipment for the production of export goods. It provides trade confirmation services, trade confirmation guarantees and irrevocable reimbursement undertakings.

In view of the role of Nigerian government, Mrs. Ahmed noted that the federal government and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has put in place measures to improve trade through the construction of Free Trade Zones. "Construction of regional roads that link some West African states through Lagos is on-going, the Calabar – Cameroon road is also on-going to facilitate trade and movement of people.

"The federal government is also working with ECOWAS to introduce single currency with the sole aim of facilitating trade and improving the wellbeing all citizens. ECOWAS has put in place Common External Tariff and ECOWAs Trade Linearisation Schemes. Nigeria is also working closely with ECOWAS for the full implementation of the IT base ECOWAS interconnectivity system SIGMAT, which automatically transfer relevant transit data. There is also free movement of people with the introduction of VISA on arrival.

The Honourable Minister also noted that Africa has a long history of trade with the Arab countries covering thousands of years. However there has been a significant shift in the trade patterns toward Asia over the past few decades.

"The scarcity of quality data and statistics on both domestic and foreign investment means a lack of evidence-based public policy and increases perceived investment risk. Regional trade remains dismal at a very low rate with much of their exports going to Europe. Though average tariffs have reduced over time, they remain very high; non-tariff barriers (e.g., burdensome technical regulations, import authorization procedures, cumbersome customs clearance and border controls) are obstacles to both Arab- Africa Trade).

On trade facilitation performance, Mrs. Ahmed said that a lot needs to be done in terms of procedures, harmonisation, transparency, border agency cooperation and in both Africa and Middle East. "Though regional trade agreements are in place, their implementation and enforcement are lacking and benefits are not visible; lack of diversification is a serious drawback, given that oil and agricultural products remain by far the most important exports.

"Regional economic integration in both continents has seen very little progress due to different factors including weak institutions, the lack of infrastructure and state-owned enterprises this need to be strengthened for the integration to work properly; cumbersome licensing processes, complex regulations and investment barriers should be reviewed in line with best international practice.

She also noted that trade has been negatively affected by the wars, sanctions and political barriers in the region.

On why Arab-African collaboration is vital to investment and trade development in Africa, Mrs. Ahmed said: "The importance of trade collaboration between Arab and Africa cannot be over emphasized as it is a major enabler of mutual growth, job creation and poverty reduction. However, openness also needs to be accompanied by greater competitiveness (i.e., productivity-enhancing reforms in the home country) to fully reap the benefits.

"However, for the collaboration to work, there is the need to ensure sound macroeconomic stability with investor and trade-friendly policies and regulations; good governance (that leads to efficient public administration, timely decision-making, impartial enforcement of property rights and contracts, lowering corruption, greater business integrity, etc.); investments in hard and soft infrastructure, all enabling trade and investment facilitation; and clear mechanisms.

Why We're Sustaining Our Interventions - CBN

• Maintains All Monetary Parameters Constant
• Apex Bank Laments Negative Effect of Oil on FX

*The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) recently concluded its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting for March. Our correspondent, **Musa Ibrahim**, highlights the key points from the Communique and other disclosures from the meeting by the CBN.*

Mr. Godwin Emefiele, CBN Governor

The Nigerian central bank has stated that its development financing intervention will continue to assist the economy's growth, despite warnings by international financial institutions for it to slow down.

Mr. Godwin Emefiele, Governor of CBN, stated this while reading the communiqué after the inaugural Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.

While responding to the International Monetary Fund (IMF)'s recent Article IV report on Nigeria, in which the IMF encouraged the CBN to reduce its credit intervention programs because they are likely to generate market distortions in the long run.

The CBN Governor showed how the IMF used intervention to stimulate growth in the past, particularly at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said: "In 2020, as a result of COVID-19, the IMF opened its vault to all countries for the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF) loan and Nigeria got the highest in Africa of almost $3.4 billion.

It aided us in resolving some of our problems, particularly in the period of COVID-19. In 2021, when they saw the third wave, they came up to say, they were increasing the special drawing right (SDR) and we benefit to the tune of above $3billion."

Mr. Emefiele stated that the CBN is a development finance-oriented institution that needs to deploy intervention to achieve the bank's objectives.

He said: "We reiterate the fact that the CBN remains a development finance-oriented central bank and it is normal for an emerging market, a good developing economy to deploy the development finance tools through intervention to support the growth of the economy.

"I think it is just reasonable that the CBN steps in to support the fiscal to fill that space not through grants but through loans to smallholder farmers, Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment scheme (SMEIS) and to wake up our manufacturing industries who are dead."

He argued that the IMF would agree that the over N300billion disbursed to over one million homes helped to catalyse consumption expenditure that has helped Nigeria to return positive in gross domestic product (GDP), even though the GDP is still fragile.

"IMF knows that even our intervention to manufacturing is helping and we have facts to show so," he added.

Despite rising inflationary pressures in the country, the MPC agreed to maintain all monetary parameters steady, keeping the benchmark interest rate at 11.5 percent.

When asked about the apex bank's view on the global economy, Mr. Emefiele said that inflation is projected to rise as a result of rising oil costs, and that it could only be contained if the Russia-Ukraine conflict is resolved as soon as feasible.

However, the MPC voted unanimously to keep rates unchanged, believing that tightening the interest rate at this time would be counterproductive for the country's economy, given the global economic uncertainties caused by the Russia-Ukraine standoff.

Mr. Emefiele also explained that increasing oil thefts on the economy is affecting the accretion of the country's foreign reserves.

The federal government has disclosed that it is finalising plans to deal with the issue of oil theft, which forces Nigeria to lose $4 billion annually or 150,000.

In his speech, the Governor said: "The committee noted, with grave concern, the unprecedented rate of oil theft recorded in recent times and its debilitating impact on government's revenue and accretion to reserves."

In the medium term, he said that the MPC was hopeful that the Dangote Refinery's planned start-up later this year would assist in boosting Nigeria's petroleum product supply.

He said that the MPC also noticed that the rising price of fuel was exacerbated by a lack of energy supplies, which had a negative impact on domestic prices.

"MPC advises the CBN's management and the fiscal authorities to take specific and urgent actions to avoid many power generating stations shutdown for turn-around maintenance, resulting in the current unwarranted shutdown of generating assets," he said.

The committee also evaluated the bank's multiple interventions to boost productivity in manufacturing, industry, agriculture, energy, infrastructure, healthcare, and micro, small, and medium firms, according to Mr. Emefiele.

He noted that the bank disbursed N29.67 billion under the Anchor Borrowers' Program between January and February 2022 for the procurement of inputs and the planting of maize, rice, and wheat, the three crops that had previously been major sources of forex demand.

"These disbursements bring the total under the programme to over 4.52 million smallholder farmers, cultivating 21 commodities across the country, comes to a total of N975.61billion," he said.

FG Plans 24hrs Operation At Ports

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Niyi Adebayo, has said that plans were in progress for the ports in Nigeria to operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week to facilitate quicker movement of goods.

He said on Thursday during the weekly ministerial briefing on the Sugar Backward Integration Program (BIP) organised by the Presidential communication team (PCT) at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Adebayo said as vice chairman of the Presidential Ease of Doing Business Environment Council (PEBEC), under the chairmanship of Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, he could confirm that the council had been working to improve the business environment in the country.

He added: "The Federal Government is spending a lot of money on infrastructure, the road to the port. Contracts have been awarded for scanning machines for the Customs to enable them clear goods more efficiently and quicker.

"Before the end of the year, it is believed that the new port at Lekki will be operational. So, plans are already underway to fix the road network to those ports so that there will be quick evacuation of goods from the ports at minimal cost and minimal effort for both imported and exported. Efforts are being made, the challenges are being addressed with a view to easing that particular challenge."

Niyi Adebayo, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment

The minister said that apart from Apapa and Tin Can, there were plans for a new port to come up in Badagry after the new port in Lekki.

He explained that the government was looking at improving the road network at Port Harcourt and Onne ports so that it can ease the congestion of Lagos.

The minister stressed: "At the last PEBEC meeting, we also looked at the possibility of utilization of Warri port, but there are certain issues and problems with it at the moment that are being looked into. I believe the breakwater has collapsed, so, government is looking at how that can be repaired and to see how dredging can be done so that bigger vessels can use that port.

"Calabar port is a problem, apparently there is a court case on that one at the moment with regards to a subcontract for the dredging of that as well."

On the sugar master plan implementation, he said the millions of dollars expected to finance the project was coming from the private sector major industrialists involved in the backward integration programme.

He expressed optimism that the cultivation of 10,000 hectares for the sugar backward integration programme should be over within 18 months.

The minister said though the investment on sugar production plan would take time to yield return, it has created employment for 15,000 people.

He disclosed that government was not giving out any loans on the sugar backward integration programme but is providing intervention through the provision of infrastructure.

He said trade department in his ministry would produce a policy paper to be presented to President Muhammadu Buhari after a thorough analysis of the current situation between the two warring countries.

Adebayo added: "I can assure you that my ministry is looking at all the issues involved. And since the war has come up, the trade department in my ministry is looking at all the things that we import, and that we export to them with a view to coming up with a policy paper, which we will be presenting to the president.

"At present, we import 1.7 million tonnes of raw sugar every year. At the present moment, we are only manufacturing less than five percent of that. So, it gives us an opportunity to build up what we are manufacturing."

Adebayo explained that the ministry hopes that Nigeria will be self-sufficient in sugar production in 10 years and be able to export sugar.

Air Transport Rises 22.95%, Bus Fare 30.93% In Feb, Says NBS

By Albert Egbede

The hike in price of petroleum products occasioned by its scarcity may have impacted air fare, rising 22.95 percent year -on–year, from N36,458.11 in February 2021 to N44,825.04 in February 2022.

According to the Transport Fare Watch report released Monday by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), the average fare paid by commuters for intercity bus journey climbed by 30.93 percent in February 2022.

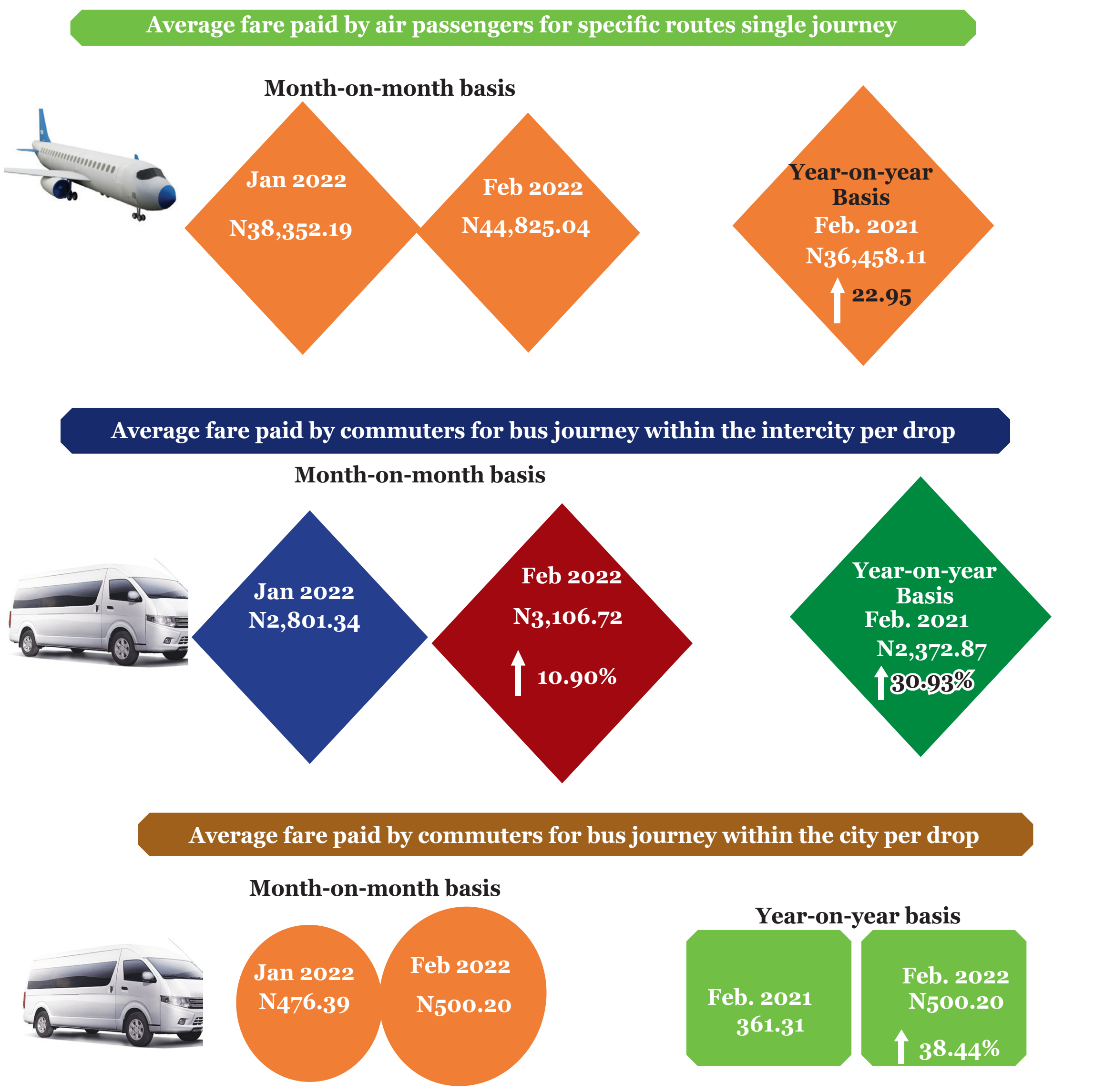
"The February 2022 report covers bus journey within the city per drop constant route; bus journey intercity, state route, charge per person; air fare charge for specified routes single journey; journey by motorcycle (Okada) per drop; and water way passenger transport.

In February 2022, most of these categories of transport recorded an increase in their fares.

"The average fare paid by air passengers for specified routes single journey, increased by 16.88 percent on a month-on-month basis from N38,352.19 in January 2022 to N44,825.04 in February 2022. On a year-on-year, the fare rose by 22.95 percent (N36,458.11) in February 2021," the report said.

"The average fare paid by commuters for bus journey intercity stood at N3,106.72 in February 2022 indicating an increase of 10.90 percent on a month-on-month compared to the value of N2,801.34 in January 2022. The fare also rose by 30.93 percent (N2,372.87) on a year-on-year, in February 2021.

Similarly, the average fare paid by commuters for bus journey within the city per drop, increased by 5.00 percent on a month-on-month from N 476.39 in January 2022 to N500.20 in February 2022. Also, on a year-on-year, the average fare paid by commuters for bus journey within the city per drop rose by 38.44 percent from N 361.31 in February 2021 to N500.20 in February 2022.



Stating further, the NBS said, "in another category, the average fare paid by commuters for journey by motorcycle per drop increased by 11.20 percent on month-on-month from N340.94 in January 2022 to N379.12 in February 2022. In terms of year-on-year, the fare rose by 42.13 percent from N 266.74 in February 2021 to N379.12 in February 2022.

According to the statistic office, "the average fare paid for water transport (water way passenger transportation) in February 2022 stood at N 913.13 showing an increase of 2.80 percent on month-on-month from N888.24 in January 2022. On year-on-year, the fare rose by 15.0 percent from N794.02 in February 2021 to N913.13 in February 2022."

The NBS disclosed that the highest air fare was recorded in Abuja, while Edo, Bauchi and Abia jointly had the least fare under the period in wreview.

"At the state level, Abuja recorded the highest air transport charges (for specified routes single journey) with N53,000 in February 2022, followed by Bayelsa with N 50,686. Conversely, Edo, Bauchi and Abia had the least fare with N40,000 each. For intercity bus travel (state route charged per person fare) in February 2022, the highest fare was recorded in Abuja with N4,975.00 followed by Lagos with N4,167.78 respectively.

"The least fares were recorded in Bauchi and Abia with N 2,017.14 and N 2,058.33. In terms of bus journey within the city (per drop constant route), Zamfara recorded the highest with N771.43 followed by Nasarawa State with N657.5. On the other hand, Abia State recorded N350.50 while Bauchi State recorded the least fares with N100.00. In February 2022, Kwara state had the highest motorcycle transport fare with N595 followed by Lagos with N584.38. The least fare was recorded in Adamawa with N200.50 followed by Kebbi with N181.25.

"Similarly, water transport recorded the highest fare in Rivers with N2,825 followed by Bayelsa State with N2,757.14 while the least fare was recorded in Gombe followed by Borno with N405.5 and N328.15 respectively.

Looking at the zonal distribution of transport fares, North-Central recorded the highest fares of air transport in February 2022 with N45,968.02 followed by South-South with N45,797.61, while South-West had the least with N43,297.69. In terms of bus journey intercity, the North-Central had the highest fare with N 3,402.85 followed by South-West with N3,322.72 while the South south recorded the least with N 2,748.28.

"In February 2022, transport fare of bus journey within the city recorded the highest in the Northwest with N556.28 followed by South-West with N528.81 while the South-East recorded the least with N445.62. Also, commuters on motorcycle (Okada) paid the highest fare in the Southwest with N433.34 followed by South-South with N428.69 while the North-West recorded the least with N248.51. South-South zone had the highest charges paid on water transport with N2,107.84 followed by South-West with N798.55, while North-East had the least fare with N553.88."

Customs Intercepts Donkey Skins, Rice Worth N373.6m In Lagos

Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), Strike Force Unit, Zone A has intercepted eight trucks of foreign parboiled rice, 44 sacks of donkey skins and other contraband valued at N373.6million within four weeks.

The service said in Lagos that the rice was smuggled into the country from Benin Republic.

The coordinator of the unit, Deputy Comptroller Muhammad Yusuf, said at his maiden press briefing that the cement truck used in conveying the bags of smuggled rice was intercepted in Ilaro, Ogun State.

He added that officers and men of the service intercepted some of the contraband along the nation's borders and warehouses in Lagos State.

Yusuf listed the items seized to include 3×20 feet containers of timber worth, N177.7million; 1,000 foreign smuggled rice, with Duty Paid Value of N43.2million; 3,143 pieces of used tyres worth, N75.4milion, used clothes worth N33.8million.

Others are 663 sacks of used shoes worth N37.8million, 44 sacks of donkey skin, N2.42million and 137.3kg of canabis sativa worth, N13million.

He said: "We are working 24 hours from day one and they have us to contend with any time they dare to carry out their illicit activities either at night or in the day. I am happy to declare that our operatives are relentless and uncompromising as far as this task is concerned.

"This is just the beginning of heated anti-smuggling action which we have embarked upon in the entire South West area of the country. We are ready to run smugglers out of town with the full support and encouragement of our Comptroller-General (CG) of Customs, Col Hameed Ibrahim Ali (rtd). This task is aimed at protecting our national economy and preventing dangerous importation as well as exportation that contradicts the law."

Yusuf stated that his more than 200 workforce were ready to run smugglers out of town with the full support and encouragement of the customs Comptroller General, Col Ibrahim Ali.

He added that the operation was aimed at protecting the national economy and preventing dangerous importation as well as exportation that contradict the law.

According to him, "our patrolling and interdiction capacity is recharged for round the clock operation against smugglers and anyone attempting to circumvent the dye process of import and export.

"I am happy to state that within a period of four weeks, the reconstituted Strike force Team A has collected the sum of N648.3million as revenue through the demand notices."

Yusuf explained that the service's patrolling and interdiction capacity was recharged for round the clock operation against smugglers, saying that anyone attempting to circumvent the due process of import and export would be arrested.

PTAD

Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate

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#1

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#2

Payroll is uploaded into GIFMIS payment system managed by the office of the Accountant general.

#3

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#4

After these steps pensioners will receive their due payments on or before the 25th of every month.

E-mail: **info@ptad.gov.ng, complaints@ptad.gov.ng**
Website: **www.ptad.gov.ng**

Address: Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate, No. 22 Katsina Ala Crescent, off Yedseram Street, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria.

If you need any information on your pension, call PTAD toll free on;

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POLICY BRIEF with ENAM OBIOSIO

FG Doesn't Need To Look Too Far To Boost Revenue?

Considering the revenue that Nigeria needs to generate to buoy the national budget, and to enable the country fix its most desired infrastructure, there is the question whether the federal government does not need to look too far.

Some political economic experts believe that the government has to take seriously the financial resources that lurk in its digital economy and e-commerce, same for entertainment, hydrocarbons, solid minerals, land administration, housing etc.

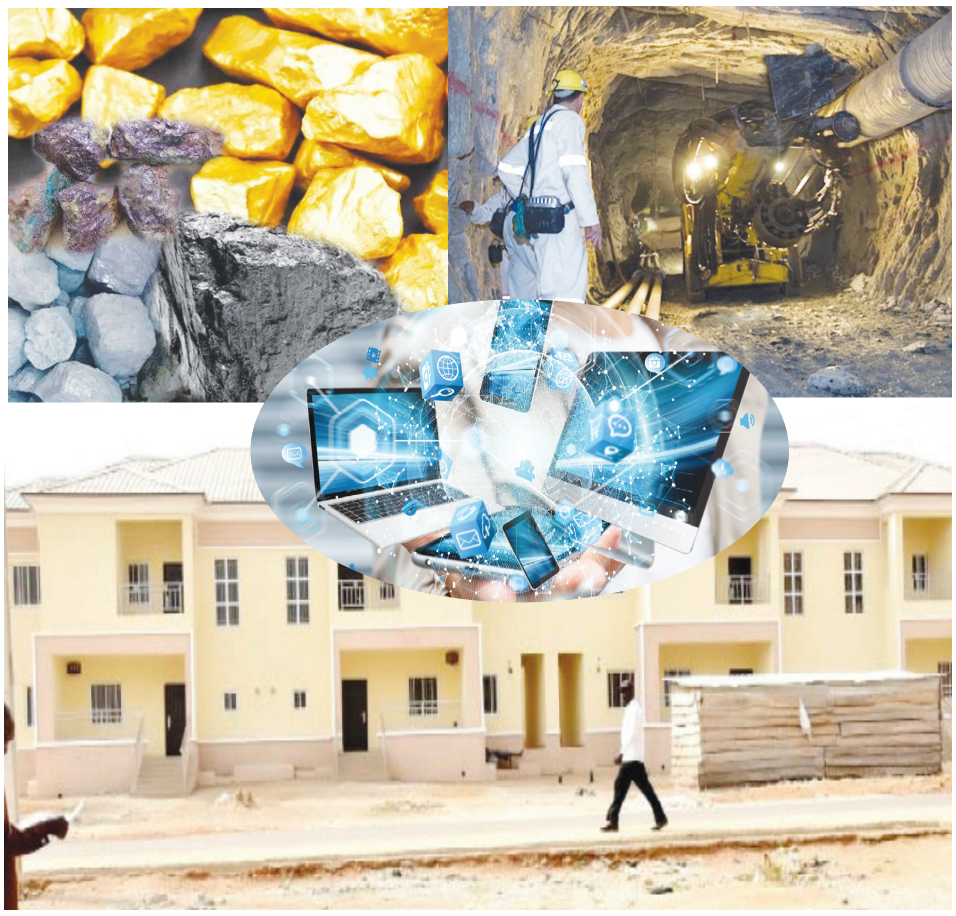
Looking at all the areas and without any serious study, it shows that the government can raise N100 trillion, if not more than, to fund our national budget. But with concerted deep study, it is possible to even exceed the N100 trillion mark. Therefore, it is advisable that government should explore new sources of revenue within the country to close the budget deficit and grow the economy and create jobs.

Nigeria can leverage its status as a multi-billion-dollar tech hub to develop its information technology (IT) sector and become a global IT services destination. Github, a leading software development platform, recently reported that Nigeria is home to the fastest-growing developer community on its platform.

The country has benefited from companies like Andela which brought world-class training and job opportunities to budding Nigerian programmers. Nigeria's growing supply of programmers will likely be met with rising demand from the country's constantly expanding tech hubs. The potential of the business-to-business (B2B) or enterprise software sector is also good news for the country's ITC sector.

The government recently said the current e-commerce spending in Nigeria has grown to $13billion per annum and is expected to hit $75billion in revenue per annum by 2025. It also said e-commerce grew in Nigeria from 14 percent in 2019 to 17 percent in 2020. Nigeria is well-positioned to benefit from this growth in terms of revenue if legal bottlenecks related to incorporation, trademark security, copyright protection, transaction issues. Privacy is adequately addressed.

Nigeria's entertainment industry already plays an important role in the Nigerian economy but its full potential remains untapped. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) predicts that total industry revenue will rise steadily from $7.7billion in 2021 to $9billion in 2022, $10.7billion in 2023, $12.6billion in 2024 and then $14.8billion in 2025. This steady growth will be largely fuelled by internet access, which is in turn powered by the country's broadband infrastructure and mobile connectivity. Like digital economy and e-commerce, Nigeria will benefit in terms of revenue if legal bottlenecks related to incorporation, trademark security, copyright protection, transaction issues. Privacy is adequately addressed.



Although oil receipts are down, our huge gas reserves present opportunities for alternative revenue sources. The success of Nigeria's LNG has demonstrated that gas revenue is massive but only if exploited. Nigeria can also derive revenue from petrochemicals like methanol which Nigeria currently imports. But the legal framework must be right. The legal framework relating to hydrocarbons is skewed in favour of foreign companies in the entire value chain. In at least four cases, banking, insurance, shipping, legal service, capital flight is massive. In relation to shipping alone, it has been suggested that Nigeria loses over $10billion annually. Revenue loss will continue unless the legal framework is amended to domesticate the value chain in hydrocarbons. It is important to review the legal framework for local content with a view to strengthen implementation and enforcement. It is also very important to address the issue of corruption in the extractive industry. The continuing lapses and loss to the nation in oil and gas revenue as revealed in the report by Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) which indicate lack of implementation of previous reports, supports this. Our hydrocarbon resources especially gas could generate $30billion export earnings and spawn other local industries.

Solid mineral is another sector that has not been adequately harnessed. Nigeria is estimated to have about 34 solid minerals, with every Nigerian state boasting of at least one of these minerals. Still mining constitutes only 0.2 percent of gross domestic product (GDP). According to Olisa Agbakoba Legal (OAL), in its 'Olisa Agbakoba Nigeria: Driving Economic Growth Through Legal Innovations', majorly from which I draw this essay, mining can generate $10billion and 5 million Jobs. The Democratic Republic of Congo in 2017 alone saw the sector generate $ 1.68 billion, accounting for 55.16 percent of the total government revenue and 17.40 percent of the GDP. "Solid minerals is undoubtedly capable of making a more pronounced impact on the country's employment rate and generating more revenue for the government however, to derive the highest possible benefit from this sector, a local content policy and legal framework needs to be put in place. Agriculture is one of the largest contributors to Nigeria's GDP. It is 25 percent of GDP and has the potential to create massive numbers of new jobs, especially in Northern Nigeria that has very fertile agricultural land. The apex bank's Anchor Borrowers programme that made Nigeria self-sufficient in rice production has shown the potential of the agriculture sector. The apex bank has identified 10 crops to support namely rice, wheat, milk, tomato, fish, cotton etc. This is a great leap forward for the sector. But our policy on agriculture must move away from subsistence to mechanised agriculture. The legal framework for land use administration also needs adjustment. Mechanised agriculture could generate $10billion, create jobs but also improve national security by offering employment to our teeming youths exploited for banditry and terrorism.A recent study shows that the housing inventory of Nigerian property exceeds $6 trillion. Nigeria has fallow assets estimated at $900 billion in and outside Nigeria (according to PWC). Most of this is dead capital as it cannot be used as collateral. "Creating the proper legal framework to make dead capital fungible (easily transferable) will create an instant credit market and enable Nigerians to borrow on their property. Digitalisation of land registries including introducing a Land Use Administration Act will make the consent process more efficient and give confidence to banks to accept title documents as collateral. This process will release into the economy 6 trillion dollars' worth of assets currently dead capital.

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