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Nigeria's Solid Mineral Development: **A Bright Future With GEO-SCAN**

EDITORIAL

In an era where economic development hinges on the wise management of natural resources, Nigeria has taken a significant stride towards securing its future with a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with the German company, GEO-SCAN for solid minerals exploration.

We understand that Nigeria's mineral resources are conservatively estimated at $700billion underground, constituting about 0.02 percent of global mining. Therefore, this partnership marks a crucial moment in Nigeria's pursuit of harnessing its vast mineral wealth, a step that will undoubtedly have far-reaching benefits for the nation.

Nigeria, blessed with an abundance of solid minerals, has, for far too long, allowed these resources to lay dormant beneath. The neglect of this valuable sector has led to an over-dependence on oil, resulting in economic instability, corruption, and environmental degradation. The MoU with GEO-SCAN, one of the top-notch Geo-

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Fitch Affirms Stable Credit Rating For Nigeria, Forecasts Inflation Below 21%

It is important to note that credit ratings are just one piece of the economic puzzle, and many factors contribute to a country's economic health and growth prospects. ***Mr. Wale Edun,*** *Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, and* ***Mr. Yemi Cardoso,*** *Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), among others in the current executive cabinet, quite supportive of the reforms, are on a page that while a 'B-' rating may represent challenges, Nigeria has the potential to improve its ratings over time through sound economic policies, fiscal responsibility, and other reforms.* ***Enam Obiosio*** *writes.*

Mr. Wale Edun, Minister of Finance And Coordinating Minister of The Economy,

Fitch Ratings has affirmed Nigeria's long-term foreign-currency issuer default outlook at 'B-' with a stable outlook, listing the country's major strengths as large economy, developed and liquid domestic debt market, and large oil and gas reserves.

The affirmation by the global rating agency came as Governor of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, reiterated his determination to change the story of the apex bank and make its policies more impactful on Nigerians. He gave the assurance while playing host to former CBN governor, Emir Muhammadu Sanusi II, who emphasised the critical role of the central bank and its enormous impact on the lives of citizens.

However, Fitch stated that the rating was constrained by weak governance, structurally very low non-oil revenue, high hydrocarbon dependence, security challenges, high inflation, low net foreign exchange (FX) reserves, and ongoing weakness in the exchange-rate framework.

It acknowledged that the government had taken important steps to reduce fuel subsidies and reform the exchange rate framework much more quickly than it anticipated and had ambitions to substantially raise revenue.

"However, there has recently been some backtracking on reforms, notably a lower degree of price discovery in the FX market than in late June, raising doubt about the strength of this positive momentum," Fitch said.

"In addition, new data on the CBN suggests its net foreign-

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Finance Minister Estimates Forward Payments Of $6.7bn To Clear Forex Backlog

- CBN Gov. Cardoso Vows To Combat Inflation
- Blames Russia-Ukraine War For Nigeria's Economic Woes

By Tony Tagbo

The amount of overdue forward payments estimated at $6.7 billion, according to Mr. Wale Edun, Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, is to clear outstanding matured forex forwards owed to various creditors.

The payment which has already started through Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) was confirmed a few weeks ago.

Meanwhile, it is revealed that three banks received full payment of the debts owed. The banks are Citi Bank, Stanbic IBTC and Standard Chartered Bank.

The circular titled 'Settlement of Matured FX Forwards by CBN', read: "We have been directed to inform you that the CBN has delivered all outstanding matured forward forex.

The paid banks represent a small percentage of outstanding FX forwards with the largest percentage mostly in tier 1 banks yet to be settled.

Reacting, the Association of Corporate Treasurers of Nigeria (ACTN) said that the decision to settle matured foreign exchange forwards is a significant step in promoting stability and confidence in Nigeria's foreign exchange market. The statement signed by the ACTN president, Mr. Adeyinka Ogunnubi, read, "We, at ACTN, believe that the timely settlement of matured FX forwards is crucial for our members and the broader business community. It allows our corporate treasurers to efficiently manage their foreign exchange risks and plan for their financial obligations.

Also reacting, the Director-General (DG) of the Nigeria Employers Consultative Association, Mr. Wale Oyerinde, said that the actions of the new administration of the CBN have shown tremendous improvement in the FX management.

The Chairman of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, Mr. Niyi Yusuf, said, "This is in the news and it's useful that the administration is delivering on its public commitments which should help to improve public confidence. It's a good signal and a right step to rebuilding trust and confidence," he concluded.

Recently, the Governor of CBN, Dr. Olayemi Cardoso, linked the country's current economic challenges to the ongoing Russian-Ukraine war.

The governor, who stated this in his keynote address at the launch of the book, 'Cowries to Cash' and lecture held in Abuja, also blamed the situation on the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Wale Edun, Minister of Finance And Coordinating Minister of The Economy

Mr. Yemi Cardoso, CBN Governor

Represented by the CBN Director of Banking Supervision, Mr. Mustapha Haruna, the governor noted that the Cowries to Cash transformation has been deepened by the implementation of the cashless policy. According to him, the book would eloquently capture the evolutionary journey in the history of the CBN particularly with regards to the phenomenal transformation of the Nigerian payment system in the last two or three decades.

"We have financial inclusion in the neighbourhood of about 64 percent. These Nigerians have access to formal financial services. Our vision is to push the boundaries to over 95 percent and we are well on course, in achieving that objective", Dr. Cardoso stated.

He assured that the CBN would continue to collaborate with the key stakeholders, particularly the fiscal authorities to ensure that it addressed a number of the essential issues and challenges currently facing the country

In his remarks, Special Adviser to the President on Economic Matters, Dr Tope Fasua, disclosed that President Tinubu's administration is working on policies that would strengthen the naira.

He cautioned Nigerians who are hoarding foreign currencies with the hope that the local currency would continue to fall, that the policies of the government would shock them.

Dr. Fasua who represented the Vice President, Kashim Shettima at the event, said that the policies that are being rolled out by the central bank through Mr. President would shock some people. You know, he has some very great ideas coming up. He wants to achieve it by 2026. So, you are going to see all of these, including efforts from the fiscal side," Dr. Fasua said.

Speaking on the essence of the book, the author and the Executive Director of Asher Global Treasures, Princess Iphie, emphasised the need to preserve the evolution of money and its history in Nigeria.

Iphie said: "If you do not know what yesterday was and you do not know what is today, definitely you will not know what tomorrow will be. So, we started from Cowries to Manillas and then other ones before we started with the exchange of goods and then this is where we are right now — the technological age and loads of innovation."

Also, Mr. Cardoso said that the bank, under his leadership, was determined to make its impact felt by curtailing inflation. He reiterated that under his leadership, the bank will focus mainly on the core mandate of price stability with policies for positive impact.

He said this while hosting the impact investing community, which was led by Muhammadu Sanusi II, the 14th Emir of Kano, and former governor of the apex bank.

Speaking further, Mr. Cardoso vowed to focus mainly on the core mandate of price stability.

While commending the quality of leadership at impact investing community and its effort to create awareness, as well as build partnerships, the CBN boss assured that the bank would collaborate with them in the direction of putting in place frameworks that would encourage investments that would contribute to economic growth.

In his remarks, Emir Khalifa Sanusi noted that the bank's activities had a massive impact on the lives of Nigerians, adding that many people often "do not know the impact of a central bank's works until a central bank fails."

Emir Sanusi pledged his continued support, along with the impact investing community, to the CBN in achieving its goals.

Also speaking, the Chair of Impact Investing, Mrs. Ibukun Awosika, said that they were at the CBN to register their willingness to support what the bank and the federal government were doing in terms of changing Nigeria's investment climate by redirecting resources to areas where they would make the most positive impact. According to her, over $200 trillion was available around the globe as investment funds, with $1trillion of it with impact investing. She stated further that impact investing, with a presence in over 41 countries, was willing to blend with traditional investment practitioners to make an impact in the country.

While stressing the importance of social investment, Mrs. Awosika sought the support of the CBN to enable the body achieve its goal.

In his remarks at the meeting, the deputy governor in charge of Corporate Services, Dr. Bala Bello, underscored the importance of investment, noting that global capital was moving towards social investment.

We have financial inclusion in the neighbourhood of about 64 percent

Fitch Affirms Stable Credit Rating For Nigeria, Forecasts Inflation Below 21%

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exchange position is substantially weaker than we previously understood. These factors are reflected in the stable outlook," the rating agency stated.

While there has been faster reform progress, constraints remain, Fitch noted, highlighting President Bola Tinubu government's removal of fuel subsidies, which cost nearly two percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2022.

"It also unified the multiple exchange rate windows, and the official investors and exporter (I/E) rate was allowed to depreciate by close to 40 percent, with renewed volatility around end of October," it stated.

In the report released a few days ago, Fitch explained that it viewed the cabinet, particularly Mr. Wale Edun, Finance Minister and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, and Mr. Cardoso, as supportive of reforms.

However, it said that there were still sizeable socio-political challenges to implementation, including an acceleration in inflation, which could account for recent backtracking of some reforms.

On the challenging exchange rate liberalisation, the agency noted that FX shortages continued to weigh on economic activity and further FX liberalisation, and deter foreign capital.

It stated, "In October, the CBN lifted the ban on providing FX for imports of 43 items, and is currently taking forward plans to clear near $6.7 billion of unmet FX forwards. However, there has been a renewed widening of the gap between the official and parallel exchange rates since July with a premium of over 30 percent over the official rate.

"Average daily FX turnover at the official exchange rate window has fallen back to near April 2023 levels (well below pre-pandemic), at $95 million in September."

Fitch raised concerns about the weaker net FX reserve position, saying the CBN's gross FX reserves fell to $33.2 billion in September, from $37.1 billion at end-2022.

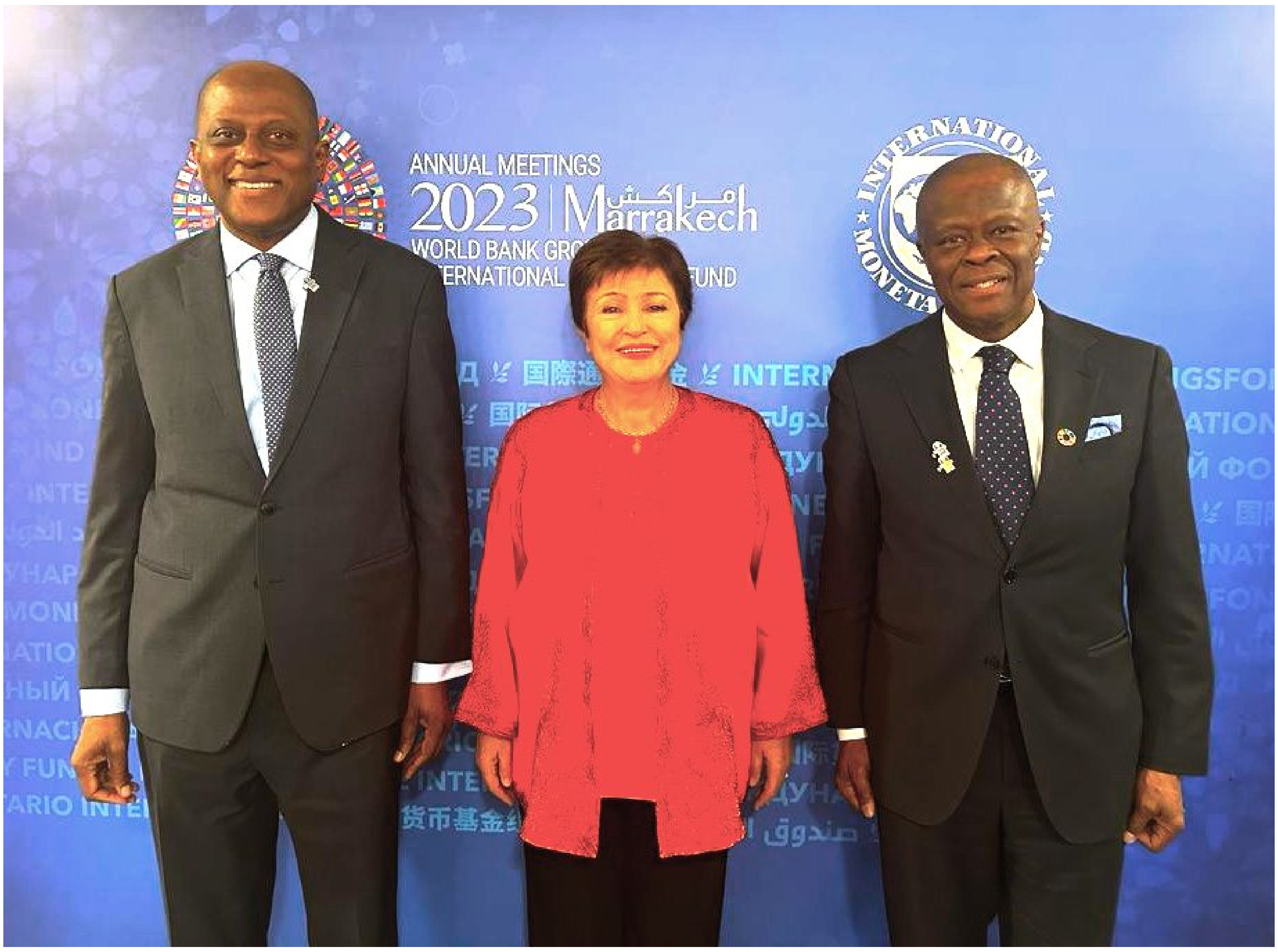
It observed: "In August 2023, the CBN published its consolidated financial statements for 2022, its first since 2015. These indicate its net foreign exchange position is weaker than we understood, although sizeable gaps remain, preventing a reliable assessment.

"Short-term CBN liabilities at end-2022 included $5.5 billion of foreign-currency (FC) securities lending, and $6.8 billion of FC forward payables.

"There is a particular lack of detail on additional near $32 billion of 'FX forwards, OTC futures, and currency swaps', which is recorded as an off-balance-sheet 'commitment' and not broken down.

"While this likely includes some non-deliverable contracts settled in naira and commitments of a longer tenor, it suggests domestic bank swaps with CBN are probably higher than the $10-12 billion Fitch previously estimated.

"Nevertheless, we expect most swaps will continue to be rolled over, reflecting incentives for banks to invest the naira received in high-yielding sovereign securities and the sector's limited reliance on swaps for FC liquidity, given sizeable FC placements with international banks."



R-L: **Mr. Wale Edun,** Minister of Finance And Coordinating Minister of The Economy, **Kristalina Georgieva.** Managing Director of International Monetary Fund**,** and a **Mr. Yemi Cardoso,** CBN Governor, at the 2023 World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings in Marrakech, Morocco.

We anticipate a moderate increase in 2024-2025, averaging 1.81 million bpd, helped by improved onshore surveillance

The report predicted a broadly flat current account surplus, averaging 0.5 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2023-2024, but expressed concern over the lack of details on the recently announced expectation of $10 billion FX inflow.

It said: "There is a lack of detail on a recent government announcement to raise $10 billion of FX, including whether this includes World Bank budget support loans of $1.5 billion.

"Following the sharp depreciation this year, Fitch assumes exchange-rate adjustments proceed more gradually in subsequent years. Near-term sovereign external debt service is moderate, at $4.3 billion in 2024 (10.2 percent of current external receipts below the projected 2024 'B' median of 17.7 percent)."

On revenues from oil, Fitch stated that there had been only a partial recovery in oil production, to 1.57 million bpd (including condensates) in September from a low of 1.25 million bpd in September 2022.

"We anticipate a moderate increase in 2024-2025, averaging 1.81 million bpd, helped by improved onshore surveillance. However, this is still well below the 2.09 million bpd in 2019, reflecting chronic underinvestment in the sector, and likely ongoing production outages," it explained.

Stressing that budget deficits would narrow, Fitch forecasted it to reduce by 0.2 percent in 2023, to 5.2 percent of GDP, as strong non-oil revenue growth and fuel subsidy removal is offset by higher capital spending and underperformance in oil profits from Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPC).

The rating agency stated: "We project a 1.1 percent of GDP rise in government revenue in 2023-2025, to 8.5 percent of GDP, helped by increased government efforts to mobilise non-oil tax revenue (including establishing a presidential fiscal and tax reform committee), but this remains one of the lowest ratios of any Fitch-rated sovereign.

"This underpins our forecast for the budget deficit/GDP to narrow to 5.0 percent and 4.6 percent in 2024 and 2025."

As for Nigeria's public debt (excluding CBN loans), Fitch ratings stated that it had a fairly long average maturity of 9.7 years.

It said: "The securitisation of N23 trillion of CBN loans at a lower interest rate of nine percent has helped contain general government interest costs, but at near 42 percent of revenues, overall interest expenditure is well above the 'B' median of 10.9 percent.

"We expect much lower recourse to CBN financing in 2023-2024 than in 2022, although there is a risk demand from the domestic banking sector which turns out to be weaker than expected, despite its ample liquidity and strong deposit growth."

It also projected GDP to slow to 2.6 percent in 2023, from 3.3 percent in 2022, and to expand to 3.2 percent in 2024 driven by the services sector and higher oil production.

The report said: "Nigeria's already structurally high inflation rose to an average of 25.5 percent year-on-year in third quarter 2023, from 20.3 percent year-on-year in 3Q22, partly reflecting fuel subsidy removal and naira devaluation.

"Fitch projects inflation moderates to 21.1 percent in 2024 from an average 24.8 percent in 2023, helped by lower deficit monetisation, but well above the 'B' medians of 6.0 percent and 4.9 percent respectively."

EDITORIAL

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scientific technology German technology companies in the world, which is Geo-scan GMDH, a German company through the solid Mineral Development Plan, SMDF, presents a ray of hope in diversifying the Nigerian economy and creating a more sustainable and resilient future.

GEO-SCAN, a renowned German company with an impeccable track record in geoscientific research and exploration, is undoubtedly a fitting partner for this ambitious endeavour. Their expertise in the extraction and processing of solid minerals is a valuable asset, providing Nigeria with the necessary knowledge and technology to unlock the potential of its mineral deposits. This understanding signifies the beginning of a new era in Nigeria's mineral exploration, one that promises job creation, technology transfer, and enhanced national revenue.

Critics may argue that foreign companies often exploit the resources of developing nations for their benefit, but the GEO-SCAN deal appears to be different. We believe that Nigeria has wisely negotiated the terms of the MoU to ensure that the nation reaps the maximum benefits. The understanding may for the country underscore a substantial revenue share, technology transfer, and environmental safeguards. We want to believe that the government has insisted on transparency and accountability in the partnership as a reassurance that it is committed to protecting the interests of Nigerians. We also want to believe the government that the MoU, which comes at no cost to the Nigerian government, according to the government, aims to promote the development of Nigeria's solid mineral exploration, effective utilisation, and responsible allocation of the generated income into the Nigerian government's treasury.

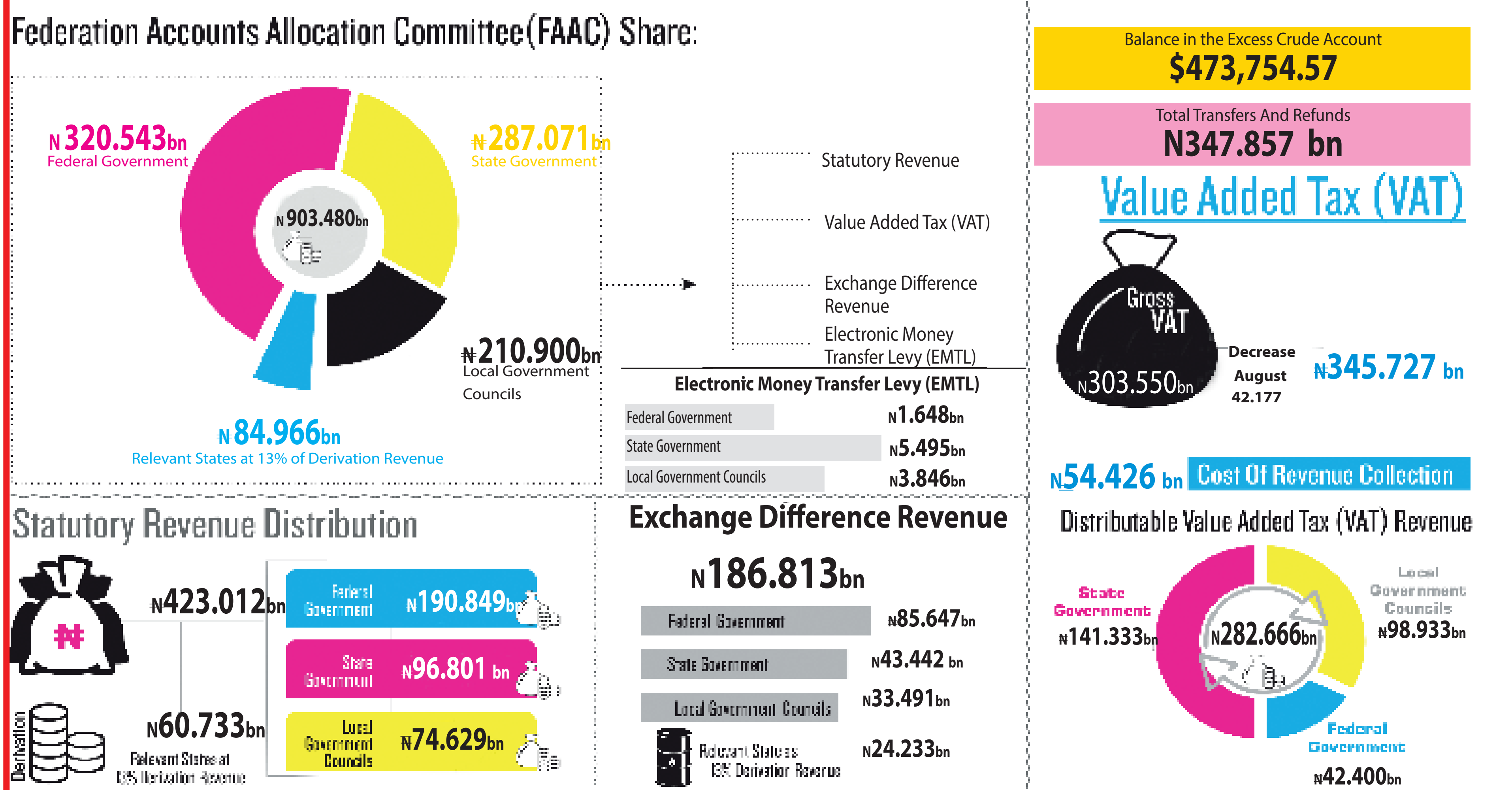
We want to emphasise the urgency of this moment. In a world where green technologies and sustainable practices are gaining prominence, the solid minerals sector presents an opportunity for Nigeria to be one of global leaders in responsible resource extraction. With GEO-SCAN's expertise, the nation can prioritise sustainable mining practices and environmental protection, ensuring that the exploitation of minerals does not come at the cost of ecological devastation.

It is crucial to acknowledge the immense potential of this understanding. The exploration and utilisation of Nigeria's solid minerals can provide the necessary revenue to fund critical social infrastructure, reduce unemployment, and alleviate poverty. Moreover, by diversifying the economy, Nigeria becomes less susceptible to the volatile oil market, bolstering its economic stability.

Nigeria's MoU with GEO-SCAN, which is fully supported by German Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, who recently visited President Bola Tinubu, is a beacon of hope for a nation that has often been held back by its reluctance to tap into its vast mineral wealth. This landmark understanding is a testament to the government's commitment to economic diversification, sustainable development, and responsible resource management.

We call on the government to ensure the right approach and a vigilant eye on the interests of the Nigerian people, as this partnership promises to unlock the nation's true potential and secure a brighter future for generations to come.

FAAC Shares N903.480 Billion September 2023 Revenue To FG, States And LGCs



In the month of September 2023, Petroleum Profit Tax (PPT) and Oil and Gas Royalties increased considerably while Value Added Tax (VAT), Import and Excise Duties, Electronic Money Transfer Levy (EMTL), Companies Income Tax (CIT) and CET Levies recorded significant decreases.

FG Launches Seven Conversion Centres For Cheaper Fuel, Removes VAT On CNG Purchases

• FIRS Begins VAT, WHT Compliance Monitoring Exercise For All Taxable Individuals

By Ahmed Ahmed

The federal government, via the Presidential Compressed Natural Gas Initiative (PCNGI) Steering Committee, has recently said that seven conversion centres had been installed across Nigeria.

Chairman of the Committee, Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mr. Zacch Adedeji, revealed this during the initiative's launch with the handing over of two Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) buses to Mr. Olusesan Adebiyi, the State House Permanent Secretary at the Presidential Villa in Abuja.

Nigeria moves to pivot away from petrol, the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) represented Mr. Adedeji at the occasion.

Mr. Adedeji said that establishing the CNG conversion centres shows President Bola Tinubu's administration's determination to lead Nigeria's energy revolution.

He stated that more CNG conversion centres would be built across Nigeria, calling the action a key milestone in the country's march to a cleaner and more prosperous future.

He said that the action was about job creation and not just about cars.

FIRS is to waive value added tax (VAT) on CNG purchases.

Mr. Adedeji, said that the service would waive VAT on CNG purchases and seek duty exemptions along the value chain. According to him, the aim was to create a sustainable future by using the nation's cheap energy supply.

Meanwhile, FIRS had begun a nationwide VAT and Withholding Tax (WHT) compliance monitoring exercise for all taxable individuals.

According to a statement released by Mr. Adedeji, this initiative is designed to bolster tax compliance and revenue collection within the nation.

VAT is a consumption tax applied to a product when value is added at various points in the supply chain, starting from production and ending at the point of sale.

Conversely, WHT is deducted at the source by organisations or entities when making payments to suppliers of goods and services.

They are mandated to remit the deducted amount to the tax authority during payments to suppliers or vendors.

Mr. Adedeji emphasised that this monitoring exercise was in accordance with the FIRS Act of 2007 and was effective as of from October 23, 2023.

The statement: "Pursuant to Sections 2, 8, 26, and 29 of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (Establishment) Act 2007 (as amended), notice is hereby given to all taxable individuals or tax agents, including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) of governments at the federal, state, and local levels," it stated.

"As a result, teams of officers from the Service will visit selected taxpayers, taxable persons (including companies, NGOs, or MDAs) to review their VAT and WHT records.

"This exercise will encompass the accounting years from 2019 to 2022 for taxable individuals whose records were audited by the Service up to the 2018 accounting year."

Mr. Adedeji clarified that for taxpayers whose records have not been audited by the agency up to 2018, the exercise will be extended to include the preceding unaudited years.

"All taxable individuals or tax agents who have made deductions of VAT or WHT on behalf of the Service are required to promptly remit all such deductions to the FIRS within two weeks of this announcement,"

The tax authority also pointed out that taxable individuals or tax agents who are subject to the VAT and WHT compliance monitoring initiative would be duly notified by the FIRS, and the necessary documents and requirements for the exercise would be outlined in the communication sent to the selected entities.

FG Targets N650/$ Exchange Rate By December – *Taiwo Oyedele*

By Edmond Martins

The federal government has set a goal targeting an exchange rate of N650 to the dollar by December, 2023.

The Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele disclosed this while speaking in an interview recently. The tax expert predicted that the true value of the naira would be reflected by the end of this year.

He said that the government would be introducing new foreign exchange rules (already part of the recommendations his committee made to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu), including a crackdown on illegal currency trading, to help the naira reach a 'fair price' of N650-750 to the dollar by year-end.

Mr. Oyedele revealed that the government plans to clear a backlog of dollar demand, bolster the naira forward market, and set transparent rules for the official market.

This announcement implies that the government is actively taking measures or policies to influence the exchange rate, such as foreign exchange market interventions, monetary policy adjustments, or economic reforms, to achieve this target. The government is essentially expressing its desire for a stronger naira relative to the US dollar by the end of this year.

He stated that the government also wants to expand the official market to include all legitimate transactions while snuffing out the illicit "black market" for foreign currency.

Mr. Oyedele during a presentation on 'Building Resilience Through Domestic Revenue Mobilisation' at the inaugural session of the annual African Tax Administration Forum (ATAF) meeting in Cape Town, South Africa, called on other African countries to adopt a robust tax system that could adapt to the constantly evolving global economic landscape.

He stressed the importance of designing an efficient tax system that offers stability and adaptability to help nations navigate uncertain times.

Mr. Oyedele outlined key approaches to building a tax system that can withstand challenges.

He underscored the necessity of modernisation and the utilisation of technology to improve tax collection and administration.

He emphasised the importance of aligning tax policies with the ever-changing global economic landscape.

According to Mr. Oyedele: "A resilient tax system should possess flexibility and agility to respond to changing circumstances and global shifts. It should be grounded in principles of transparency, fairness, and efficiency."

He also advocated for international collaboration and the sharing of information to address tax-related issues in an increasingly interconnected world.

Mr. Oyedele concluded by reiterating that a resilient tax system is not just a means of revenue collection but is a fundamental pillar for a nation's economic resilience and sustainable growth.

NBS, World Bank, Stakeholders Brainstorm On Strategy For Statistics Development

By Tony Tagbo

The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), alongside the World Bank and various collaborators, has initiated the groundwork for formulating the third phase of the national strategy for statistical development in the country. This strategy, termed the NSDS, is slated for the years 2024 to 2028, aiming to be a comprehensive framework orchestrating a coherent and structured advancement in statistical operations across the nation.

The NSDS intends to elevate the quality, significance, and accessibility of statistical data, recognising its pivotal role in shaping evidence-based decision-making, policy crafting, and national developmental planning. During the National Stakeholders Engagement Workshop for Drafting the NSDS Phase III, Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, the Statistician-General of the Federation, emphasised that the agency is on the verge of a transformative journey in crafting a new NSDS for Nigeria. This strategy is envisioned as a beacon guiding the NBS toward a modernised and evolved statistical system, crucial for navigating the crossroads of data possibilities and responsibilities in today's era.

Mr. Adeniran highlighted the significance of collective expertise and insights from stakeholders, emphasising their invaluable role in identifying essential data needs and societal challenges. The guiding principles for this endeavour encompass inclusivity, quality, accuracy, innovation, technology, capacity building, partnership, and collaboration.

In ensuring inclusivity, the focus lies on addressing data gaps concerning marginalised groups, regional disparities, and specific sectors, aligning with global sustainable development objectives to ensure that no segment of society is left behind. The emphasis on maintaining the accuracy and quality of statistical data is crucial to sustain the trust of users, necessitating continuous pursuit of excellence in data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

Moreover, the NBS aims to harness the latest technological advancements to streamline the processes of data collection, analysis, and dissemination. Mr. Adeniran highlighted the challenges of unifying available administrative data from diverse sectors and geographical areas, emphasising the aspiration to create a data lab enabling the aggregation of administrative data in various forms, transcending current limitations in Nigerian statistics.

In the realm of the Ministry of Health, all the ongoing data can seamlessly flow to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) in various formats. The upcoming

Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, Statistician-General of the Federation

The transformation expected from the NSDS intends to enhance the global competitiveness ranking of the NSS across the different tiers of government

data lab will efficiently collect this information, bring it to the NBS server, and reformat it according to our preferences without burdening the Ministry with formatting duties. This setup, available across departments via Google, ensures seamless sharing of data within and beyond national borders, fostering collaboration between the NBS, state statistics bureaus, and local government levels.

Collaborations with global financial bodies like the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), alongside the support of the federal government, are in motion to solidify these efforts. This strategic initiative is seen as the contemporary direction for African nations.

During discussions, emphasis was placed on integrating cutting-edge technologies like big data and artificial intelligence to ensure Nigeria remains at the forefront of this data ecosystem. The Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, Mr. Abubakar Bagudu, highlighted the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) as a pivotal framework, aiming to enhance the quality and accessibility of statistical data across Nigeria. The new NSDS for 2024-2028 aims to revolutionise the country's statistical system, aligning it with current needs and paving the way for a comprehensive and unified data production system.

Mr. Bagudu, who was represented by the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Nebolisa Anebo, said that this transformation is poised to aid the assessment of President Tinubu's 8-point agenda, focusing on strengthening the statistical system to evaluate the government's progress effectively. The involvement of stakeholders, development partners, and participants is praised for their role in this undertaking, with an eagerness to witness the substantial impact of NSDS Phase III on the nation's statistical system and its role in Nigeria's development.

Addressing the recalibration of the country's data processes, plans to review and potentially amend the NBS 2007 Act are in the works, ensuring it aligns with the current needs. Additionally, there is a compelling case to integrate the Statistician-General into the weekly Federal Executive Council (FEC) meetings, underlining the essential role data plays in effective governance, planning, and assessment of development outcomes. Emphasising the democratisation of data is crucial—ensuring that data not only reflects critical issues but is also easily accessible for productive purposes.

The upcoming NSDS, spanning from 2024 to 2028, aims to revolutionise the National Statistical System (NSS) through a comprehensive overhaul. It is designed to create a unified, integrated data production system that covers all tiers of government, consolidating various agencies involved in data production and management.

This initiative will not only involve major stakeholders in the statistical realm but also engage policymakers at federal, state, and local levels. Its core objective is to align national and sub-national statistical strategies and master plans. By evaluating the current NSS status and strategically addressing issues, this plan sets a trajectory for the next five years.

The transformation expected from the NSDS intends to enhance the global competitiveness ranking of the NSS across the different tiers of government. It will bring about an expansion in statistical production, ensuring that it accurately reflects current realities and seamlessly integrates emerging issues.

Mr. Biyi Fafunmi, the Director of Information and Communications Technology at the NBS, emphasised that the NSDS aims to further reform the NSS and accelerate statistical development in Nigeria. He highlighted the need for a more unified, coordinated, and coherent NSS to streamline the data production process. Mr. Fafunmi stressed the significance of workshops and dialogues in shaping a more comprehensive, participatory NSS, tailored to meet Nigeria's evolving needs in a rapidly innovating global landscape.

Customs Chief Holds Gathering Over Delayed Cargo Removal

● ANLCA Stands Firm On Auction Via Ikorodu Warehouse

By Tony Tagbo

Emerging signals point to the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) gearing up for the removal of overdue cargoes from various ports across the nation. Mr. Adewale Adeniyi, the Comptroller-General of the NCS, has unveiled plans for consultations with terminal operators to establish agreeable handling charges and streamlined processes for the impending cargo removal.

Under this new approach, trucks will no longer be held alongside containers once drivers have been cleared of any involvement. These decisions were part of a comprehensive 9-point agenda settled upon during a stakeholders meeting orchestrated by the customs at the Marriot Hotel in Lagos.

In a related move to alleviate port congestion, a committee for the disposal of these overdue cargoes has been officially inaugurated. Mr. Adeniyi made this announcement, highlighting the imperative to clear ports excessively burdened with overdue cargo. The NCS has responded to the revised Customs Act, which empowers them to dispose of containers that have surpassed their stipulated time within the ports.

Mr. Bashir Adewale Adeniyi, Comptroller-General, Nigeria Customs Service

During the inauguration held at the NCS Headquarters in Abuja, CGC Adeniyi emphasised the NCS's commitment to easing port congestion, a goal aligned with President Ahmed Bola Tinubu's vision for improved efficiency and trade facilitation. The revised NCS Act, signed about six months ago by former President Mohammed Buhari, ushered in significant changes governing the disposal of overdue cargo.

The newly formed committee, chaired by a senior NCS officer, comprises representatives from various entities including the Attorney General of the Federation, the Federal Ministry of Finance, the Nigerian Police Force, the Department of State Service, Nigerian Ports Authority, NAFDAC, EFCC, and ICPC.

In response, the Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA) proposed that auctioning of overdue cargoes should not transpire within port terminals but rather at the Ikorodu government warehouse. Chief Ikechukwu Martins, Chair of the Ikorodu Chapter of ANLCA, urged the customs authorities to transfer all overdue cargoes to the Ikorodu government warehouse for auction processes, suggesting that terminal operators and shipping companies regard their revenue from overdue cargoes as irrecoverable debts.

Chief Martins highlighted the Ikorodu warehouse's capacity to house over 13,000 containers and vehicles after the removal of scrapped vehicles. Additionally, he advocated for broader stakeholder involvement in the committee overseeing the impending evacuation exercise.

NEXIM Collaborates with Fidelity Bank, Sapphital to Bolster Nigeria's Export Sector

● Promotes FAAN's Aviacargo Export Growth

By Jennete Ugo Anya

In a concerted effort to bolster Nigeria's foreign exchange earnings, the Nigerian Export-Import (NEXIM) Bank not long ago had a strategic partnership with Fidelity Bank Plc, and Sapphital Learning Ltd.

The primary objective of this collaboration was to enhance the competencies and performance of export-oriented businesses in Nigeria, utilizing the NEXIM Export Academy (NEXA).

The NEXA is an online platform that equips exporters with capacity-building training and facilitates access to financial resources, empowering them to expand their operations.

Launched in 2022 with the support of Sapphital, a digital learning institute, the NEXA platform is designed to provide millions of businesses with the essential resources required for successful export operations, superior quality control, and competitive positioning in the global marketplace.

This platform's overarching goal is to stimulate the growth of non-oil exports and foreign exchange earnings by fostering collaboration among all stakeholders in the value chain.

This collaborative effort aims to enhance learning, elevate quality standards, and promote intra-African and global trade.

During the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Abuja at the time, Mr. Abba Bello, the Managing Director of NEXIM, emphasized the bank's intent to raise awareness about the accessibility of export opportunities to a broader range of businesses.

Mr. Abba Bello, Managing Director of NEXIM

He underscored the importance of demystifying the misconception that exporting is exclusively reserved for large corporations. This initiative seeks to disseminate the knowledge necessary for entrepreneurs to understand the intricacies, documentation requirements, and compliance standards essential for engaging in export and import endeavours.

On the part of Fidelity Bank Plc, Mrs. Nneka Onyeali-Ikpe, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), reiterated the bank's consistent commitment to promoting non-oil exports and building the capacity of players in Nigeria's export and import industry.

She noted that Fidelity Bank has long been at the forefront of advancing non-oil export businesses.

Over the years, the bank has focused on its export banking operations, maintaining a steadfast dedication to spearheading initiatives aimed at facilitating capacity-building and access to capital for local exporters.

The collaboration with NEXIM, therefore, represents an opportunity to deepen the discourse within the export sector and, more importantly, to create added value for all participants in the industry.

In outlining the overarching vision for Sapphital Learning Ltd, its Founder and CEO, Mr. Amu Ogbeide, articulated a compelling mission: "Our aspiration is to foster the growth of the export market, and we eagerly welcome more participants to join us in this growth endeavour."

In a significant development, NEXIM Bank also pledged to lend its support to Nigerian agro-exporters, streamlining the export processes by providing essential financial instruments.

This commitment was affirmed by Mr. Bello during a meeting with the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) Aviacargo Cargo Committee held at the bank's headquarters in Abuja. Mr. Bello emphasized the critical importance of this support in bolstering the volume of agro-produce exports within Nigeria and expanding access to international markets. Furthermore, he pledged that NEXIM Bank would collaborate with the Aviacargo Committee to facilitate agro-exports and enhance the export capacity of Nigerian air cargo airlines.

"It is disheartening to observe that foreign airlines operating cargo flights into Nigeria frequently depart without carrying any exports, despite the abundance of exportable products within the country.

The Managing Director of NEXIM Bank expressed the institution's willingness to support local Nigerian carriers in expanding their capacity for agro-product exports. Additionally, domestic airlines are encouraged to explore opportunities for expanding their operations to other countries to generate essential foreign exchange.

The NEXIM chief highlighted the institute's diverse range of products for various trade purposes and its financing capabilities in both local and foreign currencies. The primary objective is to provide financial support to exporters when they seek to conduct their exports.

He emphasized that the bank is committed to addressing the issue of cargo planes arriving in Nigeria but leaving empty, emphasizing that there is a significant potential for air-based trade in Nigeria.

Commending the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) for their initiative to establish a cargo village at the Murtala Muhammed Airport in Lagos, Mr. Bello proposed replicating this model in other regions of the country. He suggested that underutilized airports with low passenger traffic could be repurposed into cargo airports for increased commercial viability.

Mr. Bello stressed the need to establish a comprehensive one-stop-shop for agro-product exports, involving all relevant government agencies in the sector.

In his remarks, Mr. Olumuyiwa Femi-Pearse, Director of FAAN Commercial and Business Development, underscored the agency's commitment to engaging all stakeholders and fostering sustainable development in the aviation sector. He outlined their vision of making Nigeria the premier export hub in Africa and emphasized the collective effort required to achieve this long-term goal.

Mr. Ikechi Uko, the Coordinator of the Aviacargo Committee, explained the committee's mandate to develop a practical strategy that would transform Nigeria into a prominent aviation export hub in West Africa and across the continent."

NEWS IN PICTURES

The dignitaries on the occasion of the Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC)'s Special Day at the recent 2023 Lagos International Trade Fair organised by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), where **Mr. Bello Hassan,** Managing Director/Chief Executive of the NDIC, and his management team, emphasised before the stakeholders the role of the corporation in fortifying the financial system and ensuring public trust in Nigeria's banking sector.

Representative of MD/CE of NDIC & Director, Communication and Public Affairs Department, **Mr. Bashir Nuhu,** presenting NDIC research publications to the President of LCCI, **Dr. Michael Olawale-Cole,** while Deputy Director, Bank Examination Department of NDIC, **Mr. Emeka Udechukwu** (1st left), and Vice President (VP) of LCCI, **Mr. Gabriel Idahosa** (1st right), watch in admiration.

L-R: VP of LCCI, **Mr. Abimbola Olashore;** Deputy Director, Bank Examination Department of NDIC, **Mr. Emeka Udechukwu**; VP, Trade Promotions Board, LCCI, **Engr. Leye Kupoluyi;** President of LCCI, **Dr. Michael Olawale-Cole;** Representative of MD/CE & Director, Communication and Public Affairs Department of NDIC, Mr. Bashir Nuhu; and VP of LCCI, **Mr. Gabriel Idahosa.**

NDIC Reveals Payment Of Cumulative Insured Sum Of N1.393bn To Depositors Of Closed MFBs, PMBs

• Emerges Overall Best In ICPC 2023 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard (EICS)

• Refunds N1.2bn To Depositors Of Liquidated MFBs

By Jennete Ugo Anya

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC) recently shared significant updates regarding compensations paid to depositors of closed Microfinance Banks (MFBs) and Primary Mortgage Banks (PMBs). According to Mr. Bello Hassan, the Managing Director of NDIC, a total insured sum of N1.393 billion was disbursed to 36,163 depositors from 110 closed MFBs and three PMBs by September 22, 2023.

During the NDIC Special Day at the 2023 Lagos International Trade Fair organised by the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), Mr. Hassan emphasised that payments of insured sums continue, with depositors holding amounts beyond the insured limit set to receive liquidation dividends once debts are recovered and closed banks' physical assets are sold.

Speaking at the trade fair, Mr. Hassan highlighted the event's theme, 'Connecting Businesses, Creating Value,' praising LCCI's efforts in hosting one of Africa's most prominent trade fairs. He emphasised that such platforms allow the NDIC to showcase achievements and increase public understanding of its mandate and operations.

Reiterating the NDIC's establishment under government decree and subsequent acts, Mr. Hassan stressed the primary objective of the Deposit Insurance Scheme (DIS) in Nigeria. This includes safeguarding small depositors' interests in the face of bank failures, alongside promoting secure banking practices, a robust payment system, and fair competition in the banking sector.

Emphasising the NDIC's role in fortifying the financial system and ensuring public trust in Nigeria's banking sector, Mr. Hassan underlined the corporation's support to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in guaranteeing financial system safety and stability.

In response to recent license revocations by the CBN for some microfinance and primary mortgage banks, the NDIC swiftly initiated the liquidation process and expedited disbursements to depositors within three days of the banks' closure.

Regarding the ongoing verification and payment of liquidation dividends to depositors and stakeholders of 20 banks in liquidation, Mr. Hassan urged eligible parties to access verification forms through the NDIC website for further details and submissions.

The mentioned banks in the process include Allied Bank, Peak Merchant Bank, Commerce Bank, Continental Merchant Bank, Financial Merchant Bank, Fortune Bank, Gulf Bank, Hallmark Bank, Icon Merchant Bank, Liberty Bank, Nigeria Merchant Bank, North South Bank, Premier Commercial Bank, Prime Merchant Bank, Progress Bank, and Merchant Bank. Eligible parties were encouraged to utilise the NDIC website and submit their forms via claimscomplaints@ndic.gov.ng.

Mr. Bello Hassan, MD/CEO of NDIC

In a recent announcement, Mr. Hassan of the NDIC reaffirmed the organisation's commitment to collaborating with the CBN to ensure robust oversight of banks, maintaining adherence to strict guidelines for corporate governance. The goal? Safeguarding Nigeria's banking system. He urged the public, particularly traders and business owners, to prioritise licensed banks for their funds, cautioning against wonder banks and Ponzi schemes that often lead to financial distress.

Mr. Hassan also highlighted the NDIC's dedication to fortifying depositor trust. The corporation actively handles reported breaches and complaints, offering a 24-hour toll-free helpline and email for inquiries regarding the DIS in Nigeria. Additionally, he pointed to their website and social media channels for more information.

In a proud moment, the NDIC secured the top spot in the 2023 Ethics and Integrity Compliance Scorecard by the ICPC, marking their second consecutive first-place ranking. This recognition, shared in a recent release by Mr. Bashir A. Nuhu, is an assessment of adherence to ethical standards and anti-corruption laws.

The ICPC's evaluation covers various factors, and in 2023, the NDIC scored an impressive 91.30 percent among 404 evaluated agencies. This achievement underscores the NDIC's dedication to maintaining high ethical standards, as well as its commitment to combatting corruption.

It is worth noting that the NDIC obtained three ISO Certifications in September after meeting rigorous audit standards set by MSECB. These successes reflect the corporation's ethical operational framework aimed at fostering transparency and accountability.

The NDIC's efforts, particularly through the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (ACTU), have been pivotal. Teaming up with the ICPC, they have diligently educated NDIC staff, beefed up internal controls to prevent fraud, and ensured strict adherence to established policies. This commitment was recently acknowledged in the 2023 ICPC EICS, underscoring the corporation's dedication to ethical standards and integrity in public service. Their focus remains on safeguarding deposits and contributing to financial system stability.

In recent updates, the NDIC disclosed its refund initiatives for depositors affected by the recent revocation of microfinance banks' licenses by the CBN. Approximately 34,000 depositors from 179 microfinance banks have received refunds totalling N1.2 billion. This ongoing process builds upon previous payments made earlier in October, reflecting an increase in the number of beneficiaries.

During the 2023 sensitisation seminar for Judges of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN) and members of the Investments and Securities Tribunal (IST) in Port Harcourt, Mr. Hassan, represented by the NDIC Executive Director, Operations, Mr. Mustapha Ibrahim, emphasised the seminar's importance. The event aimed to foster a deeper understanding of the corporation's operations among stakeholders.

The theme, 'Strengthening Depositors' Confidence in Banks and Financial Institutions through Speedy Justice Dispensation,' highlighted the necessity for collaboration with the judiciary to promote financial system stability in Nigeria. Mr. Hassan reiterated the NDIC's primary mandates, particularly in guaranteeing deposits and managing the orderly resolution of financial institutions facing closure.

While acknowledging the challenges faced, such as legal liabilities and recovery issues, the NDIC continues its pursuit to enhance depositors' trust in the country's financial institutions. Justice Salisu Abdullahi, Administrator of the National Judicial Institute, emphasised the importance of the seminar in providing context awareness for NICN judges and IST members concerning banking matters and other related complaints. Additionally, the reinforcement of collaborative efforts between the IST and NDIC was stressed for a more robust financial landscape.

> **It is worth noting that the NDIC obtained three ISO Certifications in September after meeting rigorous audit standards set by MSECB**

NDIC
Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation
Protecting your bank deposits

NOTICE TO STAKEHOLDERS OF BANKS (IN-LIQUIDATION)

The Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), the Official Liquidator of deposit-taking banks licensed by the Central Bank of Nigeria is in the process of verifying and paying liquidation dividends to the specified stakeholders of the following defunct banks.

S/N	BANK	STAKEHOLDERS	DECLARATION STATUS
1	Liberty Bank	Depositor	1st Liquidation Dividend
2	Amicable Bank	Depositors	Final call for depositors.
3	City Express Bank	Depositors	3rd Liquidation Dividend
4	Assurance Bank	Depositors	2nd Liquidation Dividend
5	Century Bank	Depositors	2nd Liquidation Dividend
6	Fortune Bank	Depositors and Ex-Staff	2nd Liquidation Dividend
7	Allstates Trust Bank	Depositors and Ex-Staff	5th Liquidation Dividend
8	Prime Merchant Bank	Depositors and Ex-Staff	2nd Liquidation Dividend for depositors.
9	Allied Bank	Depositors/ MDAs	6th Liquidation Dividend
10	North South Bank	Depositors/ MDAs	Final Call for Depositors
11	Financial Merchant Bank	Creditors	1st Liquidation Dividend for Creditors
12	Icon Merchant Bank	Creditors	1st Liquidation Dividend for Creditors
13	Progress Bank Creditors	1st Liquidation	Dividend for Creditors
14	Commercial Trust Bank	Depositors	Final Call for Depositors
15	Merchant Bank of Africa (MBA)	Creditors	Final Call/Final Liquidation Dividends for Creditors
16	Premier Commercial Bank	Creditors & Shareholders	Final Call/Final Liquidation Dividends for Creditors
17	Co-Operative & Commerce Bank	Shareholders	2nd Liquidation Dividend for shareholders
18	Rims Merchant Bank	Shareholders 2nd Liquidation	Dividend for shareholders.
19	Nigeria Merchant Bank	Shareholders	2nd Liquidation Dividend for shareholders
20	Pan African Bank	Shareholders	Dividend for Shareholders.

Eligible stakeholders are, by this notice, advised to either contact NDIC officials in any of the underlisted NDIC Offices or visit NDIC website on www.ndic.gov.ng to download the verification forms that apply to each category of claimants.
Kindly note that duly completed verification forms may be returned to any of the underlisted offices or via our email address: claimscomplaints@ndic.gov.ng.

S/N	OFFICE	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.
1	Lagos Office	23 A, MARINA, LAGOS. P.M.B. 12881, LAGOS	07080517483, 09063903615 08038112996, 08067298386
2	Enugu	No. 10, Our Lord's Street, Independence Layout, Enugu	08065996819
3	Benin	28A/28B, Benoni Hospital Road, Off Airport Road, GRA, Benin City, Edo State	08023124220
4	Kano	Plot 458, Muhammad Muhammad Avenue, Off Maiduguri Road, Hotoro, GRA, Kano	08133151192
5	Ilorin	No. 23B, Ahmadu Bello Way, GRA, Ilorin.	08023073975
6	Bauchi	Plot No. 3, Bank Road, P.M.B. 0207, Bauchi	09127343434
7	Sokoto	No. 2, Gusau Road, Opp. NNPC Mega Station, Sokoto.	08033142546. 09077367736 08033468446
8	Yola	No. 6, Numan Road, P.M.B. 2227, Jimeta, Yola, Adamawa State.	08067910599 08067923383, 09-4601515, 09-4601516
9	Port Harcourt	No. 104, Woji Road, Off Olu Obasanjo Road, GRA, Port Harcourt, Rivers State.	08054663230
10	Head Office Abuja	Head, Bank Examination Unit (BEU), NDIC, Abuja, Plot 447/448, Constitution Avenue, Central Business District, Garki, Abuja	09-4601260, 09-4601261
11	Owerri	No. 56, Area A, World bank Area, New Owerri Landmark, Behind Immaculate Hotel, opp. Fidelity Bank. Owerri, Imo State.	09135137677
12	Abeokuta	No. 1, Oshele Road, Ibara GRA, Abeokuta, Ogun State.	08033137255

Director, Claims Resolution Department
Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation
Mamman Kotangora House (8th Floor) 23a, Marina, Lagos

Website: www.ndic.gov.ng
E-mail: claimscomplaints@ndic.gov.ng

@NDICNigeria

President Tinubu Enacts 2023 Supplementary Budget of N2.17trn

• As Nigeria's Foreign Trade Hits N12.74 trn

By Majeed Salaam

President Bola Tinubu recently signed off on the 2023 Supplementary Budget totalling N2.17 trillion at the Presidential Villa in Abuja. The bill, sanctioned after a thorough legislative process by the Senate and the House of Representatives, received unanimous support from both chambers.

Before its approval, the Senate acknowledged the comprehensive report submitted by Senator Solomon Olamilekan Adeola, Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, following synchronised sessions between the red and green chambers on the 2023 Supplementary Appropriations Bill. This swift adoption was deemed crucial for the nation's interests, quickly passing through the upper and lower chambers.

President Tinubu formally requested the National Assembly's approval for the N2.17 trillion supplemental budget, primarily allocated for enhancing security measures, revising labour compensations, and addressing various national concerns. Alongside this, the President also submitted the Fiscal Strategy Paper (FSP) and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for the years 2024–2026 to both houses of the National Assembly.

Additionally, the Senate recently greenlit a N819 billion bill, which encompassed a N500 billion relief package. President Tinubu emphasised the necessity of this supplemental law to facilitate further palliative measures such as salary increments, leading to the approval of the N2.1 trillion 2023 supplemental budget by the President-chaired Federal Executive Council (FEC).

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

In a separate development disclosed within the 2024-2026 MTEF and FSP, Nigeria's import-export activities, as of June 2023, reflected a total trade value of N12.74 trillion. Notably, the Netherlands emerged as the top destination for Nigeria's exports, accounting for a significant portion. Premium motor spirit imports comprised 21.5 percent (N1.23 trillion) of the total import volume.

The document also outlined key trading partners, with the USA, Indonesia, China, Belgium, India, and the Netherlands being prominent players in Nigeria's import-export landscape. The report highlighted a 2.99 percent increase in total imports in the first six months of the year compared to the preceding quarter of 2023 but noted a decline of 10.37 percent when compared to the same period in 2022.

The information disclosed in the report reveals significant trends in Nigeria's import and export values. In particular, imports from the top five countries accounted for a substantial portion of the total, totalling N3.44 trillion, around 60.05 percent of the overall imports. These imports comprised used vehicles and automotive gas oil among other goods.

Regarding exports, there was an increase of 8.15 percent in comparison to the first quarter of 2023, reaching N6.49 trillion. However, this figure marks a 5.20 percent decline from the corresponding quarter in 2022, which stood at N7,400.89 billion. Notably, the largest export product was 'Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals, crude' valued at N5.59 trillion, constituting 79.63 percent of total exports. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and Urea followed in the export hierarchy.

When it comes to capital importation, foreign portfolio investment (FPI) led the way, amounting to US$3.30 billion, reflecting a 34.1 percent decrease from the previous year's $5.14 billion. Foreign direct investment (FDI) in Nigeria stood at a mere $696.78 million, down by 32 percent compared to the preceding year's $1.03 billion.

The report also highlights a consistent decline in Nigeria's capital importation over the past three years, dropping from $16.812 billion in 2018 to a low of $5.32 billion in 2022. Quarter-to-quarter data reveals a 51.51 percent decline from $2.187 billion in Q4 2021 to $1.06 billion in Q4 2022. The major components of capital importation in 2022 were trade deficits, loans, and currency deposits, representing 65.17 percent of the total.

Meanwhile, the House of Representatives commenced the examination of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and Fiscal Strategy Paper (FSP) in preparation for the 2024 budget presentation by the President. The MTEF/FSP serves as the groundwork for the annual budget, establishing parameters and evaluating the performance of revenue-generating agencies in the preceding year. The Committee on Finance anticipates the attendance of chief executives and heads of government agencies over the next three weeks to delve into these financial matters.

Pensioners Union Commends Ejikeme's Reappointment As PTAD Executive Secretary

• Directorate Pays ₦1bn of Accrued Arrears to Pensioners
• As PTAD, NUP Clarify Conditional Cash Transfer To Pensioners

By Anita Dennis

It was a moment of excitement as the Nigerian Union of Pensioners (NUP) commended President Bola Tinubu for reappointing Dr. Chioma Ejikeme as the executive secretary of Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD).

As was contained in a statement signed by the National President of NUP, Mr. Godwin Abumisi, the NUP then distanced itself from a protest against Dr. Ejikeme's reappointment by some people.

The NUP, which is the umbrella body of pensioners in Nigeria, noted that the recent reappointment was out of merit, as Ejikeme had in the last four years, rejuvenated the hopes of pensioners all over the country by her leadership style and professional disposition to the job.

The statement read, "I, Chief Godwin Abumisi, wish to commend His Excellency, President Bola Tinubu, for the reappointment of Dr Chioma Ejikeme as the Executive Secretary of Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate.

"This sterling reappointment is indeed well merited and gladdens the hearts of the over 250,000 pensioners managed by PTAD, considering the diligent work she has so ably done for the pensioners ensuring the prompt payment of our monthly pensions and attendance to other challenging issues in the last four years.

"I wish to state that in the NUP, there exists no objection to her appointment and any talk of protests against her reappointment exists in the hollow minds of persons obviously sponsored by arch enemies of the Nigerian pensioners. I hereby call on all members of the NUP to rally around Dr Ejikeme in order to ensure that she continues the good works of restoring the dignity of the Nigerian pensioner."

Dr. Chioma Ejikeme, Executive Secretary PTAD

In a statement, Dr. Ejikeme said that disgruntled people who lobbied and lost out on being appointed as the executive secretary of PTAD were fighting her reappointment.

She also said that the verification exercise of PTAD that led to the removal of over 50,000 ghost pensioners from payroll, and the adjustment of inflated pension benefits by corrupt persons within pension offices of some government agencies in the past were also brewing trouble with the directorate.

The Executive Secretary stated that corruption that had been fought to a standstill under the old pension scheme, the Defined Benefit Scheme (DBS) was fighting back, especially because of her reappointment.

Recall that PTAD had finalised the payment of the sum of □1,023,756,227.45 to 7, 091 pensioners of the power and transport sectors of the parastatals pension department (PaPD).

The payment represents 39 percent of the accrued pension arrears owed pensioners in the said Sectors for the period August 2015 to September 2023 as a result of the computation of the monthly pension of pensioners of PaPD based on their career details, salary structure and applicable pension increments.

In a statement by Mr. Olugbenga Ajayi, Head, Corporate communications Unit of PTAD, it was made clear that the arrears were ascertained during the back-end computation exercise conducted by PTAD, where it was discovered that 7,091 pensioners in the Power and Transport Sector were being underpaid based on the payroll inherited by PTAD.

According to Dr. Ejikeme, the back-end computation exercise was necessitated by the need to ensure that each pensioner earns their rightful pension for fairness, equity and justice, in line with the directorate's mandate.

She further assured federal pensioners under the DBS that the federal government is committed to their welfare, and the arrears subject to government funding, will continue to be paid until all accrued pension arrears are liquidated.

In another development, the directorate and the NUP during an interactive engagement session with stakeholders, including the National Pension Commission (PenCom), pension union executives and pension desk officers of the parastatals pension department last month clarified that pensioners under the DBS are part of the priority groups to benefit from the just approved N25,000 conditional cash transfer (CCT).

This was confirmed by the Director, Civil Service Pension Department (CSPD), Mr Sulayman Shelleng, who stated that the CCT is part of the poverty alleviation plans of the federal government to support the economic livelihood of vulnerable groups across the country at this time.

He further explained that PTAD in collaboration with the NUP made sure that the data of all DBS pensioners who have been verified and are on the payroll has been promptly submitted to the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, through the Nigeria Union of Pensioners (NUP).

The NUP representative, Mr Gadzama Gadzali, confirmed receipt of pensioners data and further clarified that the transfer is being directly handled by the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation.

FIRS, NNPC, Others Contributed N14.38 trn To Federation Account In 2 Years, Says NEITI

...as Federal, State, LGs Shared N5.42 trn

By Jennete Ugo Anya

The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiatives (NEITI) recently disclosed that federal government revenue agencies channelled a substantial N14.38 trillion from the extractive sector to the federation account between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021. These agencies, comprising Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC), Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Ministry of Mines and Steels Development (MMSD), and Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), played a pivotal role in this remittance.

Mineral revenue accounted for about N6.40 trillion, contributing 44.5 percent to the total, while non-mineral revenue (excluding VAT) made up N4.80 trillion, amounting to 33.37 percent of the total remittances. Orji Ogbonnaya Orji, the Executive Secretary of NEITI, emphasised that their report scrutinised these revenues' allocation, examining their impact on national development, particularly in poverty alleviation.

The report highlighted the contributions of various agencies, with NUPRC leading in mineral revenue remittance at about N2.71 trillion, followed by FIRS at N2.13 trillion and NNPC at N1.55 trillion. Conversely, solid minerals made the smallest contribution at N13.33 billion, indicating 0.09 percent of the total.

There was a noticeable decline in contributions from NNPCL and FIRS, attributed to reduced revenue from crude oil exports in 2021, resulting in a 56 percent decrease for NNPC and a 10 percent drop for FIRS. Conversely, non-mineral revenue increased by N3.86 billion from 2020 to 2021, primarily driven by Company Income Tax, which contributed N2.69 trillion, and the Nigeria Customs Service, contributing N2.025 trillion.

The allocation of these revenues saw the federal government, States, and Local Governments sharing N5.42 trillion, with an additional N859.66 billion set aside as a 13 percent derivation fund, distributed among nine oil-producing states. These details shed light on how these revenues were disbursed and utilized across different government levels and sectors.

> The allocation of these revenues saw the federal government, states, and local governments sharing N5.42 trillion, with an additional N859.66 billion set aside as a 13 percent derivation fund, distributed among nine oil-producing states

A breakdown of the allocations revealed that the federal government received roughly N2.80 trillion, while the 36 state governments obtained N1.45 trillion, and the 774 local government areas collectively received about N1.17 trillion within the specified period. Shaakaa Chira, the Auditor-General of the Federation, emphasised the significance of the Financial Audits and Statement Disbursement (FASD) report, highlighting its alignment with the constitutional obligations of the Auditor-General's office in Nigeria.

Speaking through the Director of Audits, Sundung Eldad James, Mr. Chira expressed the report's pivotal role in facilitating comprehensive audits of revenue within the federation, encompassing collection, remittance, and disbursement processes. The report's insights are set to streamline checks on deductions, transfers before remittances, and the allocations from the Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC).

Revenue sources, including exchange gains, excess crude, non-mineral and solid mineral earnings, and NNPC refunds, totalled N972.705 billion, allocated across the three tiers of government. Exchange gains accounted for N234.32 billion, distributed as follows: the federal government received N109.89 billion, states obtained N55.73 billion, and local governments secured N42.97 billion, with N25.72 billion designated as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

Furthermore, domestic excess naira revenues, totalling N81.097 billion, saw the federal government gaining N37.168 billion, states acquiring N18.85 billion, local governments obtaining N14.53 billion, and N10.54 billion allocated as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

From the N105.257 billion excess oil revenue, the federal government received N55.36 billion, states obtained N28.079 billion, local governments secured N21.648 billion, with N167.94 million set aside as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

Regarding non-oil excess revenue amounting to N240.45 billion, the federal government received N126.67 billion, while state and local governments obtained N64.25 billion and N49.53 billion, respectively.

Solid mineral revenues of N16.83 billion were divided with the federal government receiving N7.712 billion, state governments acquiring N3.911 billion, local governments obtaining N3.016 billion, and N2.1 billion assigned as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

The report also outlined foreign exchange equalization revenue, distributing N46.00 billion, with the federal government obtaining N21.083 billion, state governments acquiring N10.69 billion, local governments receiving N8.244 billion, and N5.98 billion allocated as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

FGN intervention revenues, totalling N244 billion, were divided among the federal, state, and local governments, with shares amounting to N118.68 billion, N60.19 billion, and N46.41 billion, respectively, along with N18.72 billion designated as the 13 percent derivation revenue.

Lastly, excess bank charges amounting to N4.75 billion were distributed, with the federal government receiving N2.50 billion, state governments obtaining N1.27 billion, and local governments securing N978.85 million.

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Now That Mr. President Targets Solid Mineral Sector As Largest Revenue Source

POLICY BRIEF
with
ENAM **OBIOSIO**

We will make solid minerals our largest source of revenue, is what President Bola Tinubu has just said; he has by this statement expressed a commitment to prioritise the development and exploitation of Nigeria's solid mineral resources as a significant source of income for the nation.

Nigeria is known to have substantial deposits of various solid minerals, but historically, the country's economy has been heavily reliant on oil revenue. Obviously, overdependence on oil has made the economy vulnerable to fluctuations in global oil prices and other challenges associated with the oil industry.

Mr. President's statement typically means that the federal government is planning to focus on the extraction, processing, and export of solid minerals as a significant driver of the country's economic income.

This statement also suggests a commitment to diversify the country's sources of revenue beyond its current main income streams, such as oil or agriculture. By prioritising the development of the solid minerals sector, the government aims to exploit the economic potential of these resources to generate substantial income, create jobs, and boost economic growth.

To achieve this goal, the government might implement various policies and initiatives to encourage investment in the solid minerals industry, improve infrastructure and transportation networks to facilitate the movement of minerals, enhance regulatory frameworks, and ensure environmental sustainability.

Of course, the success of such a strategy depends on various factors, including the quality and quantity of solid mineral resources in Nigeria, global market demand, investment climate, infrastructure development, and effective governance. It is a long-term vision to reduce the country's dependence on a single revenue source and promote economic diversification.

Mr. President had made the statement precisely at the second edition of African Natural Resource and Energy Investment Summit, AFNIS, with the theme: 'A Just Transition' held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja.

He, who was represented by the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Senator George Akume, said that Nigeria was able to make petroleum her largest source of revenue and that Nigeria could do it again with solid minerals.

He said: "Nigeria is open for business. We are willing to develop our God-given resources with genuine partners

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

who share the vision of equitable distribution of wealth produced in our country with our people. We are ready to walk the talk of renewed hope with lovers of human development, to achieve the sustainable development goals of banishing poverty, disease and hunger from our fatherland.

This administration has to wake up the sleeping giant that the solid minerals sector is today, to play its strategic role in the economy, by providing jobs for our people, improving the revenue accruable to the government, and establishing an industrial sector that is the envy of the world.

It is quite promising for the President to say, "Nigerians did it with the petroleum sector against the odds. Petroleum became our largest source of revenue. We shall do it again with the solid minerals sector, wiser, and better, because we have learnt useful lessons".

Then, President Tinubu issued stern warning to illegal miners in Nigeria and vowed that they would face the wrath of the law should they continue with their acts. This was as he said that his administration was working tirelessly in tackling difficulties to ease of doing business.

He said: "The challenges of the sector are enough to overwhelm investors. The indiscriminate and illegal mining of richly endowed regions cheat our country of vast revenue; the threat of bandits oppressing villagers and exploiting the mines to raise money for insurgency is a national emergency; the lack of comprehensive and certified data to guide investment financing starves the sector of critical funds; the allegations of sharp practices in the licensing process undermines our commitment to transparency. These challenges, and more are well known to this administration.

"Let me assure you that these difficulties to ease of doing business in this sector are being tackled by our administration. A new sheriff is in town and the status quo shall no longer be the same. Let me declare that those responsible for the state of affairs are advised to change or they will be changed. The penalties for these acts of economic sabotage are in the laws and we shall apply them to the last letter.

"These are a few of the reasons we have appointed Dr. Oladele Alake, seasoned investigative journalist, political media strategist and a man of unblemished integrity, to sanitise the sector and drive its transformation".

Earlier in his welcome address, Honourable Minister of Solid minerals and Development, Dr. Oladele Alake, stressed that it was time to reshape Nigeria's future through the huge mineral wealth available in the country.

The ministry must be working tirelessly to make the nation's mineral wealth the engine room of the country's prosperity. He stated that Nigeria is committed to driving the economic growth and prosperity of its citizens through proper harnessing of the mineral resources.

According to him, the African continent has long been the source of invaluable mineral wealth that has contributed to global development, but it is time for us to redefine the narrative and shape the future.

Of course, our resources must become the engine of our own prosperity and the well-being of our people. We must set the foundation for a just transition that fosters inclusive growth and minimises the environmental impact.

In Nigeria, in view of all this development, we have witnessed the transformative potential of our solid minerals sector and the vast opportunities that lie within it. We are committed to harnessing these resources effectively, efficiently and sustainably to drive economic growth and create prosperity for our citizens. Our efforts in this direction have already yielded positive results, with increased exploration, investment, and responsible mining practices taking centre stage.

The global energy landscape is also undergoing a profound transformation; the imperative of combating climate change is steering us towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources driving our industrial activities towards less carbon footprints. We must embrace this transition, seizing the opportunities it presents for innovation, job creation, and a healthier planet. Nigeria, with its vast energy potential is poised to play a pivotal role in this journey.

We want to believe that Nigeria would work collaboratively to diversify its energy sources, promote renewable energy, and implement energy efficiency measures.

Of course, our resources must become the engine of our own prosperity and the well-being of our people

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