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FIRS Should Evaluate Consequences Of Waivers On Accrued Penalties, Interests For Unsettled Tax Obligations

EDITORIAL

In a surprising and unprecedented move, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has decided to grant a full waiver on accumulated penalties and interests for outstanding tax liabilities. This decision has brought about opinions whether it is a prudent fiscal strategy or a risky manoeuvre that could undermine the nation's revenue collection efforts.

The Chairman of the service, Mr. Zacch Adedeji, disclosed this in a notice personally signed by himself.

Usually, the agency imposes penalties and interests for failure by companies to fulfil their tax obligation as when due as stipulated in extant tax laws.

Mr. Adedeji said this time

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'Renewed Hope' Budget 2024 To Ensure Greater Future For Nigeria

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu presenting the 2024 Budget

In a recent development that has captured widespread attention, ***President Bola Ahmed Tinubu*** *unveiled the much-anticipated national 2024 budget, named the 'Renewed Hope' budget. The proposal is indeed targeted at meeting the goal of completing critical infrastructure projects in Nigeria, help address structural problems in the economy, lower the costs of doing business and the cost of living for average persons. Writes* ***Enam Obiosio.***

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has characterised the 2024 Budget as the 'Renewed Hope' Budget, emphasising its role as a cornerstone for Nigeria's promising future.

During his presentation of the proposed federal budget for 2024 at a joint National Assembly session in Abuja, the President underscored the budget's focal points, which include prioritising human capital development, poverty alleviation, macroeconomic stability, local employment creation, human defence, internal security, and social security, among other crucial aspects.

He said: "Today, I stand before you to present a budget of renewed hope. A budget which will go further than ever before in implementing macroeconomic stability, in reducing the deficit, increasing capital spending and allocation to reflect the eight priority areas of this administration. The budget we now present constitutes a foundation upon which we shall erect the future of this great nation.

"Analysing prevailing economic environments, economic conditions remain challenging both abroad and at home, despite lingering post-COVID pandemic supply, and production bottlenecks, and conflict in various parts of the world, and restrictive monetary policies in major economies, we expect global growth to hover around 3.0 percent in year 2024. This relatively reads as significant implications for our economy due to our current reliance on importation.

"Distinguished senators, honourable members, despite the global headway, the Nigerian economy has proven resilient, maintaining rugged but positive views over the past 12 months. Inflation has trended upward, yes, due to the weak global conditions. To contain these rising domestic prices, we will ensure effective coordination of fiscal and monetary policy measures and collaborate with sub-national government to address structural factors driving inflation in Nigeria," he said.

"The budget proposal meets our goal of completing critical infrastructure projects which will help address structural problems in the economy by lowering the costs of doing business for companies, and the cost of living for average persons."

The President then stated that as human capital is still the most important resource for the growth of a country, the proposed budget places a high priority on its development, with special attention paid to children.

He

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AfDB, GGBI Forge Alliance To Boost Africa's Green Bond Market

Jennete Ugo Anya

The African Development Bank (AfDB) Group entered into a declaration with a coalition of development finance institutions, aiming to boost green bond markets in Africa.

Ms. Hassatou N'Sele, AfDB's Group Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, announced the collaboration on the bank's website.

Presently, Africa's involvement in the green bond market is less than one percent of the $2.2 trillion global green bond issuance in 2022.

Participating in the Global Green Bond Initiative (GGBI) are institutions such as the European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, Italy's Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, Green Climate Fund, and Germany's KfW development bank. PROPARCO of the AFD Group acts as a consortium of European development finance institutions.

The declaration was formalised by Ms. N'Sele, AfDB's Chief Financial Officer, and representatives of the coalition's institutions during the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference (COP28) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Dr. Akinwumi Adesina, President of AfDB

The engagement seeks to leverage the GGBI technical assistance program announced by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in June 2023.

Ms. N'Sele explained that the GGBI Initiative aims to facilitate private capital flow into climate and environmental projects in EU partner countries.

It provides technical assistance to green bond issuers in emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs), encouraging private investment through a dedicated de-risked fund. The anticipated impact is substantial, with up to 15-20 billion euros in green investments.

The partnership supports the origination of green bonds, the development and identification of pipelines for green projects, and the establishment of credible green bond frameworks.

She emphasised the importance of vibrant local capital markets for impactful development in Africa.

Highlighting AfDB's commitment to the green bond market, she mentioned issuing over $10 billion worth of green and social bonds in 2022.

Ms. N'Sele called for collective efforts to help Africa fully leverage the potential of green bonds, contributing to a sustainable future for Africans.

Mr. Stefano Signore of the European Commission's partnerships directorate lauded the partnership with AfDB as a crucial milestone in mobilising green bonds in emerging developing economies.

The representative of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) expressed optimism that the collaboration would enhance climate and environmentally relevant projects.

FIRS, CAC Strengthen Collaboration For Enhanced Revenue Generation

CAC Imposes N100m Minimum Capital Requirement For Companies With Foreign Participation

By Jennete Ugo Anya

In a bid to bolster their efforts in revenue generation, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) have reaffirmed their commitment to a robust collaboration.

The agreement was solidified during a recent visit by the CAC Registrar General/ Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Hussaini Magaji, to FIRS Executive Chairman, Mr. Zacch Adedeji.

Mr. Magaji emphasised the significance of the existing collaboration and highlighted the seamless registration process achieved through a dedicated integration platform. Stressing the strategic importance of both agencies to Nigeria's economy, especially in revenue generation, he urged greater cooperation.

Mr. Zacch Adedeji, Executive Chairman, Federal Inland Revenue Service

Addressing the need to formalise numerous unregistered online businesses for increased revenue, Mr. Magaji's statement underlined the critical role of collaboration between the CAC and FIRS.

In response, Mr. Adedeji emphasised the necessity of a strong inter-agency relationship for optimal FIRS performance.

Simultaneously, the CAC announced the implementation of a minimum paid-up capital requirement of N100 million for companies with foreign participation. The public notice explained that any application for incorporation must adhere to this requirement, as per the Revised Handbook on Expatriate Quota Administration (2022).

Existing companies with foreign participation possessing less than N100 million paid-up capital were given a six-month window to comply.

Failure to adhere to the directive would result in the commencement of compulsory winding-up proceedings, following section 571 (e) of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020.

'Renewed Hope' Budget 2024 To Ensure Greater Future For Nigeria

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

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

Mr. Atiku Bagudu, Minister of Budget And Economic Planning of Nigeria

said, "To improve the effectiveness of our budget performance, the government will focus on ensuring value for money, greater transparency, and accountability. In this regard, we will work more closely with development partners and the private sector.

"To address long-standing issues in the education sector, a more sustainable model of funding tertiary education will be implemented, including the Student Loan Scheme scheduled to become operational by January 2024."

He said, "We expect the economy to grow by a minimum of 3.76 percent, above the forecasted world average. Inflation is expected to moderate to 21.4 percent in 2024. In preparing the 2024 Budget, our primary objective has been to sustain our robust foundation for sustainable economic development. A critical focus of this budget and the medium-term expenditure framework is Nigeria's commitment to a greener future.

Emphasising public-private partnerships (PPPs), "we have strategically made provisions to leverage private capital for big-ticket infrastructure projects in energy, transportation, and other sectors. This marks a critical step towards diversifying our energy mix, enhancing efficiency, and fostering the development of renewable energy sources. By allocating resources to support innovative and environmentally conscious initiatives, we aim to position Nigeria as a regional leader in the global movement towards clean and sustainable energy.

Furthermore, President Tinubu affirmed his government's commitment to fostering broad and inclusive economic prosperity, stating: "We are reassessing social investment programs to improve their implementation and efficacy. Specifically, the National Social Safety Net project will undergo expansion to offer targeted cash transfers to impoverished and vulnerable households." Additionally, he highlighted plans to enact essential public financial management reforms aimed at efficiently curbing financial leakages.

Budget parameters based on empirical projections - Edun

Additionally, during the public presentation of the budget proposals, Mr. Wale Edun, the Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, emphasised that the budget parameters were grounded in empirical projections. He clarified that a greater emphasis would be placed on managing expenditures.

The Honourable Minister highlighted that the 2024 fiscal document aimed to stabilise the economy and reduce reliance on borrowing. In support of this goal, he pointed out a significant reduction in the debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio, dropping from 6.1 percent in 2023 to 3.88 percent in 2024.

Furthermore, he articulated the primary focus of increasing the tax-to-GDP ratio, aiming to elevate it from the current under 10 percent to approximately 18 percent in the coming years, underscoring that the budget's overarching objective was to create a stable macroeconomic environment, fostering an atmosphere conducive for both local and foreign investors.

He said: "The budget is N27.5 trillion and what I think is critical is that this budget is based on assumptions, which are realistic. It is based on projections, which I think is okay to the average person and reasonable. Therefore, it is something that we can expect to be successfully implemented.

"The breakdown of different elements shows the direction of this administration in order to stabilise the Nigerian economy for rapid inclusive growth. There is going to be less reliance on borrowing," he noted.

In his words: "Likewise, debt service as a proportion of revenue is expected to fall. The budget is rallying up the economy for domestic and foreign investment to come in and this would be achieved through public private partnerships and even privatisation is mentioned in this budget."

Moreover, Mr. Edun emphasised the imperative for Nigeria to explore climate financing as a means to augment revenue for funding the 2024 Budget. He made these remarks during a one-day retreat on the 2024 Appropriation Bill, organised by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, with the theme: 'Budget and Budgetary Process: Improved Outcomes in 2024.'

Acknowledging that Nigeria's fiscal space had reached its limits, aligning with the International Monetary Fund's position, Mr. Edun proposed a strategic shift towards concessional funding, highlighting climate financing as a viable solution. He stressed the need to urgently address fiscal constraints and reduce dependence on borrowing, particularly from foreign sources.

Mr. Edun underscored the significance of climate financing, citing the estimated annual expenditure of $1 trillion on climate change. He urged a proactive approach in seeking the cheapest and most concessionary financing, including climate financing, to fund the N27.5 trillion budget. The minister emphasised the importance of leveraging financial markets to reduce debt servicing and borrowing emphasis, advocating for courage and innovation in navigating financial challenges.

Highlighting recent achievements, such as a 100 million euros foreign direct investment for reforestation in Cross River State, Mr. Edun emphasised the need to maximise existing assets without resorting to excessive borrowing. He suggested exploring funding options based on credit ratings from willing countries and organisations to alleviate debt service burdens for Nigeria.

While defending President Tinubu's administration's borrowing plan in the 2024 appropriation bill, Mr. Edun emphasised the importance of borrowing efficiently, sensibly, and sustainably. He pointed out the reduction in borrowing and deficit as a positive move, representing about three percent of the gross domestic product (GDP), signalling a strategic effort to reduce dependence on borrowing and stabilise the economy.

Speaking with the news media in Abuja after President Tinubu's budget presentation to the National Assembly, Mr. Edun expressed confidence that the budget would ensure economic stability for government finances and the overall economy.

Meanwhile, the Senate issued a warning against lackadaisical attitudes from government functionaries in all ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to maintain the January-to-December budget cycle.

> ...we have strategically made provisions to leverage private capital for big-ticket infrastructure projects in energy, transportation, and other sectors

Tinubu's administration would ensure adequate implementation of the 2024 budget- Bagudu

Regarding the same budget, Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, Honourable Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, expressed assurance that President Tinubu's administration would effectively execute the 2024 budget.

He stated: "I am confident that the 2024 budget proposal, upon approval by the National Assembly and subsequent assent by the president, will be carried out efficiently."

"The deficit of N9 trillion may sound high, but if you compare it to that of last year, which is over N13 trillion, this is a significant milestone because it has absolutely lower deficit," he furthered said.

Providing a detailed breakdown of the budget proposal, Senator Bagudu revealed that the 'Budget of Renewed Hope,' totalling N27.5 trillion, allocated a substantial portion of N2.18 trillion or 7.9 percent to education.

He highlighted that, in addition to the N10 billion previously approved for the student loan fund in the N2.17 trillion Supplementary Budget, an extra N50 billion had been earmarked for the fund in the 2024 appropriation.

Furthermore, Sen. Bagudu disclosed a comprehensive allocation of N3.25 trillion for defence in the 2024 budget, encompassing recurrent expenditure for the military, police, intelligence, and paramilitary forces.

In the health sector, the 2024 appropriation directed five percent, equivalent to N1.33 trillion, with N1.07 trillion designated for the capital and recurrent expenses of the Federal Ministry of Health and its agencies.

Additionally, an allocation of N1.32 trillion was specified for infrastructure, covering works, housing, and power, according to Sen. Bagudu.

Breaking down the overall N27.5 trillion budget, he outlined a non-debt recurrent expenditure of N9.92 trillion, with debt service projected at N8.25 trillion and capital expenditure at N8.7 trillion.

N27.5trn 2024 budget estimates 'way too small' to meet Nigeria's needs - Akabueze

Addressing the same budget, Mr. Ben Akabueze, Director-General (DG) of Budget Office of the Federation (BoF), remarked that the N27.5 trillion 2024 budget estimates, awaiting approval at the National Assembly, might be deemed 'way too small' to meet Nigeria's needs.

However, he stressed that the government must align its expenditures with its available resources.

In a media briefing, the DG acknowledged the relative insufficiency of the federal government's budget concerning the country's extensive needs. He highlighted the necessity of adapting to available resources, emphasising that the budget size corresponds to the government's financial capacity.

Mr. Akabueze attributed the budget's perceived smallness to the limited size of public revenues. He emphasised the importance of maintaining focus on this aspect despite the budgetary constraints.

Speaking on the economic projections for 2024 under President Bola Tinubu's government, he defended the appropriation bill against criticisms, asserting that it addresses the needs of the impoverished in terms of healthcare, security, education, and the economy.

During the budget presentation on November 29, 2023, President Tinubu outlined a breakdown of the N27.5 trillion budget estimates, indicating recurrent non-debt expenditure at N9.92 trillion, capital expenditure at N8.73 trillion, debt service at N8.25 trillion, revenue at N18.32 trillion, new borrowings at N7.83 trillion, and deficit at N9.18 trillion.

The President projected a 3.76 percent growth in the economy and a moderation of inflation to 21.4 percent in 2024. Contrary to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) October prediction of a 3.1 percent growth, Mr. Akabueze criticised the IMF's track record of inaccurate projections for the Nigerian economy over the past four years.

He emphasised that IMF projections do not hold absolute authority on economic growth and suggested that those directly managing individual economies, like the Nigerian government, have a more accurate understanding. Mr. Akabueze added that the growth rate projected by President Tinubu's administration does not fully reflect the government's ambitions, revealing a desire to double the GDP before the end of the first term.

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FIRS Should Evaluate Consequences Of Waivers On Accrued Penalties, Interests For Unsettled Tax Obligations

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that the forgiveness of piled-up penalties and interests was in recognition of the challenges that many taxpayers have faced in settling their outstanding tax liabilities.

According to him, the concession also syncs with the commitment of President Bola Tinubu to support businesses to flourish. He explained that full payment of outstanding original tax liabilities without interest on or before the 31st of December this year must be done by companies wishing to benefit from the peculiar concession, advising that the waiver of interest is subject to the full settlement of outstanding principal on or before 31 December 2023.

However, he asked to note that the full penalty and interest shall be reinstated after the expiration of this one-off concession window where the outstanding undisputed liability remains fully or partially unpaid.

On the surface, the FIRS' decision seems like a generous and benevolent act, aimed at providing relief to businesses and individuals grappling with the economic fallout of the recent economic policies by the federal government, among others. The waiver is intended to ease the burden on those who have struggled to meet their tax obligations due to the unprecedented challenges faced in recent times. However, beneath this seemingly altruistic gesture lie layers of complexity and potential repercussions that cannot be ignored.

Proponents of the FIRS' decision argue that it demonstrates a commitment to economic recovery and a recognition of the hardships faced by taxpayers. By waiving penalties and interests, the government aims to stimulate economic activity, encourage investment, and ultimately spur growth. In this light, the move is seen as a strategic step to reinvigorate a struggling economy and support businesses on the brink of collapse.

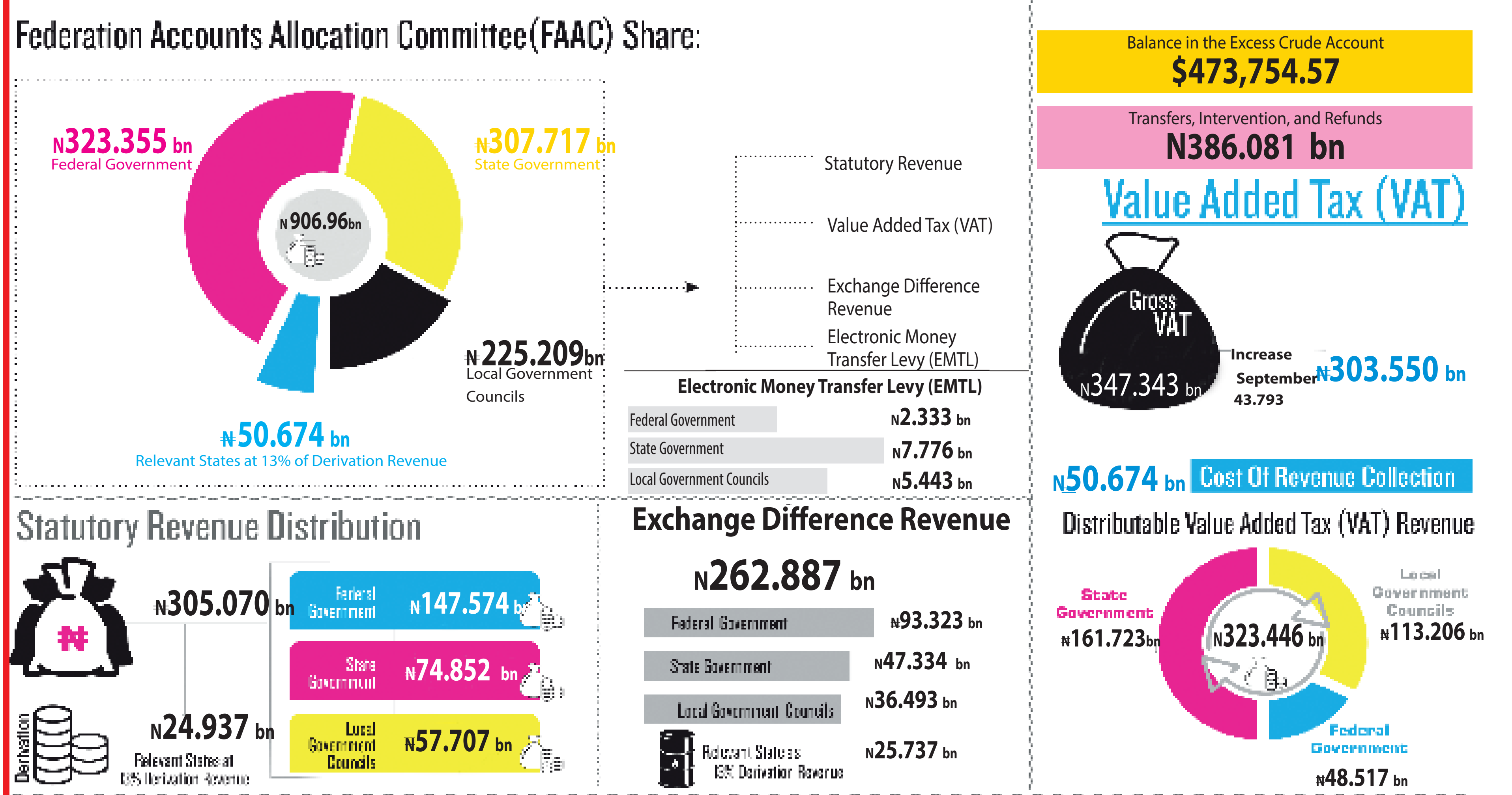
On the flip side, the decision could set a dangerous precedent, creating a moral hazard where businesses and individuals feel they can avoid their tax responsibilities without consequence. Furthermore, there are concerns about the impact on government revenue, especially at a time when public finances are already strained. With essential services dependent on tax revenue, a significant dip could undermine the government's ability to meet its obligations, potentially leading to a vicious cycle of economic decline.

Another concern is the perceived unfairness of the waiver. While some businesses may genuinely have struggled due to external factors, others may have intentionally evaded taxes, benefiting from the waiver without facing the consequences of their actions. This raises questions about the equity and justice of such a broad-spectrum approach, as it fails to differentiate between those who genuinely need relief and those who have been negligent in fulfilling their tax obligations.

One cannot ignore the potential impact on the overall tax culture within the country. The FIRS' decision might inadvertently signal that non-compliance is tolerable in certain circumstances, eroding the sense of responsibility that taxpayers should feel towards contributing to the nation's development. It is crucial to strike a balance between offering relief and maintaining a robust tax system that encourages compliance and ensures a fair distribution of the tax burden.

While the FIRS' decision to grant a full waiver on accumulated penalties and interests may be well-intentioned, it raises valid concerns about its long-term impact on fiscal discipline, revenue collection, and the overall health of the economy. Striking the right balance between providing relief and maintaining accountability is a delicate task that requires careful consideration of the potential consequences. It is a matter of time whether this move proves to be a masterstroke in revitalising the economy or a risky gamble that could have far-reaching implications for Nigeria's financial stability.

FAAC Shares N906.96 billion October 2023 Revenue To FG, States And LGCs



In the month of October 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.

Collaboration By CBN, TCN, Discos Targets Completion Of 53 Power Projects Worth N122bn

By Jennete Ugo Anya

In a joint venture, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), and various power distribution companies are set to finalise 53 power projects valued at N122 billion by May 2024.

The projects, currently under construction across the nation, aim to enhance the country's power infrastructure.

During a recent tour of three ongoing projects situated at Ojo, Isolo, and Oworonshoki Transmission stations in Lagos, Mr. Mathew Ajibade, TCN's Programme Coordinator overseeing the projects, stated that the completion of these initiatives would add over 1,000 megawatts to the firm's wheeling capacity.

Mr. Ajibade clarified that the projects, contrary to widespread speculation, have not been abandoned. He affirmed that the work is actively progressing, and the projects are anticipated to be delivered on schedule.

The collaborative effort involves the TCN headquarters' project management office working alongside TCN field engineers and technical teams from distribution companies.

Providing insight into the financial support for these endeavours, Mr. Tumba Tijani, Assistant Director/Head of the Infrastructure Finance Office at CBN, disclosed that the apex bank released a loan at a nine percent interest rate for the project in August 2022.

The CBN's intervention, known as the Nigeria electricity market stabilisation facility-3, was allocated the sum of N122,289,344 to address transmission and distribution interface challenges. This initiative seeks to improve power supply to end-users and unlock the untapped generation capacity in the country.

Mr. Tijani further revealed that N85.43 billion has already been disbursed into the Advance Payment Guarantee accounts of the 53 contractors responsible for executing the projects.

These encompass the delivery of eight 150MVA power transformers, 19 1000MVA transformers, 60MVA transformers, re-conducting existing transmission lines (conductors and accessories), upgrading existing 132/33KV substations, and constructing 33KV line bays.

The projects remain a significant step toward addressing critical challenges in Nigeria's power sector and enhancing the overall electricity supply infrastructure.

CBN Reveals 8 Banks Falling Short of CAR, Urges Remedial Measures

In a recent disclosure, the CBN highlighted concerns regarding eight commercial banks that failed to meet the required Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) for international authorisation.

These banks are now under pressure to augment their capital base, addressing the gap resulting from the depreciation of the naira against the dollar and other foreign currencies.

> The decrease in CAR was attributed to a reduction in total qualifying capital relative to increased risk-weighted assets

The CBN's 2021 guidelines mandated deposit money banks (DMBs) to maintain a prudential CAR of 10 percent for national and regional banks, while those with international authorisation were instructed to uphold a 15-percent regulatory CAR.

However, the CBN's report revealed a decline in the banking system's CAR, dropping to 11.2 percent, a deviation of 3.0 percent from the prescribed level for banks with international authorisation.

The decrease in CAR was attributed to a reduction in total qualifying capital relative to increased risk-weighted assets, stemming from the depreciation of the naira following the adoption of a market-determined exchange rate policy. This reflects the challenges faced by the affected banks.

The stress test, focusing on capital strength and risk profile, aimed to assess the banks' financial health and their ability to withstand adverse economic conditions and shocks. Specifically, the test scrutinised the CAR, a crucial measure of a bank's financial stability, representing the proportion of its capital to risk-weighted assets.

Results of the stress test revealed that the CAR of the affected banks with international authorisation was lower than the minimum regulatory requirement set by the CBN. This suggests potential inadequacy to absorb losses during challenging economic conditions, raising concerns about their overall financial stability.

The CBN's disclosure emphasises the urgency of appropriate measures to address the issue, potentially prompting regulatory actions such as requiring affected banks to raise additional capital or implement strategies to fortify their financial position. This is crucial to mitigate potential risks to the banking sector and the broader economy.

The depreciation, a result of the CBN's managed float of the exchange rate in June 2023, significantly impacted banks, resulting in substantial foreign exchange losses and affecting the required capital for international, national, and regional banks.

CBN Governor, Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, highlighted plans to introduce new capital requirements for banks during a recent speech at the annual dinner of the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN).

Over 75m Bank Accounts At Risk As CBN Directs Freeze On BVN-less Transactions

In response to the latest directive from the CBN, more than 75 million bank accounts are now facing potential repercussions as financial institutions are instructed to cease transactions on individual accounts or wallets lacking a Bank Verification Number (BVN) or National Identity Number (NIN).

An investigation by news media reveals this significant threat to a substantial portion of the banking population.

Recent data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS) discloses that, as of October 9, 2023, the banking industry registered 59 million (58,999,262) BVNs.

This follows the CBN's mandate for financial institutions to halt transactions on funded individual accounts or wallets without BVN or NIN, effective March 1, 2024.

Upon examination of NIBSS data, it was found that the total number of bank accounts in the country stood at 191.4 million in 2021, with 133.5 million actively in use. Given the dynamic nature of banking, it is anticipated that the current figure for total bank accounts would have increased from the 2021 statistics.

The CBN's directive underscores the urgency for individuals to ensure compliance with BVN and NIN requirements to avoid disruptions to their banking transactions. The move aims to enhance the security and integrity of the banking system, emphasising the importance of valid identification for all account holders.

COP 28: President Tinubu, Others Seek Urgent Investment In Alternative Energy

*Nigeria will become more vulnerable to climate impacts if it fails to get its climate finance priorities right at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu** made impressive effort.*

*Together, the President and others even at the sub-national levels worked for Nigeria to emerge from the conference with tangible commitments, reinforcing the nation's dedication to a future where energy is not only a catalyst for development but also a driver of environmental stewardship. **Enam Obiosio** writes.*

President Bola Ahmed Tinubu

President Tinubu underscored the urgent need for investments in alternative energy for Nigeria and Africa to effectively transition to sustainable energy.

His comments were made during a panel discussion on African Green Industrialisation at the 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP28) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Dubai, UAE.

Emphasising the critical importance of fresh investments in key areas, the President highlighted Africa's potential contribution to the emerging global green economy. He stressed the need for the continent to adapt and transition successfully, given its minimal contribution to global carbon emissions coupled with a disproportionate economic burden in pursuing cleaner energy.

President Tinubu expressed concern about the risk management essential for Africa's rapid transition to cleaner energy, cautioning against the continent becoming a victim of the disruptions associated with climate change mitigation measures.

While acknowledging past landmark agreements from conferences, he noted the challenges in the negotiation process for international climate finance, particularly for developing countries like Nigeria. Nigeria has been grappling with the harsh realities of climate change, including flooding, desertification, coastal erosion, drought, deforestation, land degradation, and pollution.

Despite historically low contributions to global warming, developing countries, including Nigeria, bear a disproportionate impact of climate change, leading to human security issues such as food insecurity, resource conflicts, and political instability. President Tinubu emphasised the commitment of Nigeria and other African countries to align their development agenda with the international climate regime.

Nigeria has actively committed to global climate mandates through initiatives such as the nationally determined contribution, the national climate change policy, the national climate change council, and the energy transition plan. The country's participation in COP28 is deemed crucial for both its development and the well-being of its citizens.

President Tinubu said: "I am a political scientist with research in environmental and energy politics. I argue that Nigeria should focus on three climate finance goals at COP28. These are: the loss and damage finance mechanism, Nigerian energy transition plan finance and adaptation finance".

Securing the necessary funds would significantly bolster Nigeria's capacity to address the challenges posed by climate change, playing a crucial role in achieving the country's immediate, medium, and long-term climate objectives. The attainment of this financial support would mark a historic milestone in Nigeria's environmental diplomacy, with the President highlighting its importance.

The President acknowledged that, unlike many African nations, Nigeria has faced difficulties in accessing international climate finance due to perceived lack of readiness and a reputation for corruption. Despite these challenges, the recent successful agreement on the loss and damage fund during COP27 emerged as a positive outcome. This fund aims to assist the most vulnerable and affected countries by climate change, showcasing the growing assertiveness and influence of developing nations in climate negotiations.

As COP28 has approach, Nigeria and other developing countries are urged not to rest on the laurels of the loss and damage fund agreement. The conference provides a platform to clarify funding mechanisms, ensuring streamlined access to the fund and facilitating the implementation of adaptation projects.

The loss and damage fund hold the key to addressing Nigeria's climate-induced human security crises, particularly in dealing with issues such as flooding and resource conflicts.

Nigeria's historical challenges in climate change adaptation are closely linked to the lack of sufficient financing, leading to socioeconomic crises resulting from hesitancy to invest in reducing citizens' vulnerability to climate change. With expectations tempered regarding easy access to funds for adaptation at COP28, diplomatic finesse will be crucial to raising the required funds, considering the modest pledge of US$230 million for adaptation at the previous conference.

"Global manufacturers must partner with us to invest in the health of our collective environment. Africa doubles as an unrivalled opportunity in this respect. We are removing all obstacles that are inhibiting progress as Africa's largest economy. The investment environment is becoming cleaner and better," President Tinubu said.

COP28 is the time for the world and Nigeria to get their climate finance priorities right. Nigeria would become more vulnerable to climate impacts if it fails to do this at COP28. A prolonged lack of adaptation finance would increase the number of Nigerians who are not resilient to climate change and its impact.

> **Nigeria's historical challenges in climate change adaptation are closely linked to the lack of sufficient financing...**

Consequently, it would affect the country's economy as climate change has an impact on livelihoods and health, damages infrastructure, and threatens food security. Similarly, failure to secure financing for the Energy Transition Plan could hamper Nigerian development projections. This is because the federal government treats this as a development plan.

Timely and effective implementation at COP28 is deemed essential, given the country's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2060, requiring substantial funding for its US$1.9 trillion energy transition plan.

Securing international climate finance is pivotal for Nigeria to meet its nationally determined contribution commitments, both initially and in updated submissions. Therefore, the success of Nigeria's negotiators and delegation at COP28 hinges on their ability to adeptly secure the necessary financing for the country's energy transition plan.

COP28 represents a critical socioeconomic juncture for Nigeria, and the country has to secure international climate finance.

Also, President Tinubu while speaking at a high-level meeting with stakeholders and investors on the Nigeria carbon market and electric buses rollout programme in Dubai, UAE, on the margins of the COP28, said that Nigeria is taking significant step towards a sustainable and eco-friendly future by pioneering initiative to deploy a fleet of 100 electric buses.

He explained that the strategic initiative is aimed at significantly reducing Nigeria's carbon footprint and modernising the country's transportation systems as part of a larger effort to position Nigeria and Africa as the pioneering frontier of green manufacturing and industrialisation with a focus on natural gas as a transition fuel alongside other renewable energy sources.

To spearhead this transformative plan, the President announced the appointment of the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Mr. Zacch Adedeji, and the Director-General (DG) of the National Council on Climate Change (NCCC), Mr. Dahiru Salisu, to co-chair the Nigeria carbon market activation plan.

Speaking on gas flaring, President Tinubu, who shared the platform with the President of COP28, Dr. Sultan Ahmed al-Jabar, the United States Special Envoy on Climate, John Kerry, and the Chinese Envoy on Climate, Xie Zhenhue, told the world that Nigeria has already imposed heavy penalty on defaulters.

Commending the drive to reduce greenhouse gases, the President said that he was aware of the need for participants to make commitments to the goal of limiting the earth's temperature increase to 1.5C by the end of the century.

He said: "Sitting here in this room, I know that we have to commit ourselves. We have been doing so before today. We are committed to critical steps to reduce methane emissions by ensuring gas flaring is eliminated. There is a huge penalty for that. There is equally a huge incentive to do so. The measures that are taken here are a welcome development, no doubt about that. I am with the leadership of the UAE for the commitment shown so far."

He stated: "We are consolidating on gas export, usage domestically and export to other countries. I can assure you that we will be partners in progress to achieve renewable energy. We are committed to energy mix; we are providing cooking gas for our large population. We will continue to do that.

He revealed: "We have signed off on reduction of methane. We will leverage on new technology and we hope that the two giant nations and the Emirates will be able to help us."

President Tinubu pointed out that the world's biggest economies, the U.S. and China, are the biggest culprits in greenhouse emissions. While expressing delight that both countries were represented at the summit, he said: "What I know of Africa is the fact that de-risking in additional investment and technological knowhow is very necessary and the largest economies that have benefitted immensely should do more real fast because the earth needs healing and needs more attention."

Earlier, Dr. Al-Jabar stressed that the efforts being made prove that success is possible in the objective to limit the earth's temperature. He observed that the elimination of all CO_2 gases could be done with the necessary cooperation and hard work on the part of the countries.

In his remark, Mr. Kerry announced that over $1 billion in new grant funding has been mobilised since COP27 in Sharm el-Shiekh, Egypt. He expressed happiness that more countries have made methane pledge endorsements.

The Chinese envoy said that his country was willing to cut down on greenhouse gases but lack the capacity to do so. He, therefore, called for support from the international community.

Dangote Refinery Prepares For Operations As First Crude Shipment Arrives

NNPC Inks Agreements To Expand LNG Delivery in Domestic, Int'l Markets

As Fox Petroleum Commits $2.5 bn Yearly To Bolster NNPC Limited's Energy Operations

By Anita Dennis

The first crude feedstock for Dangote's 650,000 b/d refinery arrived the country a few days ago, with the development indicating that fuel production at the new $19 billion facility is finally set to start after years of delays.

Africa's largest refinery, the $20bn Dangote Refinery, is finally set to commence fuel production as the first crude shipment arrived at the facility, marking a significant milestone for the country's oil industry.

The OTIS tanker loaded a 950,000-barrel cargo of Agbami crude on Dec. 6 and was discharged at the refinery's terminal on Thursday.

The Suezmax tanker, chartered by state-owned Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), is the first of Dangote's initial crude supplies as the giant new plant starts to ramp up operations.

The privately owned refinery was officially completed in May this year but was yet to make any oil products due to a lack of domestic crude feedstock.

The NNPCL, which owns a 20 per cent stake in the refinery, recently agreed to supply 6million barrels of crude oil as feedstock to the refinery in December 2023.

Operated by Chevron, Agbami is one of Nigeria's largest deepwater developments pumping about 100,000 b/d in the central Niger Delta. It produces light sweet crude with a gravity of 47.9 API and a sulfur content of 0.04 per cent, according to Platts' Periodic Table of Oil. The crude is known in the market for yielding a large proportion of naphtha and kerosene.

NNPCL has chartered a number of other tankers to transport further crude shipments from offshore fields to the refinery later this month, according to the oil trader.

The refinery's startup has been repeatedly delayed since the project was unveiled in 2013, although most of the key units were installed in 2019.

The crude distillation unit has been designed to process 12 crudes at one time and has been engineered to process three Nigerian crude grades — Escravos, Bonny Light and Forcados. Once fully operational, the plant will yield 327,000 b/d of gasoline, 244,000 b/d of gasoil/diesel, 56,000 b/d of jet fuel/kerosene, as well as 290,000 mt/year of propane/LPG, according to previous Dangote presentations.

It is estimated that the Dangote Refinery will cater to over 12% of Africa's product demand, potentially reducing petroleum imports across the continent by 36%.

Mr. Aliko Dangote, Nigerian businessman and industrialist and founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ☐Dangote Group, had earlier said in an interview last month that the refinery would start with refining Nigerian crude.

He said that the refinery's first priority is to supply petrol to Nigeria before exporting elsewhere, including the West African region.

"We do not want to start our refinery with foreign goods, we want to start with the Nigerian crude. We are more than ready and you will see our gasoline products soon."

The refinery is also projected to generate over 100,000 job opportunities and stimulate growth in the cosmetics and plastics industries.

Aliko Dangote

Market implications

Located on the outskirts of Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos State, Nigeria hopes the Dangote refinery will help end its dependence on gasoline imports. Nigeria has to import about 1 million-1.25 million mt/month of gasoline to meet national demand due to the poor state of its existing refineries, all of which are currently shut for repairs.

The country currently exports almost all of the crude and condensate it produces.

Dangote officials have previously told S&P Global Commodity Insights that the refinery would start operating at 370,000 b/d, producing mostly jet fuel and diesel initially.

Some analysts expect the refinery will not hit full operating capacity until mid-2025, with further delays still possible. Forecasts from some international agencies suggest Nigerian gasoline production will exceed imports until the 2040s as a result of the new refinery.

> The refinery is also projected to generate over 100,000 job opportunities and stimulate growth in the cosmetics and plastics industries

NNPC Inks Agreements To Expand LNG Delivery in Domestic, Int'l Markets

The Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) recently revealed its accomplishment in securing two significant agreements aimed at supplying Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) to both the domestic and international gas sectors.

In an official statement signed by Mr. Olufemi Soneye, Chief Corporate Communications Officer of NNPC, the national oil company emphasized that these agreements are integral to its ongoing initiatives to elevate natural gas utilization within Nigeria and augment the nation's gas revenue.

Conducted during separate signing ceremonies amid the United Nations' Climate Change Conference (COP28), NNPC disclosed that one of the pacts was sealed with Wison Heavy Industry Co. Ltd, a Chinese company, focusing on the development of a floating LNG project within Nigeria, strategically targeting the global LNG market.

Additionally, NNPC Prime LNG Ltd, a subsidiary of NNPC Trading Ltd, formalized a Supply, Installation, and Commissioning Agreement with SDP Services, an independent oil and gas company, for a 421-tonnes-per-day LNG project concentrated on the domestic LNG market.

The Floating LNG Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was inked by Mr. Olalekan Ogunbayo, Executive Vice President of Gas, Power & New Energy, representing NNPC Ltd, and Mr. Kai Xu, Managing Director of Wison Ltd, representing his company. Both entities have committed to collaboratively devising a project development roadmap that will lead to a crucial investment decision.

Similarly, the Small-Scale LNG (SSLNG) project agreement was formalized by Mr. Lawal Sade, Managing Director of NNPC Trading Ltd, on behalf of NNPC Prime LNG Ltd, and Mr. Abhinav Modi, Managing Director of SDP Services Ltd, representing his company.

The SSLNG project, slated for Ajaokuta in Kogi State, is set to ensure the efficient supply of LNG to Autogas/Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and industrial/commercial customers nationwide. Anticipated to be operational by December 2024, this initiative marks a significant stride towards bolstering Nigeria's position in the LNG market.

Fox Petroleum Group Commits $2.5 bn Yearly To Bolster NNPC Limited's Energy Operations

In a significant move, the board of directors at Fox Petroleum Group has unanimously agreed to extend a substantial credit facility of $2.5 billion annually for three consecutive years.

The purpose is to facilitate the comprehensive revitalisation of NNPC Limited's operations spanning the upstream, midstream, and downstream energy sectors within Nigeria.

This decision reflects the unwavering confidence that the Fox Petroleum Group board of directors has in the leadership of President Bola Tinubu.

The administration's commitment to enhancing Nigeria's oil and gas production, augmenting reserves, increasing federal revenue, generating employment opportunities, and fostering development in host communities played a pivotal role in sealing the deal.

Chairman of Fox Petroleum Group, Dr. Ajay Kumar, emphasised the company's eagerness to play a pivotal role in fund investment provision. Over the next three years, Fox Petroleum Group plans to release $2.5 billion annually, earmarked for the acquisition, investment, and operation of energy-producing assets in Nigeria.

This strategic move aligns with NNPC Limited's growth strategy following its recent incorporation as a limited liability company under the Petroleum Industry Act, PIA.

Dr. Kumar, originally from India, disclosed that specific details of this landmark funding agreement would be disclosed to the public following a closed-door meeting with Nigeria's President Tinubu, who also serves as the Minister of Petroleum Resources.

Additionally, Mr. Yomi Falana, Business Representative of Fox Petroleum in Nigeria, highlighted the positive impact of good governance under President Tinubu's leadership.

He emphasised that Nigeria has now become the preferred destination for foreign investors, marking a new era of prosperity and collaboration.

Finance Minister Advocates Non-Interest Finance For $1trn GDP Growth Target

By Edmond Martins

Mr. Wale Edun, the Honourable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, announced the federal government's intention to leverage the non-interest finance market to propel its ambitious $1 trillion gross domestic product (GDP) growth target.

Emphasising a commitment to massive infrastructure investment, Mr. Edun highlighted the critical role of non-interest financing in raising the necessary funds.

Addressing participants at the 1st Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) Nigeria-Islamic Financial Service Board (IFSB) International Forum on Non-Interest Capital Markets in Abuja, Mr. Edun asserted that non-debt, equity financing mechanisms would be key to addressing Nigeria's debt challenges. He emphasized the financial opportunities presented by non-interest finance, which avoids interest-bearing obligations.

In alignment with President Bola Tinubu's inclusive economy vision, Mr. Edun stressed the importance of incorporating green projects and investments into Nigeria's economic strategy.

The 2-day forum aims to harness the expertise and resources of participants to identify challenges, explore regional initiatives, and promote sustainability and climate considerations in the non-interest capital market. Seeking to foster global cooperation and generate innovative ideas, the event marks a significant step in transforming the non-interest finance landscape.

Mr. Lamido Yuguda, the Director-General of SEC, affirmed the commission's dedication to market development and innovation, ensuring a regulatory framework that maintains stability and fairness. He highlighted Nigeria's potential to become a global Islamic finance hub, contingent on addressing issues such as awareness, regulatory harmonization, and the enactment of legislation for legal certainty. Mr. Yuguda underscored the importance of attracting potential foreign exchange inflows, especially through Sukuk, to entice international investors.

Calling for collaboration to grow and develop West African capital markets and the economy, Mr. Yuguda emphasised the opportunity to create cross-border products and establish a market ecosystem for the non-interest segment of capital markets. This includes equipping market players with the knowledge and skills necessary for optimal participation in the non-interest finance market.


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


Islamic Financial Services Board (IFSB) Secretary General, Dr. Bello Lawal Danbatta presents a commemorative plaque to the MD/CE NDIC, Bello Hassan during a courtesy visit of the IFSB delegation to the NDIC Management in the Corporation's Head Office in Abuja.

The Director-General (DG) and key speakers at a recent event, including Dr. Bello Lawal Danbatta, the Secretary-General of IFSB, highlighted the substantial benefits Nigeria stands to gain by fostering the growth of the non-interest segment within its financial sector.

The collective goal is to proficiently manage disruptions associated with emerging trends, fostering increased competition, productivity, and innovation in the non-interest financial system while maintaining financial stability. Dr. Danbatta emphasized the importance of embracing emerging trends, focusing on value-driven finance, and providing financial solutions that bridge sustainable development gaps and address issues related to financial inclusion.

While the Nigerian non-interest finance market is valued at $2.3 billion, representing approximately 0.52 percent of the country's 2021 GDP, it has shown growth and maturity, with participants operating across various segments of the financial market.

However, Nigeria's non-interest finance market lags behind global peers, constituting just 0.075 percent of the global Islamic Financial market, valued at $3.06 trillion in 2021. Comparatively low Islamic banking assets, estimated at $732 million, make up just one percent of total banking assets, placing Nigeria at the same level as Sri Lanka and Tanzania. This stands in contrast to other nations like Bangladesh (26.30 percent), Pakistan (18.60 percent), Libya (6.10 percent), Senegal (5.00 percent), Egypt (4.00 percent), and Kenya (1.00 percent). The stakeholders emphasised the need for concerted efforts to enhance Nigeria's position and contribution in the global non-interest finance landscape.

World Bank Unveils $5bn Initiative To Bring Electricity To 100mn Africans By 2030


Mr. Ajay Banga, The President of the World Bank

The President of the World Bank, Mr. Ajay Banga, recently announced a groundbreaking initiative to allocate $5 billion, aiming to provide electricity to 100 million people in Africa by the end of the decade (2030).

He revealed this plan during his speech at the mid-term review of the International Development Association (IDA)'s $93 billion replenishment package on December 6, 2023, in Zanzibar, Tanzania.

Highlighting this ambitious undertaking as a testament to the effective use of funds from the bank's IDA, which offers zero- or low-interest loans to low-income countries, Mr. Banga emphasised the crucial role of donor countries in providing support for such initiatives.

Addressing the need for increased support, Mr. Banga urged World Bank shareholders, donor countries, and philanthropies to contribute more profoundly to enable IDA to achieve enhanced development outcomes in low-income countries. He emphasised, "The truth is we are pushing the limits of this important concessional resource, and no amount of creative financial engineering will compensate for the fact that we need more."

Mr. Banga also stressed the necessity for the World Bank to redefine its performance evaluation, shifting the focus towards improved outcomes rather than solely measuring the number of projects or dollars disbursed. He cited examples such as an IDA-financed mini-grid delivering electricity to rural communities in Nigeria, encouraging the adoption of replicable platforms.

Expressing his vision for significant progress, Mr. Banga stated: "But this is just one example; I want to see 100,000 – 200,000 – half a million more." He revealed that the IDA would invest $5 billion in delivering affordable renewable electricity to 100 million Africans before 2030.

Acknowledging the challenges, Mr. Banga highlighted the pressing issue that 600 million people in Africa, including 36 million in Tanzania, still lack access to reliable electricity. He emphasised: "Put simply: We can't."

The current 20th IDA funding round is set to conclude on June 30, 2025, with the Zanzibar conference aimed at supplementing this funding. Mr. Banga seized the opportunity to launch a campaign for the subsequent funding round, urging it to exceed the current $93 billion, stating: "This must drive each of us to make the next replenishment of IDA the largest of all time."

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

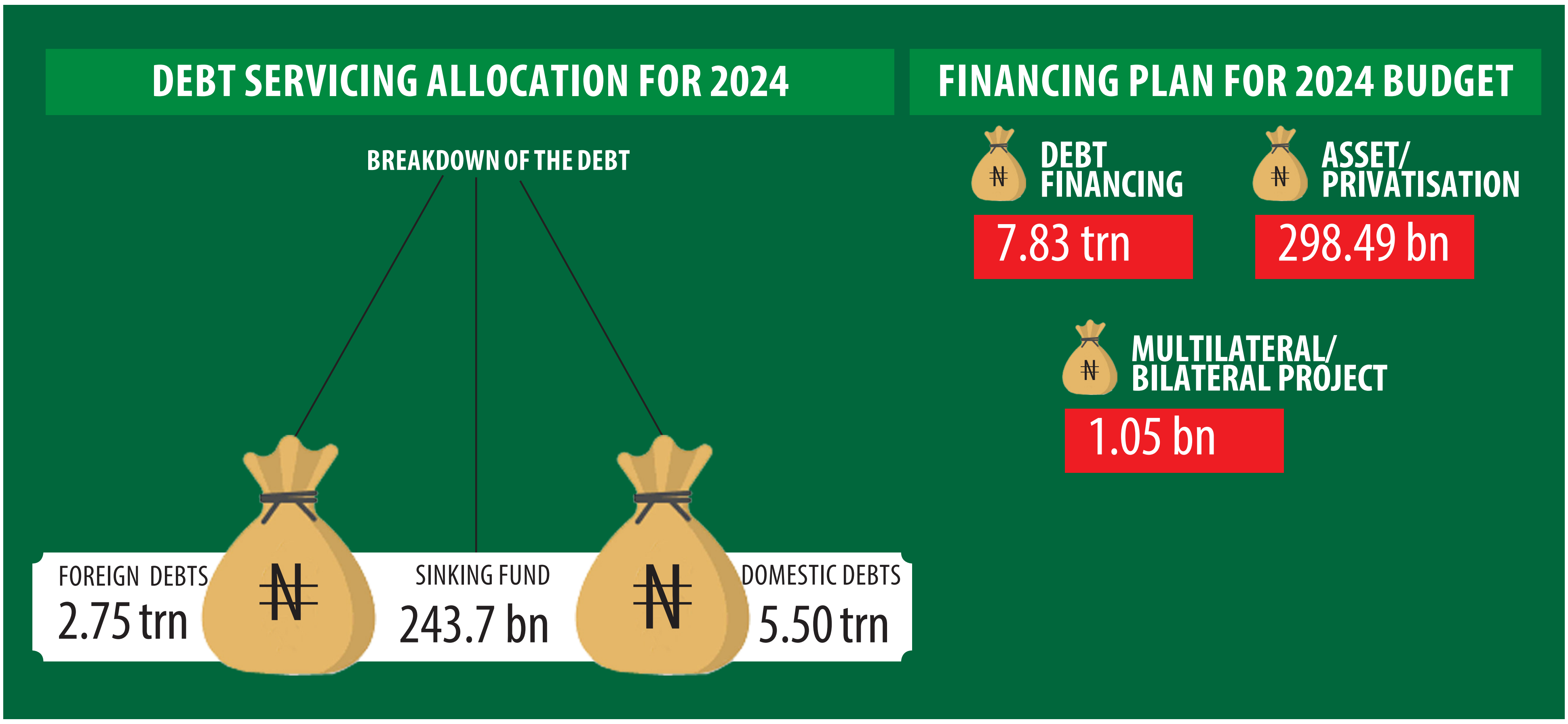
Director, Claims Resolution Department
Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation
Mamman Kotangora House (8th Floor) 23a, Marina, Lagos

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

@NDICNigeria

DMO Launches Dec. 2023 Subscription For FGN Bonds With 12.287%, 13.287% Interest Rates

Gov't Unveils Debt Servicing, Financing Plans For 2024 Budget



By Jennete Ugo Anya

The Debt Management Office (DMO) commenced the subscription process for the December 2023 offering of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) bonds, featuring interest rates of 12.287 percent for the two-year bond and 13.287 percent for the three-year bond.

The announcement was conveyed through an official statement on the DMO's website, citing the relevant legal frameworks.

As per the statement, the subscription window was open for five days, spanning from December 4th to December 8th, 2023.

Investors were invited to participate with units valued at N1,000 each, subject to a minimum subscription of N5,000, and subsequent multiples of N1,000. The maximum subscription limit was set at N50,000,000.

The bonds are scheduled to mature on March 13th, 2024, with quarterly interest payments.

Interested investors were directed to engage with authorised stock brokerage firms, listed by the DMO as agents for the subscription. Additionally, the FGN bonds are tradable on the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX).

It is crucial to highlight that these FGN bonds enjoy full backing from the federal government of Nigeria, providing a secure investment avenue for participants.

Meanwhile, in a recent presentation to the National Assembly, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu outlined the federal government's strategies for debt servicing and financing in 2024. Notably, there are substantial increases in allocations for both aspects compared to the 2023 figures.

> As per the statement, the subscription window was open for five days, spanning from December 4th to December 8th, 2023

A significant aspect of the debt servicing plan is the commitment to start repaying the N23 trillion owed to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN). The budget details revealed a total allocation of N8,490,960,606,831 for debt servicing in 2024, reflecting a notable increase from the N8,250,000,000,000 allocated in 2023.

The breakdown of the debt servicing allocation for the 2024 budget reveals a strategic approach by the government, with a focus on meeting maturing obligations and addressing the challenges posed by global economic factors. The detailed breakdown includes N5,499,702,927,540.091 for Domestic debts (including Ways and Means), N2,747,595,527,533 for foreign debts, and N243,662,151,758 allocated to the Sinking Fund for retiring maturing promissory notes.

The surge in the debt servicing allocation is attributed to the escalating cost of debt management, influenced by global economic dynamics and the imperative to settle maturing obligations, particularly the repayment of ways and means obtained from the CBN over the years.

The government has pledged to prioritise debt servicing, emphasising its commitment to maintaining the country's financial stability and creditworthiness.

Notably, the largest portion of the debt servicing budget is dedicated to domestic debts, reflecting the government's emphasis on effective management of domestic debt.

The administration also expressed a commitment to decrease reliance on foreign borrowing and promote domestic debt financing, aligning with its strategy for economic sustainability.

The allocation for foreign debts underscores the government's proactive measures in addressing its external debt obligations. Additionally, the allocation for the sinking fund signals the government's determination to meet maturing obligations promptly, specifically for repaying short-term debt instruments such as promissory notes used to finance government operations.

The government's debt servicing plan for 2024 reinforces its dedication to financial stability and sustainable economic growth. By prioritising debt servicing, the government aims to uphold investor confidence and attract foreign capital.

Shifting focus to the financing plan for the 2024 Budget, the federal government outlined a comprehensive strategy with a total allocation of N9,178,930,385,914. The breakdown includes N7,828,529,477,860 for debt financing, N298,486,421,740 for asset sales/privatisation, and N1,051,914,486,314 for multi-lateral/bi-lateral project-tied loans.

The increase in the overall financing allocation is attributed to the government's ambitious plans for infrastructure development and economic diversification. The allocation for debt financing constitutes the largest portion, indicating occasional borrowing to meet financial obligations as the government pursues its strategic objectives.

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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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Dangote Refinery: A Milestone For Africa's Energy Independence

POLICY BRIEF *with* ENAM **OBIOSIO**

In a groundbreaking development, Africa's largest refinery, the $20 billion Dangote Refinery, is poised to usher in a new era of energy independence for the continent.

The facility is set to commence fuel production following the arrival of its first crude shipment, marking a significant milestone in Nigeria's efforts to revitalise its oil and gas sector.

The Dangote Refinery, spearheaded by Nigerian billionaire Mr. Aliko Dangote, has been a long-anticipated project aimed at addressing the region's refining capacity constraints.

With a capacity to process 650,000 barrels of crude oil per day, the refinery is expected to play a very important role in reducing Africa's dependence on imported refined products, thereby bolstering energy security and fostering economic growth.

The arrival of the first crude shipment at the Dangote Refinery not only signifies progress in its construction but also highlights the potential to reshape the dynamics of the global oil and gas industry.

Africa has traditionally been a net importer of refined petroleum products, leading to economic vulnerabilities and a reliance on foreign markets. The commencement of production at Dangote Refinery signals a shift towards self-sufficiency, with the prospect of Nigeria becoming a net exporter of refined products in the near future.

One of the key advantages of the Dangote Refinery lies in its use of state-of-the-art technology, ensuring efficiency and adherence to environmental standards. The facility is equipped with advanced refining processes, including a sophisticated crude distillation unit, catalytic cracking unit, and hydrocracker unit. This will not only enhance the quality of the refined products but also position the refinery as a global player in the production of cleaner fuels.

The economic implications of the Dangote Refinery cannot be overstated. The project has already generated thousands of jobs during its construction phase and is expected to contribute significantly to Nigeria's gross domestic product (GDP) upon full operation.

Additionally, the refinery is poised to attract foreign investment, with potential partnerships and collaborations that could further strengthen Nigeria's position in the global energy market.

However, challenges and uncertainties remain. The oil and gas industry is inherently volatile, and geopolitical factors, market fluctuations, and regulatory issues could impact the refinery's success. Moreover, concerns regarding the environmental impact of large-scale refineries persist, necessitating a commitment to sustainable practices and stringent monitoring.

As the Dangote Refinery gears up for full-scale production, all eyes are on how this colossal project will shape the future of Africa's energy landscape. Will it pave the way for similar initiatives across the continent, or will it face challenges that hinder its potential impact?

Only time will tell, but for now, the commencement of fuel production at the Dangote Refinery stands as a symbol of progress and a beacon of hope for a more self-reliant and economically robust Africa.

In the annals of Nigeria's economic history, the arrival of the first crude shipment at the $20 billion Dangote Refinery is nothing short of a watershed moment. As one of the largest single-train refineries in the world, this behemoth facility is poised to reshape the dynamics of the Nigerian market and send ripples throughout the global oil industry.

For far too long, Nigeria, despite being an oil-rich nation, has been shackled by the chains of dependency on imported refined petroleum products. The Dangote Refinery promises to break these chains, heralding a new era of self-sufficiency and economic empowerment for Africa's most populous nation.

One cannot overstate the significance of this refinery in the context of Nigeria's economic landscape. The country has long been a net importer of refined petroleum products, bleeding billions of dollars annually to meet domestic demand. With the Dangote Refinery now gearing up for fuel production, Nigeria is on the brink of a paradigm shift – from a consumer to a producer on the global oil stage.

The economic implications of this transition are profound. Not only will the refinery reduce Nigeria's reliance on foreign imports, but it will also generate significant revenue through the export of refined products. The facility's annual refining capacity of 650,000 barrels per day positions Nigeria as a major player in the global refining market, potentially turning the tide in favour of a trade surplus.

Furthermore, the Dangote Refinery is a harbinger of job creation and skills development. The sheer scale of the facility demands a skilled workforce, providing employment opportunities for thousands of Nigerians. This influx of jobs not only alleviates unemployment pressures but also contributes to the overall improvement of living standards.

Critics may argue that such a massive investment in a single project is a risky venture, particularly considering the volatility of the global oil market. However, the visionary leadership of Mr. Aliko Dangote, Africa's richest man and the driving force behind the refinery, demonstrates a keen understanding of the cyclical nature of the oil industry. The facility's integrated design, which includes petrochemical and fertilizer units, ensures diversification and resilience against market fluctuations.

The Dangote Refinery is not just a business venture; it is a catalyst for industrialisation and economic transformation. Its completion represents a vote of confidence in Nigeria's economic potential and sends a powerful message to the international community that the nation is open for business on a grand scale.

As the refinery inches closer to full-scale production, it is imperative for the Nigerian government to capitalise on this momentum by implementing policies that foster a conducive business environment. The success of the Dangote Refinery should inspire a broader commitment to infrastructure development, regulatory reforms, and investment incentives to attract more private sector giants willing to contribute to Nigeria's economic renaissance.

The $20 billion Dangote Refinery is not just a facility; it is a symbol of Nigeria's determination to chart its own economic destiny. The market implications are vast, ranging from reduced dependence on foreign imports to the creation of a thriving domestic industry. As the first crude shipment heralds the beginning of production, Nigeria stands at the precipice of a new economic era, one where self-sufficiency and global competitiveness are no longer aspirations but tangible realities.

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All correspondence to Editor: **Enam Obiosio** (08058334933); D2-32 Atiku Abubakar Crescent, Cityview Estate, Dakwo, Abuja;
E-mail: info@fmfinsights.com; **Website:** www.fmfinsights.com