

TRANSPORT OUTLOOK



2024
HIGHLIGHTS
2025
OUTLOOK

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OUTLOOK FOR 2025

FOREWORD

The Nigerian Transport sector undeniably plays a critical role in national integration, urbanisation and revenue generation with attendant positive impact component of Nigeria's economic growth and development. Over the years the Nigerian government has made significant efforts to considerably bridge the gap of the infrastructural deficit and challenges in the sector. These efforts, like in previous years, culminated in notable infrastructural, legislative and judicial developments in the sector in 2024.

In the Maritime space, the Supreme Court delivered a landmark decision which settled the age-long controversy between the National Inland Waterways Authority and the Lagos State Waterways Authority, in respect of the proper authority to regulate and administer maritime operations within the inland waterways of Lagos State. Additionally, two Bills in the Maritime industry – the Nigerian Coast Guard Bill 2024 and the Nigerian Marine Corps Bill, 2024, sparked significant reactions amongst maritime stakeholders.

In the Aviation sector, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority issued the Nigerian Civil Aviation (Investigation and Incident) Regulations 2024 to enhance aviation safety through independent and transparent investigations of air accidents and incidents, aligned with international standards. Additionally, the Civil Aviation Order 2024 was made to adopt amendments to the International Civil Aviation Organization Standards and Recommended Practices. Significantly, the removal of Nigeria from the Aviation Working Group's watchlist underscores the Minister of Aviation's efforts to ensure the sector's compliance with international best practices.

In the road transport sector, the year 2024 witnessed crucial infrastructure projects including the commencement of construction of the Lagos-Calabar coastal road and the significant allocation of budgets by the Federal Government for the construction of vital roads and infrastructure across various parts of Nigeria.

In the rail sector, there were laudable events such as the inauguration of the recommencement of the \$3 billion Port Harcourt-Maiduguri Rail link Project and the Nigerian Railway Corporation's award of a three-year license to the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation to operate freight services in Nigeria.

This Wrap up sheds light on these significant events in the Nigerian transportation space. While we anticipate emerging developments in the transportation sector, it is hoped that the succeeding year will equally be momentous, and the transportation sector will continue to positively impact the growth and development of the Nigerian economy.



Dr. Echefu Ukattah
Partner, Olaniwun Ajayi LP



NOTABLE TRANSPORT CASES

NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY & 3 ORS V. LAGOS STATE WATERWAYS AUTHORITY & 5 ORS [2024] 14 NWLR (PT 1959) 435 (SC)



THE FACTS

The 5th and 6th Respondents – The Incorporated Trustees of Association of Tourist Boat Operators and Water Transporters of Nigeria and The Incorporated Trustees Dredgers Association of Nigeria, respectively, commenced an Interpleader action by an Originating Summons (“OS”) at the Federal High Court (“FHC”), against the 1st – 4th Appellants – the National Inland Waterways Authority (“NIWA”), the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (“NIMASSA”), the Hon. Minister of Mines and Steel Development, and the Hon. Minister for Transportation, respectively, and the 1st – 4th Respondents - the Lagos State Waterways Authority (“LASWA”), the Hon. Commissioner, Ministry of Waterfront Infrastructural Development (“Ministry of Waterfront”), the Hon. Attorney-General of Lagos State, the Governor of Lagos State, respectively, challenging the multiple levies and taxation imposed on their operations by the Federal and Lagos State Agencies.

The OS sought, in the main, the FHC’s direction on which Government Agency - NIWA, NIMASSA, LASWA or Ministry of Waterfront - was lawfully entitled to issue operational certificates, operational permits/licences, impose taxes, issue regulations, and administer their operations within the inland waterways in Lagos State. In response, the Appellants and the 1st – 4th Respondents filed their counter-affidavits in opposition to the OS.

The FHC delivered judgment in favour of the Appellants and directed the 5th and 6th Respondents to defer to the Appellants during their operations. Dissatisfied with the judgment, the 1st – 4th Respondents appealed to the Court of Appeal. The Court allowed the appeal and set aside the FHC’s judgment. Aggrieved by the Court of Appeal’s judgment, the Appellants appealed to the Supreme Court.



THE COURT'S DECISION

In allowing the appeal, the Supreme Court (“SC”) held that by sections 4(2), 4(4)(a) and 315 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended) (“the Constitution”), Items 36 and 64 of the Exclusive Legislative List on the Second Schedule, Part 1, of the Constitution, Sections 9(e), (f), (g), (h), (i), (j), (l), (n), (p), (s), (x), (z), 10, 11, 13, 23, 28 and 29 of the National Inland Waterways Authority Act (“NIWA Act”), and Item 5 of the Second Schedule to the NIWA Act, the National Assembly has the exclusive legislative authority to legislate on all navigable waterways, rivers with their tributaries, creeks, lakes, lagoons and intracoastal waterways in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the SC held that it is an encroachment on the legislative vires of the National Assembly for the Lagos State House of Assembly to make laws on the issuance of operational certificates, operational permit/licence, imposition of taxes, issuance of regulations, and administration of operations within Lagos State inland waterways.

The SC, taking cognisance of the fact that the National Assembly has enacted a law on the subject - the NIWA Act, held that the NIWA Act prevails over the law passed by the Lagos State House of Assembly – Lagos State Waterways Authority Law, 2008, and that the application of both on the subject amounts to multiple levies and taxation from both the Federal and Lagos State Agencies on the operations of the 5th and 6th Respondents. Therefore, the SC held that the NIWA Act and the LASWA Law cannot concurrently subsist and declared the LASWA Law null and void.



COMMENTS

The SC’s judgment is laudable because it settles the long-standing tussle between NIWA and LASWA in respect of which Agency is the lawful authority to regulate operations within Lagos State inland waterways.

It is an established principle of law that where the National Assembly has validly legislated on a matter, any State legislation on the same matter which is inconsistent with the Federal legislation will be void to the extent of the inconsistency. The apex Court’s judgment reinforces the doctrine of covering the field and resolves the ostensible conflict between the NIWA Act and the LASWA Law.

The Apex Court’s judgment is particularly significant because it curbs the issue of double taxation which operators within the inland waterways of Lagos State were subjected to by the former concurrent application of the NIWA Act and the LASWA Law. By the Supreme Court’s judgment, it is expected that there will be no conflict across Nigeria between State Governments and the Federal Government in respect of the lawful authority to administer operations within Nigeria’s inland waterways.

MV SAMSUN & 1 ORS V. IBG INVESTMENT COMPANY LIMITED & 2 ORS [2024] 8 NWLR (PT 1939) 35 (CA)



THE FACTS

In 2015, the 1st and 2nd Respondents commenced an action at the FHC, against the vessel MV Samsun (“1st Appellant”), owned by Samsun Maritime Ltd (“2nd Appellant”), seeking monetary damages and an order for the arrest of the 1st Appellant, for the alleged damage caused by the vessel, to the 1st and 2nd Respondents’ Jetty (“Initial Suit”). The Parties to the Initial Suit resolved the dispute amicably by Terms of Settlement dated 27.07.15 (“Terms of Settlement” or “Terms”) and the same was entered as consent judgment on 30.07.15 (“Consent Judgment”). Consequently, the Appellants paid the sum of US\$1.2 Million to the 1st and 2nd Respondents as full and final settlement of the dispute.

Thereafter, the 2nd Appellant initiated arbitration proceedings in London against Navig8 Inc., the Time Charterer of the vessel (“3rd Respondent”), seeking compensation for the settlement sum paid to the 1st and 2nd Respondents (“Initial Arbitration”). Subsequently, the 3rd Respondent also commenced arbitration proceedings in London against Palmex Agencies Nigeria Limited, the Sub-charterer of the vessel, to defray potential costs that might be awarded by the Arbitral Tribunal against the 3rd Respondent in the Initial Arbitration.

Following the above, the 1st and 2nd Respondents commenced an action by an Originating Summons at the FHC, against the Appellants and the 3rd Respondent seeking, in the main, a declaration that the Terms of Settlement between the 1st and 2nd Respondents and the 1st Appellant are binding on all the parties to the Terms of Settlement and their privies, and that by the provisions of the Terms of Settlement, the parties are estopped from re-litigation or arbitration of the subject matter of the Terms.

The Appellants filed a counter affidavit and a notice of preliminary objection, and the 1st and 2nd Respondents filed a counter affidavit in opposing the Appellants' notice of preliminary objection. The 3rd Respondent also filed a notice of preliminary objection and in response, the 1st and 2nd Respondents filed a counter affidavit in opposition.

The FHC dismissed the preliminary objections and held that the Consent Judgment was valid and binding on the parties and their privies and that the Appellants ought to have sought the leave of the court to appeal the Consent Judgment, rather than commencing an arbitration proceeding in London. Dissatisfied with the FHC's judgment, the Appellants appealed to the CA.



THE COURT'S DECISION

The CA in upholding the FHC's judgment addressed the jurisdictional issue raised by the Appellants at the FHC. In respect of the issue, the CA determined that by Section 251(1) (g) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) (1999 Constitution) and Section 1 of the Admiralty Jurisdiction Act, 1991 ("AJA"), the FHC is vested with the exclusive jurisdiction to hear and determine civil causes and matters arising from its admiralty jurisdiction, including maritime claims. The CA determined that the Initial Suit culminating in the Terms of Settlement, the suit at the lower court, and the arbitral proceedings were all predicated on maritime claims pursuant to sections 2(2)(c) and 3(a)(b)(f) and of the AJA 1991. Thus, the CA held that the FHC had the requisite jurisdiction to hear and determine the suit before it.

Furthermore, the CA in evaluating the Terms of Settlement and the Consent Judgment held that their applicability and enforcement was not limited to the named parties – 1st and 2nd Respondents and the Appellants - but extended to their privies – the Charterers and Sub-charterers of the vessel. The CA's position was that the privies were those who may be interested in the outcome of the suit and those who ought to have been made parties to the suit but were not joined. Thus, the CA determined that the 3rd Respondent and the Sub-charterer were privies under the Terms and were persons interested in the outcome of the suit at the FHC. Hence, the CA held that the Terms of Settlement and the Consent Judgment applied to the 3rd Respondent and the Sub-charterer.

Importantly, the Court of Appeal held that the subject matter of the arbitration proceedings and the Initial Suit was the same. Thus, the Appellants were estopped by the doctrine of res judicata from re-litigating the subject matter which had already been resolved in the Initial Suit.



COMMENTS

The CA's judgment reinforces the exclusive Admiralty Jurisdiction of the FHC provided in section 251 (1) (g) of the Constitution and Section 1 of the AJA and the principle of law that decisions of Courts are binding on privies of the named parties to a suit. This underscores the FHC's specialised role in the determination of maritime claims. Additionally, the decision upholds the settled principle of judicial finality and the doctrine of res judicata. The decision promotes the integrity of the Nigerian judicial system by ensuring that parties, in any guise, do not re-litigate settled/determined maritime claims.

PETROLEX OIL & GAS LIMITED v. ENERGY LINK INFRASTRUCTURE LTD, SUIT NO FHC/L/CP/1083/2023



THE FACTS

Petrolex Oil & Gas Limited (the "Plaintiff") entered a charterparty agreement with Energy Link Infrastructure Limited ("the Defendant") on June 1, 2022, for the hire of eight vessels owned by the Plaintiff. The agreement stipulated a daily hire rate of \$3,000 per vessel for crude transportation at the Alakiri/Bonny Intersection in Rivers State.

The Plaintiff delivered the vessels and fulfilled its obligations under the agreement, but the Defendant failed to pay the accrued hire as required. On October 11, 2022, the Plaintiff issued a Default Notice to the Defendant, notifying it of the breaches and the Plaintiff's intention to exercise its rights under the agreement. Following continued non-compliance, the Plaintiff terminated the charterparty on the same date through a Termination Notice and demanded the removal of the Defendant's cargo to allow for the redelivery of the vessels.

Despite further demands made in letters dated November 22, 2024, and January 24, 2023, the Defendant neither released the vessels nor paid the outstanding hire costs. As a result, the Plaintiff initiated legal proceedings, claiming \$4,590,000 as the total cost of hire for the period during which the Defendant failed to redeliver the vessels. The Defendant responded by filing a Motion on Notice, seeking a stay of proceedings pending arbitration based on the arbitration clause in the charterparty.

In opposing the Application, the Plaintiff contended that there was no dispute to be referred to arbitration. This was on the basis that the Defendant did not dispute the Default Notice, the Termination Notice, and the Demand Letters. The Plaintiff's submissions were based on the Supreme Court's decision in Sakamori Construction (Nig) Ltd v. Lagos State Water Corporation [2022] 5 NWLR (Pt. 1823) 90 at 395-396 paras D-H, in which the apex Court held that a matter can only be referred to arbitration where a dispute exists between the parties.



THE COURT'S DECISION

The Federal High Court considered the arbitration clause in the Charterparty and its significance as an alternative means of dispute resolution and held that the parties can only resort to arbitration if there is a real dispute to be referred to arbitration.

The Court agreed with the submissions of the Plaintiff and relied on the Sakamori case and UBA Plc v Trident Consultant Ltd where the Supreme Court held that an arbitration clause is activated by the dispute between the parties to the arbitration agreement and it is the said dispute that should be submitted to arbitration.

The Court found that the Defendant had admitted in its affidavit in support of the Application the obligation – under the Charterparty, to pay the Plaintiff for holding on to the Vessels beyond the redelivery date and that the Defendant failed to produce any documentary evidence to demonstrate that there existed a dispute over the debt owed to the Plaintiff under the Charterparty. On this basis, the Federal High Court held that there was no dispute between the parties to warrant referring the parties to arbitration.



COMMENTS

The Ruling of the Federal High Court is laudable as it reinforces the salient principle established in the Sakamori case regarding the activation of an arbitration clause in contracts. The implication of the Ruling in the Petrolex case is that, following the principles established in the Sakamori case, defendants in maritime cases will err on the side of caution before filing applications for stay of proceedings pending arbitration as it is beyond cavil that an arbitration clause in a maritime contract can only be activated where a real dispute exists between parties to the maritime contract.

BARR. IGWE ONYESOM UGOCHUKWU v. FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY COMMISSION (FRSC) AND 2 ORS- APPEAL NO- CA/ABJ/CV/243/2022 (UNREPORTED)



THE FACTS

In 2020, the Appellant – Barr Igwe Onyesom Ugochukwu, commenced an Originating Summons (OS) action at the Federal High Court (FHC), against the 1st Respondent – The Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC), the 2nd Respondent – Dr Lawal Akeem, and the 3rd Respondent – Dr Isaac Nwokeukwu, alleging that the officers of the 1st Respondent unlawfully stopped his vehicle at the Shehu Shagari Way in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, harassed him in a bid to extort him, impounded his vehicle and unjustly issued him a fine for a traffic light violation.

Furthermore, the Appellant was mandated by the officers of the 1st Respondent to undergo a medical evaluation by the 2nd and 3rd Respondents to secure the release of his vehicle. The 1st Respondent's defence at the trial court was that pursuant to the FRSC Act 2007, it was legally justified to fine the Appellant for committing a traffic offence, and that it lawfully required the Appellant to undergo medical evaluation to ensure that the Appellant was fit to be a motorised road user.

The main issue before the trial court was whether the FRSC was empowered to operate on all public roads - including internal roads in the FCT. The trial court ruled in favour of the Respondents and held that the 1st Respondent could operate on all public roads including internal roads like the Shehu Shagari Way, and that the Appellant committed a traffic offence under the FRSC Act. Dissatisfied with the trial court's judgment, the Appellant commenced an appeal at the Court of Appeal.



THE COURT'S DECISION

The Court of Appeal (CA) in dismissing the Appeal held that by Section 4(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as Amended) (1999 Constitution), the National Assembly is vested with the legislative powers of the Federal Government, and that by Section 4(2) of the 1999 Constitution, the National Assembly is empowered to make laws on any matter included in the Exclusive Legislative List set out in Part 1 of the Second Schedule to the 1999 Constitution. Additionally, the CAA held that by Item 63 of the Exclusive Legislative List, traffic on Federal Trunk Roads is within the Federal Legislative competence and that the Appellant had failed to prove that the Shehu Shagari Way was not a Federal trunk road or a road belonging to the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Furthermore, the CA found that the National Assembly in exercise of its power under Section 4(1) and (2) of the 1999 Constitution and Item 63 of the Exclusive Legislative list enacted the FRSC Act which empowers the 1st Respondent to make laws to regulate traffic on Federal Roads – including the power to create criminal offences and prescribe punishment and payment of penalties. The COA additionally held that by the combined provisions of Section 299 of the 1999 Constitution and Section 13(1) of the FCT Act, the FRSC Act is applicable to the FCT and empowers the 1st Respondent to operate on all public roads including internal roads like the Shehu Shagari Way in the FCT.

Importantly, the CA in its judgment distinguished its decision in *FRSC v. Obono Obla* [2010] 15 NWLR Part 1217 at Page 617 (CA) where it held that the jurisdiction of the FRSC was restricted to operations on Federal Trunk Roads or Highways belonging to the Federal Government of Nigeria and not roads, streets or public highways – internal roads, which are neither Federal Trunk Roads nor Federal Highways. The CA clarified that the said decision cannot apply to roads in the FCT because roads in the FCT belong to the Federal Government and that the decision in *FRSC v Obono Obla* will only apply to roads in the States of the Federation with its own legislative powers and not the FCT whose legislative powers are vested constitutionally in the National Assembly pursuant to Section 299(a) of the 1999 Constitution.



COMMENTS

The CA's judgment is laudable because it elucidates the jurisdiction of the FRSC as it relates to the roads in the FCT. By Section 299(a) of the 1999 Constitution, it is apparent that the National Assembly is conferred with the powers to make laws for the FCT. Hence, by the National Assembly's enactment of the FRSC Act - which establishes the FRSC, the FRSC is empowered to carry out its operations in roads within the FCT.

In addition, the CA's judgment is important because it highlights the uniqueness of the legislative status of the FCT. Unlike the other 36 States of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the FCT does not have a State House of Assembly, and its legislative authority is solely vested in the National Assembly. The decision brings regulatory clarity to the FCT road users, on the FRSC's jurisdiction in internal roads within the FCT and will considerably aid the FRSC in maintaining safety and order within the FCT roads.

RIVERS DRIVERS TRANSPORT CO-OPERATIVE UNION LIMITED & 2 ORS V NATIONAL UNION OF ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS (NURTW) ELELENWO BRANCH & 6 ORS - NICN/PHC/153/2022 (UNREPORTED)



THE FACTS

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Claimants - Rivers Drivers Transport Co-operative Union Limited, Mr. Kelvin Nwomelem, and Mr. Friday Otokoro respectively, (together the Claimants) commenced an Originating Summons (OS) action against the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th Defendants – National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) Elenlenwo Branch, Akelslau Drivers Association Elenlenwo Unit, Mr. Wodi Chizim Eliot, Mr. Onyinye Samue Amadi, Mr. Wilcot Henry China, Mr. Nyehuchi Amadi, and HRH Eze Sunny Welichukwu respectively, (together the Defendants) seeking in the main, a declaration that the Claimants and its members have the right(s) to form their own association and have the right to operate freely without the interference of the Defendants.

The Defendants filed a Notice of Preliminary Objection (NPO) challenging the jurisdiction of the National Industrial Court (NIC) to entertain the Claimants' action on the grounds that the Claimants were members of an Association/Co-operative Society and lacked the locus standi to commence the action at the NIC.



THE COURT'S DECISION

The National Industrial Court (**NIC**) in dismissing the OS action held that by Section 254C of the Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 as amended) (**1999 Constitution**), the NIC was devoid of the jurisdiction to entertain matters relating to Rivers Drivers Transport Co-operative Union Limited – it being a Co-operative Society/Association.

The NIC held that it has jurisdiction over Trade Union matters and found that for a Trade Union to qualify and benefit from its jurisdiction, it had to be duly registered under the Trade Union Act. Relatedly, the NIC held that the National Union of Road Transport Workers and its members were a duly registered Trade Union under the Trade Union Act, and the Rivers Drivers Transport Co-operative Union Limited, and its members were deemed not to be a registered Trade Union under the Trade Union Act.

Consequently, the NIC held that the Claimants - as a Co-operative Society/Association, were not contemplated to fall within the NIC's jurisdiction under Section 254C of the 1999 Constitution. Although the NIC held that it lacked the jurisdiction to entertain the Claimants' action, it is vital to state that the Court additionally held that despite the absence of Co-operative Societies/Associations in Section 254C of the 1999 Constitution, nothing precludes the right of the Claimants to commence an action before the NIC in cases of intra dispute i.e. non-payment of salaries to members of the Claimants.



COMMENTS

The NIC's decision underscores the importance of jurisdiction as a threshold matter in actions before a court and buttresses the provisions of Section 254C of the 1999 Constitution which excludes Co-operative Societies or Associations from the NIC's jurisdictional ambit.

Additionally, the judgment reinforces the distinction between trade unions and co-operative societies in the transport sector by emphasising that only registered trade unions - under the Trade Union Act, can commence actions at the NIC – save for labour related matters concerning its members.

It is hoped that the decision will considerably ensure that Co-operative Societies/Associations – in the transport sector, will institute their actions at the appropriate court with the requisite jurisdiction to entertain their grievances.



LEGISLATIVE TRACKER

In 2024, the Nigerian Transportation Industry witnessed critical legislative and regulatory efforts geared at positively impacting the sector. Particularly, two Bills in the Maritime sector – the Nigerian Coast Guard Bill, 2024, and the Nigerian Corps Bill, 2024, were introduced which have elicited varied reactions amongst maritime stakeholders. In the aviation sector, the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (“NCAA”), pursuant to the powers vested in the Director General of Civil Aviation, by Section 31(5) of the Civil Aviation Act 2022, issued the Civil Aviation Order 2024. Additionally, the Director General of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau, in exercise of the powers conferred by Sections 5(b), 39(1), and 60 of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (Establishment) Act 2022, enacted the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2024 to enhance operations in the aviation sector. These are examined below.

CIVIL AVIATION ORDER, 2024 - NCAA/CAO/2024/001

The Civil Aviation Order 2024 – NCAA/CAO/2024/001 (the “Order”) was issued to adopt the amendments to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Standards and Recommended Practices (“SARP”) - in the Annexures to the ICAO Convention on International Civil Aviation 1944, which are yet to be contained in the Nigerian Civil Aviation Regulations.

The Order aims to enhance aviation safety by implementing stricter protocols on aircraft maintenance, crew training, and emergency procedures and to (a) enable the implementation of Nigeria’s international obligations to facilitate the provision of advance passenger information relating to passengers and crew members of an aircraft to enhance border controls; (b) share advanced passenger information with other States to identify persons who may pose a security risk; and (c) for any other incidental and connected purposes.

In addition, the Order requires compliance with comprehensive passenger screening, baggage inspection, and airport security measures to improve security in aviation operations. Importantly, the Order has provisions to (a) streamline air traffic management systems to improve efficiency and minimise delays; and (b) protect passenger rights, addressing issues such as compensation for delays, baggage handling, and provisions for passengers with disabilities.



Furthermore, the Order mandates aircraft operators operating to and from Nigeria to submit Advanced Passenger Information (“API”) data to the competent authority – the Nigerian Immigration Service (“NIS”), one hour before departure and again after flight closure, including API data for crew members. Relatedly, the aircraft operator is mandated to transmit Passenger Name Record (“PNR”) data of passengers to the NIS at three stages: (a) 24 hours before departure; (b) one hour before departure; and (c) immediately after flight closure.

Importantly, under the Order, passengers and crew members have the right to the protection of their personal data, access, rectification, removal, restriction, compensation and judicial redress in accordance with Nigerian privacy and data protection laws. The Order underscores Nigeria's alignment with international standards and best practices in the aviation sector.

THE NIGERIAN COAST GUARD BILL, 2024

The Nigerian Coast Guard Bill, 2024 seeks to establish the Nigerian Marine Corps with the purpose of securing Nigeria's maritime zones, protecting maritime and other national interests within Nigeria's maritime zones, and maintaining a state of readiness to function as a specialised service in the Nigerian Navy in times of war. The Bill, which passed its second reading before the Nigerian Senate on 15 October 2024 and had a public hearing on its provisions envisages that the Nigerian Marine Corps shall function as a service within the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, except during times of war when it will operate as a service in the Nigerian Navy. The Nigerian Coast Guard is envisioned to serve as both an enforcement agency and a branch of the Nigerian Armed Forces.

Under the proposed framework, it is envisaged that the duties of the Nigerian Coast Guard will include, amongst others, administering laws promulgating and enforcing regulations for the preservation of lives and properties within the maritime zones of Nigeria, enforce or provide assistance in the enforcement of all relevant Federal laws within the maritime zones of Nigeria, ensure safety within the maritime zones of Nigeria by establishing, managing, and coordinating aids for maritime navigation and rescue facilities, engage in maritime air surveillance or interdiction to enforce or assist in the enforcement of Nigerian laws, and take measures as are necessary to prevent and control marine pollution, and other elements that pose a risk to human and marine lives and businesses.

To oversee the activities of the Nigerian Coast Guard, the Bill proposes the establishment of a Coast Guard Board which will comprise of,— amongst others, the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy or his/her representative, the Minister of Interior or his/her representative, the Minister of Defence or his/her representative, representatives from the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (“NIMASA”), Nigerian Shippers’ Board, Nigerian Inland Waterways Authority, Nigerian Customs, a legal practitioner appointed by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy – on recommendation of the Nigerian Bar Association, and six individuals from each of Nigeria’s geopolitical zones. The Board is envisaged to be chaired by a retired or serving naval officer, and the tenure of office as a Board member is contemplated to be for a four-year term with the option of a single re-appointment for another term of four years.

Funding for the Nigerian Coast Guard is expected to consist of, amongst others, monies appropriated by the National Assembly, contributions of 2% from NIMASA, 1% from the Nigerian Port Authority (NPA), gifts, and grants.

The Bill has significantly sparked criticism for potentially duplicating the functions of the Nigerian Navy, which already performs many of the roles envisioned for the Nigerian Coast Guard. Critics argue that this overlap could lead to inefficiencies, jurisdictional disputes, and unnecessary complications in Nigeria’s maritime security architecture.

THE NIGERIAN MARINE CORPS BILL 2024

The Nigerian Marine Corps Bill, 2024 seeks to establish the Nigerian Marine Corps to promote maritime security and for related matters. The Bill which passed its second reading before the House of Representatives on 30 November 2023 and had a public hearing on its provisions on 18 November 2024, seeks to establish the Nigerian Marine Corps (a) to provide clear direction and leadership in the establishment of a platform for national maritime security; (b) to encourage the development of expertise in local and global maritime security; (c) to promote awareness of marine information and communication technologies for the Nigerian maritime industry; (d) to provide security information and mechanism to protect all national maritime and maritime related infrastructures within Nigeria’s territorial waters and coastal land; and (e) to regulate corporate bodies or persons engaged in the provision of maritime security services within Nigeria’s territorial waters and coastal land.

The Bill seeks to apply to any person, ship, aircraft, or any other craft or object in the inland, territorial waters and coastal land of Nigeria and the functions of the proposed Nigerian Marine Corps includes provision of maritime security, ensuring the continuation and coordination of the implementation of the Chapter XI-2 of SOLAS International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code of the International Maritime Organisation (“IMO”) in collaboration with other regulatory and security agencies of Government in the maritime sector, provision of security for national maritime infrastructure, conducting air and coastal surveillance, interfacing with the operations and the activities of security organs of State in the discharge of its functions, inspection, investigation and prevention of marine pollution, monitoring, regulating and co-ordinate maritime related communication between persons, objects or craft within Nigerian maritime environment, initiating or assisting in search and rescue operations of all agencies and organisations, in the maritime sector, and providing security information on oil and gas pipelines, rigs, platforms and all other established or anchored under water, over ground or any other similar or related forms of installation.

CIVIL AVIATION (INVESTIGATION OF AIR ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT) REGULATIONS 2024

On 27 November 2024, the Director General of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau enacted the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2024 (the “**Regulations**”). The Regulations provide a framework to govern the investigation of air accidents and incidents within Nigeria’s airspace or involving Nigerian-registered aircraft abroad and is applicable to:

A

any accident or incident involving civil manned aircraft or remotely piloted aircraft (“**RPA**”) arising out of or in the course of air navigation and either occurring in or over Nigeria or occurring to Nigerian registered aircraft or RPA elsewhere and/or where the interest of Nigeria is involved; and

B

any accident or incident involving state and civil aircraft or RPA either occurring in or over Nigeria.

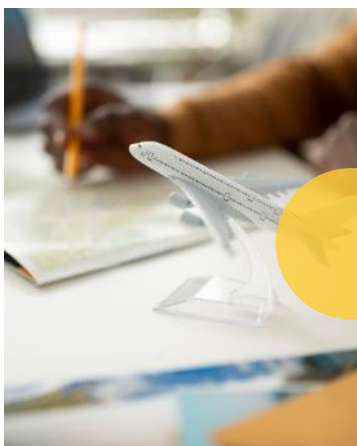
The primary objective of the Regulations is to enhance aviation safety through independent and transparent investigations, aligned with international standards such as, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (“**ICAO**”) Annex 13 (“**Annex 13**”). The investigations under the Regulations focus solely on the prevention of future accidents and incidents rather than apportioning blame and liability.

Some key provisions include:



Independence of Investigations (Regulation 3.3)

Under the Regulations, the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (“**NSIB**”) has the independence to conduct investigations of air accidents and incidents. The NSIB has unrestricted power over its conduct. However, the exercise of the power must be consistent with the National Safety Investigation Bureau (Establishment) Act (“**NSIB Act**”) and in line with Annex 13.



Mandatory Reporting (Regulation 4.1):

Pursuant to the Regulations, accidents and serious incidents must be promptly reported to the NSIB to facilitate timely investigations and preserve evidence. The contact information of the NSIB is published on its website, www.nsib.gov.ng. The Regulations also provide for an emergency hotline, 0807 709 0908 and 0807 709 0909, NSIB NIGERIA App. Additionally, further detailed information on any accident and incident can be submitted to the NSIB using the Accident/Incident Reporting Form (NSIB Form 001) within 72 hours from the time of the occurrence.



Protection of Accident and Incident Investigation Records (Regulation 5.14):

Sensitive information, including flight recordings, medical records of persons involved in an accident or incident, and names of victims, are protected and shall not be disclosed to the public for purposes other than the investigation of accidents and incidents unless the NSIB determines in accordance with the NSIB Act and subject to Appendix 2 to Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation 1944 and Section 5.14(1)(c) of the Regulations, that the disclosure or use outweighs the likely adverse domestic and international impact that such action may have on that, or any future investigations.



Coordination with Judicial Panel/Tribunal of Inquiry (Regulation 5.12):

This permits the Director General of the NSIB to allow coordination between the Investigator-in-Charge of the accident and incident and judicial authorities. Under the Regulations, any investigation conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Regulations shall be separate from any judicial or administrative proceeding to apportion blame or liability.



State Participation in Investigations (Regulation 5.18):

By the Regulations, where investigation of an accident or serious incident is being carried out by an Investigator-in-Charge – defined by the Regulations to mean a person charged with the responsibility for the organisation, conduct and control of an investigation based on his/her qualifications, certain States – the Regulations define a State to mean a contracting State of the ICAO, are entitled to each appoint an accredited representative to participate in the investigation. The States for the purpose of Regulation 5.18 includes the State of Registry - the State on whose register the aircraft is entered, the State of Design - the State having jurisdiction over the organisation responsible for the type design, the State of Manufacture - the State having jurisdiction over the organisation responsible for the final assembly of the aircraft, engine or propeller, and any State which has, on request, furnished information, facilities or experts to the NSIB in connection with the accident or incident in investigation.



Preparation of Final Report and Public Publication (Regulation 6.1 & 6.5):

By Regulation 6.1, upon completion of an investigation into an accident and incident, the Investigator-in-Charge is mandated to promptly prepare a Final Report of the investigation. Additionally, in the interest of accident prevention, under Regulation 6.5, it is mandatory for the Final Report to be promptly made publicly available and if possible, within 12 months of the date of the occurrence - publication on the NSIB website suffices.



Implementation of Safety Recommendations (Regulation 6.8):

During any stage of investigation of an accident or incident, the NSIB is mandated to share any preventive action necessary to be taken promptly to enhance aviation safety in a data transmittal correspondence, to the appropriate authorities, including those in other States.

The Regulations are crucial to the investigation of air accidents or incidents within Nigeria's airspace or involving Nigerian-registered aircraft abroad. This underscores the NCAA's aim to further strengthen Nigeria's adherence to global aviation safety protocols and investigation standards.

THE AMENDMENTS TO THE MARITIME LABOUR CONVENTION 2006

The Maritime Labour Convention 2006 (as amended) (**MLC**) was established by the International Labour Organisation (**ILO**) to establish a single, coherent instrument encompassing contemporary standards of existing international maritime labour conventions, recommendations, and fundamental principles in other international labour conventions including – but not limited to, the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea, 1974, the Convention on the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea, 1972, as amended, the seafarer training and competency requirements in the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978, as amended, the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29), and the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87).

The MLC is an international treaty which protects seafarers' rights, it establishes minimum working and living standards for seafarers and has been ratified by over 100 countries including Nigeria. At the 110th session of the International Labour Conference, held from 27 May 2022 to 11 June 2022, the plenary session approved additional amendments to the MLC and these 2022 amendments came into effect on 24 December 2024.

The Key amendments include:

Recruitment and Placement (Regulation 1.4: Standard A1.4)



Paragraph 5(c)(vi) of Standard A1.4 under Regulation 1.4 of the MLC provides for Private Recruitment and Placement Services (PRPS) to establish a system of protection, by way of insurance or an equivalent appropriate measure, to compensate seafarers for monetary loss that they may incur from a PRPS' or shipowners' failure to meet their obligations to the seafarers under the seafarers' employment agreement. The said paragraph has been slightly revised to require the PRPS and shipowners to inform the seafarers of the system of protection prior to or in the process of their engagement with the seafarers.

Repatriation (Regulation 2.5: Standard A2.5.1)



Standard A2.5.1 under Regulation 2.5 of the MLC deals with seafarers' entitlement to repatriation. The new amendment introduces a new paragraph to Standard A2.5.1 which provides that Member States to the convention shall facilitate the prompt repatriation of seafarers inclusive of when the seafarers are deemed abandoned. Additionally, by the amendment Port States, Flag State, and labour supplying States are mandated to cooperate to ensure that seafarers engaged to replace seafarers which have been abandoned in their territory or on a ship flying their flag, are accorded their rights and entitlements under the MLC.



Accommodation and Recreational Facilities (Regulations 3.1: Standard A3.1)



Paragraph 17 of Standard A3.1 under Regulation 3.1 of the MLC mandates the provision of appropriate seafarers' recreational facilities, amenities, and services to meet the special needs of seafarers who must live and work on ships, on board of ships for the benefit of all seafarers. The new amendment includes services in Standard A3.1 to include social connectivity.

Food and Catering (Regulation 3.2: Standard A3.2)



Paragraph 2(a) of Standard A3.2 under Regulation 3.2 of the MLC requires food and water supplies to be considered based on the number of seafarers on board, their religious requirements and cultural practices, and the duration and nature of the voyage. The MLC also required the food and catering to be suitable in respect of quantity, nutritional value, quality and variety. The amendment to the MLC expands the said provision by specifying that the drinking water shall be made available to seafarers free of charge during the period of their engagement.



Medical Care on Board Ship and Ashore (Regulation 4.1: Standard A4.1; Guideline B4.1.3)

Regulation 4.1 of the MLC provides for the general health protection, medical care, welfare, and social security protection of seafarers. The new amendment introduces new provisions to Regulation 4.1 by inserting new paragraphs in Standard A4.1 by providing that each Member State to the convention shall ensure prompt disembarkation of seafarers in need of immediate medical care from ships in its territory and access to medical facilities ashore for the provision of appropriate treatment.

Furthermore, where a seafarer has died during a ship's voyage, the Member State is mandated to facilitate the repatriation of the body or ashes by the shipowner according to the seafarer's wishes or their next of kin in whose territory the death has occurred or, where the death has occurred on the high seas, into whose territorial waters the ship next enters,

Relatedly, Guideline B4.1.3 under Regulation 4.1 introduces new provisions that require Member States to ensure that seafarers are not prevented from disembarking for public health reasons and that they are able to replenish ships' stores, fuel, water, food, and supplies. Additionally, seafarers are considered to be in need of immediate medical care in the following circumstances – amongst others, any serious injury or disease, any injury or disease which might lead to temporary or permanent disability; any communicable disease which poses a risk of transmission to other members of the crew, any injury involving broken bones, severe bleeding, broken or inflamed teeth or severe burns.



Health and Safety Protection and Accident Prevention (Regulation 4.3: Standard A4.3; Guideline B4.3.5)

Regulation 4.3 provides for the health and safety protection and accident prevention of seafarers and ensures that seafarers' work environment on board ships promote occupational safety and health. A new provision was introduced into the MLC by paragraph 5(a) of Standard A4.3 which mandates Member States to the convention to ensure that all deaths of seafarers employed, engaged or working on board ships that fly its flag are adequately investigated and recorded, and reported on an annual basis to the Director-General of the International Labour Office to be published in a global register.

Further, Guideline B4.3.5 under Regulation 4.3 introduces paragraphs 4 and 5 to the said Guideline which requires the fatality data to be reported under paragraph 5(a) of Standard A4.3 to be in the format and classification specified by the International Labour Office. Additionally, the fatality data should include, but not be limited to, information on the type (classification) of death, ship type and gross tonnage, location of fatality (at sea, in port, at anchorage), and seafarer's sex, age, occupational position and department.

The amendments to the MLC will considerably improve the general wellbeing of seafarers. It is vital for Nigerian maritime stakeholders - Nigeria being a member state to the convention, to bring themselves up to speed with the revised MLC. This will ensure that Nigeria remains compliant with international best standards of shipping as it relates to the welfare of seafarers.



MARITIME DEVELOPMENTS

NIMASA, MWUN, AND ITF-UK PARTNERSHIP FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT



In February 2024, The International Transport Workers' Federation UK (ITF UK) approved a grant to Nigeria through the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria ("MWUN") to partly fund the construction of a Seafarers Recreation Centre in partnership with the NIMASA in February 2024. The grant was approved after the ITF-UK's meticulous three-year assessment of the Nigerian maritime industry's suitability for the project.

Seafarers are fundamental contributors to the maritime industry and considering the arduous nature of seafaring, it is commendable that there is a solid investment into their social integration after seafaring activities. This major infrastructural development underscores the MWUN and NIMASA's deep commitment to the wellbeing of seafarers in Nigeria.

NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL BILL PASSES SECOND READING



In February 2024, the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) "Nigerian Shipping and Port Economic Agency Bill 2023" passed its second reading at the House of Representatives. The Bill seeks to repeal the Nigerian Shippers' Council Act, and its objective is to create an effective and harmonised regulatory regime for the Nigerian Ports after the concession of the Ports. Additionally, the Bill is expected to extend to stakeholders in Nigerian Ports, control of tariffs, rates, charges, and other related economic services.

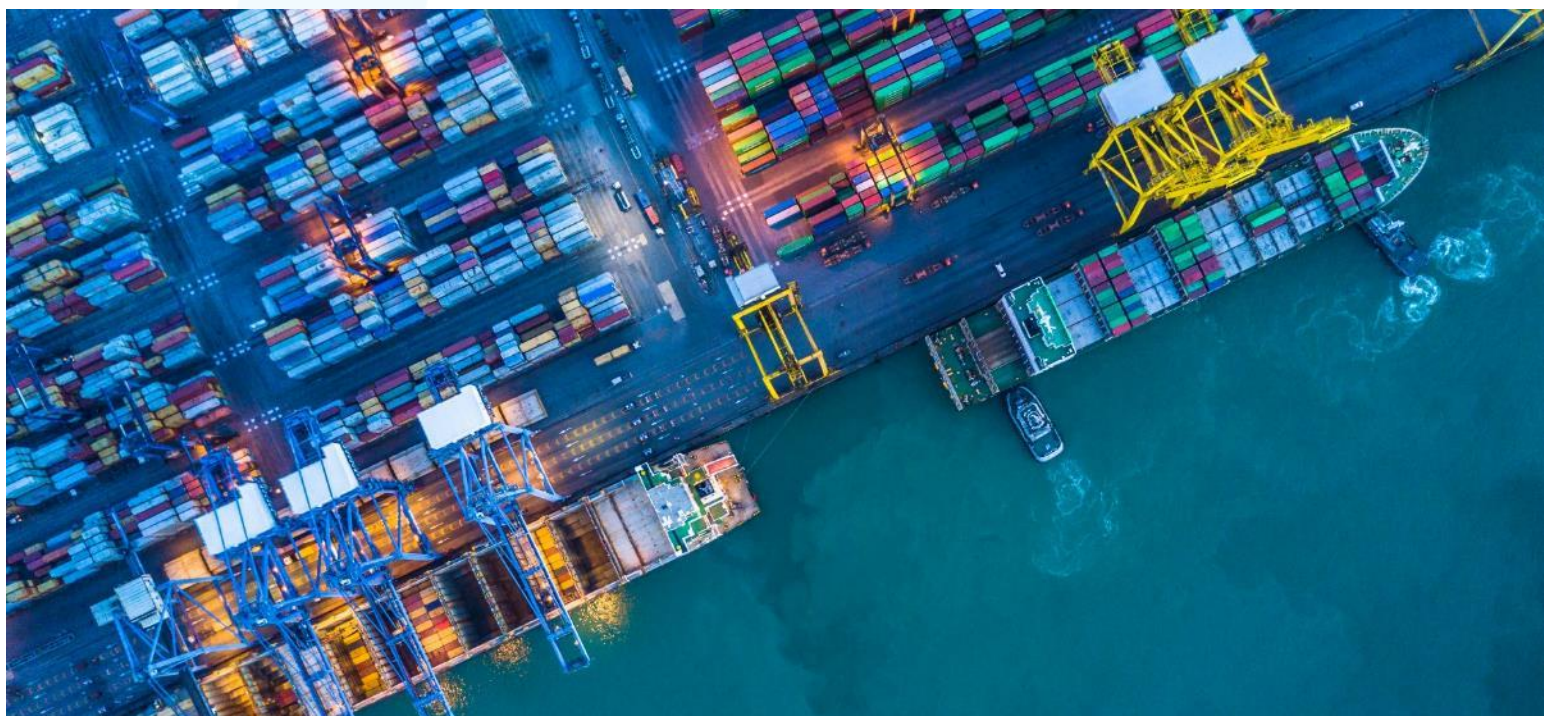
It is anticipated that the Bill – if enacted as law, will enable the Commission to discharge its mandate as the Port Economic Regulator in the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy and harmonise all the NSC existing regulations in the Nigeria Shipping and Port Economic Regulatory Agency Bill 2023.

NIMASA'S MOU ON VHF DATA EXCHANGE SYSTEM



In March 2024, the NIMASA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) with Sternula Denmark on a full scale Very High Frequency (VHF) Data Exchange System (“VDES”). The partnership is aimed at enhancing vessel to vessel/land communication in Nigeria and enhancing safety and security of navigation in Nigerian waters. This development will enable timeous accessibility to information in seaborne transport and considerably result in seamless communication between shores and ships, thereby improving safety of lives at sea.

This highlights NIMASA’s efforts to digitalise the procedure for maritime activities and further provide alternate communication channels for vessels in line with provisions of the MO and the International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (“IALA”).



NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY SECURES \$700 MILLION FOR LAGOS PORTS REHABILITATION



In March 2024, further to the NPA’s port rehabilitation plan, in 2024, the NPA secured a facility of \$700 Million from Citibank Nigeria and funded by the UK Export Finance (“UKEF”) for the revitalisation of the Apapa and Tincan Ports in Lagos. The loan fund will be directed to the installation of automation technologies, including the Port Community System, to enhance efficiency and revenue generation. This highlights the NPA’s efforts to enhance the physical infrastructure of Nigerian ports to bring about port efficiency, increased revenue, and improve trade facilitation.

NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY'S \$1.1 BILLION PORT REHABILITATION PLAN



In March 2024, the NPA announced its \$1.1 billion port rehabilitation plan for Apapa, Tincan Island, Apapa, Rivers, Onne, Warri and Calabar Port complexes. The NPA's aim is to enhance the physical infrastructure of the ports to accommodate vessels of various sizes and increase the draft the quay side with the objective of achieving draft depths of up to 14 meters. The NPA is also working on alternative initiatives, including implementing barges and expanding rail infrastructure, to curb inefficiencies associated with road-dependent cargo evacuation in the ports. Further, the NPA automated its collection system and is collaborating with the International Maritime Organization to introduce a state-of-the-art port community system, poised to optimise cargo clearance processes.

This underscores the NPA's intent to enhance the productivity of Nigerian Ports and its goal to become the maritime logistics hub for sustainable port services in Africa.



THE APPOINTMENT OF A NEW NIMASA DIRECTOR-GENERAL



In March 2024, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR appointed Dr. Dayo Mobereola as the Director-General of NIMASA for a renewable term of four years. The Director-General holds a PhD and an M.S.C in Transport Economics from the University of Wales, United Kingdom. He is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Transport, England, and a fellow of the same institute in Nigeria. Additionally, he was the Managing Director of Lagos Metropolitan Area Transport Authority ("LAMATA") from 2003 – 2015 and the Commissioner for Transportation in Lagos State from 2015 – 2016. Giving the Director-General's robust background, it is anticipated that under his leadership, the NIMASA will provide trailblazing standards of maritime safety administration, maritime labour regulation, marine pollution prevention and control, search and rescue, cabotage enforcement, shipping development and ship registration.

The Director-General aims to build a purpose driven organisation whilst prioritising safety, security, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. Following the appointment, the Director-General emphasised the need to foster innovation and embrace technological advancements to increase the efficiency, competitiveness, and resilience of NIMASA's maritime operations.



NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY'S CLEARANCE OF DECADE-LONG GRIDLOCK



In May 2024, the NPA announced the successful clearance of the decade-long gridlock on the Mile 2 Tincan Apapa corridor occasioned by the indiscriminate parking of container trucks. The accomplishment was possible through the collaborative efforts of the Lagos State Government (“LASG”), the NPA, and support of the Minister of the Marine and Blue Economy – Hon. Adebayega Oyetola CON.

The clearance of the decade-long gridlock has considerably reduced the cost of commercial transportation of goods and import costs and improved the turnaround time for truck transportation. The direct impacts extend to quality control of exports, reduced cost of haulage, improved turnaround time for trucks, improved port security, reduced cost of shipping, and improved port competitiveness.

NIMASA'S MINIMUM WAGE DOCUMENT FOR SEAFARERS



In May 2024, in line with the provisions of the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (“MLC”), NIMASA launched the reviewed minimum wage document for Nigerian Seafarers. The document culminated from a Collective Bargaining Agreement which involved employers of labour in the maritime sector, the leadership of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (“MWUN”), NIMASA, and other stakeholders in the industry.

The landmark document establishes the benchmark for fair and safe working conditions, decent living wages, and social protection of seafarers. Further, the document provides a comprehensive framework which outlines the terms and conditions of employment for maritime workers, including – amongst other, wages, working hours, health and safety regulations. The revised document is laudable because it reinforces the provisions of the MLC 2006 and will considerably guarantee better working conditions for seafarers.

NIGERIA OBTAINS UN APPROVAL TO EXPAND ITS MARITIME TERRITORY



In May 2024, Nigeria received approval from the United Nations (“UN”) to extend its continental shelf by 16,300 square kilometres – it was reported that the territory is five times the state of Lagos State. The UN’s approval granted pursuant to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (“UNCLOS”) 1982 grants Nigeria sovereignty over this additional maritime territory and thereby expands the nation’s jurisdiction beyond the existing 200 nautical miles. Nigeria’s maritime territory has now been extended to 220 nautical miles.

The additional territory indicates the potential of a transformative era for Nigeria’s Blue Economy as it represents an avenue for numerous economic, strategic, and ecological, opportunities. With a larger territory Nigeria can, explore deeper offshore oil and gas opportunities, strengthen its geographical influence in regional and international affairs, boost the nation’s hydrocarbon reserves and production capacity, create job opportunities especially in coastal communities, undertake seabed mining, biotechnology, and marine research, and significantly improve its economy through increased revenue streams.

INTEGRATION OF NIMASA’S COMMAND, CONTROL, COMPUTER, COMMUNICATION INFORMATION SYSTEM



In June 2024, Hon. Bello Matawalle - the Minister of State, Defense, declared the Federal Government’s commitment to integrating the operations of NIMASA’s Command, Control, Computer, Communication, Information System (“C4I”) and the surveillance facility of the Nigerian Navy – the Falcon Eye System, for the security of the Nigerian maritime space to foster economic prosperity.

The C4I is the base for, situational intelligence gathering, synchronisation of situational security reports on land, air, and the maritime domain in Nigeria, and the real time analysis of same for the Deep Blue Project. Whereas, the Falcon Eye System is the Nigerian Navy’s advanced surveillance facility which incorporates various sensors located along Nigeria’s coastline with thermal or night vision capability, Automatic Identification System receivers, Weather Stations and marine Very High Frequency Radios for communication.

This integration between the Nigerian Navy and NIMASA will considerably enhance their capability to curb maritime crimes in Nigerian waters. Furthermore, this will considerably enable a maritime space devoid of security challenges resulting in a boost in local and foreign investment in the sector.

NATIONAL INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY INAUGURATES PROJECTS TO BOOST WATER TRANSPORTATION



In June 2024, the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy – Hon. Adegboyega Oyetola CON, inaugurated some landmark projects to be executed under the leadership of the Managing-Director of the National Inland Waterways Authority (“NIWA”) led by Mr Bola Oyebamiji. The projects include, 12 fibre-reinforced plastic fast-moving boats, 3 water ambulances, a standard healthcare centre, and 23 boats with double engines.

It was reported that three of the boats have a 150 horsepower to ensure that NIWA Police officers are more visible, and five of the boats have double scintillating horsepower for enforcement of safety rules and regulations. It was also reported that one of the gun patrol boats are combat ready and has a five horsepower for emergency response to security threat.

The inauguration of these projects underscores NIWA’s commitment to ensuring that Nigeria’s inland waterways are well utilised both in terms of cargo shipment and passenger transportation.

NATIONAL INLAND WATERS AUTHORITY'S LAUNCH OF THE WATERWAYS TRANSPORTATION CODE



In June 2024, the National Inland Waterways Authority’s Transportation Regulations 2023 – also known as the Waterways Transportation Code, was launched by the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy – Hon. Adegboyega Oyetola CON. The Code aims to regulate the activities of vessels navigating in the inland waterways of Nigeria as it relates to, marks, draughts scales and tonnage measurement, visual signals, sound signals and radio telephony, waterway signs and marking, rules of the road, berthing rules, mechanisms for preventing and controlling pollution along the declared right of way, and reporting requirements.

Relatedly, in September 2024, the NIWA commenced the sensitisation of the Code in Lagos State with industry stakeholders - such as the Waterfront Boat Owners and Transporters Association of Nigeria (WABOTAN), expressing positive reactions to the enforcement of the Waterways Transportation Code.

The Waterways Transportation Code will considerably prevent incessant boat mishaps within Nigeria’s inland waterways, and it is anticipated that the implementation of the Code will attract investors to Nigeria’s inland waterways.

NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL COLLABORATION THE EUROPEAN UNION TO DECONGEST LAGOS PORTS



In June 2024, the Nigerian Shippers' Council collaborated with the European Union (EU) by a strategic partnership to curb the congestion at the Lagos seaports. The partnership is part of the EU's wider efforts to develop transportation infrastructure and trade connectivity across West Africa – particularly along the Lagos-Abidjan corridor.

The collaboration reflects the EU's commitment to improving transportation within Nigerian and neighbouring countries and particularly highlights the EU's commitment to the €411 Million Euros "Omi Eko" project aimed at easing transportation congestion in Lagos and reducing transportation costs and delays for residents.

It is anticipated that the partnership will boost trade and connectivity within Nigeria and beyond and will considerably enhance Nigeria's broader economic growth objectives by improving port operations and regional trade.



APPOINTMENT OF A NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY



In August 2024, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR appointed Dr. Abubakar Dantsoho as the new Managing-Director of the NPA. Dr. Dantsoho has committed to ensuring that the Nigerian Ports compete favourably with neighbouring ports especially in the area of port operations. He further aims to continue with the digital transformation of the NPA and the Port Community System, explore improving port infrastructural renewal, drive port rehabilitation and modernisation, tap into benefits of the Deep Seaport corridor, and collaborate with sister agencies to maintain an open-door communication and collaboration amongst the relevant industry stakeholders.

It is anticipated that under the leadership of the new Managing-Director, by the collaboration with sister agencies such as NIMASA, the Nigerian Ports will be positively repositioned for increased productivity, efficiency and improved revenue generation.

NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY'S APPOINTMENT OF NEW PORT MANAGERS AND GENERAL MANAGERS



IN August 2024, The Managing-Director of the NPA – Dr Abubakar Dantsoho approved the appointment of six new port managers. The new port managers are as follows, Mr. Adebowale Lawal Ibrahim – Port Manger, Lagos Complex, Mr. Abubakar Sani Isa - the Port Manager, Tin Can Island Port, Mr. Abdulrahman Hussaini – Port Manager for Onne Port, Mr. Sa'adu Dahiru Mohammed – Port Manager for Delta Ports Warri, Mr. Ekine Ibifiri Alex – Port Manager for Calabar Port, and Mr. Emmanuel Anda – Port Manager for Lekki Port. The Port Manager of Rivers Port - Mrs Kenechi Edith Okezie, was retained.

The Managing-Director also appointed of seven new General-Managers and ten Assistant General-Managers in line with the Management's commitment to employees' motivation and service excellence. The new General-Managers include Moltok Josephine Adar - formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Overseas Office and now the General-Manager Servicom; Ahmad M. Umar - formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Accounts and now the General-Manager, Human Resources; Sheidu-Shabi Khadija Ife - formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Environment and now the General-Manager Managing Director's Office; and Ngini Chukwuma - formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Facility Management and now the General-Manager, Lands and Asset Administration, Ibrahim Nasiru – formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Corporate & Strategic Communications and now the General-Manager, Corporate & Strategic Communications, Odunsi Opeoluwa – formerly the Assistant General-Manager, Finance and now the General-Manager, Finance; and Mohammed Shehu - formerly the Assistant General- Manager Procurement and now General-Manager Tariff & Billing.

NIMASA DG ENDORSES PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP MODEL FOR INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT



In October 2024, the Director-General of NIMASA endorsed the adoption of the Public Private Partnership (“PPP”) model for the infrastructural development of Nigeria's maritime sector. The Director-General emphasised the important role that the Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (“ICRC”) can play in attracting private investors to develop infrastructural capacity in Nigeria's maritime sector. In light of this, the ICRC expressed its intention collaborate with NIMASA on NIMASA-related infrastructural projects to develop PPP based business models that will considerably attract private sector infrastructure funding – domestically and internationally.

The maritime sector is capital intensive, and the adoption of PPP based business models will considerably facilitate increased funding and expertise from the private sector, thus increasing the growth and development of the Nigerian maritime sector.



NIGERIA SEEKS ELECTION INTO IMO COUNCIL



In October 2024, at the 2024 World Maritime Day parallel event in Barcelona, Spain, the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy – Hon. Adegboyega Oyetola, CON, signified Nigeria’s interest to be elected to Category C of the International Maritime Organisation (“IMO”) Council. This indication of interest was hinged on the fact that Nigeria has deployed resources to develop the nation’s maritime industry in line with international best practices such as Nigeria’s active participation in upholding key conventions including the Safety of Life at Sea (“**SOLAS**”) and the International Ship and Port Facility Security (“**ISPS**”) Code.

It is worthy to note that NIMASA met with the IMO technical team and commenced the process of effective communication with other member states using the IMO Global Integrated Shipping Information System (“**GSIS**”) platform, amongst others. It is anticipated that NIMASA’s focus on the technical aspects of strengthening Nigeria’s maritime industry and the Ministry’s supervisory role will guide Nigeria’s election to Category C of the Council at the IMO.

MANDATORY REGISTRATION FOR DOCKWORKERS



In October 2024, the NIMASA advised International Oil Companies (“**IOCs**”), terminal and jetty operators, and all other companies involved in stevedoring in the country to refrain from engaging unregistered dockworkers. NIMASA required all stakeholders, inclusive of dock labour employers and stevedoring companies, to apply for new operating licenses or renew expired licenses within a 30-day moratorium period. This is further to NIMASA’s Stevedoring Regulations 2014 and Part IX, Section 27 of the NIMASA Act, 2007 which addresses the registration of Dockworkers.

This underscores the need for stakeholders to comply with the extant laws and regulations, and the requirement to ensure their safe and regulated operations within the Nigerian maritime industry. This compliance will improve NIMASA’s operational database for dockworkers and will considerably develop the nation’s capacity in line with international best practices for dockworkers.

THE MINISTRY OF MARINE AND BLUE ECONOMY'S VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE MARITIME ECONOMY AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



In November 2024, the Minister of Marine and Blue Economy – Hon. Adegboyega Oyetola, CON, revealed the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy's intention of creating a National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy document, which will provide a transformative framework for harnessing Nigeria's vast marine resources, creation of job opportunities, enhancement of sustainability and unlocking economic opportunities across sectors including fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, and tourism. This intention was revealed at the commencement of the Technical Validation Workshop – part of a two-stage stakeholders' session, for the development of a comprehensive National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy.



The National Policy Document encompasses vital components including legal and institutional framework, trade and shipping, fisheries and aquaculture, marine abiotic resources, marine innovation and technology. Further, the said document seeks to address issues relating to safety, security, and sustainability.

It is anticipated that the National Marine Policy document will clearly set out the roadmap to developing the Blue Economy, creating jobs within the sector, and promoting private sector investments, in line with international best practices. This underscores the Ministry's efforts to develop a sustainable framework that engenders economic growth through the efficient management of marine and blue resources.

NIGERIA SIGNS SIX IMO INSTRUMENTS FOR ACCESSION



In November 2024, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR signed the instruments of accession for six conventions of the MO. These include, the Instrument of Accession of the Protocol of 2005 to the 1988 Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms on the Continental Shelf (“**SUA PROT**”), the Instrument of Accession of the International Convention of Standards of Training, Certification, and Watch-keeping for Fishing Vessel Personnel 1995 (“**STCW-F**”); the Instrument of Accession of the Protocol Relating to Intervention on the High Seas in cases of Pollution by Substances other than Oil, 1973 as Amended (“**Intervention Protocol**”); the Instrument of Accession to the Protocol of 1996 to Amend the Convention on Limitation of Liability for Maritime Claims (LLMC) 1976; the Instrument of Accession to the Protocol to the 1974 Athens Convention Relating to the Carriage of Passengers and Their Luggage by Sea, 2002; and the Instrument of Accession to the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

It is important to note that in the same month, three of the instruments - the SUA Protocol 2005, STCW-F, and the Intervention Protocol 1973 were deposited with the IMO few weeks after Nigeria’s declaration of its intention to contest for a seat on the IMO Council. This underscores Nigeria’s efforts to enhance the nation’s maritime governance in line with international standards and its commitment to the promotion of maritime safety, security, and environmental protection.



COSCO SHIPPING, ONE, AND ZIM ALLIANCE SHIPPING LINES COMMENCE OPERATIONS IN LEKKI PORT



In November 2024, the management of the Lekki Port LFTZ Enterprise Limited (“**LPLEL**”), Lekki Freeport Terminal, and the Lagos Freezone announced the launch of COSCO, One Ocean Network Express (“**ONE**”), and ZIM Alliance Services at the Lekki Deep Sea Port. The services commenced with the arrival of the vessel E A Centaurus at the Lekki Deep Sea Port. The vessel has an overall length of 277m and a container handling capacity of 7,000 TEUs and is the largest COSCO vessel to dock at Nigeria’s port.

The launch of the service at the Lekki Deep Sea Port marks a crucial milestone in the terminal’s development and capacity expansion. This will considerably strengthen Nigeria’s position in international trade and underscores the commitment of the port’s management to position the Lekki Deep Sea Port as a transformative force in Nigeria’s maritime industry.



NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL'S REGULATORY REFORMS TO BOOST NIGERIA'S MARITIME SECTOR



In November 2024, during the 15th Annual General Meeting of the Nigerian Maritime Law Association (NMLA), the Chief Executive Officer of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) – Mr. Pius Akutah, MON, announced the NSC's efforts to boost Nigeria's maritime industry by streamlining regulatory processes geared towards the efficient and cost-effective cargo movement across African nations.

The CEO of NIWA underscored the importance of international cooperation for a thriving and revitalised maritime economy and expressed the Commission's efforts in enhancing intra-African trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The enhancement of intra-African trade presents an uncharted opportunity for Nigeria's maritime industry to unravel significant economic opportunities and enhance Nigeria's global competitiveness.

NATIONAL INLAND WATERS AUTHORITY SEEKS COLLABORATIONS TO BOOST WATERWAYS SAFETY



In December 2024, during a one day consultative event on Safety and Security Challenges in Inland Waterways Transportation - held by the Nigeria Transportation Commissioner's Forum in Illorin, Kwara State, the Managing Director of the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA) – Mr. Bola Oyebamiji, commenced moves for stronger collaboration between the NIWA and State Governments of coastal States to improve the safety and security of inland waterways transportation in Nigeria.

The MD of NIWA emphasised the importance of safety and security as key tools to the success and growth of water transportation in Nigeria and highlighted measures undertaken by the NIWA to enhance safety within Nigeria's inland waterways i.e. the launch of the Water Transportation Code. It is anticipated that the State Governments of coastal States will collaborate with the NIWA in areas including – but not limited to, infrastructure development, and water safety and sensitisation campaigns, for the improvement of security and safety across the Nation's inland waterways.



AVIATION TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INAUGURATES THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE SAFETY COMMITTEE

In April 2024, in compliance with the safety requirements of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (“ICAO”) annex 19 the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development – Hon. Festus Keyamo SAN, inaugurated the National Executive Safety Committee NESC of Nigeria’s State Safety Programme (“NESC”). The members of the committee include, the Director-General of the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (“NSIB”), Capt Alex Badeh, the Director of the Air Safety Administration of the Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development, the Managing-Director of the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (“FAAN”), the Managing-Director of the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (“NAMA”), the Director-General of the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (“NIMET”), the Rector of the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (“NCAT”), Zaria, the Directors of the technical directorates of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (“NCAA”), the person responsible for safety management in the Nigerian Air Force (“NAF”), and the Director of Special Duties of the NCAA and the Technical Adviser to the Honourable Minister.

The NESC is charged with the following terms of reference:

Endorsing the priorities and ensuring that appropriate resources are allocated to drive the desired improvements in safety performance, based on risk assessment, and give strategic direction to the Safety Improvement Advisory Committee (“SIAC”);

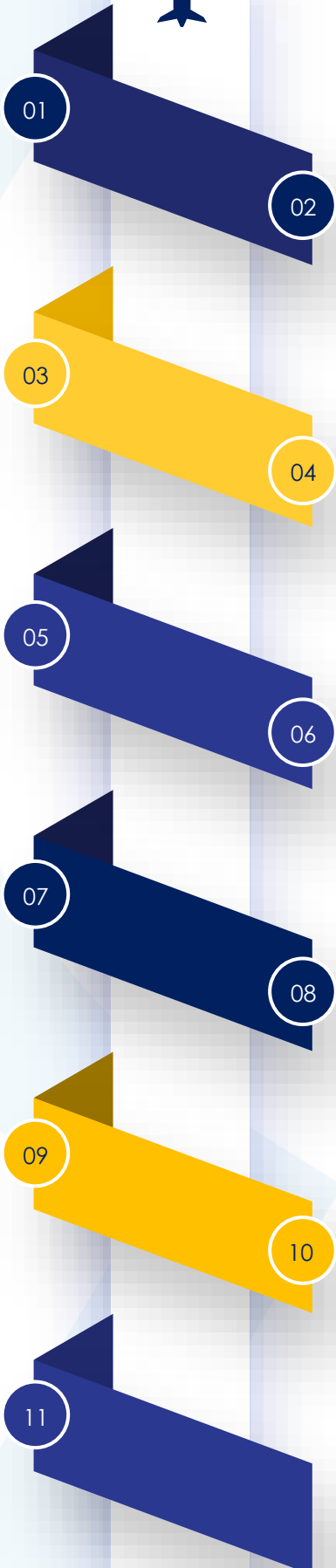
Monitoring safety performance against Nigeria’s safety policies and objectives;

Identifying new and emerging strategic safety risks;

Ensuring the effectiveness of the safety oversight of regulated organisations and personnel;

Handling escalated issues identified by the SIAC;

Ensuring the effectiveness of the organisation’s safety management processes demanded for a periodic progress report on a quarterly basis for consideration.



Ensuring the development, periodic review and decision and policy making pertaining to SSP activities, such as safety policy, safety indicators, enforcement policy, safety data protection and sharing, SMS regulatory requirements, and internal SSP review and findings are carried out in an integrated and coordinated manner;

Assessing and accepting the picture of the aggregate risk within the aviation industry in Nigeria;

Directing and monitoring the effectiveness of the SIAC;

Reviewing and signing off major policies, rules and interpretation changes;

Approving Terms of Reference as recommended by the SIAC for projects, new entities and other safety activities as determined by the SIAC; and



NCAA SETS UP DEDICATED UNMANNED AIRCRAFT UNIT

In May 2024, the NCAA has introduced an Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) Integration Unit to manage the rising use of drones in Nigeria's airspace. The unit will handle the registration, licensing, and regulation of Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS) to ensure compliance with NCAA standards.

While drones were initially developed for military use, they now serve diverse purposes, including policing, surveillance, cargo delivery, and agriculture, filmmaking, and drone racing.

This initiative highlights the NCAA's commitment to balancing innovation with safety in the aviation sector. It is also expected to create jobs and boost economic growth, positioning Nigeria as a leader in drone technology.



FAAN INTRODUCES ELECTRONIC TAGS

In May 2024, FAAN has implemented a policy requiring all vehicles to possess electronic tags (e-tags) for entry into the nation's 24 federal airports. This initiative aligns with a presidential directive approved by the Federal Executive Council, mandating that all users of federal airports pay tolls at the gates.

The sale of e-tags commenced on May 17, 2024, at designated locations within major airports, including Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos and Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja. Motorists without e-tags have the option to pay the access fee in cash at the gates.

The e-tags are registered to specific vehicles and must be affixed to the driver's side windshield to be valid for entry. They are valid for one year from the date of purchase. The e-tags do not cover parking fees, except for VIP tags, which grant access to the VIP parking lot.

This policy aims to streamline airport access, reduce traffic congestion, and enhance revenue collection for airport maintenance and development. It applies to all users, including government officials, with no exceptions.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S INAUGURATION OF 8-MAN MINISTERIAL TASK FORCE

In June 2024, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development – Hon. Festus Keyamo SAN, inaugurated a Ministerial Task Force Committee on illegal private chartered operations and related matters. The task force is aimed at regulating the operations of private aircraft owners, and to ensure that flights in Nigeria's airspace adhere to the highest standards of safety and legality.

Furthermore its members - who were carefully selected from within and outside the aviation industry, were charged with the following duties:

01

To take inventory of all Private Non-commercial Flight ("PNCF") holders and Air Operator Certificate ("AOC") holders.

02

To determine why the practice of illegal charters by PNCF holders persists in the country despite regulatory controls,

03

To call in all professional licenses of pilots and crew in the country and determine their authenticity and validity,

04

To recommend to the Minister any additional measures to be taken by regulatory agencies to stem the ugly tide,

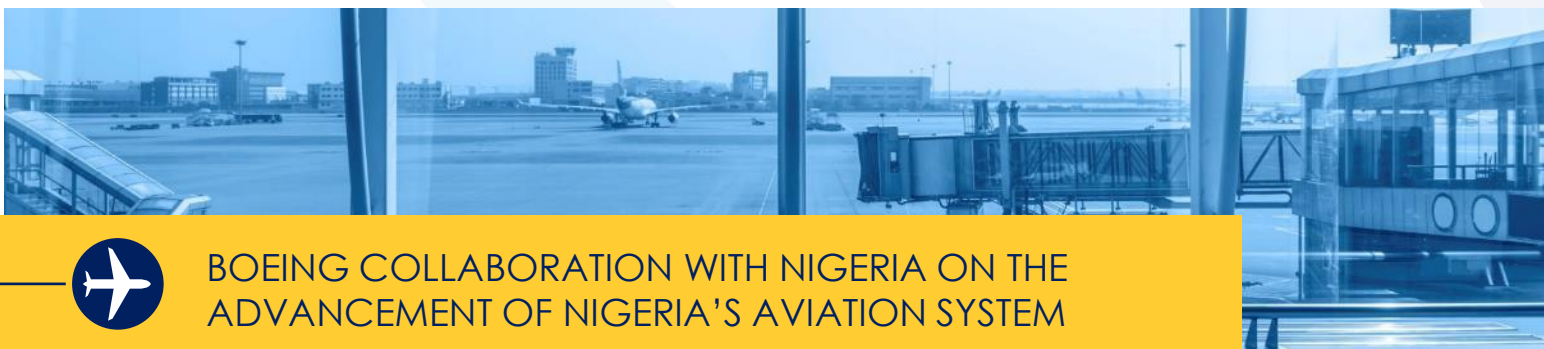
05

To recommend appropriate sanctions to be imposed by the regulatory agencies on defaulters, and

06

To recommend additional measures to further monitor the operations and activities of private aircraft in Nigeria.

It is anticipated that the task force will considerably curb the safety and security concerns of the Federal Government arising from the unregulated operations of private aircraft owners in Nigeria.



BOEING COLLABORATION WITH NIGERIA ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF NIGERIA'S AVIATION SYSTEM

In August 2024, Boeing – a global aerospace company, and the Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace Development signed an MoU to strengthen Nigeria's aviation sector. The MoU will benefit Nigerian airlines and will enable the development of the nation's civil aviation system. In furtherance of the collaboration, Boeing is set to provide planning workshops, training, technical support, and assessments, to airline operators.



FAAN MANAGING DIRECTOR'S NOMINATION AS REGIONAL ADVISOR FOR AFRICA

In September 2024, the Managing Director (“MD”) of the Federal Airports Authority (“FAAN”) was nominated to serve as a Regional Advisor for Africa on the Airport Council International (“ACI”) World Governing Board. The laudable achievement for Nigeria and the African aviation sector will enable the MD of FAAN to play a vital role in shaping policies and strategies that will considerably impact airports across Africa – Nigeria inclusive.

It is anticipated that with the MD’s extensive background in infrastructure finance and the aviation sector, the MD will advocate for unique challenges and opportunities faced by African airports and will considerably address issues including infrastructure development, safety regulations, and sustainable practices, It is also hoped that under the MD’s new role as Regional Advisor for Africa there will be enhanced efficiency and competitiveness of African airports on an international spectrum.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT UPGRADES MUHAMMADU BUHARI AIRPORT, MAIDUGURI TO INTERNATIONAL STATUS

In October 2024, Mr Festus Keyamo SAN, announced the upgrade of the Muhammadu Buhari Airport, Maiduguri to international status. The establishment of an international airport in Maiduguri is strategic to receive international flights coming in from Managing-Director the Middle East into Nigeria. The State has the capacity, size, population and infrastructure to support an international airport. It was expressed by the Minister that the airport would commence full operation in January 2025. This development is reflective of the Ministry’s efforts to transform the aviation sector in Nigeria by improving international patronage and tourism.



NIGERIA SIGNS THE IRRECOVERABLE DEREGISTRATION AND EXPORT REQUEST AUTHORSIATION DOCUMENT



In October 2024, The Director-General of the NCAA signed the updated Procedure for Recordation of Irrevocable Deregistration and Export Request Authorisation document (“IDERA”) which empowers aircraft lessors to withdraw their aircraft from borrowers in Nigeria, upon an airline’s default of the lease agreement or upon expiration of the agreement.

The IDERA seeks to provide an alternative avenue of resolving disputes without the intervention of the courts. Hence, by the IDERA when an aircraft’s lease expires, the lessor can apply to the NCAA for deregistration, allowing the aircraft to be exported. The IDERA process is governed by the Cape Town Convention and Aircraft Protocol which protects creditors’ rights in financing and leasing transactions. If a default occurs in the aircraft lease agreement, the creditor can invoke their rights under the IDERA, and the NCAA is empowered to deregister the aircraft and issue an export request authorisation. This process is crucial for ensuring that lessors can recover their aircraft if necessary.

It is anticipated that this development will increase Nigeria’s rating in the sphere of the global aviation industry and will make the nation a more attractive destination for aircraft lessors and financiers. However, it would not be surprising to see lessees resorting to court actions in a bid to circumvent the implementation of the IDERA for the benefit of lessors.



THE COMMISSION OF NIGERIA’S LARGEST JET FUEL DEPOT

In October 2024, a consortium of energy operators including Eterna Plc, Techno Oil, Quest Oil, Rahamaniyya, Ibafo Oil, and First Deep-Water Limited commissioned Nigeria’s largest jet fuel depot – The Joint User Hydrant Installation 2 (“JUHI-2”), in Lagos State. The facility spans 46,000 square meters with a storage capacity of 15 million litres of Jet A1 fuel. Its design includes the latest filtration systems, the ability to load four bowsers simultaneously, a jet fuel discharge system with four dedicated trucks, a modern laboratory, and state-of-the-art fire prevention measures.

The JUHI-2 is commendable because the depot will considerably serve as a crucial storage and supply hub for jet fuel, whilst ensuring a steady fuel supply to Murtala Muhammed International Airport (“MMIA”), MMA2, MMA1, and nearby airbases.



NIGERIA'S REMOVAL FROM AVIATION WATCHLIST

In October 2024, Nigeria's global aviation compliance score significantly improved following the signing of the IDERA. To this end, Nigeria's score on the Cape Town Convention ("CTC") Compliance Index increased from 70.5% to 75.5% - placing Nigeria in the high category. This is laudable because the development marks Nigeria's official removal from the Aviation Working Group's ("AWG") watchlist of non-compliant countries.



NCAA'S LANDMARK CERTIFICATION FOR DOMESTIC AIRCRAFT RESCUE AND FIREFIGHTING TRAINING

On October 29, 2024, the NCAA issued certificate of accreditation to the Nigerian College of Aviation Authority to the Aerodrome Emergency Training School of Nigeria College of Aviation Technology ("NCAT") as a provider of Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting ("ARFF") training in Nigeria.

The accreditation of ARFF training by the NCAA will considerably enhance the standardisation of ARFF training across the transport sector in Nigeria and will reinforce the NCAT's reputation and increased regulatory compliance. Notably, the ARFF training will equip aviation officers with essential skills in emergency response, mitigation, evacuation, and rescue during aviation incidents.

Furthermore, the landmark initiative will considerably enhance Nigeria's airspace safety, boost its global aviation standing, and contribute to economic growth through increased enrolment in ARFF programs.



MINISTER OF AVIATION'S NEW INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE NIGERIAN AIRPORTS

In November 2024, the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Mr Festus Keyamo SAN, announced new initiatives aimed at addressing the expectations of the public in the utilisation of the Nigerian airports.

The initiatives include;

01

the appointment of voluntary Special Airport Marshals comprising of public-spirited individuals drawn from members of the Fourth Estate of the Realm, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and representatives of State Governors with the role of monitoring staff conduct and assess the general hygiene and conditions of the airports; and

02

unscheduled visits of airports nationwide by the Minister in collaboration with the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, the Managing Director of FAAN, key directors of the Ministry and FAAN, and members of the Senate and House Committees on Aviation.

These underscore the Minister's dedication in maintaining high standards of service delivery, accountability, and cleanliness in Nigerian airports.



NIGERIA'S MOVE TO DECARBONISE AVIATION FUEL

In November 2024, at the 2nd consultative stakeholders' engagement on the development of, and deployment of Sustainable Aviation Fuel ("SAF"), Low Carbon Aviation Fuel ("LCAF") and other cleaner fuels, the Federal Government engaged stakeholders and individual partners to develop SAF, LCAF, and other cleaner fuels in Nigeria.

The collaboration with stakeholders such as the European Aviation Safety Agency ("EASA") and the National Council on Climate Change ("NCCC") will not only benefit the aviation sector in Nigeria but will also contribute to the global efforts geared towards reducing the carbon footprint of air travel. This underscores the Federal Ministry of Aviation and Aerospace's desire to invest in the use of cleaner energy in aviation, in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization's ("ICAO") resolution on global framework on aviation cleaner energies.



LANDMARK RECERTIFICATION OF LAGOS AND ABUJA AIRPORTS



In November 2024, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (“FAAN”) and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (“NCAA”) completed the recertification of the Nnamdi Azikiwe Airport Abuja (“NAIA”) and the Murtala Muhammed International Airport Lagos (“MMIA”). The landmark achievement marks the restoration of the NAIA’s and MMIA’s aerodrome certificates which had been inactive since 2020. The recertification process was posed with challenges including the need for structural improvements to runways, taxiways, and airfield lighting systems. However, the FAAN’s efforts in revitalising airport infrastructure in Nigeria aided in the recertification of the NAIA and MMIA.

This development is important as it serves as a medium for enhancing Nigeria’s aviation infrastructure and operational efficiency and underscores Nigeria’s compliance with International Civil Aviation (“ICAO”) Standards.



NCAA'S LAUNCH OF THE DIRECTORATE OF AIR TRANSPORT REGULATION ELECTRONIC PORTAL

In December 2024, the NCAA launched the Directorate of Air Transport Regulation (DATR) Electronic Portal (E-Portal) to modernise and digitise aviation regulatory processes. The unveiling ceremony which was held on December 2, 2024, at the NCAA headquarters in Abuja, was conducted by Acting Director-General Capt. Chris Najomo who described the E-Portal as a single-window platform aimed at streamlining DATR operations, improving service delivery, and aligning with global best practices to enhance efficiency in the aviation sector.

The features of the E-Portal include, process optimisation, data centralisation, real-time tracking, and increased transparency - which collectively aimed at enhancing efficiency, fostering innovation and improve operational efficiency amongst aviation stakeholders.

This significant milestone underscores the NCAA’s dedication to facilitate digital transformation in the aviation sector, enhance business efficiency, and strengthen Nigeria’s position in the global aviation landscape.



THE COMMISSIONING OF NCAA'S FLIGHT DATA ANALYSIS CENTRE

In December 2024, the NCAA unveiled the NCAA Flight Data Analysis (“FDA”) Centre at the NCAA headquarters in Abuja and the Project was officially commissioned by the Honourable Minister of Aviation - Mr. Festus Keyamo (SAN). The FDA Centre is a legacy project of the Acting Director-General of the NCAA – Capt. Chris O. Najomo, and it is an advanced facility designed to monitor and interpret critical flight data directly influencing safety and operational standards.

The FDA Centre will considerably enhance aviation safety by improving safety oversight in Nigeria, aviation incident investigations, risk management, and operational efficiency in Nigeria’s aviation sector. The commissioning of the FDA Centre reinforces the NCAA’s commitment to modernising Nigeria's aviation sector, boosting regulatory efficiency and increasing the nation’s alignment with international best practises in the aviation.



ICPC INAUGURATION OF THE NCAA ANTI-CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY TEAM

In December 2024, the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (“ICPC”) inaugurated the Anti-Corruption and Transparency Unit (“ACTU”) of the NCAA. The ACTU is a 12-manned team with the objective of preventing corruption within the NCAA.

The ACTU initiative supports ICPC’s strategy of integrating anti-corruption frameworks into public institutions. The ACTU aims to with monitor and report corrupt practices, educate staff, and uphold ethical standards to strengthen operational transparency, boost public trust, and contribute to Nigeria's national anti-corruption efforts.



FAAN UPGRADES LAGOS AIRPORT TERMINAL

In December 2024, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (“FAAN”) in collaboration with United Bank for Africa (“UBA”) upgraded the E-Wing Terminal at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos (“MMIA”) and introduced four Compressed Natural Gas (“CNG”) powered air-conditioned buses to enhance passenger comfort and mobility. The new design to the airport includes modern lighting, upgraded flooring, and more prominent advertising experience and the implementation CNG buses underscores the FAAN’s alignment with President Ahmed Bola Tinubu’s goal of promoting sustainable practices and reducing reliance on traditional fossil fuels.

The Project which is set to improve overall passenger experience at the airport is a part of the FAAN's plans for further investments in cooling systems, equipment upgrades, and infrastructure modernisation by 2025 and a broader initiative of the Honourable Minister of Aviation - Mr. Festus Keyamo (SAN) to refurbish the nation's airports in collaboration with private sector stakeholders. It is anticipated that the modernisation of the **MMIA** will considerably boost Nigeria's global standing, economic growth, and improve seamless travel experience for air passengers.



FAAN'S 'OPERATION AIR CLEAN' IN MMIA

In December 2024, the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria ("FAAN") launched 'Operation Air Clean' to address critical challenges at the Murtala Muhammed International Airport ("MMIA") and the General Aviation Terminal ("GAT"). This initiative was reached after an emergency high-level meeting chaired by FAAN's Managing Director – Mrs. Olubunmi Oluwaseun Kuku, and was attended by Heads of Agencies, the HQ Taskforce, and FAAN Directors. The measures align with FAAN's commitment to achieve world-class standards in service delivery, security, and passenger satisfaction across Nigerian airports.

Operation Air Clean is aimed at eliminating corrupt practices, curbing illicit activities, and enhancing the travel experience particularly during peak travel seasons. The resolutions reached by the FAAN for the Project will include, the elimination of joint inspection tables, dissolution of joint inspection tables by security agencies, transition to intelligence-based searched, scanners, and individual profiling. The initiative additionally includes the introduction of a mobile court for the expeditious prosecution of offenders.

Additionally, camera-based passenger observation is set to be installed around a dedicated area to assist in streamlining passenger processing, while the Department of State Security ("DSS") and Immigration Service personnel is to share counters to reduce checkpoints for outbound passengers, in order to enhance travel flow. Further, Customs is set to relocate to the Aviation Security ("AVSEC") screening point for money declaration, and secondary screening will be done in a profiling room – with real time screens displaying the names, agencies, and contact details of officers on duty to improve transparency. Relatedly, the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency ("NDLEA") personnel is set to partner with AVSEC at screening points with the aim of conducting monitoring checks in the arrival area, while the DSS officers will monitor the departure and screening areas.

Operation Air Clean is laudable because it reflects the FAAN's dedication in ensuring that Nigerian airports operate at the highest standards of security, service delivery, and transparency. These reforms will considerably transform passenger experience and address systemic challenges within the MMIA's operations.



RAILWAY TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS

\$3 BILLION PORT HARCOURT-MAIDUGURI RAIL LINK PROJECT RECOMMENCES

In February 2024, the Federal Ministry of Transportation recommenced the construction of the Port Harcourt-Maiduguri rail link project. The Project aims to improve regional trade and boost Nigeria's industrialisation and will be fundamental in connecting the seaports to move goods in West Africa and Central Africa.

The Federal Government commenced the construction of the rail link last year in March and its scope entailed the repair and reconstruction of the 1,443-kilometer Eastern Railway Line. The line runs from the southeastern oil centre of Port Harcourt to Maiduguri in the northeast. It would link Rivers, Abia, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi, Anambra, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe, Yobe, and Borno states, when completely operational.

It is anticipated that upon the completion of the Project Nigerians would enjoy good trade and access to the market, and business places easily.

REDLINE RAIL INAUGURATION AND OPERATIONS

In February 2024, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR inaugurated the 37 kilometres the Lagos Rail Mass Transit ("LRMT") Red Line rail system in Lagos and as part of the inter-modal connectivity of Nigeria's public transportation infrastructure. The Redline rail was integrated with Bus Terminals at Ikeja, Oshodi, Oyingbo, Ikeja, Yaba, and Iju. The first phase of the Lagos Redline Rail has eight stations namely, Agbado, Iju, Agege, Ikeja, Oshodi, Mushin, Yaba and Oyingbo.

The commercial operations of the Project commenced in October 2024 and the LRMT Redline Rail is expected to significantly reduce travel time on the Lagos corridor and increase the productivity of Nigeria's economy.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR RAILWAY LINE CONNECTING PORT HARCOURT, ENUGU, CALABAR, AND ABUJA

In March 2024, the Minister of Transportation, Senator Said Ahmed Alkali, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (“MoU”) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Transportation with Messrs MPH Rail Development (UK) (“MPH UK”) Limited for the construction of a railway line connecting Port Harcourt, Enugu, Calabar, and Abuja. This allowed MPH UK to commence the production of necessary documents for Federal Executive Council (“FEC”) approval.

The Project aims to connect Port Harcourt, Enugu, Calabar, and Abuja via a standard gauge rail line, which will be implemented through a Public-Private Partnership (“PPP”) arrangement, with no loans or debts incurred by the Nigerian Government. The Project will serve as a vital infrastructure project that will boost socio-economic development in the region and contribute to the overall growth of the Nigerian economy. This highlights the Federal Government’s efforts to revitalise the country’s rail sector and provide more efficient and cost-effective transport avenues for Nigerians.



FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INAUGURATES PORT HARCOURT-ABA RAIL LINE

In April 2024, the Federal Government inaugurated commercial train operations along the 62-kilometre Port Harcourt-Aba rail line for public use. The project was contracted to China Civil Engineering and Construction Company (“CCECC”) by the Federal Ministry of Transportation and will link the ports of Onne, Bonny, and Port Harcourt to facilitate the evacuation of goods and other freight through the Eastern corridor.

This development is commendable because the commencement of operations in the rail line will boost economic activities between the South-South and South-East regions of Nigeria.

\$350 MILLION CALABAR-OBUDU RAILWAY LINE CONSTRUCTION

In August 2024, the Governor of Cross River State, Senator Bassey Otu, performed the groundbreaking ceremony for the \$350 Million, 365-kilometres railway to connect the Southern and Northern parts of the State. The Project is a Public-Private Partnership (“PPP”) initiative, chaired by Messers Reinhoke LLC, in partnership with the State Government. Upon completion, the Project will cover an approximate distance of 365 kilometres with main terminals in Calabar and Obudu, while three sub-stations will be located at Ugep, Ikom and Ogoja.

It is anticipated that the Project will facilitate easy intra-state movement, attract local and international investors, and serve as an evacuation corridor for goods and services within international borders.

KANO-MARADI RAIL PROJECT'S \$350 MILLION FUND

In October 2024, the Federal Government of Nigeria secured \$350 Million from the African Development Bank (“AFDB”) to fund the construction of the Kano-Maradi rail project, which will connect Kano to Maradi – Niger Republic. The Kano-Maradi rail project is envisaged to be completed by 2025, and it is anticipated that it will transport 9,300 passengers and 3,000 tonnes (t) of freight daily between Kano and Maradi. Furthermore, the Project includes the construction of 13 stations along the rail corridor, with major stations in Kano, Katsina, Kazaure, Daura, Jibiya and Dutse.

The Project is vital because it is a part of the Federal Government’s wider efforts to modernise Nigeria’s railway network and enhance regional trade connectivity.

NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION'S GRANT OF A THREE-YEAR LICENSE TO OPERATE FREIGHT SERVICES ON LAGOS-IBADAN RAILWAY

In November 2024, the Nigerian Railway Corporation (“NRC”) awarded a three-year license to the CCECC to operate freight services on the Lagos-Ibadan standard-gauge railway line, effective until October 2027. This is a milestone achievement for Nigeria’s rail sector, as CCECC became the first company to be licensed for standard-gauge rail freight services in Nigeria.

It is anticipated that the grant will be maximised to increase the railway’s economic benefits, provide businesses with a reliable cost-effective logistics option, and stimulate further economic activity along the Lagos-Ibadan corridor.

TRANSFER OF \$3.02 BILLION PORT HARCOURT-ABA RAILWAY PROJECT TO THE NIGERIAN RAILWAY CORPORATION (NRC)

In November 2024, the Federal Government handed over the completed \$3.02 billion, 62-kilometer Port Harcourt-Aba railway project to the Nigerian Railway Corporation (“NRC”) for operation. The Project is part of the broader Port Harcourt-Maiduguri Eastern Narrow Gauge railway project, and the assets transferred to the NRC include – but not limited to, dismantled tracks measuring 283.060 km, rehabilitated and reconstructed 62.800 km of subgrade, the laying of 62.800 km of rail for the main line, the laying of rail for sliding lines covering 5.690 km and the reconstruction of 27 sets of turnouts at Port Harcourt, Elelenwo, Obuzor, Umugo and Aba Stations.



RAILWAY TRANSPORT GENERATES ₦1.70 BILLION IN THIRD QUARTER OF 2024

In the 3rd quarter of December 2024, the railway transport services generated ₦1.70 billion Naira in revenue from railway passengers and cargo transport. This is significant because the revenue depicts a 13.83% increase when compared to the ₦1.49 billion Naira recorded in the same quarter of the preceding year. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (“NBS”), the Nigerian Railway Corporation’s (“NRC”) generated ₦412.5 billion from goods and cargo in the 3rd quarter of 2024 whereas, ₦217.6 Million Naira was recorded in the same period in 2023. The NBS reported that the NRC recorded 734,205 passengers in the 3rd quarter of 2024 which represents a 25.05 % improvement from the 594,348 passengers reported in the previous year. Furthermore, the NBS reported that in respect of tons of goods and cargo, 96,401 tons of goods and cargo were transported via rail in the 3rd quarter of 2024 in comparison with the 69,003 tons recorded in the same period of the preceding year. Additionally, passenger freight services generated ₦412.5m, representing an 89.6% increment from the 3rd quarter of 2023.

Evidently, the significant increase in revenue generation in the railway sector in the third quarter of 2024 underscores the efforts to the Federal Government to optimise the use of railway transportation to facilitate economic growth and development.



ROAD TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS

MINISTRY OF WORKS' COLLABORATION WITH THE NIGERIAN ACADEMY OF ENGINEERING ON ROAD CONSTRUCTION

In February 2024, the Federal Ministry of Works and the Nigerian Academy of Engineering (“NAE”) agreed to collaborate in road construction and management in the interest of the development of the road sector in Nigeria. The Minister of Work – Hon. David Umahi, pledged to continue to deliver on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu’s mandate – that the *Renewed Hope Agenda of the Federal Government* is not only sustained, but it would also be seen to be working for Nigerians who deserve to reap the benefits of democracy, by ensuring that all roads are safe and constructed to specifications. It is anticipated that the collaboration will manifest in standard roads which will enable efficient road connectivity.

COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE 700 KM LAGOS-CALABAR COASTAL ROAD

In March 2024, the FEC approved a ₦1.06 trillion contract for the construction of the first phase of the coastal road from Lagos to eight other states. Further, in March 2024, the Federal Government announced the commencement of the construction operations on the 700 km Lagos-Calabar Coastal Highway – which is expected to span 9 states, with two spurs leading to the Northern States.

The highway construction which has been handed over to Hitech Construction Company Nigeria Limited is being constructed using concrete technology that will start from Lagos through the nine coastal routes or States - Lagos, the Lekki Deep Seaport, Ogun, Ondo, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, and Akwa Ibom. The Project is expected to be a dual carriage way with each carriage way having five lanes and a provision for a train infrastructure that will be in the middle.

This Project underscores Nigeria’s commitment to enhancing road transport connectivity, stimulating economic growth and addressing Nigeria’s age-long infrastructure challenges.

NIGERIA'S TRANSITION FROM ASPHALT TO CONCRETE IN ROAD CONSTRUCTION

In July 2024, the Minister of Works – Hon. David Umahi, disclosed that 70% percent of the Federal highways were being designed on concrete to prolong their lifespan after construction and commissioning for public use – this is an improvement from asphalt which affected the longevity of the roads. This underscores the Minister's dedication in constructing roads that will stand the test of time in Nigeria and the optimisation of road networks for efficient public use.



RECOMMENCEMENT OF THE LAGOS-SANGO-OTA-ABEOKUTA ROAD

In August 2024, the Governor of Ogun State – Hon. Dapo Abiodun flagged off the reconstruction of the Lagos-Sango-Ota-Abeokuta express way. The road was awarded in 2003, but since then, it has suffered insufficient funding, resulting in contractors working and many times abandoning same – leading to the severe degradation of the roads. The reconstruction work on the 70-kilometre highway is set to be completed in a record time of 18 months and it is expected that the completion will guarantee the growth of Ogun State's economy and act as a catalyst for its capacity as an increasingly expanding industrial and investment destination choice in Nigeria. The road is not only significant to Ogun State but also to Lagos State and Nigeria – on a wider sphere, taking cognisance of the fact that the route is a regular passage for the public's interstate travels.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL OF CONSTRUCTION OF ROADS IN ABUJA SATELITE TOWNS

In September 2024, the Minister of the Federal Capital Territory ("FCT") – Hon. Nyesom Wike, announced the approval on the construction of roads in Abuja's satellite towns. The Minister aims to commission more than 75 kilometres of roads in areas including, but not limited to, the Kwali, Gwagwalada and Bwari area councils, the Arterial Road N5, Obafemi Awolowo way, and Ring Road 1-N16 Shehu Shagari Way.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S APPROVAL OF ₦1.24 TRILLION FOR NATIONWIDE ROAD PROJECTS

In September 2024, the Federal Government approved a series of road projects across Nigeria, with total approvals amounting to approximately ₦1.24 trillion. The FEC awarded a contract for major road projects including - but not limited to, the repair and rehabilitation of Gamboru Bridge along Gamboru-Ngala/Kala-Balge Road in Bornu, Maraban-Kankara/Funtua Road in Katsina State, the construction of 258 kilometer three-lane carriageway - a component of the 1,000 Sokoto/Badagry Super-highway, the construction of Ngutuk to Demeshi Road; Amasiroposi/Uburishagu to Enugu State and the construction and dualisation of Afikpo-Uturu-Okigwe Road in Ebonyi, Abia and Imo States.

Additionally, the FEC approved the construction of fourteen roads and bridges in states heavily affected by floods. These states include Ekiti State, Adamawa State, Kebbi State, Enugu State, Cross River State, Ondo State, Osun State, Ebonyi State, Abia State, and Imo State.

The floods in Nigerian States are reflective of Nigeria's age-long infrastructure deficit. It is hoped that the efforts of the FEC will be productive in curbing the nation's infrastructure challenges.



COMMENCEMENT OF CONSTRUCTION OF THE 1,068 KILOMETER SOKOTO-BADAGRY SUPERHIGHWAY

In October 2024, the Minister of Works, Sen. Engr. David Umahi, flagged off the construction of the long-awaited 1068 kilometers Sokoto-Badagry Superhighway which experienced a 48-year delay after its conception under the administration of Former President Shehu Shagari.

The 1,068-kilometer Project which will approximately cost \$7.9 billion dollars is anticipated to feature six lanes – with solar lighting and modern signages, with three of the lanes being on each side of the road which will be separated by landscaped medians. The Sokoto-Badagry Superhighway is set to span through Sokoto State, Kebbi State, Niger State, Kwara State, Oyo State, Ogun State, and Lagos State and the first phase of the Project is expected to be completed in 2027.

Furthermore, the Project is anticipated to serve as a Trade, Transport, and Security (“TTS”) Greenfield corridor and will connect existing inter-border routes and towns to considerably facilitate ease of transportation, strengthen existing border settlements, improve trade, security, and regional integration.



TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT FOR THE REHABILITATION ON SECTION I OF THE ABUJA - KANO DUAL CARRIAGEWAY

In November 2024, the Federal Ministry of Works issued a 14-day Notice of Termination to Julius Berger (Nig.) Plc (“**Julius Berger**”) for the Rehabilitation of Section I of the Abuja-Kaduna-Zaria-Kano Dual Carriageway. The Ministry’s decision was reached following Julius Berger’s non-acceptance of the reviewed contract sum, which resulted in the Ministry’s issuance of a 7-day ultimatum to Julius Berger to accept the reviewed contract sum. The termination of the contract by the Ministry was based on lapse of the 7-day ultimatum and non-performance of the contract by Julius Berger.

As a background to the Project, in October 2024, the Minister of Works, Sen. Engr. David Umahi, flagged off the rehabilitation of Section I of the Abuja-Kano Dual Carriageway. The Project was in three sections: Section I - Abuja-Kaduna, Section II – Kaduna-Zaria, Section III – Zaria-Kano. The Zaria-Kano section. Prior to the termination of the contract, it was announced by the Minister that the Zaria-Kano and Kaduna-Zaria Sections had made significant progress, and the Abuja-Kaduna Section had merely reached about 27% completion.

Taking cognisance of the importance of the Abuja-Kaduna road as a major link to the Kaduna-Zaria and Zaria-Kano Sections of the Project, and its potential impact on Nigeria’s economy and infrastructure development, it is hoped that the Ministry will secure an alternative contract and recommence the rehabilitation of Dual Carriageway.

E-MOBILITY DEVELOPMENTS IN NIGERIA: PROGRESS AND INITIATIVES IN 2024

In 2024, Nigeria experienced significant advancements in its e-mobility sector, driven by regulatory reforms, government policies, and private sector investments. These developments reflect a broader strategy aimed at transitioning towards cleaner energy sources, reducing dependence on fossil fuels, and addressing the economic impact of petrol subsidy removal. The year saw important legal and policy changes that shaped the sector's trajectory, along with new challenges that require further regulatory attention.

● Government Initiatives And Policy Shifts



In November 2024, the Nigerian government took proactive steps to address the challenges posed by rising fuel prices following the removal of petrol subsidies. A notable initiative was the promotion of converting petrol-powered vehicles to compressed natural gas (CNG). The Presidential CNG Initiative (Pi-CNG) was launched with the ambitious goal of converting 150,000 vehicles by the end of the year and aspiring to reach one million conversions by 2027. This shift aims to reduce transportation costs by approximately 40%, leveraging Nigeria's abundant gas reserves. However, the initiative faced challenges, including limited conversion centres and safety concerns.

The Pi-CNG Initiative forms part of the palliative interventions introduced by the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu to mitigate the economic hardship resulting from the fuel subsidy removal. With the deregulation of the petroleum products market leading to a significant increase in petrol prices, the government identified CNG and electric vehicles (EVs) as viable alternatives.

The primary objective of the initiative was to stimulate the adoption of CNG for transport in line with the already adopted national transportation policy. The program follows an end-to-end approach to CNG utilization, aiming to reduce costs and carbon emissions. A key focus is making transportation more affordable by utilizing Nigeria's cheaper and currently underutilized gas resources. Another critical goal is delivering a cleaner alternative to petrol and diesel, ensuring compliance with Nigeria's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) commitments while capturing and utilizing gas that is currently flared.

Beyond its environmental and economic benefits, the initiative also aims to create employment opportunities by fostering the development of local auto manufacturing, vehicle retrofitting, and conversion services. Additionally, investments in gas distribution, processing, and production infrastructure are expected to stimulate economic growth and expand government revenue.

State-level Advancements

At the state level, Ogun State emerged as a frontrunner in adopting e-mobility solutions. Governor Dapo Abiodun announced plans to roll out electric trucks and motorbikes, reinforcing the state's commitment to sustainable transportation systems through alternative energy sources. This initiative aligns with the state's earlier adoption of CNG-compliant vehicles to support a greener environment and alleviate transportation burdens.

To further ease the impact of fuel subsidy removal, the federal government launched the Conversion Incentive Programme of the Compressed Natural Gas Initiative in Abeokuta, Ogun State. Speaking at the flag-off, Michael Oluwagbemi, CEO and Program Director of the Presidential CNG project, reiterated the administration's goal of converting one million automobiles at no cost to vehicle owners. The program is set to work with four conversion centres in the state.

Governor Abiodun highlighted the state's commitment to supporting transport unions by providing 100 brand-new Toyota Hiace CNG buses through a purchase agreement that allows installment-based repayments. He expressed confidence that transport operators would utilize the buses responsibly and meet their payment obligations on time.



International Collaborations And Investments

Nigeria's collaboration with international partners further bolstered its e-mobility landscape. In September 2024, Nigeria and China signed five significant agreements aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation, including an economic and nuclear energy agreement under the Belt and Road Initiative. The agreement includes plans to establish an electric tricycle assembly plant and a joint solar photovoltaic test lab, which will support the integration of renewable energy into mobility solutions.

During the signing in Beijing, Presidents Bola Ahmed Tinubu and Xi Jinping reaffirmed their commitment to elevating Nigeria-China relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership. China remains Nigeria's largest bilateral lender, with loans totaling \$5 billion as of March 2024. The longstanding diplomatic ties between the two nations, which were strengthened in 2018 under the Belt and Road Initiative, have yielded massive infrastructure projects, including deep-sea ports and rail lines.

At the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, President Tinubu emphasized that the strategic partnership would enhance stability, security, and economic development in the West African sub-region. President Xi Jinping described the partnership as an opportunity to deepen China-Africa relations and advance progress among Global South countries.



The private sector played a pivotal role in advancing e-mobility in Nigeria. In April 2024, Spiro, a major electric mobility operator in Africa, announced plans to launch its first electric vehicle assembly plant in Ogun State by March 2025. The facility is expected to increase production capacity to 100,000 bikes annually and localize the manufacturing of three-wheelers and batteries, reducing reliance on imports while fostering local industry growth.

Spiro has already deployed 13,000 electric motorbikes in Nigeria as part of its expansion into Africa's largest economy. Its operations now span major cities, including Abeokuta, Ibadan, Lagos, and Abuja. The company's innovative battery-swapping model allows riders to replace depleted batteries with fully charged ones in seconds, offering a more efficient alternative to traditional charging methods.

Spiro's expansion into Nigeria is part of its broader strategy to advance environmental sustainability and lower carbon emissions across Africa. To strengthen its presence, Spiro has established strategic partnerships with leading e-mobility companies in Nigeria.

Similarly, Electric Motor Vehicle Company (EMVC) reported the sale of over 10,000 electric vehicles within the year, highlighting a growing acceptance of electric transportation in Nigeria. The company operates the largest electric vehicle manufacturing facility in the country, located in Giri, Abuja. Additionally, EMVC initiated a dedicated e-mobility training program in collaboration with the Federal Polytechnic, aiming to equip Nigerians with essential skills for the burgeoning green economy.



OUTLOOK FOR 2025

There is no gainsaying that the Nigerian transportation space witnessed commendable developments in the year 2024 with attendant positive impact on the Nigerian economy. With respect to the maritime industry, the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in *National Inland Waterways Authority & 3 Ors v. Lagos State Waterways Authority & 5 Ors* [supra], clarified the seeming jurisdictional conflict between the NIWA and LSWA regarding the regulation and administration of inland waterways in Lagos and nationally. The judgment indeed reinforced NIWA's constitutional authority to regulate the operations of inland waters within Lagos – and beyond the State and provided much needed clarity to maritime stakeholders in respect of the lawful and proper Agency to engage with for compliance, levies, licensing, and operations. It is anticipated that other Nigerian States with inland waterways will follow suit in recognising the superiority of the NIWA Act on the subject of inland waterways, over any State laws that have been passed/in the process of being passed on the same subject. This will ensure that there are no needless court disputes on the subject in 2025.

Furthermore, with the appointment of Dr. Dayo Mobereola as the new Director-General of the NIMASA, it is anticipated that under his leadership the Nigerian maritime space will significantly improve in the areas of safety, security, efficiency, and environmental sustainability. Additionally, it is hoped that following the Minister of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy, – Hon. Adegboyega Oyetola CON's vision for a sustainable maritime economy and resource development, the conclusion of the National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy document will provide a transformative framework for harnessing Nigeria's vast marine resources, creation of job opportunities, enhancement of sustainability and will bring about economic opportunities across sectors including fisheries, aquaculture, maritime transport, and tourism. It is also expected that Nigeria's signing of six International Maritime Organisation ("IMO") instruments will increase Nigeria's chances of re-election into the IMO Council, this will further solidify Nigeria's position as a solid maritime nation.

Importantly, in respect of the two proposed Bills in the maritime industry – the Nigerian Coast Guard Bill 2024 and the Nigerian Marine Corps Bill, 2024, which sparked significant criticism amongst maritime stakeholders and the general public, it will be interesting to see whether the Bills will be passed into law taking cognisance of the fact that the said Bills overlap the functions of already established Federal Government Agencies, and in light of the heavy opposition from the Nigerian Navy and the NIMASA.

It is hoped that instead of the Bills being passed into law, extant maritime legislation, such as the NIMASA Act could be amended to include provisions that will address any lacuna in our maritime legislative infrastructure which the Bills seeks to address.

Additionally, it is anticipated that the funds allocated for the rehabilitation of ports in Nigeria will be utilised efficiently to achieve efficient and optimal operations of Nigerian ports, and with the momentous launch of COSCO, One Ocean Network Express (ONE), and ZIM Alliance Services at the Lekki Deep Sea Port, it is hoped that the landmark event will enhance Nigeria's position in international trade.

In the Aviation sector, 2024 was a notable year for the Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Mr Festus Keyamo, SAN. The Minister undertook significant strides to improve the operations of the Nigerian aviation in line with international best practices. Nigeria's collaboration with Boeing through the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding will considerably enhance the development of Nigeria's civil aviation system and Nigeria's signing of the updated IDERA will considerably position Nigeria as a more attractive destination for aircraft lessors and financiers. In addition, it is foreseen that the upgrade of the Muhammadu Buhari Airport in Maiduguri to international status will increase international trade, commerce and tourism and will improve Nigeria's infrastructure development and revenue generation. It is hoped that the signing of the updated IDERA will make it easier for lessors of aircraft obtaining in Nigeria to retrieve their aircraft from Nigeria upon the accrual of the right to do so. However, based on the antecedents of aircraft lessees in Nigeria, it is anticipated that some of the lessees may resort to court actions to circumvent the implementation of the IDERA for the benefit of lessors.



Further, it is hoped that Nigeria's improved global aviation score and removal from the Aviation Working Group's ("AWG") watchlist will signal Nigeria's improvements in compliance with international aviation standards and obligations, and will reassure international lessors, financiers, and investors that Nigeria is a reliable and compliant nation in the aviation sector. Also, with Nigeria's landmark commission of its largest fuel depot, it is anticipated that the depot will ensure a steady supply of fuel and considerably reduce the risk of shortages caused by disruptions in importation or domestic distribution – this reflects Nigeria's investment in modern infrastructure that meets global standards and will enhance the overall capacity of Nigeria's energy sector.

In addition, it is expected that the Civil Aviation Order 2024 – NCAA/CAO/2024/001 and the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2024 will promote the implementation of stricter protocols on aircraft maintenance, crew training, and emergency procedures, ensuring the seamless investigation of air accidents and incidents within Nigeria's airspace or involving Nigerian-registered aircraft abroad respectively.



With respect to railways, the revenue generation of ₦1.70 billion by the Nigerian rail system in passenger patronage and the significant increase in transportation of goods, within the 3rd quarter of 2024, is a testament of the Federal Government's efforts to optimise the use of the Nigerian railway to facilitate economic growth and development, it is hoped that the revenue will continue to increase in 2025 as the government continues to encourage rail transportation in addition to addressing security concerns in relation to it. Furthermore, it is hoped that the inauguration of the Lagos Redline and the commencement of its operations will considerably reduce traffic congestion in the metropolitan city of Lagos, boost economic activities in Nigeria, and set a standard for future rail projects across Nigeria. With the significant fund allocated to various rail projects in 2024, it is anticipated that upon completion of the rail projects, Nigerians nationwide will have increased accessibility to cost effective transportation and enhanced productivity for daily commuters. In addition, the Nigerian Railway Corporation's landmark grant of a three-year license for the operation of freight services on the Lagos-Ibadan railway will significantly improve freight movement, decongest road networks, revitalise the Nigerian rail sector, and improve Nigeria's competitiveness in regional and international trade.

With regards to Road transport, the commencement of the 700 km Lagos-Calabar Coastal Road construction is a transformative infrastructure project with significant implications for Nigeria's economy, regional integration, and socio-economic development. The road which connects major coastal cities such as Lagos, Port Harcourt, and Calabar, will considerably foster greater economic and social integration among Nigeria's southern states. Additionally, by connecting key ports, industrial hubs, and commercial centres, the road project will considerably enhance the movement of goods and services, thereby fostering trade and economic growth. Further, the approval of several road projects across Nigeria underscores the Federal Government's commitment to improving the nationwide infrastructure deficits and challenges.

Although the Nigerian transport industry plays a crucial role in the nation's economy, the sector still faces significant challenges that hinder its efficiency and development for example, the high operating costs due to the inflating economy and the insecurity challenges across the various sectors impose an impediment to the seamless operations. It is hoped that in 2025, with ongoing initiatives and potential developments in the maritime, aviation, railway, and road sectors, the Nigerian transportation industry will considerably experience significant growth that will critically impact the nation's economy.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Advance Passenger Information (API)

Data provided by airlines to immigration authorities before flight departure and after flight closure to enhance border security and control.

Air Operator Certificate (AOC)

A certification issued by a civil aviation authority that allows an airline or aircraft operator to conduct commercial air transport operations.

Airport Council International (ACI)

A global organization representing airports worldwide, promoting best practices in airport management, safety, and sustainability.

Aviation Working Group (AWG)

A private sector organization focused on improving financing and leasing laws related to aircraft assets globally.

Cabotage

The transportation of goods or passengers between two places in the same country by a foreign vessel. In Nigeria, cabotage laws regulate the use of foreign-owned vessels in coastal trade.

Cape Town Convention (CTC)

An international treaty designed to standardize transactions involving movable assets, particularly aircraft, by protecting creditors and reducing financial risks.

Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2024

A regulation enacted by the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) to govern the investigation of air accidents and incidents, ensuring compliance with ICAO Annex 13 standards.

Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA)

A written contract negotiated between employers and a union representing workers, outlining terms of employment such as wages, working conditions, and benefits.

Electronic Tags (E-tags)

Digital access passes affixed to vehicles for automated entry into airports, improving traffic flow and revenue collection.

Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN)

The agency responsible for managing and operating all federal airports in Nigeria.

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)

A specialized UN agency that establishes global aviation safety, security, and environmental standards.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code

An international framework developed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to enhance security measures for ships and port facilities.

Irrevocable Deregistration and Export Request Authorization (IDERA)

A legal document under the Cape Town Convention that allows aircraft lessors to deregister and reclaim aircraft if a lessee defaults on lease payments.

Maritime Air Surveillance

The use of aircraft for monitoring maritime activities, enforcing laws, and conducting search-and-rescue operations.

Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (MLC 2006)

An international convention adopted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) that sets minimum working and living standards for seafarers.

National Executive Safety Committee (NESC)

A high-level aviation safety committee responsible for overseeing Nigeria's State Safety Programme (SSP) and improving aviation safety performance.

Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA)

The agency responsible for providing air traffic management services and ensuring the safety of Nigeria's airspace.

Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA)

The regulatory agency responsible for ensuring compliance with civil aviation laws, safety protocols, and international aviation standards.

Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT)

A premier aviation training institution in Nigeria, providing education and certification for aviation professionals.

Nigerian Coast Guard

A proposed enforcement agency tasked with securing Nigeria's maritime zones, protecting national interests, and assisting in marine safety and navigation.

Nigerian Coast Guard Bill, 2024

A proposed law seeking to establish the Nigerian Coast Guard as a specialized service under the Nigerian Navy during wartime and as a maritime enforcement agency under the Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in peacetime.

Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS)

The agency tasked with border control, including processing Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data for flights..



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Nigerian Marine Corps

A proposed security entity focused on maritime safety, pollution control, coastal surveillance, and oil and gas infrastructure protection.

Nigerian Marine Corps Bill, 2024

A proposed law aimed at establishing the Nigerian Marine Corps for maritime security, coordination of the International Ship and Port Security (ISPS) Code, and protection of national maritime infrastructure.

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA)

The federal agency overseeing maritime safety, security, and environmental regulation in Nigeria's territorial waters.

Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA)

The government agency responsible for managing and regulating ports in Nigeria, overseeing infrastructure development and operational efficiency.

Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB)

The national body responsible for conducting independent air accident investigations, ensuring aviation safety improvements rather than apportioning blame or liability.

Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC)

The economic regulator of Nigerian ports, responsible for ensuring fair pricing, efficiency, and stakeholder protection in shipping and port services.

Passenger Name Record (PNR)

A record of travel information on passengers, including itinerary and personal details, required to be submitted to the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS) at three stages: 24 hours before departure, one hour before departure, and immediately after flight closure.

Port Community System (PCS)

A digital platform that facilitates the exchange of information among stakeholders in a port, improving efficiency in cargo clearance and logistics.

Port Concession

The transfer of port operations from government management to private operators under a long-term agreement, aimed at improving efficiency and investment in infrastructure.

Port Rehabilitation

The process of upgrading and modernizing port infrastructure to improve efficiency, accommodate larger vessels, and enhance trade facilitation.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Private Non-Commercial Flight (PNCF)

A flight operated for private purposes rather than for commercial passenger or cargo transport.

Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS)

Drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) controlled remotely, used for various applications, including surveillance, delivery, and filmmaking.

State Safety Programme (SSP)

A framework established by ICAO and implemented by national aviation authorities to improve safety oversight and risk management in the aviation sector.

Very High Frequency Data Exchange System (VDES)

A digital communication system used for maritime operations, enabling vessel-to-vessel and vessel-to-land communication for enhanced safety and security.

VIP Parking Tag

A specialized e-tag that grants vehicles access to VIP parking areas at airports.

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