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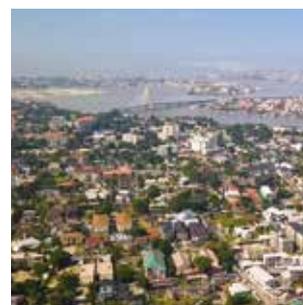


“Nigeria is so peculiar and dramatic. Even talking about the potentials before we talk about the negativities, Nigeria is a nation for perpetual study. I think in Nigeria, it is the potential which hits people and makes them believe in Nigeria.”
Wole Soyinka,
Playwright,
Poet and Nobel Prize
Laureate

I came across this quote during my first months in Nigeria, back in 2009. I had grown up as a disciple of Winston Churchill, utilising his positive and inspirational words to drive me forward during every challenge that I faced. However, the words of Soyinka struck me deeply and I began to look at Nigeria in a whole new light.

I began to immerse myself within the culture, cuisine and the spiritual side of the nation. With this, I saw the potential in myself and saw that Nigeria truly is a land of opportunities. During my time in Nigeria, I met my wife who gave birth to our first daughter here and we began our life together. I feel that I owe a great debt to the country. I may be Austro-Brazilian but I'll always have Nigeria in my heart.

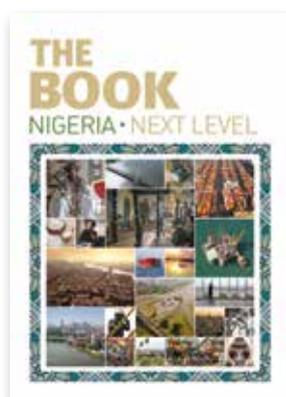
This source book, and our documentary that was released in April 2019, are our small attempts to repay the country by showcasing to the world the potential of this beautiful land. I believe in Nigeria and like Wole Soyinka, see it as an evolving nation for perpetual study. I hope that *Nigeria: Next Level* provides you with a strong example of the country's potential and makes you too, **believe in Nigeria.**



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Taking Nigeria To The Next Level

Bold economic policies and a vigorous reform drive revive and revitalise Nigeria's economic growth momentum and help transform its immense potential to wealth.

As sub-Saharan Africa's largest economy and Africa's biggest oil exporter with the largest gas reserves on the continent, it may come as a surprise to learn that Nigeria's economic growth in recent years has also been driven by growth in agriculture, telecommunications and services. In 2017, under President Muhammadu Buhari administration and direction, the nation managed to emerge triumphantly from the recession brought on by the crash in oil prices and production, but, as the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) has since pointed out, improved oil performance was by no means the sole cause for Nigeria's economic recovery. The optimisation and implementation of policies and reforms in agriculture, manufacturing and trade sectors has been key to securing the boost in the nation's economic growth. President Buhari explains: "We rolled up our sleeves, and went to work. We invested massively in agriculture, focused on mining, and gave manufacturing some incentives. We launched the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), kept our focus, hunched and utilised funds judiciously, and gradually, the

economy started to respond, until it eventually came out of recession." By 2018, GDP growth had increased to 1.9% and was more inclusive; currently GDP has an estimated growth projection of 2.3% in 2019 and 2.6% in 2020.

Empowering Nigeria's Economy

In April 2017, Buhari launched the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) 2017-2020. Its primary objective was to restore growth and build a globally competitive economy through investment in infrastructure and the creation of an enabling business environment. Under an umbrella framework, incorporating 60 national development strategies, the ERGP focuses upon infrastructure, industrial and power sector development and is committed to the investment in human capital, while moving the nation away from an import dependent predicament. The plan also hinges upon the promotion of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to push the nation towards a more knowledge-based economy. Over the past few years, power, road and rail projects



“Nigeria was ranked among the top 100 countries in business dynamism and as one of the most entrepreneurial countries in the world.”
PEBEC report on Ease of Doing Business Outlook 2019

have been built, industries have decentralised the power supply by leveraging off-grid solutions, including climate friendly solar-based systems while expanding national accessibility to broadband. Campaigns, such as the ‘Made in Nigeria’ scheme, have also been key to diversification and industrialisation; promoting local products as an alternative to imported products in order to guarantee authentic sustainable economic growth in the long-term.

Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria, Godwin Emefiele, has secured the stability of the naira through efficient handling of governmental exchange rate and currency policy. In Governor Emefiele’s own words: “At the CBN we consider ourselves agents of development. While we use both our traditional policies (monetary and exchange rate) to support the structural rebalancing of the Nigerian economy, our development finance initiatives are targeted at directly boosting domestic productive capacity and creating jobs.” The Investors and Exporters (I&E) forex window launched in April 2018, allows investors and exporters to purchase and sell foreign exchange at the highest market rate and in February 2019, had attracted US\$50 billion into the economy. CBN has consequently been able to increase its loans for governmental schemes, such as the Anchor Borrowers Programme, Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme and the Real Sector Support Facility.

Reforms To Revive Growth

“Improving the business environment is at the heart of the Buhari Administration’s reform agenda,” states Vice President Yemi Osinbajo. “Our focus remains firmly on ensuring that SMEs operating in Nigeria find it easier to do business.” In 2017, Nigeria moved up by an unprecedented 24 places in the Ease of Doing Business rankings; working its way up towards its goal to become a top 100 ranked economy by 2020, and one of the top 70 doing business destinations by 2023. President Buhari’s deliberate appointment of a cabinet of economic (and technocrat) ministers aims to ensure the promotion of transparency while aligning itself with diversification strategies in fiscal management and in encouraging private sector investment. In August 2015, President Buhari implemented a Treasury Single Account (TSA), consolidating 20,000 government bank accounts into a unified, transparent system; the government has also carried out a number of institutional and governance reforms which have secured the implementation of the Integrated Financial Management and Information System and the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System, while the ratification of the Secured Transactions in Movable Assets Act 2017 has provided favourable circumstances for SME loans. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), Executive Chairman, Babatunde Fowler drives diversification of the nation’s economy through the implementation of initiatives which improve tax compliance and collection. “The only way to improve the standard of living of the people is to continue to create an environment good for business and good for living,” states Fowler. “Key to this is convenience and transparency.” Further reforms have been implemented by the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) for a new electronic platform integrating tax authority and Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). According to the PEBEC report on the Ease of Doing Business 2019 outlook, over the past three years there have been over 140 reforms that aim to remove bureaucratic constraints to doing business in Nigeria. The report states that: “Nigeria was ranked among the top 100 countries in business dynamism and as one of the most entrepreneurial countries in the world, according to the World Economic Forum.” The World Bank of Doing Business has recently announced that out of 190 countries, Nigeria is amongst the top-20 improvers in doing business.

In September 2019, President Buhari put together a star cast eight-man economic advisory team. According to presidential spokesperson, Femi Adesina the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) will: “advise the President on economic policy matters, including fiscal analysis, economic growth and a range of internal and global economic issues, working with the relevant cabinet members and heads of monetary and fiscal agencies.” This will encourage the conversation to open up, deepen and think outside the box for solutions in securing Nigeria’s rapid economic growth.

Economic confidence has found fertile and solid ground in Nigeria and, as the economy stretches, grows and strengthens under Buhari’s administration, an auspicious outlook of a continued prosperous, transparent and thriving future is being positively projected. ■

A Quick Look At The Land Of The Super Eagles

A key regional player in West Africa, Nigeria accounts for about half of region's population with approximately 202 million people and one of the largest populations of youth in the world.

Known as the Giant of Africa, everything in Nigeria is done on a grand scale. With every one in five Africans hailing from the land of the Super Eagles, Nigeria dominates the dialogue on the African continent. A country full of life, vibrant cultures and a zest for life, the Nigerian lifestyle and economy pulsates with energy, vitality and creativity.

Situated in Western Africa, bordering the Gulf of Guinea, between Benin and Cameroon, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is Africa's most populous country. Abuja is the capital of the democratic secular country which is comprised of 36 states. With just around 200 million people, it possesses the largest large population and economy on the continent. In regards to religion, the Christians live primarily in the northern part while the Muslims, who represent half of the population, reside in the southern part. Inhabited by over 500 ethnic groups, largest being the Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba, there are over 500 languages spoken, with English being the official language.



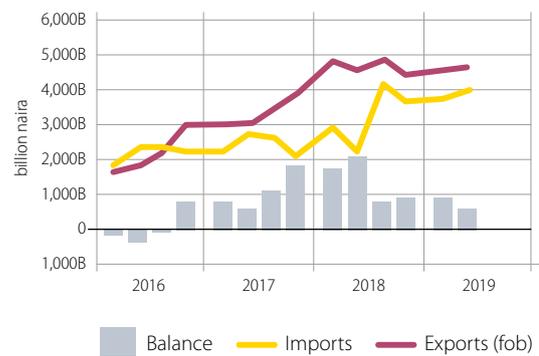
Real Gross Domestic Product

Source: Economic Outlook for Nigeria, 2011-2019



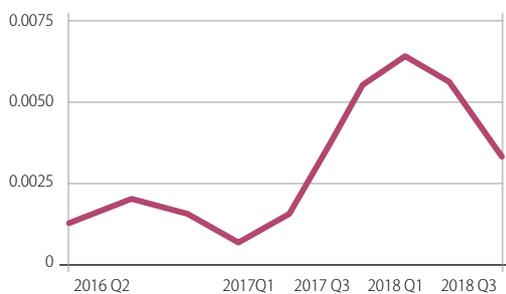
Monthly Trade Summary

Source: Economic Outlook for Nigeria, 2016-2019



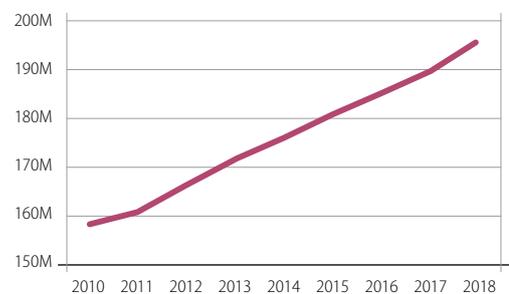
Foreign Direct Investment Inflow (millions \$US)

Source: Nigerian Capital Importation (Q3 2018)

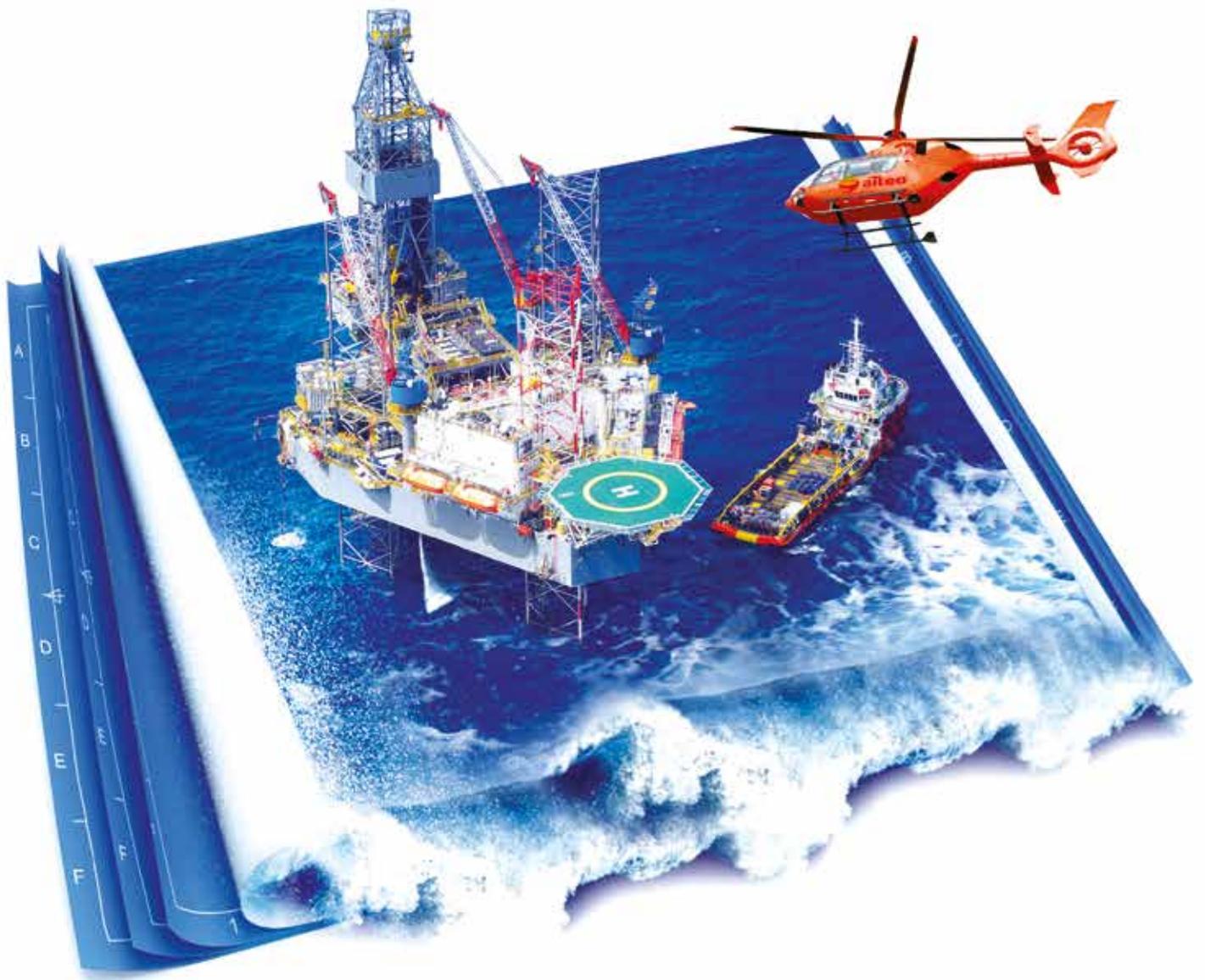


Population (millions)

Source: data.worldbank.org



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From Obasanjo to Buhari

Twenty Years Of Democratic Rule In Nigeria

Nigeria transitioned from military to civilian rule in 1999. The transition was the result of a bargain struck by an elite faction over 1998 and 1999, following the death of Sani Abacha. Among the principal ideas was that the presidency would alternate every eight years between the south and the north. A corollary was that if the presidential nominee was Christian, then the vice presidential nominee would be Muslim, and vice versa. This provision was never a matter of law, but it was incorporated into the rules of the soon-to-be-governing People's Democratic Party (PDP). The other major political party, now the All Progressives Congress, never formally adopted the principle.

Current incumbent President Muhammadu Buhari was the first opposition candidate to win the presidency through the ballot box. While he is just at the beginning of his second term in office, the expectation is that in 2023, after eight years of a northern, Muslim presidency, it will be the turn of southern Christians.

Let's take a look at the past 20 years of democratic rule through the reigns of four Nigerian presidents: Olusegun Obasanjo, Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, Goodluck Jonathan and Muhammadu Buhari and how their legacies shaped the Nigeria of today.

8

NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



"My joy knows no bounds... I will devote all my energy and all the powers available to me to the service of Nigeria and humanity."

■ OLUSEGUN OBASANJO (1999 – 2007)

The history of Nigeria is incomplete without mention of Obasanjo. At critical moments in the life of the country, fate had always brought him into the limelight for meaningful intervention. Olusegun Obasanjo was born outside Abeokuta in the ethnic Yoruba heartland. He rose to prominence through army ranks after being trained in the UK. He served in the United Nations' first ever peacekeeping force, during the Congo crisis in 1960, and after returning to Nigeria led federal troops in the battle that ended the Biafran civil war. He became head of state in 1976 after Murtala Muhammed, to whom he was deputy, was killed in a botched coup. In 1979, Obasanjo supervised the self-liquidation of acquired power, thereby emerging as the first military Head of State to relinquish power to civilians.

Twenty years later, in 1999, following years of coups, counter-coups and military misrule, he was encouraged to stand for election and was propelled back to presidency. Nigeria was threatening to break apart again at that moment in history and at the time of his swearing-in in 1999, many Nigerians were cynical about the chances of the government lasting this long. Thus, Obasanjo's very first action in office was the unexpected but tactical retirement of all military chiefs and their immediate replacement. That action was followed by the retirement of all military officers who had held political appointments in the preceding military regime. The steps were widely applauded and they sent a clear message to the barracks and officers' messes that the military must henceforth subject itself to control by civil government. For the first time since independence in 1960, Nigeria had democratic governance for eight uninterrupted years.

Affectionately known as Baba, Obasanjo became a critical moral voice of sorts. He played a crucial role in the international community and was sent to troubled spots across the globe to solve problems of civil/military relations. He became the curator of democratic projects in Africa. More importantly, he restored Nigeria's influence, as the Giant of Africa, on the continent and the world. To add to this, he steered Nigeria through precarious times, wiping out its once crippling external debt and unleashed some of its business potential. However left office in 2007, handing over power to Umaru Yar'Adua, somewhat unfavourably for not fully eliminating the unprincipled political culture he had sought to destroy. To this day, he remains the longest serving Nigerian leader and continues to play a pivotal role as influencer and critic in today's political arena. ■

■ UMARU YAR'ADUA (2007 – 2010)

The election of President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua made history in Nigeria, as it was the first time that a democratically elected president handed over power to another democratically elected president. Conversely, from the moment he entered office in May 2007, it was obvious that Yar'Adua would not face an easy time. Dubbed by the Nigerian press as 'Baba Go Slow,' in reference to the country's infamous traffic jams, Yar'Adua spent much of his time highlighting his differences from his predecessor.

Legal challenges to his legitimacy as president immediately hindered any major policymaking early in his presidency. This had an adverse effect on investor confidence and damaged Nigeria's position as a major continental player, undoing much of Obasanjo's economic diplomacy. Additionally, Yar'Adua revoked several of the 'oil for infrastructure' deals brokered by Obasanjo. With several of the Asian companies involved failing to deliver on their promises, Yar'Adua's attempts to improve the erratic electricity supply fell flat.

Socio-economic reforms were undertaken but a serious banking scandal hit Nigeria in 2009, and the Central Bank was forced to bail out nine major Nigerian banks. Religious and ethnic tensions escalated in Nigeria's volatile middle belt, and violence continued among militants in the oil producing Niger Delta region. Nevertheless, he should be remembered for aiming to bring about peace in the Niger Delta through an amnesty and credited with appointing a visionary Central Bank Governor, Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, whose programme of reforms helped clean up and energise Nigeria's thriving banking sector.

The announcement of his death in 2010 did not come as a surprise to his people, as his poor health was a major feature of his short-lived presidency. His three month absence following his travels to Saudi Arabia for medical treatment in 2009, left Nigeria without a leader as he failed to hand over executive powers to his deputy, Goodluck Jonathan. Sadly, most people will probably remember his inability to truly reach out to the Nigerian people. During his absence and unfortunate death, a political and legal struggle ensued until Goodluck Jonathan was eventually given clearance to assume the role of Acting President in February 2010. ■



"We must see today's challenges as veritable opportunities waiting to be translated into stepping stones to an assured destiny of peace, progress and prosperity."

■ GOODLUCK JONATHAN (2010 – 2015)

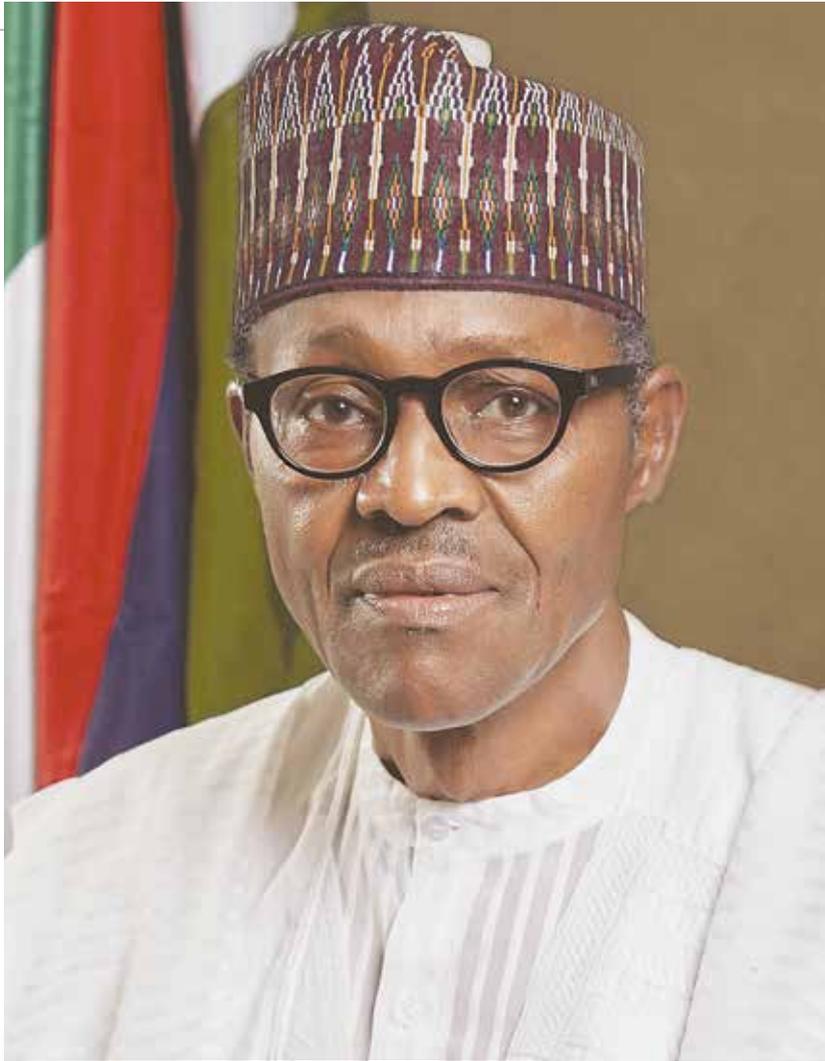
An accidental president living up to his namesake, Goodluck Jonathan inherited a nation in mourning and a fresh set of challenges ahead. In 2011, Jonathan surprised many observers in and out of Nigeria by securing the ruling party's support for another term and ultimately winning the general election. The five years of Jonathan's presence as chief of the governance of Nigeria remains a solid era of the country's economic transformation into the largest economy in Africa. Primarily, he stabilised the polity and modernised the country's rail system which had been comatose for nearly thirty years, and started the present modernisation scheme which was 68% completed on some lines. Nevertheless, his tenure will mostly be characterised by soaring unemployment, increased instability in northern Nigeria as Boko Haram gained strength and territory, and a widespread perception that public funds were improperly placed.

During the presidential elections of March 2015, Jonathan conceded electoral defeat to Muhammadu Buhari, an unprecedented and courageous act in Nigerian politics, which caught many Nigerians and Nigeria-watchers by surprise. Famously stating, "I've always affirmed, nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian," he became the first sitting president to be ousted by the ballot box. Since then the Bayelsa-born politician has reiterated that his personal loss in the 2015 presidential election is a win for Nigeria, due to the improved electoral system he ensured came to fruition during his time in power.

By refusing to cling to power illegitimately, Goodluck Jonathan altered the course of Nigerian history. By doing so, he also created a surprising new future and legacy for himself. Since his concession, the former president has experienced a renaissance as a senior statesman, being honoured with international awards and invited to deliver keynote remarks at global conferences on everything from peace building to improving educational opportunities. ■



"I've always affirmed, nobody's ambition is worth the blood of any Nigerian."



“The work of making Nigeria great is not yet done, because I still believe that change is possible, this time through the ballot, and most importantly, because I still have the capacity and the passion to dream and work for a Nigeria that will be respected again in the comity of nations and that all Nigerians will be proud of.”

Muhammadu Buhari,
President of Nigeria

MUHAMMADU BUHARI (2015 – PRESENT)

Before winning in 2015, the 77-year-old former army general and self-styled ‘converted democrat’ had tried three times to become president since Nigeria’s return to democracy in 1999. Born in the northern state of Katsina, Buhari was Nigeria’s military ruler from December 1983 to August 1985, after he ousted elected president Shehu Shagari. Thanks in part to a campaign run upon change and accountability, he swept to power on a wave of optimism in 2015, becoming the first opposition candidate in Nigerian history to defeat a sitting president.

During his first four years in office, there were concerns about his fragile health, his economic policies, the extent of his claims about better security, as well as the targets of his campaign against graft. Much like former President Yar’Adua, he was also dubbed ‘Baba Go Slow’ for taking six months to appoint cabinet ministers. His health presented a major concern, spending six months receiving treatment for an undisclosed illness as Nigeria moved out of its recession. Working to diversify Nigeria’s economy away from oil, Buhari prioritised the agricultural sector as a way to boost growth. However, the country’s hard work was hampered by escalating clashes with Fulani herdsmen across the country’s heartland. Nevertheless, under his stewardship, Nigeria has become the largest rice producer in Africa.

Campaigning early on with an anti-corruption message that ‘Change Begins with Me,’ Buhari was heralded for recovering stolen public funds and bringing those responsible to justice. Furthermore, he has had much better success at taming rampaging Boko Haram insurgents, which during the previous administration controlled swathes of territory in the country’s northeast. Similarly, he has brought home 107 of the 219 schoolgirls kidnapped from Chibok that brought world attention to the conflict and contributed to Jonathan’s downfall.

Winning re-election in early 2019, he moves forward on a similar path, striving to bring Nigeria to the ‘next level’ both in terms of economics and social welfare. He continues to warn his people against “quick fixes or shortcuts” to Nigeria’s problem however with his last term in office, his job now is to lay a solid foundation for the future of Nigeria. Nigeria’s future needs to be youth driven; guided through infrastructural development, technology, agriculture and energy projects that will lay the foundation for a new modern country. Nigeria has already maintained democracy for two decades now, it’s only right to continue on this path towards its next level. ■





Nigerian Cities

12

A History Of Africa's Big Apple

The dynamic economic powerhouse of the continent, Lagos is rising up with an innovative and ambitious vision to pave the way for national development, growth and vibrancy.

NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Lagos is the world's fastest growing city, with an increase in population growth from 1.4 million in 1970, to an estimated mind-boggling 21 million today, heralding it as the most populous city in the whole of Africa. According to data from the United Nations, the population in Lagos is predicted to increase by 77 people every hour from 2010 to 2030, and is set to be the largest city in the world by 2100. With thousands of people pouring into the city every day, in search of opportunity and a better life, Lagos is making sure that it can accommodate and sustain the influx, and have fun while they're doing it.

Out of Nigeria's 36 states, Lagos has always been the nation's centre of power. It has been demonstrated that if Lagos was a country, it would be among Africa's largest economies; indeed its economy is currently larger than the whole of Kenya's put together.

Initially emerging as a port city, Lagos has been always been a land for traders and settlers with a tendency towards industrialism. Currently, it is the largest and busiest seaport on the continent, with its main hubs of commerce and financial business located on the two small islands of Lagos and Victoria, where headquarters for the majority

of national and international commercial banks, financial institutions and major corporations have been set up and consolidated.

Political competence and efficient guidance have been key drivers to the city's growth and economic stability. Governors, such as Bola Tinubu to Babatunde Fashola (Nigeria's current Minister of Works and Houses), Akinwunmi Ambode and present incumbent, Babajibe Sanwo-Olu have been driving the same productive vision and political machine towards modernisation and progress. Their forward-thinking leadership has placed infrastructure development of the fastest growing city at the forefront of all their policies. With an emphasis upon private-sector input, the city has been transformed physically and productively, providing a dynamic contribution to Nigeria's economy. Since 2007, development of Lagos' urban infrastructure really took off, new power plants, Africa's first suspension bridge, roads, highways, skyscrapers and bridges have been built, metamorphosing Lagos into the megacity it is today. Fiscal security has also been restored via effective tax implementation put into place by Lagos Internal Revenue Service (LIRS), leading the city to



With an emphasis upon private-sector input, the city has been transformed physically and productively, providing a dynamic contribution to Nigeria's economy.

outperform every other state in Nigeria and providing it with the capital to invest in infrastructure.

Lekki's free trade zone on the peninsula to Lagos' mainland is symbolic of the city's innovative vision and enterprising attitude. A modern city within a city, Lekki FTZ aims to integrate industries, commerce, business, real estate development, warehousing, logistics, tourism and entertainment all within one area. Due to tax incentives, Dangote, Africa's richest man and a Lagosian resident, is building Dangote's Refinery at the Olojola Liquefied Natural Gas (OKLNG) free trade zone in Lekki. Projected to be the largest oil refinery in the world, once operational the refinery has the potential to completely transform the face of Nigeria's economy forever.

Lagos has reinvented itself; an attractive and important destination for investors and visitors the world over. It has helped reverse diaspora, and as the biggest ICT hub in West Africa with a 24-hour economy, it offers possibilities to ambitious entrepreneurs. Reputed to be a city of millionaires, expanding banking, telecommunications and service sector have broadened Lagos' middle class, injecting hope and positivity into its surroundings. "Lagos is like a single market in Nigeria and its melting pot," explains Chairman of FIRS, Dr Babatunde Fowler. "People from all over the country have found a very conducive environment for business and for living."

The city that rose from the sea

The Eko Atlantic scheme is another ambitious project currently underway in Lagos which encapsulates an innovative and futuristic vision, not only for Nigeria but the whole of Africa. Eko Atlantic is a privately funded multi-billion dollar project which has turned back time on 100 years of coastal erosion, and extended the coastline by two kilometres offshore, through the building of a new peninsula upon a vast area of land from the Atlantic Ocean. The project provides a powerful resounding

solution to Lagos' growing population, as well as supporting its ambitious dreams. Ten new city districts will be built with luxurious and iconic commercial, residential and recreational buildings with their own independent power, water, fibre optics and drainage systems. Its objective is to become Nigeria's, and indeed the whole of West Africa's, future financial hub whose Eko Boulevard will be on a par with New York's Fifth Avenue.

Cultural capital and powerhouse

Alongside Lagos' financial hub, a growing, vibrant and colourful cultural scene has been injecting life into the city for decades, simultaneously filling in the gap in Nigeria's culture-tourism market. Known for being a cosmopolitan city with a vibrant and thriving music, fashion and film scene that resonates around the continent and beyond, Lagos has also been labelled as Africa's capital for the arts and the city that never sleeps. Indeed, Lagos teems with life and energy, proffering a rich variety of restaurants and music clubs, as well as being home to the National Arts Theatre, the primary centre for performing arts and artistes in Nigeria. Lagos also hosts a number of important, influential and trend-setting arts events such as the Lagos Fashion Week, LagosPhoto Festival and the Ake Arts and Book Festival which moved from Abeokuta to Lagos in 2018, upping attendance by 18%. Other festivals include the Eyo Festival, Festac Food Fair, Eko International Film Festival and Lagos Jazz Series.

Dreaming Big

Originally inhabited by the Awori group of the Yoruba people, today Lagos is a cosmopolitan and multi-ethnic diverse place, known as one of the safest cities in Nigeria. People live in complete harmony and security in this dynamic global city buzzing with optimism and aspirations, Lagos is Nigeria's throbbing heart, a model mega-city for Africa, and a city like no other. ■

Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos

A Man With A Golden Vision

“Let our time be proclaimed in golden celebration of a state, and of a people who stood in unity of purpose to make their home a Greater one.”

Babajide Sanwo-Olu, Governor of Lagos

In May 2019, Babajide Sanwo-Olu's was sworn in as Governor of Lagos and a new chapter for the state began. A technocrat, Sanwo-Olu's overlying mission is to power Lagos into being a 21st century economy through a technological drive and an emphasis in the renewal and development of public infrastructure in order to achieve a 'Greater Lagos.' Encapsulating the demands and needs to drive Lagos' economic policies, the Governor established his Six Pillars of Development with the acronym T.H.E.M.E.S: Traffic Management and Transportation, Health and Environment, Education and Technology, Making Lagos a 21st Century Economy, Entertainment and Tourism, and Security and Governance. Key to achieving the goals of the vision are Lagosian's needs and demands, as well as the importance of the city to pull together, with everyone unravelling and carrying out their own personal role in the city's development.



called the 'Healthy Bee Project' was launched in August 2019. Disadvantaged children were provided with access to quality medical care during this time, with volunteer teams of specialised doctors treating over 25,000 Lagosians, while performing 1,417 surgeries.

In order to resolve Lagos' waste disposal system, Governor Sanwo-Olu has launched the Blue Box initiative. This programme consists in providing residents with black and blue containers, the blue box being for recyclables. "The experience of the past dictated the need to explore efficient techniques in line with our 'Smart City' aspiration," states Sanwo-Olu. "Rather than being a burden on us, we want to create wealth through the new techniques and generate jobs for our youths." By 2021, the state aims to reduce waste disposal by 50% through this circular economy and there are also plans to expand the Oluosun dumpsite by 42 acres.

Traffic Management and Transportation

Since the Governor's inauguration, roads in Lagos have been rehabilitated and his administration has declared its commitment to funding the completion of the 27.1 kilometre Blue Rail line from Okokomaiko to the coast. Sanwo-olu is also concerned with developing water transportation as a means to decongesting roads. In October 2019, the UberBOAT initiative was launched and aims at providing commuters with easy routes to and from the city's business districts.

Health and Environment

Governor Sanwo-Olu's endorses medical advancement in technology as a means of betterment for healthcare delivery, the state government supports initiatives which support better accessibility, particularly for quality healthcare. In regards to this, a new four-floored 110-bed complex Maternal and Childcare Centre (MCC) was recently opened in Eti-Osa, in order to curb infant and maternal mortality, while a free four-week healthcare programme

Education and Technology

Following an assessment of public schools, Sanwo Olu has called for the recruitment of 15,000 school teachers and a new 12 block school has been built. The state's focus upon advocating technical education aims at preparing its youths for the ever-evolving technological future, and encourages creativity in innovation and start-ups as a means to generate jobs.

Making Lagos a 21st Century Economy, Entertainment and Tourism, Security and Governance

Governor Sanwo-Olu's passionate strategic focus pivots upon the concept of carving Lagos into becoming a model mega city and global economic and financial hub, creating the enabling business environment necessary to sustain private sector partnerships to thrust Lagos into the limelight. Indeed, in only a short period of time, rapid development has been made towards building Lagos' new tomorrow, leapfrogging the dream, to rapidly reach the city's awakening. ■



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Abuja

Constructing Nigeria's New Capital

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16

NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Located at the very heart of Nigeria, on the grass covered Chukuku Hills, Abuja is the first, and so far only, purpose-built capital city in Africa. Its construction began in the early 1980s, and on 12 December 1991, Abuja officially inherited from Lagos the mantle of Federal Capital of Nigeria. The bold decision of relocating the capital to the exact geographical centre of the country stemmed from symbolic and strategic concerns: its geographical location grants Abuja, the first planned city ever built in Nigeria, unparalleled ease of access and quick connections to and from the country's other major centres. More specifically, the Federal Capital is served by several major expressways and by the Nmandi Azikiwe International Airport, which offers flights from first-class airlines such as Ethiopian Airlines, Lufthansa, KLM, Turkish Airlines and British Airways.

Standing at a height of 360 metres above sea level, Abuja enjoys a salubrious climate, with a much lower degree of humidity compared to coastal centres like Lagos. Downtown Abuja accommodates a lively business district, as well as all major Nigerian institutions, and sports all the distinctive hallmarks of a modern yet human-sized city envisioned since its conception to become the herald of Nigerian peace, unity and democracy: the National

Mosque and the National Christian Centre, for instance, are located within a 15-minute walk from one another, witnessing the plurality and open nature of Nigerian people. The mosque's mesmerising golden dome, surrounded by its four minarets, dominate the skyline of central Abuja: the religious centre is open to non-Muslims at all times except during prayers, and the premises house a library, a conference hall and a school.

The immediate outskirts of the city centre host a wide variety of residential districts with parks, shopping centres and all sorts of urban amenities, like the 60,000-seater Moshood Abiola National Stadium, home of the Nigerian national football team and multipurpose venue for a vast array of social, cultural and religious events. Back in the Central Business District, among towering modern hotels and corporate buildings, lies the surprising Arts and Crafts Village, a market dedicated to traditional African crafts, with small rows of small shopping outlets encased in traditional huts. Locals and travellers wander beneath the lush exotic trees looking for all kinds of hidden gems: pottery, fabrics, beads, paintings, carvings and so much more.

On the easternmost side of the Central Business District, at the very end of Constitution Avenue and Independence Avenue, the two main parallel arteries that intersect downtown Abuja, the bustling business centre makes way to the green-coloured Three Arms Zone, the district that houses the headquarters of the three branches of the government (hence the name): the National Assembly, the Supreme Court and the Presidential Complex are all within walking distance from one another. Nigeria's judiciary and body politic are in close contact with Mother Nature: enclosed between the Three Arms Zone and the A234 is the National Arboretum of Nigeria, a 100-hectare area envisioned to maintain the forest to its pristine and original condition. The unparalleled flora and fauna inhabiting the Arboretum are protected by a dedicated fence, and the area is accessible by special permit only.

Its geographical location grants Abuja, the first planned city ever built in Nigeria, unparalleled ease of access and quick connections to and from the country's other major centres.



The mosque's mesmerising golden dome, surrounded by its four minarets, dominate the skyline of central Abuja.

Abuja, besides, has no shortage of public parks, the largest being Millennium Park, with its over 32 hectares of extension. Commissioned in 2004, by Queen Elizabeth II, Head of the Commonwealth, and designed by Italian architect Manfredi Nicoletti, Millennium Park sits peacefully in the Maitama district, and has rapidly become one of Abuja's chief attractions. Each day, crowds of locals and foreigners alike enjoy pleasant strolls along the park's sweet walkways, punctuated with fountains and equipped with efficient night lighting. Many of them also choose the park as the venue for relaxing picnics for family and friends. The park is a safe haven for a great deal of bird species that travel into Abuja from the surrounding hills by following the course of the river Wupa, making Millennium Park a must-see attraction for any bird lover.

This should not come as a surprise: the Federal Capital was built in the sure knowledge that human beings are mere guests of this planet, and Abuja lives in absolute harmony with its surroundings, as evidenced by the ever-present familiar silhouette of Aso Rock, a large granitic rock located in the outskirts of Abuja, peaking at a height of 936 metres above sea level. A characteristic feature of Abuja's skyline, the Rock watches over the Federal Capital, reassuring its residents with its kind and silent presence; symbolising the allegiance between nature and human beings represented by Abuja, the city that was built to become capital of a great and prosperous country. ■



Ibadan

The Cradle Of The Pacesetter State

One of Nigeria's key transit hubs, the Oyo State capital is hell-bent on strengthening its role as key economic centre.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



With an estimated population of over three million inhabitants, Ibadan is the most populous city in Oyo State, as well as one of the most populous in Nigeria as a whole. Located in the south-western region of the country, about 530 km from Federal Capital Abuja, Ibadan is a key transit point, a veritable hub situated along the highways that connect the coastal regions with the inner areas of Nigeria.

The origins of the city as we know it date back to the mid-1800s, when a humble military camp evolved into a powerful and increasingly urbanised Yoruba trading post. The city's fortunes continued under the British colonial rule: in the early 20th century Ibadan was connected to the blossoming railway network of Nigeria, thus retaining its role as a strategic junction and economic centre. This ever-growing metropolis remains a vital commercial hub to this day, with the extensive city centre literally teeming with lively markets and commercial outlets of all sorts, from the innermost and oldest core of the city to the newer, constantly expanding suburbs.

Despite its astounding size and its economic prowess, Ibadan prides itself to be an extremely pleasant city to live in: residents and travellers alike can enjoy a wide choice of shopping venues, restaurants and public parks. The most illustrious example of the latter category are the impressive Agodi Gardens, located in north-eastern Ibadan. With their over 60 hectares of extension, the Agodi Gardens are no regular city park: their verdant areas are filled with lush exotic trees, luxurious walkways, large terraced lawns and even a water park equipped with three swimming pools.

Urban greenery aside, Ibadan is a culturally vibrant city with a strong educational offer: its University, established in 1948, is the oldest degree-awarding institution in Nigeria, and provides courses in 13 faculties, including Medicine, Law School and Pharmacy. The over 35,000 students enrolled to the University can take full advantage from the many facilities offered by the institution, including residential structures, sports venues, canteens and botanical/zoological gardens.

Despite its relative proximity to Lagos, it would be a severe mistake to underestimate Ibadan or brush it away as a secondary city: the Pacesetter State capital city is as determined as ever to keep tapping into its infinite potential. Four Mills will open in Ibadan the biggest palm oil refinery on the continent, and works are under way for the construction of a fast railway connecting Ibadan with Lagos and for the creation of an urban light rail system. It has been estimated that these two projects alone might bring a 120%-150% boost to the region's economy. ■

Port Harcourt

A Flagship For Nigerian Development

Nigeria's key hub since the 1950s, the Rivers State capital is looking for new ways to expand.

At the time of its foundation, in 1912, no-one could have predicted that a small farm-land village would eventually grow to become one of Nigeria's most important cities. Port Harcourt grew exponentially in the late 1950s, when Nigeria began exporting oil from fields located in Niger Delta region and the city assumed the role of strategic refining and transport hub for the country's blossoming oil and gas industry. The first refinery, located in the south-eastern outskirts of the city and still owned by the Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC, a subsidiary of the NNPC), opened in 1965, followed by a second plant in 1989. Today, the two plants have a combined capacity of 210,000 barrels per stream day and provide a wide array of products: from gasoline to diesel, kerosene and LPG. It is no surprise, then, that many giants of the oil industry have selected Port Harcourt as the location for their Nigerian offices.

Deservedly renowned as one of Nigeria's largest and busiest ports, Port Harcourt's original terminal was expanded in the 1970s with the inauguration of new facilities in nearby Onne, thus decisively increasing the city's overall capacity. Port Harcourt is equipped with state-of-the-art deepwater facilities that can handle the export of oil, gas, palm oil, timber, coal, tin, columbite and much more.

The city is the undisputed standard-bearer of Nigerian industry, as it is endowed with one of the country's largest and most vital industrial areas: the 1000-hectare Trans Amadi Industrial Estate, located a mere six kilometres north of Port Harcourt, hosts a wide variety of plants producing tires, aluminium products, glass bottles, paper, steel structural products, corrugated tin, paints, cement, et cetera. The urban area of Port Harcourt also has flourishing boatbuilding and fishing industries.

A modern and bustling metropolis, capital of Rivers State and home to over a million residents, Port Harcourt is now on the verge of a bold and ambitious development project aimed at reinforcing its role as Nigeria's leading industrial centre and energy hub: the creation of a two million people, 1,900 km² wide Great Port Harcourt metropolitan area. The three transit hubs of the city (the International Airport, the City port and the Onne port) will become the cardinal points of the new metro area, which will see the enforcement of key infrastructural improvements that will meet the demands of an ever-growing population. The creation of new residential neighbourhoods interconnected by efficient internal road networks will allow a much-needed decompression of Port Harcourt's centre, enabling the city to expand further and remain the industrial and export hub Nigeria needs to grow. ■



Calabar

Nigeria's First Capital

A centuries-old trading post, Calabar is widely renowned as one of Nigeria's greenest and most loved destinations.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



An internationally recognised seaport since the 16th century, Calabar has progressively grown into a huge metropolis, enclosing several smaller surrounding towns and villages over the course of the decades. Not all has changed, however: Calabar remains a strategic export hub, just like it used to be in its early days. Today, the city functions as a marine terminal for products such as oil, natural gas, palm produce, timber, rubber and cocoa, and is connected to the rest of Nigeria by the Calabar-Itu-Expene highway.

Built on a hillside just above the banks of the Calabar river, that flows for a further few kilometres south before joining the Cross river estuary, by the mid-19th century Calabar had already become a flourishing trading post for palm oil and palm kernels. Such was the importance of the city that it was selected by the British to serve as capital of their protectorate in the region until administrative headquarters were transferred to Lagos in 1906. Nonetheless, Calabar earned its place in history books as Nigeria's first ever capital city.

Today, while the administrative capital is over 460 km away from Calabar, the city retains its status as capital city of Cross River State, as well as being one of the most visited destinations in Nigeria. Unsurprisingly so: the National Museum of Calabar treasures a vast collection of artefacts from the city's long and rich history, and the city is surrounded by breathtaking, endless expanses of vegetation. Indeed, Cross River State has about 40% of the remaining tropical rainforests of Nigeria, inhabited by plants and animal species unlike any others on Earth.

A mere 25 km from the streets of Calabar, hidden in a narrow gorge along the banks of river Kwa, the spectacular Kwa waterfalls incessantly amaze the travellers that venture into the fascinating green depths around Calabar. Two hundred and thirty-four steps lead the visitor down to the bottom of the waterfall, where pure waters dive into a deep plunge immersed in a mangrove forest, filling the beholder with an unparalleled feeling of peace.

Conscious that with the privilege of living surrounded by pristine nature comes responsibility, Calabar's residents and local authorities spare no effort to ensure the sustainability of human activities in the region. Calabar hosts several organisations devoted to the protection of the ecosystem. For instance, the Drill Rehabilitation & Breeding Centre, operated by the Pandrillus Foundation and founded in 1991, takes care of wounded and orphaned primates: the centre rehabilitates them, ensures their reproduction and rehuses them in a protected natural habitat. The centre also works to promote an environmentally conscious lifestyle. ■



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A Restructured Transport Sector To Advance Connectivity And Economic Growth

Balanced policies seek to upgrade, rehabilitate and maintain roads, rail lines and ports while private sector investment and cost-sharing public-private partnerships (PPPs) are seen as the best way to accelerate implementation.

Over the past years, Nigeria has seen much of its transport network fall into disrepair following decades of underinvestment in critical transport infrastructure. Nigeria's transport and storage sector is comprised of six activities: road, rail, pipeline, air, water transport, transport services, and postal and courier services. Combined, the sector has grown significantly (by 38.5% year-on-year) with its overall real GDP contribution equalling to 1.3%.

Recognising transport as the lynchpin to unlocking new and non-oil economic growth and trade, the government of Nigeria has heavily emphasised transport investment, particularly from the private sector, in recent economic development plans. While rising passenger and cargo demand continues to strain nearly every segment of Nigeria's transport sector, 2018 saw the nation make commendable progress in alleviating urban congestion, investing in critical infrastructure projects and increasing private sector participation in the development of transport arteries.

Abuja's long-awaited light rail service began operations in July 2018, with Lagos set to welcome its own rail mass transit system once the first line of its metro line, currently under construction, is complete. The Ministry of Transport has also adopted several important measures aimed at boosting private investment in the roads sector, including a tax incentive scheme and the formation of new tollbooths on major highways.

In addition to roads and transit, Nigeria is home to 853 km of Atlantic Ocean coastline spanning seven southern states. Most ports in the country derive the majority of their activities and income from the oil and

gas industry in the Niger Delta, with three of the country's six largest ports located in this region. In a bid to ensure a healthy competition among existing ports and the ongoing construction Lekki Deep Sea Port and Badagry Deep Sea Ports, a port development master plan is under implementation in an effort to boost revenue generation through the provision of infrastructure and technologically up-to-date equipment at the ports. A pillar for the diversification of the economy to break the over-reliance on oil, the current efforts are meant to reposition the ports industry to play its key role as the gateway to the nation's economy.

With the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) targeting development, the plan lists that Nigeria will need to invest US\$ three trillion into infrastructure over the next 30 years. It calls for US\$30 billion of short borrowing to close its infrastructure deficit, as well as cost-sharing financial frameworks and new fundraising tools to be supported by the private sector. These include public-private sector partnerships (PPPs), as well as infrastructure bonds, diaspora bonds and value-capture financing. With rising public and private investment in the critical rail, road and ports segments, the country should see the transport sector become a key enabler of diversified non-oil growth, supporting the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan targets as well as an ongoing macroeconomic recovery.

Although financial shortages and project delays remain a worry, the country is making steady progress in expanding its transport network, which should support an ongoing economic recovery and significantly bolster the ease of doing business in the near future. ■



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Tolaram Group

Major Infrastructural Developments To Ensure Continued Prosperity

Always on the look for new opportunities, Tolaram Group is now working to create the first private free zone in Nigeria and a new state-of-the-art seaport in Lekki.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Founded in Indonesia in 1948, and currently headquartered in Singapore, Tolaram Group is a global powerhouse with operations across three continents and products sold in over 75 countries. Over the course of seven decades, the business activities of the group have evolved from retail to trading, manufacturing and brand building. Tolaram Group is present in several industries including fast-moving consumer goods, digital services, energy, infrastructure, real estate, textiles and financial services.

The group has been doing business in Nigeria since the late 1970s and is behind established and renowned household brands such as Indomie, Nobel Carpets, Minimie, Power Oil, Power Pasta, Hypo Bleach, Kellogg's and Arla's Dano. Tolaram's products are deeply woven into Nigeria's social fabric and everyday life. Indomie, the group's brand of instant noodles, is a household name within the country. "From 2011 to 2016, our compounded annual growth was 30% per year. That's how fast we grew," says Haresh Aswani. Tolaram began importing instant noodles in 1988, and opened its first noodle plant in 1996. The Group currently runs three such plants in Nigeria, the newest of which located in Kaduna: fully automated, it is the most modern noodle plant in Africa.

In 2015, the group signed an exclusive joint venture agreement with Kellogg to develop snacks and other food products for markets across West Africa, with the general aim of expanding the Kellogg's brand all over the continent. In late 2017, Kellogg Tolaram Nigeria Limited commissioned an NGN six billion factory designed to produce 10,000 metric tonnes of cereals per year. "This is the first plant Kellogg's opens in Africa in 70 years, that in itself makes a statement." Tolaram has also innovated and partnered with Kellogg to launch Kellogg's Instant Noodles in South Africa and Egypt.

Despite already being an unquestioned major player in the Nigerian economy, Tolaram Group is determined not to rest on its laurels, and is planning major infrastructural developments as a way to sustain its ambitions in the oncoming years, as well as generating new sources of revenue and employment for the country. "We are creating the first private free zone in Nigeria, in Ibeju Lekki," says Aswani. "We intend to put Nigeria on the world map by making it easier for investors to come and develop their industries and do their business in a single location." Once complete, the Lagos Free Trade Zone (LFTZ) will span over 805 hectares of land, becoming an investment hub for the country and Africa as a whole, attracting investors to the region.

Moreover, the group is also working to the construction of a deep seaport to be included within the perimeter of the Lagos Free Trade Zone. Built entirely from scratch, the upcoming Lekki terminal will have a depth of 16.5 metres and a capacity to handle up to 2.5 million containers per year. Once operational, the Lekki port will be among the biggest and most modern terminals in the continent: it will be able to handle and accommodate 18,000 TEUs. Currently, other Nigerian ports are unable to accommodate ships with a capacity larger than 4,000-4,500 TEUs. Enabling access to much larger container ships will significantly reduce costs while simplifying transshipments into the wider West African region. Lekki is thus poised to become Nigeria's main industrial hub, enhancing national, regional and international trade by connecting Nigeria to international trading and shipping routes. The positive impact of the project has been estimated at about US\$360 billion during the concession period, more than 250 times the initial investment.



Tolaram Group

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Once operational, the port will undoubtedly push local and international companies to open new industrial facilities inside the free zone surrounding the new Port terminal. Investors will be provided with developed land, top quality logistics and other key services. Creating an industrial hub of this magnitude is crucial for a country where the manufacturing sector is on the rise: "Currently, manufacturing is the best investment in Nigeria. Agriculture creates jobs, but the second biggest job creator is the manufacturing sector," explains Dinesh Rathi, CEO LFTZ. "As a group, we are an operator of 19 manufacturing units in the country and we employ about 16,000 people overall."

Tolaram's commitment, however, goes beyond the mere profit: following guidelines set by the World Bank, the Group has developed an environmental social management plan to support Nigerian communities. "We feel that we cannot exist in isolation," says Rathi. The programme aims at ensuring that the Group hires workers from the communities that reside in the plant's proximity.

Furthermore, the Group's Ishk Tolaram Foundation develops programmes that enable self-sufficiency and independence in vulnerable communities, with a focus on education, entrepreneurial training, vocational training and healthcare. Over the past 10 years, the foundation runs limb centres which has provided an excess of 15,000 free custom-made prosthetic limbs to amputees in Nigeria. Other programmes organised by the Foundation's skills hub equip unemployed or underemployed youth in Nigeria with knowledge, skills and attitudes to enable them secure productive livelihoods to support themselves and their families.

Its 43 plus years of experience in the Nigerian market gives Tolaram a competitive advantage: "Some of the products we

make are substituting imported goods. We are becoming self-reliant, we always feel that we have to continue investing. That is the spirit with which we operate in Nigeria. We firmly believe in this country. Given its demographic opportunities, Nigeria will continue to grow, and Lagos will remain the country's commercial hub," says Rathi.

As a further step towards localisation, Tolaram has embarked upon local chilli farming in Niger State by acquiring 800 hectares of land and has a development of a 18,000 hectare palm plantation in Edo state. Tolaram has also commenced cultivating and utilising cassava flour which will steadily replace the usage of 25% of wheat flour used in manufacturing of instant noodles. All these activities are in line with the Federal Government's localisation programme and in ensuring food security for Nigeria.

According to Mr Aswani, Nigeria is working hard to free itself from the negative perception it has been unjustly associated with for quite some time: "One must bear in mind that Nigeria is a very dynamic market: we have almost 190 million people living here," he says. "Nigeria has 16% of the African population, and if you want to do business in Africa, you cannot ignore Nigeria. You must be here." To succeed in Nigeria, he adds, quality must be the top priority. "Nigerians look for the best products, and you need to be most competitive." Investors looking to do business in Nigeria can take advantage of a very well organised distribution system.

In October 2017, Tolaram Group received the EY-Standard Chartered Family Business Award of Excellence in Singapore: a crowning achievement that rewards the creativity, the courage and the uncompromising commitment to absolute quality and social awareness shown by the group across the decades and the continents. ■



Catamaran Group

Supporting Quality Infrastructures To Boost Inclusive Growth

With extensive experience in many sectors, Catamaran Nigeria is assisting in the country's infrastructural advancement campaign.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Lai Are,
Catamaran's Group
Managing Director

Based in Lagos, Catamaran Nigeria Ltd is a dynamic and highly proficient consultancy company which provides services for the development, operation and maintenance of high-quality infrastructures. Catamaran has firmly established itself as one of the foremost players in the transportation sector, carrying out work for high-profile clients such as the Federal Ministry of Transportation, the Bayelsa and Bauchi State Governments, the Nigerian Shippers' Council and many others.

In 2004, Catamaran partnered with the federal government to ensure widespread compliance with the international ship and port facility security code (ISPS). "We did a significant amount of business in the maritime sector to support ISPS compliance," says Lai, Catamaran's Group Managing Director. "At a certain moment, we held about 80% of the business."

In the ensuing years, while continuing operations in the maritime sector, Catamaran gained valuable experience in the land transportation sub-sector: "We approached the Lagos State Government while they were building the Lekki-Ikoyi bridge and conducted traffic counts and analysis," recounts Lai. "In 2013, we were granted the concession to operate the bridge, following which we installed the equipment and handled it for three years." The Company was later awarded a contract to upgrade the toll infrastructure on the entire Lekki expressway. Presently, Catamaran is working at increasing the adoption of electronic toll collection (ETC) systems across the country, in collaboration with key stakeholders to achieve full implementation by year end 2019. ETC systems shall facilitate payments and toll collection, thus easing traffic and decreasing transportation costs and ultimately providing the end users with a smooth travel experience.

Road tolls are a crucial step in the progressive improvement of transport infrastructures throughout Nigeria: a reasonably-priced toll system on major highways such as the Lagos-Ibadan road would provide funds to carry out extensive network maintenance, allowing quicker connections between rural areas and major cities, as well as reducing transportation costs for goods. "The transport sector has a major impact on all sectors of the economy in terms of competitiveness, profitability and ease of doing business," explains Lai. "Roads, ports and airports are critical. When people want to invest in your country, in any sector, the first thing they think of is: How do we get to your country and how do we move goods and operations there?"

"People interested in investing in Nigeria have so many opportunities," he adds. "A NGN one billion investment in treasury bills yields a return of between about 12-13%, today, which equates to NGN 1.2 billion per annum." To make sure this vast and incredible country can take full advantage of its immeasurable resources, it is necessary to keep looking for potential investors for the infrastructure sector. Infrastructure, such as major highways and deep seaports, create revenue-generating employment that can develop and maintain other public infrastructure.

Nigeria is bridging its infrastructural gap by leveraging private and public investment to stimulate inclusive growth. As a leading consultant, Catamaran is cooperating with the Ministry of Aviation to establish Nigeria's first Maintenance and Repair Organisation (MRO), to enable airlines to perform plane maintenance and repair in Nigeria, without having to move their aircrafts to Europe. This facility shall be available to service multiple carriers in the aviation sector and not restricted to specific airlines. Another project in the pipeline is the establishment of an aviation leasing company, which would significantly reduce start-up costs for establishing new airlines.

Lai affirms "Nigeria truly is a land of opportunity: Genuinely interested and capable investors will find an array of highly rewarding investment opportunities to match their appetites." "Catamaran is uniquely positioned by dint of our network, expertise and experience to advise and partner in the best suited capacity, as either a consultant, a business partner or as a project manager with such investment ready entities. ■



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Soaring Eagles in the Sky

Reviving The Nation's Aviation Sector

Recent regulatory reforms and a pan-African aviation agreement have significantly bolstered the country's aviation growth prospects.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

In 1960, Nigeria's aviation industry was a force to reckon with as Nigeria Airways, the country's national carrier, underwent a layered transformation. More than its independence, it marked the final process of the country's complete takeover of the airline. In its salad days, Nigeria Airways (NA) was a flagship in the global aviation industry. It flew many routes and provided safe and efficient air transportation for Nigeria for decades, until 2003 when it was liquidated. The death of Nigeria Airways greatly impacted the nation's aviation sector by hampering its growth and development and blighted the sector's capacity to compete favourably with its counterparts all over the world. However, since President Muhammadu Buhari gave a presidential directive to fast track the process of establishing a new national carrier, a new impetus has been added to the nation's aviation sector.

Today, there are 23 registered airlines according to the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), however only eight operate scheduled flights. The operating carriers are: Air Peace, Dana Air, Overland, Aero Contractors, Azman Air, Med-View Airline, Ibom Air and Arik Air. While the efforts to bring back the national carrier have not fully been realised, the air transport and aviation sector is experiencing a revival. Within the six sectors of the transport sector, the air transport segment grew the fastest, at 43.54% year-over-year in the second quarter of 2018.

Currently, the Ministry of Transportation, in collaboration with relevant parastatals and agencies, has drawn up short term plans that are currently being implemented which the travelling public will soon take notice. These plans include the expeditious completion of ongoing airports remodelling projects at Lagos, Abuja, Kano and Port Harcourt and the decongestion of airports access roads, among several others. The new terminal in Lagos will generate an additional 15 million passengers annually, making a total of 30 million passengers yearly nationwide. Additionally, improved technology is being used to enhance security at the nation's airports and will be complemented by customised staff training. With an improved national airport security, passenger experience and overall facilitation of services will vastly improve. Ultimately, the purpose of all these measures is to be efficient in achieving stated goals and targets to become more competitive in the region, continent and the globe.

Having signed the Single African Air Travel Market (SAATM) agreement launched by the African Union in January 2019, Nigeria will be ready to encourage cross-border investment and innovation, improve business operations and efficiency, increased route competition resulting in lower fares, create more jobs, help airlines grow, and allow for the free mobility of people and goods. It also highlights Nigeria's desire to take up its role as the Giant of Africa, and encourage inter-regional trade and tourism.

Nigeria has recently been re-elected into the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council with a high number of votes signifying a rise in the popularity of the country within the global aviation community. The continued success and recognition of the country in all issues relating to the world aviation governing body goes to show that Nigeria is on course in its transformation agenda for the aviation sector.

With a stronger commitment to the implementation of the aviation sector development road map of the Buhari administration and adhering to the united African ethos, Nigeria is doing all it can to grow its influence and popularity within the global aviation industry. ■



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Aero Contractors

Taking Nigeria's Aviation Sector To The Skies

Aero Contractors has created a culture of maintenance, which nurtures its local airlines to sustain the sector for years to come.



Captain Ado Sanusi has the best American training and vast experience in African aviation operations. "I always had a flair for aviation," says Sanusi, who began his flying career in the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT) in Zaria, where he obtained his Commercial Pilot License and a National Diploma in Aeronautical Sciences. He later proceeded to the United States where he obtained a BSc in Aeronautical Science, Air Transport Pilot License, Certified Flight and Ground Instructor's license. These qualifications were earned through various institutions in the United States: Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Flight Safety in Savannah GA, the University of Southern California, Simuflite in Dallas TX, North America Training and Development TX, USAir Training Centre in Pittsburg PA and Flight Safety International in Wichita KS.

Upon returning to Nigeria, Sanusi worked for Kabo Air as a Senior First Officer and proceeded to ExxonMobil as Captain and flight Safety Officer. He then joined Virgin Nigeria as Captain on the B737 Classic. He later became the Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and managed the entire Nigerian Airspace, succeeding in laying the foundation for performance-based airspace. He worked in collaboration with various parastatals including the Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT), Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET) and the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) to implement total radar coverage in the Nigeria Airspace (TRACON). There, he designed the blueprint of capacity building by organising training for the Air Traffic Controllers and Engineers in the United States. Being in charge of the safety of the Nigerian Airspace allowed him to have an insight into critical safety areas of the aeronautical industry.

His positive impact in the aviation sector resulted in becoming Chief Executive Officer of Aero Contractors with a mandate to reposition the airline. The airline was formed in 1959, as an air charter operator for church missions throughout Nigeria. Aero Contractors is a respected aviation service provider with a fleet of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft that range from the 50-seat Dash 8 to the 140-seat Boeing 737-400. Today, the company is focused on the helicopter offshore oil and gas sector but became a scheduled airline in August 2000 due to increasing demand for air transportation in Nigeria. For this reason, they are now involved in the scheduled and charter passenger sector, with destinations including Abuja, Lagos, Port Harcourt, Warri, Asaba, Yola, Sokoto, Kano, Benin and more.

In his expertise, Sanusi has accomplished something with Aero Contractors that airlines of the past had lacked: a maintenance culture to ensure rapid growth. "One of the things that made other airlines fail was maintenance, and if we can provide that, the situation will improve a lot. In West and Central Africa, there are no maintenance facilities, so creating a maintenance culture for the sector is key." He obtained the approval of the Nigerian Aviation Authority to do C checks locally, which stabilised the business. Aero Contractors now carries 50,000 passengers per month from the previous 8,000.

According to Sanusi, Nigeria is the centre of opportunity in the continent with a large population and a blank slate of investment potential. Aero Contractors is headquartered in Lagos and Sanusi says, "Lagos is the fifth largest economy in Africa, and it is the aviation capital of West and Central Africa. We have the biggest hub in the country. Unfortunately, infrastructure has not met the requirements of the economy. Lagos has grown at such a level that we should have at least two airports. The city is booming, but infrastructure has not grown with it. The government is working hard on that, especially for the aviation sector, trying to tap into opportunities." The country has worked hard toward becoming conducive for foreign direct investment and historically has produced a high return. "Nigeria is the last frontier of aviation investment. Aero obviously will be the choice." ■

Captain Ado Sanusi, CEO of Aero Contractors

Working Towards The Creation Of A Sustainable Aviation Sector

Aero Contractors is leading the way by developing the aviation community.

How does the aviation sector work in Nigeria and what challenges is it facing?

Aviation is a catalyst for economic growth in the world, as we need aviation to connect businesses. Aero Contractors started 60 years ago. It was originally a logistics company for oil and gas, and then it expanded into helicopter and fixed-wing operations. It ventured into the mainstream airline business and began flying commercial. In a nutshell, the aviation sector has not been developed. The greatest challenge is the lack of sustainable policies to keep the airline growing and sustained for a long period of time. I believe the new administration will make a wise decision to develop aviation because it has placed the sector on its front burner and understands its importance.

What new changes would propel the sector forward?

Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria has built a new terminal building, but that is not enough, because there has been no remarkable improvement in the entire infrastructure of the airport in the past thirty years. I believe it is time to build a new airport. The government has come up with a blueprint to improve airport structure in the entire country. We are looking at concession: in most parts of the world, airports are given out on concession and are being run as companies. That is the only way you can have an efficient airport system. Murtala Muhammed International Airport is very important, not only to Nigeria, but to the region: it is central in West Africa, and it can be a hub for the whole continent. We must develop and improve the infrastructure by going back to the master plan in order to accommodate at least 15-20 million passengers per year.

Aero Contractors recently reached its 60th anniversary. Tell us more evolution of the company.

When I joined two years ago, the company was in distress because it was going through the devaluation of the naira. Its very existence was being challenged. I was in charge of turning it around. We looked inwards, starting with maintenance. We had been developing it for sixty years, so we only needed to harness our talent so that we could maintain our own aircraft. Our main objective was to perform a C check ourselves and we did it. We got the approval of the Nigerian Aviation Authority to do a C check locally. The business is stabilised and now we want to grow. We have a positive cash flow and we are carrying over 50,000 passengers per month from the previous number of 8,000. Aero Contractors is ready to move forward with our niche market: we are the only air company with our own maintenance services, which we offer to third parties. We already conduct C checks on two other local companies. This is not for profit; we are developing the aviation sector. One of the things that made other airlines fail was maintenance, and if we can provide that, the situation will improve a lot. In West and Central Africa, there are no maintenance facilities, so creating a maintenance culture for the sector is key.

Why do you believe Nigeria is the place to invest and why is Aero Contractors the company of choice?

Nigeria is the symbol of untapped resources with a lot of opportunity in the whole country. We have 200 million citizens: if an investor targets only 10%, that makes 20 million. Currently, we do not have any formidable carrier, commuting services, or helicopter services. There are a lot of opportunities for direct investment. Nigeria is investment-friendly and there is high return. Nigeria is the last frontier of aviation investment. Aero obviously is the choice. ■



“Nigeria is the last frontier of aviation investment.”

Air Peace

Flying Nigeria To The World

Air Peace has expanded its airline fleet over six times in the last five years, becoming West Africa's largest airline in record time.



Air Peace Limited, Nigeria's champion airline was launched on October 24, 2014, with a record of seven aircraft comprising three state-of-the-art Dornier 328 and four Boeing 737-500 SP jets. The original vision of Air Peace was to fly to the top of the Nigerian aviation industry in no time. In just five years of flight operations, Air Peace has met and exceeded their goals and has now proudly proclaimed the title of the largest airline in Nigeria and West Africa. They boast a fleet size of 25 aircraft with 40 more to debut in the future, thanks to their strategic fleet expansion programme.

The massive project to increase its fleet of B737-300/500, B777 and Embraer 145 jets to 65 is part of the carrier's plans to re-fleet and phase out its classic aircraft, which will help the airline achieve better fuel efficiency, reduce maintenance costs and maintain dispatch reliability.

In 2017, the carrier got its International Air Transport Association Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certificate and was admitted as a member of IATA shortly thereafter. As a start-up airline, they first dedicated their three Dornier 328 for charter purposes, while their four 114-seater Boeing 737-500 aircraft catered to the aviation and travel needs of their rapidly-growing customer base. Soon, the demand quickly exceeded the capacity of their fleet, which presented an opportunity to acquire another Boeing 737-500 aircraft. In addition, the airline advanced significantly between 2015 and 2017, acquiring eight 136-seater Boeing 737-300 aircraft, which expanded their passenger capabilities immensely. In response to the pleas of the flying public to extend their services to many unserved and underserved domestic and regional routes, Air Peace procured six 50-seater Embraer 145 jets in 2018 to drive its 'No-City-Left-Behind' project under its subsidiary, Air Peace Hopper.

In line with its business plan to operate flights to certain European destinations, including Frankfurt, Brussels, Amsterdam, Paris, Milan and Jeddah, the airline set a new record on the West Coast of Africa when it signed an agreement with American airline manufacturer, Boeing, on September 13, 2018, for the delivery of 10 brand new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft. Air Peace became the first and only airline in the sub-region to go for that aircraft type. Soon after the huge feat, the carrier again raised the bar in fleet expansion on April 3, 2019, as it set a continental record when it signed an order for 10 brand new Embraer E195-E2 jets, with purchase rights for another 20 of the same aircraft type.

From the very beginning, Air Peace's objectives came from a determination to make a difference in the provision and availability of flight services, especially on international routes. Between 2018 and 2019, the carrier acquired one Boeing 777-200ER and two Boeing 777-300 aircraft for its long-haul services, setting a domestic record as the first Nigerian airline to acquire the Boeing 777 and register it in the country. This feat also placed Air Peace in a position to deliver Nigeria its first type certification on the Boeing 777.

On July 5, 2019, the carrier launched its first international route: Dubai-Sharjah, as it pursues an expansion project to operate flights into more international destinations, including Johannesburg, Mumbai, London, Atlanta and Guangzhou-China. Air Peace operates from its main hub, the General Aviation Terminal of the Murtala Muhammed International Airport in Lagos.

In just five years of its operations, Air Peace has grown to become the biggest and preferred airline in Nigeria, as more than a third of all passengers in the country in 2018 elected Air Peace as their airline of choice. Air Peace is 100% owned by Chairman/CEO Barrister Allen Onyema and his family. His motivation is to make a positive impact by creating employment opportunities for Nigerians, Africans and aviation experts across the globe and guarantee quality on-time flight services at very affordable rates. ■



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Housing and Real Estate Opportunities

Seeking Creative Solutions Within The Housing Market

The housing and real estate sector performance has remained lacklustre for several years. Although there is a slight uptick this year, both the public and private sector require innovative solutions and creative finance to resolve a significant housing deficit within the country.

Housing, through property taxes, is a significant contributor to local government finance and thereby to the provision of essential services, such as water, sanitation, transportation and education. The sector also has the potential to generate employment, increase productivity and alleviate poverty. It is able to achieve this because investment in housing affects all facets of life through its multiplier effect on economic development by forward linkages to the financial markets and backward linkages to land, building materials, tools, furniture and labour. After nearly 60 years of independence, several efforts to address the housing situation by successive governments in Nigeria have yielded limited success over the years. Today, the nation is estimated to have a total housing deficit of 17-23 million units, though the current demand is estimated at 37 million houses.

In Nigeria, the rapid urbanisation rate has effectively set back adequate and affordable housing. The total urban population in Nigeria is expected to rise to 60% by 2025, around 120 million people. The inadequate public urban and land delivery policies, despite significant efforts, allow the net growth of slums to continue to outpace the improvements being made. Nigeria has an extremely low home ownership rate, which is greatly affected by constraints related to the high cost of securing and registering secure land title, inadequate access to finance, slow administrative procedures, and the high cost of land. The country's mortgage finance industry is still in its infancy, targeting primarily high-income earners and largely excluding middle and low-income earners. For the majority of Nigerians, mortgage finance is not an option due to the lack of a robust land tenure and financial system, and because loan repayment costs remain prohibitively high.

A National Housing Policy was adopted in December 2011 to ensure that all "Nigerians own or have access to decent, safe and sanitary housing in a healthy environment with infrastructural services at an affordable cost, with secure tenure." The Nigeria Mortgage Refinance Company (NMRC) has refinanced mortgage loans totalling N18 billion as of January 2019, which has helped to boost

liquidity in the Nigerian housing market, thus enabling mortgage lenders to provide more housing loans and encouraging long-term mortgage loan creation. In May 2019, the Central Bank of Nigeria held its benchmark interest rate at 13.5% in a bid to stimulate economic growth. The key rate has been held at 14% from July 2016 to February 2019 to support the naira and curb inflation.

Formal housing production is at approximately 100,000 units per year and this is highly inadequate because at least one million units are needed yearly to bridge the 17 to 20 million housing deficit by government's target date of 2033. The private sector is critical in making housing available and affordable in Nigeria, as the government cannot do it alone providing ample opportunity for investors and the Nigerian diaspora to contribute to Nigeria's housing development.

After three years of house price falls, Nigeria's property market is now stabilising, mainly driven by improving economic conditions. House prices were almost unchanged in the past two years, amidst steady demand. The housing market will continue to stabilise this year, with house prices and residential rents expected to either remain stable or rise modestly this year. As one of the most expensive cities to live in Africa, the Lagos market has been improving in terms of transparency and ease of doing business, according to the Global Real Estate Transparency Index. In 2018, Nigeria ranked 67th among 100 markets, up 16 notches from 83rd in 2016.

While Nigeria's housing deficit will not be resolved soon, there is some hope on the horizon, albeit from an overlooked source. According to United Nations statistics, there are over two million Nigerians living and working in North America today; of this, one third of them are highly paid academics and professionals. In 2018, the diaspora contributed US\$23.63 billion to the Nigerian economy by way of remittances or 6.1% of Nigeria's GDP. This revelation indicates the need for developers and the government to relate with Nigerians in Diaspora so that the nation can leverage on their resources and ideas in the country's bid to further the course of affordable housing in Nigeria. ■



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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Bolaji Edu,
CEO of
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Founded in 1975, Broll Property Group is deservedly renowned as one of Africa's leading companies in the sector of commercial property services. Headquartered in Johannesburg, Broll expanded to Nigeria and several other African countries, with operations in over 10 other African countries. Services provided by the company include investment and sales, corporate real estate services, facilities management, retail leasing, advisory and property search services, software solutions and much, much more. Broll, the largest independently owned pan-African commercial property services company, is uniquely equipped to follow its clients, supporting them through the entire real estate chain. "We are a progressive service provider," says Bolaji Edu, CEO of Broll Nigeria, "we provide research and advisory services to investors and potential developers. We also have a facilities management arm. We have been in Nigeria for fifteen years, and we have been working in Africa for nearly 50 years."

Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, is a land ripe with resources and opportunities of all kinds: "It has a great deal of natural wealth, not only oil and gas, but also in agriculture," explains Bolaji Edu, who also adds that Nigeria's strategic location on the West African coast grants the country the potential to be a true gateway for the wider West African region.

Universally acknowledged as the progressive key driver to Africa's economy, Nigeria is facing a series of challenges connected to the exponential population growth the country has witnessed in recent years, and the government led by President Muhammadu Buhari is working tirelessly to bridge the gap between supply and demand in the housing sector. According to Edu, who has been CEO of Broll Nigeria since 2014, investments are needed to improve transport infrastructures and allow the development of residential neighbourhoods located in the suburbs as a way to decompress the city centres, creating new decentralised housing in areas where land is cheaper and more easily available. On the other hand, great attention is being devoted to the financial side of the issue, with the aim of creating an efficient credit and mortgage system.

Real estate, adds Edu, is one of the main employment-generating sectors in Nigeria, giving work to architects, engineers, developers, contractors, managers and many others. Broll, he adds, provides "advisory work, valuation work, research, help for new companies and assistance for international and local investors coming into the market. Improving professionalism and transparency in the industry is going to attract more capital into the sector, which will mean more investment and development opportunities and more jobs."

According to Edu, the time to invest in Nigeria has now arrived: the country is looking for ways to reduce its reliance on its strong oil and gas industry as main sources of revenue and growth to protect its economy from possible fluctuations in the oil market. "There will be a drive for other sectors, be it agriculture, manufacturing, renewable energy or technology." The change towards a new economy will certainly require effort, he adds, but whoever comes first will have the opportunity to shape a new era for Nigeria. ■



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Working To Improve Communities And Bridge The Housing Deficit Gap

Wiser Estates is dedicated to its mission to positively impact the housing deficit in Nigeria.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Nasiru Suleiman,
CEO of Wiser Estates
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Wiser Estates & Investments is a pioneer in Nigeria's real estate industry with the fundamental goal of providing affordable homes to their valuable customer base in Nigeria and the diaspora. Their credo: "Vel primus, vel cum primis," Be the best or be with the best, is not only a testimony to their products and services but reinforces their dedication to the industry's international standards and the people whose lives they touch.

Nasiru Suleiman, CEO of Wiser Estates & Investments, has been in the construction industry for sixteen years, and during that time has gained enough education and experience to start his own business in Nigeria. Suleiman says, "Nigeria is unique. The population is power. The higher the number of people you have, the greater the power you have." This power is evident in Wiser Estates' dedication to its clients and employees, but also in the geographic location of the country, which also proves to be a great asset. "We have all the advantages in terms of position, natural resources, agriculture and mineral resources. There are a lot of things that put Nigeria on the leadership map on the continent. Everything you need can be found here. It is an automatic ticket to being a driver in the economy," he says.

As a testament to being an economic power, Wiser Estates & Investments has become one of the fastest-growing estate development companies since its incorporation. Suleiman states, "We came on board in July 2015. There was no land asset and we took no loans. All we did is partner with landowners and build on their land. When we started, the economy was going into recession. The timing was right because the houses we were building would have been sold more in that period. Everyone would have bought affordable houses, considering the recession. I realised that in affordable housing, the margins would be very low, as 98% of those who are suffering from the housing deficit are medium and low-income earners. However, we wanted to break into real estate because we are solving a country's problem. We are now bridging the gap, and masses are getting houses thanks to us. It is natural that people are coming to us."

This level of care for its community and its people is reflected in Wiser Estates' dedication to corporate social responsibility as well. Suleiman understands that if their projects lead Wiser Estates to a region that lacks water facilities, adequate roads or electricity, these necessities cannot be restricted to only the houses in which they work. Suleiman states that acts of CSR such as building roads are a responsibility as a leader in the market: "In this way, we are ensuring people a good road network. Making roads is part of your selling point. People today know that if it is Wiser coming, there will be roads. They know it is part of the quality."

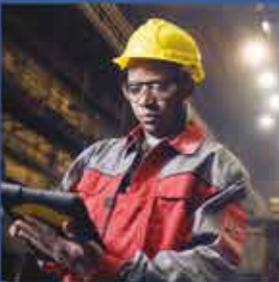
To continue helping their communities, Wiser Estates is supporting Nigeria's youth and by extension, the future of Nigeria, which has a population of over 180 million people and 60% being under the age of 30. Suleiman's own story is proof of the possibilities that lie ahead. "I am from a very humble background: my father comes from a village. I found my way. When I was starting the real estate business, I did not have even N1m in my account. When I was about to start, I realised that goodwill is also an asset, is capital. People helped me along the way." With this testimony, Suleiman hopes to reach the young population to inspire them to work hard for their dreams. "The message I am trying to send to the youth is that you do not have come from a rich background. Start from where you are. Look at me today. Many will say that they do not have the money: you do not have to have it." ■



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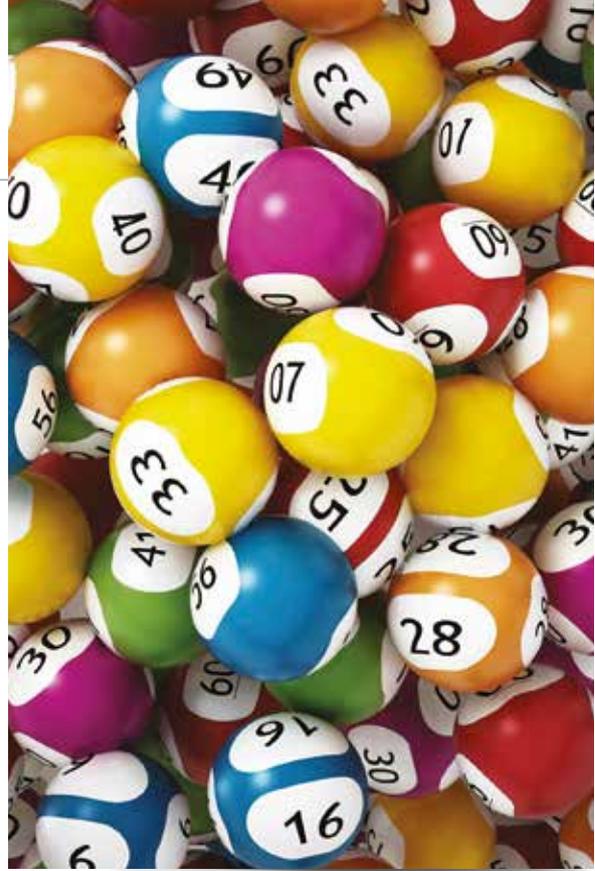
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Gaming Sector

The Ace Up Nigeria's Sleeve



Nigeria's fast expanding gaming business is empowering its populous youth through technology, while partnerships with mobile money platforms game change Nigeria's economy.

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Nigeria has one of the most successful gambling industries the world over, expanding quickly and widely over a short stretch of time with outstanding results. In 2018, for example, it generated US\$180 million in revenue and greatly impacted the nation's GDP through taxation, increasing employment and the provision of business opportunities. While earning an additional income is key to the boost in sports betting and lotteries in the nation, the increase in the less likely young middle-class Nigerian as customer base is undoubtedly the result of improved national internet penetration and accessibility, causing a proliferation of the industry, with people being able to bet within the comfort of their homes.

The National Lottery Act 2005 defines lotteries to include any game of luck that involves drawing a lot for a prize and a strategy for fundraising. Since the National Lottery Regulatory Commission was established in 2005, it has issued licences and permits to lottery operators and promoters, growing the market by opening up opportunities for investors, individuals and the government. The three categories of licences are: lottery licence, sports betting licence and promotional lottery (promotional schemes with an element of chance or lot in the prize's distribution, for example scratch cards or SMS/USSD). Through the investment and engagement in regulated lottery, the nation was provided with a new platform from which they could now contribute to national development. "Gaming provides employment and empowerment for the youth, who can be employed as agents or operators," explains Lanre Gbajabiamila, Director General of the National Lottery Regulatory Commission. "At the same time, we make sure that gaming remains responsible. Gaming is ultimately entertainment: if you win, good;

if you don't, you're still contributing to good causes, which is something we manage through our sister agency, the National Lottery Cross Fund."

Nigerians are sports loving people, so it is hardly surprising that there has been a consistent increased preference for sports-related betting around the nation, causing it to become one of the most lucrative segments within the gaming sector. With the advent of the internet, online sports betting has been further boosted through a number of different betting platforms, whereby online sports betting operators have attained enormous gains through mobile payment, many of whom have since become millionaires. In June 2018, Seun Anibaba, CEO of Lagos State Lotteries Boards, reported to Reuters that sports betting sector growth had been matched by a rise in web payments according to data from the Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System (NIBSS), concluding that the online sports betting sector had a worth of approximately US\$620 million in 2018. "The Nigerian lottery and gaming industry has grown and has gone technically digital, rather than retail," states Gbajabiamila. "The only way to manage that aspect of the industry is collaborating with Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), which makes us able to properly enforce regulations. We also collaborate with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and other federal agencies, to enhance revenues for the country."

Global trends have demonstrated that sports betting, if clearly regulated, can be a major sector for the generation of tax revenue by the government. Nigeria's successful evolution of its gaming sector has gained momentum under NLRC's guidance, revealing that its potential as an alternative to oil in income generation is no game, but a truth rooted in reality. ■

Baba Ijebu's Legacy

Hitting The Jackpot

Founding father of the lotto industry, Sir Kesington Adebutu, comes from a humble background and has been a major player in laying the groundwork for a better future for Nigeria, while injecting hope through a powerful philanthropic drive.

Known to be one of the founding fathers of the Nigerian Lotto industry, Sir Kesington Adebutu is founder, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Nigeria's lucrative and oldest Nigerian lotto game operator, Premier Lotto Ltd, popularly known by its nickname, Baba Ijebu. Long before the advent of online betting, Baba Ijebu catered to Nigeria's gambling community with Adebutu starting his business as a pool agent in 1963. His honesty and integrity immediately won him his client's trust and confidence, and under a year later he had already opened another two pool outlets while his business began branching out into the lotto business. Adebutu has said: "Having no capital, I looked for a business that required little or no capital and what came to my mind was to be a pool agent, because to be a pool agent, what you just need is to get a table and your pen. So, you can see it is not capital intensive. I did that briefly and within a short time with my best friend, the late Chief Solomon Adebayo Ayoku, we dominated Africa. We then diversified to other areas like agriculture, manufacturing, estate management, the lotto and entertainment. Today, I have the concession for the gateway hotels Abeokuta for 25 years." In 2001, the Premier Lotto Ltd. was incorporated and established to carry out the Lotto business in Nigeria, building itself up over the years to become the mega-franchise that it is today, with over 200 principal agents supervising over 16,000 sub agents/sales representatives. Adebutu's empire currently includes lotteries, betting on major events, entertainment, casinos and pools.

An important aspect to Baba Ijebu's success lies in its pioneering drive and innovative vision within the gaming industry. In order to accommodate the lotto and facilitate the ease of playing to participants, Baba Ijebu has partnered with MTN telecommunications company to provide quick and easy access to the Baba Ijebu Mobile Gaming Service. However, with agents for Nigeria's most popular lottery all over the country, the company also prides itself with its engagement with Nigerian people, especially its youth; reducing unemployment and providing a means of living for thousands of people across the spectrum of the business value chain, from agents to lucky winners. However, Adebutu philanthropist footprint has not stopped there. In November 2013, he launched the Sir Kesington Adebukunola Adebutu Foundation (KAAF) and generously donates to churches, mosques, schools and various organisations, while establishing important state-of-the-art institutions, such as the Sir Kesington Adebukunola Adebutu School of Law at the Houdegbe North American University in Benin Republic, the Medical Laboratory and Maternity Centre and the Lady Kesington Diabetic Centre at the Olabisi Onabanjo University Teaching Hospital.

Adebutu's success is not based on luck or chance; through perseverance, hard work, integrity and self-discipline, he has set the stage for Nigeria's positive social transformation and driven its economy. In October 2019, he was conferred with the prestigious chieftancy title of Odole Oodua by the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Eniitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II at the Ile-Oodua, the Ooni's palace in Ile-Ife, Osun State. An immense honour deservedly awarded due to the decisive and valuable impact Adebutu and his Baba Ijebu platform has had upon the lives of millions of Nigerians. ■



"Having no capital, I looked for a business that required little or no capital and what came to my mind was to be a pool agent."

Sir Kesington Adebutu

Mr Lanre Gbajabamila, Director General/CEO of NLRC

Redefining The Regulations Of The Nigerian Gaming Industry

The NLRC is joining forces with other key federal agencies to oversee the increasing digitalisation of the industry and create opportunities.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Established in 2005, the National Lottery Regulatory Commission (NLRC) is tasked with the regulation of lottery business and the promotion of transparency and accountability in the sector, as well as the protection of players, stakeholders and general public. The Commission aims at standardising guidelines throughout the industry, with the general goal of generating revenue for the country.

Since the beginning of your mandate, you have launched a key reorganisation of the Commission in order to make sure NLRC is up to task in a changing gaming landscape. How did you achieve that?

A few months ago, we had a specialised training session for our staff: this industry is highly specialised, and I felt we needed to engage with the staff for better performance, efficiency and knowledge in compliance with the regulations. We brought in experts from abroad to train our staff, with particular attention to what it means to be an operator, a stakeholder or a regulator. It was a great opportunity for this industry and Nigeria as a whole.

In August 2018, NLRC signed a MoU with the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) to regulate lottery activities on telecommunication platforms. Do you think this agreement will be a game changer for the sector?

The Nigerian lottery and gaming industry has grown and has gone technically digital, rather than retail. The only way to manage that aspect of the industry is collaborating with NCC, which makes us able to properly enforce regulations and know if a particular operator is not in compliance with our rules and regulations. It has been a win-win situation for both us and NCC. We also collaborate with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), the Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and other federal agencies to enhance revenues for the country. This is a tech-driven industry: the Commission has pushed for the establishment of a central monitoring system, which will allow us to see the revenues brought in by each operator and identify any possible leakage.

What role do you think the gaming sector can play in Nigeria? In what way are you giving back to communities throughout the country?

The gaming sector has gone a long way and is still growing. Gaming also provides employment and empowerment for the youth, who can get employed as agents or operators. At the same time, we make sure that gaming remains responsible. It is something the Commission is really passionate about. Gaming is ultimately entertainment: if you win, good; if you don't, you're still contributing to good causes, which is something we manage through our sister agency, the National Lottery Trust Fund. All the revenues we generate go into the Trust Fund, ensuring that the fund is used for good causes. Part of the revenues have been channelled to different parts of Nigeria to donate hospital equipment; we recently went to Daura to deliver hospital equipment. It is the best way to use the lottery fund.

How can companies invest in the lottery and gaming industry of Nigeria?

We have foreign and local investment partners willing to come in. There is a process to be followed: you register, fill a form, present a business plan that we can analyse for the sake of transparency. We go through all the necessary procedures and do our own due diligence on the operator to ensure the standard is maintained. ■



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Creating A Ripple Effect Into The Economy

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The implementation of financial technologies within the banking and finance sectors helps to reach underbanked populations, strengthening the economy and empowering surrounding communities.

Over the last decade, Nigeria's fintech sector has witnessed explosive growth. As one of the most enticing tech sectors for investment in Africa, fintech is offering immeasurable opportunities for early investors and emerging economies like Nigeria. Naturally, the Nigerian government is focusing on fintech as a key catalyst for growth in the industry. As part of a national strategy for fintech development, there has been significant interest from policymakers in implementing new regulations for the fintech industry, which will create a ripple effect throughout the entire economy.

But what is fintech exactly? In longer terms, it is a technology that competes with traditional methods of financial service delivery, such as settlement services like mobile and web-based payment applications, deposits and lending. Other services that raise capital, such as crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending, are made more readily available to consumers, as well as access to savings accounts, credit, pensions and insurance. The sector is also involved with investment management services such as e-trading. In short, fintech is a sector that is challenging the traditional relationship that

consumers have had with money, and it is quickly becoming a way of life for the banked and underbanked population in Nigeria.

The exponential growth in fintech has led to an increase in start-ups and more established businesses throughout Africa. Fintech investment has quadrupled in 2018, reaching a total of US\$357 million. Professionals emphasise a wealth of fintech opportunities in Nigeria that could potentially restructure the financial services landscape. Nigeria has a huge population, but about 40% of its people do not have access to basic financial services. That is where the opportunity lies for start-ups and fintech companies to come in and establish groundbreaking digital solutions to reach many people.

Fintech companies in Nigeria have begun to disrupt the industry by introducing digital technology within various parts of the customer's journey. These companies are able to utilise technology to have an expansive reach into a larger customer base without the high cost of building infrastructure. In this way, the lower cost-to-serve ratio offers a great advantage for the economy, the businesses and the consumer.



“We welcome the steady expansion of the global economy recorded since mid-2016, but believe that growth could be more durable, stronger and inclusive.”
Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed, Minister of Finance

Nigeria has about 36.6 million adults excluded from financial services, but fintechs are bridging that gap and offer a solution to the challenge of financial inclusion by presenting a variety of services that are cost-effective and easy to access.

Among these services, mobile payment systems function as the means through which financial resources flow and are undoubtedly a critical aspect of any economy. The Nigerian Payments System has enjoyed incredible progress with the introduction of many initiatives under the Payments System Vision 2020, such as the implementation of a Bank Verification Number (BVN) scheme, which provides a unique identifier for banking customers across the country and aids in reducing identity theft. The payment space is among the most successful areas of fintech in Nigeria and has become a key revenue source for banks and payment service providers. As part of Nigeria's Payments Systems Vision (PSV) initiative, the government's policy changes have given rise to several innovative payment systems propelled by changing consumer patterns, such as the increase in smartphone ownership, internet penetration and ATM implementation.

With the rise of smartphones and internet connectivity, mobile banking creates new possibilities in the financial sector while reducing the need for customers to visit a bank branch for non-cash withdrawal and deposit transactions. However, as this technology has advanced, many apps now have a remote deposit option, which uses the device's camera to digitally transmit cheques to their financial institution. The ability to introduce mobile banking allows more Nigerians to become banked, secure their money and manage savings accounts without travelling to a branch.

Financial inclusion has continued to assume increasing recognition across the globe among policymakers, researchers and development-oriented organisations. Its importance derives from the promise it holds as a tool for economic development, particularly in poverty reduction, employment generation, wealth creation and improving welfare and the general standard of living.

Yet it seems that the impoverished are the least likely demographic to have access to formal financial services due to reduced understanding, financial illiteracy or because the usefulness of the products available for their needs is limited. In the past, financial service providers have excluded some demographics as they were perceived as too risky and expensive to reach. Fintech is making this mentality a thing of the past. Many institutions are empowering those in need by simplifying account opening procedures, introducing mobile money and by providing more affordable insurance products.

To truly achieve financial service utilisation in Nigeria, the country needs a focus on improving the quality and number of financial services available to the people. Some studies suggest that financial inclusion can only reduce poverty and income inequality when the overall economic conditions are adequate, but it seems that access is the first step toward creating favourable economic prosperity. Empowering consumers to use their financial access for productive purposes, such as investing in their children's education, is ultimately the first stage in enabling future development and expanding the economy.

Minister of Finance Zainab Shamsuna Ahmed recently stated, “We welcome the steady expansion of the global economy recorded since mid-2016, but believe that growth could be more durable, stronger and inclusive.” Achieving financial inclusion will require certain necessary steps. Conscious efforts must be made to implement financial literacy across the country but most notably to the areas with the highest number of financially excluded people. Campaigns that provide enlightenment programmes in local languages will help to include smaller demographics in the fight for inclusivity. Nigeria is already pursuing dynamic initiatives to facilitate financial inclusion for all, and the continuation of these approaches will help achieve widespread participation. As an active player in the industry, fintech companies are critical in providing products and services that can reach millions in Nigeria. The subsequent environment will inevitably lead to mass financial inclusion, nurture the fintech sector and boost the Nigerian economy. ■

Women Entrepreneurs

The Secret To Sustainable Development

As the administration paves the way for gender inclusivity, Nigeria's women entrepreneurs are taking local businesses to even greater heights by fearlessly taking on leadership roles.

Women participate in the economy primarily through entrepreneurial businesses, most of which are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs employ 84% of Nigeria's labour force and contribute 48.47% to Nigeria's GDP.

In 2018, only 50% of women in Nigeria had an active role in the labour force. Although this participation hasn't greatly evolved over the past 20 years, recent shifts to a services-based economy and the prestige associated with women's entrepreneurship are opening up incredible opportunities for Nigerian women to play a more active role in business. Some of these advancements are tearing down walls and creating gender inclusivity across the entire country, especially in the realm of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) where women are continuously taking on leadership roles.

As with any moment of progress, there are societal and economic challenges facing these enterprises that underscore the support Nigerian women need in order to grow their businesses. Women entrepreneurs will only be able to seize the country's opportunities with the right support systems in place. Women's potential to participate in businesses play a key role in driving economic growth, but social development is limited by lowered access to finance or capacity building opportunities, lack of access to credit and regulations that prohibit inclusion-enhancing products. But the good news is that the solutions to these obstacles are already being implemented throughout the country. Support systems that promote education and training, business advice, financial support and technology are paving the way for women in Nigeria to be invaluable assets to the economy.

One such support system for female entrepreneurs is tied to financial inclusion. In a survey, only 52% of female-led firms had a business bank account. Without these accounts, business owners are prohibited from accessing loans and many other necessary financial services to grow their business. New developments in fintech and the banking sectors are converting this obstacle of the past into an opportunity of the future. ▶▶





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Women Entrepreneurs, (continued)



The administration of Nigeria is making strides in the right direction and changing the landscape for women-owned businesses in the country. Women entrepreneurs represent a large potential market for African banks, and financing them will inevitably be good for business and long-term sustainable development. But many African banks are unaware of the specific challenges women face as business owners.

In response to these needs, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has moved to encourage women in business by setting aside 60% of the N220 billion CBN loan set out for SMEs so that they can be gainfully involved in the private sector of the economy. Not to mention, the African Development Bank (AfDB) has approved a US\$50 million credit for Nigeria's Fidelity Bank to support small and medium-sized and women-owned enterprises in Nigeria. The credit is for almost 100 selected SMEs in manufacturing, health and education. Other banking entities are moving to launch a proposition that offers 0% interest rates on loans for SMEs that are owned and operated by women. All signs are pointing to opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria who desire affordable and convenient funding to boost their respective businesses.

Through dedication from the Nigerian government to invest in fintech, expand banking services and revise existing financial policies, the number of people who have been financially excluded in Nigeria has been decreasing over recent years, where the rate of unbanked persons has declined by 500 million. While this is a great success, there is still opportunity in the sector to improve and include more women, where only 42% have access to formal financial services. It is also reported that an estimated 7 million businesses will be established by Nigerian women by the year 2021. This creates the potential to generate 8.9 million jobs and unlocking N19.7 billion in revenue for the country.

Women participate in the economy primarily through entrepreneurial businesses, most of which are Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). MSMEs employ 84% of Nigeria's labour force and contribute 48.47% to Nigeria's GDP. There's a significant growth opportunity here for women entrepreneurs. With the help of special training targeted at women entrepreneurs could result in more women-owned and led firms engaging in international trade.

As part of its SME development objective and support for women in business, the International Labour Organisation Country Office in the capital city of Abuja is reinforcing the capacity of local business and development service providers (BDSPs) through training workshops in Nigeria. These workshops aim to support business expansion and growth and enhance the capacity of local women-led SMEs to access markets and sustain their businesses.

For example, GroFin recently hosted nearly ninety women entrepreneurs at a capacity building workshop in Lagos. Women's empowerment is one of GroFin's core impact objectives and the event formed part of GroWoman, GroFin's Gender Lens Investing Initiative. Women entrepreneurs from various sectors including agro-processing, education, healthcare, retail and manufacturing attended the event which broke down misconceptions around gender roles that assume that women can not—or should not—venture into the business world.

The learning sessions included practical guides to business planning and focused on equipping women entrepreneurs with business planning and strategy techniques to build their businesses for success. GroFin works to instil more knowledge on sustaining business, building a proper structure and implementing the right strategies for entrepreneurial growth.

The importance of training workshops and courses such as these enhance business development and highlight the need for local entrepreneurs in various regions nationwide to promote their products effectively in order to grow and expand their products and services beyond Nigeria.

These developments are in line with the commitment to empower women-owned SMEs, both existing and start-ups, through financial support, advisory and value-added products, to enhance customer experience and overall contribution to the growth of the country and its economy. These moves will further unravel and unleash the true potential of women in entrepreneurship so they can take their respective businesses to greater heights and compete favourably in the global environment. ■

All signs are pointing to opportunities for women entrepreneurs in Nigeria who desire affordable and convenient funding to boost their respective businesses.



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Mr Oluwadare Owolabi,

Chief Executive Officer of Xpress Payment Solutions Ltd.

Bringing Nigeria To The Next Level

In just three years, fintech company Xpress Payment Solutions Ltd. has conquered a considerable share in the Nigerian market.

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With headquarters in Ikeja and offices located all over the country, Xpress Payment Solutions Ltd is a proudly Nigerian company incorporated in 2016 that aims to enable smarter living, increasing its market share in the Nigerian fintech industry.

Nigeria is one of the powerhouses of the African continent. What do you think makes this country so unique?

I would say its teeming population. It is a rather diverse country with a market for every and any product. This marketing potential is partly responsible for the influx of people into the country; the percentage of young people is incredibly high, which also increases the percentage of fintech solutions tailored for young minds. Agriculture was the mainstay of the Nigerian economy before the discovery of crude oil. Nigeria is a country richly endowed with abundant mineral and natural resources ranging from industrial metals to various precious stones such as barites, gypsum, kaolin, marble, etc. The government has worked overtime to provide avenues for young people to develop solutions and programmes, which has driven a lot of investment into the country. I believe this great country can survive with its resources, even without relying so heavily upon oil.

How has the emergence of fintech companies affected the financial sector? What kind of opportunities does fintech open for the industry?

Things started to change in the late 2000s, with the first licenses issued for mobile payments. These licenses have engineered a lot of things, and now there is less emphasis on physical bank appearances as a lot of transactions can now be carried out on your mobile device. For example, for salary payments, I can do it on my platform, and money gets delivered within 15 minutes. When banks were doing this, the technology was not as effective hence, payments were naturally delayed. We have built technology around mobile. Mobile phone payments have grown tremendously, the volume of population has also been key to this success: we have about 173 million people using mobile devices (per NCC report 2019). You can do whatever you want online. You do not have to go to a cybercafe anymore because of the availability of data. In this country, data has been able to jumpstart financial technology to another level. People are using their mobile phones for a lot of things, without going to the bank. Personally, I have not been to my bank in the last nine months, because I can do everything with my phone.



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Technology and Taxes

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

An Impetus For Long-Term Socio-Economic Development

In Nigeria, the ICT sector functions as a catalyst for growth, creating job opportunities and stimulating the economy.

Nigeria's ICT sector functions as a major contributor to the economy, supported by the country's young demographic and the rapid acceptance of mobile internet services. The telecoms industry is holding a steadfast growth trajectory, as smartphone penetration and mobile internet network investment are increasing and support an economical shift towards data-driven growth models. In the IT sector, government efforts to boost broadband penetration have begun to gather steam, and all signs point to ICT creating an auspicious avenue for all sectors to rapidly grow.

Internet usage statistics are indications of Nigeria's readiness to transform into a digital economy through ICT-driven systems and processes. Nigeria's impressive internet access demonstrates its dedication to strengthening the quality of education, improving livelihoods and reducing poverty. The internet also drives employment and trade opportunities both within the region and across the globe, serving as an engine of access to information and empowering Nigerians toward a technological future. ICT has brought about equal footing, financial inclusion and competition in the delivery of services in the business environment.

Nigeria recognises the importance of ICT as an impetus for long-term socio-economic development for its people and as the enabler for developing other critical sectors. This recognition is reflected in the national development plan, Nigeria's Vision 2020. In its drive to diversify the economy from dependence on the oil and gas sectors, the federal government has prioritised additional foreign direct investment in the ICT sector, bringing in as much as an additional US\$15 billion. Overall investment in the ICT sector has hit US\$70 billion, increasing from a mere US\$50 million in 2001. The plan will accelerate the sector's contribution to the nation's overall GDP, where investment in telecom alone currently brings US\$ 32 billion.

The governmental support and developmental plan will inevitably create countless opportunities for the country to become a technological hub for training, skills transfer, leadership and investment. Hon. Adebayo Shittu, former Minister of Information and Communications, says, "We will offer every support to ensure that our local ICT firms, service providers and manufacturers have a qualitative competitive advantage over others. If we do so, Nigeria's ICT sector will attract international investors." Additionally, the government



“We will offer every support to ensure that our local ICT firms, service providers and manufacturers have a qualitative competitive advantage over others.”

Hon. Adebayo Shittu,
former Minister of Information and Communications

is encouraging partnerships between local ICT companies and multinational/foreign investors. To promote these partnerships and grow an entrepreneurial eco-system in the tech sector, the administration has supported creating a series of government or private sector-led incubator hubs, youth innovation programmes and science-technology parks.

One such example is Abuja Technology Village Science and Technology Park is a destination for research, incubation, development and commercialisation of ICT. Such hubs enable duty-free shipments and elimination of labour issues as an incentive to investors and entrepreneurs. Prominent private sector partnerships are collaborations with local accelerators like the Co-Creation Hub (CC-Hub) in Yaba, Lagos. Initiatives such as these have attracted foreign investors like the Silicon Valley-based Y Combinator who established an incubation centre in Lagos to recruit and train talented Nigerians to code. In mid-2016, Facebook invested US\$24 million in Andela through its Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. This act was followed by the visit of Mark Zuckerberg, who also toured the CC-Hub during his African business tour. Due to the variety of support, tech start-ups are slowly beginning to carve a niche for themselves and deliver impressive products and services. The progress made in a relatively short period of time is well-deserving of optimism. With more people interested in technology and its real-life applications, Nigeria stands a credible chance of becoming an ICT world leader.

The continuous support of Nigeria’s bright entrepreneurs is set to continue, especially with the success in establishing “Yabacon Valley” in Yaba. The suburb has won its affectionate nickname due to its large number of tech firms and startups that have been established in recent years. Nigeria attracts more startup funding than anywhere else in Africa. The Nigerian government is facilitating these startups by liberalising key ICT sub-sectors such as broadband, managed services, software, IoT and even blockchain, to create more competition and attract FDI.

Nigeria boasts an extremely entrepreneurial, tech-savvy and young population. The future of the nation lies in recognising the incredible potential of Nigeria’s young people and understanding that technology is one of the cornerstones of any thriving economy. The country’s efforts and training will be the dawn of a new wave of technological achievement for Nigeria and it begins with these young, brilliant minds.

In ICT, the potential for job creation is vast. ICT alone can employ over 40 million Nigerians and contribute billions to the Nigerian economy. The telecom industry itself employs over one million Nigerians in their value chain. The telecom industry has accelerated socio-economic growth in Nigeria, adding that all sectors, including education, banking/financial services, agriculture, entertainment and health, are leveraged on communication and overhead infrastructure. This will help Nigeria in job creation and in gaining a significant competitive advantage in the rapidly changing global economy. By deploying full utilisation of ICT infrastructure on all fronts—education, health, oil and gas, agriculture and more—the country can use ICT to penetrate all sectors and inspire job creation.

ICT is, without doubt, a key catalyst which can be strategically deployed to drive productivity and efficiency in all sectors of the economy. ICT has impacted healthcare, agriculture, services and tourism and continues to create opportunities for diverse forms of investment through the digital market, improved productivity and quality and the revolution of the Nigerian banking and financial sector. Currently, almost all sectors of the Nigerian economy leverage on ICT to increase efficiency, productivity and performance which enables ICT to contribute over 10% of the nation’s GDP. Through foreign direct investment and continued support of this promising technology, Nigeria is set to be the main ICT hub in Africa. ■

NCC

Enforcing High Quality Standards For Nigeria's Telecommunications

The NCC works to ensure all stakeholders can benefit from a thriving ecosystem.

The Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) is an independent authority established in 1992 and tasked with the general overseeing of the Nigerian ICT and telecommunications sector. With its 200 million population, Nigeria's potential market for the telecom industry is like no other on the African continent.

In the past few years, NCC has been working tirelessly to bring broadband penetration from 10% in 2015 to well over the 30% threshold, a goal that is now well within reach. "In 2015, we came up with an eight-point agenda," says Umar Danbatta, Executive Vice Chairman of the NCC. "In the plan we have, among other things: facilitating broadband penetration, improving quality of service, optimising usage and benefits of spectrum and promoting ICT innovation and investment opportunities."

The Nigerian telecommunications industry is widely renowned as a true haven for foreign investors, and many have been the positive results obtained by the sector in recent years. The telecom industry currently accounts for about 10% of the Nation's GDP, contributing to the economy for more than NGN 1.4 trillion. Such impressive results could never have been achieved without the government's efforts to improve general ease of doing business and without NCC's absolute commitment to ensuring regulatory excellence within the ICT sector. The Commission emphasised adherence to the rules with the aim of preserving Nigeria's ICT ecosystem. "No element of the ecosystem can survive without the others," explains Danbatta. "All stakeholders need to work in harmony for the interest of the industry. The NCC deliberately introduces flexibility in all regulations to ensure the rules of engagement are respected and complied with."

The Commission, Danbatta adds, will stay this course for the foreseeable future, putting in place all the necessary measures to ensure the ICT and telecommunications sector of Nigeria continues to thrive and drive growth for the country. ■

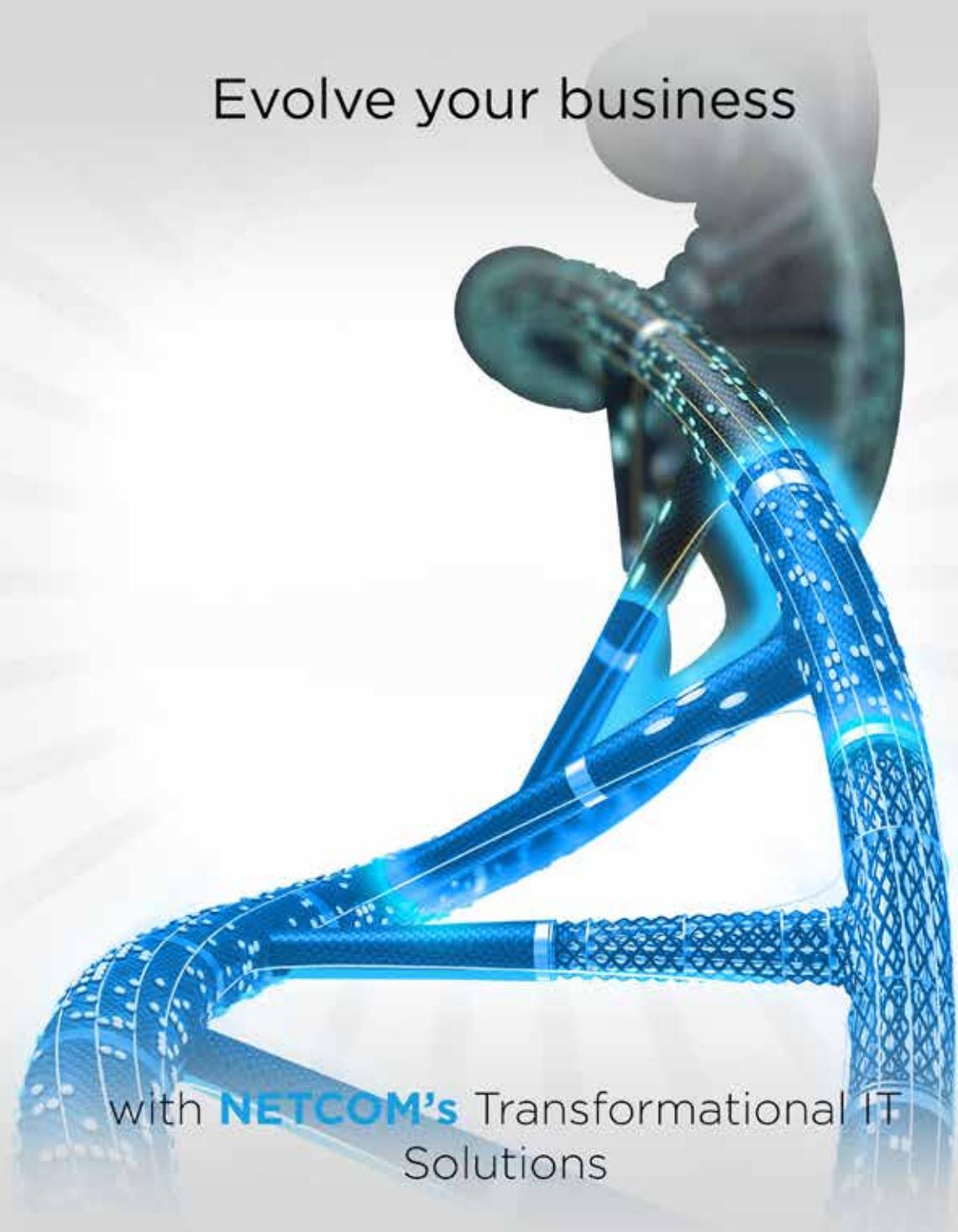
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Telecom operator, 9mobile, is a key player in the ICT sector that is reshaping the economy of Nigeria and opening a world of possibilities to its youth.

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Stephane Beuvelet,
Acting Managing
Director of 9mobile

Active in Nigeria since 2008, 9mobile is one of the country's most outstanding mobile network operators and one of the most important players in Nigeria's rapidly expanding ICT sector. "9mobile positioned itself as a trail blazer in innovation. We have always been known for our quality, because we have always tried to maintain a very high standard. In this respect, we have very highly competent partners," Beuvelet emphasises. "We are applying new technologies and innovations. For instance, we were first operator to rollout 4G services without requiring customers to swap their SIM cards; our network is 4G-native!" The company recently unveiled a new e-shop, entering the exciting world of e-commerce, and offers a wide range of financial products to bring value to customers, while also promoting financial inclusion.

The ICT sector is one of the fastest growing areas of Nigeria's economy, currently accounting for about 10% of the country's GDP and a significant share of the job market. It is a capital intensive and highly competitive environment laden with opportunities. "ICT is an enabler," explains Beuvelet. "Markets are becoming global. If you produce cocoa in Nigeria, you need to sell it on a worldwide scale. You need to know real-time pricing and weather forecasts; you need to stay updated about the newest technologies." Telecom operators, consequently, must ensure that they remain competitive and provide the best value to their customers - a challenge 9mobile has always prioritised. The role technology is playing in reshaping the global economy is particularly evident in Nigeria, a country with a markedly young and dynamic population. In this context, 9mobile is working hard to improve its 4G network penetration and support young entrepreneurs across the country. "9mobile has always been very close to the youth," says Beuvelet. "They need access to educational content and international platforms in order to compete globally. They need low latency networks, APIs, VoIP and ease of interconnection." 9mobile is partnering with a wide array of companies led by young entrepreneurs, in a bid to expand access to opportunities for more people.

The company has also been very active in the Corporate Social Responsibility space, designing a master's degree programme in Telecommunication Engineering in partnership with Kaduna State, Nigeria-based Ahmadu Bello University. This is one of our main CSR initiatives, and we intend to continue to explore options for sustainable engagements in the education sector," adds Beuvelet. The company is also supporting schools to provide young students with internet access and promote literacy across Nigeria.

According to Beuvelet, Nigeria, one of Africa's economic powerhouses, is a country that offers limitless opportunities to both local and foreign investors, with the vibrant and ever-expanding city of Lagos being rightfully considered the standard-bearer of Nigeria's new digital and industrial drives: "It is a cardinal city, comparable to some African countries in terms of GDP," says Beuvelet. "Lagos is significant in our operations as a business. There are a lot of opportunities here and across the country. This is the place to be if you want to do business, simple." As for 9mobile, he adds, "we remain passionate about innovation and offering value adding solutions that improve the everyday lives of our customers." ■



We've Been Together For 11 yrs



And what a journey it has been.
Cheers to many more years together.

Happy Anniversary from 9mobile.

Phase3 Telecom

The African Telecom Pioneer That Adapts With Technology And The Customer's Unique Needs

Phase3 Telecom has used its business model and core values to expand its network and push ahead in the telecom industry.

58

NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Stanley Jegede,
Chairman of
Phase3 Telecom

Phase3 Telecom, incorporated in 2003, lives a clear vision to secure its place in the global telecoms market as Africa's number one independent fibre optic network infrastructure and telecommunications provider. "Today, Phase3 prides itself as the brand of choice for delivering world-class connectivity and network solutions to the continent's largest mobile network operators, ISPs, government agencies, businesses and homes" according to Stanley Jegede, executive chairman of Phase3 Telecom. He also states that the company intends to maintain this status as it continues to work toward innovative solutions that connect people, networks and businesses to the rest of the world.

Phase3 boasts a customer-centric DNA and a wealth of competitive advantages that have solidified its place in the Nigerian telecom sector. To buttress this, Jegede says, "we listen and feel the pulse of our clients to meet their unique needs whilst continuously improving network performance and value creation to satisfy their constantly evolving needs." This special attention to the needs of their clients allows for continuous and successful growth, allowing them to pursue their core vision which is to see every Nigerian and other West Africans connected in a vibrant global information technology and communication space through unrivalled and groundbreaking innovation. With its new service-oriented governance structure, the company is poised for playing an active role in the Nigerian government's digital economy drive through policies and programmes targeted at quicker e-government implementation, widespread digital literacy as well as the increase of broadband penetration across the country. Especially as Nigeria enjoys a teeming youth percentage of 65% in a population of over 180 million citizens.

Jegede's belief that the future of Nigeria depends on its youth is reflected upon the company's CSR activity. Phase3 is in "several ways also contributing to the socio-economic empowerment of Nigerian youths through impact corporate social responsibility programmes with ICT skills acquisition, STEM Advocacy and powering tech innovation/entrepreneurship hubs serving as major thematic areas of engagement for the company."

But touching on the company's future focus, Jegede says, "the scope of possibilities for Phase3 remains exciting as "we just recently carried out an astute modification of our five-year strategy implementation plan (SIP), into four goal-driven categories with streamlined actionable steps." He added that if 16 years in the telecommunications industry has taught the Phase3 family anything, "it is that to continue to establish ourselves as experts in sustaining unequalled business advantage, we must be structured with the consistent mindset of staying ahead of the curve, to chart even greater courses, in proffering distinctive value-focused solutions that must always carry remarkable customer experience, and true service excellence at their cores." With the confidence that Phase3 team will continue to employ the right tools, to maintain a consistent growth graph, optimise the capabilities of network offerings and expand the scope of their partnerships and investment portfolios. Indeed, the telecoms market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 9% to nearly US\$8,346.4 billion by 2022.

In conclusion, Jegede reiterates that while its active play in the West African pool is a major driver goal, its focus on the Nigerian market is un-shifting, as it remains a goldmine of divestible business and investment opportunities. ■



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Muyiwa Razaq Ogungboye, CEO of e.Stream Networks

From Broadband Provider To Solution Provider

e.Stream Networks' investment in infrastructure, strategic partnership and innovative product development sets it apart from other broadband providers. This combination allows the organisation to provide tailor-made solutions for its diverse client base.



What makes Nigeria unique compared to other countries in Africa?

Our geographical position on the African west coast makes it difficult to remove Nigeria from trade. Secondly, our population is tremendous. If you have people, that means you have trade. Thirdly, we are resilient. We always find a way to innovate and make progress, regardless any difficulty. Lastly, agriculture and natural resources: our weather is conducive for virtually anything. We have good seasons and raw materials which gives us a unique advantage in what we grow and produce.

Nigeria is considered a key tech hub in Africa with the internet playing a key role. How did Nigeria achieve this position?

The launch of the Global System for Mobile Telecommunication (GSM) and landing of submarine Internet fibre into the country boomed everything. In addition, we have a vibrant and young population. This mix opened our population to the world. Young, intelligent people now have a platform to learn and execute their passion while finding success in it. In the last five to ten years, we have surpassed many African countries who were ahead of us despite our lateness to the telecoms market.

Has Nigeria's readiness level for digital transformation heightened?

Yes. The various submarine fibre cable has created a whole new ecosystem of opportunities for digital transformation. For example, the fintech sector has brought an unimaginable world of services and success. Also, the rate at which telecoms and ICT are converging will bring limitless possibilities. The industry is transforming and in a few years' time, e.Stream will transform from a broadband provider to a solutions provider, where almost any value-added service on connectivity will be offered by us. Nigeria is rated sixth Internet user in the world. The possibilities and opportunities are endless.

What is the competitive advantage of e.Stream?

We continually develop new products by bringing diversity and consistent innovation together. Part of our strategic goals is to develop services that can ride on all our infrastructure. We will showcase and push all our products into the market next year. We have invested a lot in infrastructure over the years. Our technologies cover satellite, radio, fibre (POP's in all major cities) and 4G; we will soon launch our SD-WAN services. This uniqueness, coupled with our connection to all major operators, allow us to provide services in any part of the country and also customise solutions to meet our customer's changing needs. If there is a connectivity gap wherever you are, we can develop a solution for you.

Why is now the time to partner, trade and invest in Nigeria and with Nigerian companies?

Nigeria has the largest population in Africa, and with a growth rate of 3.2% per year, there will be about 402 million people in Nigeria by 2050 (with an average age between 18 to 45 years old) that's a little above the current population of US. This means investors are exposed to a population full of energy, highly mobile, hungry for high tech solutions and good national infrastructure, as well as having the freedom to collaborate and innovate by challenging the status-quo. Investors, have a forex advantage that can tap into these energy and transform talents and natural resources into something useful. Nigeria has a lot of untapped opportunities that can produce an incredible economy. ■



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Providing The Platform For Growth

“Convenience, reliability and quality of service are the three words that describe OyaNow the best.”
Abbas Dayekh, Founder & CEO of OyaNow Logistics

Founded only two years ago on September 21, 2017, OyaNow Logistics Ltd. provides a gamut of home delivery services that includes food, drinks, medicine, laundry, home-cleaning, errands and personal shopping. With the click of a few buttons on its user-friendly mobile application, available on both Apple Store and Google Play Store, one can be assured of a 24-hour service, in the three major cities of Nigeria (Kano, Abuja and Lagos). The company has also become the preferred logistics partner for small and medium businesses who are in search of a reliable and efficient means of delivering their products to their end customers.

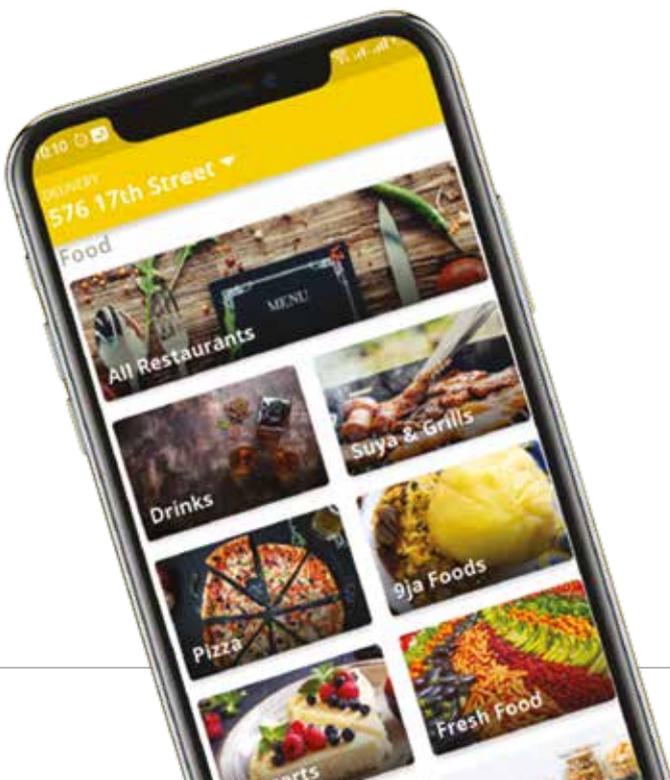
“We built OyaNow to fill two major gaps in the Nigerian market: Last mile logistics and Customer Service,” says Iffat Mahmud, Co-Founder & COO. While most e-commerce platforms build the platforms and outsource logistics, customer service and even technology, OyaNow applied a reverse strategy of building a strong foundation around typically outsourced services, to ensure it can deliver on its promise of being the most convenient and reliable service in the country. “E-commerce without excellent teams to handle your logistics and customers, is merely an electronic platform without the commerce!” reiterates Christabel Aigbogun, Head of Operations.



OyaNow employs more than 120 young Nigerians, with the aim of providing nationwide employment for the youth in a matter of years. As an employer, the company's strategy is to hire only sincere and ambitious youth in return of providing merit-based career growth and an environment of continuous learning. It is therefore no surprise that OyaNow has a growing team of possibly the smartest and most presentable dispatch riders who call themselves 'Marketers.' “We are marketing our OyaNow to customers and getting business; dispatch is only part of the job!” boasts Ali Joseph, a proud Marketer of OyaNow. The company boasts of an unprecedented level of loyalty amongst its teams, something that it claims to have earned with hard work and a genuine attention to its most critical resource: its people!

OyaNow is a company with a long-term vision for Nigeria. The team reiterates that it is no rush to report miraculous growth, and is instead working towards providing significant value for customers by providing convenience for small and medium businesses by providing reliable and efficient logistics services that helps their businesses grow and most importantly, by providing a platform for growth and personal success to the young Nigerians who run the company itself. ■

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Saying Yes To Yabacon Valley

Yabacon Valley is a centre for ICT start-ups and SMEs to thrive, leading the sector toward great success and the country toward its future.

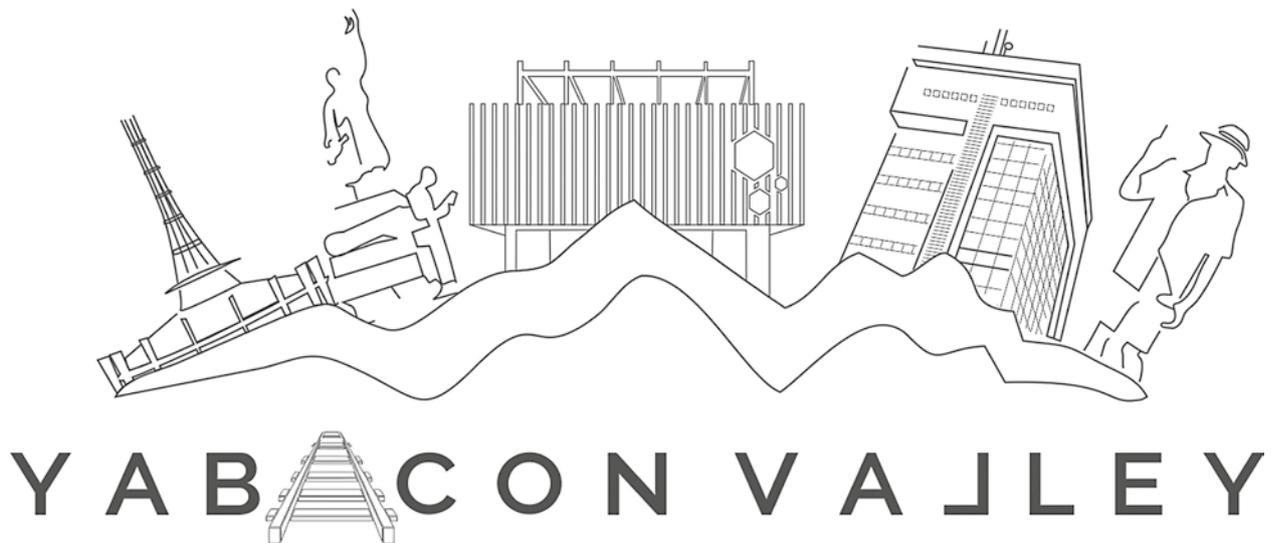
Nigeria has all the ingredients for the future of the ICT sector to grow: a young, tech-savvy workforce, a constantly improving telecom sector and a population that is ready to make its mark in the sector. These elements all culminate in Lagos, the country's centre for tech and startups. Nicknamed "Yabacon Valley" after Yaba, the Lagos neighbourhood that many consider to be an unexpected source of startup success.

Yaba's appeal lies in its wealth of possibility. With mostly one-story buildings that echo the late colonial architecture of the past, the potential to transform Yaba into a hub of technology is ready and waiting, even catching the attention of Facebook founder and CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, who visited Yabacon Valley in August of 2016. Zuckerberg's visit was a monumental acknowledgement in the world of ICT that Nigeria is a source for endless potential.

Although many view Yaba and the surrounding areas as a glass that is half full, others worry that it does not have the infrastructure to adequately help startups find their footing. Bosun Tijani, CEO and co-founder of Co-Cre-

ation Hub (CcHUB), is working toward a solution. CcHUB is a startup incubator that wants to solve the infrastructure problem in Yaba. All that is needed is a spark to ignite a wildfire of startup businesses and success in Lagos. CcHUB has plans to build a US\$8 million Innovation Centre in Yaba by 2020. Standing tall over Yaba, the 10-story building will serve as CcHUB's new location and hopes to promote more investment in the ICT hub.

But that is not the only purpose of the Innovation Centre. CcHUB also provides offices for other flourishing startups, creating a space where ideas and tech can come together to create new jobs and opportunities for Nigerians. What is more, CcHUB offers training programmes for its startups throughout every stage of development to help them succeed. So whether a small business is in the pre-incubation stage where prototypes are developed, the incubation stage where revenue is built, or the acceleration stage where products and business models are refined to sustain growth, the people are motivated. Bosun Tijani says, "There is a can-do attitude, which means



you can literally get anything going around here. It is a fantastic place for ideas to germinate. Creative people tend to flourish in places where they are exposed to opportunities as opposed to challenges.”

Some startups have already found significant success. In the world of e-commerce, one success story is Jumia. Known as the “African Amazon”, Jumia ships products from virtually every department, ranging from fashion to electronics to home decor. Jumia has partnered with over 50,000 African retailers and has a presence in fourteen African countries. In April of 2019, Jumia was the first startup in all of Africa to go public on the New York Stock Exchange, a monumental achievement and huge step forward for Nigerian startups.

Other startups such as iRokoTV specialise in entertainment. Dubbed the “Netflix of Nigeria”, iRoko adds value to Nigeria’s economy through its web-based television platform that offers free and paid access to Nigerian films on-demand.

Startups also specialise in helping other sectors and improving the communities of Nigeria. Farmcrowdy is Nigeria’s first digital agriculture platform that blends technology with the agro-industry. Their goal is to provide improved seeds to farmers, training programmes on farming techniques, inputs and creating a better market for farmers to sell their produce.

What this means is that startups and small businesses are the future to improve Nigeria. They stimulate the economy, bring awareness to its rich culture and provide job opportunities in all sectors. Don’t be fooled by the clever wordplay of Yabacon Valley as a copy of Silicon Valley. Although Yabacon Valley is striving to be ground zero of the innovation and tech industry in Africa, it is reaching its goals through originality, not imitation, as its startups are founded with the needs of its people in mind. Nigeria has its own story, its own unique narrative, and its character will allow it to make its mark in the world of ICT. ■

“Creative people tend to flourish in places where they are exposed to opportunities as opposed to challenges.”

Bosun Tijani,
CEO and co-founder
of CcHUB



Dr Babatunde Fowler,

Chairman of Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)

Taxes For A Better Nigeria

Appointed Chairman of LIRS in 2005, Dr Babatunde Fowler transformed Lagos into a thriving economic hub through a thorough review of taxation law and methodology. Today, Chairman of FIRS since 2015, Dr Fowler finds himself responsible for having revolutionised and considerably boosted national economic growth through a transparent and fair implementation of tax.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



“We deploy the right technology to the extent that, if you want to start a business and if you have to register with CAC, you can register your business number online and pay online.”

Why does it pay to pay taxes? How has the Nigerian mindset evolved regarding understanding the importance of paying taxes?

People certainly understand the importance of taxes. The initial problem that they had is that they thought only civil servants and the middle class were to pay taxes, while millionaires were not paying taxes. Now, they have realised that tax laws apply to all. Everybody has been asked to comply with that civil responsibility and they have accepted it. Everybody in Nigeria has come to the realisation that everyone has to give back, regardless of who you might be.

Lately you disclosed that FIRS agency is looking to eradicate multiple taxation scenarios. How will this affect the economic growth of companies and financial institutions?

In Nigeria, we have three tails: federal, state and local. We found out that a lot of local governments within Nigeria impose charges and levies on businesses, especially in the telecom sector. So, there is an accumulation of tax. We had a meeting under the Joint Tax Board with NCC and local governments and they are working towards a process whereby they will agree on what type of charges should be paid for the installation and environmental assessment. Taxpayers who are given a bill they believe is not correct should approach the State Internal Revenue Chairman or visit the FIRS office.

Since your first tenure, you have been pushing the ICT and e-taxation of the institution. How do you think that this will increase the tax payments?

So, the point is that nobody likes to pay taxes. What we have done is deploy technology to make it very convenient and we have deployed literature to make people understand the process and pay the right amount due. We deploy the right technology to the extent that, if you want to start a business and if you have to register with CAC, you can register your business number online and pay online. So, any tax on the federal level can be paid online. If you give us your e-mail address and phone number, you will be given an alert every time a payment is being made on that tax ID. Also, if you want a tax certificate, you can apply online. So, you can do everything without visiting our offices.

In 2016, you collected 3.3 trillion naira (US\$9.1 billion) in taxes and in 2017, 4.18 trillion naira (US\$11.5 billion) This is the highest figure in Nigeria’s history. How was this achieved?

We had to change our focus: we had to interact more with all stakeholders to show the benefits of paying taxes. We had a tax amnesty in 2016, for 45 days and thereafter, we gave individuals and organisations the opportunity to come forward and carryout a self-assessment. Now, we are at the stage where we believe that all Nigerians know about tax laws and they know that there will be consequences if they do not pay their taxes. ■



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Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS)

Awakening The Sleeping Giant Of Nigeria

Through education, technology and a dedication to end corruption, the Federal Inland Revenue Service is implementing a transparent tax system that benefits all.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) is on a mission to improve the economy of Nigeria through education and the implementation of technology. As the country is progressing in all sectors, there is a need to fine-tune the economy's tax system to sustain all of the advancements that Nigeria has in its future with emerging markets around every corner.

General Director of FIRS, Dr Babtunde Fowler, has created a tax system that supports the government, so that the government can support its people. Dr Fowler tells us that this is an idea that Nigerians are not used to. "We have to change the thinking of all businesses and individuals to help them realise that, in order to fund economic and infrastructural development, we all need to pay taxes." But for a country that is now experiencing an incredible growth of its economy and has not previously relied on a tax system to fund expenditures, how can FIRS accomplish this task? "The first step," states Dr Fowler, "was to meet with staff and let them know the new vision: we are a service agency, we are here to serve the people and at the same time, we have to make sure that all the tax laws are followed, meaning that taxpayers will pay taxes when due."

One of the first steps toward implementing this goal was the development the Tax Awareness Initiative and FEETTs, the Federal Engagement and Enlightenment Tax Teams. These teams are designated to speak with shop owners, small business owners and individual citizens to share information and spread awareness of how a proper, uncorrupt tax system can benefit everyone in the country. "They help them realise that the sale of oil is not sufficient to fund government at all levels," says Dr Fowler, "that we all have to chip in just a little bit to make sure that you have the standard of living that you desire, that you witness when you travel abroad."

This door-to-door, personal level of education is crucial to help Nigerians understand the need of taxes

in a country that is leading the way for Africa in sectors such as tech, health and ICT. The results have been enormous. Through the Tax Awareness Initiative, FIRS has nearly doubled its tax database from 10 million to 19.5 million within a period of 18 months, with a goal of reaching 40 million by the end of 2019.

Outside of educating the public, the technology sector itself is a great asset to implementing a successful taxation system in the country. According to Dr Fowler, the convenience that technology offers Nigerians is crucial to compliance in taxes. Technology offers a secure way for Nigerians to pay taxes to the government as FIRS works to improve the country and continue its commitment against corruption.

FIRS has deployed technology to allow taxpayers to carry out all of their tax activities and transactions online, giving them the ability to e-file without visiting tax offices. They have implemented ways to keep records and receipts to ensure that taxpayers' money is going to the correct accounts. FIRS also uses technology to enable trend analysis to verify that citizens are paying the correct amount of taxes. "Basically, we have made it as simple as possible and, at the same time, we made it extremely transparent and added accountability into the system of the present government. Taxpayers want to make sure that government is spending this tax revenue wisely. You can see in speeches of the Vice President, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Information--they are all constantly updating on all the new projects that are carried out, such as road improvements, so people see how tax revenue is being utilised." The transparency of the system is the key to a tax system that citizens can trust.

As a result, the efforts of FIRS have been fruitful. Nigeria has already seen positive change in nationwide tax benefits that make the future hopeful for Nigeria and all of Africa. FIRS reports that they have been able



to improve revenue generation from 3.3 billion to 4 trillion, with their sights set on 5 trillion. Seeing the benefits of a tax system will only encourage more Nigerians to trust in FIRS and their government's commitment to improve the country's economy. In reporting these successes, Dr Fowler tells us, "I think that the government and the people of Nigeria now understand that we cannot rely on oil sales to fund our economy or to ensure sustainable development."

These results will also place Nigeria as a guiding light for the rest of the continent. Dr Fowler states, "I believe a lot of other African countries look up to our experience and our leadership. When they see us carrying out all these reforms, they are also encouraged to carry out similar reforms in their own economies. So, I think together we're moving in right direction that will simply make Africa a better continent and will help Africa realise its full potential. In terms of the African countries, I think it shows them that we have something to contribute to the world."

Dr Fowler describes Nigeria as "one of the world's best kept secrets" in terms of business, tourism and potential. "I think Nigeria has tremendous potential and I think the present government has woken up this potential." And with the government focused on ending corruption in the business world in the country, its viable market and business-oriented workforce are looking even more appealing to investors from all over the world.

Even outside of the economic or investment benefits, the people of Nigeria, Dr Fowler says, are one of the most hospital groups of people. "As a country, we have open doors to everyone, be it an investor or a tourist enjoying Nigeria. I think Nigeria is ready to receive the world. As a tax administrator, I would invite individuals to come and see what we have to offer. I can assure you that it will be an experience that you will never forget." ■

FIRS has nearly doubled its tax database from 10 million to 19.5 million within a period of 18 months.



Andersen Tax LP

World-Class Quality Tax Advisory Services For Nigerian Companies

Part of a group operating in 23 African countries, Andersen Tax LP aims at being the most trusted tax advisory firm in the sector.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Olaleye Adebisi,
Managing Partner
of Andersen Tax

Andersen Tax LP is the Nigerian Member Firm of Andersen Global, an international association of firms established in 2013 with the aim of joining together tax and legal professionals from all around the world. With offices both in Lagos and in Federal Capital Abuja, Andersen Tax LP provides specialist tax, corporate and commercial advisory as well as regulatory and transactional services, together with transfer pricing services, to resident and non-resident companies operating in Nigeria and beyond. The structure of the firm enables Andersen Tax to take full advantage of the strength and resources of a global group while maintaining the level of individual care and invaluable expertise of a locally based firm.

The Andersen brand debuted in Africa with the launch of Andersen Tax in 2017: "The group is now present in 23 African countries," says Olaleye Adebisi, Managing Partner of Andersen Tax. "We are expanding rapidly in Africa, and in each market we enter we want to be trusted advisors for our clients and add value to their businesses." The group has just signed collaboration agreements with tax firms in Morocco and Tunisia. Within the next few years, the ultimate aim is for Andersen Tax to become the market leader in tax and legal advisory in the continent. "By the end of 2020, we should get into 28 countries in Africa, and in 37 by 2021," adds Adebisi. "We are principally into tax, but in some markets we are also involved in legal advisory services. We choose the best or one of the best firms in the markets we enter."

Nigeria, with its 202 million people, is Africa's most populous country, and has one of the lowest median ages in the world at around 17-18 years. These two bits of data translate into millions and millions of incredible young Nigerians ready to unleash their best in a country ripe with endless potential: "Our people are entrepreneurial," says Olaleye Adebisi. "Nigeria is full of natural resources, and we have a unique way for agriculture. We have fertile land, and agriculture is now contributing to the GDP more than oil." The government, he adds, has worked on a number of policies to improve Nigeria's business climate. "Now it's easier to register companies and obtain licenses/permits," he says.

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement that entered into force in the early summer of this year leading to the creation of an African common market is a fantastic opportunity for all the Member States, adds Adebisi. Becoming part of the world's largest free trade area is expected to be yet another boost to Nigeria's continued development, further increasing the country's attractiveness as an investment and business destination: "Some companies entered when the market was not saturated and gained a lot," explains Adebisi. "For any company which is planning to stay long term in Africa, this is the best time to come to Nigeria as an investor."

Adebisi, a renowned tax expert with over 30 years of experience, has a word of advice for Nigeria's bustling and inventive youth: "Sometimes patience is needed, and things need to be gradual. Things take time. The market is expanding and there will be more opportunities for the youth, but they need to create their own niche, think critically and take one step at a time." ■

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Oil and Gas

72

Nigeria's Powerhouse

The country seeks to increase its production and become a fuel exporter in the foreseeable future.

NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Petroleum was officially discovered in Nigeria for the first time over sixty years ago. In 1956, five decades of exploration finally yielded fruit when Shell D'Arcy (today Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria) at last found the country's first commercially viable oilfield in Oloibiri, a small community located in modern Bayelsa State, in the Niger Delta region, about 70 km from Port Harcourt. Within a couple of years, Nigeria joined the ranks of oil producing countries: in 1958, the oilfield came on stream, producing 5,100 bps. Oil exportation changed the course of Nigerian history: by the late 1960s and early 1970s, Nigeria produced over 2 million barrels of crude oil per day, a figure eventually topped in the early 2000s, when production peaked at the record level of 2.5 million bpd.

Despite the many fluctuations that characterised the oil market in recent years, petroleum production and export still account for a major share of Nigeria's gross earnings: in the first quarter of 2018, sales of crude oil made up 76.3% of Nigeria's export earnings, bringing in about US\$11.7 billion. In the same time span, processed oil products (e.g. condensates and lubricants) earned an additional US\$1.75 billion, i.e. 11.4% of the total export

earnings. In 2018, the increase of oil prices supported the economic growth of Nigeria, and new investments keep being launched to make sure the oil and gas industry can keep sustaining further growth in forthcoming years.

Until 2019, the four major existing refineries of Nigeria were the two Port Harcourt refineries, with a combined capacity of 210,000 barrels per stream day; the Warri Refining and Petrochemical Company, with a capacity of 125,000 bpsd; the Kaduna Refining and Petrochemical Company, with a capacity of 110,000 bpsd. Further efforts have been made, and in the next few years, two major sites will reach their peak production rate, providing a further combined increase of 450,000 bpd: the Dangote Refinery and the Egina oilfield.

Located in Lekki, not far from Lagos, and fully owned by the homonymous Nigerian company, the US\$9 billion Dangote Refinery will be the largest oil refinery in Africa. Once operational, by the end of 2020, the Dangote plant will have an expected refining capacity of 10.4 million tonnes of gasoline per year, contributing to double Nigeria's overall capacity and sustaining the country's transition from fuel importer to fuel exporter.



The government signed the landmark Seven Critical Gas Development Projects, which are expected to bring 96.3 mcm per day of gas and generate at least 15,000 MW of electricity by 2020.

The Egina offshore oilfield, located in the Gulf of Guinea, approximately 150 km from the coasts of Nigeria, became operational in early 2019 and has rightly been dubbed “one of the most ambitious ultra-deep offshore projects on Earth.” The field, discovered in 2003, lies at about 1,400-1,700 m beneath the surface. The facility is based on a subsea production system with 44 ultra-deep subsea wells connected to a FPSO (floating production, storage and offloading vessel). At its peak, the Egina offshore oilfield will produce 200,000 barrels of oil per day. In July 2018, Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) then-Group Managing Director Maikanti Baru affirmed his commitment to increasing Nigeria’s crude oil reserves from 37 to 40 billion barrels by 2020 while achieving a production of 3 million barrels per day by 2023.

In the same occasion, the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, together with the NNPC, reaffirmed the government’s will to focus on taking all the necessary steps to ensure Nigeria can take full advantage from its vast gas resources: the government signed the landmark Seven Critical Gas Development Projects, which are expected

to bring 96.3 mcm per day of gas and generate at least 15,000 MW of electricity by 2020. The projects are poised to contribute decisively in bridging Nigeria’s demand-supply gap in the domestic gas market. Key projects among the so-called 7CGDP include the development of the 4.3 trillion cubic feet Assa North/Ohaji South gas field.

The Nigerian oil and gas market is relatively consolidated and competitive, with players such as NNPC, Royal Dutch Shell PLC, Total SA, Chevron and Exxon Mobil Co. sharing the majority of the market. Recently, NNPC Group Managing Director Mele Kyari thanked Chinese enterprises for their investments in the industry, which amount to approximately US\$16 billion. Experts predict that China will import about 80% of its crude oil supply by 2030, and Nigeria is poised to play a key role in that sense, especially since Chinese companies such as the China National Offshore Oil Corp. (CNOOC) trade and invest in Nigeria since the early 2000s. CNOOC’s Executive Vice-President Lu Yan Ji recently said that his company aims at increasing its production output from 800,000 bpd to over 1.2 million bpd, and that he hopes Nigeria will help in that regard. ■

Helping Hands

The Most Important Hydrocarbon Projects In Nigeria

Nigeria is expected to drive capacity growth in their domestic and regional areas from planned and announced projects during the outlook period 2019 to 2023.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

As the largest holder of oil and gas in Africa, Nigeria holds a pivotal position in the international market. The government of Nigeria is also encouraging investments in gas in order to increase supply to power companies and move the economy from over dependence in oil which currently accounts for the bulk revenue in the country.

Here are some of the major projects that are working towards enhancing the nation's oil and gas production to generate power, increase employment and unleash socio-economic prosperity.

1. LNG Train 7

With six trains currently operational, Nigeria LNG's plant, on Bonny Island in Rivers State, is capable of producing 22 million tonnes per annum of LNG. With global LNG demand expected to increase by 72% between 2017 and 2030, Nigeria LNG has signed engineering and design contracts for a seventh train in the nation's Atlantic coast. Complementing the existing six-train structure, its latest plan would boost production to 30 million tonnes by 2024.

In line with the current administration's Gas Revolution, Train 7 will cost as much as US\$6.5 billion to build, with another US\$5 billion to be spent on wells and pipelines needed to supply the plant. Nigeria LNG is seeking US\$7 billion from the global financial markets for sustainability of its operations and the expansion. As gas is a cleaner form of energy, this project will spur Nigeria's gas for industrialisation agenda, focused on domestic consumption rather than exports. This project is coming at the right time as Nigeria needs to invest in new production to avoid slipping from the 4th to the 10th position by 2025 in the ranking of global LNG exporters.

2. Deepwater Bonga North

The project, which Shell Nigeria Exploration and Production Company (SNEPCo) and its partners brought on stream in August 2014, is an important milestone for Nigeria's deep-water industry and has generated jobs and businesses.

Bonga North West ties into the existing Bonga vessel, one of the largest floating production, storage and offloading vessels in the world. The project team safely drilled and connected new wells in a highly challenging environment more than a kilometre below the ocean's surface. Through close collaboration with the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and industry regulators the project has unlocked new energy resources to help meet the world's growing demand.

In some of the highlights on Nigerian content development, 90% of the people who worked on the Bonga North West project during its four-year development were Nigerian. SNEPCo awarded the major engineering and construction contracts for the project to companies that were either indigenous, have local staff, or possess domesticated capabilities in the country.

3. Deepwater Bonga Southwest/Aparo

Shell Nigeria Exploration & Production Company (SNEPCo) and its partners are now set to commence the tendering process for the development of Bonga South West/Aparo (BSWA) deepwater oil project. It will open further opportunities in the deepwater oil and gas sector in Nigeria, whilst creating significant benefits for the state. BSWA, located in OML 118, OML 132 and OML 140, will be the first major deepwater project in Nigeria since Egina. BSWA has the potential to produce approximately 150,000 to 200,000 bopd, which will account for around 10% of Nigerian crude oil production.

4. Assa North/Ohaji South (ANOH)

The government of Nigeria has announced plans to raise US\$700 million for a joint gas project between Seplat Petroleum Development and NNPC in bid to reduce the reliance on oil in the country. Assa North-Ohaji South project is one of the seven gas production infrastructures in Nigeria.



The ANOH project is a critical gas supply hub in Nigeria's burgeoning gas-infrastructure network designed to provide the linkage between the Eastern, Western and Northern gas pipeline system.

The plant will process wet gas which has a capacity of 300 standard cubic feet per day and will begin production works in the last quarter of 2020 with its major supply targeted to begin in 2021. When fully developed, the project will add about 600 million standard cubic feet of gas per day to the national gas grid with capacity to expand to 1.2 billion cubic feet per day. The ANOH project is a critical gas supply hub in Nigeria's burgeoning gas-infrastructure network designed to provide the linkage between the Eastern, Western and Northern gas pipeline system.

5. Ultra-deepwater Zabazaba-Etan project

The Zabazaba and the Etan fields are located in oil prospecting lease (OPL) 245 offshore Nigeria in the Niger Delta of the Gulf of Guinea, in water depths ranging from 1,200 - 2,400 metres. The deepwater project is expected to support small and medium sized businesses in Nigeria, with half of the Zabazaba FPSO topside currently slated to be fabricated and integrated in the country. The Zabazaba and Etan fields are estimated to hold a combined total of 560 million barrels of oil-equivalent.

The Zabazaba field development is being executed alongside Etan field, and the two are expected to increase Nigeria's oil production by 150,000 barrels per day when the project comes on stream. First production from the US\$13.5 billion integrated development project is expected in 2020.

6. Preowei Development

The Preowei accumulation, located north-eastwards of the Egina Field, was discovered in 2005. Preowei is expected to produce around 70,000 barrels of oil per day at peak. The field will be developed as a tie back to the Egina FPSO, the largest deep-water floater that TOTAL ever deployed.

7. Ikike Project

Located in 20 metres of water, some 20km offshore, on block OML 99, Ikike is intended to produce 32,000 barrels a day of oil and some 3.5 cubic metres a day of gas. While oil production will be relatively modest compared to Egina, this project exemplifies that IOC appetite for Nigeria is returning in a big way.

8. Owowo Project

Further down the line, Nigeria's aspirations to boost oil production to closer to three (3) million barrels per day over the coming years could receive a real boost if ExxonMobil decides to push on with development of the Owowo field. The sandstone reservoir is estimated to hold 500 million to 1 billion barrels of recoverable oil making it Nigeria's largest oil discovery since 2004. Once fully running and connected, these initiatives will help propel Nigeria to the gas hub within West African. ■

Gas Revolution

The New Fuel Of Choice For Nigeria's Economic And Industrial Revolution

Crude oil has been the choice of fuel for Nigeria for quite a while however with the nation armed with a Gas Master Plan and several key players at work; Nigeria is poised to become the gas hub of west Africa.

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When President Buhari put forth the 7 Big Wins platform, his administration ensured that under their watch, the "old" Nigeria would slowly disappear while a new era would arise. Focusing on security and the new ease of doing business in Nigeria, they promised progress on reforms in the oil and gas sector. Compared to other alternatives, natural gas is the cheapest available fuel source. However, despite this, the use of natural gas is not as widespread in the country due to limited gas reserves development, inadequate pipeline infrastructure, supply insecurity and the absence of clear fiscal terms. Nevertheless, with an extensive roadmap in place, the Gas Revolution is on the right track to usher in Buhari's vision for a next level Nigeria.

The recent rise in Nigeria's current proven gas reserve up to 202 trillion cubic feet allows a more rapid development of the country's energy sector while revitalising other sectors with the provision of affordable electricity. The earliest large-sized project to be completed to monetise Nigeria's gas resources was aimed at the domestic market. The one billion cubic feet a day - Escravos-Lagos Pipeline System (ELPS), commissioned in 1989, was primarily intended to supply gas from Escravos

region in the western Niger Delta to Egbin power station near Lagos. The 440km-long pipeline, grid length pipeline now supplies natural gas to several industries in the country's southwest.

The same year that ELPS was completed, the country inaugurated a Liquefied Natural Gas Company: Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Limited. Ten years later, in 1999, the first cargo of Liquefied Natural Gas was exported out of a plant on Bonny Island, in the east of the country. Over those 20 years, some six trillion cubic feet of gas have been converted to exports as LNG and Natural Gas Liquids (NGLs), earning the government over thus helping to reduce gas flaring by upstream companies. With six trains currently operational, the entire complex is capable of producing 22 Million tonnes per annum (MMTPA) of LNG, and 5MMTPA of NGLs from 3.5Bscf/d of natural gas intake.

The second large export project, the West Africa Gas Pipeline (WAGP) was completed in 2006 and commissioned in 2011. It extends, by 678km, the ELPS, supplying Nigerian gas pumped from Escravos to Benin, Togo and Ghana. WAGP is the first regional natural gas transmission system in sub-Saharan Africa.







The NNPC, in JVs with major IOCs, is progressing to deliver about 3.4 billion standard cubic feet of gas per day to bridge the country's medium term supply gap.

There are several on-going and upcoming gas projects in the work for the rapid development of the country's energy sector.

OB3 Pipeline

The 120km Oben-Obrikom-Obiafu (OB3) pipeline has been under construction by the NNPC since 2012. Commissioning is anticipated before the end of 2019. At peak capacity, it would ferry a billion cubic feet of gas every day from resource-rich Eastern Nigeria to the industrialised markets in the west of the country. At 48 inches, it is the largest diameter grid length pipeline in the country.

The Escravos Lagos Pipeline 2

The Escravos Lagos Pipeline (ELP) 2 is a pipeline running near and parallel to the Escravos Lagos Pipeline, in order to double the capacity from 1 billion square cubic feet per day to 2 billion. Recently, Shell and Seplat have separately taken Final Investment Decisions (FID), as operators of two segments of the Assa North Ohaji South gas project. Whereas Shell will add its equity gas and sell to factories, markets and power plants in the neighbourhood; Seplat will construct a spur line from its processing trains to the OB3 and pump the gas to Oben, which has become a gas hub in the Niger Delta's western axis.

NLNG'S Seventh Train

The NLNG plans to build the Seventh Train of the Bonny-based LNG plant, to lift the total production capacity from 22MMTPA to 30 MMTPA. This 8MMTPA Train will utilise 2.2Bscf/d of natural gas. Progress has advanced with Front End Engineering Design almost completed.

AKK Pipeline

The proposed 614km Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) pipeline is a continuation of infrastructure build for the domestic gas market. Running from Ajaokuta in Kogi State to Kano through the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, the AKK construction has been awarded to Oilserv/Oando Consortium and is estimated to cost US\$2.8 billion.

The AKK pipeline is envisaged as the first part of the Trans Nigeria Gas Pipeline Project (TNGP) development, a key part of the Gas Master Plan. The second and third parts of the TNGP are located in the south of the country, where the gas reserves are abundant. The TNGP, which is expected to be 1,300km in total length, then forms a piece of the Trans Sahara Gas Pipeline (TSGP) system, which is envisaged to pump Nigerian gas through Algeria or Morocco to Europe.

The Nigerian state hydrocarbon company NNPC, in Joint Ventures with the major international companies, is progressing Seven Critical Gas Development Projects (7CGDP) to deliver about 3.4 billion standard cubic feet of gas per day (to bridge the country's medium term supply gap by an accelerated basis.

The on-going implementation of the Gas Master Plan will enable power-starved communities across the country to have greater access to electricity, while providing stranded commercial and industrial customers with a cleaner and more efficient source of energy. Gas will continue to play an increasingly important role to ensure that Nigeria progresses forward towards the next level. ■

Creating Superior Value



We are a leading indigenous oil company with over 20 years of expertise across the entire value chain of the downstream sector.

Our history runs deep, and with our wealth of experience and resources to invest in growth, we have increased our efforts to establish strong positions in geographic markets, with high potential for diversification.

- Marketing
- Bulk storage
- Logistics
- Shipping



Local Content Paves The Way

The Nigerian Content Act has resulted in employment generation, capacity building and economic diversification since its introduction a decade ago.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



The Nigerian oil and gas industry has been growing since the discovery of crude oil by the Shell group at Oloibiri. This sector of the economy was primarily dominated by the International Oil Companies (IOCs) until the 1990s when Nigerian companies began participating as a result of the implementation of the Nigerian Content Directives issued by the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC). The aim to increase the participation of Nigerians in the Oil and Gas industry led to the enactment of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act (referred to as Local Content Act), which received presidential assent in April 2010. As a result of this Act, the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) was initiated to implement and enforce the development and growth of Nigerian Content in all oil and gas transactions.

The overarching idea of Nigerian Content is to serve as the instrument to spur economic growth and drive industrialisation with linkages to other key sectors of the economy such as construction, ICT, power, railways and agriculture. Over the past eight years, several initiatives have been introduced seeking to domicile manufacturing capacities in-country, create jobs and enhance capital retention from annual industry spend. The major policies of government in the sector, including the Seven Big Wins, Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB), the Gas Commercialisation policy and the Nigerian Content Act are tailored toward making the oil and gas industry a driver of the economy, not just a revenue earner for the country.

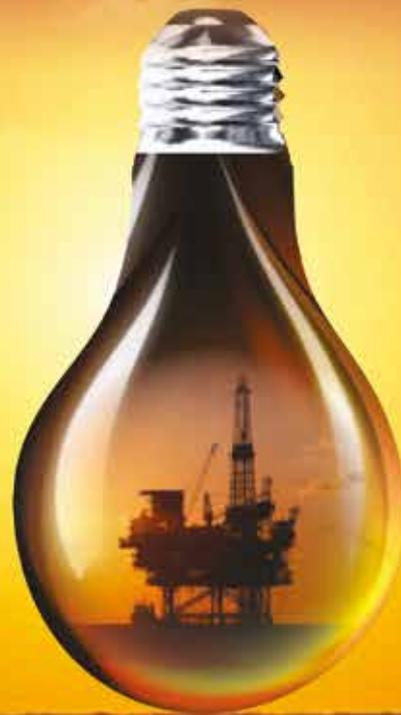
Alongside the NNPC, NCDMB's plan to grow Nigerian Content to 70% by the year 2027 is anchored on a ten-year strategic roadmap, introduced back in 2017. As a result, the NCDMB is fully aligned to the strategy to use oil to wean the country off its reliance on oil. Some plans within the framework include committing about US\$1.8 billion for the rehabilitation of local refineries through private sector participation and promoting the setup of modular refineries. If Nigeria gains sufficiency in refining within the next five years, then the country will be on a path to becoming Africa's refining hub.

Typically within the hydrocarbon industry, for every direct employment created, six indirect jobs are created which is why the NNPC and NCDMB plan to establish five industrial parks for the manufacturing of goods and services for the oil and gas sector in most of the oil-producing states. NCDMB has put in place a firm arrangement for provision of 24/7 power supply to the industrial parks as they are set up. This will help in great measure towards increasing manufacturing within the country.

A US\$200 million Nigerian Content Intervention (NCI) Fund has been launched to provide affordable credit to indigenous service providers. In 2018, they supervised the in-country integration of the Egina FPSO, creating thousands of jobs in various service companies across Nigeria, and developed huge capacity, which will be utilised for future projects like BGSW/Aparo, NLNG Train 7, Assa North Gas Development and other upcoming projects. These are some of the ways which Nigerian Content will reach the NNPC/NCDMB goal of 70%.

Since its enactment, the oil and gas ecosystem has expanded rapidly while the IOCs and indigenous companies have collaborated extensively to ensure that Nigerians are well represented across the board. Ultimately, the Local Content Act is one of the most successful economic policies of the Nigerian federal government in recent times. ■

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organized to harvest opportunities across the E
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Bolaji Osunsanya, Chief Executive Officer of Axxela

A New Awakening For Nigeria Through Sustainable Gas Investments

Through new grounds for development in gas, infrastructure and local content, Axxela advances in Nigeria and the region.



A Helios Investments Partners portfolio company, Axxela is a designated natural gas shipper on the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP) and the pioneering private sector-led developer of natural gas distribution in Nigeria, delivering at peak 80 million scfd via a vast network of gas infrastructure to over 175 industrial and commercial customers. With over 280km in gas pipeline infrastructure developed, Axxela provides unique energy solutions and cost-effective energy alternatives.

Could you give us an overview of how the oil and gas sector has developed in recent years?

A lot has happened since the discovery of oil in Nigeria. We now have a diverse and indigenous focus within Nigeria's oil and gas industry, and there is a greater focus away from crude. Gas has been discovered, and there is a growing discourse about gas being pivotal to the continued industrialisation of the country. We've also brought more local content into the sector; we have indigenous companies involved in exploration, production, and all segments of midstream and downstream. There are also more Nigerian oil and gas practitioners today than a few years ago, who are positioned in critical roles which encourages increased industry and local capacity development. Additionally, if you look at oil and gas products being implemented in agriculture, via fertilisers, urea and petrochemicals, the impact on the sector is immense.

Could you give us a brief summary of the innovation behind Axxela and what you're planning next?

Axxela started twenty years ago as a downstream player within the gas sector with a primary focus on gas distribution. Our business enterprise has evolved to a more holistic approach to provide energy solutions for on-grid and last-mile commercial and industrial users. Annually, our operations enable a US\$1.3 billion contribution to Nigeria's GDP, which indicates Axxela's commitment to economic empowerment using cost-effective and environmentally friendly energy. For the future, we are aggressively expanding our strategic footprint across five basic areas. Firstly, by deepening our penetration in local distribution; we have invested in pipeline infrastructure across the Greater Lagos and Port Harcourt areas, but we are also framing developments in the South-West along the Sagamu and Ijebu-Ode axis and other geo-political zones across Nigeria. Secondly, we are thinking regionally: we are extending our operations into other parts of the West African sub-region such as Togo, Benin, and Ghana. Thirdly, we want to contribute to infrastructure by building processing plants, compression stations and transport facilities to ensure that the gas gets to the various markets across the region and globally. A fourth element is our commitment to innovation. Thus, we are developing infrastructure to bring gas to otherwise stranded or off-grid customers via virtual pipelines. The fifth part of our strategy is embedded power. We are a gas and power company, and historically we have built about 24MW of power plants. Now our aim is to surpass that by developing about 50MW in embedded power within the allocated distribution zones, so that we can help mitigate the power-related issues plaguing Nigeria's advancement. ■

Axxela

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Axxela

Dangote Refinery

Drastically Redefining Africa's Oil And Gas Landscape

Addressing Nigeria's low refining capacity, Aliko Dangote's US\$9 billion refinery in Lekki's free trade zone will boldly makeover the face of Nigeria's oil industry and economy.

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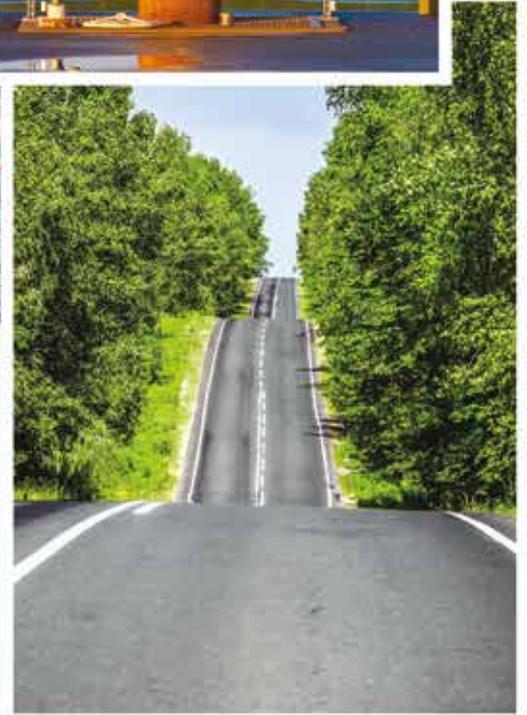
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As Africa's largest oil producer and with an estimated 37 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, it is crucial for Nigeria to up its refining game. At present, Nigeria's four refineries have a combined refining capacity of about 445,000 bpd, operating at a level far below their full capacity due to dilapidated and underused infrastructure, causing the nation high costs in domestic importation of oil refined products and draining the country's foreign reserves.

This is where the Dangote Oil Refinery Company enters the scene. With a bold and ambitious vision for its country and company, Dangote is currently building an estimated US\$9 billion state-of-the-art integrated refinery and petrochemical complex in Lekki's Free Trade Zone which will double Nigeria's refining capacity and meet the nation's increasing fuel demand. Due for completion by the end of 2020, the refinery is expected to be the largest single-train facility in the world; producing 650,000 barrel per day (bpd) with an annual refining capacity of 10.4 million tonnes of gasoline, as well as 4.6 million tonnes of diesel and four million tonnes of jet fuel. In meeting the Euro V grade, the highest standard in the world, it will be able to export products everywhere in the world. The Refinery is also looking at generating at least 9,500 direct and 25,000 indirect jobs. When Dangote unveiled his refinery plans in 2016, he announced his desire to challenge the status quo: "This refinery is attacking the entire system," he said. "You export jobs and create poverty here, so that's what we are stopping."

Constructed through a US\$3 billion dollar equity and a US\$6 billion dollar loan capital, as well as a consortium of local and international banks led by Standard Chartered Bank providing a US\$3.3 billion loan facility, the refinery covers an area of 2,635 hectares and is conveniently located on the LFTZ, facilitating transshipment of refined petroleum products to international markets. Infrastructure facilities comprise of a pipeline system, access roads, tank storage facilities and crude and product-handling facilities, an administrative building, guardhouses, fire station and pump stations, as well as marine terminal, including a breakwater, jetty and harbour. Whereas processing facilities include: a crude distillation unit (CDU) and associated facilities, a mild hydrocracking (MHC) unit, residual fluid catalytic cracking (RFCC), naphtha hydrotreater and RFCC gasoline hydrodesulfurisation (HDS) unit, as well as alkylation units. Also part of the refinery are sulphur recovery and hydrogen generation facilities (with two steam methane reformer units) and a polypropylene unit. In a bid to address the avoidance of wastage, the refinery will also include the largest fertiliser plant in West Africa, which will transform the refinery's by-products into raw materials.

Nigerian authorities aim to increase its oil production to four million bpd and its refining capacity of 1.5 million bpd by 2025. Dangote's refinery possesses all the requisites needed to reach this target, providing the means for Nigeria to go from being fuel importer to meeting domestic demands for petroleum and with a surplus that will allow it to emerge as major global exporter of refined products. The largest refinery in the world is pouring innovation and efficiency into all aspects of the nation's oil and gas sector while single handedly transforming the whole petroleum product market in sub-Saharan Africa.



SpringRock Group *means Excellence*

SpringRock Group is a privately held Integrated Energy Company with interests in Oilfield E&P and Integrated Oilfield Management Services that are built to address the management service white spaces in Africa's Oil & Gas and Energy Industries.

As an E&P player, our goal is to drive value-based partnerships by aligning with likeminded organizations to jointly exploit assets.

As a Management Services Group of Companies, we are designed to bring significant value to E&P companies by integrating our proven project delivery systems to effectively and safely achieve set objectives.

SpringRock has an intimate knowledge of Africa and a proven ability to deploy successful innovative operating systems and deliver outstanding results. We also have the ability to manage local risks and conduct business at high ethical standards, which is one of the key drivers for our success.

"Wells constructed by SpringRock are producing better than wells previously drilled in the same field due to the use of our unique models in real-time while drilling and for delivery of well completions. Speak to us on how to increase the 1P reserve recovery in each of your wells."



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Alliance World 

Chief Tunde J. Afolabi,

CEO and Chairman of Amni International Petroleum Development Company Limited (Amni)

Expanding The African Oil And Gas Horizon

Creating value and pushing for growth in Nigeria's Oil and Gas sector, Amni is set to grow into a five billion company over the next three years.



Operating in Nigeria for over 25 years, Amni is leading the way for independent and international oil companies on the continent, as it expands its long term gas prospects. However, philanthropist and founder of Amni, Chief Afolabi, looks beyond empowering the economy, through the support of local content and the implementation of CSR initiatives.

How can Local Content contribute to the project development and operations cost savings for the IOC's?

Much of the money spent in the industry is now spent in Nigeria. However, if I give money to a company owned by a French man, if it is registered in Nigeria, it is still considered a Nigerian company. I have always thought that we should put emphasis on big projects. If we get the low-hanging fruits right, then we can claim higher. We need to master whatever endeavour we are on and take it away from IOCs and get into the business ourselves.

How has Amni International created value within the Nigerian Oil & Gas sector?

Gas projects are very large and consume a lot of space. They are also very capital intensive. We spent two years trying to do feasibility studies. So, now, we are doing site selection to locate smaller projects. We are going to go straight from gas to propylene, for which there is the technology, but for commercial reasons, has not been done yet. We found out that gas might not be as straightforward as we want it to be. That is why we went from gas to methanol and then propylene, which is not commercially prized yet. However, it is much easier to predict the yields for a refinery, because they know how much of that they are going to need, and that is not always the case for LNG. Locally, we still have oil production. Gas is something that we know has a longer gestation period than oil. Most oil projects have a lifetime of five to 10 years; however, for gas it is about 25 years.

How does Amni promote and empower its host communities?

My own personal approach to CSR is through education. We have a foundation which gives out scholarships. We have 200 students under a scholarship scheme and we also build schools. In this way, these students can get proper education and go to university in the oil sector. We also are active in other areas: we build clinics, jetties, police stations, houses. We empower women.

How do you see Amni's future?

Amni has a very bright future, our plan is to grow Amni into a US\$ five billion company in the next three years. We have all the assets in place to get there: about US\$ one billion a year, at another US\$ one billion a year and a power Station producing almost the same. US\$ three billion a year means close to US\$5 or 6 billion. We are on the right path. We decided to go to Angola last month. We signed an agreement at the end of August, and maybe by the next quarter, or the second quarter next year, we will be there. ■

"Amni has a very bright future, our plan is to grow Amni into a US\$ five billion company in the next three years. We have all the assets in place to get there."

A company of choice

Key goal-

To build a successful independent exploration & production company in the West Africa sub-region

Core values-

Community
Safety
People
Partnerships
Governance

5-Year Growth Plan

2018-2019

Okoro Field Further Development (Nigeria)
RESERVES: 26MM BBLs
CAPEX: \$270MM
SOURCE: GTBANK/SHELL & AFREXIM/SHELL
Current Status: Completed & Producing

2019-2020

Central Tano Block Exploration Well (Ghana)
TARGETED RESERVES: 2.6 billion STOIIP
CAPEX: \$60MM
SOURCE: SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY
Current Status: Pre Execution Activities

2019-2020

Setu Field Development (Nigeria)
RESERVES: 7 MM BBLs
CAPEX: \$50MM
SOURCE: SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY
Current Status: FID

2019-2021

Addition Acreage (Africa)
RESERVES: 60MM BBLs
CAPEX: \$500MM
SOURCE: SHAREHOLDER'S EQUITY & DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Due Diligence

2019-2021

Tubu Field Development (Nigeria)
RESERVES: 41MM BBLs
CAPEX: \$344MM
SOURCE: SHAREHOLDER & AFREXIM/SHELL
Current Status: FDP Approved

2020-2024

AMNI Gas Pipeline (Nigeria)
Pipeline: 600Km, 32" size, 750mmscf per day
CAPEX: \$900MM
SOURCE: SHAREHOLDERS EQUITY & DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Concept Selection

2020-2024

AMNI Upstream Gas Development (IMA/TUBU) (Nigeria)
RESERVES: 3.2 TCF
CAPEX: \$500MM
SOURCE: DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Concept Selection

2020-2025

AMNI Petrochemical (Nigeria)
DAILY PRODUCTION: 1,000,000 Metric Tons
CAPEX: \$2 Billion
SOURCE: DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Concept Selection

2020-2025

AMNI Refinery (Nigeria)
DAILY PRODUCTION: 100,000 BBLs/Day
CAPEX: \$1.2 Billion
SOURCE: DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Concept Selection

2020-2025

AMNI Power (Nigeria)
CAPACITY: up to 1,000MW
CAPEX: \$1.25 Billion
SOURCE: DEBT FINANCING
Current Status: Concept Selection

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...focused on growth

AMNI INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM
DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

Amni International Petroleum Development Company Limited

Amni Petroleum's Secret To Success

Through a pragmatic approach to business and concentration on community, Amni Petroleum has paved the road toward a future full of success in the oil and gas sector.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Amni International Petroleum Development Company Limited was founded in 1993 with only five employees. Twenty-six years and much success later, they have grown significantly and boasted its 130 employees. Their success, Chief Afolabi says, was made by a pragmatic approach from the very beginning. "When we started the business there was very little money in the system so we had to partner with some foreign companies. Amni started out with a company called Abacan. They brought the money and we made a good production. After a year or two they went bankrupt and we took over the operation." Through wise financial planning and decisions, Amni has been running 100% of its operations with its own professional assets for the last eight years. This sense of independence is leading Amni to a very bright future.

Amni's operations are improving, as well. Amni owns two infrastructures right now in Okoro and Ima. At the facility in Okoro, they produce 15 thousand barrels a day and just closed a second \$US 270 million facility that will allow an additional 22 thousand barrels a day. All of this production is in combination with expansion efforts, as the company is beginning the development of Tubu. "Between now and the middle of next year, we are looking to drill ten wells [in Tubu] that will bring our production to about 45,000 barrels a day," says Chief Afolabi.

Aside from their success in oil, Amni has also set their sights on gas. "We have close to 3.2 trillion cubic feet of gas in our reserves. We know our future is in gas so we are working very hard to accumulate more gas and monetise it. The problem is getting a good market price, but if you put it in your value chain, you can be the producer and the consumer so it stays in family." In pursuing their advantage in the gas industry, Amni is currently exploring several projects that will give them a full value chain, securing their place in the market and the future. "We will develop the gas ourselves and treat it so we can have a petrochemical, probably propylene. We are also looking to do a power station. We are actually commissioning a 500-700 million a day process plant and we are in an advance stage of discussion with an FLNG (floating liquefied natural gas) company."

Their plan is to grow Amni into a US\$ five billion dollar company in the next three years. All signs suggest that it is headed in the right direction. Chief Afolabi says: "We can see that the next generation to run Amni is already in place. The plan is to give them more responsibilities, let them learn to steer the ship and be there just to guide them. We have all the assets in place to get there: the FLNG cash flow is about US\$ one billion dollars a year, the petrochemical plant is another billion dollars a year and the power station almost the same. Amni has a very good future."

Amni claims its practical and sensible decision makes the difference which helps it stand apart from the competition. Chief Afolabi says, "We have a very short turnaround time in the decision making process. We have very well aligned people on board and we don't like to owe money. If we borrow today, we don't pay a dividend to anybody until we pay that debt, hence why investors like us." This business philosophy has brought confidence to Amni's vision and their ability to deliver.

It is not just Amni's incredible success that sets it apart from other companies in the oil and gas sector. Amni's dedication to corporate social responsibility ensures that their presence gives to the community in which they operate. "We build schools

"It's all about treating others like you would like to be treated, and they will respond to you when you have needs."

Chief Tunde J. Afolabi,
CEO and Chairman
of Amni Petroleum



and we give scholarships [to students]. We build hospitals." Their focus is on helping the people in the communities in which they work, so that their endeavours in oil can have a lasting and positive ripple effect. They aid citizens in transportation, finance, and teach life skills to help them to succeed. Chief Afolabi continues: "I think the one service that I am most proud of is the education that we provide to the society."

Amni works to guarantee that their work in Nigeria is positive by keeping it as close to Nigeria as possible. Amni outsources very little in the operation of their reserves, which opens the door for jobs in the country and stimulates the economy further. "We are local content ourselves," he says, "I have a really good relationship with local content because we are the same: they are local content downstream and I am local content upstream. We do close to 90% of our business with Nigerian businesses."

All of these elements have created an environment that is ripe for investors and stockholders. As for why investors should choose Amni, Chief Afolabi tells us, "Because we have a good growth path and a very good asset base. We are extremely focused, we are very professional and, more importantly, we have very good corporate governance. We are a company that you can invest in and go to sleep without worrying if the money is there."

Amni's practical decision making is the secret to their success and has created a company and environment where everyone involved - investors, stakeholders and employees - benefit from their efforts. "My investors are banks; my stakeholders are, first, the government because I pay them taxes. Second, the communities where I make sure to leave something behind and third, our employees. My employees are happy; we treat each other like family here. My three stakeholders are happy, I'm happy and the banks are happy. So we are all happy."

Ultimately, Amni has grown into a fully realised ambition, an achievement of which Chief Afolabi is very proud: "To see an indigenous company take off. That was one dream that I had and it happened. I am still very proud today."



AMNI INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED

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Mr Eke U. Eke, Chief Executive Officer of SpringRock Group

Shaping The Oil And Gas Sector Anew Through Excellence And Innovation

SpringRock is a giant of the sector constantly on the look for new ground-breaking ways to improve performances.



The Oil and Gas sector is one of the key drivers of Nigeria's economy, and SpringRock is a leading firm in the sector. What are your competitive advantages?

There's been a lot of growing participation of Nigerian companies in the business. Our entrance was to bring about improvements, so we went into well construction, management and optimisation, as well as production management, innovation and human capital development. Today, we are constructing wells that perform far better than the ones previously drilled in the same fields. We use different models and simulations and apply best practices during construction, which brings about better performance in the way the wells operate and increases the length of time they function optimally.

Additionally, we are creating a production management tool which will hopefully be released next year. We are at the field testing stage, before commercialisation, and the tool will be initially launched in Nigeria and then we will release it across the globe. Outside of Nigerian headquarters, we have activities in Ghana, we are present in the US, Kenya, Mauritius, Seychelles, and we are also looking into venturing into Angola. SpringRock aims to apply best practices, changing the status quo in the way things are done and improving performances.

The key product SpringRock sells is 'Excellence'. It is our major competitive advantage: whatever we do, we want to make sure it is better than in the past, in terms of reducing costs, minimising risks, doing things in a simpler way. For instance, we have gone into a terrain, near a river mouth, and we are using modified logistic techniques to avoid use of special rigs. That terrain used to be rather very challenging, and now even IOCs are approaching us to understand how we managed to do that successfully. They wanted to do that in the past but were unable to. So, excellence is our brand.

How does SpringRock engage and empower the communities that live around its operations?

Our CSR is presently focused on technical education and human talent development. We recently sponsored an event geared towards encouraging young girls to take interest in STEM subjects. SpringRock also pledged to be a yearly joint partner of the event and contribute financially along with participation of our technical staff. So we are essentially focusing on education. At some point, we want to look into specific projects that can drive initiatives to enable women excel in the agricultural sector, adding new skills and improve what they do, bringing knowledge and ultimately improving productivity, yields and trade.

Why is now the time to partner, trade and invest in Nigeria and with Nigerian companies?

The reason is that there is abundance of opportunities in Nigeria. If you step back to look at the basics, Nigeria has nearly 200 million people, which means a huge market. Improvements are needed, in sectors such as agriculture, power, roads and infrastructures. In oil and gas there are huge opportunities: today, Nigeria is producing about two million barrels of oil per day, but we could get up to 5, 6 million barrels per day.

In the gas domain, we have huge deposits still untapped: that is a huge investment opportunity, even for domestic use. We could use the gas for electricity or for manufacturing. Agriculture also remains a big space, and the country has hardly scratched the surface of its capability. Anybody who wants to do business in Nigeria should feel free to engage with the country: we have some challenges still ahead, but there are plenty of opportunities to do business and operate at high standards. So, everyone who wants to tap into the opportunities of Nigeria, I encourage them to do so.

SpringRock Group

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SpringRock Group

Changing The Status Quo Through Superior Innovation

Driven by complete adherence to ethical principles and professional commitments, SpringRock aspires to deliver excellence in all .

SpringRock is a privately held Integrated Energy Company with interests in oilfield exploration and production. The group also provides Integrated Oilfield Management Services aimed at addressing the management service white spaces in Africa's Oil & Gas and Energy Industries. Its intimate knowledge of Africa, paired with a proven ability to deploy successful and innovative operative systems and deliver outstanding results, enable SpringRock to manage local risks and conduct business at high ethical standards, which is one of the key drivers of the company's success.

As an E&P player, SpringRock's goal is driving value-based partnerships by aligning with like-minded organisations to jointly exploit assets. As a Management Services Group of Companies, SpringRock is designed to bring significant value to E&P companies by employing its proven project delivery systems to achieve set objectives effectively and safely. The company's management team has a proven track record of successes in providing all the expertise and the processes needed to improve performance, increase efficiency and turn around businesses. The company also provides its clients with all the technology and the systems needed for projects and businesses in the upstream and midstream energy sector.

Choosing SpringRock, is a winning choice. A deep desire to drive change enables the company to understand the gaps in their customers' needs and efficiently understand what is needed to take the clients' performances to the next level of optimisation. The company is bringing modified ways, new methods and better processes to manage projects, and is working to introduce a new, optimal way of managing production to the global industry.

SpringRock's Business Groups include SpringRock E&P Investments which is an 'Asset Holding Company' that manages E&P assets and value-driven partnerships in Oil and Gas acreages to achieve optimised monetisation using the company's unique solutions.

SpringRock Energy Ltd, is the 'Well Construction Company' which is specialised in project management from the field development planning phase onwards, as well as well engineering and design, development of programmes, policies, procedures and rapid procurement. The company also manages drilling rigs for new wells construction and production optimisation operations using owned and third-party rigs, combining its well construction project management expertise to ensure drill-ability.

SpringRock mConsults is a 'Management Company' built to provide executive management and Innovative Operating Solutions for E&P companies, providing Executive Corporate Consultancy services that result in optimised monetisation via innovative solutions. It also provides Technical Management of field development and exploitation, asset acquisition, asset evaluation, FDP, operations execution and cost optimisation.

SpringRock Crystal Industries is a 'Production Company' that helps clients assess the status of their wells and provides solutions to restore their potential. Its WRFM model delivers optimal production through a proactive process that identifies and realises opportunities to improve performance and maintain production at the integrated system capacity.

SpringRock GeminiResources is the 'Innovative Solutions Company' which is involved in human talent development, through an in-house-developed model that produces independent competency within six to nine months. It also uses R&D and Applied Technology to provide solutions to unsolved challenges.

SpringRock Alliance World the 'Collaboration Company' provides power solutions for FPSOs and Gas Plants through a collaboration that delivers unique power solutions. The company collaborates with OEMs in finance and execute projects. It also sources Finance for projects and provides advisory to Investors and Assets owners. ■



SpringRock

SpringRock E&P Investments
 SpringRock Energy Ltd
 SpringRock mCONSULTS
 SpringRock Crystal Industries
 SpringRock GeminiResources
 SpringRock Alliance World

Candid Oil Services Ltd.

Impeccable QC Services For The Oil And Gas Industry

For almost a quarter of a century, Candid Oil has assembled the best and the brightest to support Nigerian-based projects.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Incorporated in 1995, Candid Oil Services Ltd's original vision was joining the knowledge and expertise of high-profile engineers with extensive experience in the oil and gas industry. Almost 25 years have elapsed since then, and yet Candid Oil's commitment to absolute quality has remained unaltered.

The company has provided services to major international oil and gas companies in Nigeria, the NNPC and the Federal Government. The company makes it a point of honour to be an equal opportunity employer, valuing technical competences above anything else. Moreover, Candid Oil puts community-friendliness among its core values, doing everything in its power to ensure effective communication between the company and the communities involved in its areas of operation and appointing local liaison officers from each community.

Nigeria is extremely endowed in oil and gas reserves, which makes Candid Oil's services a key asset for all the companies operating in the sector. "Nigeria is big, and we have a huge reserve which is still untapped," says Olalekan Oyeleye, Managing Director of Candid Oil. "That is why so many companies want to come in and participate: you can be sure that, if you invest in it, there is always a possibility for a long-time yield, which is attractive for any investor."

Nigeria's energy sector is one of the key drivers of the country's economy, and the government has been sparing no efforts to ensure the industry's continued development. "Both Mele Kolo Kyari of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) and Simbi Wabote of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) are committed to growing local content in the oil and gas industry from the current 40% to 70% by 2027, as part of strategies to sustain economic development in country," explains Oyeleye.

Moreover, adds Oyeleye, the situation of the industry in Nigeria has been greatly improved by the passing of the Nigerian Content Act: local content is instrumental in making sure that Nigerian companies can capitalise on the sector and that IOCs can optimise the cost of operations while employing Nigerian workforce and Nigerian-made tools. "Now, everything can be done here. Everything is realisable if there is enough will from the authorities," claims Oyeleye.

The non-implementation of local content has created a virtuous circle: in the past, most projects were usually carried out outside Nigeria, at high costs. Now, the overall cost of operating in Nigeria has become more reasonable and the training of locals is being steadily and progressively improved to make sure companies operating in the country can keep relying on a workforce that meets the highest international standards. "Nigeria can now aspire to improve its income from this stratification. The cost of projects is going down, and that is very good for the economy," adds Oyeleye.

Candid Oil supplies Quality Assurance Services providing certified personnel, third-party world-class certifications and quality construction processes, and has just concluded a technical partnership with Cutch Group of Singapore. "Our competitive advantage," says Oyeleye, "is that we are developing local content, and we are developing Nigeria's certified processes and skilled personnel with the best price, creating a competitive environment and economy." ■



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25 Years Providing The Answers The Industry Needs



CandidOil Services is an inspection service firm which concentrates on unique, innovative and real time solutions for the Oil and Gas sector.

Services Provided:

- Mechanical Works (Fabrication & Erection)
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CandidOil Services Limited

Blue Camel Energy

Leading The Country To Energy Self-Sufficiency

Blue Camel Energy is expanding across the country, coming up with brilliant and cost-efficient solutions to provide power and employment.

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL



Blue Camel Energy has established itself as a market leader in the renewable energy sector of Nigeria and is committed to provide Africa with uninterrupted, cost-effective and eco-friendly power through innovative turnkey renewable energy solutions. The company designs and integrates solutions that cut across all levels of energy demand, ranging from urban and rural solar home systems to industrial power back-up solutions.

In accordance with the company's long-standing dedication to the provision of innovative solutions, Blue Camel Energy partners with prominent energy establishment such as IRENA, ECREE and many others. Additionally, the company participates actively in local and international seminars, conferences, workshops and training programmes. Blue Camel Energy's impressive roster of clients includes UNDP, Oxfam International, FHI360, GIZ, Sterling Bank Plc., Unity Bank Plc., Energy Commission of Nigeria and EFCC, as well as real estate developers and state governments across Nigeria.

Blue Camel Energy has established a Training Centre located at the heart of the Kakuri industrial layout, in Kaduna state. Since its establishment, the facility has trained more than 180 engineering graduates. The company also delivered summer classes to secondary school students in Kaduna and Abuja to enlighten them on the effects of climate change and the global action needed to mitigate the phenomenon by increasing reliance on renewable energies.

Among the company's recent achievements, Blue Camel Energy is proud of having built the first totally off-grid estate in Nigeria, which has now been running reliably for more than 48 months located in federal capital Abuja. The company also built the first totally off-grid plaza as well as an off-grid gas station in the state of Nasarawa. Furthermore, Blue Camel Energy installed and maintains over 100 solar-powered ATMs across the country, in support of Nigeria's commercial financial institutions.

Projects completed this year by the company include successful delivery of a 75 km solar street lighting project in the city of Jos, in Plateau state. The project employs Blue Camel Energy's very own state-of-the-art Nigerian-made solar integrated streetlight equipment with Lithium-ion batteries, complete with exclusive anti-theft features. The project was offered to the state government with a financial model intended to ease capital cost and drawdown burden. Moreover, the company set up a maintenance programme that will span over the repayment period, as well as a sustainability programme by empowering local youth. Young people of Plateau state were extensively trained not only about maintenance duties to be carried on the project after completion, but also on other aspects of the industry and opportunities for entrepreneurship.

The team at Blue Camel Energy remains steadfast in realising the company's vision of becoming Africa's market leader in the production and distribution of grid-tied and off-grid renewable energy solutions. The company is strongly committed to help Africa achieve the SDGs set by the United Nations, as well as global commitments against climate change. To these ends, the company supports the NDCs to reduce carbon emissions and build sustainable cities and communities by providing clean and affordable energy.



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A New World of Possibilities

Nigeria is a nation on the rise and Petrolex is poised to provide energy solutions that will accelerate its growth by deploying an integrated mix of innovations and excellence service delivery. Our 300 million litres capacity tank farm and other strategic investments, across the energy value chain reflect our resolve to be the energy partner of choice on the continent

**We see a world of possibilities
Join us on this journey into the future!**





“73% of project delays the world over were due to 'above ground' or non-technical risks including community resistance.”

Goldman Sachs

CSR·in·Action

Partners:



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Zenera
consulting



AFRICA'S PREMIER COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STANDARDS



The oil and gas and solid minerals sectors are key contributors to many African economies and have robust value chains and stakeholders. For growth and prosperity to flourish in these communities, businesses must work smart to mitigate their negative impacts and amplify positive impacts.

Care about women, youth, progressive communities and peace? Sign up to the Community Engagement Standards for Extractive Communities, by CSR-in-Action; a tool of 44 well-researched indicators via which businesses, communities and governments will foster equity, particularly through inclusive engagement.

Visit www.csr-in-action.org/ces to join in.

...driving collective action for inclusive prosperity



An initiative of:





Agriculture & Industry

Sowing The Seeds For Sustained Growth In The Agri Sector

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Nigeria returns to its fields to unlock its potential to become Africa's agricultural powerhouse, eliminating its high import bill, providing employment for all and generating national income through complex value chains.

Nigeria's economy has always been sustained by, and rooted in, agriculture. Following its independence in 1960, agriculture was the mainstay of the economy, accounting for 57% of national GDP and responsible for 64.5% of export earnings, providing the nation with its main source of employment, as well as developing further opportunities and possibilities for the nation. Indeed, with 84 million hectares of arable land and favourable climates for a variety of crops, Nigeria was one of the world's most promising agricultural producers. Agriculturally self-sufficient and food secure, it was the world's largest groundnut and palm oil producer, the second largest exporter of cocoa and an important producer of cotton. By 1965, 70% of the national labour force was employed within the agricultural sector and northern cities, such as Kano, had become regional economic hubs, while national development plans focused upon the modernisation of agricultural methods through farm settlements, co-operative plantations, supply of improved farm implements and expanding agriculture were set up.

Following the oil boom in the 1970s, however, the agricultural sector lost its drive as Nigeria's focus shifted to petroleum exploration and exportation. Between 1975-1979 agricultural input to the national GDP dropped drastically to 25%, with the consequence of a decline in the exportation of crops,

such as palm oil, peanuts and cotton; suddenly Nigeria was forced to become a food-importing country. By 1975, Nigeria was forced to import basic commodities, such as rice and cassava for domestic consumption, spending US\$11 billion a year on wheat, rice, sugar and fish imports alone.

Since the 1960s, a number of agricultural research institutes have been established in the country and various governmental programmes implemented such as: the National Accelerated Food Production Programme (NAFP) launched in 1972 and the 1980 Green Revolution. The World Bank-funded Agricultural Development Projects (ADP) laid down the foundation for a returned focus upon agriculture and the nation's reliance upon small scale farmers for increased food production, putting into action the value chain approach, from field to mill to table. In 1982, in the first attempt to make a return to building up industrial crop production, the government disbanded produce marketing boards, motivating farmers to cultivate tree crops, while federal and state governments set up oil palm, rubber and cacao plantations. From 2011-2014, the Agricultural Transformation Agenda grew national food production by 21 million metric tonnes and led to a reduction in food imports while creating 3.5 million new jobs in agriculture and food-related industries. An Electronic Wallet System was set up so that five million smallholder farmers were able to receive subsidised electronic



“Agriculture is the future. Agriculture is providing jobs for millions of our citizens and we are doing well towards the attainment of food security and jobs.”

President Muhammadu Buhari

vouchers for seeds and fertilisers via their mobile phones, while seed and fertiliser companies began to sell direct to farmers and banks loaned money to companies and agro dealers.

With Buhari’s arrival on the political scene, a new comprehensive agriculture policy, the Agriculture Promotion Policy (APP), was drawn up in line with his economic diversification plan and vision for self-sufficiency and the momentum for agricultural development really picked up. Vice President Yemi Osinbajo stated: “If you had to sum up our vision for the Nigerian economy in a few words, these would suffice. Grow what we eat, produce what we consume.” Focusing upon the need to create an enabling environment, policies and incentives for a private-led transformation was key to promoting self-sufficiency in food production as well as going one step further in order to increase foreign exchange earnings through agriculture exports. Five agricultural development initiatives were set up: the Anchor Borrowers Programme (ABP), the Presidential Fertiliser Initiative (PFI), the Youth Lab, the Presidential Economic Diversification Initiative (PEDI) and the Food Security Council, providing farmers with financial support and improving upon the supply of specialised fertilisers and high-yielding seeds. President Muhammadu Buhari appealed to Nigerian youths to embrace the ongoing agricultural opportunities as a means to improving their standards of living, and focused upon putting an end to food importation, particularly for rice and cassava. Agricultural policy is taking place across the whole spectrum of the agriculture’s value chain, and private sector investments in farmer companies are transforming the sector, for example, Dangote Group’s US\$20 million tomato processing factory built in Kano. Agricultural equipment manufacturers and suppliers are also currently highly oper-

ative in the Nigerian market. In accordance with Nigeria’s Ministry of Agriculture, in May 2018, John Deere supplied 10,000 tractors managed by Hello Tractor telematic devices and supported by technology advice from Mustard IT. Multinational food processing companies are also establishing their own commercial farms or empowering small farmers through out-grower programmes in Nigeria.

Over the past five years, the agricultural sector has begun to grow once more, pulling the nation out of recession and contributing an average of 24% to GDP. Today, at least a third of the Nigerian labour-force earn their livelihood from agricultural production, with small-scale subsistence farmers dominating industrial crop production such as yams, corn, coco-yams, cow-peas, beans, sweet potatoes, millet, plantains, bananas, rice, sorghum, and a variety of fruits and vegetables, with leading cash crops cocoa, citrus, cotton, groundnuts (peanuts), palm oil, palm kernel, benniseed and rubber. Nigeria is currently the largest producer of cassava in the world, through private sector investment in large-scale cassava processing plants it produces about 50 million metric tonnes annually from a cultivated area of about 3.7 million hectares and currently accounts for 20% of global production and 46% of West Africa’s. Through a cassava flour substitution policy, Nigeria has gone on to reduce its US\$4 billion wheat import cost, replacing wheat flour with high-quality, home-grown cassava flour in bread, as well as producing starch that can be used in sweeteners to reduce sugar imports.

A new dawn is rising upon Nigeria’s agricultural sector as a business haven for investment, Nigeria taps into its golden days of self-sufficiency, while implementing modern farming through digital agriculture, to project itself towards a thriving, fertile and flourishing future. ■

Alhaji Kabir Mohammed Adamu,
CEO of Bank of Agriculture (BOA) Limited.

Investing Time And Energy In Nigeria's Agriculture Sector And Youth

The Bank of Agriculture is returning to its roots in order to rejuvenate the agriculture sector for future generations.



What makes Nigeria so unique compared to other countries in the continent?

We have over 94 million hectares of cultivable land, so compared to any other African country, Nigeria has huge potential in agro-activities. The population is huge so whatever is produced leaves a margin for local consumption and for export. Agriculture is Nigeria's hope.

Can you give us an overview of the evolution of the sector over the past five years?

Before now, farmers remained in rural areas and they produced whatever they required at a subsistence level. Whatever was excess was sold so that they could make a profit in order to meet other needs in their lives. With the discovery of oil, many people abandoned agriculture and came to the cities; rural areas are consequently underdeveloped. We need to bring in new agricultural entrepreneurs who can add value to the value chain. Primary production here is increasing. Rice production has gone up substantially, and we also have other crops such as palm oil and soybeans that can add value and generate revenue.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has just released an NGN 607 billion credit for 587 projects. What other initiatives has the administration undertaken for the agriculture sector?

One initiative is the Anchor Borrowers Programme. The Bank of Agriculture is the main pioneering institution in the sector. We started the Rice Farmer Association collaboration through the Central Bank and have disbursed over NGN 20 billion. Besides that, we also support other crops associations and agri-financing. We train farmers along the agriculture value chain on the basis of best practices in agriculture, so that they can achieve much more yield. The development partners have indicated interest in what we are doing and they are ready to inject more funds for it. The government also understands that agriculture is a major vehicle to address unemployment.

BOA was restructured in 2000. Since then, the bank has focused on giving credit to small and big agriculture companies. How are you supporting SMEs and big scale projects?

The Bank of Agriculture has the mandate to support small farmers and enterprises directly and indirectly through micro-lending. We also support SMEs along the value chain. As for larger projects, we collaborate directly with state governments and development partners, because we accept contracts for the supply of particular crops needed abroad. We work closely with the Nigerian Export Promotion Council to provide funding to the farmers and have products that can satisfy the standards abroad.

The agriculture sector is big enough and has capital to employ Nigeria's young workforce. How can the sector evolve to become "sexier" to younger Nigerians?

The mindset behind agriculture is changing. Currently, we are encouraging young graduates to enter into agricultural practices of their choice. We provide them with hectares of farmland and working capital so that they can practice, start a business and make money. We are investing and introducing mechanisation and technology into the industry. We are collaborating with development partners to access funding for machineries that can make agriculture more attractive. The CBN has introduced the Accelerated Agric Development Scheme, whereby new lands are available and open, so that new people can be accommodated. We are opening accounts for young people daily. Some of them are looking for opportunities in the value chain. Opportunities in agriculture are vast now, we need to do more to accommodate young people. ■



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Setting The Example In The Quest For Food Security

As a result of the implementation of farmer incentives and a total ban on rice importation, record breaking rice production has been secured, placing Nigeria as Africa's largest producer of rice in 2019.

Rice is the basis of most of Nigeria's popular dishes and the key ingredient to its national dish, Jollof Rice, making Nigeria Africa's leading consumer of rice. So, when President Buhari's administration began looking at agriculture as a means to diversify the nation's economy, it made sense to start off by ramping up domestic production of its main staple food to curtail its hefty rice import bill. A complete ban imposed by the government on rice importation and the creation of an ecosystem linking out-growers to local processors, while training farmers, has managed to save the government a breathtaking total of US\$800 million in 2018, according to the Bank of Agriculture (BoA). Through the implementation of a thorough and in-depth scheme at enhancing rice production, the rice revolution is being tackled at all angles, and the success has been resounding.

The Anchor Borrowers Scheme (ABP)

The Anchor Borrower's Scheme (ABP) is the government's flagship agriculture programme and is at the heart of the rice revolution's achievements and the mass production of rice currently underway. Launched by President Buhari in November 17, 2015, the ABP is a collaboration between the Central Bank of Nigeria and the Ministry of Agriculture, creating a link between anchor companies involved in the processing, and small holder farmers in order to encourage and fast track rice cultivation. Through incentives, such as subsidised loans and credit facilities, the provision of farm inputs (affordable fertilisers, seedlings, water pumps) in kind and cash to small holder farmers, free farm land and tax rebates production is boosted and the input supply to agro-processors guaranteed. With the disbursement of NGN 40 billion to over

The Anchor Borrowers Scheme (ABP) is the government's flagship agriculture programme and is at the heart of the rice revolution's achievements and the mass production of rice currently underway.



12.2 million rice farmers, the ABP has additionally provided 33.6 million Nigerians with jobs, lifting small holder farmers out of poverty and providing unemployed Nigerians with gainful employment. "The Anchor Borrowers Programme is an intervention. The Bank of Agriculture is the main pioneering institution," explains Alhaji Kabiru Mohammed-Adamu, CEO of BoA. "We started the Rice Farmer Association collaboration through the Central Bank. We have disbursed over NGN 20 billion to that association. So, all those successes have given an input into those initiatives. Besides that, we are also supporting other crops associations and agric financing. We train farmers along the agric value chain on the basis of best practices in agriculture, so that they can achieve much more yield. The development partners have indicated interest in what we are doing and they are ready to inject more funds for it." In supporting small-scale farmers and SMEs, the ABP has ensured that Nigeria has emerged from being a net importer of rice to becoming a major producer and exporter, going as far as supplying key markets in neighbouring countries. States, such as Kebbi, have displayed exponential growth with over 78,000 smallholder farmers, cultivating approximately 100,000 hectares of rice farms, and registering approximately 2.5 million metric tonnes in rice production in 2018, compared to its one million tonnes in 2017. States such as Adamawa, Cross River, Ebonyi, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Lagos, Niger, Ogun, Plateau, Sokoto and Zamfara are displaying enormous potential and opportunity, in growing rice for exports. In May 2019, the Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN) announced that the production of eight million metric tonnes of rice production had been attained, and that the production of 18 million metric tonnes has been projected to be achieved by 2023.

Rice is Nigeria's pilot programme and a model upon which to base the production of other cash crops. Godwin Emefiele, Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria states: "The Anchor Borrowers' Scheme provides loans to farmers without collateral and the benefitting farmers are given farm inputs and cash to cultivate their farms, and

with the experiment on rice, which has achieved huge success, it is time to extend the scheme to cotton, soya bean and cassava farmers."

Grist for the mill

The competitiveness in rice production has been contagious; for example, Lagos partnered with Kebbi in its award winning initiative in the production of Lake Rice, providing price reductions for Lagosians, while the Ogun state has launched its own MITROS Rice Mill to produce Ofada Rice. New mills are popping up all around the country as everyone jumps on the rice wagon due to the enormous profitability of building rice mills in Nigeria, with Kano State alone boosting 1,421 rice mills. Due to the rapid increase of agricultural output, the need to enhance capacity utilisation of integrated mills has been critical. Indeed, The role of Public Private Partnerships (PPP) and investors have played an essential part in this aspect of the revolution. Olam, Onyx Rice Mill, Integrated Grain Processors Ltd., Quarra Rice Mill, Igbeemo Rice Processing Company Ltd., Dangote Rice Mill are just a few of Nigeria's leading rice processing companies. While Nigerian business mogul Cosmas Maduka has built a state-of-the-art processing mill in Anambra at a reported cost of US\$35 million, with a milling capacity of 40,000 million tonnes per annum and an expected 120,000 million tonnes milling capacity upon completion in 2020.

Nigeria's efforts to wean the nation from foreign rice consumption and become self-sufficient in rice have paid off, Nigeria is now producing an average of four million tonnes of rice annually. In March 2019, Dr Harold Roy-Macauley, Director General of the Africa Rice Centre, Benin Republic, disclosed that Nigeria had overtaken Egypt as Africa's largest producer of rice. The success of the nation's rice revolution has flung open the door to a secure and thriving future for Nigeria's cash crops, providing a model to follow as it finds and consolidates its place as a rising star in the confederacy of rice producing countries. ■

Tribes and Culture

A Brief Look Into Nigeria's Tribes

Nigeria's tribes possess a unique culture and history of their own, but these traditions may be more well-known than you think.

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If you are a fan of Beyoncé, you have most likely seen evidence of the Yoruba people of Nigeria without even realising it. The Yoruba people are an ethnic group dating as far back as 7th century Nigeria. Today, the Yoruba are around 44 million people in total, with the majority of this population still residing in Southwestern Nigeria. On the whole, the Yoruba people make up 21% of the country's entire population. What is impressive about the Yoruba is their resilience. For centuries, the Yoruba have maintained their customs and beliefs through oral tradition, as there was no official written language until around the 1850s. Unsurprisingly, Yoruba culture still exists in pop culture today.

A hallmark of Yoruba traditions are their folktales and proverbs, which are used to help its people navigate through life wisely. One such proverb is *"Iy'ò wu mi e wue, oun e, ni mu omo iya meji jeun ototo,"* which translates to English as "Differences in likes and dislikes make two brothers eat separately." What this means is that the Yoruba people recognise and value the special characteristics that make each person unique.

The Yoruba traditional religion holds that there is one Supreme being, called Olodumare, and hundreds of orisha. As man can not fathom the awesomeness of Olodumare, the orishas serve to encompass various, specific qualities of Olodumare. One of the most venerated orisha is Oshun (also spelled Ossun), a beautiful female goddess who embodies beauty, love, prosperity, femininity, sexuality and fertility. She is considered to be among the most powerful orisha and is the golden deity who was paid homage in Beyoncé's 2017 Grammy Awards performance.

In Northwest Nigeria, the Hausa people are the largest single ethnic group in the country. Combined with the Fulani people, they create about 38% of Nigeria's entire population, with Hausa being the most widely spoken language in West Africa. The Hausa and Fulani people are often grouped together due to their cultural similarities and close proximity, but each possesses a uniqueness to their culture that sets them apart.

The Hausa people are largely Muslim, with 97% practicing Islam and the remaining 3% Christianity. There also exists a class of Hausas called Maguzaya who do not practice Islam nor Christianity, but instead worship natural spirits known as bori, or iskoki.

The Hausa people are most easily recognised by their dressing style. Their dress is generally conservative, with men wearing elaborate gowns called 'Babban Gida', matched with a cap called 'Huluna'. Hausa women wear an 'Abaya', a wrap-around robe with a matching blouse, head tie and shawl. Many women often adorn elaborate henna designs on their hands and feet.

In Southeast Nigeria, the third largest ethnic group are the Igbo people, who reside in a region called Igboland. The Niger River splits Igboland, but this division has not hindered their sense of unity. Instead, it serves as a means of communication with surrounding tribes. The origin of the Igbo people has been long debated, with research into their history having begun only in the last fifty years. Some historians have traced the Igbo people to Israel while others claim that they migrated from Egypt during the stone age. What we do know is that the Igbo people are a culturally rich people due to their advantageous geographical position and contact with surrounding tribes.

The Igbo have their own traditional religious belief system called Odinani. Odinani states that there is one creator called 'Chineke' or 'Chukwu'. Believers can approach the creator through other deities and spirits in the form of natural objects. After the colonisation of Nigeria, most Igbos became Christian, but many practice a unified version of Christianity intermingled with Igbo indigenous beliefs.

Differences aside, what is evident among these three tribes and others (there are over 300 tribes in Nigeria alone) is that each is rich in its traditions and beliefs, representing one part of a large melting pot of people that make Nigeria the exceptional country that it is today. ■



The deep-rooted and rich cultures of Nigeria's tribes are a demonstration of the melting pot of people that make Nigeria truly exceptional.

Women of Yoruba

Woman Leadership In Yoruba Culture

The Yoruba people are an ethnic group that date back to 11th century Nigeria. Today, they are around 44 million people in total, with the majority of this population still residing in Southwestern Nigeria, where the Yoruba make up 21% of the country's entire population.

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The Yoruba are not only limited to Africa. The Atlantic Slave Trade between the 16th and 19th centuries constituted for the Yoruba diaspora that created Yoruba communities in countries such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Venezuela, Jamaica, Brazil and others. The preservation of the Yoruba culture in the face of adversity is example of the resilience of their people and their generosity through sharing their traditions and religion. The Yoruba have maintained these customs and beliefs through oral tradition, as there was no official written language until around the 1850s.

The traditions of the Yoruba are strongly based on folktales and proverbs, which are used in the Yoruba culture to help its people navigate through life wisely. One such proverb is *"Iyò wu mi e wue, oun e, ni mu omo iya meji jeun ototo,"* which translates to English as "Differences in likes and dislikes make two brothers eat separately." What this proverb means is that the Yoruba people recognise and value the fact that each human being has special characteristics that make him unique.

One such example is the value and appreciation of women in the Yoruba culture. Though the Yoruba people have a largely patriarchal society with men maintaining leadership positions, there is also an understanding that women have powers and abilities that man can not achieve, and these gifts are highly cherished in the Yoruba society. Namely, the position of motherhood is considered to be very important in Yoruba culture. The creation and preservation of life depends on the role of mothers in the society of the Yoruba people and is considered sacred.

The Yoruba religion also encompasses the sacred act of bringing life. In traditional religion, there is one Supreme being, Olodumare, as well as hundreds of deities called orisha. The orisha embody and reflect the various qualities of Olodumare. Among the orisha, one of the most cherished and powerful is Oshun, a female goddess who represents love, femininity, prosperity, fertility and sexuality. Oshun is especially important to women in the Yoruba culture. Women who may suffer from infertility may look to Oshun

for assistance and guidance. For this reason, she represents the important role of power in the Yoruba culture, aiding those in the motherhood that allows the continuity of life on Earth and is even one of the most respected leaderships of Osun State as an advisor.

Oshun is said to reside in the sanctuary of the Osun Sacred Grove by the Osun River in Nigeria. Not only is the grove considered to be a holy place, it is also a natural herbal resource, containing over 400 species of plants, where over half of those species are known for their medicinal properties. Upon entering the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove, the uniqueness that the Yoruba people treasure in its people is also the main word that encompasses the space. It is unlike any place on earth and is special because no matter what one believes, the ancient architecture of the grove hypnotises body and soul. The landscape of the Osun-Osogbo Sacred Grove is adorned with shrines, sculptures and art works in honour of Oshun. This location is important to the Yoruba people for two reasons. It is a symbol of identity for all Yoruba people, but due to urbanisation, it is also among the last sacred grove in the Yoruba culture. As recently as 2005, The Osun-Osogbo Grove was declared an UNESCO World Heritage Site to preserve it as an important monument of the Yoruba culture.

In addition to its natural beauty, daily worship takes place in the grove, and every August, the goddess Oshun is honoured for two weeks at the Osun-Osogbo Festival each year. Starting over 700 years ago, the festival has deep roots in Yoruba culture. It is an annual procession that functions to re-establish the mystical bonds between the goddess Oshun and the Yoruba people who look to her for leadership and guidance. The celebration is highlighted by drumming, music, dancing, elaborate costumes and poetry of praise in the Yoruba language. Through the rhythm of the drum beats and the jingle of the bead necklaces, the Yoruba dances are a spectacle that captivate the five senses and exemplify the living culture of the Yoruba people. ■

Oshun represents the important role of power in the Yoruba culture, aiding those in the motherhood that allows the continuity of life on Earth.



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NEXT LEVEL



True or False?

Myth-Busting Pidgin Languages

BBC World Service has begun offering news stories in English-based Pidgin, taking a step toward inclusion and shining a light on one of West and Central Africa’s most widely spoken languages.



Recently, the BBC World Service launched BBC Pidgin, a new language service for digital platforms in West and Central Africa in English-based Pidgin. Pidgin is one of the most widely-spoken languages in these regions and many are rejoicing that the BBC World Service has taken a step toward inclusion by recognising its importance in history. But what is Pidgin exactly?

Pidgin is just “broken English”.

False. A pidgin language is actually a fully intact bridge between languages. Pidgins are a simplified language that develops between two or more groups who do not share a common tongue. Interestingly, Pidgin is believed to be a shattered version of English because it does not have any set grammar rules or restrictions as long as both groups are able to understand each other. As a result, pidgin languages are malleable; they can adapt and change over time and across social groups.

Pidgin languages are a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade.

True. West African Pidgin began during the late 17th century as the result of colonisation and trade between Europeans and Africans. It combined basic English vocabulary with the grammar of languages of the various ethnic groups that British traders encountered. It strips speech to the bare necessities. Phrases such as ‘How bodi?’ means “How are you?” and its friendly reply: ‘Bodi dey inside cloth’ means “I’m still wearing clothes”.

Additionally, pidgins do not only utilise English. Among the first to trade in West Africa in the 15th century were the Portuguese, and some words of Portuguese origin remain in the pidgin. For example, “you sabi do am?” means “Do you know how to do it?” with sabi being derived from ‘saber’, the Portuguese word for ‘to know’.

Pidgin languages have no native speakers.

True and false. In West Africa, adults and children learn pidgins as their first language. The catch is: once a pidgin language has evolved and its vocabulary has grown to the point that it can be learned as a first language, it is then considered a creole. Creoles are languages that were once a pidgin but are now a first language for a new generation of speakers. ■

By debunking myths related to the Pidgin language, we facilitate understanding and come closer to true inclusion.



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Art

The International Route Of Nigeria Art

As the world begins to notice the rich history behind Nigerian artwork, the art scene is bringing attention to a country of creativity and opportunity.

In no small way, art reflects the story of the people from which it comes. With traditional African art, such as sculptures, textiles, masks and pottery being born out of utilisation, modern art has transformed over time to include practical and decorative items. These movements helped to change the relationship that artists and consumers had with art, and the result has been fruitful.

In the world of Nigerian art, the Zaria Rebels is a name that cannot be overlooked. The Zaria Rebel Society was a group of undergraduate students who completely altered Nigerian art in the late 1950s by rejecting the established means of teaching art and creation and expression. This defiance was motivated by the political state of Nigeria at the time. As the country was on the verge of gaining its independence from Britain in 1960, anti-colonial revolts, labour disputes and the foundation of Nigerian art education led to the establishment of diasporic networks and international gatherings of black writers and artists. These gatherings created an environment where the Zaria Rebels could express their postcolonial discourse more freely. Fuelled by the intense feelings of

nationalism before and after gaining independence, the Zaria Rebels gave in to their desire to create new art that expressed the diverse cultures of Nigeria. The Rebels fought against the colonialist threat of erasing local art traditions, styles and ideas. They were formed with the aim of returning to their African roots and rejecting the visual arts teaching methods brought by expatriate Europeans.

Almost immediately after Nigeria gained independence, a second group of artists emerged as creative expression flowed throughout the country, setting an art movement in motion once again. Between 1962 and 1966 in the Yoruba town of Oshogbo in southwestern Nigeria, a group of artists, including Susanne Wenger, Ulli Beier, Georgina Beier and Nike Okundaye, gathered together in workshops to combine traditional subject matter with Western art techniques and media. They called themselves the Mbari Club, and the result of their informal art lessons became a blend of genres that set a new standard for Nigerian artists and pushed the art world forward. What the Mbari Club created was a postmodernist, post-colonial, contemporary art form that the world had never seen before.



As Nigeria continues to grow in all creative forms: music, film, fashion and more, Nigerian contemporary artists have found recent success.

Since then, art expression and creativity have flourished in the country. As Nigeria continues to grow in all creative forms: music, film, fashion and more, Nigerian contemporary artists have even found recent success abroad. In 2017, painter Njideka Akunyili-Crosby, who is based in Los Angeles, sold her piece “Bush Babies” for US\$3,375,000, setting a new world record for a Nigerian artist. Akunyili-Crosby is now the most valuable Nigerian artist in history and among the most valuable female artists in the entire world. In 2018, the Berlin-based sound and installation artist Emeka Ogboh was a finalist for the Guggenheim Museum’s prestigious Hugo Boss Prize. In October 2019, the long-lost painting called “Christine” by Nigerian Ben Enwonwu was discovered in Texas and sold in London for a US\$1.8 million. Enwonwu was one of the original pioneers of the Zaria Rebels, and the sale of “Christine” has set an auction record for a Nigerian modern work. The successes of these artists help to bring awareness to Nigeria as a powerhouse for artistic expression.

Nigerian art is not only successful abroad. Lagos is home to some of the most impressive galleries for African art. The Nike Art Gallery, owned by Nike Davies-Okundaye, one of the original members of the Mbari Club from Oshogbo, is the largest art gallery in West Africa. In a five-story building, it contains a collection of 8,000 pieces of art from Nigerian artists. Another impressive gallery is the Signature Beyond gallery which showcases artworks, paintings and sculptures. The leading art gallery in Nigeria is the Omenka gallery, which highlights the work of existing and emerging Nigerian and international contemporary artists. Most importantly, the Omenka gallery is active in education, creating academic texts to foster a critical thinking environment and discussion devoted to the future of contemporary art in Nigeria and all of Africa. Their efforts have yielded reward. As they encourage professional artistic development, Lagos has seen a surge in art interest over the past few years, resulting in the international art fair, ART X Lagos.

ART X Lagos is an event that aims to feature the most inventive contemporary art from Africa and its diaspora, deliberately placing itself in an area of the world that has been unknown the art industry in years prior: Nigeria. Founded by Tokini Peterside in 2016, the Nigerian art industry’s highlight event of the year began as a project for Peterside’s MBA. She began designing an international art fair for an entrepreneurship assignment and brought it to life within a year and a half. In its first year in 2016, it debuted with 14 galleries. Only two years later, it has grown exponentially. In 2018, ART X Lagos featured 55 artists from 17 countries. In the same year, ART X introduced a prize and reward of funding and professional mentoring to nurture the incredible talent of budding artists while contributing to the art industry in the country. Ultimately, the goal of ART X Lagos is to perpetuate a desire to create among local and foreign-trained artists and artists who have worked, studied or lived abroad, which will bring art lovers, critics, curators and collectors to the source of inspiration. The art history of Nigeria is rich and growing and it tells a story that can be clearly seen in the pieces that its people create. ■

Fela Kuti

Nigerian Legacy To World Music

To say that Fela Kuti has left a legacy in Nigeria is an understatement. His music sent a message to Nigerians and the world--and it can still be heard today.

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Fela Kuti was born on October 15, 1938 in Abeokuta, Nigeria and at the age of twenty, went to London to study medicine. He instead discovered his passion for music, not knowing then where his passion would lead him. Enamoured with the London jazz scene, he started a career as a musician and returned to Nigeria to perform in nightclubs in Lagos.

In the late 1960s, however, Kuti experienced a fundamental change to his relationship with music. After travelling to the United States during the heart of the civil rights movement, he connected with the message of the Black Panthers and resonated with the ideas of Malcolm X. As a result, his understanding of his position in Nigeria dramatically altered. Fela Kuti was no longer just a musician, he realised that his music held power and had purpose. He later explained this change, saying, "It was in America I saw I was making mistake. I didn't know myself. I realised that neither me nor my music was going in the right direction... As soon as I got back home I started to preach. I had decided to change my music. And my music did start changing according to how I experienced the life and culture of my people." From this revelation, Afrobeat was born.

Afrobeat can be defined in more ways than one. On one hand, it is a style that combines elements of jazz, funk, American blues and traditional Yoruba rhythms that are native to Nigeria. Often accompanied with eclectic and hypnotic arrangements of sounds, Kuti began to create music that told the story of Africa. On the other hand, Afrobeat is defined by its political charge, messages of defiance toward oppressing powers that obstructed progress in Africa, and attempted to transition power from the military dictatorship back to the people of Nigeria. For this reason, Afrobeat is also characterised by its use of pidgin English, which was the language of choice among the poor working class and Nigerian youth. This was a deliberate choice as a means to communicate and spread messages of criticism of those in power to the impoverished population of Nigeria.

These messages were made of lyrics that isolated the injustice of the military dictatorship at the time. Kuti fought to instil pride back into the people of Nigeria so that his country may also adopt independence and achieve democracy. For example, his song "Suffer Head" exposed the living conditions of the working class poor. During this time in Nigeria's history, families of ten might sleep in a single room, where food, water, or electricity was inadequate. Kuti recognised that the narrative that was being spread in regard to Africa was that of an "undeveloped" continent, when he knew Africa was so much more. Given these ideas that were being perpetuated, Kuti was also critical of organisations within the United States, stating that they often "waged psychological warfare against developing nations in terms of language" citing that descriptions such as "Third World", "undeveloped" or "non-aligned" should not be used, as they all maintained the underlying message of inferiority. His stance was simply pro-African, seeking to inspire Nigerians and Africans alike to realise their worth and potential.

The length of his songs are a defining characteristic of his music, but were also the subject of criticism. Some of Kuti's songs lasted up to 20 or 30 minutes, with live performances extending to 45 minutes or more for a single song. During the 1980's, Kuti's songs often reached the 60-minute mark. Throughout his career, record labels from the UK and even the US offered partnerships with him, but often requested that he create songs that were around three minutes and more suitable for the radio. Kuti declined the offers, saying, "I wouldn't know how to. Did Mozart or Beethoven compose short songs? My music is not to sell. It is to allow people to understand my culture, and you cannot understand a culture in three minutes." The length of his music has solidified his position in the music industry, but was also the reason that his music never reached a significant audience outside of Africa.



“I could never leave my home.... It inspires me a lot.”
FelaKuti, Nigerian musician and human rights activist

But within Africa, his music and his example left a lasting influence and inspired the Nigerian people. For Kuti, his music had a specific purpose. “Music is supposed to have an effect. That’s what African music is about. When you hear something, you must move. I want to move people to dance, but also to think. Music wants to dictate a better life, against a bad life. When you’re listening to something that depicts having a better life, and you’re not having a better life, it must have an effect on you.”

This purpose, however, often came with a price. During his time as a fearless and politically vocal musician, he was arrested over 200 times during the dictatorship. Nevertheless, he continued to play his music. Kuti understood that the power of his music and the messages and education that produced would survive against any government in power-- and it did.

Fela Kuti died on August 2, 1997, only two years before the end of the Abacha dictatorship when Nigeria would witness democracy return to its people in 1999. Although Kuti did not witness the fruits of his labour firsthand, he never stopped believing in his responsibility as a musician and his duty as a proud Nigerian. His love for Nigeria is best summarised in his own words: “When you’re concerned, you love your culture and your people and you love your children, you cannot sit down and let these things go by. Your children will ask you, “So daddy, what were you doing? What did you do about the changes?” I don’t want to be the kind of father that will be ashamed at my old age. I’d rather be dead than my children asking me, “So daddy, when you saw all this, what did you do?” We are in the front where we can always give the people encouragement, give them hope, with our lives or with our music or whatever we’re doing, so that’s the way I see my life with my music.” ■

History and Future of Music in Nigeria

Afro Jazz, Afrobeats And The Alté Movement

If a country is a reflection of the music that its people produce, then the evolution of Nigeria's music suggests a lot about its potential in 2019.

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Davido. With his history-making song 'Fall,' the afropop titan has become the most viewed artist on YouTube, amassing well over 500 million views across all his uploads on the platform.



Wizkid is a magnetic performer at the top of the Afrobeats scene. He achieved international recognition through his collaboration with Drake on the global hit 'One Dance.'

Music in Nigeria experienced a great change in 1945 as World War II ended. When Nigerian soldiers came home from Europe, jazz came with them. As early as 1947, Nigerian artists such as Bobby Benson and his Jam Session Orchestra embraced this new kind of jazz and made it their own. Known for playing for extended periods and experimenting with new sounds by incorporating African music traditions with the European influence, Benson's 'jam sessions' cultivated a freedom of expression that allowed the music to become its own. Afro Jazz was born. With its distinct sound compared to the jazz that resonated from Europe or the United States, Afro Jazz is its own genre of music and honours Nigeria's rich culture, paving the way for the future of music in the country.

Fast forward to the 2000s and people are dancing to Afrobeats in almost any nightclub across the globe. Afrobeats is not to be confused with Afrobeat (sans 's'), which is a style of music that was pioneered by Fela Kuti and was fuelled and is characterised by its political messages and own unique style. Instead, Afrobeats embodies a desire to evolve and adapt through self-expression through music. In fact, casual music listeners have probably heard Afrobeats without even realising it.

"Afrobeats is absolutely taking over," says D-Black, founder of Black Avenue Muzik record label. "In 2016, Drake's 'One Dance,' which featured Wizkid, was arguably one of the biggest sounds globally. This thing is becoming a movement."

Artist Davido reached a milestone for the Nigerian music industry when he won Best International Act at the 2018 BET Awards and was the first African music artist to receive his award on the BET stage. This success has ignited interest in Nigerian music and the potential for the industry's future, with Sony and Universal Music Group opening offices in Lagos to help musicians sign labels.

The opportunity that comes with worldwide acknowledgement presents a challenge of its own. Nigerian record producer Don Jazzy recognises where the world of music is headed. "When it comes to Afrobeats, we have to look at two main revenue streams. The type of songs that impact the clubs and Nigeria locally; and secondly, the type of sound that moves numbers online, thus digitally. So, you have to be very conscious of the type of music you make at the moment. You have to consider whether you are trying to do this song so that you will be popping in Nigeria and thus offline or are you doing the song for international!"

Now many Nigerian artists do not want to be constrained by the established expectations of the music industry. The Alté Movement is a reaction to a changing world. Alté, short for 'alternative,' is not solely about music, but also freedom of style and individual expression. Through social media channels like Youtube and Soundcloud, the Alté Movement is a response from young artists who want to express themselves and find their own place in the music industry. Artists like Odunsi the Engine are soaring to the top of the charts with new, unexpected styles featuring experimental and otherworldly tones. And it seems Alté is resonating with Nigerians.

What do these music styles tell us about Nigeria today? While Afro Jazz sparked change, Afrobeats is paving the way for the today's Nigerian musicians on a global scale, while the Alté movement makes it clear that Nigeria is a country of opportunity where there is no fear in breaking boundaries or taking risks. Through music, we see a country full of people eager to experiment and express themselves freely. Nigeria is ready to share its rich culture with the world. Are you? ■

The Lights of Nollywood

Capturing The Nigerian Identity In Moving Images

One of the world's largest film industries, Nollywood has been a fundamental part of the Nigeria's everyday life for decades.

Unlike its Californian namesake, the term "Nollywood" (a portmanteau word blending Nigeria and Hollywood), does not refer strictly to a single, physical place, but it is used to describe the whole Nigerian film industry, the activity of which is mostly based in the Lagos area and in the Western region of the country. Surely enough, Nollywood may lack a huge white sign in capital letters sitting on a hillside, but that does not make it any less real or relevant. The Nigerian film industry is recognised as one of the largest film producers on Earth, and represents a key part of Nigeria's Arts, Entertainment and Recreation sector, which contributed NGN 239 billion to the country's economy in 2016, i.e. 2.3% of Nigeria's GDP.

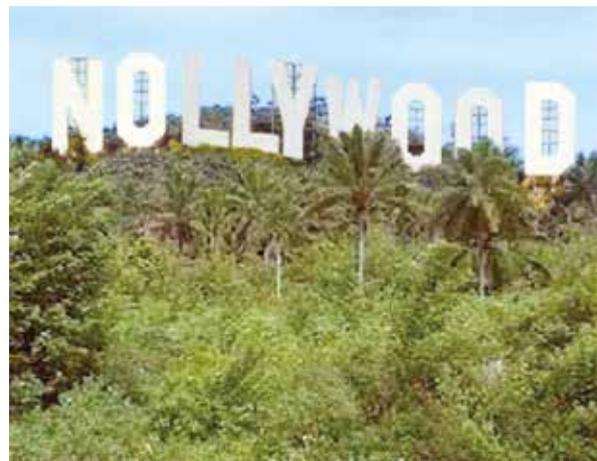
The first locally written, produced and shot Nigerian films were released in the late 1960s and the early 1970s, with the film industry progressively gaining traction and cultural relevance over the course of the two following decades. A generation of Nigerian playwrights and screenwriters, such as Hubert Ogunde and Moses Olaiya, switched from the boards of theatre to the big screen, adapting popular literature and theatre works into motion pictures. Many of those works were aimed at challenging stereotypes and promoting Nigeria's indigenous language, arts and culture. Today, Nollywood is the second largest employer in the country: the industry produces about 200 movies a month and gives work to 300,000 actors as well as innumerable other people involved in the various production stages.

Its current economic relevance, coupled with its irreplaceable cultural status make Nollywood a vital asset and a treasured heritage, dear to all Nigerians at home and abroad. The government of Nigeria is thus committed to providing Nollywood with all the resources it needs to strengthen and increase its contribution to the country's growth. As of today, Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa, and it is forecasted to become one of the ten largest economies in the world within the next 30 years. In a country where 62% of the population is currently aged less than 24 years, the growth opportunities for Nigeria's creative economy, which already accounts for a total 10% of the country's GDP, are countless.

In fact, the Nigerian film industry is one of the priority sectors listed in the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) of the government, according to which the sector should reach US\$1 billion in export revenue by 2020.

Following the example set by the Indian government, that managed to make Bollywood (the Mumbai-based Indian Hindi-language film industry) an economic success and a worldwide cultural phenomenon, the Nigerian government is preparing initiatives to counter piracy, ensure copyright ownership, create tax incentives and foster co-production treaties and bilateral agreements. Another key step in bringing Nollywood to the next stage is investing in digitisation and in the creation of multiple distribution channels: this would reduce printing and distribution costs for filmmakers and producers while allowing simultaneous release across Nigeria and the world.

The interest in Nigeria's vibrant cultural stage is on the rise, both in Africa and in Western countries: in recent years, the British Council launched UK/Nigeria 2015/16, a cultural season aimed at exposing young Nigerians to a vast programme of events in art, fashion, design, theatre, dance, music, literature and film, as well as showcasing Nigeria's arts and creative industries in the UK. The United Kingdom, already Nigeria's largest trading partner, might be a vital creative partner for Nigeria's bustling and young creative industry. In a world where increasing digitisation is tearing down geographical and cultural barriers, if properly assisted and supported, Nollywood can fortify its role as Nigerian culture's ambassador around the globe, contributing to the further diversification and enrichment of the country's economy. ■





Taking Over The World One Thread At A Time

Naija fashion possesses its own essence and is finding its place in the global fashion industry.

As a result of its recent economic improvement, Nigeria has been bursting with creative energy. With the emergence of Afrobeat in the music industry during the '60s and '70s, then through the explosion of the Nollywood film industry when democracy returned to the country, Nigeria shows us that where there is progress, there is opportunity. Now Naija fashion is taking the spotlight, reminding the world that Nigeria still has more gifts to offer.

Teni Zaccheaus, Jr., brand designer for Native magazine, describes Naija fashion, saying, "Naija style is flamboyant, eccentric, more often than not. It is always trying to stand out." From wild prints of bright colours to designs that echo a rich, traditional African style, elements of Nigerian, or Naija, influence can be seen from all parts of the globe, ranging from Gucci to Louis Vuitton. Designers are even reaching the Red Carpet, with celebrities such as Beyoncé, Lady Gaga and Lupita Nyong'o have been seen wearing Naija style with pride.

In years past, the exceptional style of Nigeria was a hidden treasure. Designers and stylists would have to leave the

country and secure a spot at a highly publicised Fashion Week just to be seen and showcase their talents to a larger audience, a feat that was daunting at best. With Nigeria's economic success, the country has seen the emergence of a middle class, but without a platform to display Naija style, many consumers began to focus their attention on luxury brands like Prada and shifted attention away from locally inspired fashion.

However dedicated Nigerian designers were not to be underestimated. Rather than secure a spot in a Fashion Week outside of the country, they brought Fashion Week to Nigeria instead. In 2007, the Arise Fashion Week debuted in the cultural epicentre of Lagos and gained worldwide recognition. Even more, it helped to highlight what makes Naija fashion so special and desirable and refocused attention on its own exceptional flair. Only a few years later, Nigeria had officially established Lagos Fashion Week, inaugurated in 2011, which is now the premier fashion event in the country.

Even more, the monumental improvements within Nigeria's telecom sector have shined a light on Naija fashion



in an unexpected way. Through social media outlets like Facebook and Instagram, technology facilitates an appreciation of fashion from anywhere in the world to the palm of our hand. So when Naija style is embraced by influential figures such as Michelle Obama, who proudly wore pieces from Naija designer from Amaka Osakwe, designer and founder of Maki Oh, while visiting South Africa or when Naomi Campbell attended Lagos Fashion Week this year, the entire world sees the beauty of Naija style first-hand. Representation by such prominent forces signifies an international acknowledgement that Nigerian fashion is unique and worthy of recognition. In a short time, presentations of a new style from the country's designers have become a highlight of Fashion Weeks across the globe.

Yet what makes Naija style special is not just the singular look. A dedication to culture and community separates Nigeria within the world of fashion and boasts a high industry standard. Folake Folarin-Coker, founder of Tiffany Amber, was named one of Forbes Magazine's 20 Most Powerful Women in Africa and is an example of embracing her community in the construction of her designs. Like many designers, Coker does not outsource her materials but instead works to locally source her fabrics, materials and labour. This effort supports the small industries of the community and gives her pieces the benefit of local techniques. By utilising local resources, Tiffany Amber contributes to local growth and enriches the country's economy.

In the fashion industry, the production of pieces would be significantly cheaper if it were outsourced, but the authenticity of Naija fashion would be lost. True pioneers of the national style take pride in what it means to be Nigerian and to be able to share Nigerian products with the world. As a result, the true Afro-chic is authentic to the last thread, and the hard work and resources are straight from the heart of the country. This allows Naija style to maintain an authentic feel and give back to the community, improving the local economy while inspiring the world one thread at a time. ■

“Naija style is flamboyant, eccentric, more often than not. It is always trying to stand out.”

Teni Zacccheaus, Jr.,
brand designer
for Native magazine



Inside Nigeria

The Story Of The Kano Dress Code

In modern-day Nigeria, the story of the Kano dress code tells a history of its people.



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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

In Northwest Nigeria, the state of Kano is the most populated in the country. There you will find that the principal inhabitants consist of two main groups, the Hausa and Fulani people. Both groups combined create about 38% of Nigeria's entire population. Due to their cultural similarities and close proximity, the Hausa and Fulani people are often grouped together and noted with a hyphenated collective term "Hausa-Fulani". Though their histories and cultures are intertwined since the Fulani War in the early 1800s (although their coexistence dates back to the 1400s), each group still possesses a uniqueness to their culture that is worth noting.

One of the most notable differences between these two groups is the uniqueness of their turbans. For the Hausa people, one specific dress that stands out is the *alasho*, a special turban that is typically reserved for important ceremonies such as rites of passage into adulthood, marriage ceremonies, or the inauguration of leaders. The *alasho* is a long turban that covers the head and is worn across part of the neck and is an important symbol of prominence in Hausa culture. The Fulani people have a similar turban, but where the Hausa people generally wrap their turbans into a round shape, the Fulani turbans often have one or two ears sticking from the top. These are symbols which are often tied to prestige or status. The Fulani turban is similar to the *alasho* and often covers part of the face and neck as well. Historically, these turbans were used by travellers and herders in the region to protect the face from wind and sand. Both Hausa and Fulani turbans are similar to that of the *tagelmust* worn by the Tuareg people, but it is wrapped differently in a style that is unique to the people of the region, leaving the lower neck and parts of the face free.

The state of Kano is largely Muslim, and for this reason, much of the dress code of the people residing there abides by the rules of Islam. Hausa and Fulani men

and women are required to cover the main parts of the body through modest dress. For the Fulani people, their clothing choices also adhere to *pulaaku*, an unwritten moral code of behaviour. This code centres around four main points: patience, respect, wisdom and hard work, guiding the Fulani people toward maintaining their identity and are reflected through their clothing. Neither the religious beliefs nor *pulaaku* restrict the inhabitants of Kano from expressing themselves through impressive and elaborate fashion.

Hausa men often wear a dress called *babban riga*, a large flowing gown that is measured to reach the floor and is appropriate for formal and informal occasions. It is designed with elaborate embroidery and patterns. An alternative dress for a Hausa male would be a robe-like dress called *jalabiya*. Casual and formal dress can also call for a *fula*, a colourful embroidered cap. Fulani men wear long robes similar to the *babban riga*, but also wear solid-coloured shirts and pants that reach their lower calves. In addition to their turbans, a cone-shaped leather or straw hat is worn on top of their heads, which is especially popular for men working in agriculture.

Hausa women will often wear colourful *zani*, a wrapper that can also serve in formal and informal occasions, depending on the quality of the fabric. At times, women also wear a loose, robe-like dress called an *abaya*. Fulani women will often wear their hair in long braids that are adorned with beads, shells, or even accent their hair with silver coins that have been passed down within their family.

Though the Hausa and Fulani people of Kano share a similar history and culture, what is apparent from the dress of the two neighbouring peoples is that they are two individual groups with their own identities and means of expression. The Hausa and Fulani live together through an appreciation of tradition, respect, morality and religious belief. ■





Tourism

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NIGERIA ■ NEXT LEVEL

Ten Hidden Nigerian Gems No Visitor Should Miss

As Africa's most populated country; Nigeria is gifted with an incredibly varied landscape. From its 850km+ coasts on the shores of the Gulf of Guinea in the west, to the southern rainforests ripe with wildlife, all the way to the vast and incredible savannah in the northern regions below Niger. While the hustle and bustle of the Lagosian nightlife may attract you with its bright lights and grooving beats, here are the top 10 hidden getaway spots to visit in order to immerse yourself within the vast splendor and beauty of Nigeria.

1. Yankari National Park

This extraordinary wildlife park located in Bauchi State hosts an immeasurable variety of flora and fauna and represents a unique opportunity to witness rare wild animals in their habitat: the park gives shelter to over 50 species of mammals as well as more than 350 species of birds.

2. Gashaka Gumti National Park

Located in the extreme south-east of Nigeria, the national park covers over 6,000 square kilometres of land crossed by winding rivers that here and there morph into spectacular waterfalls. Its mysterious green depths are home to rare avian species as well as chimpanzees and African big cats.

3. Erin Ijesha Waterfall

Speaking of waterfalls, how not to mention this breath-taking attraction, apparently known since the 1100s with the alternative name of Olumirin? The village of Abake dominates from above, guarding over the many visitors that come from all over the world to partake of the fall's pure waters, said to have medicinal properties.

4. Okomu National Park

One of the few remaining spots of the virgin rainforest that used to cover the entirety of southern Nigeria, this reserve is an oasis of purity and untainted nature that hosts rare creatures such as pangolins, leopards and forest elephants.



5. Lekki Conservation Centre

If you're staying in Lagos, be aware that one of the best natural reserves in Nigeria is located within the boundaries of the coastal megalopolis. Managed by the Nigerian Conservation Foundation and covering an area of 78 hectares, this centre has a tract of wetland equipped with canopy walkways that allow visitors to see monkeys, birds and crocodiles among others.

6. Ancient Kano City Walls

The origins of Kano, today a modern metropolis in northern Nigeria, date back to the early 10th century. The city was already a commercial hub in ancient times, and the walls that helped defend the city as well as monitor the flow of people and goods are still partly visible, silent witnesses of many centuries of Nigerian history.

7. Zuma Rock

Located in the central Niger State, not far from federal capital Abuja, Zuma Rock is a 725 m tall monolith. One of the sides of the rock spots a formation closely resembling a human face, which earned the rock the nickname of "watchman of the federal capital."

8. Idanre Hills

Above the town of Idanre, in the western Ondo State, rise the majestic Idanre Hills, reaching the height of 900 metres above the sea level. The hills, one of the most beautiful natural landscapes in Nigeria, guard a precious ecosystem and give shelter to a rich variety of flora and fauna.

9. Osun Sacred Grove

Near Oshogbo, along the banks of the river Osun, there is a large area covered in rainforests. Within the area, one of the last traces of primary high forest in southern Nigeria, lies the shrine of Oshuno, the River Goddess sacred to the Yoruba people, that watches over the flora and fauna inhabiting the area.

10. Edumanom National Forest

Enclosing the delta of the river Niger, this forest, punctuated with freshwater swamps, is populated by some of the largest remaining chimpanzee colonies on Earth, as well as other rare primates. ■





Unstoppable Agents Of Progress And Change

With the immeasurable advancements and opportunities on the horizon for Nigeria, its youth population are the engine to a progressive future.

All over the world, a virile youth population is the bedrock on which national integration and development are based. Nigeria is no exception. The youth are the foundation and the building blocks of any successful nation. Their role in politics, the economy and the future cannot be overemphasised as countries that develop their youth will inevitably become more developed themselves. The intelligence, optimism and motivation of the younger demographics function as a catalyst to prosperity.

Young people will also account for nearly 20% of Africa's entire youth population between the ages of 15 and 24. It seems that young people are destined to be Nigeria's greatest asset, placing the country in a leadership position in this regard. The logical cause and effect relationship is that a rising youth population in comparison to other age groups will stimulate economic development, based on the assumption that young people bring a new generation of confidence, technological skill sets and innovation to the work environment. In other cases, they require fewer resources to meet the needs of the dependent population

while mobilising sufficient resources for investment in economic expansion and human development.

By the end of the next decade, 78 million people, which will be half of Nigeria's entire population, will be under 25 years old. With such large numbers of young people in the country, the Nigerian government is in no doubt about the kind of future young Nigerians want. The youth are the engine that actualises national development. This does not only manifest itself in the workforce; young people know the future is already in their hands and they're working to make it better by embracing the politics of the country.

One example of such youth is Chioma Agwuegbo, who created the "Not Too Young To Run" bill, which seeks to reduce constitutional age limits for various elected positions. Minimum ages which will be around 40% of Nigeria's entire population, from 35 to 30 for governors and from 30 to 25 for members of the House of Representatives. If half of the population will be young people by 2050, the youth are seeking equal representation in official offices. The momentum behind this act is coming from Not Too Young To Run activists, who are led



“To achieve this incredible feat of building Nigeria,
we must all truly desire to see it happen.”
Fela Durotoye, nation brander and motivational speaker

by advocacy group YIAGA. This movement is a testament to the strength, resilience and dedication of Nigerian youth and has been calling for greater youth participation in Nigerian politics since 2016. The group seeks to correct young people’s huge under-representation in politics so that they may make a positive difference in the political structure of Nigeria. Agwuegbo and the Not Too Young To Run movement believe that if young people were to run and win in the elections, they could foster more inclusive politics from within. They could introduce new perspectives and spearhead much-needed innovation in Nigeria’s governance systems.

But aside from an eager and willing workforce and interest in the country’s political future, what more does Nigeria need to nurture its youth? The answer is this: more investment. The private sector is focused on growing itself immensely in order to accommodate unemployment and the incoming university graduates in Nigeria. An increase in investment will allow several sectors to intensify the value addition to their industries. Not to mention, with Nigeria’s entrance into the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), Nigeria senses that pan-Africanism is on the horizon. Investment is also of interest to Nigeria’s youth because, when there is an influx of foreign direct investment, a causal effect is often job creation, opening the potential for young people to start their careers and put their talents to use. This opportunity for self-discovery in the job market plays a major role in mobilising the people toward a common goal and energising the economy.

There exists a direct link between youth and national development. The limits of development and progress of any country lie in the hands of a productive and creative youth population, who supply a great percentage of the labour force for the production of goods and services to take hold. Societies are recreated through the youthful population and their abilities are crucial to the development of Nigeria. Nigeria’s current demographic structures could be future assets if the country invests now in human development.

The incoming wave of young workers in Nigeria presents a great opportunity for economic development, productivity improvement and innovation. To achieve this, however, Nigeria requires investment in job creation, education and appropriate policies that address the current challenges facing the country’s young people. Further investments in health are therefore vital to nurture this demographic. Nigerian youth also have the potential to increase entrepreneurial activity in the country which will further drive business growth. The Nigerian administration is working to make sure these people become properly empowered in small and medium-sized enterprises, local businesses and startups. Sectors such as ICT, sports, entertainment, hospitality and agriculture already possess the potential to provide significant economic and career opportunities for its youth. In addition, infrastructural development, provision of credit facilities and removal of institutional and regulatory constraints are crucial to enhance entrepreneurship opportunities.

And that is exactly what it is striving to do. The government is now focused on creating an atmosphere favourable for the youth to achieve their goals by investing in knowledge, education and skill training. Education is the cornerstone of the country’s future and should be holistic in nature, teach understanding and awareness and develop potentials that can be utilised in the workplace.

One of the areas where this nurturing of potential is most beneficial is the technology sector, which has become one of the highest-emplying industries for university graduates with an employment rate of 11.12%. The industry is rivalled only by financial services and education industries. Even so, these rivaling sectors are industries that are moving towards communications and technology-enabled business models that will require technical skills in order to implement and operate.

The Nigerian technology industry has grown monumentally over the last ten years. In 2018, Nigerian ►►

“I believe in the grand vision of Nigeria’s future. I believe in it because I’ve seen it. It’s represented by this line — the line that depends on healthy, educated people and the surge of economic activity they will unleash.”

Bill Gates, Co-Chair of Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



tech companies raised over US\$306 million in funding, boasting an increase of 167% from the previous year in 2017. Some tech companies such as Flutterwave have obtained valuations of over US\$100 million. As these companies expand and more startups are created, they will need to hire talented youth in order to create engineering, design, marketing, customer support and sales teams. A Nigerian technology jobs platform called Gigson has seen a 600% increase in job postings on its database since launching three years ago. Gigson has filled roles for almost 3,000 job openings.

As a result, a unique problem of tech jobs being created quicker than the positions can be filled presents a specialised skill gap. Many Nigerian organisations are working to discover ways to provide promising young applicants with the skills and hands-on experience to fill these positions. Among the most desired skills are technical skills, often at management levels. Software developers are also high in demand as many companies are struggling to fill engineering roles. As a consequence, many experienced developers often work for multiple companies. Other skills in demand are digital marketing, project management, design, sales, customer support and people operations. To nurture these needs, many companies have hiring processes that typically involve a fixed duration for training and placement in established technology companies at the end of these training programmes. These companies also provide welcoming workspaces with stable internet access for their interns and young workers.

Many youths find outlets for their talents through startups, which are leading Nigeria’s tech sector growth. In the last decade, thanks to mobile access, favourable policies and improved infrastructure and education, Kenya and South Africa have earned reputations as startup havens. Now Nigeria—the continent’s largest economy—is being added to that list as its growing population and young entrepreneurial spirit attract tech investments.

Just like recent graduates, startups are often in the process of finding their place in the economy and active business industry. While young people in Nigeria are eager to join the tech sector, they also require training. To build their skills, a growing number of developer community meetups, conferences and tech hubs offer support to help them find their place as valuable members of a growing sector. As of 2016, Nigeria was home to twenty-three technology hubs that foster new ideas, innovative changes, personal and professional growth and a conducive environment for success. These hubs help Nigerian startups grow across all industries including fintech, agriculture, tourism and e-commerce. Entrepreneurs are now creating products and services that strive to address the modern challenges of their country’s developing infrastructure. Fintech companies streamline banking, payments and

money transfers to facilitate financial inclusion so that more Nigerians can bank digitally and take advantage of the country’s advancing financial system.

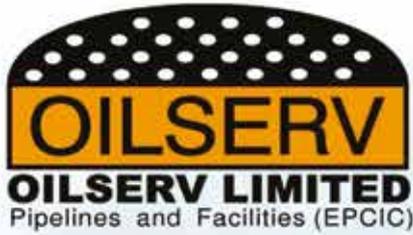
The continuous investment in Nigerian startups will persist in the support of local tech communities, but governmental, tech-friendly policies are needed to continue their growth and support incoming investments and partnerships. Through increased local and foreign investments, Nigerian tech communities have the potential to transform the country’s economy. These policies are critical to ensure the sector continues to expand.

Nigerian startups are not the only employers of young technology talent. Software development and specialities such as web design have become globally sought after. For example, Google, Microsoft and Booking.com currently employ Nigerian youth expertise to join their worldwide teams in their Lagos offices. Microsoft opened its African Development Centres in Lagos and hired twenty-five developers for its Cognition and Azure teams. The goal of Microsoft is to increase this number to 500 developers by 2023. This act alone will present a huge opportunity for youth employment in Nigeria in the ICT and tech sectors.

As an innovative and digitally savvy generation, Nigeria’s youth will play a key role in the country’s technology revolution. Growing tech communities all across Africa and Nigeria will continue to push the digital revolution forward while powering political, societal and cultural changes. A crucial factor in moving this digital revolution forward is through increased internet and mobile access across the continent.

The Nigerian government sees technology—and the youths who design, create and use it—as crucial to the continent’s future. Pro-innovation lawmakers can enact key policy issues like broadband access, privacy and security. Nigeria’s dedication is an indication that budding tech communities will be supported by continued investment, partnerships and policies built specifically for the young demographic and the future of the country.

It remains true that youth development structures in any country have a very high propensity to be a catalyst for a country’s national and economic growth. The young population, especially in Nigeria, possesses a strong transformative force. These persons are often creative, resourceful and innovative agents of change. For this reason, they are impassioned in the realm of politics, in working hard and restructuring the future of their country. In no uncertain terms, the youth can determine the direction of the nation and its upcoming generations. In recognising the growing need to strengthen policies and investments involving young people, Nigeria is working to give the youth a platform to create a successful, professional environment and prosperous future for the country. ■



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