



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



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Interview with Engr. A. O. Mokuolu, (FNSE) on Engineering Education-Key to Infrastructural Development and the effect on Local Content

E-Newsletter: *It is a pleasure to hold this discussion with you on 'engineering education- key to infrastructural development and the effect on local content'. It is obvious that a lot of people are not fully aware of Local Content in the area of job placement, opportunities for engineers especially those involved in consulting services. Our objective (E-newsletter) is to create awareness to all engineers on this local content initiative of the government and NNPC. But before we proceed, it will be a great pleasure for us to know more about you and your contributions to the engineering profession.*

Engr. Mokuolu: Thank you very much Dr. Ujile, My name is Engr. Adenkunle Olumiwa Mokuolu. I'm a Fellow of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. I graduated from the University of Lagos in 1980. I work with the Federal Capital Development Authority. I am the deputy director for the regional road department for satellite town infrastructure. The Nigerian Society of Engineers is my passion. I'm one of the foundation members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. I have served at the Abuja branch in many capacities including Branch Chairman. At the national level, I also became very active in 1989; there I rose to become the then assistant publicity secretary. I also served as Assistant Secretary General. I became an EX-Official in 2007 and Vice President in 2008.

E-Newsletter: *How do you rate the participation of engineers and the prospect for engineers on this notable program or scheme- local content from the federal government and NNPC?*

Engr. Mokuolu: Thank you very much. Before I proceed I will like to create a scenario, this will help us understand the reason why local content is very important. Imagine a father, having children in the house and he stocked the house with all the good things of life and a stranger came to him and said "look, I can add value to all these things you have". He loved him and trusted him because he showed him pictures of what he is doing in his own house with the same resources. The stranger after being given a chance, he started doing it but as he was adding value to these resources he was taking it to his country and the children of the man were there. It got to the point where the man was no longer eating with his children, but the stranger alone. The children were there looking, hungry and wondering, even to clean the table, they were not allowed to. The stranger brought in his own children to do the cleaning of the table while the man's children wash the plate. This is really the pathetic scenario happening in Nigeria. Though it may be impossible from time to time for some of the children of the man to enjoy the comfort of life they are entitled to but it would be difficult for these to pass to all of them. Answering this question, I think this is the

time we need to be serious about it. But in trying get involved in local content we should not be in a hurry. We should have a plan. A plan that is sustainable, a plan that will ensure that generation to come would be able to stand on that platform and make progress. Yes local content, we have to see it first from the human capacity, secondly from some of the infrastructural facilities that need to be provided and then of course the services. COREN is talking about human capacity, the human resources in this



Engr. A. O. Mokuolu, FNSE
NSE V.P. (Prof. Development)

country is so numerous because I can tell you without an iota of contradiction that Nigerians are very smart people and we also have culture of hand work where we are well enumerated. When you are talking about this local content development, there are some things that have to be in place which we call fundamental human rights. We need really to solve the problem of water then food, shelter and communication. The thing is that the well being of the people will ensure that these people will apply 90% of their minds to improve their intellectual capacity. By intellectual capacity, I'm not saying that it's limited to academic's intellectual capacity. We should be able to render services that are required by others. It could be as simple as cleaning the floor but when you clean that floor, you are sure that no other person can do a better job, then you are an expert in that area. Let's start thinking of developing local content in a particular area. You talk them bit by bit and I think it is only applicable to Oil and Gas right now but I can tell you that Oil and Gas is just one out of it. Let us have local content in Roads, our water treatment plants. For example, there is no city in this country where there is twenty-four hours pipe borne water supply, electricity. Now where there is no industry, we cannot really build local capacity and when there is no indigenous manufacturing capacity, what do you find? The foreigners will not be willing to show you things within their system that would make you an expert. That is the reason why I said we should not be in a hurry about it. It is good that we have started it, but first of all let's make a solid ground for it and for goodness sake our people should stop thinking that local content is all about making money. Money is just infinitesimal fallout of what Local Content Policy is all about. It is about our dignity. It is Nigerian enhancement because local content, if done in the expected way, we will be exporting

human capacity to other places to benefit mankind. The only thing is that when you do a particular thing that makes people happy, the automatic result is that you make money, people will put money into your pocket. The good thing about money also is that you cannot spend it alone. Thank you.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you very much. What is the place of the engineers when it comes to planning with respect to local content? As you said, Local content does not only involve services in the oil and gas facilities, but also our social services like water, road, power etc. These are the things we supposed to do to help ourselves so that when we go out of this country we can boast of twenty-hour power and water supply. Which way do you think engineering training and education would come into play?*

Engr. Mokuolu: Thank you very much, your question is very important and I'm happy you raised it. Over the years, engineers really have been limiting themselves to what can be done whether as temporary or permanent measure to solve a particular problem. We should be the one to apply engineering tools to solve societal problems in a sustainable manner. For example we should at this time get into the habit of using statistics, etc to plan our cities. We should be involved to formulate laws for physical development, putting data base in place. That is why (COREN), Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria alone cannot drive the vision of engineers. We need the technologist; we need the artisans and craftsmen. More so we need the society. There is a need for us to start looking for a way because of this global melt-down, let us use that opportunity to convince government that some things can be done in a cheaper way by consulting the Nigerian engineers to the same standard of any facility that can be achieved anywhere in the world at a lower cost. The second thing I want to say is that engineers should not be afraid to sanction any member. We have codes of ethics, if two or three people are sanctioned for bad and poor performance on the profession others would sit up. So we need to identify those who are bringing down our profession. Then thirdly as a professional body there are some little things that we can do for our communities. We can provide our communities with infrastructure that would add great value to their lives. With that our profile will be enhanced within the society. Then they will be able to trust us.

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E-Newsletter: We are still talking on Local Content. If you look keenly into the Nigerian engineering firm, you discover that there is a lot of Political interference. A politician without the least knowledge in engineering principles wants to detect what should be done on project. For example, the governor of a state can visit project site for inspection and decides to effect a change on the structure without regard to the project engineer and the engineer would not be able to advise Mr. Excellency, 'let us go back to the design calculations and necessary drawings'. What is your opinion about this situation?

Engr. Mokuolu: Dr. Ujile, I salute your courage. You are one of the Nigerian engineers that think this way, I believe and I want to state without any contradiction that this is killing our country. You know I just told you that I work for the federal capital development and if you look at Abuja today, personally I'm not satisfied with the pattern of our development in Abuja. I'm not satisfied with the road



network with dangerous junctions and all the associated unplanned features. The example you have given, is enough for us to intensify sanctioning. When COREN is in the position to remove any engineer from government position, that is even if the person is a permanent secretary and discipline him of an approved and authenticated misbehaviors and deviation from the code of ethic, I think everybody would sit up. The politicians are at liberty to conceive their own ideas because this is what they think. The time has come in this country where all of us must act on the benefit of each other. Politicians know that their job is to give us challenges and provide the resources to meet these challenges and it is for us therefore to ensure that when there is no achievement, there will be sanctioning.

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much for sharing your wealth of knowledge with us.

REFLECTION ON COMMENTS FROM OUR READING AUDIENCE

E-newsletter wants to use this medium to appreciate those who have been commending us for the regularity of our productions. On the 64th edition, we have received more than 65 comments within and outside Nigeria. Basically the various comments centered on the consistency and contents. Errors on spellings of names of our members were noted; especially on NSE Vice President's name is regretted. The following requests from some of our members should be granted with minimum delay:

- **LOSS OF NSE CERTIFICATE FOR YOUNG-HARRY:** This member wrote to us that since 2007 he has not received his NSE Certificate. His number is 18992. NSE headquarters should locate this certificate and revert.
- **Correction of surname: CHIGBUNDU Chima S.** is the correct name and NOT Chibundu. A member suggested that engineers should be involved in politics. This will enable us to be partakers in policy-making. All engineering principles, ideas and policies can only be implemented and executed religiously when we are at the helms of affairs. Engineers in government should protect the ethics of the profession.

Other comments will be made known at subsequent editions

The World Federation of Engineering Organizations' (WFEO) Engineering Congress was hosted by the Kuwait Society of Engineers in Kuwait from 2nd November 2009 to 6th November 2009. The theme for this year's assembly is Alternative Energy Applications. In course of the event, the Nigerian delegation paid a courtesy visit to the Nigerian Ambassador to Kuwait, Amb. Ahmed Bala G. Over 75 countries participated & the Nigerian delegates were more in number with a total of 49 engineers.



From left: Engrs. Igoni, Ajibola (NSE DP), President Ghana Inst of Engrs, Ogariawo, Denis & George.



NSE President, Engr. Ali (standing) addressing the Nigerian Ambassador to Kuwait & other engineers



The opening ceremony of WFEO

NOTICE!!!

The Engineering Week of the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch has been postponed from 9th November—15th November 2009 to 16th November—22nd November 2009. The programme of activities remains the same.

**WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT**

The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch is organizing a- 3 day Refresher Course on: Pump Operations, Pump Maintenance, Safe Operations, Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

Resource Persons:

Engr. Prof. H. I. Hart; (FNSE)

DVC. Rivers State University of Science and Technology, Port Harcourt.

Engr. R. O. Ogona; (MNSE)

Managing Director,
RICH- MOG SERVICES NIGERIA LIMITED.

Venue: NSE PH. Secretariat,

3 Barnard Carr Street,
Water Works Yard, Port Harcourt.

Date: 25th – 27th November, 2009

Time: 9am-4pm daily

Registration Fee: N50,000.00.

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NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE PH should pay their **annual branch dues** of N4000 and **compulsory levy** of N5000 towards the Engineer Resource Center to UBA ACC. NO: 0234-031-0000962 (Port Harcourt Main Branch). Also pay **National Annual Subscription** of N7,500.00 for **Members** & N9,500 for **Fellows** directly to AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613 & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank