



# Pengassan

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**HOLDING THE LINE:  
LUMUMBA OKUGBAWA ON  
LEADERSHIP, LEGACY AND  
LIFE AFTER PENGASSAN**

**MULTIFACETED CHALLENGES  
FACING NIGERIA'S OIL AND  
GAS INDUSTRY SAYS DIVESTMENT  
DOES NOT AFFECT OUR MEMBERS**

**-OSIFO**

# PENGASSAN: MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OSIFO LEADERSHIP

**EDITORIAL**

**BEING A DEDICATED LABOUR LEADER: THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES**



## Message from the President



**D**ear Members and Readers,

As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of the oil and gas industry, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to excellence, safety, and innovation. This edition of Pengassan Info Magazine serves as a platform to celebrate our achievements and to address the challenges that lie ahead. Our commitment to excellence, professionalism, and solidarity has never been more pivotal.

In the face of evolving market dynamics and regulatory landscapes, we must remain united in our pursuit of sustainable practices and innovation. Together, we can advocate for our members' rights, enhance workplace safety, and ensure that our voices are heard on critical issues affecting our sector.

I encourage each of you to stay engaged, participate in our initiatives, and share your insights as we work to enhance our profession. Your dedication is what drives PENGASSAN forward.

In the pages that follow, you will find insightful articles, interviews with industry leaders, and updates on our initiatives aimed at enhancing the welfare of our members. We are witnessing significant shifts in global energy dynamics, and it is our collective responsibility to adapt and lead in this transformative era.

I encourage each of you to actively engage with the content, share your thoughts, and contribute to the ongoing dialogue that shapes our profession. Together, we can foster a culture of collaboration and empower ourselves for a sustainable future.

Thank you for your unwavering dedication to our Association. Let us continue to stand united as we advance our shared goals and uphold the values of integrity and professionalism.

In solidarity,

Comrade Egnr Festus Osifo  
President, PENGASSAN

## BEING A DEDICATED LABOUR LEADER: THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES.

In an age characterised by rapid economic change and social upheaval, the role of a labour leader has never been more critical. A dedicated labour leader serves as the backbone of the workforce they represent, advocating for the rights and well-being of workers while fostering a climate of respect and collaboration. The attributes that define an effective labour leader are not merely advantageous; they are essential for navigating the complexities of the modern labour landscape.

Firstly, strong communication skills are paramount. A dedicated labour leader must not only articulate the concerns of their constituents but also engage in meaningful dialogue with employers and policy-makers. This requires the ability to convey complex ideas with clarity and passion, ensuring that the voices of workers resonate at every level. Moreover, effective communication builds trust among union members, reinforcing the leader's role as a reliable representative of their interests.

Equally important is empathy, a quality that enables labour leaders to connect with the struggles of their members on a personal level. Understanding the day-to-day challenges faced by workers allows leaders to advocate more effectively for solutions that are compassionate and just. An empathetic leader fosters a sense of solidarity within the workforce, creating an environment where

individuals feel valued and heard. Critical thinking and strategic planning also play a crucial role in labour leadership. The ever-changing dynamics of the labour market demand leaders who can analyse complex issues and anticipate future challenges. A dedicated labour leader must be proactive, developing strategies that not only address immediate concerns but also lay the groundwork for long-term improvements in working conditions, wages, and job security. This foresight is essential for crafting a sustainable vision that resonates with members and garners support from the broader community.

Furthermore, integrity cannot be overlooked as an attribute of a dedicated labour leader. Upholding ethical standards fosters respect and credibility among workers. When leaders act with honesty and transparency, they set a precedent that encourages a culture of accountability within the organisation. Integrity ensures that leaders remain steadfast in their commitment to defend workers' rights, even in the face of adversity.

Additionally, a commitment to lifelong learning is a vital attribute that dedicated labour leaders must embody. The workforce landscape is continually evolving, shaped by technological advancements, shifts in policy, and changes in worker demographics. Leaders must stay informed on these trends to advocate effectively and adapt

strategies accordingly. By remaining open to new ideas and continuously seeking knowledge, labour leaders can implement innovative solutions that meet the needs of a diverse membership.

Finally, resilience is a critical trait for labour leaders. The journey of advocacy is often fraught with obstacles, whether legislative battles, strikes, or negotiations with management. A dedicated labour leader must remain steadfast in their mission, demonstrating the perseverance to navigate setbacks and challenges. This resilience inspires confidence in union members, reinforcing their commitment to collective action and solidarity.

In conclusion, being a dedicated labour leader is a multifaceted role that encompasses various key attributes. Strong communication skills, empathy, critical thinking, integrity, a commitment to lifelong learning, and resilience are vital for anyone seeking to guide the workforce toward a more equitable future. As the landscape of work continues to transform, the necessity for dedicated labour leaders who embody these qualities becomes ever more apparent. Ultimately, it is through their unwavering commitment to workers' rights that labour leaders can effect lasting change in society.



# **PENGASSAN:** **MONUMENTAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE OSIFO LEADERSHIP**



Comrade (Engr.) Festus Osifo was born in Benin City, Edo State. He is happily married with children and has built a distinguished career spanning engineering excellence, union leadership, and national advocacy. In August 2020, he was elected the 16th President of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) and also serves as the President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), where his voice continues to shape labour discourse at the national level.

He holds a First-Class degree in Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering from the University of Portsmouth, United Kingdom. With over two decades of professional experience in the oil and gas industry, he has worked with leading multinational companies, including Schlumberger Nigeria Limited and TotalEnergies Exploration and Production Nigeria Limited. His technical depth, combined with extensive industry exposure, has informed his pragmatic and solution-driven approach to labour leadership. Beyond his professional and union roles, Comrade Osifo is the Chief

Executive Officer and Founder of the Save Our Children Education Initiative (SOCEI), reflecting his strong commitment to social development and human capital advancement. He is a member of respected professional bodies such as the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE), the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), and the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE). His public service experience includes board memberships at organisations such as HEIWA Africa, the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency (PPPRA), and the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), among others.

From the oil fields and refineries of the Niger Delta to national policy platforms, Comrade Festus Osifo has emerged as one of the most influential voices in Nigeria's labour movement. Shaped early by the realities of labour exploitation and inequality in the oil and gas sector, he developed a lifelong commitment to social justice and workers' rights. His journey into trade unionism began at the grassroots, where his clarity of thought, persuasive advocacy, and unwavering dedication

to workers' welfare quickly distinguished him.

Rising steadily through the ranks of labour leadership, he became a symbol of hope for oil and gas workers navigating an industry marked by volatility, environmental challenges, regulatory uncertainty, and frequent industrial disputes. As President of PENGASSAN, he has demonstrated strategic clarity in balancing firm advocacy with constructive engagement, mobilising workers while maintaining dialogue with employers, regulators, and government institutions.

Despite sustained pressure from powerful corporate and political interests, Comrade Osifo has remained resolute in defending workers' interests. Through disciplined negotiations and, where necessary, organised industrial actions, his leadership has delivered improved remuneration, enhanced safety standards, and strengthened welfare protections for members. His emphasis on dialogue, fairness, and institutional respect has helped rebuild trust within an industry historically characterised by conflict.

Since assuming office, his leadership

has been defined by focused reforms and tangible outcomes. PENGASSAN has recorded consistent collective bargaining gains despite severe economic headwinds, including inflation, currency devaluation, and sectoral reforms. Under his leadership, negotiated salary improvements ranging between 80 and 100 per cent were secured across various establishments, significantly cushioning members against declining real incomes and reinforcing the Union's reputation as a formidable bargaining institution.

Comrade Osifo has also played a critical role in safeguarding jobs during industry divestments, restructuring, and asset transfers. His administration has insisted on due process, fair severance arrangements, and the protection of Nigerian professionals, preventing indiscriminate job losses and unfair labour practices. He has consistently warned against the growing threat of brain drain in the oil and gas sector, advocating competitive compensation frameworks and policy reforms to retain skilled manpower essential to Nigeria's energy sustainability.

Institutionally, his tenure has significantly strengthened PENGASSAN's operational capacity, internal efficiency, and national presence. The acquisition of a magnificent Abuja Liaison Office strategically positioned the Union closer to key government ministries, regulatory agencies, and industry stakeholders, thereby enhancing policy engagement and advocacy effectiveness. Further investments included the purchase of six high-capacity buses for all zones and the National Headquarters, improving logistics, mobility, and nationwide coordination.

Infrastructure renewal was prioritised through the comprehensive renovation of the Port Harcourt Zonal Office, restoring it to a modern, functional standard befitting its strategic importance. The FOJ Event Centre was also fully furnished, expanding the Union's capacity to host conferences, training sessions, and major engagements in a dignified

environment. Internally, staff morale and productivity were boosted through a Secretariat staff remuneration increase of over 100 per cent. In addition, the recruitment of new staff was undertaken to strengthen institutional capacity, improve service delivery, enhance research, communications, and administrative efficiency, and add greater value to the Association's day-to-day operations.

In a further demonstration of institutional maturity, respect for legacy, and continuity of leadership, Comrade Osifo's administration approved and executed the presentation of official vehicles to past Presidents and General Secretaries of PENGASSAN. This historic gesture reinforced the Union's culture of honouring service, recognising sacrifices made by former leaders, and preserving institutional dignity, while inspiring current and future leaders to serve with commitment and integrity.

A defining achievement of his administration is the deliberate strengthening of inclusive unionism through gender-responsive reforms. Recognising the critical role women play in the energy sector, PENGASSAN's innovative leadership under Comrade Festus Osifo identified the need to enhance the structure, accountability, and impact of women's participation within the Union. This vision led to the upgrade of Women in PENGASSAN (WIP) to the PENGASSAN Women Commission (PWC), a pivotal entity dedicated to advancing the interests and welfare of women in the oil and gas industry. The new structure was formally ratified at the Special Delegates Conference in December 2022. PWC has strengthened women's representation, promoted greater women's involvement in unionism, created leadership development opportunities, and intensified advocacy against gender-based discrimination and harassment, aligning firmly with PENGASSAN's mission to be a gender-friendly and all-inclusive union.

In a solemn demonstration of respect for labour history and fallen heroes, Comrade Osifo's administration

organised a Special Night of Tribute in January 2026 in honour of Comrade Uche Marcus Okoro, former President of PENGASSAN, who died in the tragic Sosoliso Airlines plane crash on 10 December 2005. The event brought together labour leaders, past presidents, industry stakeholders, and members of the Okoro family, reaffirming the Union's commitment to preserving institutional memory and celebrating exemplary leadership.

In further demonstration of his commitment to inclusive unionism and social responsibility, Comrade Osifo strengthened the role and impact of PENGASSAN Foundation, which was established in 2024 as a structured platform for humanitarian intervention. Through the Foundation, PENGASSAN has reached out to the less privileged across various communities, providing educational support, relief materials, and targeted assistance to vulnerable groups. This initiative reinforces the Union's belief that labour leadership must extend beyond workplace negotiations to meaningful social engagement, positioning PENGASSAN as both a defender of workers' rights and a compassionate contributor to community development and social equity.

This flagship forum has become a critical national platform for examining the interconnected challenges confronting Nigeria's oil and gas industry and the broader economic landscape. By convening policymakers, industry leaders, regulators, labour unions, academia, and subject-matter experts, PEALS has enabled informed, solution-oriented dialogue on energy transition, workforce sustainability, economic reforms, security, and industrial harmony, thereby reinforcing PENGASSAN's role as a strategic thought leader in national development discourse. Complementing this initiative is the PEALS PENGASSAN National Essay Competition for secondary school students, organised annually to promote early intellectual development, stimulate interest in energy and labour issues, encourage

critical thinking, and nurture future leaders aligned with Nigeria's long-term socio-economic and industrial aspirations.

On the national stage, Comrade Osifo has emerged as a leading advocate against crude oil theft, consistently engaging government, security agencies, and industry operators on its devastating impact on national revenue, energy security, jobs, and workers' welfare. His interventions have elevated PENGASSAN's standing as a union that links labour advocacy with national economic stability and accountability.

He has also maintained a firm stance on insecurity and economic instability, repeatedly calling for decisive government action while underscoring the direct relationship between national security, workers' welfare, and productivity. Internally, his administration has reinforced discipline, constitutional order, and respect for union structures, confronting anti-union activities and strengthening institutional integrity. Beyond negotiations and policy advocacy, Comrade Festus Osifo remains deeply invested in mentoring and inspiring a new generation of labour leaders. Through sustained youth engagement, capacity-building initiatives, and thought leadership, he continues to shape a labour movement that is dynamic, principled, and responsive to evolving workforce realities. His influence now extends beyond Nigeria, contributing to global conversations on workers' rights within extractive industries.

One notable achievement of Comrade (Engr.) Festus Osifo's labour leadership is defined by his principled and consistent advocacy for electoral transparency and democratic accountability in Nigeria. Under his leadership, PENGASSAN took a firm public position in support of the electronic transmission of election results, aligning the Association with the broader labour movement's demand for credible, transparent, and verifiable elections. By linking free and fair elections to good governance, workers' welfare, and national stability, Osifo reinforced labour's role



not just as an industrial pressure group but as a moral and civic force shaping Nigeria's democratic and socio-economic direction.

Further strengthening PENGASSAN's role as a thought leader on long-term worker welfare, Comrade Osifo's administration convened a one-day Summit on the Future of Pensions in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry on 13 November 2025. The high-level engagement brought together regulators, pension fund administrators, industry operators, labour leaders, and policy experts to interrogate emerging risks, regulatory gaps, and sustainability concerns affecting retirement security in the sector. The summit underscored PENGASSAN's proactive commitment to safeguarding

members' post-service livelihoods, advancing pension reforms, and ensuring transparency, accountability, and adequacy in pension administration within an industry characterised by restructuring, divestments, and workforce mobility. Overall, Comrade Festus Osifo stands as a pillar of Nigeria's labour movement, an engineer, reformer, and advocate whose leadership has consolidated PENGASSAN's relevance, credibility, and roles within the industrial relations and energy policy space. His journey affirms the enduring power of solidarity, principled advocacy, institutional memory, and strategic engagement in shaping a fairer and more inclusive oil and gas industry.

# THE MULTIFACETED CHALLENGES FACING NIGERIA'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY

.....OSIFO EXECUTIVE SUITES

*Comrade Engineer Festus Osifo, President of Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), who doubles as President of Trade Union Congress (TUC), in this interview, speaks on the Multifaceted Challenges Facing Nigeria's Oil And Gas Industry. Excerpts:*



**H**ow can PENGASSAN ensure that checks and balances remain strong and responsive to fighting for the rights of members, especially now that a lot of International Oil and Gas companies are divesting from onshore and shallow waters of the Nigerian oil and Gas Industry?

Accountability is a basic principle of good governance. We are redefining our approach with International Oil and Gas companies, including governments, and the private sector, to become less bureaucratic and more agile, effective and efficient

The recent National Executive Council (NEC) Meeting of the Association sharpened the Association's vision and strategic direction to meet the pressing

demands of today and tomorrow.

In working to be a better Association that strives for speed and efficiency, accountability must take centre stage and underpin everything we do.

As you may be aware, a lot of International Oil and Gas companies are divesting from the onshore and shallow waters of the Nigerian oil and Gas Industry.

The divestment brought about some opportunities for the indigenous companies and inherent challenges for the employees and members of the Association in the affected companies.

The major task that was before PENGASSAN leadership was how to protect the jobs of our members and the existing collective bargaining

agreement, as most of the new companies do not have an existing PENGASSAN branch.

We have since concluded negotiations with Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and successfully signed an agreement between Nigeria Agip Oil Company (NAOC) and Oando Energy Limited. This agreement met the two criteria of protecting the jobs of all our members and protecting the conditions of service in the collective bargaining agreement.

For the divestment of Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited JV Assets to Seplat Energy Offshores Limited, we just concluded negotiations and signed an agreement with Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited and Seplat Energy

Offshores Limited on how our members will be transitioned and again the two broad line criteria were met.

We have also reached a landing on the divestment of Equinor to Chappal Energy. We are currently reviewing the communique for a sign-off, and this should be concluded in the coming days.

For the divestment of Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) JV assets to the Renaissance consortium, we have to stop all conversations with the management of Shell Companies in Nigeria because the government declined approval for the sales.

Are you saying that the Association's negotiations with different management across all sub-sectoral levels are negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement for members?

Yes, the leadership of the Association across all levels has been engaging different management across all sub-sectoral levels in negotiating a new collective bargaining agreement. A lot of successes have been achieved in this regard, as this is the most viable way the Association has strategically devised to help its members navigate through the current economic challenges.

We have been able to secure a cumulative increase of 150% to over 200% increment for our members in some branches.

**Please, tell us some of the challenges of the oil and gas industry?**

We are all aware of the critical importance of our sector, not just in Nigeria but in the world.

The oil and gas industry has long been the beacon of our economy, providing jobs, infrastructure, and resources that have fueled our development.

However, the sector faces immense challenges that threaten not only its sustainability but also the prosperity of

our nation and the welfare of its citizens.

We also agree that the challenges facing Nigeria's oil and gas industry are multifaceted and deeply intertwined with our social, economic, and environmental fabric.

However, we can turn these challenges into opportunities through a commitment to transparency, inclusivity, and innovation. With our collective responsibility, government, industry, you, and I, we can fight for a sustainable future where our natural resources benefit every Nigerian.

How is PENGASSAN protecting all oil and gas-bearing communities?

As experts and workers in the sector, we stand at the forefront to speak on the state of some oil and gas host communities regarding environmental degradation, lack of infrastructure, and general development.

We believe that harnessing Nigeria's environmental protection regulations in the oil and gas industry to benefit host communities requires a multifaceted approach focusing on regulatory enforcement, community engagement, and proactive Environmental Management and Legal Framework Enhancement.

The goal is to ensure that regulations translate into tangible improvements in the lives and environment of those communities most impacted by oil and gas operations and end youth restiveness and communal conflicts that arise from these problems.

We hereby call for a 100% implementation of the provision of host communities in the Petroleum Industry Act, as this will go a long way in bringing stability and development to the affected communities.

**How do you see the ongoing tax reform by the Federal Government?**

The Association is aware of the

*The goal is to ensure that regulations translate into tangible improvements in the lives and environment of those communities most impacted by oil and gas operations and end youth restiveness and communal conflicts that arise from these problems.*

ongoing tax reforms and wishes to demand that the tax relief exemptions that are given to those earning minimum wage and businesses should be expanded to accommodate more people and companies in that category.

We are of the view that clarity must be provided regarding revenue collection processes from oil and gas companies, as some provisions in the bill have the likelihood of negatively impacting our members in some of our major branches, like the Nigeria Upstream Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) and the Nigeria Mid and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA).

We shall be participating actively in the public hearing, where our position will be well articulated. We hereby call on the National Assembly to conduct a proper public hearing session where different views will be collated to amend the provisions in the bill, and not just to tick the box.

**What is your position on ways to address the food crisis in Nigeria?**

We stand at a critical juncture in Nigeria, a nation blessed with fertile land and a vibrant population, but it faces a looming food crisis of immense proportions.

And this is not just a prediction; it is a reality unfolding before our eyes, impacting the lives of millions and threatening the very fabric of our society.

The Cadre Harmonisé Report for October 2024 has recently projected that at least 33.1 million people in 26 states and the FCT will face a food and nutrition crisis between June and August 2025.

The consequences are stark and

disastrous and should not be left unattended.

PENGASSAN demands that, to address the looming food crisis, the Nigerian government must take measures to support both commercial and smallholder farmers, who are the backbone of the food system.

These measures should include providing access to credit, improved seeds, fertilisers, and technology, strengthening farmer cooperatives and providing market linkages to ensure fair prices for their produce. Additionally, the government must enhance infrastructure by investing in better roads, storage facilities, and irrigation systems to reduce post-harvest losses and ensure efficient food distribution.

The government must provide a secure environment that will enable farmers who have abandoned their farms to return.

#### **How do you see the tragic tale of our power sector?**

We are worried that Nigeria's continuous decline in power generation and transmission is profoundly disappointing and a significant cause of the terrible quality of life and the economic downturn we are experiencing.

Every Nigerian knows and feels the consequences of our poor power supply and deteriorating energy sector.

One would have expected an improvement in power supply with the increase in tariffs, but with dismay, we have witnessed the national grid collapse over 6 times this year alone. It is the worst frequency in our country's history. Are we making progress or regression? We cannot continue like this!

As a union, we advocate decentralising power transmission and involving state governments and private sector players. A good example is what we have in Abia state where a private sector-led initiative has helped in

*Secondly, I think it is important that the Nigerian government, in particular, carry out serious reforms that can help bring about economic stability.*

providing constant power to some sections of the state.

#### **How can Nigeria's government improve its economic policies?**

One of the reforms that we really want to see happening is that there must be information-sharing with the stakeholders, especially civil society organisations working on financial management issues.

Many times our countries do come to the IMF, World Bank and collect loans, including the parliament in those countries; they would just simply approve a loan request without knowing the details, and even when the loans are given, they do not have an idea on what implementation of those loans are. And therefore, you know, the citizens are left without knowledge of what those debts are used for.

Secondly, I think it is important that the Nigerian government, in particular, carry out serious reforms that can help bring about economic stability.

Many of the economic indices that we have in Nigeria and Africa at large do not suggest any positive outlook. For example, as a result of corruption in the economic sector, we are having a lot of backsliding in economic progress.

A lot of factories and manufacturers are closing down, the government is not able to collect the necessary revenue from multinational corporations and some wealthy men and women in Nigeria, in particular.

For example, recently, we conducted research and we discovered that almost 90 per cent of the rich men and women in Nigeria are not paying taxes, and for the government to be able to have development financing, you need to collect the appropriate taxation.

Again, property taxation is not imposed in Nigeria. If the government wants money, it needs to look at those areas that can bring in revenue to the country, and more importantly, also make those revenues judiciously used, and utilise them in a manner that will help address the lingering poverty that Nigeria and Nigerians are faced with.

To also have better economic reforms in the country, we need to look at how the country runs its financial system. We need to carry out a serious reform in the banking industry in Nigeria, because our banks are allegedly being used for money laundering, for illicit financial flow, and there's no way you can use the financial sector in a country like Nigeria to be doing terrorism financing, and then you want to have peace and stability in the country.

So, there are several radical reforms that we expected the government to carry out, which include reforms and strict oversight and regulation enforcement on our financial institutions in Nigeria, and we are not seeing that much happening again.

Nigeria must stop this reckless borrowing, because you have a lot of resources that it can use. For example, the multinational corporation they are refusing to pay the necessary tax you know they are supposed to give to the Nigerian government. We need to make sure that we collect those taxes and utilise them for the good of Nigeria.

We also observed and noted that, because of corruption, infrastructural dilapidation had risen to the level that the social sector, like health, educational sector and other physical infrastructure, have all gone down-courtesy of corruption; because when the resources are allocated to handle those areas, they are either diverted or wasted or even completely stolen. We cannot actually make economic progress when looting and stealing, a misapplication of public tax money at the centre of the scene.

So, it is important that the IMF and

World Bank democratise information and ensure that they create opportunities for interaction.

I must also confess that, as a result of our protest on how loans are collected and misapplied in Nigeria. During the COVID-19 Nigeria approached the IMF and World Bank with a request of \$3.4 billion, and we wrote to the IMF to say that, look, there must be an accountability mechanism in the use of this money. And the IMF and World Bank said that, okay, we will ensure that even though Nigeria is a sovereign country, we will ensure that we have some clauses that will enable the government to be at least transparent to its people.

**Could you please suggest some policies to the Federal Government that would make investing in enterprises and decent work opportunities possible in the short run?**

Investment and employment in Nigeria are constrained by the high cost of, and difficulty of accessing credit, problems in securing property rights and enforcing contracts, weak energy, transport and communications infrastructure, delays in the registration of businesses, a lack of transparency in the regulatory process and deficiencies in education and skills of the labour force.

Nigeria has made tremendous policy efforts to establish conditions for higher growth, in terms of a better-regulated financial environment, policy reforms to attract investment and development assistance, and improving the competitive environment to raise productivity and decent working conditions.

Nevertheless, the bulk of Nigerian enterprises, many of which are operated by women, remain trapped in the informal economy, yielding owners and workers little more than survival-level incomes and inhibiting the exercise of their rights under labour laws and contracts.

Nigeria needs a strategy for sustainable enterprise development and decent

work. The strategy should include the creation of an enabling environment, measures to improve the investment climate, macroeconomic stability, respect for workers' rights, and good governance.

Particular attention should be given to policies that promote MSMEs and women's participation and entrepreneurship.

The Government needs to support the MSMEs more because of the important role the MSMEs can play in employment generation and in the upgrading of working conditions.

**How do you see investing in youth in transforming Africa with your quest for 'Africa Solution to Africa Problems'?**

The urgency of our quest for 'Africa Solution to African Problems' today is because we are optimistic that Africa's future growth trajectory is ready to take off, and this leap can be led by a generation of young people able to realise their full potential and transform their communities and nations.

There is an urgent need for timely investments in the education and health of African countries, as the population of African countries can increase productivity, spur job creation, create a demographic dividend, and unlock the enormous economic potential of the region

The urgency of investing today comes from a unique moment in Africa's demographic history, countered by fiscal pressures and the huge needs of the African people.

It will require a strong country and regional commitment to the development of human capital because by 2075, one-third of the world's population—and of the working-age population will be African.

It is the only region where the workforce will grow continuously in the coming decades.

This gives Africa an enormous opportunity to drive economic growth and prosperity through investments in

education, skills, and health.

Our clarion call is that Africa's Heads of State need to accelerate human capital accumulation, leverage the youth bulge, and create jobs to propel economic growth

This is because young people on the continent have aspirations, energy, and ambition. This is the most connected generation of Africans in history, one that can turn the trajectory of their continent.

The growing working-age population presents an enormous opportunity to super-charge economic growth and lead to greater prosperity for billions of people on the continent.

The population of young people aged 15-24 in Africa is projected to reach 500 million in 2080.

The working age population of 25-64 will only peak after 2100 at about 1.5 billion people. If the people are healthy, educated, and skilled, this projected working-age population can be the long-awaited big push to accelerate the region's economic growth.

Africa is battling a learning crisis. Millions of children are out of school and most of those in school are falling behind on key learning indicators: reading, writing, and basic math.

The percentage of 10-year-olds unable to understand a simple text is projected to be approaching 89% after the COVID pandemic.

The current education system is at capacity, and the demand will only increase.

Africa will represent over 40% of the school-age population in low- and middle-income countries by 2050.

The population growth presents significant fiscal pressure on governments, including public service delivery, early childhood development interventions, and sustained investment in accessible and quality education for all, especially for women and girls

## HOLDING THE LINE: LUMUMBA OKUGBAWA ON LEADERSHIP, LEGACY AND LIFE AFTER PENGASSAN

*Comrade Lumumba Okugbawa, the immediate past General Secretary of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), reflects on nearly three decades of service to Nigeria's Oil and Gas worker, the crises that tested the union, and the personal cost of leadership. Now stepping aside after eight years as General Secretary and more than 23 years within the Association, Okugbawa speaks with the calm confidence of a man who believes he has left the institution stronger than he met it.*



sides, and I was able to keep them together.”

Having served almost 14 years as Deputy General Secretary before becoming General Secretary, Okugbawa said his approach was rooted in rules and respect for constituted authority.

“PENGASSAN is very democratic compared to many unions,” he said. “But democracy doesn't mean lawlessness. You must come with facts and figures.”

**What does “service to workers” mean to you personally?**

For Okugbawa, service goes beyond popularity. “You don't just tell people what they want to hear,” he said. “Sometimes you retreat, sometimes you recalibrate. Our main job is to protect jobs first before even talking about improving conditions of service.”

**What achievement gives you the deepest sense of fulfilment as you retire?**

As he retires, Okugbawa says his deepest sense of fulfilment comes from mentorship.

“When I joined PENGASSAN, I was among the youngest members of the Central Working Committee,” he said. “Now I'm leaving as one of the

**W**hy are you called sweetlummy?

Long before boardrooms and bargaining tables, Okugbawa's story began on a basketball court in Warri, in the former Bendel State.

“I grew up around the basketball court,” he said with a smile. “That's how I got the nickname Sweetlummy.”

As a schoolboy, he represented his school in basketball before advancing

academically to the University of Ibadan. Early exposure to teamwork and discipline, he says, later shaped his approach to leadership.

Looking back, what moments in your union journey define your legacy the most?

Com. Okugbawa pointed not to a public victory but to a quiet crisis that nearly tore the union apart.

“There was a time when internal wrangling almost split PENGASSAN into two,” he recalled. “I knew both

oldest. That irony tells you I've seen generations rise."

**If you were to describe your career in one guiding word or principle, what would it be?**

Leadership, he noted, is never personal.

"Workers are different. You can't expect everyone to agree with you," he said. "Some act out of lack of information. They are human beings, and it's your job to communicate effectively and motivate them."

Navigating Policy Shifts in Nigeria's Energy Sector.

Reflecting on decades of change in Nigeria's Oil and Gas sector, Okugbawa described the journey as challenging but necessary.

"Government policies will come and go," he said. "But the advantage we have now is democracy. Trade unionism thrives best under democracy."

He contrasted this with the experiences of predecessors who served under military regimes, emphasising the importance of free expression and advocacy.

What personal values anchored your decisions throughout your years of service?

If he were to describe his career in one word, Okugbawa said it would be faith.

"You must give glory to God. Through all the turbulence, it has not been easy."

**How did your upbringing or early experiences shape your approach to labour leadership?**

Integrity and transparency, he said, guided him throughout his tenure, though he was quick to clarify.

"Transparency doesn't mean exposing everything you know," he said. "At senior levels, there are confidential matters you must protect."

He added, "I can work without looking over my shoulder. I have never stabbed anyone in the back."

**What was the toughest decision you ever had to make as the General**

**Secretary of PENGASSAN?**

Despite numerous challenges, quitting was never an option.

"Winners never quit, and quitters never win," Okugbawa said. "You confront challenges. If you resolve them, it's good for the union."

His recently launched book, *Holding the Line*, he explained, reflects that philosophy. "You are in the background, holding things together," he said. "I am happy to be leaving on a high note."

**How did you manage the emotional weight of leading during crises or industrial disputes?**

Recalling moments of crisis, Okugbawa cited an incident where an official attempted to inflate a delegate's list.

"I told him, 'This will not fly,'" he said. "If it went to court and failed, they would ask whether you advised properly."

He noted with pride that none of the union's cases were overturned in court during his tenure. "If you are not eligible, I will tell you whether you are my friend or not."

**What is one change you fought for that you believe will outlive you?**

Gender Inclusion in PENGASSAN

One reform he believes will outlive him is improved women's participation in the union.

"We encouraged women to come in, and it has improved a lot," he said. "Certain positions should remain permanent for women. They help diffuse tensions when things get heated."

**How did you bridge the gap between leadership intentions and members' expectations?**

**Bridging Leadership and Members' Expectations?**

For Okugbawa, the answer is simple: the constitution.

"Everything is in black and white," he said. "If anyone goes outside the constitution, you call them to order."

**How did your position as the General Secretary affect your personal life, family, health, or relationships?**

The role, he admitted, took a toll on his personal life.

"Of course it affects your family," he said. "You watch your children grow when you are not there. You have to balance everything."

The biggest sacrifice, he said, was time. "This is a thankless job," he added. "If you negotiate 40 per cent, they ask why not 80. If you get 90, they ask why not 95. But if you didn't cheat anyone, your head should be above your shoulders."

**What are you looking forward to in retirement?**

Life After PENGASSAN

Looking ahead, Okugbawa describes retirement as a new beginning.

"As I moved from primary school to secondary school, then to university, I have now graduated from PENGASSAN," he said. "The future is there."

**If you had one message to leave with the Association, what would it be?**

Final Words to PENGASSAN

His parting message was clear and resolute.

"PENGASSAN must remain strong," he said. "Fight for your members, and the society at large. Protect the industry."

He warned that without a strong union, Nigeria's Oil and Gas sector, which accounts for about 80 per cent of foreign earnings, could have collapsed.

"If PENGASSAN was selfish or weak, the industry would have nosedived," he said, pointing to advocacy against vandalism and oil theft as key examples.

As he steps away, Okugbawa leaves behind a simple credo: leadership is not about applause, but about holding the line.



## DIVESTMENT DOES NOT AFFECT OUR MEMBERS, SAYS OSIFO

*President of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Festus Osifo, in an interview, speaks on the state of refineries and divestments as they impact workers, as well as the union's stance on the tax reform bills currently pending before the National Assembly.*

**W**hat is the state of the refineries and the effects of the exchange rate on the pricing of petroleum products?

We state unequivocally that the old Port Harcourt Refinery is functional, and the Warri Refinery is also functional as of today. These refineries are working, although not to the full installed capacity yet. I would also confirm that there is enormous work going on today in the Kaduna Refinery as well as the new Port Harcourt Refinery. In terms of the pricing, we stated repeatedly that the real challenge that we are facing as a country is mainly about our exchange rate. The price of PMS is high today because the exchange rate is high. The exchange rate has affected the price of literally everything. We have said that if the exchange rate is less than

N1,000 to a dollar, we will be buying PMS for as low as N500 to N600 per litre. In the same way, we will be buying AGO slightly above the price of PMS, and the same for kerosene. So, the reason everything is high today is because of the weakness of the naira. As trade unions, both on the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC) and PENGASSAN, we have been advocating the need for our forex to be properly managed. In terms of value addition of the refineries, we have said that a lot of jobs will be created. When the Port Harcourt Refinery was working, we had close to 2,000 people working there. But today, when you go there, the number of staff and support staff that are there has drastically reduced, and some have been transferred to other SBUs within the NNPC. The same thing in Warri Refinery and also

the Kaduna Refinery. **Regarding the divestment issue, have the affected workers received their benefits? If not, what measures is PENGASSAN taking to ensure that they receive their entitlements?**

During our last NEC meeting in December, we came up with strategies to ensure that none of our members lose their jobs as a result of divestment. I want to announce that by the grace of God, today, none of our members has lost his/her job as a result of divestment. Just as a guarantee, we have transitioned from a Nigerian oil company to Oando Energy Resources Limited with zero loss to membership. We just transitioned from Mobile Producing Nigeria Unlimited to Seplat Energy Producing Nigeria Unlimited with zero-loss jobs. The condition of

service was 100 per cent protected. I want to announce to you that there are none of our members today that is earning less than what they were earning before now as a result of divestment. So, it is an achievement that we are extremely proud of. For the divestment of SPDC, the conversation is ongoing, and we also assure that no member against his position will lose his or her job, and the remuneration will equally be enhanced further.

**What is the union's stance on the proposed tax reform bills?**

Our position is very clear. I am going to tie this to the Value Added Tax (VAT) and the expansion of tax. We welcome the reform in our tax administration system. But there are some key provisions in the bills that might be inimical to the growth of Nigeria and the economy. One, we looked at the issue of increasing the VAT. Increasing the VAT is going to impoverish Nigerians much more. When I talk about us getting an expanded revenue base by harnessing our material and mineral resources, not increasing VAT, because today, if the VAT is increased, it is passed back to Nigerians. We are the ones who will pay for it. So, what we are advocating is that instead of increasing VAT, the government should bring more people into the net. People who are paying taxes today in Nigeria are less than 10 to 15 per cent of those who should pay. What that means is that if you expand that to about 80 per cent, you are going to generate much more revenue.

But increasing the rate is going to impoverish Nigerians much more. Another thing that we also looked at in the proposed bills is the proposal to the Federal Inland Revenue Services (FIRS) with the Nigerian Revenue Service that will be saddled with collecting revenue across boated. On how it affects us, for example, is NUPRC, they are responsible for calculating royalties. They are the ones that are responsible for looking at the profit margin and all that, and this, in the end, is paid not to the NUPRC account; it is paid to the government's

account. But NUPRC has been saddled with this responsibility. So, our challenge today is that if you move that function to the Nigerian Revenue Service, where would they get the requisite experience to collect that specialised tax effectively? Are they going to have the requisite expertise to be able to administer this? Will they now be going from one field location to another to be able to look at what the companies are declaring vis-à-vis production? How will service now reconcile with other functions that are domiciled in the NUPRC? So, we could see that Nigeria as a country might be shortchanged when we go in that direction. So, all these are the things that we have highlighted in the proposed bills. Again, if an establishment like TETFund is yanked off, that will affect the quantity of money that is available to the tertiary institutions and that can affect the quality of education. These are all the issues that we have highlighted. These are the issues that we are going to canvass, and we are currently canvassing. We are not even waiting for the public hearing. We have started engagement. In the next few days, we are going to meet with those in authority as well on this subject. We are putting up some presentations together to engage them further before we get to the public hearing stage.

**What is your take on the persistent national grid collapse?**

We are estimated at 210 million Nigerians, and we believe strongly that we have competent and knowledgeable Nigerians. You could see what happened in Geometrics in Aba. It was a private initiative supported by the state government and we see the revolution that happened. We are quite happy that today, the government has decentralised power generation. It is very good as we have been calling for that for ages. If you look at the speeches of my predecessors, we have been calling for the decentralisation of the power grid system. Today, that is a work in progress. However, we think that we can do better than what we

have today as a country. Have you ever seen a situation where you have an engineer as the Minister of Health? Have you ever seen a situation where we have a medical doctor as Attorney-General of the Federation? Power generation is a technical job. We could see when somebody like Prof. Berth Nnaji was the Minister of Power, we saw the difference that came within that period. So, what we are saying is that you must put round pegs in round holes and square pegs in square holes. It is a general principle. So, the reason for the grid collapse is not our responsibility. It is the government that should fulfil its responsibility. Whether it is because of an upsurge in generation, because of a lower generation, as a result of a trip to one of the stations, or as a result of tests. It is the responsibility of the government to find solutions. That is why they are in government.

**What capacity of oil production do you believe the country should strive for to meet its economic expectations?**

We have said that Nigeria is a country that has about 37 billion barrels of global oil reserves. Today, the country is producing less than two million barrels per day. If we continue in this way, when you divide 37 billion by two million, we are going to see that over the next 50 years, we will still be producing. But we will only have those 50 years. So, what we are advocating is that as a country, we must expand our production base. We have the capacity as a country to be doing nothing less than four million barrels of crude production per day, and that is the direction that the government must embark upon. That is the direction that we must continuously find ways to achieve because it will not just give us more revenue, it will also create a lot of jobs and increase our GDP as a country.

## Probe shutdown of refineries, PENGASSAN tells govt ..... laments the absence of CNG infrastructure



**T**he Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN) has called for an investigation into why the Port Harcourt and Warri refineries were shut down a few months after they resumed operation.

President of the union, Festus Osifo, while speaking at a joint briefing by the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) on the sidelines of the just-concluded International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, also defended the continued engagement of workers in the refineries despite the parlous state of the facilities.

Against popular belief that workers in comatose Port Harcourt, Warri and Kaduna refineries are redundant, collecting salaries, emoluments and benefits without doing any work, Osifo has leapt to the defence of the staffers.

Explaining that it is wrong to assume that the workers in the refineries can function only at the refineries. He added that the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) has about 12 Strategic Business Units (SBUs) where the workers can be deployed when the

refineries are shut in.

Osifo explained, "Is it the fault of the workers that the refineries are not working? It is the workers' responsibility to go to work, but it is the employer's responsibility to provide the tools with which they will work. 12 SBUs in the NNPCL offer different roles and functions. The refineries are just one of the SBUs. Over the years, whenever the refineries were not working, 90 per cent of the refineries' staff were transferred to other SBUs, which is referred to as 'minimum manning'."

Osifo, who is a petroleum engineer by training, went on a lecture tour, saying that refineries, even in their worst state, still needed to be maintained over the years to retain some level of serviceability, making them repairable. He said, "Engineering has its processes. The reason the refineries can be revived is that engineers were on the ground executing the basic maintenance. Then again, there is routine maintenance in all engineering processes. So, to think that the refineries not working is tantamount to workers being idle is to display the highest level of ignorance." The PENGASSAN chief also

disclosed that the reason for the closure of the refineries is unknown to the union. Despite the fanfare that heralded the introduction of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as a fuel option for Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), the near absence of key infrastructure needed for effective distribution has frustrated the initiative.

President of NLC, Joe Ajaero, at the joint briefing, lamented the economic hardship brought upon workers as a result of the removal of the subsidy on petrol and the absence of an alternative that CNG was touted to be.

Osifo said, "Certain developments that happened have brought us to where we are today. From the standpoint of the labour movement, when the government removed the fuel subsidy, we decided to support the adoption of CNG as a policy option. But more than one year later, only a few stations are in the country. Lagos and Abuja are reputed to have a few stations.

## OKUGBAWA SERVED 8 PRESIDENTS TO RESHAPEN PENGASSAN TO ENVIABLE HEIGHT – OSIFO



*Comrade Nuhu Toro, TUC Secretary General (left); Comrade Festus Osifo, President of TUC (second left); Comrade Lumumba Okugbawa, immediate past General Secretary of PENGASSAN (middle); Mrs Charity Okugbawa, wife (second right), and David Owan, National Treasurer of PENGASSAN, during the retirement dinner/launch of the book of Comrade Lumumba Okugbawa at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja on Thursday.*

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) President, Comrade Engineer Festus Osifo, has implored members of the association to take bold and decisive action to empower themselves for the future of work, expressing deep concern that Comrade Lumumba Ighotemu Okugbawa, worked with eight presidents of PENGASSAN to reshape the association to its current enviable height.

Osifo, who is also the President of the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC), and chief host at the retirement dinner and book launch of the retired General Secretary of the association, Comrade Okugbawa, popularly called 'Sweet Lummy', emphasised the enduring role of unions in advocating for workers' welfare.

He said: "Being the longest serving Central Working Committee (CWC) member in the history of the Association, Comrade Lumumba Okugbawa, worked with 8 presidents as General Secretary and retired today after 25 years of service in the association: from Comrades Shina Luwoye, Brown Ogbeifun, U.M Okoro (of blessed memory), Peter Esele, Babatunde Ogun, Francis

Olabode Johnson (of blessed memory), Ndukaku Michael Ohaeri, and of course, Festus Osifo, my humble self to reshape our association to its enviable height we are today"

According to him, Comrade Okugbawa, as General Secretary, was always at the forefront of ensuring that the union's biggest successes remain its ability to navigate the wave of industry divestments without mass layoffs, an outcome he described as "a major victory" considering the turbulence that has followed oil asset transfers nationwide.

Okugbawa, at 60 years, worked with the past President to shape how PENGASSAN's winning team: "an injury to one, is an injury to all" to put the Association's advocacy in the service of working people that puts members' welfare and security at the heart of everything we do."

While post-divestment issues persist in some companies, he affirmed that union with Comrade Okugbawa's engagement as the then General Secretary helped prevent widespread job losses and stabilise affected branches.

He also highlighted the signing of numerous new Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) across the International Oil Companies (IOCs),

government agencies, service companies, and the marketing sector. These agreements, he said, with comrade Okugbawa, significantly improved wages and working conditions and brought "smiles to the faces of our members."

He further reaffirmed the need to empower members with the skills needed to thrive in a rapidly changing labour market and ensure resilience and adaptability across the workforce. He reasserted his commitment to advancing economic opportunities for members because "if they see ladders of opportunity, they will climb, innovate and foster prosperity for our collective future."

He noted that PENGASSAN remains committed to defending workers' jobs and pushing for improved welfare across the oil and gas value chain.

Comrade Osifo and his family, however, as the chief host, launched the Book: "Holding The Line: The Reminiscences of a Trade Union Administrator"- a short story of historical narrative of Comrade Lumumba Ighotemu Okugbawa, while all oil and gas companies, TUC Secretary General, Comrade Nuhu Toro, and all branch members of PENGASSAN launched the book

In his response, Comrade Okugbawa

thanked the Association for giving him the opportunity to be part of the team that transformed the Association to its enviable height.

He said: "When I was appointed General Secretary in 2017, I learnt that union politics could consume those unprepared for its internal factionalism. Some of my predecessors faltered; others survived by mastering the rules of the game. I crucially observed that the Union President's support was indispensable: without alignment between the political face and the administrative engine, governance can break down".

"To temper factional conflict, I championed training across the NEC and CWC, while also pushing for institutional reforms such as supporting the creation of a permanent women's chair on the CWC to improve and guarantee women's representation.

I was prepared for the realities of labour politics, late-night meetings that stretched into the early hours of the morning, symbolic disputes that escalated into broader conflicts, and the constant need for preparation and engagement, and I mastered the game for my survival as General Secretary of our great association, PENGASSAN, till today of my retirement"

...Names Amah, Acting General Secretary

The PENGASSAN President announced the appointment of Comrade Jerry Amah as Acting General Secretary

Amah, who emerged as the acting scribe at the Union's NEC, succeeds Comrade Lumumba Okugbawa, who retires after 25 years in the service of the union.

Formally, Deputy General Secretary, Amah, holds a BSc, Masters of Science degree in Mass Communication/Media Studies at the University of Lagos

He was a one-time Director of Marketing, Communications, Public Relations and Protocols at Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria.

The President of the union congratulated Amah on his appointment as the acting scribe of the

Union. He charged him to rededicate his efforts in advancing the ideals of PENGASSAN and workers in the nation's Oil and Gas sector.

Meanwhile, Osifo said the NEC meeting examined all major developments in the industry since the first NEC session of the year, noting both progress and persistent challenges affecting PENGASSAN members across various branches.

"The NEC resolved to continue to pursue dialogue with management and engage all social partners and stakeholders to ensure these matters are concluded. We hope these issues are resolved at the negotiation table, because we do not want to return to an era of avoidable industrial crises," he added.

He reaffirmed that PENGASSAN remains committed to defending workers' jobs and pushing for improved welfare across the oil and gas value chain.

The President also called on the government at all levels to do everything possible to ensure that the prices of commodities in the market are under control.

Osifo added that economic achievements will remain meaningless to citizens unless policies translate into lower food prices and improved living standards.

"People want food on their tables, not just macroeconomic figures," he said, urging authorities to align fiscal and monetary strategies to ensure real relief for households.

He added, "Today, yes, the inflation, we are still in numbers, they are coming down. But in the market, the prices are not coming down. When you go to the market with the sum of 100,000 Naira, what you will bring out is almost less than nothing.

"The government, from the federal to the state and to the local government, must do everything possible to ensure that the prices of commodities in the market are under control.

"They must ensure that farmers can return to farms. Because it is when farmers go back to farms that they will be able to produce those food crops that could come to the market.

He also expressed deep concern over

the rising insecurity across the country, urging the government to move beyond issuing statements of condemnation.

"We are tired of condemnations. The government must expose those sponsoring insecurity and protect citizens," he said.

He backed calls for the establishment of state police, arguing that decentralised policing would strengthen community safety and help farmers return to their fields.

Osifo stressed that food inflation will persist if rural communities remain under threat

He warned that the sharp devaluation of the naira, coupled with super-inflation, is pushing oil and gas professionals toward mass emigration.

"In this industry, our skills are globally competitive," Osifo said.

"A drilling engineer in Nigeria is as qualified as one in the U.S. or Abu Dhabi. It takes only a snap of the finger for our members to leave the country if conditions worsen."

The President stressed that unless companies adjust remuneration to reflect the current economic reality, Nigeria risks experiencing "a brain drain far worse than what other sectors are witnessing."

Osifo further disclosed that the NEC reviewed the ongoing crisis at some refineries and chemical plants, including unresolved labour issues at certain privately owned facilities. While dialogue continues, he warned that the union would not hesitate to escalate actions if matters remain unresolved.

"PENGASSAN does not shy away from doing what is right," he said. "Our preference is negotiation, but we will defend our members' rights with every legal tool available."

Osifo expressed deep concern over worsening violence across Nigeria, lamenting the nationwide impact on workers, families, and businesses

## PENGASSAN HONOUR LATE PRESIDENT 20 YEARS AFTER SOSOLISO TRAGEDY



**T**he Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria paid tribute to one of Nigeria's influential labour leaders, Uche Okoro, 20 years after the Sosoliso plane crash claimed his life.

The remembrance, held at the Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, brought together union leaders, former presidents, regulators, and stakeholders to honour Okoro's remarkable contributions to the welfare of oil and gas workers and the broader Nigerian labour movement.

Speaking at the event, PENGASSAN President Festus Osifo described the gathering as both a celebration and a reaffirmation of the union's enduring values.

"We are gathered to remember his immense contributions to the labour movement, his dedication, and the sacrifices he made to advance workers' welfare in the oil and gas industry and Nigeria at large.

"Remembering him after 20 years is our way of saying 'thank you,' and reassuring his family that PENGASSAN stands by its leaders, not only when they are alive, but even after they are gone," Osifo said.

Osifo emphasised that the union's achievements in the oil and gas sector are products of firm and principled leadership, not government benevolence or employer generosity.

"What workers enjoy today is because PENGASSAN has remained firm, principled, and courageous over the years. Leadership is transient; what matters is service, lifting people from poverty, ensuring quality healthcare, functional education, food security, and basic infrastructure," he said.

He also highlighted the union's ongoing advocacy for Collective Bargaining Agreements, stressing that these arrangements have been central to securing fair compensation for oil and gas workers.

"Minimum wage is only the floor, not the destination. Every sector must negotiate conditions of service that reflect the skill and experience of its workforce. We are ready to export our expertise through the Trade Union Congress to other unions," Osifo added.

A former PENGASSAN President, Peter Esele, spoke emotionally about his personal connection to the union and the enduring impact of selfless

leadership.

"PENGASSAN does not owe me anything; for the rest of my life, I owe PENGASSAN. This gathering is not about mourning; it is about celebrating the sacrifices of our past leaders and reminding all Nigerian leaders that service, simplicity, and love define true leadership.

"Without a legacy, nobody remembers you. When you serve well, you leave behind a legacy that people will always remember and refer to," Esele said.

He urged political and corporate leaders alike to focus on service to citizens and workers, stressing that wealth or power alone does not secure a lasting memory.

"Leadership is about service. When you truly serve, you find fulfilment. Your family, your community, and the nation remember you," he said.

The Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission also paid homage to Okoro in a statement signed by the commission's Head of Media and Strategic Communication, Eniola Akinkuotu.

"Comrade Uche Marcos Okoro remains the only person to have led both PENGASSAN and the Nigeria

Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers, a testament to his sterling leadership qualities.

“PENGASSAN christened its national headquarters 'U.M Okoro House' in his honour. His dedication and doggedness in championing the rights of oil workers continue to inspire the sector,” the NUPRC said.

The commission reaffirmed its commitment to staff welfare and development while extending condolences to the family of the late unionist.

“We pray that God Almighty continues to strengthen the wife and children he left behind,” the statement concluded.

The event underscored that true leadership is measured not by wealth or position but by service and sacrifice for others. Both PENGASSAN and NUPRC urged Nigeria's political class to emulate Okoro's example, prioritising citizens' welfare over personal enrichment.

“Leadership is transient, but service leaves a lasting mark. Comrade Okoro's life reminds us that selfless dedication builds a legacy that endures,” Osifo said.

The 20th anniversary commemoration was marked by reflection, celebration, and moral exhortation, sending a clear message that principled leadership and

collective action remain central to Nigeria's labour and governance landscape.

On December 10, 2005, a Sosoliso Airlines plane flying from Abuja to Port Harcourt in Rivers State, crashed at Port Harcourt International Airport.

The aircraft, with over 110 passengers on board, burst into flames after hitting the ground. Seven passengers who survived the accident, were taken to hospitals, but only two people eventually survived.

## OSIFO LEADS PENGASSAN ON 300% SALARY INCREMENT NEGOTIATION

President of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association (PENGASSAN), Festus Osifo has led the union to conclude Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs) with companies operating in the Oil and Gas industry.

Most of the CBAs that have been concluded led to about 300 per cent increment in the salaries and emoluments of PENGASSAN members across the country.

Osifo said: “Since it began to rise, we have been engaging our employers in CBA negotiations across the board, and there has been a tremendous response. Since 2023, when the process started, we have achieved close to 300 per cent salary increment across the board.

Osifo explained that CBAs are continuous negotiations that are constantly evolving in dynamics that are often dictated by industry atmospherics.

“Where we have not achieved 300 per cent, we have hit about 200 per cent. So, it has been success stories for us in PENGASSAN from one branch to another,” he added.

Osifo has a warning for companies

delaying salary increments amid biting inflation and devaluation of the naira. Osifo said the union would issue a timeline within which they are expected to implement a new wage or face the wrath of PENGASSAN.

Osifo added that while oil workers operate above the N70,000 national minimum wage, they have their thresholds under which no employer in the oil and gas sector is expected to fall.

He said: “For us, it is not just inflation. If you tell an oil and gas management to bridge the inflation, which is about 24 per cent, they will be very happy to implement that. But what we are talking about is over 300 per cent. PENGASSAN is not negotiating based on inflation devaluation alone. Other, more fundamental issues underline our call for better conditions of service.”

Speaking as the President of the Trade Union Congress (TUC), Osifo said he and his team are working towards ensuring that the N70,000 minimum wage is implemented by state governments and other employers that are

historically hesitant.

“But when it comes to TUC, the situation is a bit different. For the 42 affiliates of the TUC, some people are working in traditional civil service institutions. We know and understand the challenges, which is why from time to time, we constantly suggest solutions,” he said.

For the umpteenth time, Osifo reiterated the role devaluation is playing in the skyrocketing inflation.

While the government has accelerated the importation of food, Osifo insisted that the government must do more to alleviate the suffering of the people beyond cheaper food.

Osifo, who sounded reserved and cautious when asked to comment on the two-year scorecard of President Bola Tinubu's administration, described the last two years as a mixed bag of the good, the bad and the ugly, economically and socially.

He said, “It is a mixed bag. We were told before the president emerged that he was a master at solving economic challenges. But today,

two years down the line, Nigerians are still facing a lot of macro and microeconomic challenges. Government functionaries can continue to make presentations and a lot of noise about the gains that have been made. But how has this gain trickled into the price of food in the market? How has this gain trickled into the food that is

on the table of every Nigerian? That is a question that must be answered.”

One policy that excites Osifo is the students' loan scheme, which will help keep indigent students in school.

“On the flip side is the student scheme that the government has introduced. That will be a big relief

to poor parents who have their wards in school. Students from poor backgrounds will no longer worry about where their school fees will come from. Our appeal to the government is to ensure accountability and transparency of the process to prevent corruption creeping into a novel programme,” he stated.

## NNPCL Can Bring PH Refinery Back To Life Within One Week — PENGASSAN



The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has said the old Port Harcourt Refinery is technically ready for operation and could be brought back on stream within one week, but remains idle due to concerns over profitability and operating economics.

The President, Com. (Eng.) Festus Osifo disclosed this while speaking as a guest on Channels Television, noting that although the refinery has been rehabilitated to about 90 per cent, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL) is weighing the cost implications of resuming operations. According to Osifo, from a technical standpoint, the refinery can be restarted almost immediately if management approves the decision. However, he stressed that the key

obstacle is the imbalance between the cost of crude oil input and the value of refined products output.

“As of today, you can start the old Port Harcourt refinery and it will function. You can put it on today and it will function. But NNPC is a commercial entity and has to make a profit. If they decide to start it, within one week it can be brought back to life,” he said.

Osifo explained that under current market conditions, the refinery risks operating at a loss, as the cost of crude oil supplied to the plant may exceed the revenue generated from the sale of refined petroleum products.

“If you feed crude oil worth about five million dollars into the old Port Harcourt refinery, what you are likely to get at the other end when you sell the products may be around 4.5 million dollars. That means you put in five million dollars and get 4.5 million

dollars as output,” he explained.

Despite the delay in restarting operations, the President maintained that the funds committed to the refinery's rehabilitation were not wasted.

He said the exercise significantly upgraded the facility, with major components replaced to improve its overall value and long-term viability.

“The money spent on the Port Harcourt refinery is not a loss. Almost all the compressors, control rooms, and panels were replaced. The contractors did not remove these assets,” Osifo said.

He added that the refinery is now in a far better condition than before the rehabilitation, noting that its asset value has increased substantially.

“If you value the refinery today, it will be much more valuable than the state it was in before the rehabilitation,” he said.

The Port Harcourt Refining Company was reopened in November 2024 following years of inactivity as part of the Federal Government's refinery rehabilitation programme.

However, operations were suspended again in May 2025 due to operational and economic challenges.

## PENGASSAN FAULTS TINUBU'S EXECUTIVE ORDER ON UPSTREAM OIL SECTOR OPERATIONS

....Says fuel dealers are shortchanging Nigerians

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has criticised the recent Executive Order signed by President Bola Tinubu to promote offshore oil and gas production in the country. It said some aspects of the policy will have a restraining impact on the enforcement of the Nigerian Content law.

The new Executive Order, titled "The Upstream Petroleum Operations Cost Efficiency Incentives Order (2025)" introduces performance-based tax incentives for upstream operators who deliver verifiable cost savings that meet defined industry benchmarks.

Festus Osifo, the President of the Association, stated during a press conference in Abuja that the Association's main concern was related to the Executive Order aimed at reducing upstream production costs by granting a 20 per cent tax credit to oil production companies.

In the same vein, the association has accused the producers and dealers of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) of exploitation by refusing to bring down the pump price of fuel in response to a reduction in crude oil prices in the international market.

It blamed the regulatory agencies for abandoning their mandate to protect Nigerians from being shortchanged by profit-seeking oil companies.

Festus Osifo said that tax incentives granted to the oil companies by the President may not guarantee cost reduction unless security challenges are addressed.

He said one of the major cost elements presently driving high production costs in the upstream sector is insecurity and resources committed to the protection of production facilities.

According to the PENGASSAN President, one of the major reasons some oil and gas operators, especially the international oil and gas companies, are leaving Nigeria is principally because of insecurity.

"This is mainly because the cost of

securing facilities, the cost of securing infrastructure in the Nigerian oil and gas industry, has become prohibitive," he said.

"We are saying that this may not be far-reaching. This may not really work because there are some foundational problems, and until these foundational issues are addressed, that cost may not necessarily be reduced.

"For us, the policy is quite commendable, that is quite good. But, in reducing the cost of operations, there are some inherent challenges that, over the years, PENGASSAN has drawn the attention of the government to issues we want it to address squarely. And chief among these issues is the level of insecurity that we have in the oil and gas industry.

"I mean, the insecurity in Nigeria has also dovetailed into the oil and gas industry. One of the challenges that is affecting us today in Nigeria's oil and gas industry is that the cost that the upstream companies spend in protecting their facilities, in protecting their infrastructure, both on land, in sea, shallow waters, deep waters, etc., is quite prohibitive," he said

He said that companies in the upstream sector have to put up with the challenge of securing their production facilities, whereas in other countries, oil companies do not have to bear such a huge financial burden on security bills.

Osifo said that it is the responsibility of the government to provide security and to secure the oil production infrastructure in the country

For instance, Osifo said that for an average installation that is in an offshore location, "you are going to realise that for one installation, you are going to have a minimum of three or four security vessels.

"These security vessels will be manned by Naval personnel. These security vessels, you pay for them daily. You pay for the crew daily as well. You have to fuel them daily. They are standing by and trying as much as possible to ensure that there is no intruder into these facilities. Whereas in other countries, it

is not like that".

He also faulted the aspect of the Executive Order that suggests that the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) could adopt a flexible approach in the enforcement of the provisions of its Act.

He said that "as long as that NCDMB Act is a law, it should be fully obeyed. An executive order cannot override a subsisting act. It is wrong".

On the situation in the downstream petroleum sector in the country, Osifo said that PENGASSAN is sad that Nigerians were being exploited and not allowed to enjoy the full benefit of the deregulation of the sector.

He blamed the management of the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) for failing in its regulatory responsibilities of ensuring compliance to price reduction in line with the dictates of market forces.

He said that whereas crude oil price recently came down to about \$65 per barrel, there was no commensurate reduction in the pump price of PMS by marketers as expected under deregulation.

Against the background of fears of a possible spike in the crude oil price as a result of the ongoing Israeli-Iranian conflict, Osifo said that it is the responsibility of the government and regulators to ensure that prices are not jerked up beyond market considerations.

"It is the function of the regulator to ensure that Nigerians are not exploited. So we have a call called NMDPRA to be neutral in discharging its responsibilities and to ensure that Nigerians are not exploited," he said.

While responding to a question on the Memorandum of Understanding PENGASSAN reached with the Sterling Oil Company over their dispute, Osifo said the company accepted that it violated the Nigerian Content law and gave an undertaking to make amends

## FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD TACKLE FX VOLATILITY - OSIFO

In the past, when the [Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria](#) (PENGASSAN) spoke, the Federal Government listened. This is because of the strategic position of the sector to the economy as the country's main money spinner.

At the NEC meeting, the Association addressed issues, namely the high cost of foreign exchange and why Nigerians may not enjoy the anticipated benefits of local refining, among others, and charted the way forward.

Leaders of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) are not happy. The reason for the sadness is not far-fetched. The Federal Government's policies aimed at taming hyperinflation are not yielding fruit.

It has, therefore, suggested some factors as the way out of the woods. One of them is lowering the cost of [foreign exchange](#) (FX). The workers have pleaded with the government to address the high cost of FX, now hitting over N1,600 to \$1, saying the highly priced FX has denied Nigerians the expected benefits of local refining. Also, it has negatively impacted the cost of the product, thereby making its price jump up and evaporating Nigerians' hope of lowering the cost of PMS.

To the union, the weakness of the naira is responsible for this huge problem.

The workers also stated that in future the product is likely to sell at a more expensive price, if the naira continues to dwindle in value against other currencies.

Speaking at its National Executive Council (NEC) meeting, PENGASSAN President, Comrade Festus Osifo, argued that the only factor that could arrest the prohibitive cost of petrol was a drop in the international price of crude.

Osifo, also the President of Trade Union Congress (TUC), however, called for an improvement in FX liquidity supply to support growth in its sectoral utilisation.

He said: "In PENGASSAN, we believe

that imports to Nigeria are likely to remain constrained by elevated inflationary pressures and expected reduction in petroleum imports due to increased domestic refining, which could tether growth in overall FX utilisation we believe that imports to Nigeria are likely to remain constrained by elevated inflationary pressures and expected reduction in petroleum imports due to increased domestic refining, which could tether growth in overall FX utilisation.

"We are worried that the downturn is likely to be driven by weakened demand induced by sustained currency depreciation and a highly inflationary environment despite the increases in utilisation for food products and in the oil sector by +40.1% y/y to USD\$1.25 billion," he said.

According to him, the disturbing weakness of the country's naira explains the rising cost of petrol, despite the birth of Dangote Refinery and the resuscitation of the country's old Warri Refinery and Port Harcourt Refinery.

"If the exchange rate is about N1,000 to a dollar, the price of PMS (petrol) will not be more than N500 a litre. The same thing will be applicable to diesel and kerosene. God forbid the exchange rate goes beyond N2,000 to one dollar, the pump price of PMS may rise to N1,300 or above a litre. As of today, what the local refining has done to us is just the elimination of the logistics that are associated with the importation of refined products. Unless the foreign exchange is properly managed, whoever says the price of fuel will come down is lying.

He continued: "Crude is a USD (United States Dollar) international product. Even if the crude is sold to local refiners in naira, nothing will change because it is paid in the USD equivalent. So, it is based on international market value.

"In December, there was a slight downward adjustment in the pump price of PMS and others because of the appreciation of the naira in the

international market. Today, the naira is depreciating, and there is every indication that there will be an upward adjustment in pump price because the crude price has gone up. Therefore, that we are producing locally does not mean that the pump price of PMS will go down."

The oil workers' leader advocated the need for the new Port Harcourt and Kaduna refineries to come on stream to deepen the value chain in the oil and gas sector.

He added that the full resuscitation of the national refineries and the creation of the enabling environment for the private sector to thrive would add value to the country's Gross Domestic Product and create more job opportunities in the sector.

Osifo wants the government to be deliberate, strategic, and purposeful in driving the sector, as it has what it takes to produce four million barrels of crude oil in a day.

He scored the recent oil bid round conducted by the Federal Government highly on the strength of its transparency and commercial viability, which was historic in the history of sales of oil averages.

He said the transparency and commercial viability tied to the sales of the oil acreages will have multiplier effects on the country's oil and gas sector.

Osifo also addressed other issues at the forum.

They are:

2025 Budget

Osifo described Nigeria's 2025 budget proposal before the National Assembly as abysmal, noting that the budget of N49 trillion translating to roughly \$30 billion is too small to address the challenges facing a country of over 230 million people.

"Although the 2024 budget of N27 trillion was smaller, the real value of that was quite higher in dollar terms.

"The proposed 2025 budget is very low for us as a country. When you compare this with South Africa, a country with just 60 million people and a budget exceeding \$120 billion, it becomes

clear how far behind we are," he submitted.

He called for a substantial increase in the country's budget to reflect its potential and resource endowment.

"As a country blessed with human and material resources, we should be talking about a budget of at least \$200 billion. This requires harnessing our mineral wealth, which includes bitumen, tin, gold, and limestone, not just for export but for value addition that generates revenue and jobs," he added.

Osifo emphasised the inadequacy of the proposed budget in tackling Nigeria's infrastructure deficits, citing a previous study on the nation's road network.

"A study conducted under a former Minister of Works revealed that fixing federal roads alone would require \$120 billion.

"If you allocate the entire \$30 billion budget to roads, it would still take four years to complete the task. How then can we address other critical sectors like education, healthcare, and salaries?"

No problem with divestment

Osifo confirmed that the divestment of onshore assets by four International Oil Companies (IOCs) did not lead to job losses or reduced remuneration.

The international oil companies, which recently offloaded their onshore oil assets, including their human resources to Nigerian companies, include TotalEnergies, ExxonMobil, Eni, and Equinor.

He said the achievement was in line with their earlier strategies to secure their members' jobs and welfare during the divestment.

It would be recalled that in multi-billion dollar oil and gas assets divestments that were concluded last year with their final approval by the government, Italian oil giant Eni, sold its Nigerian Agip Oil Company (NAOC) to Oando Plc, while ExxonMobil sold its Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited (MPNU) to Seplat Energy.

Moreover, French oil major, TotalEnergies divested its onshore assets to Chappal; Norwegian energy company, Equinor divested to Project Odinrin, while Shell sold its Nigerian onshore business, Shell Petroleum

Development Company (SPDC) to Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited, a consortium of five oil firms.

According to Osifo, former employees of TotalEnergies, Eni, ExxonMobil, and Equinor in the divested assets have transitioned to their new employers without any job security or remuneration concerns.

He said: "So, on the divestment, for us, as PENGASSAN, and we wish to also announce to you, as we stated in Abuja in December, that we came up with strategies to ensure that none of our members will lose their job as a result of divestment.

"And we will announce to you that by the grace of God, today, there is none of our members who has lost his or her job because of divestment. The job has been 100 per cent guaranteed.

"We have transitioned from Nigeria Agip Oil Company to Oando Energy Resources Limited with zero loss to membership. We have transitioned from Equinor to Chappal, with zero loss of membership. We just transitioned from Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited to Seplat Energy Producing Nigeria Unlimited, with zero loss to membership.

Solution to incessant grid collapse

Osifo also spoke on the need for the appointment of experienced professionals to lead critical sectors to achieve better results.

He expressed frustration with the power sector, citing last year's 12 to 15 power grid failures and the recent grid failure this year.

According to him, inefficiencies in this sector underscore the urgent need for competent leadership to drive improvements.

Osifo attributed these challenges to the absence of skilled and knowledgeable professionals in key positions in the Ministry of Power, the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC), and related agencies. He urged the government to prioritise merit-based appointments to ensure effective leadership in the sector.

"The power sector is highly technical. Without capable individuals in critical positions, we cannot achieve sustainable solutions," Osifo added.

He, however, commended the Federal

Government's efforts to decentralise the power sector but stressed the need for strategic leadership to complement these reforms.

Debt burden

Beyond the budget, Osifo highlighted Nigeria's mounting debt burden, warning of its dire economic implications.

Opposing the huge deficit financing of the budget, he affirmed that a situation in the past where the country was spending about 90 per cent of its revenue to service debt was unprogressive.

His words: "So, we are calling on the government to-do everything possible to expand our revenue base. On that expansion of our revenue base, we must know how to harness our natural and mineral resources.

"Nigeria is extremely blessed with huge mineral resources. These are lying fallow. We need to tap into these mineral resources, and not just to export them as raw materials but to create value from them.

"With that, we could generate enormous jobs, and we would earn huge revenue. "Examining the budget that was submitted to the President to the National Assembly, you happen to see that it is a deficit budget where we are going to borrow a humongous amount of money, and this is also going to add to our debt profile.

"When you hear of the debt profile of the country rising periodically, they do tell us that our debt-to-Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is doing well. But the challenge is debt-to-revenue.

"At a time as a country, we were spending over 90 per cent of our revenue to service debt and not to repay the debt. There is no country that will make meaningful progress by spending 90 per cent of its revenue in servicing debt."

"So, as a country, we must be serious. As people, we must be able to examine what the government is doing and proffer solutions to them."

Tax Reform Bills: A call for public hearings

Osifo called for a public hearing on the tax reform bills.

He said: "Other issues are those related to the Nigerian Tax Reform Bills before

the National Assembly. We are calling on the Senate as well as the House of Representatives that public hearings should not just be jamborees. "It should not be that when they have made up their minds on what to do,

they just call us for a public hearing and after that, they go back and do what they intended. "That is not how public hearings are conducted in many parts of the world. Public hearings are for information to be collated, data to be

analysed, and they will form input to the bill. "But, we have observed that in Nigeria, public hearing is just a show whereby they listen to you, and they go ahead to do what they had planned to do."

## PENGASSAN TO TAKE ACTIONS OVER PERCEIVED IRREGULARITIES IN THE PENSION OF MEMBERS, ENGAGES PENCOM, OTHERS

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) has said it is making advocacy on organisations over the gaps in pensioners' remuneration and pension in order for them to close the gaps to better the welfare of the pensioners.

President of PENGASSAN, Festus Osifo who stated this at the association's One-Day Summit on the Future of Pension in Oil and Gas Industry in Abuja Thursday, said the association decided to engage PENCOM and other organisations saddled with the responsibility of paying pension to retired workers to do so with fairness and bridge the gaps in order to ensure good welfare of pensioners in the country.

Osifo said PENGASSAN observed that there was lacuna within the process of the fund, stating that people who retired several years ago can no longer meet the market demands as a result of the present economic realities.

He however noted that some of the managements over time, have been magnanimous to add little things to what pensioners were earning, stating that more could be done to bridge the gap.

According to the PENGASSAN president, "We actually decided to take up this issue, an issue that is bothering our close pension fund administration in Nigeria.

The reason is very clear. For those who didn't really know, in 2004, we had the pension reform system in Nigeria.

So when that pension reform happened, we had a system whereby

some companies started pension fund administrators.

"Some of us do the contributory pension scheme. While others, there were some exemptions given to some companies to do the closed pension fund system, which we call the defined benefit system.

So over time, in 2014, there was also a new legislation that came that now stops new employees 2014 from joining the defined benefits.

"That means, even if you operate the defined benefits, the company like Chevron, the company like NSO, Settler, Total Energies, NNPC, DPRU, and all that, even when you operate that close pension fund system, so by 2014, there was a gap.

So, anybody who was employed in this organisation from 2014 could no longer join the defined benefits. You now need to be under the PFE.

"So, over time, we have realised that there is some level of lacuna within this process, and within the system, that people who retired several years ago, under the defined benefits, their remuneration, or rather, their retirement benefit, has somewhat been capped.

Their retirement benefit does not, I mean, in some organisations, it doesn't move. It's always at management discretion.

"Some of the management, over time, have been magnanimous to add little things to what the pensioners are earning. And we understand what inflation has done in Nigeria. We understand what devaluation has done to our remuneration.

"Imagine people who have retired in 1990, imagine people who have

retired maybe in 2001, even 2010, as recent as 2010. So when they retire at that time, they'll be going home with what they think is okay in terms of the value of our currency.

What, for example, we all know, what 200,000 Naira can buy for you in 2010, today, truly, it can no longer buy.

"So we have in one or two organisations a system whereby, at the end of the year, we have the pension, it grows every year, due to a mechanism and a system that was put in place.

That's maybe like in 5 or 10% of cases where we have the closed pension funds. But in a lot of other organisations, up to 90%, it doesn't grow.

"What that means is that you are at management discretion, or you are at the discretion of the sponsor, because it's actually the sponsor that is supposed to fund, to look at the gap within the fund and fund it.

And we've also observed, the regulators have, we've also observed that there are some assumptions that are made when they are doing actuarial valuations.

Some assumptions are made that, at the end, okay, just for example, if you make some assumptions to say that the life expectancy, for example, in 1976 in Nigeria, the funds that you need to put into, I mean, you cannot assume that the fund is sufficient.

"But if you tweak that life expectancy for 76 to 80, for example, you are going to have some gap. So I think we have observed that in one or two organisations, we have that lacuna, whereby they determine what the life expectancy will be.

If not just life expectancy alone, there are some others that border on some of the assumptions that are made.

“Those assumptions that are made, we have observed that they determine how the fund, I mean, the gap that will be in the fund.

So I think that PENCOM should focus much more on it to ensure that those gaps are closed, to ensure that the funds are truly sufficient to take care of the pensioners and those who will join them in the future.

And also, I think, too, that PENCOM should also look at, you know, because people who retired several years ago, their pension can no longer do anything for them.

“So we are going to come to you, we are going to make very serious advocacy on this across the companies that are operating CPFA, because we think that there are some gaps that are not being met 100%.

And talking about PENCOM, we know very well, in fact, at the time I was a director in Total Energy CPFA and representing PENGASSAN. So within that time, I could conclude that one of the organisations that function extremely well in Nigeria is

PENCOM”.

Continuing, the PENGASSAN boss said: “Do you know that at that time, PENCOM, even when they come to do some audits, if you give them water, they will not even drink.

If you give them tea, they will not drink. In fact, about a month ago, the DG of PENCOM visited us, you know, in the TUC office in Abuja.

“And there was some personal experience that I shared with her, that I just pray that they remain the way they were, the way we've known them five years ago, the way we've known them 10 years ago, they should stay like that, so that Nigeria truly will not happen to the organisation. Solidarity. We thank you all for taking the time to be here today.

“At the end of today, the expectation is that we come up with aggregates of opinion. We will not come up with a communique that we are going to use in engaging the management of the respective organisations, in engaging the operators of the CPFAs across the oil and gas industry. The ones that are doing what is right, we thank you.

“The ones that are doing things to ensure that pensioners, you know,

they are what they get at the end of the month, you know, continuously increase.

With the reality of time, we appreciate you. But for those organisations that are not doing what they ought to do, we are going to engage you, we will sit down with you and see how the lives of our pensioners will be much more rewarding.

“You have the past president here of PENGASSAN, who laboured over the years, who is now on the other side. We just talked about who did a lot for the workforce in total energy.

“He was a very strong comrade during his time. He was the chairman of Otakot refinery. So the people today who are the pensioners in the oil and gas industry, they were veterans of the union in the past.

“It is our responsibility to take care of them because tomorrow we are also going to cross over and become pensioners as well. So that is why when we say injury to one, it is surely injury to all. When we say enjoyment, now, now, now and forever”.

## PENGASSAN-DANGOTE RIFT WIDENS OVER SALARY SUSPENSION



The Dangote Petroleum Refinery has stopped the monthly salaries of the engineers sacked in September during its face-off with the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association

of Nigeria. In a bid to address this, PENGASSAN said it is engaging the Dangote Group to resolve the matter amicably instead of resorting to another industrial action.

The salaries were halted following the refusal of many of the engineers to accept their redeployment to Zamfara, Borno, Benue, and Sokoto states, among others.

Some of the workers, who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, had earlier said individuals were sent to a coal mine in Benue, concrete road construction sites in

Borno and Ebonyi states, as well as rice plants in Kebbi, Niger, Sokoto, and Zamfara.

While a few workers were said to have accepted the redeployment, many

rejected it, relying on assurances from PENGASSAN that the crisis would be resolved through dialogue.

It was learnt that the Dangote Group issued a warning signal in October by slashing the wages of the affected workers before withholding their November salaries completely.

A senior official of the Dangote Group confirmed that the company would no longer continue paying those who rejected the redeployment offers.

While the affected workers described the non-payment of their salaries as "victimisation", the official, who did not want his name in print due to the lack of authorisation to speak on the matter, wondered why the company should keep paying individuals who had refused the alternative placements offered.

"Those whose services were terminated were given an opportunity to work in our other projects, such as rice mills, concrete road construction, and coal mines.

All those who accepted have started working.

"If a newspaper terminates the services of an employee, and if it even goes out of its way to provide alternative employment, but the employee is not interested in availing the alternative employment, will it keep paying his/her salary?" the official said.

Recall that PENGASSAN had shut down oil and gas facilities in September over allegations that 800 refinery workers were fired for volunteering to be members of the union. However, the Dangote refinery said it only sacked a few workers who were sabotaging the facility, describing the exercise as a reorganisation.

The shutdown caused nationwide losses in oil and gas production and contributed to a drop in power generation until the Federal Government intervened and directed the redeployment of the affected workers.

In October, the sacked engineers were invited to pick up their letters at the Ikeja office of the Dangote Group. One of the letters sighted by our correspondent was titled 'Offer of Trainee Engagement' and carried the

letterhead of Dangote Projects Limited.

It reads partly: "Based on your performance at the assessment and subsequent interviews held with you, we are pleased to engage you as Engineer Trainee (Mechanical Engineering) for the coal project we are executing at Okpokwu, Benue State. This engagement shall be subject to the following conditions: You will report to your work location within 14 days upon receipt of this letter.

"You will undergo classroom training and hands-on training in the construction, commissioning, and operation of our Coal Project at Okpokwu, Benue State. Your training will be for a period of two years, and it will be reviewed periodically. You will be required to submit reports on your learning and progress. The objective of the training is to impart to you skills and to enable you to take up a position of responsibility in the organisation."

Many of the engineers expressed concerns about the posting, especially to places perceived to be security hot spots. "The issue with the re-employment is that, firstly, there's no address to report to on that letter. No office to report to in the states we were posted to. Secondly, those are security hot zones.

"Thirdly, in the letter, it is stated that if you don't report within 14 days, your employment will be terminated, but no office location was given, and they don't exist when we checked on Google Maps. So, if we accept the letters, we are basically terminating our employment by ourselves because there's no office in those states to report to. PENGASSAN has basically told them not to accept the letters.

The PENGASSAN President, Festus Osifo, said the union was still engaging the Dangote refinery to have the issues resolved.

Osifo said, "Since our last national industrial action, we have been engaging them in a lot of conversations, but the issues are not fully resolved. There are still a lot of pending issues. The NEC decided that, yes, let us still continue that process by pushing those issues by engaging in a

dialogue to resolve the issues, and by also engaging all our social partners and stakeholders to get the issues resolved. And we hope and pray that these issues will be resolved at the table.

"These issues should be resolved in mere jaw-jaw so that we will not go back to Egypt. But as PENGASSAN, you know, we don't shy away from doing what is right. But our preference is to get the subject resolved over the negotiation table."

A senior management officer said that PENGASSAN had the right to make its requests, but the company also had the liberty to make decisions that suited its business.

"They (PENGASSAN) have their privilege to ask. We can't deny the opportunity to anyone to ask anything they wish. But we, too, have the privilege to state what we want," the official said.

Some of the engineers lamented the turn of events. They disclosed that there was "an agreement that they would send us to oil and gas companies owned by Dangote."

According to them, it was initially agreed that their salaries would be paid until the issue was resolved.

"But we noticed a reduction in our October salaries. We were not paid for November when others have been paid. That's clear victimisation. It was agreed that Dangote would keep paying us until the matter is resolved, but it seems they have breached the agreement already," they said.

As the stalemate lingers, the affected engineers said they are now caught between losing their livelihoods and accepting deployments they consider unsafe and irregular, while PENGASSAN continues to push for a negotiated settlement to prevent another nationwide shutdown.

With both sides holding firmly to their positions, the resolution of the dispute now hangs on the outcome of ongoing engagements between the union and the Dangote Group.

## PENGASSAN RAISES ALARM, SAYS NIGERIA RISKS EXODUS OF TALENTS IN OIL AND GAS SECTOR OVER POOR REMUNERATION APPEAL

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) says Nigeria risks massive brain drain in the oil and gas sector due to poor remuneration.

Mr Festus Osifo, President of PENGASSAN, said this at the end of the National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of the union in Abuja. He said the sector was facing challenges arising from Naira devaluation and inflation, noting that, oil and gas skills remained globally competitive.

“A drilling engineer in Nigeria does the same job as one in the U.S. or Abu Dhabi,” he said.

Osifo said the union must take steps to bridge the wage gap to prevent members from leaving the country for better opportunities abroad.

“If we don't act, the brain drain seen in other sectors will be child's play,” he said.

He said PENGASSAN had recorded

significant gains through collective bargaining across oil and gas branches. “We signed numerous agreements across government agencies, IOCs, service and marketing sectors,” he said.

He said the agreements brought relief to members facing rising costs of living, adding that, the association's duty is to protect members' jobs and enhance their pay.

Osifo urged companies delaying salary reviews and those foot-dragging as a result of the prevailing economic realities, to do the needful.

He said the industry employed some of the nation's best talents, making competitive pay critical to retaining skilled workers.

“This industry recruits the best. Companies must provide the best conditions,” he said.

On insecurity, Osifo urged the government to take decisive action against terrorism and kidnappings across the country.

“We are tired of condemnations. government must expose sponsors and protect citizens,” he said.

He urged government at all levels to prioritise tackling insecurity through better funding and equipment for security agencies.

Osifo said PENGASSAN supported calls for state police to improve local security response, adding that decentralising policing will protect citizens better than rhetoric.

He also said economic indicators meant little, if food prices remained high and farmers could not return to farms due to insecurity.

“Nigerians want to see food on the table, not macroeconomic figures,” he said.

He urged government to coordinate fiscal and monetary policies to ensure economic gains reach households.

“Translate macro results to food on the table,” he said.

## PENGASSAN TO FG: END RHETORICS, NAME TERRORISM SPONSORS, ACT NOW

According to him, Nigeria cannot keep lamenting while citizens are being slaughtered and abducted. He noted that the country cannot be talking about investment and infrastructural development without first tackling insecurity.

The labour leader further renewed PENGASSAN's call for the creation of state police, arguing that no country wins the war against insecurity with a centralised structure. He dismissed political fears around state police, saying that the politicians who represent less than 0.1 percent of the country's population cannot hold 99.9 percent of Nigerians hostage with outdated excuses

“We are all seeing how insecurity has been plaguing our land, how this

particular challenge has exacerbated in the last few weeks. Yes, we just received information that a new Minister of Defence will be sworn in, maybe in the next few hours or thereabouts. But beyond changing personnel, beyond bringing in one personnel to replace another, which we value so much because we strongly believe in human capital, the government, both at the federal, state, and local levels, should do everything possible to curb this madness.

“We have had several instances where they tell us that they know the sponsors of these terrorists. The question is: where are the sponsors? Why haven't you named these sponsors? Why haven't you exposed these sponsors? Why haven't you gone after them? Take them to the

law courts and get them convicted to serve as deterrents to others.

We are tired of always having one-minute silence for our brothers and our sisters. We are tired of always coming up with condemnations. Beyond condemnation, beyond rhetoric, let the government, even if it takes us looking at those sectors that are not critical, go to the National Assembly and divert the funds meant for the sectors that are not critical, and use it to buy sophisticated equipment to go after these terrorists.

Because it is a country that is safe, it is a country that can protect its citizens,” he stated. Osifo also spoke on the economic pain confronting households, saying the reported drop in inflation has not translated into reality in the markets.

## PIPELINE SECURITY: PINL OPERATIONS AND NNPC 100% CRUDE OIL AVAILABILITY

For nearly half a century, Nigeria's vast economic promise has been crippled by pipeline vandalism and oil theft. The country lost billions of dollars every year as critical oil infrastructure was repeatedly sabotaged by criminal syndicates and local collaborators.

Yet in a remarkable turnaround, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) has declared 100 per cent crude oil pipeline availability for June 2025, a milestone once unimaginable at the height of rampant sabotage.

But this victory is not NNPC's alone. At its heart is a transformative partnership with Pipeline Infrastructure Nigeria Limited (PINL), whose community-focused approach has undercut the sabotage economy and shown that real security must have local ownership at its core.

Nigeria's 5,000-kilometre pipeline network was once notorious for leaks and attacks. At its worst, the country lost about \$700 million monthly to theft. Pipelines like the Trans Niger Pipeline (TNP) sometimes delivered as little as 5 per cent of the crude pumped through them, as relentless attacks crippled output.

Between 2019 and 2022, NNPC spent an estimated N147 billion (about \$100 million) on repairs and security, with daily spending peaking at N123 million. By early 2025, crude production had fallen to just 1.35 million barrels per day—far below the 2.02 million bpd budget target and OPEC quotas.

This crisis turned a corner when PINL introduced its community-first security blueprint. Unlike the military-heavy tactics of the past, PINL embedded itself within the Niger Delta's social fabric, shifting host communities from suspicion to stakeholding.

Across Rivers, Abia, and Imo States, PINL launched scholarship schemes for 645 youths, three from each of 215 host communities. Women's skill acquisition programmes, whistleblower reward system “you see something, you say something and get rewarded”, and joint operations with

the Office of the National Security Adviser (ONSA) built deeper local investment in pipeline safety. Intelligence-driven ground operations swiftly dismantled illegal bunkering networks.

In just one week in January 2025, PINL teams uncovered 39 illegal refineries and 12 unauthorised pipeline connections. By supporting ONSA's clampdowns, military and joint forces task, PINL helped prosecute more than 100 pipeline vandals, sending a clear message that even well-connected actors would face justice.

While PINL's local security operations held the line, NNPC pressed on with infrastructure upgrades and reforms. The milestone of 100 per cent pipeline availability came alongside progress on major projects like the AKK Gas Pipeline. The challenging River Niger crossing, a key segment of the \$2.8 billion, 614-kilometre pipeline, has been completed, paving the way for expanded gas supply to Northern Nigeria.

NNPC's new centralised Command and Control Centre now coordinates security for Nigeria's biggest pipelines, including Trans-Niger, Forcados, Escravos, Brass, and Ramos—working closely with operators like Shell and PINL.

The impact reaches beyond pipelines alone. The Forcados Terminal, once operating at just 10 per cent capacity, is now approaching its full 400,000 bpd throughput, which could generate about \$1.2 billion monthly at current prices. In Lagos, improved stability on Escravos pipelines has added 300MW to the grid, easing chronic blackouts. Renewed confidence in energy security is drawing investors back; at the recent Lagos Energy Summit, midstream players pledged \$3.8 billion in new investments.

However, while pipeline flows are stable, Nigeria's broader production ambitions face hurdles. Underinvestment in onshore fields, stalled projects, and funding constraints mean billions of barrels remain untapped. NNPC's inability to fund its 55 per cent share in joint

ventures with international oil companies could require an extra \$2 billion yearly to maintain output.

Moreover, the sabotage economy has shrunk but not disappeared. Criminal syndicates are adopting new tactics, including subsea drones and encrypted communications, pushing PINL to constantly innovate as it expands into new regions like the AKK corridor.

Key reforms are still incomplete. Disputes over the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), royalty structures, and lingering fuel subsidies, especially for kerosene and diesel, which still drain over N200 billion each month, highlight the need for decisive policy action.

Refinery rehabilitation also lags behind schedule: the Port Harcourt Refinery missed its Q2 2025 restart target, while Warri operates below capacity due to crude supply gaps.

To truly hit the two million bpd mark, Nigeria must lock in lessons from PINL's success: embed community equity participation, strengthen legal deterrence, boost upstream investment, and guarantee steady funding for vital oil and gas infrastructure.

A national framework that adopts PINL's model into law, backed by a dedicated Pipeline Protection Trust Fund, financed by recovered stolen crude, could give this breakthrough staying power.

PINL's triumph over saboteurs proves that Nigeria's deepest challenges can be tackled with local solutions rooted in trust. As NNPC's Group CEO, Bayo Ojulari, said at the Lagos Energy Summit, “We have secured the pipes. Now let us fill them.”

The milestone of 100 per cent pipeline availability shows what's possible when community, intelligence, and infrastructure work together. But to transform Nigeria's energy story, stable pipelines must be matched by growing production—and prosperity for the communities that protect them.

The sabotage economy has been dwarfed; the task now is to bury it for good while unlocking Nigeria's full energy potential.

## NNPC REITERATES 2M BPD TARGET BY 2027, \$60BN IN FRESH INVESTMENT BY 2030



The Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) yesterday reiterated its commitment to a 2 million Barrels Per Day (bpd) oil production by 2027, calling for bold global partnerships and investments to end the phenomenon of energy poverty across Africa.

Group Chief Executive Officer of NNPC, Bayo Ojulari, made the comment at the “Energy Talk” session of the ongoing Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition and Conference (ADIPEC 2025) taking place in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Fielding questions from the host and Pulitzer Prize-winning energy author, Daniel Yergin, the GCEO emphasised Nigeria's pivotal role in Africa's energy milieu, adding that NNPC was the linchpin to the drive for energy sufficiency in the African continent.

He explained that NNPC has raised Nigeria's oil output to 1.7 million barrels per day, with targets of 2 million bpd by 2027 and 3 million bpd in the long term, a growth that is driven by redefined relationships with Independent Oil Companies (IOCs) and independents, removing legacy blockers and aligning on shared value. He reaffirmed the company's commitment to working with the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) peers, African National Oil Companies (NOCs), and financial institutions to attract \$30 – \$60 billion in fresh investment by 2030.

Ojulari said new government incentives beyond the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) are already attracting capital for deep-water exploration, dry gas development, and

cost reduction.

He spotlighted some of the nation's high-profile energy initiatives such as upstream revival through accelerated new fields development, gas infrastructure expansion, including

the near-completion of the Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) gas pipeline and the Obiafu-Obrikom-Oben (OB3), and the rollout of cleaner energy, including the Presidential CNG Initiative and expansion of autogas corridors.

Ojulari highlighted Nigeria's vast oil, gas, and renewable energy potential, stressing that under President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda, there are concerted efforts to transform Nigeria from an extractive economy to a diversified, investment-driven energy hub.

“Africa's energy future must be built on pragmatism, partnerships, and purpose. At NNPC Limited, we are not just participating in the energy transition, we are shaping it from an African perspective. Our focus is pragmatic: grow production, monetize gas, deepen partnerships, and deliver value to Nigerians and global partners alike,” Ojulari stated.

Echoing the opening remarks of Dr. Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of Industry and ADNOC CEO, who called for “pragmatic, not performative” energy policies and emphasised the need for \$4 trillion in annual global energy investment, Ojulari urged global stakeholders to co-invest in Africa's energy future.

“Our message to the world is clear: Nigeria is open for business, and NNPC Limited is fit for the future and we invite the world to co-invest in Africa's energy transformation,” he said.

NNPC said its presence at ADIPEC 2025 underscores its evolution into a commercially-driven, globally-engaged energy company, one that is not only powering Nigeria, but

helping shape the future of energy across the continent.

ADIPEC is one of the world's largest energy exhibitions and conferences hosted by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC). This year's edition is themed: “Energy. Intelligence. Impact”, is the 41st in the series.

Days earlier, Ojulari led a high-level delegation to the NNPC exhibition booth at the ongoing ADIPEC, reinforcing the company's commitment to global partnerships, energy equity, and sustainable investment.

Welcomed by the Executive Vice President, Business Services, Sophia Mbakwe, and other senior executives, the GCEO's visit underscored NNPC's strategic presence at one of the world's most influential energy gatherings. The Chairman of the Board of NNPC and fellow board members were also in attendance, demonstrating unified leadership and support for the company's international engagements.

Ojulari participated in a closed-door session of the Global Oil Club, a prestigious forum of leading energy companies and institutions. In his remarks, he emphasised the urgent need to end energy poverty across Africa and called for co-investment strategies to de-risk energy infrastructure and unlock shared prosperity.

“Africa's energy future must be built on collaboration, innovation, and inclusion. NNPC Limited stands ready to co-create solutions that will deliver real impact,” the GCEO stated. Also representing NNPC was Executive Vice President, Upstream, Mr. Udy Ntia, who featured in the Global Strategy Session titled Beyond the Barrel: The Future of Upstream Strategy. In his submission, Ntia affirmed NNPC's readiness to co-invest in industry-wide solutions while accelerating Nigeria's oil and gas output in line with national and regional energy mandate.

## INSIDE NIGERIA'S BOLD STRATEGY TO DOUBLE OIL PRODUCTION



Nigeria's oil and gas sector is undergoing a seismic transformation. Buoyed by a government eager to reassert the country's place on the global energy map, a fresh wave of reforms, strategic partnerships, and ambitious infrastructure projects is reshaping Africa's largest oil-producing nation. The centrepiece of this shift is a bold strategy to double oil production and unlock the full potential of Nigeria's vast natural gas reserves.

The recent Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement (GSPA) signed between the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC) and energy giants Shell, TotalEnergies, and Eni marks a watershed moment in this journey.

The agreement secures 270 million standard cubic feet of gas per day (mmscfd) to power the proposed \$3.5 billion Brass Fertiliser and Petrochemical Plant in Bayelsa State—an industrial behemoth expected to generate \$1.5 billion in annual export revenue.

But this is more than just another high-profile deal. It is a signal that Nigeria is shifting gears from being an oil-dependent economy to a more gas-led, diversified energy powerhouse.

**A New Era of Gas-Driven Growth**

At the heart of Nigeria's new energy strategy is natural gas, a resource the country holds in abundance, with proven reserves of over 200 trillion cubic feet. Long underutilised, gas is now being positioned not just as a transitional fuel but as the engine of

industrialisation, power generation, and export revenue.

This agenda came into sharp focus at NOG Energy Week 2024, a gathering of industry stakeholders, policymakers, and investors. A standout panel session titled “Accelerating Investment, Enabling Industry Growth, Meeting Energy Demand” laid out a pragmatic roadmap to fast-track investment, de-risk capital, and expand infrastructure in both gas and deepwater oil segments. Heineken Lokpobiri, Nigeria's minister of state for petroleum resources, summarised the country's approach: “Our goal is simple, create an environment where investors see Nigeria not as a risky frontier, but as a strategic partner in the global energy transition.”

Indigenous firms making bold moves Nigeria's indigenous oil and gas firms are making bold moves that are steadily reshaping the country's energy landscape. Once considered marginal players, these local companies are now emerging as major industry drivers, building critical infrastructure, acquiring strategic assets, and innovating in ways that enhance energy independence and economic resilience. Until recently, discussions around Nigeria's energy sector centred largely on multinational corporations, pipeline sabotage, and asset divestments.

Today, however, the narrative is being rewritten by a new generation of Nigerian firms that are not only acquiring upstream assets but also investing heavily in midstream and

downstream capabilities. Companies like Green Energy International, Seplat Energy, Conoil, Heirs Energies, Aradel Holdings, and Waltersmith Petroman are leading this transformation.

One of the most groundbreaking developments is the launch of Nigeria's first indigenous onshore oil export terminal in over a decade by Green Energy

International. Located on OML-11 near Port Harcourt, the \$400 million Otakikpo terminal is fully privately funded and designed to handle 250,000 barrels per day.

The facility aggregates output from 40 marginal fields, reducing evacuation costs by 40% and avoiding the risks associated with sabotage-prone infrastructure like the Trans-Niger Pipeline. Global confidence in the project was underscored when Shell became the first company to lift cargo from the terminal.

Across 2024 and 2025, at least 11 major milestones by indigenous firms illustrate this rising wave of self-reliant energy development. Conoil's introduction of the new “Obodo” crude grade in May 2025 marked the first such launch in six years.

Meanwhile, the Madu Field, developed by a joint venture between FIRST E&P and NNPC, came online in April 2024, lifting production at the Anyala-Madu cluster to 60,000 barrels per day, making it Nigeria's largest locally-led offshore project.

Seplat Energy has commissioned its 300 million standard cubic feet per day ANOH gas plant and committed \$320 million in oil capital expenditure for 2025, targeting 140,000 barrels per day in oil production while providing gas to an estimated five million people. Also, Oando PLC has taken over ENI's NAOC stake and successfully marketed the Obodo crude through its trading arm, demonstrating a fully indigenous value chain from

production to export.

Renaissance Africa also acquired Shell's onshore assets and pledged a \$15 billion investment over five years, one of the largest by a local player in recent memory.

### **Fiscal Reforms: Unlocking Investor Confidence**

One of the cornerstones of Nigeria's strategy is fiscal recalibration. In the same month as the GSPA announcement, the federal government unveiled a suite of incentives aimed at making Nigeria more attractive to energy investors. These include VAT waivers on gas, diesel, electric vehicles, and clean cooking solutions, alongside tax credits for new investments in deepwater oil and gas exploration.

These reforms directly tackle long-standing investor concerns about regulatory unpredictability, high costs, and bureaucratic red tape.

"By recalibrating the fiscal regime, Nigeria is sending a clear message to the global market: we are open for business, and we are serious," said Wumi Iledare, a professor of petroleum economics.

### **Challenges in the Shadows**

Despite the bold ambitions, significant challenges remain. Infrastructure is perhaps the most pressing. Nigeria's gas pipeline network, though expanding, is still underdeveloped. The Ajaokuta-Kaduna-Kano (AKK) Gas Pipeline, a critical project aimed at boosting domestic gas usage, is still under construction. Without rapid progress on such infrastructure, even the best-laid investment plans could falter.

Adebayo Alamutu, Petroleum policy analyst, noted, "Securing supply agreements is only the first step. The real challenge lies in building and maintaining the infrastructure to deliver that gas reliably and efficiently." Funding is another major hurdle. Large-scale infrastructure and upstream development projects require capital, and lots of it. With global competition for energy investment intensifying, Nigeria must do more to position itself as a viable, stable destination for funds.

Then there's the matter of environmental sustainability. "Greenhouse gas emissions from Nigeria's oil sector continue to pose serious concerns," said Dr Adeola Yusuf, an oil and gas policy researcher. "Balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility will be key. Strengthening environmental regulations and investing in cleaner technologies are no longer optional; they're essential."

Volatility in global oil prices further complicates long-term planning. With prices affected by geopolitical crises, demand shocks, and OPEC+ decisions, Nigeria's revenue streams remain susceptible to forces beyond its control.

### **Strategic solutions**

To address these issues, the government is ramping up its focus on strategic initiatives.

Top of the list is public-private partnerships. The GSPA with Shell, TotalEnergies, and Eni is a template Nigeria hopes to replicate across multiple projects. Such partnerships help bridge funding gaps while transferring technological expertise and operational excellence to local players.

Regulatory clarity is also improving, with the implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), a long-awaited overhaul of Nigeria's oil and gas legal framework. The PIA offers clearer terms for investors, a more transparent governance structure, and incentives tailored to specific segments of the industry.

Another major focus area is domestic gas utilisation. Nigeria is pushing for increased gas use in power generation, manufacturing, and transportation. Projects like the Brass Fertiliser Plant will not only create jobs but also help reduce the country's dependence on oil exports.

"This is about energy security as much as it is about economic diversification," said Dr. Yusuf. "A robust domestic gas market creates resilience against external shocks and opens up new sectors for growth."

### **Economic and Social Impact**

The potential benefits of Nigeria's new energy strategy are far-reaching.

First, there's revenue. The GSPA-backed Brass Plant alone is projected to bring in \$1.5 billion annually, a much-needed boost for Nigeria's foreign exchange reserves.

Then there's employment. The plant is expected to generate thousands of direct and indirect jobs, from construction and operations to logistics and services. In a country where unemployment remains a pressing concern, such large-scale projects could be transformative.

There's also the broader economic multiplier effect. By expanding the gas sector, Nigeria lays the foundation for downstream industries such as petrochemicals, fertilisers, and power, fostering a more resilient and diverse economy.

### **Road ahead**

As the world moves toward cleaner energy sources, Nigeria is walking a tightrope between maximising its fossil fuel resources and positioning itself for a lower-carbon future. The 2025 NOG Energy Week will likely serve as a litmus test for how far the country has progressed and how much further it needs to go.

Implementation will be key. That means ensuring that approved incentives are not only rolled out but monitored. That means fast-tracking critical infrastructure. And above all, it means fostering an environment where private capital feels safe and returns on investment are competitive.

The Gas Sales and Purchase Agreement is a milestone, not the destination. Nigeria's energy renaissance hinges on translating policy into action, investment into infrastructure, and agreements into economic dividends.

For a country with abundant resources and a youthful population, the stakes couldn't be higher. But if current momentum is sustained, Nigeria could indeed double its oil production and cement its role as a gas-powered economic giant, not just in Africa, but on the global stage.

PENGASSAN  
Energy & Labour  
SUMMIT  
2025



# BUILDING A RESILIENT OIL AND GAS

# DEFENDING OUR 2025



# PEALS 2025:

## CONVERGENCE OF ENERGY LEADERS AND INDUSTRY STRATEGISTS

The PENGASSAN Energy and Labour Summit was instituted by the Comrade Engineer Festus Osifo led Central Working Committee (CWC) to be a focal meeting points where stakeholders including energy experts, industry watchers, labour unions, government, regulatory agencies, media, financial institutions, foreign and domestic investors, community leaders and CSOs, can share ideas and cross fertilise their ideas for the growth of the nation's oil and gas industry and the Nigeria economy as a whole.

Furthermore, PEALS was established as a veritable and sustainable platform for collaborative efforts of all stakeholders, including business owners, among others, to ensure a resilient oil and gas sector through zero tolerance for poor HSE, ESG to attract greater investments in the competitive global emerging and developed market, so that there can be incremental production

The Summit was an annual event, and the first edition was held in 2021. Subsequent ones have been a great contribution to the development of the nation's oil and gas industry, with policymakers referencing resolutions from them for formulation, decision-making, and implementation.

The 2025 PEALS, with the theme: Building A Resilient Oil and Gas Sector in Nigeria: Advancing HSE, ESG, Investment and Incremental Production," identified key challenges in the industry, showcased global best and acceptable practices, model ways to attract investments, ensure sustainable development, developed a collaborative framework, and facilitated networking opportunities for stakeholders.

Consequently, in the next three days, experts will engage in enlightening discussions, share insights, and formulate strategies to address critical

issues brought about by the aforementioned issues.

The Summit is dedicated to fostering these in-depth discussions, showcasing on-ground case studies, and forging a path that balances economic, environmental, and social imperatives.

It serves as a critical platform for addressing the challenges facing the Nigerian oil and Gas industry and the nation's economic landscape.

+ The summit ensures that the mandate of PENGASSAN as a trade union will be prioritised, and the welfare of its members will also improve through a safe and secure work environment, so as to have a healthy and happy Association.

In summary, the summit is a pivotal event that not only addresses immediate labour and industry challenges but also strategises for a sustainable future for Nigeria's oil and gas sector and its overall economic vitality.

PENGASSAN President, Comrade Festus Osifo, in his welcome address stated that the theme identifies the urgent need to prioritise for the industry and the nation a robust safety procedures that requires comprehensive overhaul and strict implementation of safety protocols across all operations, continuous and effective safety training for all personnel as well as transparent reporting of all incidents and near-misses to prevent persistent unsafe practices in oil installations. He warned the operators to refrain from cutting corners and endangering the lives of workers, saying, "No job is worth a life."

As PENGASSAN's President, he condemned the disturbing and unwholesome practices in some offshore fields, which endanger the lives of their workers. A one-minute silence was observed for three members of the Association who lost

their lives in the helicopter crash around Bonny on October 24, 2024.

The President berated incessant policy inconsistency in the sector, particularly recent amendments to the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), which could hamper sustainability and erode investors' confidence and a disincentive to investment in the sector.

He called for an end to gas flaring and said that all polluted sites must be restored. He explained that financial institutions now demand strong Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) compliance from oil firms as a prerequisite for advancing financial facilities. As part of PENGASSAN's Corporate Social Responsibility, the President announced that activities of PENGASSAN Foundation and the winners of the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the PENGASSAN National Essay competition would be unveiled during the PEALS Dinner and Award Nite on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the Summit.

The Group Chief Executive Officer (GCEO) of Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) Limited, Engineer Bayo Ojulari, in his keynote address, commended PENGASSAN for establishing such a platform as PEALS for cross-fertilising ideas for the development of the nation's Oil and Gas industry.

He noted that the theme of the Summit was timely, relevant, and strategic, as it captured both the challenges our industry faces and pathways to progress, adding that the global energy landscape is evolving faster than ever, characterised by the dual pressures of energy security and energy transition.

He restated that NNPC's determination for sustainable solutions that would make all the state-owned refineries fully operational, adding that NNPC has commenced operating a new

business model that focuses on value creation, competitiveness and efficiency. He said that the company would be committed towards embracing partnerships, data-driven decisions and innovations that could help in the incremental growth of daily production to sustainable levels, calling on all stakeholders, including organised labour, government and the captains of the industry, to work together so as to attract investments into the industry.

He cautioned on the review of laws and policies in the Oil and Gas sector, especially the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), as investors look for stability before investing. The NNPC boss stated that building resilience requires placing HSE at the heart of industry's operations with absolute commitment, as one mistake can lead to environmental, reputational and economic damage, adding that the Health and Safety Certificate (HSC) is a license to operate in the nation's Oil and Gas sector. He noted that resilience is not inherited but built by consensus decision, saying that PENGASSAN is demonstrating a collaborative partnership that will set the tone for a resilient and sustainable Oil and Gas industry.

On ESG, the GCEO advised oil and gas companies to build trust and long-term value, assuring NNPC's commitment to improve operational excellence by reducing leakage and unlocking all stranded assets in the next few months. He explained that incremental production was only possible from many smart, coordinated actions across the value chain, stressing that organised labour, government and operators in the Oil and Gas industry must work together to de-risk the oil and gas sector to attract and return investments.

The Minister of State, Petroleum Resources, Oil, Senator Heineken Lokpobiri, in his keynote address, commended PENGASSAN for the Summit, describing the theme as apt and timely and that if labour refused to collaborate with government, all policies would be of no use and exercise in futility.

He stated that energy poverty is not peculiar to Nigeria alone but an African regional issue, explaining that there is a need to raise dollars to fund the energy deficit. He noted that there was a recent consensus that there is no end to fossil fuel and that it would be difficult to end smuggling, which has posed a high risk to fuel subsidies.

He assured that the Ministry will continue to provide policy direction that will focus on increasing production. The Minister lauded PENGASSAN for professionalism, dedication, expertise and innovation towards increased daily production output to about 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd), advocating for more partnership and support to ramp up oil production and realise Nigeria's target of over 2 million bpd.

He noted that while Nigeria was not ambitious to exceed the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) production quota, the country was committed to meeting the increased local and regional demands for crude. He reiterated the government's resolve to revoke licenses of companies with dormant oil wells and give to new companies with capacity as a way to increase production, as there was a need for every available well to be profitable.

The Minister requested PENGASSAN to furnish him with information relating to the Company engaged in unsafe operation for necessary action. He expressed the Federal Government's commitment to support local refineries, which will give the country 18 additional values, saying that having operational refineries within the country is crucial for economic growth and energy security. He also promised the ministry's commitment to promote healthy competition in line with the provisions of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), as well as addressing the challenges of Oil and Gas infrastructure through Public Private Partnership (PPP) and Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) or BOO arrangements. This, he said, will

allow the Government to leverage on private sector expertise and capital in the development and maintenance of the Oil and Gas infrastructure. He said that the Federal Government will continue to explore the use of fiscal incentives for new infrastructures, projects and the refurbishment of existing facilities.

On divestment, he explained that no IOC is leaving Nigeria, but they are moving from onshore assets to offshore assets so as to allow indigenous operators to grow, as indigenous operators have developed enough capacity to grow the industry in line with the provision of PIA and extant global best practices.

He further stated that the menace of crude oil theft is not only a threat to the economy but also our national security, urging the need to strengthen the collective resolve to combat the illicit activity through enhanced surveillance, stricter enforcement of laws and deployment of innovative technologies.

The Minister of Labour and Employment, Muhammad Dingyadi, in his keynote address, underscored the need to prioritise the health and safety of workers, communities, and ecosystems, and urged Nigeria not to just adopt but be in the process of transforming to the better. He advised industry regulators and labour to ensure workers' lives were protected and that environmental stewardship became a cooperative value. He called on all companies to invest in workers' welfare, HSE innovation, and ESG compliance, while labour should embrace constructive engagement and capacity building, and government agencies to streamline regulatory processes and support labour-friendly reforms.

He further stated that building a resilient oil and gas sector was about people, and this would be possible through collaboration to promote decent work.

Managing Director, Production ExxonMobil, Mr Baxir Jabir, during his presentation, opined that Nigeria will need more energy as the nation's

population continues to grow, adding that resilience will ensure generating incremental production, which will move more people from the lower rung of the economy to the middle class. With focus on technological innovation and a supportive investment climate, just as ExxonMobil has been embarking on, the country's energy output would be boosted.

Speaking on the sub-theme "Industry Player Perspective On How To Achieve Incremental Crude Oil And Gas Production Through Technology And Incentives," He said that it is essential to unlock Nigeria's full hydrocarbon potential, especially in challenging deepwater environments with advanced technologies.

To achieve incremental production, he stated that enough hydrocarbon must be recovered, while the cost should match the price volatility, there is a adequate management/mitigation/tolerance of a complex range of risks and sufficient value created rewards for all stakeholders.

Baxir said technologies can help mitigate the environmental impact of oil and gas operations, aligning with global ESG and also in revitalising mature fields and developing new ones. He advocated for fiscal stability, competitive terms, regulatory certainty, security of assets and personnel, prompt resolution of disputes, and streamlining of contractual processes as factors that can aid increased investments in the oil and gas sector and thereby maximise production.

He also called for support for sustainable National Content policies that will outlive a single project and lead to local skill development. He called on all stakeholders to work together to create an environment that fosters investment and enables the industry to reach its full potential, thereby contributing to Nigeria's energy security and economic growth. The Managing Director, Oando Plc, Dr. Ainojie Alex Irune, highlighted the successes and challenges of divestments in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry explaining that one of

the achievements of Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) was the divestment by International Oil Companies (IOCs) to National Oil Companies (NOC), which made his company have an 100% acquisition of an asset, attributing the success to resilience, and collaboration by all stakeholders and the understanding of PENGASSAN during the transition period.

Dr Ainojie, speaking on the sub-theme "Successes and Challenges of Divestment In The Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry – Lessons Learned by Industry Perspectives," explained that knowledge is democratised in this digital age and that PENGASSAN is needed for the required technical competence in the industry to consistently champion new innovation. He listed some of the hurdles confronting the industry, including the inability to attract capital, infrastructure gaps, and the need to be driven by the fundamentals of the business.

However, he said that there are lots of opportunities, such as local content growth, asset revitalisation, alignment with the National agenda and increased market competitiveness.

He recommended that the pathway to collaboration and innovative financing, leveraging natural and human resources, government and transparency, is in process. He concluded that stakeholders should collaborate to achieve incremental production and growth of the industry and national economy.

On the second day of the Annual Summit, Comrade Osifo Festus said that Nigeria's refineries should operate under a model similar to the Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG), where the government holds minority stakes while competent private operators take majority control for efficiency.

According to him, while Nigeria's workforce possesses the expertise to manage refineries, the absence of proper tools and the persistence of political interference have led to inefficiency, waste, and recurring breakdowns.

"Government must divest majority

control of the refineries, just as in the NLNG model, where private partners hold 51 per cent while government retains 49 per cent," he said.

He further warned that Nigeria's 37 billion barrels of crude reserves risk remaining underutilised if production continues to hover around two million barrels per day, urging authorities to intensify drilling and exploration.

The President stressed that oil revenues should be reinvested in infrastructure, education, and healthcare to promote diversification, citing Dubai's transformation funded by Abu Dhabi's oil wealth as a model Nigeria could replicate.

He commended the recent marginal field bid round, describing it as the most transparent in Nigeria's history, unlike previous politically influenced allocations that, he said, hindered development due to incompetence.

He also condemned alleged anti-labour practices, singling out 11PLC for reportedly forcing workers to sign agreements barring union membership.

He warned that PENGASSAN would resist any attempt to suppress workers' rights.

The Commission Chief Executive Officer, NUPRC, Engineer Gbenga Komolafe, in his keynote address, commended PENGASSAN for fostering collaboration among the industry stakeholders, saying that PEALS is now a trusted place of ideas that contributes to the nation's economy.

He posited that despite the technological advancement, especially AI, the industry is still people-driven, adding that without dedicated and committed workers, the positive turnaround would not have been possible.

He noted that to lead the energy transition, Nigeria must strike a balance as fossil fuel is indispensable despite the huge and increased investment in green energy. He said 90% of the nation's export earnings are from the upstream and that Nigeria has a proven reserve of 37.28 billion barrels of crude per day (bpd).

He recalled that the recently concluded Marginal Field bidding was very transparent, which led to an increase in rig count to 50, saying that the Commission planned to put in place a process that would reactivate dormant fields and increase production to 2.5 million bpd by the end of 2030. He also mentioned that Nigerians have the capabilities to drive the oil industry. He further stated that the government should invest more in education and in people, as policies and capital alone cannot create value, and that it is people who will drive innovation to increase production and grow the economy.

The Authority Chief Executive, NMDPRA Engr. Farouk Ahmed, represented by Mr Bashir Sodiq, Executive Director Corporate Services, said that organising the Summit is not only a testimony of PENGASSAN's interest in its members but to shape Nigeria's future, stating that the theme is a call for action, challenging all stakeholders to work to protect ourselves, our environment, secure our jobs, and future generations.

He noted that the industry is being scrutinised under environmental and climate changes, as Nigerians still depend on the industry for jobs, foreign investment, and vehicles that grow the nation's economy.

He urged every stakeholder to champion safety and reduce harmful emissions; demand transparency and fairness, as well as protect the dignity of every worker.

The Executive Secretary, NCDMB, Engineer Felix Omatsola Ogbe, represented by Barrister Dan Isueme, General Manager, Human Capital Development, focused on sustainability and building human capital for Nigerians in the Oil and Gas Industry, stating that the future of the oil and gas industry depends on the skills and competence of the people.

He said that competent, qualified and able Nigerians were the ones running the industry onshore and

offshore during the COVID-19 period when the expatriates vacated the industry. He further stated that the board had invested in human capital development to ensure that Nigerians are trained, certified, and contribute to the growth of the industry.

He further informed that all projects must incorporate training components to transfer skills to young and experienced Nigerians, and that through collaborations, local innovations should be nurtured. He said that the Agency has equipped people with hands-on skills that meet the demand of the industry.

He advocated that every organisation and government should prioritise STEM education and vocational training at all levels, as well as strengthen collaboration between government, labour and the industry to align capacity building with emerging opportunities. He advised workers to multi-skill to enable them to fit into the world of future work.

The EVP, Business Services, NNPC Limited, Ms. Sofia Mbakwe, noted that there is a critical link between industrial harmony in the nation's Oil and Gas Industry and attainment/incremental of the national production target, stating that the industry has moved from the traditional paradigm shift of Management versus Union, to a collaborative paradigm shift, which regards people as greater assets.

She explained that an urgency for incremental production needs to drive investment with speed and time is very critical, and that industrial harmony forms the fulcrum for incremental production as losses from strikes, lock out and protests will aid production increase.

She advocated that the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) should be fact and data-driven, adding that a stable Industrial Relations system is an avenue for uninterrupted operations and production.

Ms. Sofia Mbakwe stated that fossil fuel is vital and here to stay and there should be zero tolerance in HSE practice.

She said that there must be constant engagement between Management and the union, while employees should act with professionalism, integrity and commitment to excellence. She advised that all parties, especially Management, should engage in more capacity development, including union training, so that the long-term national target will be met with short-term internal progress.

The Operations Safety Leader, JV Asset, TotalEnergies E&P Nig. Ltd, Comrade Newton Ichipi In his presentation on "Deepening Stakeholder HSE Responsibilities To Foster A Resilient And Sustainable Oil And Gas Industry In Nigeria" dwelled on the imperative of imbuing, embedding and expanding Health, Safety, and Environment (HSE) responsibilities among all stakeholders in the Nigerian oil and gas sector.

He called to move beyond a compliance-based approach to a culture of shared ownership for safety and sustainability. He noted that the nation's energy infrastructure has suffered years of neglect and under-investment, as a lack of maintenance threatens assets' integrity.

Comrade Ichipi said that to confront and resolve the challenges arising from HSE and ESG, stakeholders must understand the challenges, such as structural integrity, equipment reliability issues, environment and community impact, and industrial agitation.

He advocated for shared responsibilities among all stakeholders, the need to integrate HSE into the core operational and business philosophy of every organisation, proactiveness by all stakeholders, as well as a strong and sustainable HSE culture that will prevent disruption and enhance incremental production.

He called for clear, consistent and well-enforced regulations by government and industry regulators to foster a level playing field for all operators, and ensure that a robust framework for incident reporting and

investigation is in place; companies should demonstrate leadership commitment to HSE by investing in modern, safer technologies, empower employees to stop unsafe work, and be transparent in their HSE performance reporting; unions and their members should actively participate in safety programmes, report unsafe conditions without fear of retribution, and hold both management and government accountable to adhere to safety standards; while service providers and contractors should maintain HSE standards that are on par with or exceed those of the operators they work for; and local communities should constructively engage operators, report environmental and safety concerns through established channels, and contribute to a secure operating environment.

The Chief HSE Officer, NNPC, Mr. Akpabio Essien, in his presentation on “Boosting Crude Oil And Gas Production Through Sustainable HSE Practice, ESG Domestication And Motivated Workforce” identified the lack of pipeline maintenance and inability to fix a date to end gas flaring as two important factors that affect HSE and ESG, adding that in production plant, all molecule must come with added value. He condemned the lack of maintenance culture by government and corporate organisations, advising oil companies to re-inject flared gas into oil wells to enable drilling.

He stated that for incremental production, workers must be adequately motivated and well taken care of in a safe and secure environment to enable them to deliver on high productivity and ensure the target goals and mission of their companies are met while also growing the nation's economy.

He counselled stakeholders to invest more in training and retraining, skilling and de-skilling and re-skilling of workers, while union should also train their members on global best practices in industrial relations.

The Cardiologist Surgery, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Rivers State, Nigeria, Professor Kelechi Okonta, In his presentation on “The Silent Killer: Cardio Vascular Diseases In Nigeria: Causes, Prevention And Treatment” described CardioVascular Diseases (CVDs) as a significant public health concern in the country, and often referred to as the "silent killer" due to their asymptomatic nature and high mortality rate.

He said that CardioVascular diseases are a group of disorders affecting the heart and blood vessels, adding that to combat this growing issue, it is essential to understand the causes, prevention strategies, and treatment options. He identified CVD as accounting for 10% of deaths on earth, and that the management and treatment of CVD is very expensive.

He said that World Health Organisation (WHO) efforts to curb infections such as HIV, TB and malaria have been fruitful, but that CVDs have shown an unparalleled rise, surpassing HIV/AIDS, malaria and other enteric infections in the top 10 causes of death.

He listed some of the symptoms to include erectile dysfunction (ED), Chest pain (angina), shortness of breath, fatigue, pains or discomfort in the upper body, dizziness, heart palpitations, and indigestion that may feel like heartburn.

He classified preventions into four levels - primordial, primary, secondary, and tertiary, adding that key preventative measures include quitting smoking, managing conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes, maintaining a healthy weight, eating a heart-healthy diet, avoiding harmful use of alcohol and engaging in regular physical activity. The medical expert advised that by adopting healthy lifestyles, monitoring risk factors, and seeking medical attention when necessary, Nigerians can take control of their cardiovascular health and reduce the risk of these “silent killers.”

The Managing Director, Meristem Trustees Limited, Damilola Hassan,

in her presentation on “Estate Planning & Trusts: Smart Strategies For Building Trans-Generational Wealth Without Losing Control” informed the summit that Financial experts held that 70% of family wealth is lost by the second generation because wealth without a structure is a wealth without security. She opined that every individual should build wealth that survives them and thrives beyond them.

She said that wealth creation comes with income and investments, while wealth preservation and wealth transfer come with wealth protection against erosion and a smooth, conflict-free transition of wealth to future generations, respectively.

She defined wealth transfer as the process of passing assets, businesses, or investments from one generation to the next and estate planning as the deliberate process of organising how your wealth will be managed, protected, and distributed during your lifetime and after your passing.

She listed tools of estate planning to include Power of Attorney, SPV, Wills and Trust. Hassan advised participants to avoid estate planning mistakes such as ignoring tax implications in wealth transfer, over-centralizing control in one family member, neglecting governance and dispute resolution structures, transferring wealth to young or financially inexperienced beneficiaries, failing to provide adequate protection for vulnerable dependents, avoiding open conversations about your estate plan, and trusting in 'informal structures' without firm documentation of wishes.

She advised individuals to adopt up smart strategies like putting in place a comprehensive estate plan, integrating business succession plans with estate plans, building a legacy such as philanthropy or impact investing, engaging professionals, tying beneficiary rights to age milestones and achievements, diversifying and investing in stable asset classes, and training successors in stewardship.

The Professor Emeritus of Petroleum Economics, Professor Wumi Iledare, in his presentation on “Building A Resilient Oil And Gas Sector In Nigeria: Advancing, Investment And Production”, said 85% of foreign exchange is earnings from oil & gas, indicating that it's critical for budget revenues and macro stability.

He stated that despite Nigeria's vast oil and gas reserves, the output is underperforming, explaining that the upstream alone has above 37 billion barrels of proven oil reserves, but the output has been declining from 2.5 mbpd in 2010 to 1.5 mbpd in 2025. The decline, he attributed to persistent investment and delivery gaps, adding that Nigeria's petroleum economy is vulnerable as the global oil and gas markets are facing profound uncertainty. He stated that investors prioritise clarity, cost, and carbon efficiency. All these were caused by policy gap and inconsistency, frequent fiscal regime changes, slow and partial PIA implementation, governance overlap, blurred roles by government agencies including NUPRC, NMDPRA, NNPC and Ministry of Petroleum Resources, unclear accountability by both government and oil and gas companies. Others are capital gap leading to IOC's withdrawal and divestments, financial constraints including high cost of capital compared to global peers, and shallow local financial markets.

He listed execution constraints to investment and incremental production to include delays and cost overruns, insecurity such as oil theft and vandalism, and infrastructure shortfalls. The professor pointed out that after about four years of PIA's enactment, its implementation has been uneven, marked by institutional tension, policy inertia, and structural ambiguity.

He noted that an increase in requests for better ESG by financial institutions and net zero for climate change has put pressure on capital allocation, thereby increasingly limiting upstream oil and gas investment in frontier economies. He

added that the barrier to investment post PIA is HSE and ESG compliance, as well as poor governance issues.

He concluded that the intersection of global energy uncertainty and domestic reform gives Nigeria a narrow but critical window of opportunity. He advised that Nigeria must look beyond oil as a commodity and begin to govern it as a strategic asset to succeed.

The Chief Executive Officer, Fifth Gear, Dr Adesanya, in his presentation on “Authentic Leadership: Leading With Purpose, Aligning Personal Values With Organisational Vision”, said developing authentic leadership involves self-reflection to regularly assess your strengths and weaknesses and feedback, as well as practising self-awareness by paying attention to your emotions and how they impact your decisions and interactions.

he said an authentic leader will foster a safe and inclusive environment for his or her team members, while focusing on self-development. He listed characteristics of an authentic leader to include leading with their values, openness and transparency, culturally driven values, adding that values are dynamic forces that change organisational culture, drive decision making and inspire transformation.

He gave examples of value-driven leadership to include integrity, empathy, innovation, inclusivity and resilience, explaining that an authentic leader will always take control of his or her environment, be a good listener, and align their actions with their values.

Highlights of the PEALS 2025 include the Award for consistent presence and sponsorship of peals, which was given to ExxonMobil, NNPC, NLNG and OANDO, and the Meritorious Service Award was given to the General Secretary of PENGASSAN and three secretariat staff, Awards for Excellence in Journalism and Labour Reportage was given to four reporters, Awards were also given to supporting companies and organisations was

given to Total Energies E&P Limited, Renaissance Africa Energy Company Limited, Chevron Nigeria Limited, NLNG, NUIMS and Awards were given to 3 sponsors, NCDMB, NMDPRA and NUPRC and partners to PEALS.

In conclusion, the PENGASSAN Foundation, which was floated last year, 2024, as the Corporate Social Responsibility arm of the Association, which serves as the vehicle to give back to society, unfolded its activities and achievements during the PEALS summit.

The Foundation, a humanitarian organisation, in line with its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework, renovated two blocks of classrooms and donated 200 chairs, 800 exercise books, and 200 school bags to the pupils at the Local Education Authority (LEA) Primary School in Tukurua village, Kwali Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory.

The Association also donated a truckload of food items and household materials to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) Camp located in Yelewata in the Guma Local Government Area of Benue State. The items included: bags of rice, beans, maize, groundnut oil, yam tubers, cartons of Indomie, spaghetti, tomato paste, sanitary pads, mattresses, and pillows.

The foundation also provided essential medical support to patients of Karshi Central Hospital, Abuja Teaching Hospital, Bwari General Hospital, and also engaged in medical outreach in some communities

The occasion also witnessed the presentation of prizes to winners of the PENGASSAN Annual Essay Competition.

## PEALS 2025 -PENGASSAN NATIONAL ESSAY COMPETITION

STUDENT NAME	POSITION	CLASSES	SCHOOL/STATE
Sabella Emike Ikhande	1 <sup>st</sup>	Junior	NDA Boarding Sec. Schl. Abuja
Olaoluwa Adeyemi Samuel	1 <sup>st</sup>	Senior	Newman Int. Schl, Owerri. Imo State
Moremi Ayodeji	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Junior	Telnet Int. Schl, Akure. Ondo State
Michelle Etoh	2 <sup>nd</sup>	Senior	Loyola Jesuit College, Abuja
Worship Chetachi Tochi	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Junior	Christian Int. High School, Owerri. Imo State
Martins Uzoma Akonye	3 <sup>rd</sup>	Senior	Bloombreed High School, Port Harcourt. River State

# PEALS 2025 IN PICTURES



Mainstreaming & Strengthening and HSE Culture for Operational Excellence in the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry



# PEALS 2025 IN PICTURES



**PEALS 2025**

We will also focus on our members' well-being, from skills to entrepreneurial mentorship, wealth creation, and estate planning.

2022, our national essay competition has inspired students nationwide. There was a significant increase in participation by students and women and after a thorough judging process, winners from the junior and senior categories will be unveiled at Friday's dinner event.

As we move forward, we cannot be passive in the face of these challenges. This summit is a platform for us to work together, providing support, influencing policies, and advocating for our industry, every one of us. We encourage every Nigerian who still believes in the power of our country to join us in this journey. It has been critical to this process, and we will continue to work together to ensure that no payee members' wages and benefits are affected.

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## PENGASSAN WOMEN ANNUAL CONVENTION (PWAC) 2025: THE DYNAMIC WOMAN: SHE POWERS THE FUTURE

The narrative of progress across nations and industries cannot be written without the story of women. For generations, women have served as the backbone of families, communities, and institutions, often quietly, often unseen. But in today's world, their role is no longer hidden. The theme “The Dynamic Woman: She Powers the Future: Driving Industry Transformation, Innovation, and Leadership” is more than a slogan; it is a declaration of reality. Women are stepping forward, breaking glass ceilings, and redefining the very essence of leadership across every sector of society.

Women are not just participating in industry; they are shaping its transformation. From boardrooms to laboratories, from classrooms to

parliaments, and increasingly within trade unions and the oil and gas industry, women are pioneering innovations, influencing policies, and creating inclusive systems that drive growth and sustainability.

Equally, within trade unions, women are asserting their presence as advocates for fairness, equity, and worker empowerment. They are no longer at the margins of collective action but are stepping into leadership roles that influence workplace policies, champion diversity, and safeguard the dignity of labour. Their contributions ensure that industry transformation is not only about technology or investment but also about human capital and social justice.

As industries undergo rapid transformation through

digitalisation, globalisation, and energy transition, the inclusion of women is not optional; it is essential. In oil and gas, where energy security and sustainability are pressing challenges, women bring diverse perspectives that fuel innovation and shape more sustainable futures. In trade unions, they embody advocacy, ensuring that transformation leaves no worker behind. Together, these spaces demonstrate that women's leadership strengthens not only institutions but entire societies.

The future, indeed, is powered by women. And as they continue to lead with courage, vision, and resilience within boardrooms, unions, and even oil rigs industries will transform, innovation will accelerate, and leadership will evolve into a force that truly serves humanity.

Gathered at the two-day second edition of the PENGASSAN Women Annual Convention {PWAC 2024} from 2<sup>nd</sup> -3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025, held at Congress Hall, Los Angeles, Event Mall, Abuja, with the theme “The Dynamic Woman: She Powers the Future: Driving Industry Transformation, Innovation, and Leadership”, where cream and pageants of women drawn from companies who are registered as the members of our great Association. Throughout history, women have been the backbone of societies, quietly shaping progress while balancing the demands of family, work, and community. Today, the narrative is shifting from silent contributions to bold leadership, where women are not just participants but powerful drivers of transformation, building industries, driving innovations, and leading with empathy and resilience. Across industries, from energy to technology, women are innovating, breaking barriers, shattering glass ceilings, and redefining leadership with courage and vision.

Today, more than ever, women stand at the forefront of transformation— “Woman: She Powers the Future – Driving Industry Transformation, Innovation, and Leadership” is not just a theme; it is a powerful reminder that the future of industries, nations, and communities is inseparable from the contributions of women. By amplifying their voices, celebrating their achievements, and creating spaces where they can thrive, we unlock a future that is not only prosperous but inclusive and sustainable for all

The PENGASSAN President, Festus Osifo, in his welcome address, stated that a diverse workforce that values women's contributions is not merely a moral imperative, but a strategic advantage for speedy economic development. He said during the PENGASSAN Women's convention that organisations that embrace gender diversity achieve higher levels of performance and innovation.

He noted with dismay that women in the oil and gas industry are facing gender discrimination.

Comrade Osifo also said that many workplaces lack supportive policies for maternity leave, flexible work hours, or childcare services, making it challenging for women to balance their roles effectively.

He noted that by recognising and promoting the skills and capacities of women, society is investing in the future of industries and communities. “Today, working women are integral to our economy and society. They are the backbone of our workforce, contributing significantly to productivity, creativity, and advancement across all sectors. In our home, they are nurturers, educators, and role models, demonstrating the power of resilience and adaptability. Yet, despite these contributions, working women continue to face challenges that require our attention and action,” he said.

While urging women to support one another, Osifo submitted: “Let us emphasise the importance of collaboration among women. When you support one another, you amplify your influence and impact. So, you leverage your networks and seize the opportunities to mentor and champion one another. Each step you take to uplift your peers not only enhances individual career paths but strengthens our entire organisation and creates a legacy of support for future generations.”

Osifo lamented that working women in PENGASSAN, like those in other sectors, face a range of challenges that can impact their careers and overall well-being.

On the persisting gender discrimination in the workplace, the PENGASSAN chief observed that despite progress, women still encounter biases and stereotypes that undermine their roles and contributions in the workplace, which makes it difficult to gain equal opportunities for promotion and advancement.

He added that working women still find it hard to strike a balance

between work and life, saying many working women juggle professional responsibilities with household duties, caregiving roles, and personal commitments.

To address challenges that women in energy are confronting, Osifo said there is a need for the implementation of a multi-faceted approach that includes policy advocacy, support programmes, and cultural shifts within organisations.

He stated: “Work with industry stakeholders to develop and enforce gender-inclusive employment policies that promote equality in hiring, pay, and advancement opportunities. Support the establishment of comprehensive maternity and parental leave policies, ensuring flexibility and adequate support for all working parents.”

He further stressed that by taking concrete and strategic steps, labour unions will be able to play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges faced by women in the oil and gas industry.

However, he conceded that addressing identified problems requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable working environment for women.

Osifo said stakeholders in the sector should promote professional development that will offer workshops, training sessions, and seminars focused on leadership skills, negotiation techniques, and industry-specific knowledge to empower women in their careers.

They should also create supportive work environments, implement policies and practices that encourage work-life balance, such as flexible work hours, remote work options, and childcare support and also engage with businesses that have successfully implemented gender-inclusive practices to share best practices and strategies.

“By taking these actions, we can play a pivotal role in addressing the challenges faced by women in the industry, fostering an environment that supports their success and enhances overall organisational

performance.

“Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from all stakeholders to create a more inclusive, supportive, and equitable working environment for women,” he said.

In her welcome remark, the PWAC national chairperson, Com. Engr. Dr Maryann Ada Mbanaso said women are not just witnesses to the global industry transformation and redefinition of leadership but a driving force to it.

The National Chairperson, PENGASSAN Women Commission, PWAC, Comrade Engr. Maryann Ada Mbanaso said that women are the force behind the change being witnessed in the global redefinition of leadership and transformation of Industries.

“The world is changing. Energy is evolving. Industries are transforming, and leadership is being redefined. But we are not just witnesses to this change, we are the force behind it,” she said.

Comrade Mbanaso said from the time she was a little girl, she dreamed of a future where women were not just included but leading, not just invited but building.

“I imagined a world where girls grow up knowing their place is not on the sidelines but at the forefront of transformation.

“That childhood vision has matured into the mission we celebrate today. It's not just about those of us seated here. It's about every girl who dares to dream of designing machines, coding systems, building clean energy, or reshaping the world through science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

She stated that currently women are not just leading change, noting that, “We are preparing the next generation to surpass us. We are building platforms for the girl-child in Science and Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), equipping her with tools, mentorship, access, and confidence to rise beyond barriers.”

“Because when a girl sees herself as a

lab coat, at the helm of a tech innovation, or leading a breakthrough in energy, she doesn't just imagine the future, she becomes it.

“We gather here not just to reflect but to act, not just to celebrate but to shape, not just to speak but to power the future. We are no longer waiting for permission or space. We are creating space. We are claiming power. We are redesigning the very tables where decisions are made,” Comrade Mbanaso said.

She said across the industry, women are making their mark “From the rigs to the boardrooms, from policymaking to innovation labs, from operations to strategy, we are shifting paradigms with bold ideas, strategic thinking, and fearless leadership.”

The convention brought together dignitaries within the oil and gas sector.

Mbanaso added that the conference is a platform to stand in collective power to say, with clarity and confidence, that women are not just participating in the energy industry, they are leading it.

In her keynote address at the PENGASSAN Women Annual Convention (PWAC) 2025 in Abuja, the Business Services Executive Vice President of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL), Sophia Mbakwe, inspired women not to view themselves as second-class citizens.

She urged them to be confident in tackling the stereotypes.

She urged the women to be bold to take advantage of opportunities whenever they beckon.

She, however, cautioned them to drop the bad attitudes that might hinder their progress.

Mbakwe said, “You can have all the money, you can have a PhD, you can have a Master's, but if you have a bad attitude, it will not take you to the board room.

“You will keep going round in circles and wondering what has happened. So from the pipeline, they can take you far and wide.

“They can take you to the refinery,

they can take you to the floor of the boardroom. And when you get to the floor of the boardroom, men and women are there, and these are people who have also gone through that journey.

“They are not different from you, so never feel second class, always hold your head up and have that confidence. Be serious and be able to tackle that stereotype.

“Be adventurous to take the bold step when doors open and opportunity knocks, even if it is not something you thought about, dare to take it and dare to embrace it.”

She urged the women to desist from restricting themselves from doing what their job roles entail.

She recalled how she worked in Frontier Exploration with her team, driving to Nassarawa and Maiduguri, sleeping inside the forest alongside the troops.

She added, “So if I need to be in the field, I will be in the office, I will be in the field, I don't restrict myself. If that is what the job role entails, I will do the job role, and that is why I said, Refuse stereotypes for breakfast and be a great woman.”

She advised them to be their authentic selves to advance instead of relying on the feminist agenda.

She asked them to build themselves by reading motivational books that help them to grow from the pipeline to the boardroom.

She said at the NNPC, the culture and structure have been reshaped to engender gender balance across units, businesses and departments.

According to her, the restructuring has resulted in a woman heading the NNPCL Academy and other powerful women doing their things and standing tall in their areas.

She stated that currently women are not just leading change, noting that, “We are preparing the next generation to surpass us. We are building platforms for the girl-child in Science and Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), equipping her with tools, mentorship, access, and confidence to rise beyond barriers.”

Sarah Esangbedo Ajose-Adeogun,

Managing Partner, Teasoo Consulting, spoke on “Leading the Charge: Women Powering the Energy Revolution” She said, “The future of energy lies not just in renewables, but in the renewal of leadership, and that leadership must include women.”. The women should be willing to take risks and act on behalf of others. She listed work-life balance and flexible working arrangements as key enablers for women leaders.

She also mentioned some barriers to gender inclusion as cultural norms and biases, discrimination in education, recruitment and promotion, lack of mentorship opportunities and inadequate legal frameworks to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women.

Sarah listed some steps for gender inclusion as follows: women should show up, be present, and always be prepared. They should speak up, ask questions, and challenge norms respectively. In addition, they should step up, volunteer, and be willing to take on hard tasks.

And finally, she said the women should be willing to deliver consistently, network, mentor others and be mentored

In conclusion, she said, " We need more women at the forefront of this revolution. It's not about women taking over, but about partnering with the other gender to ensure that we harness the opportunities. We need the courage to demand our rightful seat at the table, and it starts with showing up, speaking up, stepping up, and delivering consistently, especially when it's hard. Mrs Grace Ofure Ibhakhomu, CEO of Lifecard Company advised women to focus on unlocking their potential to achieve sustainable growth and wealth creation, pointing out that dynamic women should be proactive, creative, resilient, and adaptable

Betty Ugonna, Executive Director, Nexim, talk focused on identity, resilience, growth mindset, and positivity. She charged the PENGASSAN Women to be resilient, watch their emotions and

step out of their comfort zone.

Engr.Nnoli Akpedeye, MD, NNPC Energy Services Ltd, who spoke on “Inspiring the Next Generation: Women in STEM, Breaking Barriers and Building Futures,” pointed out that understanding oneself and taking responsibility is crucial as a dynamic leader. She encouraged the women to be their own hype man in their organisation. She added that women should be intentional and proactive in their efforts.

She said, “YOU are the architect of your future—be prepared, keep learning, own your growth, ask for what you deserve, use allies wisely, and stay resilient. Barriers are meant to be broken, and YOU are the force to break them”.

In conclusion, she said “Women must be intentional and own their careers, organisations must build inclusive workplaces and ensure gender parity, and government must update outdated labour laws—together, we can break barriers and create a future where equality is reality”.

Ezekiel Solesi, CEO, LIMBSimple, while speaking on “Beyond Disruption: Building Sustainable Growth In Energy Through Women's Leadership” urged the women to embrace purpose and continuous learning.

He said that the true path to growth lies in constantly upgrading what you believe about yourself, stretching the boundaries of what you think is possible, sharpening your skills to stay relevant in the marketplace, mastering your emotions so you can act with discipline beyond feelings, and nurturing high-quality relationships that strengthen and sustain your journey.

Highlights of the PWAC 2025 convention include dinner and awards night, during which women and men drawn from the Association's zones were recognised for their exceptional services to their organisations. The zones are: Lagos, Warri, Port Harcourt, and Kaduna.

SPECIAL AWARDS

The Outstanding Personalities Category Women Inclusivity Leadership Award was presented to

- 1. Com. Wilson Asekutu - Warri Zonal Secretary
- 2. Com. Tijani Oyabure - Lagos Zonal Secretary
- 3. PHRC Branch
- 4. Com. Lumumba Okugbawa - General Secretary
- 5. Com. Obonin Ogiri Daddy - Kaduna Zonal Secretary

GALA AND AWARDS NIGHT

The Outstanding Personalities Category Award was presented to

- 9. Port Harcourt Zone
- 10. Lagos Zone
- 11. Warri Zone
- 12. Kaduna Zone
- 13. Com. Layefa Prebor- Branch Chairman DBN
- 14. NLNG, Branch
- 15. Renaissance Branch
- 16. Chevron Branch

LEGENDS AWARD

17. Com. Dr Nkechinyere Duru, Immediate Past Deputy National Chairperson, PWC/Chairperson, Lagos Zone

SPECIAL AWARDS

The Plagues for Appreciation were presented to these keynote speakers

- 18. Sophia Mbakwe – Executive Vice President, Bus. Services NNPC Ltd
- 19. Engr. Nnoli Akpedeye – CEO, Contego Servo Ltd
- 20. Grace Ofure- CEO Lifecard International Investment Ltd

SPECIAL AWARDS FOR SPONSORS

- 21. Life Card Investment Group
- 22. Wisconsin Services Ltd

# PWAC 2025 IN PICTURE



# ELEVEN FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS EVERY NIGERIAN SHOULD KNOW

*Compiled by Comrade Faith Odibo*

Every human being has some inalienable rights that are inherent in them. This means that there are basic freedoms that every man and woman is entitled to without distinction as to race, sex, language, political or religious affiliation, or any other persuasion, and nobody, be it individuals, institutions, or governments, can curtail these rights except on stringent conditions as provided for by law. These rights are generally called fundamental rights or human rights. These rights were first promulgated as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1948, called General Assembly Resolution 217, as a response to the degradation of human life after the Second World War.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria, as a member of the United Nations, has signed the treaty and thus made commitments to adhere to the standards laid down in these laws, having ratified this convention and passed the same into law.

Fundamental rights in their modern form have always been in the Nigerian constitution as the Bill of Rights since independence in 1960.

In Nigeria, the fundamental rights of citizens are enshrined in Chapter IV (sections 33 to 43) constitution of the Federal Republic of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). The exceptions to these rights are also provided for in the same sections.

These are eleven fundamental rights that every Nigerian should know:

**Right to Life:** Every person has a right to life, and no one shall be deprived intentionally of his life, save in execution of the sentence of a court in respect of a criminal offence of which he has been found guilty in Nigeria.

**Right to Dignity of Human Person:** Every individual is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person, and accordingly, no person shall be

subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment, slavery, or servitude.

**Right to Personal Liberty:** Every person shall be entitled to personal liberty, and no person shall be deprived of such liberty except in cases provided by law, such as in the case of a person who is convicted of a crime.

**Right to Fair Hearing:** In the determination of civil rights and obligations, every person is entitled to a fair hearing within a reasonable time by a court or other tribunal established by law. It also provides that every person charged with a criminal offence is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

**Right to Private and Family Life:** The privacy of citizens, their homes, correspondence, telephone conversations, and telegraphic communications is guaranteed and protected.

**Right to Freedom of Thought, Conscience, and Religion:** Every person is entitled to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, including the freedom to change their religion or belief and the freedom to manifest and propagate their religion or belief.

**Right to Freedom of Expression and the Press:** Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.

**Right to Peaceful Assembly and Association:** Every person is entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular, may form or belong to any political party, trade union, or any other association for the protection of his interests. The formation of a political party is, however, regulated by INEC.

**Right to Freedom of Movement:** Every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and

to reside in any part of Nigeria without being refused entry or expelled except where restrictions are imposed by law, where the person is found guilty of an offence, or for lawful extradition.

**10. Right to Freedom from Discrimination:** No Nigerian shall be discriminated against based on community, ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion, or political opinion.

**11. Right to Own Property:** Every person can acquire and own immovable property anywhere in Nigeria except by compulsory acquisition by the government, but under certain laid down circumstances.

As discussed earlier, these rights are inalienable and fundamental to every Nigerian and, as such, cannot be derogated from except by the exigencies of law in a democratic society.

Therefore, any citizen of Nigeria can sue or be sued for the infringement of any of their fundamental rights. This can be done by instituting an action either through your lawyer or through a legal aid or non-governmental agencies diligent in advocating for the observance of fundamental rights. Whatever the choice of legal pursuit, every Nigerian is entitled to these human rights and they should be protected at all costs by the citizens and the government because, without it, the society degenerates into chaos.

These rights are enforceable by the courts, and the aggrieved individual can challenge any violation of these rights in court.



## THE ABUSE OF THE EXPATRIATE QUOTA BY FOREIGN COMPANIES - DR BROWN

*In this interview, the Chief Executive Officer, African Initiative for Transparency, Accountability and Responsible Leadership, AfriTAL and former President of PENGASSAN, Dr. Louis Brown Ogbeifun discusses salient issues in the nation's oil and gas sector: Excerpts.*

**C**an you tell us some of the challenges in the oil and gas sector

Answer: The same issues identified by our Central Working Committee from 2003 to 2005 still undermine the core of the oil and gas industry. Despite substantial investments in surveillance and infrastructure to fight oil theft, pipeline sabotage, and artisanal refining, which cause serious environmental harm, Nigeria continues to struggle to meet its OPEC quota. These criminal activities also lead to ongoing financial losses.

The other significant challenges are aging terminals, compromised pipeline integrity, and overall infrastructure decay, which increase capital costs amid underfunded budgets. Unfortunately, most automated systems in terminals and across the industry's value chain have been converted to manual processes, increasing risks for operators and operations.

There has been significant onshore divestment activity by the oil majors over the past five years. Although these assets are sold to local investors without proper remediation before transferring them to new owners, which is commendable, this often results in high costs for local investors due to remediation issues. Funding challenges also impact employees' benefits, as many companies may opt for a clean break of service and lower

salary ranges after a divestment.

There also seems to be an increase in abuses related to triangular employment and expatriate quotas, which weakens career growth and employee morale, and could cause conflicts between oil and gas unions and management. On a broader level, fluctuations in crude oil prices are driven by both domestic and international factors, leading to supply chain disruptions at different times. Currency fluctuations and financing costs are also challenges the country needs to address.

How will you rate the performance of this present administration, and what are the areas the government should look into?

Answer: The current administration inherited a country that was fractured and deeply divided along tribal and religious lines. Insecurity increased across all regions. In 2021, the inflation rate reached 33.3%, significantly eroding citizens' purchasing power. Ultimately, Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), in collaboration with UNDP and OPHI, reported that about 133 million Nigerians are multidimensionally poor.

Given the bleak outlook of our socio-economic situation outlined above, I expected that since APC handed over to another APC administration, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, would have been more cautious in making statements about economic recovery programs. Instead,

he worsened the dire socio-economic conditions he inherited by declaring on his inauguration day that "subsidy is gone," without establishing a social protection policy to support citizens. It should be emphasized that, before the last presidential election, all the presidential candidates promised to abolish the fuel subsidy because it had become a corrupt scheme that benefited a few individuals. It was only a matter of when, how, and establishing social support systems before the change. The sudden announcement caused inflation to spike over 33% at one point. Profiteers exploited the situation, driving prices higher. The cost of petroleum products quadrupled. Cooking gas prices increased from about N10,000 to N16,000.

As if the economic shock wasn't enough, the government floated the Naira amid the subsidy removal at its peak. It also announced the FX unification, leading to a sharp decline in the Naira and profound consequences for import costs. Energy prices soared as consumers were divided into distinct categories. The highest group, Band A, which faced higher costs, passed them on to consumers, worsening Nigerians' hardships. Fortunately, as of today, the Naira appears stable, and inflation has fallen to about 18%. Hopefully, by the end of the year, this will lead to lower food prices, which is especially important to people.

Despite the initial challenges of subsidy removal, the policy has demonstrated some benefits. For

*PENGASSAN should recognize that companies are unlikely to relinquish quota abuses voluntarily. It is the union's responsibility to meticulously document the presence of expatriates in the industry and publicize this information.*

instance, the three levels of government have mostly benefited from the significant funds available for sharing during the monthly FAAC allocation. The Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) reported that in early 2023, total FAAC disbursements ranged from 600 billion to 900 billion each month. State governments collectively received about 200–250 billion monthly, while local governments received approximately 150–200 billion.

These allocations have since doubled following the removal of subsidies, providing more funds for infrastructure development. However, I must note that the funds allocated to states and local governments have yet to yield visible improvements in Nigerians' lives, as most connecting roads across the country remain impassable. The Benin-Warri Road exemplifies a transportation issue that has been a nightmare for passengers and motorists for years.

The poor condition of our roads is also clear in other parts of the country. For example, access to clean water, electricity, housing, and sanitation remains very basic nationwide. Reports show that over two million children in Nigeria are severely malnourished. According to the Daily Post Nigeria, 652 children died from severe malnutrition in Katsina State alone during the first half of 2025. This number is alarmingly high and indicates a crisis that urgently needs systemic reforms.

UNICEF also states that child and maternal mortality rates in Nigeria remain very high and are worse in rural areas. However, it is essential to note that, although governments are working at all levels to address these issues, progress has been slow. As an oil-rich country, our healthcare system

should be among the best in sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria needs to expand healthcare and education reforms to combat corruption and underfunding in these sectors. Greater oversight and accountability are essential to ensure that allocated funds are used effectively for the benefit of citizens. Additionally, the increasing unemployment and the rising rate at which young people leave the country are concerning. If we want to build a resilient economy and a better Nigeria, we must reverse these trends.

However, despite the drawbacks, one benefit for citizens is learning to reduce consumption in various areas intentionally. The policy has also opened the downstream sector of the industry, boosting investors' confidence to build new refineries or invest in its supply chain, which could ultimately create more jobs for Nigerians.

The areas the government should prioritize include, but are not limited to, improving social protection for Nigerians, creating an enabling environment for manufacturing and production to grow, making electricity more accessible to citizens, supporting PPP in transportation and railways for easier commuting, upgrading our roads and rail networks to enhance supply chain access and food flow from villages into urban centers, and ultimately helping to lower food prices.

Furthermore, efforts should focus on strengthening security, agriculture, education, and healthcare sectors, while also launching gas-based commercialization projects and energy transition initiatives. These are some of the obvious, tangible benefits that citizens can see and relate to when assessing the impact of funds redistributed through subsidy removal.

What is your view on the issue of the abuse of the expatriate quota by foreign companies, and should PENGASSAN tackle this?

Answer: Expatriate quota abuse has

long been a contentious issue among oil and gas unions, the government, and corporate organizations. Removing expatriates from the system may also be impossible because investors will always want to oversee their investments with their nationals. However, that should not encourage the hiring of expatriates to do jobs Nigerians can easily perform. Oil and gas regulators, immigration, and all government agencies responsible for granting quotas to expatriates should ensure compliance with existing laws and diligently enforce the guidelines.

PENGASSAN should recognize that companies are unlikely to relinquish quota abuses voluntarily. It is the union's responsibility to meticulously document the presence of expatriates in the industry and publicize this information. Moreover, the union should record violations and forward this data to relevant stakeholders who can help curb the abuse. Finally, the union must consistently advocate for the strict enforcement of the understudy and skill-transfer clauses, including urging other government agencies that may also be ignoring these issues.

What is your take on the issue of divestment in the oil and gas sector?

Answer: The ongoing divestment aims to reduce onshore risk exposures and capitalize on opportunities in offshore deepwater and gas production. One advantage of these divestments is that local investors now have the chance to invest in the industry with fewer contractual restrictions. Additionally, it could be the best way to transfer operations to Nigerians in accordance with the Content Development Board requirements. However, as divestments proceed, regulators should ensure that each investor complies with mandatory industry safeguards, protects jobs, and completes necessary remediation work before transferring ownership to the new local investors.

How should the government tackle oil theft and insecurity?

Answer: The government should

integrate current private and naval security efforts with advanced monitoring systems, strengthen the collaboration between companies and local communities using the Host Community Funds, deploy automated metering systems, enforce sanctions against crude theft and those involved, raise awareness about the environmental effects of artisanal refining, generate jobs for oil-producing communities, and ensure that any crude leaving Nigeria can be electronically tracked and identified in markets worldwide.

What is your stance on casualization?

6.a. Do you think the government is doing enough to curtail or end these employment hazards?

6.b. What is/are the way forward?

Answer: Outsourcing or offshoring involves a work arrangement where employees are not directly hired by the leading company but work for a subcontractor or staffing agency. (ILO, 2012), of which casualization is one variation. The international community acknowledges the complex challenges that can create a "Triangular relationship." The complexities of modern global markets and economic shifts, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic, have continued to widen this gap, making such arrangements more common than rare. Under these conditions, employment can end with or without notice. Workers often have irregular hours, and jobs are usually short-term with limited opportunities for career growth. Job roles may not be clearly defined, and in many cases, workers lack security, social and welfare benefits, or collective bargaining rights.

In 2011, the Federal Ministry of Labor and Productivity issued guidelines on Contract Staffing and Outsourcing in the Oil and Gas Industry to help mitigate the adverse effects of outsourcing on workers. These guidelines include rules concerning permanent and fixed-term jobs, transitioning from contract to permanent employment, registering labor contractors, and defining what

constitutes a service or labor contract, among other topics.

It seems to me that, despite policy directives and guidelines, most organizations have found ways to bypass them. Therefore, unions must strengthen their advocacy for fair work standards, and companies must enforce policies that ensure organizational, procedural, and distributive justice. This will, in turn, guarantee job security, equitable benefits, and safe working conditions. PENGASSAN should continuously report violations of labor laws and guidelines.

How should the government address insecurity challenges in Nigeria?

Answer: The wars around the globe have shown that while kinetic energy interventions could help address security challenges, dialogue, interagency collaboration and coordination, decentralizing the police, improving welfare and remuneration for our service members, efficient intelligence gathering and sharing, providing adequate funding and high-tech drones and other equipment for the military, engaging local vigilantes and traditional rulers, implementing effective deradicalization programs, conducting both direct and indirect negotiations when appropriate, reintroducing civics education in primary schools, teaching about the history of wars and their negative impacts, and so on. Above all, engaging the majority of citizens in productive activities by providing jobs could be one of the areas the government needs to focus on to address the country's security challenges.

The government must diligently prosecute those who fund, aid, and abet terrorist acts within Nigeria. The ransom and money paid to bandits ultimately end up in someone's account. To address this, the collaboration of all government agencies, financial institutions, and Interpol is necessary. The administrations of Presidents

Jonathan, Buhari, and Tinubu have all stated that they know the funders and conflict entrepreneurs, which makes the war on terror brutal to fight. Are these individuals more powerful than the country, and is that why the government is afraid to prosecute them?

The prices of foodstuffs keep increasing, and Nigerians are suffering. What is the way out?

Answer: There is an urgent need to establish strong security across the nation's food belt to protect farmers, reduce displacement, and prevent food insecurity. Instead of subsidizing consumption, the government should subsidize agricultural producers, purchase and store excess food in silos built across the country. Implement targeted production and transportation subsidies to help farmers move food from productive centers to urban areas, and provide access to affordable seedlings and fertilizer.

In the medium to long term, the country needs to diversify and invest in agriculture, secure farmlands to reduce banditry and conflicts between herders and farmers, improve storage and processing along the value chain to prevent post-harvest losses, and eliminate supply chain bottlenecks. The World Bank's advice emphasizes trade and supply chain improvements, as well as social protection.

There are lots of controversies on the tax reform bills. What is your take on this, and what is or should be the position of the labor movement?

Answer: The two labor federations, namely the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Nigeria Labor Congress (NLC), have opposed the tax reforms because workers' interests did not appear to have been considered before the bill was passed into law.

However, my concern is the Federations' argument that they were "sidelined" during the drafting

process. I believe we only have ourselves to blame if such a reform proceeds without our input, as many union leaders have become Senators and House members and could have been relied upon in such situations. The TUC and NLC have the power and resources to lobby for an outcome that would have favored workers.

The increase in VAT to 15% in 2030 will raise living costs, especially since the minimum wage remains painfully low. Another controversial topic is the inheritance tax on what parents pass to their children. Unfortunately, most civil servants who cannot afford to buy homes and rely on their parents' inheritance will face even worse financial consequences and depletion of their retirement savings because of the policy.

The rapid succession of policy reforms enacted and implemented by this administration at an ever-increasing pace necessitates that:

Trade union officials should be highly proactive instead of reactive. They must consistently advocate rather than respond to enacted laws.

They need to form alliances in the National Assembly, especially with former union leaders who are Senators and House members. They have the strategic leverage to secure the support of former union leaders in the National Assembly to help enact labor-friendly laws.

Consistent support and advocacy for inclusive public hearings and stakeholder involvement before bills become law.

Unions should act as advocates for change rather than blockers. However, they must stress that reforms should be implemented in phases. For instance, tax reforms, energy reforms, communication reforms, and many others happened nearly simultaneously, leaving little room for workers to adapt before additional changes took place.

Can you rate the various policies of the government

*If I were to advise both Dangote Refinery and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), I would focus mainly on these key points.*

I would describe it as a mixed bag. Some macroeconomic and fiscal policy reforms, such as removing the fuel subsidy, have provided more funds to the three tiers of government for development. The subsidy removal, floating the Naira, and unifying foreign exchange rates caused short-term problems, including inflation, which hurt ordinary Nigerians. Social protection measures have not been enough, effective, or of good quality, as over half of Nigerians remain below the poverty line amid widespread decaying infrastructure.

The PIA has not yet been fully implemented, but it is under review. This review might significantly impact the status of the NNPC, since the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) will hold the shares of the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPC), while the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) will serve as the Federal Government's representative as the concessionaire for all upstream contracts, including Production Sharing, Profit Sharing, and Risk Service Contracts. Policy reversals, such as the upcoming PIA overhaul, could send the wrong signals to investors. In my view, the NNPC may lose its concessionaire role and possibly give up its valuable assets, which could have made it a strong national oil company.

Despite the challenging business and economic conditions, Nigeria actively promotes gas as a transitional or destination fuel by offering tax incentives and investing in gas infrastructure. Additionally, through its Nigerian Gas Flare Commercialization Program (NGFCP), the NUPRC is committed to ending routine gas flaring by 2030. To achieve this goal, it has issued forty-two licenses to investors through an open and transparent bidding process.

If successful, this project will capture and utilize flared gas to expand the country's gas use, producing liquefied natural gas for cooking and power generation.

The dismissal of over 800 workers by Dangote Refinery, without following proper procedures, sparked widespread controversy and led to a PENGASSAN strike. What advice would you give to prevent such incidents in the future?

Answer:

If I were to advise both Dangote Refinery and the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), I would focus mainly on these key points.

Advice to Dangote Refinery Management:

Personally, I have high regard for Aliko Dangote, the founder of the Dangote Group, especially for his investment in the 650,000-barrels-per-day refinery. This project has reduced dependence on imported white products, boosting Nigeria's economy through taxes, royalties, and exports, thereby helping reduce pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves and potentially strengthening the Naira in the long run. Although it is a private investment, it is in our collective interest to ensure the refinery's survival.

However, laudable as the Dangote Refinery project is, with its attendant benefits to Nigeria, the organisation must adhere to a combination of national labour laws, the Trade Union Act, the Trade Disputes Act, constitutional rights, and international standards, including the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

The Right to Hire and Fire:

Suppose Dangote Refinery Management had grounds to lay off its workforce as part of a reorganisation; the law requires the organisation to consult with the unions and clearly explain the reasons for any restructuring. Ambiguity breeds mistrust and fuels unrest. The incident involving the dismissal of 800 workers in a single action was filled with suspicion and a breach of the agreement it had signed with

PENGASSAN and NUPENG.

While it is true that a company's owner has the right to hire and fire, this right is generally not absolute, in statutory employment, the Supreme Court has ruled that termination must follow due process, which includes providing valid reasons, adhering to disciplinary procedures, and respecting constitutional rights, such as the right to a fair hearing. For example, in *Imolame v. WAEC* (1992), the Court held that WAEC must comply with its enabling statute when dismissing staff. Arbitrary dismissals, like the one involving the 800 workers at Dangote Refinery, were declared null and void. In *Olaniyan v. University of Lagos* (1985), the Court ruled that the university violated the employee's right to a fair hearing by dismissing him without following proper procedures. The Court emphasizes that the employee must be informed of the allegations, given an opportunity to respond, and tried by a properly constituted panel.

Under that MOU, Dangote Refinery Management agreed to allow PENGASSAN to unionise the refinery's senior staff. They also set a two-week deadline, which PENGASSAN met. The 800 workers voluntarily filled out forms to join PENGASSAN, and Dangote Refinery Management verified this. Shortly afterwards, only 800 workers were dismissed during a reorganisation. This action caused suspicion and damaged trust. If PENGASSAN dwelled on that incident, other companies might adopt the same strategy. A proactive meeting with union representatives could have built necessary goodwill and prevented the subsequent industrial action.

PENGASSAN also accused Dangote Refinery Management of ethnic bias against Nigerians and claimed that the management was replacing Nigerian workers with foreign nationals, who are less qualified and lack proper documentation. These are serious allegations that should not be ignored. It is therefore essential that Dangote Refinery Management uphold fair hiring practices to

maintain trust.

Additionally, Section 20 of the labor law clearly states how workers can be lawfully disengaged from any organization. Dangote Organization should comply with Nigeria's Labor Act and Trade Union Act, and follow proper procedures and international best practices. Appropriate process isn't just legal; it is ethical and can help maintain stability.

Regarding unionization, the guidelines for Free Trade Zones and Export Promotion Zones (FTZ/EPZ) state, "Unionization in FTZ/EPZ shall follow the provisions of extant labor legislation since the Act regulating industrial relations in the zone does not and cannot preclude unionization." Therefore, no worker shall be denied the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining. My advice to Dangote Management is to investigate how multinationals in the oil and gas sector, which have successfully managed unions for many decades and continue to do so, have handled unions effectively and remain in business, rather than shutting their gates to workers' unionization.

Advice to PENGASSAN:

While industrial action is permitted and a valid tool to confront stubborn, uncooperative organisations that resist worker organising and unionisation, dialogue remains the most effective approach for achieving a resolution that benefits all parties. It should consistently promote the reinstatement of the workers sacked to their job roles.

The PENGASSAN I know has never been a saboteur and would never encourage its members to sabotage any company. That is why it was surprising to see reports that some of the 800 dismissed workers at Dangote Refinery were involved in acts of sabotage. My advice is that if Dangote Refinery Management (DRM) is hesitant to reinstate these workers fully, PENGASSAN should file a case with the NICN to recover their jobs and demand payment of all their salaries and benefits.

This might not sit well with my comrades; my advice on strikes is to take industrial action strategically and

proportionately. They should target only companies engaging in unfair labor practices, using a balanced approach of incentives and pressure. This is important because many key allies of PENGASSAN in the industry are upset, having been affected, even though they have no disputes with PENGASSAN. PENGASSAN must also avoid tactics that could damage national infrastructure or public sentiment.

During the last strike, most Nigerians did not understand why PENGASSAN went on strike. What Nigerians perceived was that the oil and gas unions were being used to sabotage the Dangote Refinery. PENGASSAN should therefore ensure that online media help highlight the workers' plight and advocate for fair labor practices. PENGASSAN union officials at all levels should conduct activism in a way that shows they are business managers. Doing so will help management see them as allies and partners rather than foes, as DRM does.

Both DRM and PENGASSAN should respect boundaries established by law and upheld through procedural, jurisdictional, organizational, and distributive justice. They must collaborate to protect jobs and human rights. While cooperation is essential, it does not eliminate the risk of disputes. When a dispute occurs, the Trade Disputes Act recommends that the parties negotiate. Suppose they cannot resolve the issues through negotiation. In that case, they should consider involving a neutral third party or organizations such as the Institute of Chartered Mediators and Conciliators (ICMC), the ADR section of Chambers of Commerce, the Ministry of Labor, or the Nigeria Employers' Consultative Association to facilitate peace talks. Industrial relations test the commitment of social dialogue partners to fair labor practices and good faith amid an evolving industrial landscape. When managed effectively, it can serve as an example of how corporate power and worker rights can coexist.

## NEC MEETING



## MAY DAY



## PENGASSAN FOUNDATION



## SPECIAL DELEGATE CONFERENCE



**COURTESY VISIT TO PTFD: COLLEGE OF PETROLEUM & ENERGY STUDIES, KADUNA**



**CAR GIFT TO PASS GS & PRESIDENTS CHIEF DABIBI MILTON,  
COM. AUGUSTINE EZENWAKA, CHIEF OWODUNNI,  
DR. BROWN OGBEIFU**



**DR BROWN OGBUEFI'S BIRTHDAY AND CAR PRESENTATION**



**PENGASSAN HONOUR LATE PRESIDENT  
20 YEARS AFTER SOSOLISO TRAGEDY**



## ALCOLADES ACROSS THE ZONES: PORT HARCOURT, KADUNA, WARRI & LAGOS ZONAL WORKSHOPS



# COMRADE LUMUMBA OKUGBAWA BOWS OUT



## **PENGASSAN PRESIDENT, COMRADE FESTUS OSIFO, LED A CONDOLENCE VISIT TO THE LATE COMRADE ASELE'S FAMILY**



The President, Comrade Festus Osifo, led the delegation of the Central Working Committee (CWC) to pay respects to the family of the late Comrade Asele A. Asele, Branch Chairman of the NNPCL Retail Branch, who recently passed away.

The condolence visit took place at the late Com. Asele's residence in Abuja, where Mrs Clara Asele warmly received the delegation. Speaking on behalf of the National Executive Council (NEC) and all PENGASSAN members, Comrade Osifo expressed profound shock and sorrow at the untimely passing of a dear comrade, friend, and brother. He shared heartfelt memories of Comrade Asele, highlighting his dedication, kindness, and the passion he brought to the union's activities, particularly in his speciality of rending the Labour Solidarity Song at labour events.

The delegation offered prayers for the peaceful repose of Comrade Asele's soul and extended their heartfelt condolences to Mrs Asele, their daughter, and the entire family during this difficult time. Comrade Osifo also pledged that PENGASSAN would establish an Education Endowment Fund to support the education of Comrade Asele's only daughter, with immediate steps for its implementation.

In her response, Mrs Clara Asele expressed deep gratitude for the visit, emphasising how comforting the support from PENGASSAN was, particularly regarding her daughter's education, an issue that was also a concern for her late husband. She described her late husband as a loving and caring individual who prioritised his family and brought immense joy to their lives.



**NATIONAL SECRETARIAT**



**ABUJA ANNEX OFFICE**



**KADUNA OFFICE**



**WARRI OFFICE**



**PORT - HARCOURT OFFICE**

