

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF TRANSPORT,
SEN. IDRIS A. UMAR AT THE OPENING OF THE 12TH INTERMODAL
AFRICA 2014 EXHIBITION AND CONFERENCE HOLDING AT THE
ORIENTAL HOTEL, LAGOS FROM MARCH 27-28, 2014.

Protocol

I am indeed delighted and honoured to welcome you all to the 12th Intermodal Africa 2014 Exhibition and Conference which is the biggest and most established bi-annual Container Ports, Shipping and Transport Logistics Exhibition and Conference in Africa taking place for the first time in Nigeria. This event creates the enabling environment for the World's best Developers and *Manufacturers of plants, equipment* and Transport Industry data solution providers to network, market and promote their equipment and services.

2. The Federal Ministry of Transport of the Federal Republic of Nigeria is responsible for Rail and Marine Transport as well as Intermodal Coordination. This is aptly reflected in our Vision and Mission Statement as follows:-

Vision:

To evolve a world class transportation system in Nigeria and to position it as a hub in West and Central Africa.

Mission:

To establish a safe, efficient, affordable and seamless intermodal transport system in line with global best practices while creating an enabling environment for Public Private Partnership (PPP)

3. It is in realisation of these commitments that the Federal Ministry of Transport granted approval for the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) to host this Exhibition and Conference. This is a reflection of Federal Government's efforts and determination to showcase the programmes and projects being undertaken under the Transformation Agenda of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan GCFR.

4. In Nigeria, the promotion of Inter-modalism envisages among others the connection of all State capitals, Sea ports, Airports and River Ports with railway lines to complement the existing road infrastructure.

5. The topics earmarked for discussion in this conference are apt considering the huge potential for investments in the emerging African market and proven higher rate of returns on investments with Nigeria as the highest investment destination. The major topics which include:-

(a) Regional Maritime Development in Africa in 2014 and beyond

(b) Shipping in Africa – Where Does the Industry Stand Now and its impact on the Region

(c) Port Equipment and Technology for African Ports

(d) Development of Ports and Port Infrastructure in the Region, and,

(e) Improving Intermodal and cross border logistics in Africa.

Capture the topical issues in the sector. They indeed provide enough latitude for participants to examine and proffer solutions to the salient challenges associated therewith.

6. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Maritime Sector remains a key sector of the economy, whose enormous potential deserves continuous harnessing in order to meet the expectation of Government and the Citizenry. Over the last two years, Nigeria has been carrying out a number of reform measures aimed at enhancing the operational efficiency in the various ports. For instance 24 hours operation has been achieved in the Lagos Ports where more than 60% of our port activities take place. For the long term, the Federal Government is making

concerted efforts towards ensuring the development of Deep Sea Ports in the Country. This is the ultimate solution to the current port congestion as the cargo handling are presently beyond their designed capacities.

7. The Federal Government has recently approved the Development of the Lekki Deep Sea Port here in Lagos which is expected to handle bigger vessels, and also create employment. The Port is to be developed under Public Private Partnership (PPP) Initiative. Other proposed Deep Sea Ports are:-

(a) Ibaka Deep Sea Port in Akwa Ibom State,

(b) Badagary Deep Sea Port in Lagos.

(c) Olokola Deep Sea Port in Ogun and Ondo states

(d) Ogidigbe, near Escravos in Delta State, which is expected to be the Hub for Gas Revolution initiative of the Federal Government

(e) Agge Deep Sea Port in Bayelsa State.

The process for the realisation of these Ports are at various stages.

8. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to use this opportunity to reiterate the Federal Government's commitment

to the resuscitation of the Calabar Access Channel. As you are aware, Government had earlier approved the establishment of Calabar Channel Management Company, a joint venture between the Nigerian Ports Authority and Messrs. Niger Global Limited in order to guarantee the sustainability of the Calabar Channel. This Joint Venture arrangement is similar to the ongoing Lagos and Bonny Channel Management Companies that are effectively maintaining and managing the channels.

9. With regards to the Inland Waterways Development and in order to sustain the dredged Lower River Niger channel, I am happy to indicate that the Contract for the Dredging of River Benue is currently being processed for final consideration and approval by the Federal Government. This will further guarantee the sustainability of the Lower River Niger channel and expand our Inland Waterways. In the same vein, a number of River Ports are being developed with the Port at Onitsha completed and commissioned. The processes for the concessioning of the Port to a private operator are in progress with a Transaction Adviser appointed to midwife the process.

10. I am equally happy to say that the development of the River Ports at Baro, Oguta and Lokoja have respectively attained

90%, 73% and 50% completion while the procurement process for the Construction of a River Port at Makurdi is at the final stage. Upon completion, all the River Ports will be concessioned to private operators.

11. In the area of maritime safety and security, the partnership between the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the private sector is yielding positive results. In the same token, the Federal Government has granted approval to NIMASA for the removal of wrecks and derelicts on a 'no-cure-no-pay' basis in order to provide for safe navigation within our waterways.

12. In order to assist in building indigenous capacities, the Cabotage Act provides for the establishment of the Cabotage Vessel Financing Fund (CVFF). The purposes of the fund shall be to promote and develop indigenous ship acquisition capacity by providing financial assistance in the domestic coastal shipping.

Efforts are underway to ensure the disbursement of the Funds after concluding all required due diligence and approval processes.

13. In the area of capacity building, the Nigerian Seafarers Development Programme (NSDP) anchored by NIMASA is making steady progress as over 2000 cadets have been sent for various trainings all over the world. To further enhance manpower development for the industry, the federal government is processing the upgrading of the Maritime academy of Nigeria Oron, in Akwa Ibom State in collaboration with the World maritime University, Malmo Sweden into a degree awarding Institution while the construction of the Maritime University at Okerenkoko in Delta State will soon commence. In this regard, a ministerial Committee for the realisation of the university was recently constituted. In addition, Maritime Institutes are being established in four Universities across the Country. These are:- University of Lagos, Ibrahim Babangida University Lapai, Niger State, University of Nigeria Nsukka and Niger Delta University.

14 Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, the Federal Government has also recently granted approval for the Nigerian Shippers Council to act as an Economic Regulator at the ports, with the effective administrative backing of the Federal Ministry

of Transport pending the passage into law of the National Transport Commission Bill which seeks to among others establish a National Transport Commission which shall serve as the Economic Regulator for the entire Transport Sector.

It is also pertinent to highlight that three (3) more Transport Sector reform Bills namely:

- i. The Railway Bill
- ii. The Ports & Harbour Bill, and
- iii. The Inland Waterways Bill

are being considered for approval by the Federal Executive Council for onward transmittal to the Legislature, National Assembly, for passage into Law.

15. In terms of regional support and cooperation, Nigeria appreciates the special development needs of the landlocked countries in establishing sustainable transit transport systems particularly in the construction, maintenance and improvement in their transport, storage and other transit related facilities. Through the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission, efforts are being

made to facilitate the transit of Niger Republic bound cargo through Nigerian Seaports. Already a draft MOU is being considered by the Nigerian Government on how to facilitate the clearance of such transit goods in the Nigerian seaports. Feasibility studies are ongoing for the construction of rail lines linking Katsina to Maradi in Niger Republic and from Maiduguri to Gamboru-Ngala to link-up Njamena in Chad under the Port Sudan rail project. At this point, I will like to re-affirm Nigeria's commitment to current global effort in enhancing security and disaster risk reduction strategies in our territorial waters. Nigeria is a key player in the coordinated and comprehensive activities that integrate all efforts aimed at promoting the objectives through information sharing and joint maritime surveillance operations with our neighboring countries. In terms of Maritime Safety and Security, Nigeria has appointed NIMASA as the Designated Authority to coordinate the implementation of the

International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS Code). Currently, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) and the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) are jointly working together to ensure the security of the Nigerian Ports and existing facilities in compliance with standard International Best Practices.

16. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Nigeria has continued to partner with the International Community to enhance regional and global collaboration to address security and other challenges in the maritime sector. In this regard, the Maritime Organization of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) and the Abuja MOU have forged regional cooperation and understanding in the area of promotion of standard shipping and capacity building in the maritime sector. I am glad to mention here that the headquarters of Abuja MoU is in Nigeria and is being supported by all necessary logistics requirement to guarantee safer shipping within West Africa. It is also worthy to note that more Countries in the Region are joining the organisation.

17. Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I am happy to announce that on the 11th March 2014 Nigeria hosted the third D-8 Expert Working Group on Shipping where Bilateral and Multilateral agreements among Member Countries on shipping for the overall development of the maritime sector of Member countries were discussed. The resolutions include:

- a) D-8 Countries should seek to encourage promotion of investment in the shipping sector tailored to areas of need to enable Member Countries benefit from such specialised projects
- b) D-8 Countries should seek collaboration to promote capacity building for sea-time of cadets and encourage Member Countries;
- c) To commence the preparation of D-8 action plan on shipping cooperation in order to streamline the potential and address challenges in enhancing shipping, maritime and logistics.

18. In conclusion, may I once again assure the participants of the Forum of the Federal Government's unflinching focus to

provide the enabling environment for massive private sector investments in deepening and developing the Maritime Sector. I have no doubt in my mind that this Forum will provide the veritable platform for all manufacturers, service providers, stakeholders and players in the maritime business to interact and generate ideas that would engender and fast track growth in the industry. On a different but related note, I enjoin participants to take time off within the period to enjoy the beautiful facilities and hospitality in Lagos, the commercial nerve centre of Nigeria.

19. Finally, while wishing you fruitful deliberation and exhibition, it is my honour and pleasure to declare the 12th Intermodal Africa 2014 Exhibition and Conference open, and I so do.

20. Thank you and God bless.