

N-SACC

A Publication of The Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce

FEBRUARY 2025



THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS



The January 2025 Breakfast Forum of the Nigeria - South Africa Chamber of Commerce (NSACC) was held on Thursday,30th January 2025, sponsored by Protection Plus Services Limited.

Andre Okonta, Chief Operating Officer (COO), Protection Plus Limited, was our speaker. The event brought together leaders, and industry experts to discuss the critical topic of “The Economic Impact of Insecurity on Business Operations”. The presentation was well received by participants.

Andre emphasized that causes of insecurity are complex and multifaceted. He added that corruption, unemployment, inequality, bad government, marginalization, poverty, and poor justice systems are some of the underlying factors contributing to insecurity.

Inequality and bad government are additional factors contributing to insecurity. The lack of access to basic services, such as education and healthcare, and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals have created widespread discontent and frustration.

He stressed that to tackle insecurity comprehensively, it is essential to establish efficient network of intelligent gathering and analysis in Nigeria. An intelligent hub should be set up in this network to coordinate efforts between the various government agencies, support inter-agency collaboration, engage information-gathering communities, use technology for surveillance and data analysis, invest in human intelligence agents, strengthen international cooperation, and develop risk assessment framework to ensure accountability and oversight.

The Nigerian News segment in this edition highlights key developments in the Nigerian economic space that may be of interest to our members.

The South African News segment reports news items that may be of interest to our members.
We appreciate our members for their continued support and commitment.

We value your partnership and wish your organization successful operation this year and beyond.



Lyke Ejimofor

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NIGERIA NATIONAL ANTHEM



Nigeria we hail thee,
Our own dear native land,
Though tribe and tongue may differ,
In brotherhood, we stand,
Nigerians all, and proud to serve
Our sovereign Motherland.

Our flag shall be a symbol
That truth and justice reign,
In peace or battle honour'd,
And this we count as gain,
To hand on to our children
A banner without stain.

O God of all creation,
Grant this our one request,
Help us to build a nation
Where no man is oppressed,
And so with peace and plenty
Nigeria may be blessed.

SOUTH AFRICA NATIONAL ANTHEM



Nkosi sikelel' iAfrika
Maluphakanyisw' uphondo lwayo,
Yizwa imithandazo yethu,
Nkosi sikelela, thina lusapho lwayo.

Morena boloka setjhaba sa heso,
O fedise dintwa le matshwenyeho,
O se boloke, O se boloke setjhaba sa heso,
Setjhaba sa, South Afrika -South Afrika.

Uit die blou van onse hemel,
Uit die diepte van ons see,
Oor ons ewige gebergtes,
Waar die kranse antwoord gee,

Sounds the call to come together,
And united we shall stand,
Let us live and strive for freedom,
In South Africa our land.

NIGERIA-SOUTH AFRICA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
We thank you for your consistent support and commitment.

Please note that ONLY Paid-up members will be entitled to all privileges. We therefore implore members to pay their outstanding subscriptions.

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CHAMBER'S NEWSLETTER AND WEBSITE ADVERTS

Companies interested in advertising in our Newsletter and website are to please contact the Secretariat. This is a great opportunity for projecting your companies to Nigerians and South African Communities. Companies are assured of good coverage.

UPCOMING SOUTH AFRICAN PROGRAMMES

AFRICA'S GREEN ECONOMY SUMMIT 2025
Taking place 19-21 February 2025 in Cape Town, Africa's Green Economy Summit (AGES) will connect high-impact climate and other sustainable development projects across Africa with global capital. This year's theme, "Building a climate resilient Africa: Catalyzing investment and innovation in the green and blue economies," will focus on the five sub-themes: green reforms, nature and biodiversity, climate finance, the future of African cities, and green industrialization.

CPI's Barbara Buchner will deliver a keynote speech during the summit's opening plenary session. CPI's Senior Advisor Jonathan First, who is the interim chairperson of AGES' advisory board, will also feature as a speaker at the summit.

The event is slated for February 19 to 21, 2025
Cape Town, South Africa

For further information send email to contato.brasil@cpiglobal.org

AFRICA ENERGY FORUM

We were delighted to host in Barcelona, Spain at the Fira de Montjuic for the 26th edition of the Africa Energy Forum (aef). We are truly grateful for the diverse group of experts, stakeholders, and visionaries from across the energy sector globally that came together, creating a platform for meaningful dialogue and collaboration.

This year we brought together over 2,100 people, including H.E. Honourable Jeremiah Kpan Koung, Vice President of Liberia, 21 Honourable Ministers and over 100 participants from across Africa's public sector and government organisations. We want to extend our sincere thanks to Sun Africa, AKSA, IFC & MIGA, Globeleq & Nedbank, and to all our sponsors, exhibitors and partners who supported the forum this year.

"Running under the theme of Energy Systems of the Future – Balancing Africa's Needs with Global Goals, we were particularly impressed by the engaging discussions and the spirit of cooperation that permeated the forum across sessions, meetings and networking. The commitment to advancing energy solutions that answer the continent's pressing needs and the continent's energy challenges is truly inspiring." - Georgia Ermilios. The event is slated for 17 - 20 June 2025 in Cape Town,

South Africa. For further information contact marketing@energynet.co.uk

DIGITAL FINANCE AFRICA 2025

Empowering Africa's Financial Future: Fintech Innovations for Inclusive Growth

Mark your calendars for 3rd July 2025! Join us in Johannesburg for Digital Finance Africa, a pivotal summit for pioneers and thought leaders in the African financial services sector. This full-day event is dedicated to tackling the pressing challenges and uncovering the vast opportunities within the realms of banking and FinTech throughout the continent.

With a sharp focus on actionable solutions and strategic perspectives, Digital Finance Africa is set to catalyze progress in financial technology and bolster economic development across the region.

The event is slated for 336 Panorama, The Reeds, Centurion, South Africa
For further information contact +27 12 012 5801 or email Email: events@itnewsafrika.com

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THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF INSECURITY ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS

Nigeria, Africa's largest economy, is facing a daunting challenge of insecurity.

The country's evolution from armed robbery to complex threats like kidnapping, terrorism, and cybercrime has worsened insecurity, particularly in the Northeast and Northwest.

This has significantly impacted businesses operating in Nigeria, making it essential to understand the economic impact of insecurity with a view to identifying strategies to mitigate its effects.

This was stated by the guest speaker, Mr. Andre Okonta, Chief Operating Officer of Protection Plus Services Limited, while speaking on the topic: "The Economic Impact of Insecurity on

Business Operations" at the Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce (NSACC) January 2025 Breakfast Forum sponsored by Protection Plus Services Limited

According to Okonta, insecurity poses significant threats to businesses in Nigeria. These threats include looting and vandalism, disruption of business operations, increased costs, delays in supply chains, facility shutdowns, reduced foreign direct investment, and stifled business expansion.

The economic impact of insecurity on businesses is multifaceted. Looting and vandalism result in significant financial losses, while disruption of business operations leads to reduced revenue and operational efficiency. Increased costs, including higher insurance

premiums, security measures, and repairs, further exacerbate the economic burden on businesses.

While explaining some of the causes of insecurity in Nigeria, which he noted are complex and multifaceted, added that corruption, unemployment, inequality, bad governance, marginalization, poverty, and poor justice systems are some of the underlying factors contributing to insecurity. Essentially, he observed, corruption is a significant challenge in Nigeria, with widespread mismanagement of resources.

Okonta reiterated that unemployment, particularly among young people, is a major concern, with many individuals turning to crime and violence due to lack of opportunities.



"Inequality and bad governance are additional factors contributing to insecurity. The lack of access to basic services, such as education and healthcare, and the concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a few individuals have created widespread discontent and frustration."

To mitigate the impact of insecurity, he emphasized, businesses must implement robust risk management frameworks, which includes developing and integrating thorough risk management strategies, enhancing physical security measures, obtaining comprehensive insurance policies, developing business continuity plans, enhancing employee training and support, and investing in technology to prevent cyber-attacks.

In addition, businesses must also diversify their markets and supply chains to reduce reliance on high-risk areas. This includes identifying alternative suppliers, developing contingency plans, and investing in technology to enhance supply chain resilience.

On the role of government playing a crucial role in mitigating insecurity, Mr Andre Okonta said tackling security problems and governing in a way that fosters development; creating an economy with relevant social, economic, and physical infrastructure for business operations and industrial growth is essential. Eliminating corruption and providing gainful employment are also critical.

He further stated that the government must collaborate with the private security sector to enhance security

measures and adopt the top-to-bottom approach to eliminate corruption. By working together the government and private sector can create a safer and more secured environment for businesses to operate, driving economic growth and development in Nigeria.

Although the Nigerian government's approach to combating terrorism varied given the complexity of the security situation in Nigeria, communities' resilience against terrorism and enhanced cooperation between law enforcement agencies should be built into projects and programs designed to combat insecurity along with economic, political, and social tensions.

To tackle insecurity comprehensively, it is essential to establish an efficient network of intelligence gathering and analysis in Nigeria. An intelligence hub should be set up in this network to coordinate efforts between the various government agencies, support inter-agency collaboration, engage information-gathering communities, use technology for surveillance and data analysis, invest in human intelligence agents, strengthen international cooperation, and develop risk assessment frameworks to ensure accountability and oversight.

The absence of government and security infrastructure in numerous parts of Nigeria constitutes a pressing issue. As a result, residents are at the mercy of any criminal element that rises above them. Prioritizing the establishment of robust security measures in rural areas is crucial to safeguarding communities against

potential risks.

Keeping in mind that most security threats are within the hinterlands, the government should establish, empower, and fund community policing initiatives and engender partnerships between law enforcement agencies and citizens to engage local communities in security efforts. Community members can provide useful information, help prevent crime, and identify and arrest offenders who operate within their territories.

Comprehensive efforts are needed to restore peace, encourage investment, and revive economic activities that will alleviate the widespread poverty and food insecurity exacerbated by the current state of insecurity. It is therefore recommended that the government must reduce the level of unemployment in Nigeria, as political instability is encouraged by the high level of unemployment. Many graduates possess the necessary skills and education to contribute to economic growth but are unemployed.

Strengthening prosecution and legal actions to ensure perpetrators of offenses such as terrorism, insurgency, banditry, or kidnapping are swiftly apprehended, prosecuted, and held to account under the law. There is a need to look into the consequence management of banditry and terrorism in Nigeria. To speed up trials and secure convictions, this calls for strengthening the capacities of law enforcement agencies, improving their investigative techniques, and working more closely with judicial authorities.



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FG MOVES TO BRIDGE CONNECTIVITY GAP TO FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH

Minister of Communications, Innovations and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani, has called on industry stakeholders to align with government to collectively address connectivity gaps and ensure that no one is left behind in the journey towards a fully connected and digitally empowered Nigeria.

Tijani expressed worry at the current connectivity gap in Nigeria, where millions, particularly those in remote and underserved communities, were disconnected from digital opportunities.

He spoke in Lagos during an industry-focused stakeholder's engagement forum, organised by the Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF).

In a related development, Tijani stated that the launch of Airtel's spam alert service across its African operations, beginning with Nigeria, will ensure safety of its Nigerian customers when connected to the internet via their mobile phones and other smart devices.

Meanwhile, speaking in Lagos during an industry-focused stakeholder's engagement forum, organised by USPF, Tijani said despite efforts by government to bridge connectivity gap in the past, the gap still existed, especially among those in unserved and underserved communities.

He stated, "Over the last 25 years, Nigeria has made significant strides in expanding connectivity and strengthening our digital technology infrastructure.

"In recent years, broadband penetration has been growing significantly, bringing millions of more Nigerians online and enabling new opportunities for innovation,

entrepreneurship, and digital inclusion.

"Today, however, there are still millions of Nigerians on the fringes of digital transformation who are yet to have access to reliable connectivity.

"Many communities – particularly rural areas – face significant barriers, including inadequate infrastructure and limited digital literacy. These gaps not only hinder personal and business growth but also limit the full potential of Nigeria's digital economy."

Tijani added, "The Universal Service Provision Fund (USPF) has been a critical instrument in the federal government's mission to extend connectivity to these communities.

"By supporting infrastructure expansion, fostering local innovation, and driving inclusive policies, the USPF aligns with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's goal of enabling meaningful and affordable connectivity for all Nigerians."

According to him, the federal government, through the Ministry of Communications, Innovation, and Digital Economy, is driving transformative projects aimed at unlocking digital opportunities for millions of Nigerians.

He listed some of the projects to include the 90,000km fibre optic expansion, designed to improve broadband penetration across Nigeria; and Project 774 initiative purposed to ensure that every local government secretariat in Nigeria benefitted from high-speed connectivity.

The others were the Universal Access, a game-changing initiative targeted at connecting over 20 million Nigerians, who had no access to digital services; the National Broadband Alliance of Nigeria (NBAN) aimed at driving

universal high quality broadband access; and The 3 Million Technical Talent programme (3MTT), among others.

Speaking on the theme, "Strengthening Partnership for Sustainable Telecommunication Infrastructure in the Unserved and Underserved Communities: Collaborating for Sustainable Growth," Executive Vice Chairman of Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC), Dr. Aminu Maida, said, "The theme reflects our collective commitment to ensuring equitable access to telecommunications services for all Nigerians, especially those in unserved and underserved communities.

"The engagement is particularly aimed at bringing key industry stakeholders together to provide valuable insights on strategies that can be adopted to enhance USPF interventions and serve as a feedback mechanism to build partnerships for Nigeria's digital future."

According to Maida, the evolving telecommunications landscape necessitates innovative and collaborative approaches to ensure long-term viability in delivering connectivity to unserved and underserved populations.

He called for a multi-stakeholder approach that will explore innovative financing models to attract investment in rural telecommunications; leverage emerging technologies and alternative power solutions for sustainable connectivity; and promote policies that incentivize collaborative participation in connectivity projects.

Maida said all solutions must be tailored to address local challenges/needs and aligned with current realities. He expressed confidence that the



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deliberations from the forum will lead to actionable solutions that will drive progress, foster economic development, and ultimately transform lives through connectivity in the most remote corners of our nation.

At the launch of Airtel's spam alert service across its African operations, beginning with Nigeria, Tijani said, "Government is facing an urgent demand to diversify the economy and raise the level of productivity across key sectors.

"To this end, we believe and acknowledge the initiative that leads Artificial Intelligence (AI) as not just an early trend, but a significant catalyst for change. AI, as we know, has the potential to revolutionise so many aspects of our lives.

"It can help increase how we do diagnosis, transform education by making it more personal, bringing the government closer, as we learn how to protect our citizens from fraudulent practices. More importantly, AI offers countries like ours a chance to explore traditional development challenges and unlock opportunities for growth.

"I commend Airtel for its continued investment in the Nigerian digital ecosystem and the launch of this AI-powered Spam Alert Service. I personally consider this a significant step towards enhancing online security for millions of Nigerians."

Tijani stated that the initiative aligned with government's commitment to ensure universal and meaningful connectivity while safeguarding digital spaces against fraud and cyberattacks.

He stated, "By deploying AI-driven innovations that protect users and builds trust, Airtel is contributing to a safer, more prosperous digital

economy, one where Nigerians can fully participate with confidence and security."

In his remarks, Maida said NCC had always placed consumer protection at the heart of its regulatory mandate, adding that the commission is pleased to see operators, like Airtel, taking proactive steps to safeguard their customers.

He said, "Nigeria, like many other African nations, has seen a rise in these so-called spam-related scams. The AI-powered solution from Airtel provides a much-needed way of security, using advanced technology to detect and flag suspicious messages before they reach consumers.

"This aligns with the NCC's broader commitment to improving the quality of telecom services and advancing consumer trust in the industry."

Chief Executive Officer of Airtel Nigeria, Dinesh Balsingh, said the AI-powered spam alert service was developed to protect customers and keep them in a secure state.

"So, spam, today, is a menace and it is something which is globally recognised. About 60 per cent of our consumers receive spam SMS in a month and these are unwanted SMS. For a scam to happen, it starts with a spam message," Balsingh said.

NEPC TASKS MANUFACTURERS TO EXPLORE EXPORT POTENTIALS

The Nigerian Export Promotion Council (NEPC) has tasked Nigerian manufacturers to seek information on how to enhance the export potentials of their products.

Head of Product and Marketing Department of NEPC, Ogun State office,

Hadiza Kashiya, gave the charge at a Strategic Focus Group meeting organised by the National Agency for Science and Engineering Infrastructure (NASENI) on made-in-Nigeria products in Abeokuta, Ogun State.

She said one of the major problems confronting Nigerian manufacturers in exporting their goods was their inability to seek information on the procedures they should follow on export market.

"Many manufacturers do not seek information on what they need to export their products. In most cases, if we give publications on these requirements, most Nigerians will not read them. It is not enough for us to complain. We need to make use of information made available to us," she stated.

Kashiya urged Nigerians to change their perception about Nigeria-made-product. She argued that most of the locally made products being rejected by Nigerians are more durable and of better quality than imported products, adding that the nation's economy will not grow if Nigerians continue to reject them.

She said: "As Nigerians, we have to change our perception about a lot of things. We need to look inward and see that this is our country. A lot of made-in-Nigeria products are good. Many products are going out of this country and are being rebranded when they get to other countries.

"For instance, Nigerian lubricant is one of the best in the world. We have ginger and palm oil. Malaysia still comes to Nigeria to export palm oil. If we continue to reject our own products, then how do we grow our economy?"

In his remarks, NASENI team leader at the event, Mr. Babajide Soyoya, said that



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the low demand for made-in-Nigeria products was not only affecting the economy but also leading to unemployment, as jobs are being exported to other countries that produce goods imported into the country.

He said NASENI is engaging stakeholders to gather insights on how to effectively promote and encourage the use of Nigerian products and services.

To achieve this goal, he said NASENI is collaborating with various industries and empowering skilled labor, adding that the agency is also visiting firms and signing Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with industries to strengthen local manufacturing and drive technological innovation.

"NASENI is engaging focus groups to gather information from stakeholders on how we can come in properly to promote and encourage the use of our products and services. We are collaborating with various industries and empowering skilled labor to drive technological innovation and boost local production," he added.

FED GOVT'S POLICIES WILL ENHANCE AIRLINES' COMPETITIVENESS, SAYS KEYAMO

Minister of Aviation and Aerospace Development, Mr Festus Keyamo has said the federal government is ready to advance the capacity and competitiveness of the nation's national carriers via implementation of fly Nigeria Bill 2024.

Keyamo said the 2025 Ministerial Press Briefing Series, organised by the Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation.

According to him, Fly Nigeria Bill 2024 is meant to enhance capacity and competitiveness of Nigeria's national carriers to promote national pride and improve service delivery in the aviation sector.

"The Fly Nigeria Bill, a proposed legislation, aims to prioritise Nigerian flag carriers for all government-funded travel, whether domestic, regional, or international, ensuring that Nigerian airlines are used first.

"The Bill's primary goal is to boost the Nigerian aviation industry by ensuring that government-funded travel, including trips by officials, contractors, and grantees, utilises Nigerian airlines whenever possible.

"The Fly Nigeria Bill mandates that all government-funded air travel must first consider Nigerian flag carriers before any foreign carriers, even for international routes.

He explained that the initiative aimed to create a more competitive and sustainable aviation sector, allowing Nigerian airlines to compete globally toward economic growth via job creation, attract investment, and conserve foreign exchange.

According to him, the Fly Nigeria Bill is seen as a way to foster national pride and ensure that Nigerian airlines are recognised as leaders in the aviation industry.

He added that the idea for the Bill had been in development for over 15 years, but was committed to fast-tracking its implementation.

Keyamo emphasised that the Fly Nigeria Bill would be a crucial step in protecting Nigeria's aviation market from external dominance to ensure local airlines have the opportunity to thrive.

According to him, the Federal Government has planned to strengthen regulations for a safer aviation ecosystem by tackling illegal commercial operation by private jet owners.

The minister acknowledged the receipt of the final report of the Ministerial Task Force (MTF) on Illegal Private Charter Operations and Related Matters.

According to him, addressing illegal private airline operations aligns with President Bola Tinubu's vision of "doing the right thing" across all sectors of the national economy.

"The issue of illegal charter operations involves private jets and aircrafts operating outside the law, especially those obtaining licenses under the PNCF for unlawful activities.

"We are confident that we will have the freedom to take necessary actions. Our goal is a safer, more secure aviation ecosystem in Nigeria," he said.

Keyamo acknowledged that many people had worked for years to create safer environments and regulatory standards for aviation.

NIGERIA BOOSTS OIL PRODUCTION BY 70,000BPD ABOVE OPEC TARGET

A survey by Reuters has revealed that Nigeria is pumping 70,000 barrels per day above the quota allocated by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

According to the survey, OPEC oil output rose, as Iranian exports held strong, despite renewed attempts by the United States of America to curb the flows.

The OPEC nations pumped 26.74 million barrels per day last month, up 170,000 bpd from January's revised total, the survey, with Iran and Nigeria posting the



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largest gains.

OPEC+, which includes OPEC plus Russia and other allies, is keeping production cuts in place through March due to expectations of limited demand and rising output outside the group, but decided on Monday to stick with its plan to start raising output in April.

OPEC's biggest rise, of 80,000 bpd, came from Iran, the survey found, with output of 3.30 million bpd. This matched September's figure which was the highest since 2018, the Reuters survey showed.

Iranian oil exports recovered during former U.S. President Joe Biden's term, despite U.S. sanctions. Under his successor Donald Trump the U.S. is renewing efforts to cut them to zero.

The second-largest gain in output came from Nigeria where exports rose and domestic usage increased at the Dangote refinery. Nigeria is pumping 70,000 bpd above its OPEC+ target.

Output in OPEC's two biggest producers, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, edged lower and higher respectively, the survey found. Both nations are pumping less than their OPEC+ targets. Output in the United Arab Emirates was slightly above its target.

While the survey and January data provided by OPEC's secondary sources show the UAE and Iraq are pumping close to the quotas, other estimates, such as those of the International Energy Agency, suggest they are pumping significantly more.

GOVT'S INVESTMENT IN RAIL SECTOR YIELDING FRUITS, SAYS OPEIFA

The Managing Director of the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) Dr Kayode Opeifa, has said the huge investments

of the Federal Government in rail development has led to an improved service delivery and greater operational efficiency of the rail sector.

He added that Nigerians should expect more rail development that would cut across the six geo-political zones of the country under the Renewed Hope Agenda of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration.

He spoke while playing host to the leadership of the Chartered Institute of Transport Administration (CIOTA), led by the National President and Chairman of the Board, Dr Olusegun Obayendo.

He said: "We now have in the Nigerian Railway Corporation a teaming group of professionals who can be regarded as the heroes of railway mobility. These people have kept the nation's railway going simply because the Chinese government and the China Civil Engineering Construction Corporation (CCECC) have encouraged technology transfer, which has helped in building human capacity in line with the intentions of the Federal Government's investments."

According to him, the NRC will be building on the competencies of these crop of engineers to improve capacity and efficiency of the railway as the corporation is set to maximize its potentials within the limit of the funds available to it.

"We have a crop of young engineers who can remodel and retrofit any coach and locomotive engines. Our engineers can build train tracks given the support they have gained from the CCECC and the Chinese government," he said.

Opeifa who said mobility is the fifth pillar of the Renewed Hope Agenda added that much of the initiatives that would come under this would see

massive rehabilitation of the narrow gauge.

The NRC said the NRC is now poised to take full advantage of its position as the facilitator of business, fulfilling its traditional mandate not only as a rail transport management company, but also a logistics firm.

He said the legacy narrow gauge tracks is already moving into the ports, where in partnership with one terminal operator, the corporation is already moving 70, 40 feet containers thrice a week, from the Apapa Port to the Inland Dry Port in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, while talks are at advanced stage for another terminal operator to soon commence bulk movement operation.

He said in a matter of months, the corporation would achieve seamless cargo movement beyond Ibadan from Lagos, as movement to Ilorin, Mokwa and Minna would soon begin.

"We are happy to inform Nigerians that we are gradually taking back our space as the centre of bulk or large cargo movement over a long distance which hitherto has been taken over by other modes especially the road.

"We are not only working on the standard gauge to move cargoes, we are also working on the nation's food belt. We are reactivating the Idogo line between Ogun State and Lagos, to ensure that we move farm produce to the markets in the city," he said.

He said the NRC is encouraging state governments to take advantage of the train spurs within their territories to build new lines that will serve the people's transportation needs.

According to him, the NRX is working at granting states to get Track Access, the same extended to Lagos State's Red line, which would serve the needs of the



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local communities.

He listed Ogun, Bauchi, Niger, Plateau, Borno, among states already showing some interest to copy Lagos State just as he said opportunities also abound for regional development Commissions to invest in the rail sector.

“We have started discussions with the DAWN Commission, the precursor of the South West Development Commission, on rail development, while talks are also ongoing with other regional bodies in this regard,” he said.

Within the month, the corporation, Opeifa disclosed, would commence the Jos-Kuru line, as part of the commitment of the Plateau State government, ensuring the utilisation of the rail systems in its area.

He added that in the short to long term, the corporation is looking at the possibility of mini grids to complement efforts of its research and development unit to deploy Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) engines to service the routes.

He therefore urged the private sector to play more active roles in the rail systems and ensure that the rail economy in the country is boosted.

Earlier, the CIOTA President, Olusegun Obayendo, commended President Tinubu for his foresight in picking Opeifa for the job.

Also describing him as a “round peg in a round hole”, Obayendo said Opeifa, a Fellow of the Institute, has the right pedigree to make the best of the assignment.

Also speaking both Prof Iyiola Oni, Dean, college of Multimodal Transportation, at the University of Lagos, and former Dean of the School of Transportation and Logistics Development, LASU, Prof Samuel Gbadebo Odewunmi, said

CIOTA will back the new MD up to succeed in his assignment.

The regarded the opportunity as the best for CIOTA to prove it's centrality to the management of transportation in the country.

In a related development, the Terminal Operators under the NRC concessioned areas, have paid a courtesy visit to the NRC MD, where they pledged they total allegiance to the success of the mandate to move cargoes within their bonded terminals by rail to anywhere across the country.

NIGERIA OPEN FOR BUSINESS, SAYS ODUWOLE

Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, has assured the international community that the country is changing its business climate.

Dr Oduwole disclosed this in an interview with the Cable Network News at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting Davos.

She discussed how Nigeria is slowly, but surely changing its business climate.

The minister said in the last nine years, she has been part of the team working on business climate reforms.

She said over 200 verifiable reforms have been either implemented or verified by the World Bank.

Oduwole said despite these successes, progress is needed within the business environment.

She said: “We need to start making sure there's more transparency and efficiency. And we've been doing that work for nine years. There's just no shortcut. We continue to make it a progressively easier place to start and

grow a business.

“There is no shortcut. It is the people, issues, the processes and infrastructure. We need to start making sure there is more transparency and efficiency.”

In what to expect in the next four years, Oduwole said: “I'm telling the world, Nigeria is open for business. We're digital. Five out of nine unicorns in Africa are Nigerian. Nigerian talent, our youth – incredible. Don't miss the wave. We are resourceful. We are resilient. We are agile in spite of the deficiency in power. Look at our economy.

“Nigerian businesses have learned to trust the ease of, people, processes and to a lesser extent, infrastructure. The pay back has been delivered on that mandate. Now it's time to take it further, move it to investment promotion, move it to exports of services because it needs less infrastructure. So it's a quicker win for Nigeria.”

On aviation regulation within the continent, Oduwole said: “Our minister of aviation has put in impressive reforms. So, part of why you have that lack of connectivity is, for instance, Nigeria was a signatory to the Cape Town convention, but we hadn't done the procedural rules at the federal high court. So that has been done last year. And so now the aviation sector is paying attention.”

On the importance of her role she said: “It's about excellence, it's about impact. It's about being good at what you do and being committed to your role to deliver for over 200 million Nigerian people.”

On Nigeria's digital future, Oduwole said: “I'm telling the world, Nigeria is open for business. We're digital. Five out of nine unicorns in Africa are Nigerian. Nigerian talent, our youth – incredible. Don't miss the wave. We are



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resourceful. We are resilient. We are agile in spite of the deficiency in power. Look at our economy."

SEC TO REGULATE CAPITAL MARKET WITH BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has said the adoption of blockchain technology will enhance efficiency and aid the regulation of Nigeria's capital market.

Director-General of the SEC, Dr. Emomotimi Agama, made this known during a meeting with a delegation from the Algorand Foundation at the Commission's headquarters in Abuja.

He noted blockchain's potential to address key challenges in Africa, such as financial exclusion, lack of transparency, and inefficiencies in both public and private sectors.

Blockchain is a decentralized system that allows multiple parties to verify and validate transactions independently. It is recognized for its ability to enhance trust and security.

Dr. Agama noted that leveraging this digital ledger technology would enable the SEC to build a more transparent and efficient regulatory framework for the capital market.

"We want to activate blockchain in our efficiency; we want to be able to use it to regulate our market. My dream is to have all of the information we need to do our work in a blockchain. We want to bring technology into our system for effectiveness, where we can work seamlessly, and everything that we do will be traceable," Agama stated.

He further stated that the SEC is committed to international best practices by collaborating with global regulatory bodies such as the

International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO). This, he explained, ensures that Nigeria's regulatory framework remains robust and adaptive while aligning with global standards to foster cross-border collaboration and investor confidence.

To harness blockchain responsibly, the SEC has introduced programmes such as the Accelerated Regulatory Incubation Programme (ARIP) and the Regulatory Incubation (RI) Programme. These initiatives provide a controlled environment for firms in the digital asset space to test new models, products, and services while ensuring consumer protection. Agama noted that the recent approval-in-principle granted to two digital asset exchanges and five firms participating in these programmes shows the Commission's commitment to supporting innovation.

"In this era of technological innovation, the question is not whether Africa will adopt blockchain, but how it will shape its adoption to maximize its benefits for all the people," he added.

Agama stressed that blockchain's immutable and tamper-proof structure ensures transparency in financial transactions and regulatory oversight. He disclosed plans to integrate blockchain into the SEC's operations to improve accountability, stating, "Wherever there is a toxin in the blockchain, we will find it and deal with it. We will extend it to the point where the review of applications will be done on the blockchain, so whoever drops the ball will be seen."

As part of efforts to drive technological advancement, Agama said the SEC has engaged the Algorand Foundation to explore blockchain's potential applications and benefits for the Commission. He stressed the

importance of continuous education and skill development for SEC staff, noting that regulators must be well-equipped to oversee the evolving digital market.

"It is very interesting that we are having this opportunity to do this for our organization. This is a knowledge-based institution, and I am leading from the front. All our staff must begin to retool themselves because as regulators, we have to be on top of our game," he said.

Speaking at the meeting, Global Head of Business Development at the Algorand Foundation, Mr. Eric Wragge, reiterated the foundation's commitment to democratizing blockchain technology and supporting organizations in leveraging its benefits.

"We are here to tell you what blockchain is all about and how it can help your work. We are here to democratize the technology—it's free to use, anybody can use it. Our job is to go around the world, discover where the technology can be used, and help people implement it," Wragge stated.

AFCFTA DIGITAL TRADE PROTOCOL EYES 50% INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE GROWTH BY 2030

Nigeria's Vice President, Kashim Shettima, has stated that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Digital Trade Protocol is set to grow intra-African trade from 18 per cent in 2022 to 50 per cent by 2030.

Commenting at the AfCFTA Digital Trade Workshop and Global Market, with the theme, "Unlocking State Exports Potential," held in Abuja, Shettima who was represented by the Minister of Industry, Trade, and Investment, Dr. Jumoke Oduwole, highlights Nigeria's role in digital commerce, citing the



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country's 109 million internet users and expanding mobile economy as key enablers.

He emphasised that Nigeria's advancements in mobile payments have revolutionized cross-border transactions, financial inclusion, and digital commerce, positioning the country as Africa's digital trade hub.

"The internet economy is expected to contribute 5.2 per cent of Africa's GDP this year, with the digital economy projected to grow to \$180 billion, up from \$115 billion in 2020," he noted.

Shettima reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to modernising passport application systems and upgrading port infrastructure to streamline trade, reduce customs processing times, and strengthen the country's role in handling West Africa's cargo.

"We must move from policy discussions to implementing digitally enabled trade that fosters economic prosperity," he urged.

The African Union (AU) recently recognised Nigeria as the Digital Trade Champion for Africa under the AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol, a status confirmed during the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Governor Uba Sani of Kaduna State, represented by Deputy Governor Dr. Hadiza Balarabe, warns that any nation failing to embrace digital trade risks being left behind. He commends the Tinubu administration for its achievements in the ICT sector.

"Digital trade platforms have broken traditional barriers, allowing businesses of all sizes to access regional and global markets more efficiently," he says.

MINISTER: FG WILL TRANSFORM AGRIBUSINESS THROUGH PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Abubakar Kyari, has reassured Nigerians that government will not leave any stone unturned in its determination to use agricultural sector to stimulate the Nigerian economy.

Speaking during an inspection of Agbeyewa farms at Itapaji Ekiti, in Ekiti State, Kyari reaffirmed commitment to transforming Nigeria's agribusiness sector into a thriving agribusiness hub, with the aim of driving economic growth and positioning the country as a key player in both regional and global food markets.

Kyari underscored government's vision to move beyond subsistence farming, focusing on developing a robust agribusiness ecosystem that would empower farmers and foster private sector-led growth.

He explained that under the leadership of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, agriculture has been elevated to a vital economic sector, with the declaration of a state of emergency on agriculture seen as a call to action.

While stressing the importance of a structured agribusiness sector to ensure national stability and social prosperity, the minister highlighted the abundant agricultural potential in Nigeria, citing the country's vast arable land, favourable climate, and youthful, entrepreneurial population.

He noted that with a domestic market of over 200 million consumers and access to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Nigeria stands as an attractive destination for agribusiness investment.

The minister further discussed Nigeria's

strategic partnerships with international development institutions such as the African Development Bank, the World Bank, and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

These collaborations, he stated, are aimed at financing large-scale agricultural projects and enhancing food systems resilience amid global economic and climate challenges.

Upon arrival at the Ekiti Agroallied International Airport, the minister was warmly received by the Ekiti State Commissioner for Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Ebenezer Boluwade, who represented Governor Biodun Abayomi Oyebanji of Ekiti State.

The visit forms part of the President Bola Tinubu administration's drive to engage the private sector in the agricultural revolution and foster economic prosperity. Agbeyewa Farms, recognised for its cutting-edge farming techniques, has been identified as a key partner in the mission.

Agbeyewa Farms' 1,500 hectares of cassava fields, cultivated over the past two years, have positioned the farm as the largest cassava producer in Nigeria. During the visit, the minister toured the farm's extensive fields, which highlight the integration of technology and sustainable farming practices aimed at increasing productivity and ensuring long-term food security.

The farm's efforts have not only contributed to the country's food supply but have also created numerous jobs, empowering local communities.

Minister Kyari engaged with Agbeyewa Farms' team, lauding their initiatives and stressing the importance of collaboration between government and private enterprises to unlock Nigeria's



agricultural potential.

NIGERIA NEEDS MORE INVESTMENTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Nigeria must create a favourable business environment and attract the right mix of domestic and international investments to boost its renewable energy sector, experts have said.

This was made known during a legal and policy workshop organised by Natural Justice, the Renewable Energy Association of Nigeria (REANO), and Just Energy Transition Africa (JETA).

Speaking, Country Manager of Natural Justice Nigeria, Micheal Karikpo, emphasised the need for strong policies that support local manufacturing of renewable energy components for Nigeria and the broader West African region. Karikpo noted that with the right regulatory frameworks, functional institutions, and stable policies, Nigeria could naturally mobilise investments for renewable energy.

He described the country as being at an “energy crossroads,” pointing out that decades of energy crises have stifled businesses.

However, he highlighted recent policy reforms that, if well-implemented, could transform Nigeria's energy security, drive economic growth, and expand access to electricity.

He also addressed the global shift in renewable energy commitments, mentioning that while OPEC has encouraged African nations to tap into their oil reserves, Nigeria must explore alternative economic pathways that generate comparable revenue without the environmental damage associated with fossil fuels.

Karikpo further urged civil society

organisations to engage more actively with the government.

“There is a real possibility for positive collaboration between communities, civil society, and policymakers. My biggest takeaway from this meeting is that the government is open to dialogue, and civil society must seize the opportunity to engage on issues of sustainable energy,” he said.

Lagos State Commissioner for Energy and Mineral Resources, Mr. Biodun Ogunleye, highlighted Lagos' investments in renewable energy across sectors, including street lighting, tertiary institutions, and hospitals.

He added that the state is actively supporting grid-connected renewable infrastructure to enhance grid stability and lower electricity costs.

FG ADVISES WOMEN ON CAPITAL MARKET INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Federal Government has called on women across the country to explore investment opportunities in the capital market, describing it as a vital tool for wealth creation and economic empowerment.

The appeal came during the launch of the Securities and Exchange Commission Podcast in Abuja on Tuesday, an event aimed at boosting financial literacy and inclusion.

The Director of Information and Public Relations at the Federal Ministry of Finance, Mohammed Manga, revealed this in a statement on X (formerly Twitter) on Tuesday.

The Minister of State for Finance, Dr. Doris Uzoka-Anite, who officiated the launch, emphasised the transformative potential of women's participation in

the capital market.

She said, “Opening opportunities for women in the capital market would create a pathway to wealth creation.

“We need to come up with more policies, reforms, or frameworks that encourage more women to participate in the financial sector.

“By leveraging the capital market, Nigerian women can unlock new opportunities for wealth creation, economic growth, and prosperity.”

The statement further tied the initiative to Nigeria's broader economic ambitions, noting, “As the country strives to achieve its \$1 trn economy target, the active participation of women in the capital market will play a vital role in driving sustainable development and economic transformation.”

Highlighting the innate financial acumen of women, Uzoka-Anite noted their ability to manage resources effectively.

“Women are very good with investing; we know what to do with money. We know how to manage money in the house, and it will go around the whole family. If a woman learns how to make that money multiply and how to save it in a way that it will continue to add value and meet her needs and her family's needs, I think she will love that,” she remarked.

The Minister also acknowledged the unique challenges women face in balancing professional and familial responsibilities, calling for a dual approach to support their involvement in the financial sector.

She added, “Assisting women in the capital market is a multi-pronged approach; the individuals need to do



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more to be heard.

“The institutional approach, where we encourage the institutions to give women a chance, to treat women based on their competencies and capacities, and encourage them, is equally critical.

The SEC Podcast, hailed as 'very innovative and highly needed at this time' by Uzoka-Anite, is designed to bridge the knowledge gap about the capital market.

Speaking at the event, SEC Director-General, Dr. Emomotimi Agama, elaborated on its purpose.

“We want people in the most remote parts of this country to be aware of the capital market and how they can participate to create wealth,” he said.

Meanwhile, the SEC has said that it will be training selected women in capital market activities through its training arm, the Nigerian Capital Market Institute.

SEC Director-General, Dr. Emomotimi Agama, disclosed this initiative during a meeting with the Minister of Women Affairs, Hajia Imaan Suleiman-Ibrahim, which was part of SEC's activities to commemorate International Women's Day 2025 under the theme 'Women: The Voice of the Capital Market.'

Agama said, “In all we do, protection is key, and investor education is also very important. We pledge to support the work you are doing by offering to provide financial knowledge to women. We will offer financial education at the NCMI to selected women once a month.

“Women have been left out of the capital market for too long; they need to be empowered. The \$1tn economy being proposed by President Bola Tinubu cannot be possible without women. If you want to grow this market today, one of the greatest apostles will

be women. There is a multiplication for everything you give the woman. Commodity trading is mainly done by women; they are involved in buying and selling different kinds of commodities. Given the importance of women in the development of the capital market, we feel the most auspicious time to meet with you is the International Women's Day celebration. We have tagged it 'The voice of the women in the capital market.' We need the women to push out this message. Our being here today is part of our commitment to bring about a new paradigm shift in the education of women on capital market issues.”

CBN INTENSIFIES REGULATORY OVERSIGHT TO STRENGTHEN NIGERIA'S FINANCIAL SYSTEM

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening the financial sector by enhancing regulatory oversight, improving risk management frameworks, and ensuring strict compliance with global banking standards.

In a rapidly evolving financial landscape, the apex bank said it was taking decisive steps to prevent financial crimes, maintain transparency, and reinforce public confidence in the Nigerian banking system.

Special Adviser to the CBN Governor on Compliance, Ms. Shola Phillips, made the comments at a high-level Mandatory Compliance and Anti-Money Laundering (AML) Training Workshop, held in collaboration with Citi, at the weekend in Lagos.

In a statement, the apex bank reiterated its commitment to upholding regulatory excellence, ensuring that Nigerian financial institutions aligned with international compliance frameworks

to mitigate risks, prevent financial crimes, and foster a transparent banking environment. The statement stressed that effective enforcement of anti-money laundering and counter-financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) measures were a top priority in efforts to protect Nigeria's financial system from illicit activities and enhance investor confidence.

It stated, “Regulators expect financial institutions to maintain dynamic, risk-based AML/CFT programmes that are responsive to the evolving financial environment.

“Proactive engagement with regulatory developments and the integration of innovative compliance solutions are essential for institutions to meet these expectations effectively.”

The workshop, attended by compliance officers, trade operations specialists, and correspondent banking teams from various financial institutions, provided in-depth insights into global regulatory trends, emerging financial risks, and strategies to enhance Nigeria's ability to meet international banking standards.

With increasing scrutiny on financial institutions worldwide, experts at the event underscored the importance of robust governance structures to mitigate risks and uphold the integrity of the financial system.

Managing Director of Citi's Correspondent Banking Group, Siobhan Ni Ealaithe, highlighted the critical role of robust governance frameworks in mitigating risks. Ealaithe underscored the necessity of Know Your Customer (KYC), Know Your Business (KYB), and Know Your Transaction (KYT) protocols in preventing illicit financial activities.

Head of EMEA AML Risk Management for Foreign Correspondent Banking, Citi



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Stephanie Bailey, provided a stark assessment of financial crime risks. Bailey stated that over \$3 trillion in illicit funds flowed through the global financial system annually. She urged financial institutions to strengthen due diligence measures, leverage technology-driven risk assessments, and uphold transparency in all transactions.

The workshop aligned with CBN Governor Olayemi Cardoso's vision to uphold regulatory excellence and strengthen Nigeria's financial system.

Cardoso had consistently emphasised, "A strong financial system is built on trust, and trust is earned through integrity and compliance. The CBN will continue to set high regulatory standards to protect Nigeria's financial ecosystem and ensure its alignment with global best practices."

By fostering a strong culture of compliance and strengthening risk management frameworks, the CBN aimed to safeguard Nigeria's financial sector while ensuring its resilience and credibility locally and globally.

FG MULLS SETTING UP BUILDING MATERIAL HUBS TO TACKLE HOUSING AFFORDABILITY ISSUES

The federal government says plans are on the table to set up building materials manufacturing hubs in each of the six geo-political zones of the country to reduce input costs and make houses affordable for those who need them.

Besides costs of land and funds, building materials, whose prices have hit the roofs in recent times on account of inflation, constitute a significant percentage of construction costs, thereby jerking up house prices and

putting them beyond the reach of many.

To underscore the seriousness attached to this plan, government says there will be series of fiscal incentives to support it, including tax reductions for local manufacturers, customs duty waivers for importing machinery and raw materials, grants and subsidies to scale up production, access to low-interest financing, and Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) to drive innovation.

Ahmed Dangiwa, Minister of Housing and Urban Development, who disclosed this plan and the incentives, added that the manufacturing hubs would be strategically located within existing trade zones to take advantage of tax incentives, reduce regulatory bottlenecks, and enhance market access.

The minister spoke at a high-level stakeholders' engagement on in Lagos with the theme, 'Actualizing the Renewed Hope Agenda for Housing and Urban Development: Examining Strategies, Identifying Opportunities to Boost Scale and Impact.'

It gathered key players from the housing sector to deliberate on strategies for boosting local production and reducing construction costs.

Dangiwa assured that the hubs would significantly lower the cost of building materials and would ultimately improve housing affordability.

"Boosting local production and implementing strategic fiscal incentives will not only cut construction costs, but also make housing more accessible to millions of Nigerians," he said.

Abdullahi Ata, Minister of State for Housing and Urban Development, provided further insight, revealing that the hubs would be set up in Abia, Ogun, Kwara, Kano, Gombe, and Delta States,

each serving its respective geo-political zone.

"These hubs will not only increase production capacity but also promote vocational training and spur innovation in the building materials sector," Ata noted.

To oversee the implementation of the project, the Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development will establish a central oversight committee chaired by the Minister, with representation from state governments, universities, vocational institutions, and industry unions.

Victor Umeh, Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, pledged the National Assembly's support in providing the necessary policy framework to ensure the initiative succeeds.

"We will champion legislative incentives such as tax relief, import duty waivers, and access to affordable financing to enable these hubs to thrive," Umeh assured.

Similarly, Abiante Awaji, Chairman of the House Committee on Regional Planning and Urban Development, urged stakeholders to focus on practical and sustainable solutions that will have a lasting impact on Nigerians.

Shuaib Belgore, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry, emphasized the importance of the engagement as a platform to attract investment and foster innovation in the local building materials industry.

"We need to explore policies that enhance local production, improve infrastructure, address energy costs, and promote the use of alternative building materials," Belgore stated.



MINISTER TAU COMMENDS MATABOGE ON HER ELECTION AS AFRICAN UNION COMMISSIONER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENERGY

The Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition, Mr Parks Tau, has hailed the election of Ms Lerato Mataboge as the African Union (AU) Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, describing it as a momentous achievement for South Africa in particular, and the African continent as a whole. Mataboge is currently the Deputy Director-General of Exports at the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic)

Tau emphasises that Mataboge's visionary leadership, extensive knowledge of Africa's history, and deep understanding of its challenges will enable her to transform obstacles into opportunities that drive sustainable development and regional integration.

"The election of Ms Mataboge marks a pivotal step in transforming Africa's infrastructure and energy sectors, while also advancing gender representation in leadership. It is a testament to South Africa's capacity to contribute its highly skilled experts to advance the flagship projects of the AU's Agenda 2063. Her appointment also aligns with Africa's commitment to regional integration, infrastructure development, and industrial advancement – key pillars that will strengthen intra-African trade and propel the continent towards inclusive and sustainable growth," says Tau.

Tau adds that as the AU Commissioner for Infrastructure and Energy, Mataboge will play a pivotal role in addressing colonial-era transportation routes that

were primarily designed for the extraction of Africa's raw minerals for the development of Western nations.

"Under her leadership, these routes will be transformed into modern spatial development corridors that promote economic diversification and industrialisation," says Tau.

Mataboge's mandate includes overseeing the development of strategic economic infrastructure projects that facilitate mineral beneficiation, agro-processing, and the expansion of energy generation and distribution networks across the continent.

"Mataboge brings over two decades of experience in global policy, trade, and investment facilitation within the African continent. She has played an instrumental role in the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a transformative agreement aimed at boosting intra-African trade and economic integration," notes Tau.

Between 2012 and 2018, Mataboge served as the co-chairperson of the South African Presidential Working Group on the North-South Corridor during South Africa's chairmanship of the AU's Presidential Infrastructure Championing Initiative.

"Her wealth of experience, strategic foresight, and innovative leadership will be invaluable in advancing Africa's infrastructure and energy agenda. As the continent moves towards realising its development aspirations under Agenda 2063, Ms Mataboge's appointment signals a new era of progress, where Africa's infrastructure and energy sectors will be leveraged to drive economic transformation, job creation, and sustainable development," stresses Tau.

He reaffirms South Africa's unwavering support for Ms Mataboge in her new role and expressed confidence that she would make a lasting impact in shaping

the continent's infrastructure and energy landscape for generations to come.

MPUMALANGA BUSINESSES URGED TO USE CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AGREEMENT TO EXPAND MARKET INTO REST OF AFRICA

The implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement to (AfCFTA) offers businesspeople in South Africa unlimited opportunities to grow their businesses and expand their market into the rest of the continent. This was said by the Director of Africa Bilateral Economic Relations at the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), Mr Calvin Phume.

Phume was speaking at a workshop that was hosted by the dtic in partnership with the Mpumalanga Department of Economic Development and Tourism and Gert Sibande District Municipality in Ermelo, Mpumalanga.

The purpose of the workshop was to equip the Mpumalanga businesspeople with information that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities presented by the AfCFTA in order to enter the African export market and expand their businesses into the continent.

"The African Continental Free Trade Agreement has created a single market comprising more than 1.3 billion people that businesspeople across the continent can take advantage of. This will provide South African companies with new market access opportunities to key markets in the African continent beyond the Southern Africa Development Community," said Phume.

He added that the main objective of the agreement was to eliminate all barriers to trade in Africa in order to enable free flow of goods and services across the continent.

"This is meant to allow businesspeople

like yourselves to contribute in increasing intra-African trade and investment. Through the Agenda 2063: *The Africa We Want*, African leaders have set themselves an ambition of increasing intra-Africa trade from the current 17% to 81% by 2035," noted Phume.

He stressed that the agreement emphasises harmonisation of trade regulation in the continent, value-addition, economic inclusion, industrialisation and beneficiation.

"These open up myriad opportunities for your companies to increase production and create jobs for women, youth and people with disabilities in order to service the huge market that has been created by the AfCFTA. This is your chance to grow your businesses by tapping into the expansive African market, increase your exports, increase your revenue, and contribute positively in growing the intra-African trade and investment," he said.

Phume advised businesspeople to set themselves realistic ambitions when they venture into the rest of Africa, as the imposing size of the market created by the free trade agreement offers huge benefits and rewards, but could also be challenging and daunting for their small businesses.

"It is important that you conduct a thorough research and study of the market you intend entering because the fact that there are 55 countries means that each market has its own dynamics related to business environment and culture, infrastructure, logistical requirements, as well as norms and standards. It is always advisable to partner with a local company that can assist you to navigate the regulatory challenges and other hurdles. This will enable you to transform obstacles into opportunities that will be profitable and rewarding to your business," advised Phume.

THE DTIC COMMITS TO SUPPORTING NEW INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMERCIALISATION

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), will continuously support innovation and technology development for commercialisation for businesses who are in need of financial and non-financial assistance from the department and its agencies. This was said by the Director of Innovation and Technology at the dtic, Ms Takalani Ramuthaga. She was speaking at a workshop attended by entrepreneurs in Hartswater, Northern Cape.

According to Ramuthaga, this entails support for new innovation and technology development through the Support for Industrial Innovation Programme of the dtic (SPII) and commercialisation of the developed technology through the Khoebo Innovation Programme Promotion (KIPP) of the dtic.

"The non-financial support will focus on creating networking platforms for technology development and commercialisation and focused technology development and innovative thinking at grassroots levels through the local economic development in municipalities and Small Enterprise Development and Finance Agency (Sedfa) situated in different district across the districts," she said.

Ramuthaga acknowledged the lack of applications from innovators from the Northern Cape, especially from previously disadvantaged communities. She encouraged them to engage the department and other support institutions for funding and support.

"In a developing country such as South Africa, innovation has the potential to facilitate grassroots entrepreneurship and could help integrate previously marginalised groups into circuits of economic activities," Ramuthaga added.

SPII is designed to promote technology development in South Africa's industry, through the provision of financial assistance for the development of innovative products and/or processes. It is focussed specifically on the development phase, which begins at the conclusion of basic research and ends at the point when a pre-production prototype has been produced.

THE DTIC INNOVATION PROMOTION PROGRAMME TO FOCUS ON TOWNSHIP AND RURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Designed with the main focus of commercialising innovation from rural and township areas, Khoebo Innovation Promotion Programme (KIPP) offers financial and non-financial support to Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) who have developed new products or services with market potential.

According to the Senior Account Manager of the KIPP, Ms Refilwe Sekutu, the main objective of the programme is to enable early stage innovative MSMEs to penetrate the market with their locally developed and market ready products and services, resulting in a more competitive economic environment and thereby facilitating economic growth for South African.

KIPP works with technology development funding instruments such as the Support for Industrial Innovation (SPII) programme of the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic) which assist innovators with a proof of concept to develop working prototypes as well as fund the protection of Intellectual property for innovators to acquire rights on their inventions.

"KIPP is divided into two sub-schemes namely, Small, Medium Enterprise Growth Scheme (SMEGS) which offers a loan funding and the Grassroots Innovator Facilitation (GIFs) which is a grant fund towards commercialisation of



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innovative products and services developed within communities. Most of these products and solutions arise from a need to solve a particular challenge at local level," said Sekutu.

She also mentioned the fund provides non-financial support to assist with certification, development of a marketing strategy, governance, mentorship, and company policies.

"Although the programme's emphasis is on township and rural entrepreneurs, we are not excluding anyone outside these setting, but only locally developed innovations, both products and services across all sectors, that are already fully developed and are market-ready will be considered under the KIPP fund," she added.

The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), will host this year's annual Furniture Design Competition Awards ceremony at the Homemakers Fair, at the Kyalami Grand Prix and International Expo Centre in Sandton under the theme *Shedding Light on Great Design*.

The competition has been established to create an opportunity to promote innovation in the development of new, competitive furniture products and to contribute towards skills development initiatives. Participants include students from local academic institutions who are studying towards related fields and other emerging furniture designers.

The competition is a partnership between the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic), South African Furniture Initiative (SAFI), Industrial Development Corporation, Proudly South Africa, Furntech, and other industry players such as, Mecad Solidworks, PG Bison, Lewis Group, Zaptly, Rubio Monocoat, The African Institute of Interior Design Professionals (IID) and South African National Parks will also sponsor competition prizes.

The Acting Deputy Director-General of

the Sectors at the dtic, Dr Tebogo Makube says the competition complements the development of design courses and design workshops.

"The Furniture Industry Masterplan adopted in 2021 identifies the shortage of high-level skills in the furniture industry such as design and skilled artisans in furniture manufacturing as a major concern. This limits South African furniture manufacturers' capacity to supply world-class products in line with both domestic and global market demand, and thus negatively affects the industry's competitiveness," says Makube.

He adds that design can also be used as a creative instrument that will link the industry players' creativity and innovative products.

"It is thus possible to position the local industry as the producer of high-value niche furniture products that are globally competitive based on quality and/or differentiated designs. This requires a concerted effort on the part of the public and private sectors to develop programs that address the challenges that constrain the industry from achieving potential growth levels and significantly raise the levels of competitiveness," says Makube.

FURNITURE DESIGN COMPETITION WINNING COMPANY HAILS THE DTIC INITIATIVE FOR FOSTERING INNOVATION

Eden Sleep Innovation, a bed-making company, is in a celebratory mood after walking off with the first prize in the manufacturing category for its hybrid flatpack bed base design, at the annual Furniture Design Competition Awards hosted by the Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (the dtic).

The creative design known as Unibase, is engineered and manufactured locally and combines sustainable wood and recycled plastic. It is a compact 'carry and go' bed base that can easily fit into a car

or taxi, as well as through doorways and staircases. It also saves up to 85 percent in space throughout the supply chain, including warehousing and transportation.

The Chief Director of Agroprocessing and Forestry Based Industries at the dtic, Ms Ncumisa -Mcata-Mhlauli says the competition has been established by department to promote innovation in the development of new, competitive furniture products and to contribute towards skills development initiatives.

"The Furniture Industry Masterplan adopted in 2021 identifies the shortage of high-level skills in the furniture industry such as design and skilled artisans in furniture manufacturing as a major concern. Therefore, the competition is an instrument that the department is using to promote and encourage interest in the furniture industry and to entice upcoming designers into the industry.

We want to raise and nurture design capabilities in the country, raise the image of the Furniture Manufacturing Industry in South Africa, improve the industry's competitiveness and re-position the industry for high-value-added products," she says.

The Managing Director of Eden Sleep Innovation, Mr Aldrin John says they are honoured to have won the award as a testament to the vision of the company.

"Our vision as a company is to revolutionise sleep and furniture solutions with innovative, high-quality, and affordable products. This annual initiative, led by the dtic, now in its 10th year, plays a crucial role in showcasing the capabilities of local young talent and seasoned professionals in the furniture industry.

We encourage more industry stakeholders to get involved in future initiatives, as they are essential for fostering innovation and growth within the South African furniture sector."

EMPLE OFFERS FEMALE-OWNED BUSINESSES FREE INSURANCE

To commemorate this year's International Women's Day, insurance firm emPLE has offered free one-year coverage to female entrepreneurs.

This was revealed on its social media pages, where the company said the move is aimed at providing financial security for businesswomen who play a vital role in sustaining local markets.

The 2025 IWD is celebrated under the theme 'Accelerate Action.'

EMPLE said, "Over the past month, we stepped into the heart of Lagos to connect with the women driving commerce forward. We listened to their stories, their challenges, and their aspirations, seeking ways to support and empower them.

"For International Women's Day, we took action by empowering these women with our ShopProtect Insurance, ensuring their businesses stay protected. But more than that, we amplified their voices in a documentary that captures their resilience, struggles, and triumphs."

The firm added, "We envisioned a world where every businesswoman has the support she deserves to thrive against all odds. But imagination alone is not enough, so we took action. This International Women's Day, we are empowering businesswomen with free one-year #ShopProtect insurance, providing them with financial security and protection against life's

uncertainties. Beyond this, we stand with every woman striving, building, and breaking barriers."

ShopProtect is a comprehensive plan that offers protection against a range of risks, including fire, break-ins, and accidents at work.

KEYSTONE BANK BOOSTS KADUNA, EKITI SCHOOLS WITH INFRASTRUCTURE, LEARNING TOOLS

Keystone Bank Limited has reaffirmed its commitment to enhancing education across Nigeria through two significant contributions in Zaria, Kaduna and Ekiti states.

The bank recently handed over a fully renovated and equipped block of classrooms to Sarki Sambo L.G.E.A Primary School in Zaria, Kaduna State.

The project, executed under the Keystone Bank Educational Support Initiative, was aimed at creating a more conducive learning environment for young learners, aligning with the bank's commitment to fostering sustainable development through education, according to a statement.

Speaking at the event, Managing Director & CEO of Keystone Bank, Mr. Hassan Imam, emphasised the role of education in driving national development.

According to him, "At Keystone Bank, we recognise that education is the foundation of a prosperous society. By investing in the renovation of

schools like Sarki Sambo L.G.E.A Primary School, we are not only enhancing learning conditions for children but also contributing to the overall development of our nation."

In his remarks, His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zazzau, Ahmed Nuhu Bamalli, commended the bank for its investment in education, noting that such initiatives are vital for shaping the future of the region's children.

The commissioning ceremony was attended by notable dignitaries, including the Governor of Kaduna State (represented by Hadiza Usman Abdullahi), His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zazzau, and other distinguished guests.

Similarly, the lender also donated interactive boards and automated time attendance systems to four secondary schools in Ekiti State.

The bank said the donation was part of its Educational Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Initiative, which spans 12 states nationwide. The initiative aims to foster digital learning, improve classroom engagement, and enhance administrative efficiency within government-owned schools.

Directorate Head for Lagos Island and West at Keystone Bank, Mrs. Helen Maiyegun, emphasised the importance of technology in the classroom.

"Through initiatives like this, we aim to empower students and educators with the tools they need to thrive in a technology-driven world. We are honored to contribute to the transformation of the education

sector in Ekiti and across Nigeria," she said.

Commissioner of Education in Ekiti State, Dr. Olabimpe Aderiye, expressed her gratitude, highlighting that the donation would help bridge the digital divide and improve the learning experience for both students and teachers.

FIRSTBANK HOLDS GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART ECO-FRIENDLY HEADQUARTERS

FirstBank, the premier bank in West Africa and a leading financial inclusion service provider, today, marks a significant milestone with the groundbreaking ceremony for its new green-certified Iconic Head Office Building in Eko Atlantic City, Lagos.

This ambitious 40-story building project, set to be the tallest building in Nigeria, will be an engineering and environmental delight due to its technologically advanced, eco-friendly and sophisticated construction which would set a new standard for the financial services sector in Africa.

The groundbreaking ceremony, FirstBank's Acting Group Head, Marketing & Corporate Communications, Olayinka Ijabiye, said in a statement, "signifies the beginning of a transformative journey that reinforces the bank's commitment to excellence, innovation and customer satisfaction," adding that "the new headquarters is designed with sustainability in mind, featuring a

green-certified building that reduces operational costs and positions FirstBank as a leader in sustainable banking practices."

The CEO, FirstBank Group, Olusegun Alebiosu, said: "We are proud to mark this significant milestone in our journey towards excellence. Our new Head Office is envisioned as a world-class structure that represents our dedication to innovation, customer satisfaction, and sustainability. We believe that this development will play a crucial role in fostering economic growth and development across Africa, creating long-term value for all our stakeholders."

He said with a legacy spanning over 130 years, FirstBank has consistently demonstrated its commitment to innovation, customer-centricity and sustainable business practices, adding that the bank has a robust international presence, operating subsidiaries in nine countries across three continents.

The Chairman, FirstHoldCo, Femi Otedola, added: "Today's gathering highlights the importance of collaboration and support from various sectors in bringing our ambitious plans for the new headquarters to life. We appreciate the unrelenting support from our customers and stakeholders as we work together to turn this vision into reality."

The groundbreaking ceremony will be attended by prominent dignitaries, including the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR,

Senators and Lawmakers, State Governors, Federal Ministers and Captains of industry. This event marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter in FirstBank's storied history, solidifying its role as a leader in the African financial industry.

AXA MANSARD EXPRESSES DETERMINATION TO ACHIEVING FINANCIAL LITERACY AMONG NIGERIANS

AXA Mansard Investments Limited, an asset management firm in Nigeria, has reaffirmed its commitment to improving financial literacy for the financially excluded Nigerians.

The company said its commitment became important as financial inclusion in Nigeria was slowing with the growing number of Nigerians entering financial responsibility stages.

According to the firm, reliable and actionable knowledge sharing and transfer are important not just for informed financial decision-making but also for financial independence and stability.

AXA Mansard Chief Operating Officer, Alex Edafe, said in an era of economic uncertainty and complex financial markets, understanding the principles of personal finance, investing, and wealth management was crucial.

He explained that AXA Mansard Investments was dedicated to helping individuals and families build the financial acumen required to navigate 2025 and beyond.

According to him, "In recent years, the dearth of financial literacy in Nigeria has become alarming, with many individuals lacking the necessary knowledge to make sound financial decisions. From transitioning from savings to investments, budgeting, asset allocation, managing debt as well as retirement planning, to mention a few, many Nigerians, especially the younger generations, need these skills to effectively manage their money".

He said that financial education was foundational for achieving financial independence, adding that in the current year, AXA Mansard was focused on making financial knowledge more accessible to Nigerians at every stage of their financial journey.

ACCESS BANK RESTORES TRANSACTIONS AFTER CUSTOMERS EXPERIENCE SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

Access Bank Plc has fully restored services on its electronic banking platforms following a disruption that left many customers frustrated on Sunday.

In an update, the bank reassured customers that all services were back to normal. "Our USSD banking is fully restored! You can now dial *901# to enjoy fast, easy, and seamless banking. Thank you for your patience," Access Bank stated.

Through its official X handle, the bank acknowledged the inconvenience caused by the service

failure and expressed appreciation for customers' patience. "We are committed to doing more, because you matter! We know today has been tough, and we truly appreciate your patience and support. Your trust means everything to us, and that's why we're thrilled to announce that our services are back. AccessMore, USSD Banking, Internet Banking, Cards, ATMs, POS, and Agency Banking services are now fully restored. You can now bank seamlessly, anytime, anywhere, just the way you deserve.

STANDARD CHARTERED BOOSTS INVESTMENT IN FUTUREMAKERS WOMEN IN TECH

Standard Chartered has announced a partnership with Village Capital to continue and expand its Futuremakers Women in Tech Accelerator across Africa, the Middle East, and Pakistan.

Part of Futuremakers by Standard Chartered (Futuremakers), the Bank's global youth economic empowerment initiative for disadvantaged young people, and with funding from the Standard Chartered Foundation, Futuremakers Women in Tech Accelerator will provide specialised training, catalytic funding, and access to a global network of peers, finance providers, industry leaders, and ecosystem partners.

The Chief Strategy and Talent Officer at Standard Chartered, Tanuj Kapilashrami in a statement said: "Empowering women is critical to economic growth, and central to our

stand of lifting participation by unleashing the financial potential of women and small businesses.

"We believe equitable access to funding and resources is essential to fostering innovation and driving meaningful social impact – whether it be through our Futuremakers philanthropic programmes, our banking propositions such as the SC Women's International Network, or the work we do towards supporting a diverse supplier base," he said.

Speaking on the impact of the program in Nigeria, CEO Standard Chartered Bank Nigeria Limited, Dalu Ajene in a statement said, "Empowering businesses founded or led by women is crucial to accelerating progress towards fulfilling our Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria. Since the country launch of the SC Women in Technology initiative in 2019, this first of its kind initiative in Nigeria has supported greater diversity in gender representation of women in the country's technology sector."

Chief Strategy and Innovation Officer at Village Capital, Rachel Crawford added that: "Our partnership with Standard Chartered is a gamechanger for women-led start-ups across Africa, the Middle East, and Pakistan. By providing critical resources, catalytic capital, and market-level support, we aim to drive inclusive economic growth and ensure that women entrepreneurs can scale their businesses and impact communities at a transformative level."

JANUARY 2025 BREAKFAST MEETING SPONSORED BY PROTECTION PLUS SERVICE LIMITED



Cross section of participants



Ohis Ehimiaghe, Director, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce; Ajibola Olomola, Vice Chairman, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce; Kemi-Leke Bamtefa, Country Marketing Manager, South African Airways; Ije Jidenma, Chairman, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Unyime-Ivy King, Chairman, Protection Plus Services Limited; Andre Okonta, Chief Operating Officer, Protection



Dr. Unyime-Ivy King, Chairman, Protection Plus Services Limited; Prof. Neave Kannemeyer, Arcfyre Nigeria; Andre Okonta, Chief Operating Officer, Protection Plus Services Limited and Iyke Ejimofor, Executive Secretary, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce.



Ajibola Olomola, Vice Chairman, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Unyime-Ivy King, Chairman, Protection Plus Services Limited; Prof. Neave Kannemeyer, Arcfyre Nigeria and Iyke Ejimofor, Executive Secretary, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce.



Newton Ogwuadi, IT Manager, Protection Plus Services Limited; Olubiyei Adekunle, Maritime Operations, Protection Plus Services Limited and Okechukwu Igwe, Maritime Operations, Protection Plus Services Limited



Ohis Ehimiaghe, Director, Nigeria South Africa Chamber of Commerce; Kemi-Leke Bamtefa, Country Marketing Manager, South African Airways.

JANUARY 2025 BREAKFAST MEETING SPONSORED BY PROTECTION PLUS SERVICE LIMITED



Cross section of participants



Cross section of participants



Alvin Ikpe, Head, Strategic Communications, Protection Plus Services Limited and Ebube Taiwo, Protection Plus Services Limited



Cross section of participants



Hamza-Babangida, Head' Journey Management and Personal Protection Services, Protection Plus Services Limited and others.



Blessing Yahaya, Admin, Protection Plus Services Limited ; Isdora Odoemene, Finance, Protection Plus Services Limited and Jackson Blessing , Finance, Protection Plus Services Limited



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BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Opportunity to Network in our vibrant Business Fora
- Over 240 Strong Chamber Members - (inc Blue-Chip Nigeria and South African Companies)
- Relationship with the Consulate on matters relating to Investment, Trade Mission and Visa.
- Promoting bilateral trade and interest between Nigeria and South Africa
- Access to information from South Africa-Nigeria Chamber of Commerce
- Assistance with Company set-up in Nigeria and in South Africa
- Access to South African Trade Delegations to foster business related opportunities.
- Access to Business Conferences in South Africa.
- Access to Trade Missions to South Africa.
- Advocacy: Members are represented and their voice heard through the Chamber Committees that address business related issues at various inter-governmental levels.

Please contact the Chamber Secretariat for further enquiries

Mr. Iyke Ejimofor
Executive Secretary

01-4538571; 01-4538572; 08033205614

Email: iykeejimofor@nsacc.org.ng

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SCROLL

Dear Esteemed Members,

The Nigeria-South Africa Chamber of Commerce's new website was launched at the September breakfast webinar on Thursday 23rd September, 2021.

We encourage you to explore the new Chamber's website:

- Information about the Chamber
- Insights
- Services
- Information on investment opportunities in Nigeria and South Africa.
- Information on Tourist Attractions in Nigeria and South Africa.
- Information on Promotion of Bilateral Trade Investment between Nigeria and South Africa
- Membership's application and registration, etc.

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- Improving your brand positioning "image"

Visit the chamber website through this link: www.nsacc.org.ng

Thank you for partnering with us.

Iyke Ejimofor
Executive Secretary

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HERE!**



www.nsacc.org.ng

TRAVEL CHECKLIST FOR SOUTH AFRICA

1. A valid Passport (validity of at least 30days after the intended stay).
2. **Valid Visa:** -Diplomatic Passport are exempted.
-Ordinary Passport requires visa.
3. **Vaccination Certificate** (Yellow Fever Card) duly and fully completed by a health practitioner.

A fully completed valid card should bear the following information: Full names of the applicant, Passport number, Date of birth, Gender/Sex, Signature of the applicant, Date on which vaccine was taken, Health practitioner's signature and the name of the centre where the vaccine was taken/administered, Manufacturer and Batch number of the vaccine, and official stamp of the vaccinating centre.

Children who are 10years and below require their Clinic/Health Immunization Cards, with evidence of yellow fever vaccine taken at 9/12months.

Valid Yellow Fever Card could be applied in good time at Maitland International Airport:

PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY OFFICE.

ALSO NOTE: The validity of your card is 10years.

4. Minor(s)/Child(ren) accompanied by both Parents should have unabridged Birth Certificate.
5. Minor(s)/Child(ren) accompanied by one Parent should have:
 - i) Unabridged Birth Certificate(s) for Minor(s)/Child(ren).
 - ii) Letter of consent from the other Parent and passport data page.
 - iii) Marriage certificate.
6. Minor(s)/child(ren) accompanied by Guardian should have:
 - i) Unabridged Birth Certificate(s) for Minor(s)/Child(ren).
 - ii) Parental Consent Affidavit (PCA).
 - iii) Copies of the identity documents or passports of the Parents.
 - iv) Contact details of the person in whose care the Minor(s)/Child(ren) will be in South Africa.

ENSURE YOUR DOCUMENTS ARE COMPLETE PRIOR TO TRAVELLING!

NOTE: COVID -19 COMPLIANCE IS REQUIRED.



VISA

REQUIREMENTS FOR SOUTH AFRICA

VISITOR'S VISA

1. Application Form fully completed in black ink only
2. Two identical passport size (45mmx45mm) photographs on white background showing the complete face.
3. A valid passport (validity of at least 30 days after the intended stay)
4. Certified copy of passport data page as well as copies of existing visa and previously issued visas, if any.
5. Self introduction letter with physical address and phone number.
6. Introduction/Recommendation letter from an Employer, where applicable, signed with contact details, (full names of the Employer's, approved signatories, physical address and phone numbers).
7. Verifiable hotel reservation/bookings which must be done directly with the hotels and not through third parties, (e.g. booking .com; hotel .com, HRS, etc).
8. Certified copy of international vaccination card (yellow fever card) duly and fully completed by a health practitioner.
9. Proof of sufficient financial status (three months recent bank statement) or financial support letter from employer with three months bank statement) in a case where the Employer is sponsoring the trip. In the event the applicant is travelling on a private capacity, the bank statement submitted should reflect the salary deposited into the applicant's bank statement. Sponsored trips should always have a letter with full details of the sponsor and contact details; as well as a copy of identity card/passport data page. Certain Corporate Entities are exempted from this requirement.
10. Applicant travelling on an official business should, in addition to the above requirements, attach a letter of invitation/confirmation of training/conference, etc. from a South African Company with full details of the Company's Authorized representative; physical address and phone numbers (landline number compulsory). All verifiable bookings (accommodation as well as flight) are required and should be submitted together with the application.
11. Unabridged Birth Certificate for Minors/Children travelling with parents. Where applicable, a consent letter/s with copy/ies of parent/s identification card/passport data page should be attached to the application.
12. Marriage Certificate where applicable and if the intended stay will be for more than 90 days.
13. Verifiable Flight Booking.
14. Visitors to South Africa must have at least two blank pages on their passport.
15. Applications for all types of Visas should be submitted to VFS for Processing.

NOTE: COVID -19 COMPLIANCE IS REQUIRED.

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