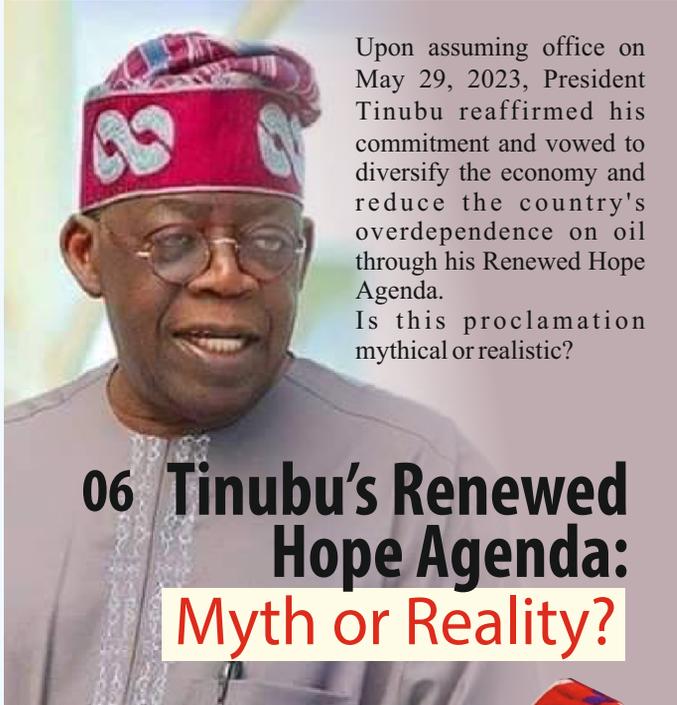


COVER



Upon assuming office on May 29, 2023, President Tinubu reaffirmed his commitment and vowed to diversify the economy and reduce the country's overdependence on oil through his Renewed Hope Agenda. Is this proclamation mythical or realistic?

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Editors' Desk



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AGBAJI EVELYN OLUCHI

She has a lot of experience in magazine marketing having previously worked with *The Market* magazine as a marketer.

Mission

To highlight economic activities, foster collaboration, share insights, and promote trade opportunities in Nigeria and Africa

Objectives

To serve as a data bank for researchers and provide expert analyses of significant developments in order to empower businesses and policymakers with the knowledge needed for informed decision-making.

Welcome to the inaugural edition of Trade Horizon Magazine, a research-based publication dedicated to exploring the vast trade and investment opportunities within Nigeria and across the African continent. As we embark on this journey, we aim to provide insightful analyses and foster dialogue aimed at driving economic growth and integration in Africa, thereby positioning the continent as a formidable player in the global marketplace.

Harnessing the Potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which marked a significant milestone in Africa's economic history following its establishment in 2018, is one strategic area of focus for the magazine.

As Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, Nigeria plays a pivotal role in the continent's economic landscape. The country's economy is diverse, with significant contributions from sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

In recent years, the country has made strides in industrialization, with indigenous companies like Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing (IVM) producing vehicles, and firms like Zinox manufacturing computers and electronic gadgets. These developments highlight Nigeria's potential to become a manufacturing hub for the continent. These are some of the issues the magazine will seek to bring to the front burner of discourse in due course in order to woo investors through whom jobs would be created and potential would be harnessed.

Nigeria's trade policy has often emphasised the need to diversify exports beyond crude oil, focusing on non-oil exports such as cocoa, rubber, and palm produce.

Africa's youthful and rapidly growing population presents both opportunities and challenges. To harness this demographic dividend will receive attention in depth.

Moreover, the development of cross-border infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector, is crucial if the AfCFTA project and others are to succeed.

At Trade Horizon Magazine, we are committed to providing in-depth analyses, expert opinions, and comprehensive coverage of the trends shaping Africa's trade and investment landscape. We believe that by highlighting success stories, engaging in solutions and development journalism, and fostering dialogue, we can contribute meaningfully to Africa's economic transformation and integration in the global economy.

Join us on this journey as we explore the vistas, the prospects, and the possibilities embedded in trade and investment in Nigeria and across Africa.

Chinedu Amadi Phd FCIHRM, KSM



Tinubu's Reform Agenda: Myth Or Reality

By Shepard Konan

Prior to his election as Nigeria's 6th Executive President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu promised, during his political campaign, to improve Nigeria's economy, transform Nigerians' lives, and improve governance.

Upon assuming office on May 29, 2023, President Tinubu reaffirmed his commitment and vowed to diversify the economy and reduce the country's overdependence on oil through his Renewed Hope Agenda with a focus on key sectors such as infrastructure development, agriculture and security, education and health care, among others crucial to driving a reform of the

country's economy.

He stated his determination to drive industrialisation in Nigeria and envisioned a 3 trillion dollar economy, which would be achieved by enhancing local manufacturing, boosting foreign and domestic investments, and creating a business-friendly environment to accelerate economic growth.

Tinubu pledged to develop the solid minerals sector, particularly in light of the global shift towards energy transition.

He affirmed that Nigeria could leverage its abundant mineral resources essential for the transition to drive development

and boost the country's economic profile.

Consequently, the president outlined eight priority areas to guide his administration's policies and reform programme under the Renewed Hope Agenda.

In tandem with the thrust of the vision, Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) have aligned their policies and programmes with the key priority areas. This alignment also extends to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, which are tailored to reflect the thematic areas of President Tinubu's agenda.

In alignment with the "Renewed Hope Agenda" set forth by Tinubu administration, the Federal Government has identified Eight Presidential Priority Areas crucial to the nation's development within the period 2023 to 2027.

These priorities so identified are a reflection of the government's commitment to driving sustainable growth, ensuring security, and enhancing the quality of life of all Nigerians.

The eight priority areas include:

1. Reforming the Economy for Sustained Inclusive Growth through strategies designed to create a robust, diversified, and resilient economy.

This is to be done by fostering an environment conducive to investment and innovation, the government aims to stimulate growth across all sectors, reduce unemployment, and ensure equitable wealth distribution.

2. Strengthening National Security for Peace and Prosperity

Security is considered the bedrock of national development. The focus in this sector, for the Federal Government, is on enhancing the capabilities of the country's security forces, promoting peace and stability, and ensuring that every Nigerian feels safe and protected, no matter where they reside.

"If the people cannot pay the school fees of their children, they cannot find something to eat or they cannot afford the food and their lives are terrible and brutish, it should be seen on the side of the leaders too."

3. Boosting Agriculture to Achieve Food Security

Agriculture, without doubt holds the key to Nigeria's self-sufficiency and economic empowerment. By modernising farming practices,

increasing access to finance, and expanding market opportunities for farmers, we are on a path to achieving food security and transforming Nigeria into an agricultural powerhouse.

4. Unlocking Energy and Natural Resources for Sustainable Development

We are unlocking the potential of Nigeria's vast natural resources and energy sector.

Through sustainable management, increased investments, and the adoption of modern technologies, our goal is to drive economic growth and ensure environmental sustainability.

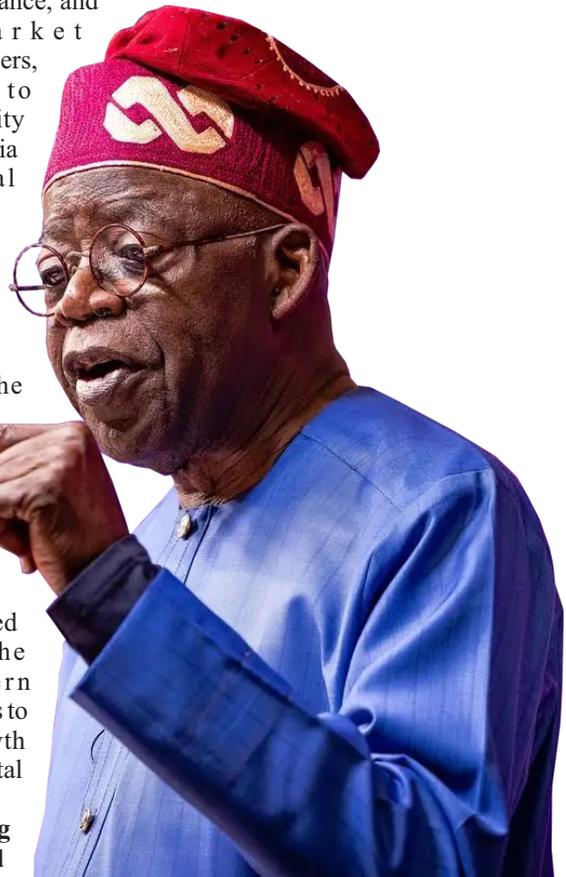
5. Enhancing Infrastructure and Transportation as Enablers of Growth

by improving connectivity and accessibility. This is in order to boost economic activities, create jobs, and enhance the quality of lives of Nigerians.

6. Focusing on Education, Health, and Social Investment as Essential Pillars of Development

Investing in human capital is at the core of our priorities. Government is dedicated to revamping the education and healthcare systems and enhancing social welfare programmes to build a healthier, more educated, and empowered populace.

7. Accelerating Diversification through Industrialisation, Digitisation, Creative Arts,



Manufacturing and Innovation to promote industrialisation, embracing digital transformation, nurturing the creative arts, boosting manufacturing, and fostering innovation to create a dynamic and diverse economic landscape.

8. Improve Governance for Effective Service Delivery by strengthening institutions, promoting rule of law, and





*Kashim Shettima
Vice President of Nigeria*

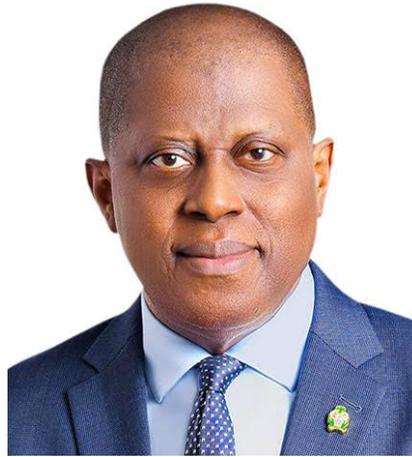
encouraging civic participation, we aim to foster a governance model that is responsive, accountable, and effective. Vice President Kashim Shettima has said the Renewed Hope Agenda of the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration is a transformative policy thrust aimed at repositioning Nigeria as a prime global investment destination.

With the agenda hinged on the core pillars of democracy, development, demographics, and diaspora engagement, the present moment serves as the opportune time to remind both Nigerians and the global community that Nigeria stands ready to embrace the future and conduct business.

Addressing a High-level Dialogue on Delivering the Renewed Hope Agenda on the theme, "Nigeria's Global Ambitions: From Hope to Reality," in Abuja, Shettima outlined the administration's ambitious roadmap, noting President Tinubu's commitment to bold reforms and strategic partnerships to revive the nation's economy and enhance security.

"The Renewed Hope Agenda is not just a policy framework; it is a statement of commitment, a covenant between us and the people."

VP Shettima pointed out that at the heart of the administration's foreign policy approach, dubbed the 'Tinubu Doctrine,' is a '4-D Diplomacy Strategy' centred on promoting democracy, driving



*Olayemi Cardoso,
Governor, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN)*

economic development, harnessing Nigeria's demographic potential, and engaging with the diaspora community. Speaking with Trade Horizon Magazine in Abuja, Amb. Bolaji Akinremi, the Director, Economic, Trade, and Investment, said that the Renewed Hope Agenda is designed to revitalise Nigeria's economy, improve governance and improve the welfare as well as create job opportunities.

"That is why you see diversification

from oil to agriculture; and now we have the ministry of livestock.

"We have diversified from focusing on oil alone to manufacturing and ICT. Another thing is agriculture and food security, where there is more mechanised farming now and irrigation expansion, as well as education and human capital development.

"We now have a ministry of livestock. "Now we have technical and vocational training. The investment into it is huge because we have expansion in scholarship, even from foreign affairs.

"We are now working more with foreign countries to get academic scholarship.

"Today, Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) is more active in order to promote education.

"Health and social welfare are now a priority and for the first time we have coordinating Minister for Health, which was not the case before.

"We are revamping the primary health care system by expanding health insurance and medical coverage.

"All of these are things that can be measured physically, particularly in terms of maternal and child mortality.

"More so, is security and defence,

Assessing Nigeria's economy, one year under Tinubu

	During inauguration	One year after
Inflation rate	22.41%	33.69%
Food inflation	25.25%	40.53%
Exchange rate	N461/1\$	N1,382.89/1\$
Healthy diet	N515	N1,035
GDP	2.51%	2.98%
Price of cooking gas	N928.45	N1,304.32
Price of kerosene	N1,206.05	N1,439.64
Price of petrol	N238.11	N701.24
Price of diesel	N844.28	N1,415.06

Source: NBS



where we have strengthened the armed forces, the police, and the intelligence agencies.

“This is not just in terms of strengthening the modernisation of the equipment, but security infrastructure and technology towards intelligence driven community policing.”

Nigeria's has been able to play key roles in ECOWAS leadership through foreign policy and global engagement, especially with President Tinubu's emergence as ECOWAS chair which has boosted the nation's role in African Union (AU).

“We are the chair of the peace and security department in the AU. Our global affairs influence is really increasing. So, we are expanding bilateral trade, economic diplomacy, diaspora engagement and national development.

“All of these are being concretised and we are attracting foreign partners and investment, in terms of the renewed hope agenda which all of these things are focused. They are targeted, and they are achieving their purpose.

“So, government policy has given us confidence now on investor side and we



Sen. Shehu Sani,
President, Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria (CRCN)



Dr. Chijioko Ekechukwu,
renowned economist

investing in artificial intelligence, which we can point to blockchain and fintech, as well as empowerment programmes designed for women and youth in entrepreneurship.”

Similarly, Arabinrin Aderonke Atoyebi, the Technical Assistant to the Executive Chairman of the Federal Inland Revenue

that seems to make things happen only when corruption can be deployed as an instrument?

Is outlining a vision adequate enough to transform a country where religious intolerance, disunity, division, and disharmony thrive at the expense of unity of purpose, healthy alliances across the ethnic and regional, and sectional divide?

Is outlining a vision alone potent enough to make the transformation of a country of more than 250 million people of about 350 tribes with as many cultures and traditions, a reality? Or is it just wishful thinking – a myth?

Atoyebi said a vision alone is not enough; execution is what truly matters. “When we look at Nigeria as a country, we all know it is more than just its challenges,” Atoyebi stated.

To ensure the successful implementation of his policies, the President carefully selected a team of reliable individuals who can effectively translate his ideas into tangible reforms for national progress.

Every Nigerian desires a country that works - a nation led by individuals who take action rather than merely making speeches or engaging in social media rhetoric.

With every reform, every policy, and every initiative, Nigeria does not just need ideas - it needs calculated, intentional, deliberate, well-thoughtout



in the foreign service. We are making sure that the president's engagement outside is domesticated.

The Tinubu administration has proclaimed its commitment to ensuring sustainable diversification, advancing digital economy and innovation, supporting technology startup and digital entrepreneurship.

That is why it is wasting no time

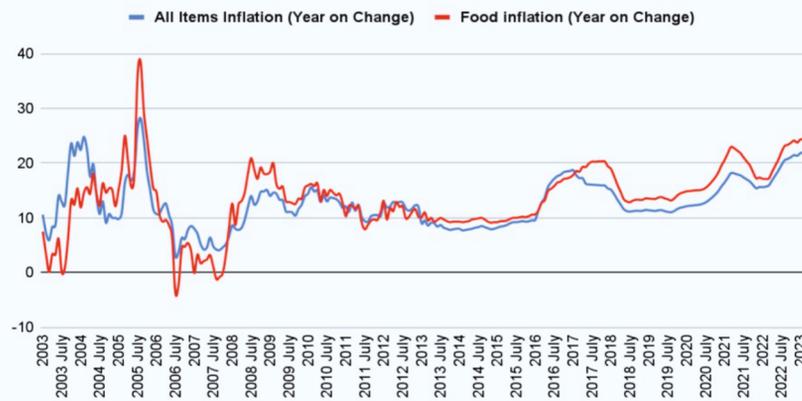
Service, outlined the President's Renewed Hope agenda as a vision designed to transform the economy and governance.

She described Nigeria as a land of opportunities, rich in resources and talent.

But is outlining a vision enough to lead to the kind of transformation required to turn around the fortunes of a country

Nigeria's Inflation Rate Soars to Near 18-Year High in May

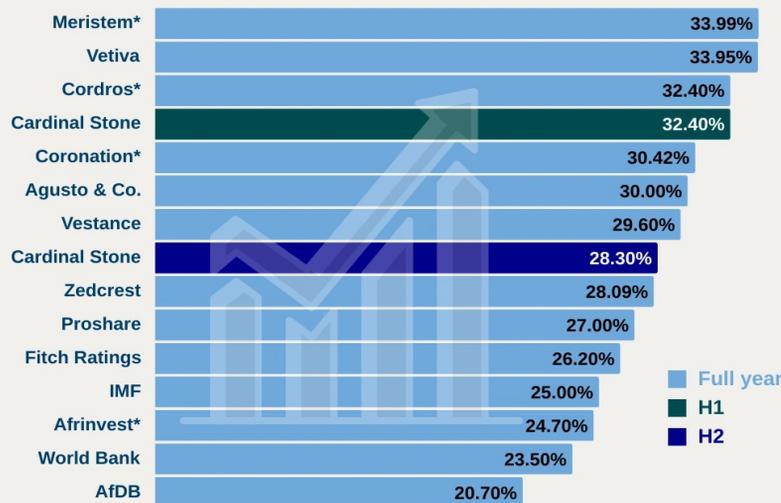
General Inflation rate of 22.41% and Food Inflation rate of 24.82% highest since Sept. 2005



Source: Central Bank of Nigeria | Analysis: Dataphyte Research

Nigeria's 2025 inflation forecast

Some organisations project that Nigeria's 2025 inflation rate will be lower than in 2024



Projected average inflation rate for 2025 by organisations

*Base case scenario

Source: Individual organisations

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actions.

Assessing the impact of the monetary policy reforms in the past year, Mr Olayemi Cardoso, the Governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) acknowledged the challenge of the high cost of living Nigerians were grappling with nationwide.

Outlining plans for 2025 when he spoke at the 59th edition of the annual banker's dinner organised by the Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria (CIBN)

in Lagos, Cardoso announced that the apex bank would sustain the Monetary Policy Rate as an anchor for inflation management as part of its priorities for 2025.

He informed bankers, financial market leaders, business leaders, and other economic stakeholders that the CBN will use all monetary tools available to tame inflation as it focuses on price stability.

The CBN governor affirmed the Central

Bank's commitment to ensuring a more transparent and efficient foreign exchange market that attracts investments into the economy, building on the reforms of market unification.

The CBN Governor said through a liquid and structured foreign exchange market, the target will be diaspora remittances, which can attract one billion dollars monthly inflows.

Speaking with the Trade Horizon Magazine in Abuja, Sen. Shehu Sani who represented Kaduna Central Senatorial District in the Senate, has told President Tinubu to give the implementation of his economic reforms a human face considering that Nigerians are suffering in the face of the reforms.

"No president has implemented a reform that has become popular. However, public opinion will change when people start seeing the benefits of what they have suffered.

"You can't implement a reform that inflicts hardship; that denies people the basics. It is painful, for people to be applauding you. It hasn't happened anywhere," he said.

"It is the risk that you have to take if you have to change the political economy and social direction of a nation. If you are reforming the economy, it is about the people. It shouldn't come to a point that before the food comes everyone has died.

"It's important that the president as he implements economic reforms should also pay attention to the fact that people are suffering and the sacrifices should be seen across board.

"If the people cannot pay the school fees of their children, they cannot find something to eat or they cannot afford the food and their lives are terrible and brutish, it should be seen on the side of the leaders too.

"The leaders should be seen to be making sacrifices too. If the leaders live luxurious lives and they live a life of opulence, a life of ostentatiousness, you can't tell the citizens to make sacrifices.

"It's important that sacrifices should be above board because patriotism should not simply be for the poor. The rich, the powerful, and those in positions of authority should also be ready to make sacrifices," he added.





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Exploring 'Blue' Opportunities

A profile on the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy established by the President Bola Tinubu administration as part of efforts aimed at transforming the Nigerian economy while exploring the largely unharnessed spheres of the economy.



At the inception of the President Bola Tinubu Administration, the number one citizen announced the creation of new ministries and the merger of some, while some others were unbundled in order to position them to play critical roles in turning around the fortunes of the country. Thus the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in Nigeria set sail towards a brighter future. Coined by the visionary Belgian economist Gunter Pauli, the concept of the "Blue Economy" emerged in 1994, spurred by a United Nations directive leading up to COP3 in Japan. This innovative approach took root in Nigeria under the visionary leadership of the country's 16th President, Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who spearheaded the establishment of the Ministry in August 2023.

Why this transformative step now? This strategic move is meant to empower Nigeria to explore new horizons, revitalise dwindling resources, and revolutionise oceanic operations for sustainable progress.

At the core of this groundbreaking initiative lies the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy (FMMBE), a key governmental entity devoted to steering the responsible development and stewardship of Nigeria's aquatic riches. Seeking to strike a harmonious chord between economic prosperity and environmental preservation, the ministry aims to leverage Nigeria's extensive marine endowments to fuel the nation's economic growth and usher in an era of sustainable advancement. The Ministry has the following fundamental objectives:

Sustainable Resource Guardianship: This ministry is expected to ensure the judicious exploitation of marine resources to safeguard ecosystems and biodiversity.

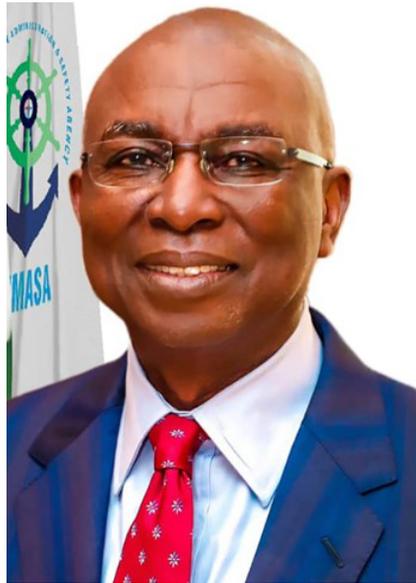
Economic Expansion and Diversification: It is also expected to reduce the nation's heavy reliance on oil and gas by tapping into the vast potential of the blue economy.

Policy Formulation: Through this ministry. The expects government craft inclusive policies to nurture marine-related industries while safeguarding precious marine ecosystems.

Innovation and Exploration: The ministry has as one of its mandates, encouraging scientific breakthroughs and innovations to boost productivity in marine pursuits.



Adegboyega Oyetola
Minister of Marine and Blue Economy



Dr. Dayo Moberola
DG/CEC, (NIMASA)

Collaborative Partnerships: It is expected to foster alliances among governmental bodies, private enterprises, and local communities to enhance marine resource management efficacy.

Operating under the aegis of the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy are several agencies and parastatals dedicated to fulfilling its mission.

The agencies are:

Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA): Established to uphold safety standards at sea, ensure maritime security, and foster the growth of the shipping sector.

National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA): This agency is to facilitate trade and transportation by managing and regulating inland waterways.

Nigerian Fisheries Corporation: This agency focuses on the growth and oversight of the flourishing fishery industry.

Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA): Supervises seaport administration and streamlining the flow of goods and services through ports.

The National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Research Institute Engages in cutting-edge research on oceanography and atmospheric sciences to inform strategic decision-making.

The Nigeria's marine bounty encompasses:

Fishery Resources: A diverse array of fish species crucial for sustenance, livelihoods, and exportation.

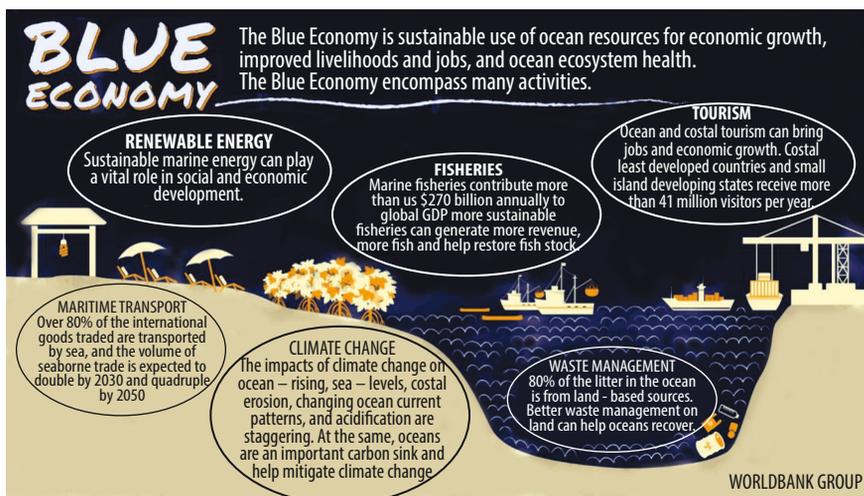
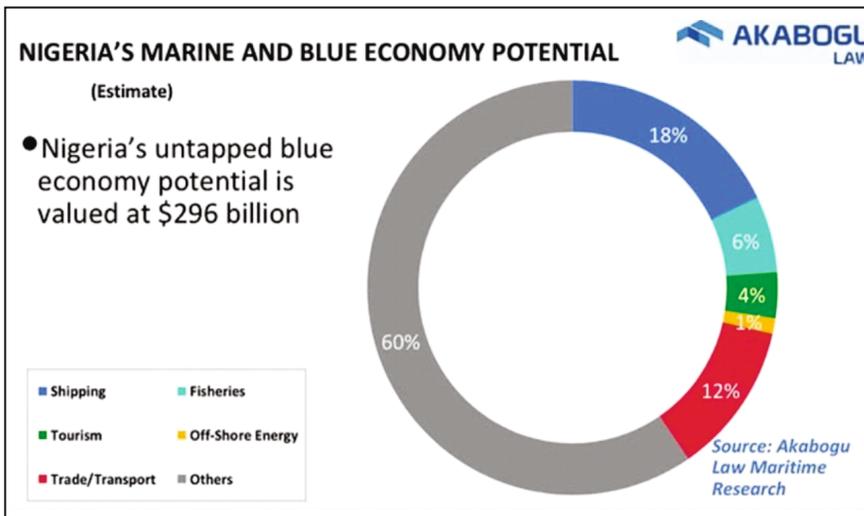
Aquaculture: The promising potential of fish farming to supplement natural fish stocks and bolster food production.

Oil and Gas Reserves: Valuable offshore energy reserves pivotal to Nigeria's economic landscape.

Marine Biodiversity: Abundant marine life supporting conservation endeavors and eco-tourism.

Sand and Gravel Deposits: Essential resources for construction and developmental projects.

Coastal Tourism Gems: Enchanting beaches, marine sanctuaries, and captivating attractions with the potential to drive tourism and stimulate economic growth.





Dr Abubakar Dantsoho
MD/CEO Nigerian Ports Authority

Maritime Transport Advantage: A strategic position along the Gulf of Guinea offering lucrative trade prospects and vital shipping routes.

By judiciously harnessing Nigeria's marine assets, the nation stands to reap manifold benefits, including:

Job Creation Opportunities through expansion in fisheries, aquaculture, and maritime logistics equating to increased employment prospects.

Foreign Exchange Generation through augmented export of marine products bolsters foreign reserves and national income.

Attraction of Investments: A well-regulated blue economy beckons both domestic and international investments.

Infrastructural Progress: Modernised ports and maritime infrastructure amplify trade efficiency and economic dynamism.

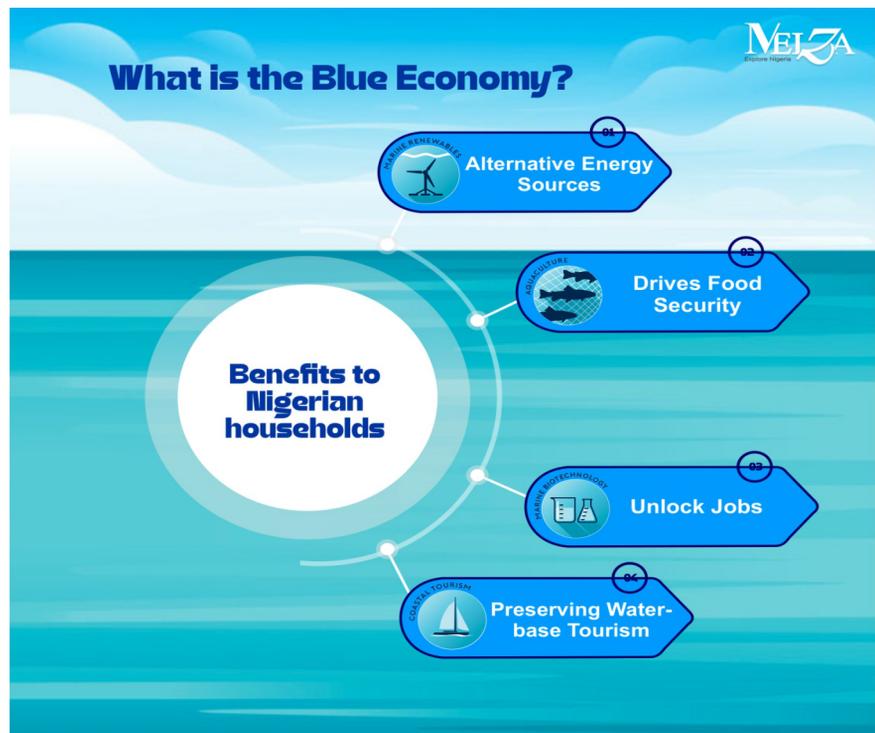
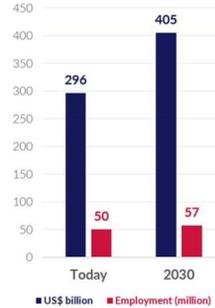
Tourism Revenue Boost through Promoting coastal and marine tourism promises substantial revenue streams and community upliftment.

Sustainability Pledge: By embracing sustainable marine resource management ensures enduring profitability and environmental well-being.

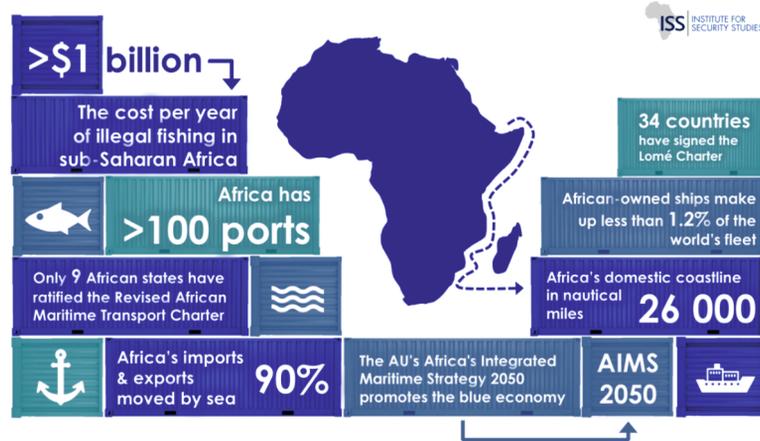
The ministry stands at the helm of Nigeria's journey towards harnessing its marine wealth sustainably, driving economic growth, and nurturing holistic national development in furtherance of the transformation agenda of the Tinubu

Why is the Blue Economy so important for Africa?

- 26,000 km**
Coastline
- 240,000 km²**
Lakes
- 64%**
River basins % of land
- 100**
Ports

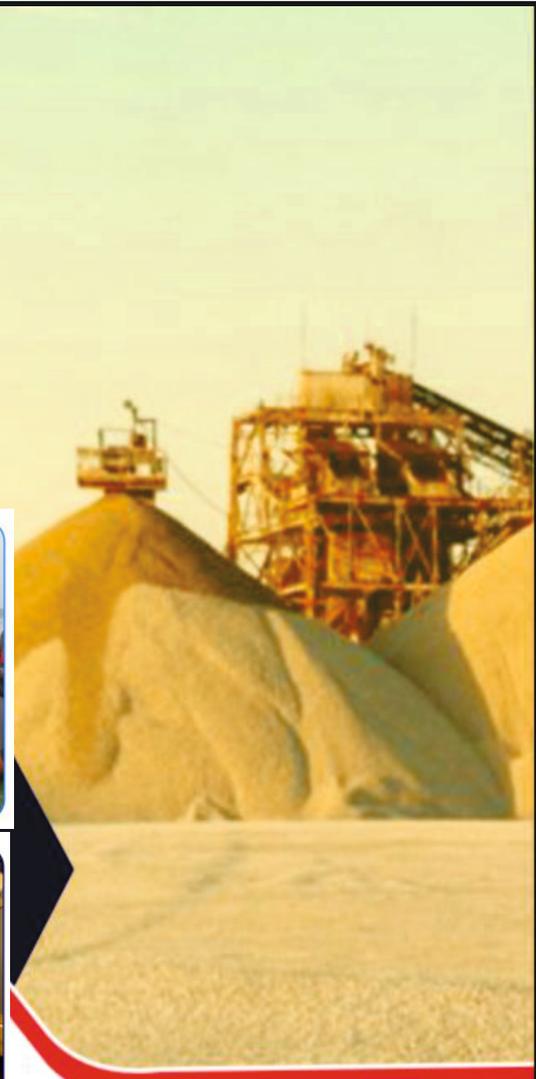


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Implementation of AfCFTA Stalls 5 Years After Inauguration

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) agreement was signed on May 29, 2019 with the objective of revolutionising trade across Africa by creating a unified market of 1.3 billion people. However, many factors have delayed the full implementation of the project five years since take-off. Shepherd Konan takes a look at some of the factors in this report.



Dr Jumoke Oduwole
Minister of Trade and Investment

The 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, which was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in February recognised Nigeria's proactive role in advancing the implementation of the digital trade protocol adopted in February 2024. In his annual report on the progress of the AfCFTA's digital trade protocol, Mahamadou Issoufou, former president of Niger Republic and AU AfCFTA champion, lauded Nigeria's leadership for convening the Digital Economy Roundtable in January.

According to him, the gathering was pivotal in driving the digital trade agenda forward.

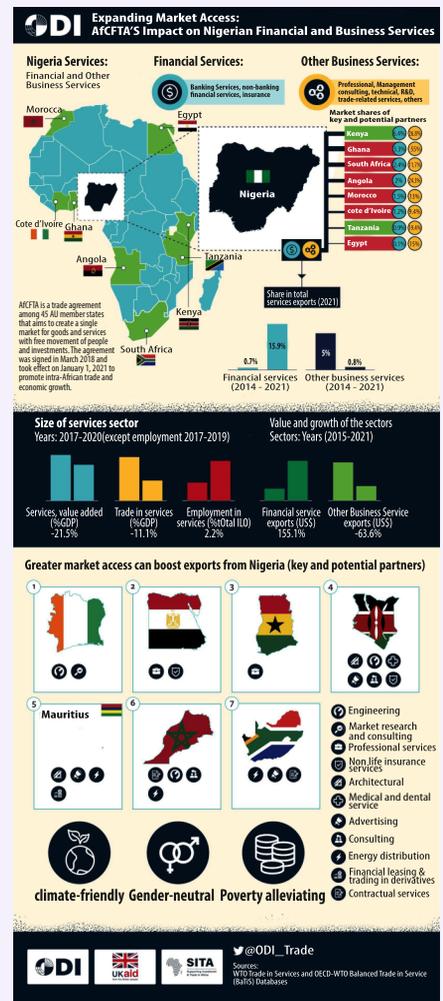
"No organisation, region, or continent has negotiated or adopted such a comprehensive legal instrument on digital trade, positioning the African continent to benefit from the digital economy for innovation and job

creation," Issoufou said. The former Nigerien leader observed that young Africans were leaders in digital innovation, particularly in mobile banking and other digitally enabled services.

"The AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade will establish a conducive environment for these young people to fully participate in Africa's digital

economy," he added.

Reflecting on the Digital Economy Roundtable in Abuja, Issoufou commended the Tinubu-led





Wamkele Mene, Secretary General of AfCFTA.

administration for convening the event and inviting the AfCFTA Secretariat to participate.

“The roundtable was attended by young pioneers in Fintech, mobile banking and other areas of the digital economy.

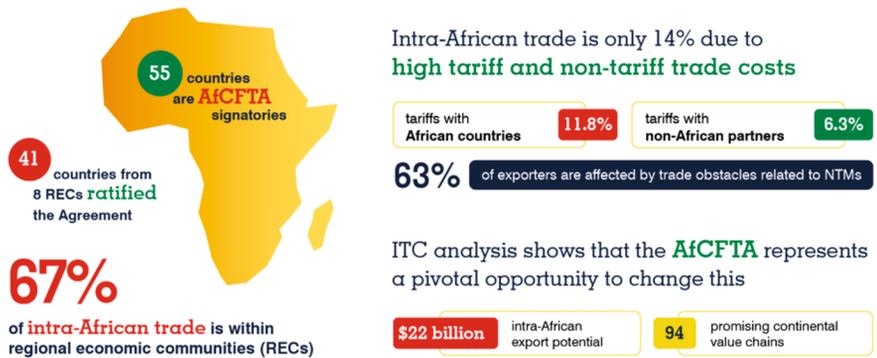
“It was evident from the discussions that young people are eager to take advantage of Africa's digital economy through the AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade,” the former Niger president said in his progress report to the 38th Assembly.

Dr Jumoke Oduwole, Minister of Industry, Trade, and Investment, informed the summit that Africa had demonstrated global leadership by pioneering the first-of-its-kind AfCFTA Protocol on Digital Trade - establishing a comprehensive regulatory framework.

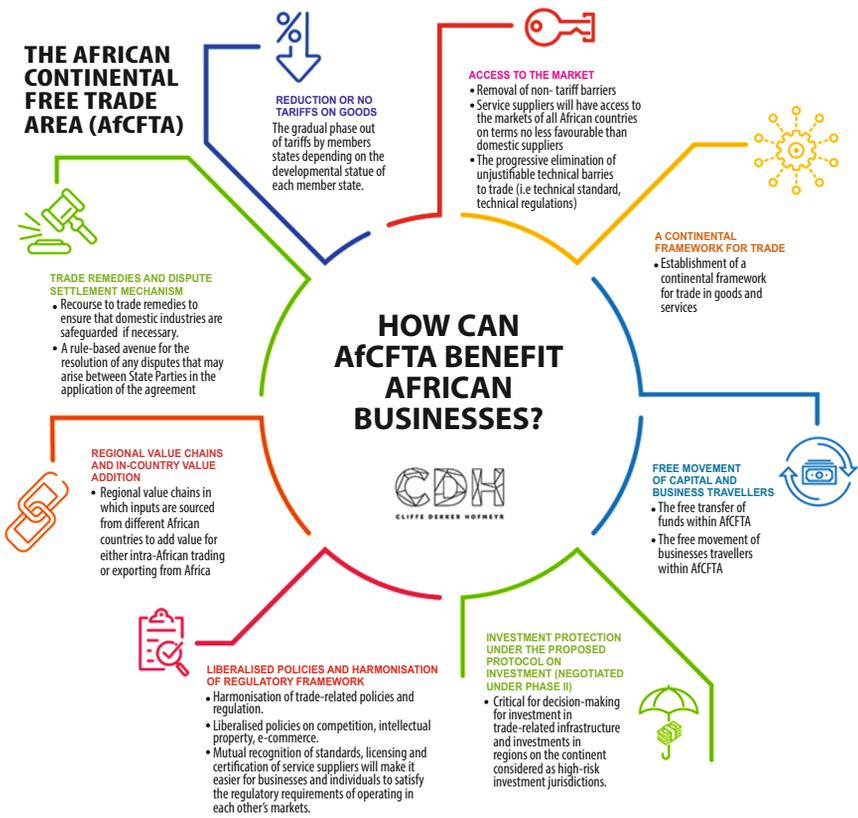
“The AfCFTA Digital Trade Protocol is a game changer in advancing Africa's economic development.

“It is set to create millions of jobs for Africa's growing, tech-savvy youth, contribute billions to the continent's GDP and attract substantial investments for public digital infrastructure across African nations,” she said.

Meanwhile, in furtherance of his determination to ensure that the Nigerian ports take advantage of intra-African trade that is expected to increase with the advent of the AfCFTA,



The successful Implementation of the AfCFTA has the following benefits for African businesses



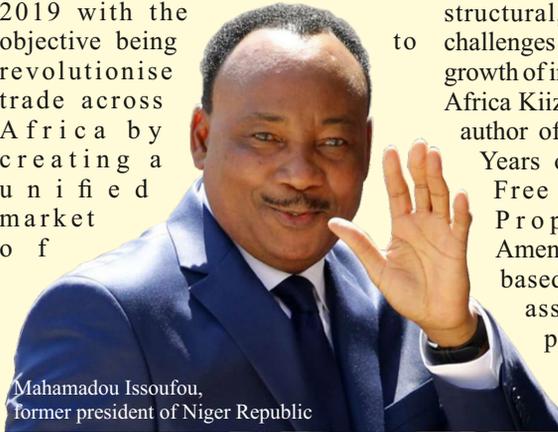
the Managing Director of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Dr Abubakar Dantsoho has affirmed that the authority is taking steps to reposition the Nigerian ports to improve its competitive strategy to stay ahead of rival ports.

He says it is envisaged that intra-African trade will significantly increase with the collapse of trade barriers across Africa, adding, “it is therefore

imperative that the Nigerian ports reposition to be competitive in order not to lose the gateway traffic to the ports.

While this is the scenario for Nigeria, it is not the same elsewhere in Africa five years after the establishment of the AfCFTA as the ambitious project has become one stalled by many hindrances. The African Continental Free Trade Area agreement was signed on May 29,

2019 with the objective being revolutionise trade across Africa by creating a unified market of



Mahamadou Issoufou, former president of Niger Republic

to structural, logistical, and political challenges have continued to delay the growth of intra-African trade.

Africa Kiiza, a trade policy analyst and author of the report "Assessing Five Years of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA): Proposals on Potential Amendments", says the AfCFTA is based on an overly simplistic assumption which seeks to promote the idea that liberalisation and tariff removal will automatically increase trade.

“ Without solid infrastructure, a coherent trade policy, and strong government commitment, the AfCFTA risks remaining an unfulfilled promise rather than a true driver of Africa's economic growth,”

1.3 billion people.

It was also intended to generate an additional 450 billion dollars in revenue by the year 2035.

Nevertheless, five years later, the implementation of the project has been stalled as only 46 out of 55 countries in Africa have ratified the agreement, and the elimination of tariffs on 90 percent of goods is not expected until 2034.

Analysts are of the opinion that although a proportion of trade has taken place under this framework - such as exports from Ghanaian and South African companies in 2023 - these transactions have remained marginal.

This, according to them, is because

He adds that this assumption is flawed because Africa has to first of all overcome production-related challenges to truly facilitate exchanges.

He remarked that even when goods are produced, their transportation remains a major challenge.

“We have only 0.1 per cent of intra-African rail connections.

“Without adequate infrastructure, it is impossible to streamline trade,” Kiiza points out.

Another challenge stalling the implementation of the agreement is the disparity in economic development among countries. Burundi is expected to open 97 percent of its market, just as Nigeria, whose economy is worth 700 billion dollars.

Kiiza argues that this disparity makes no sense because commitments must be adapted to each country's economic realities to prevent further deepening inequalities.

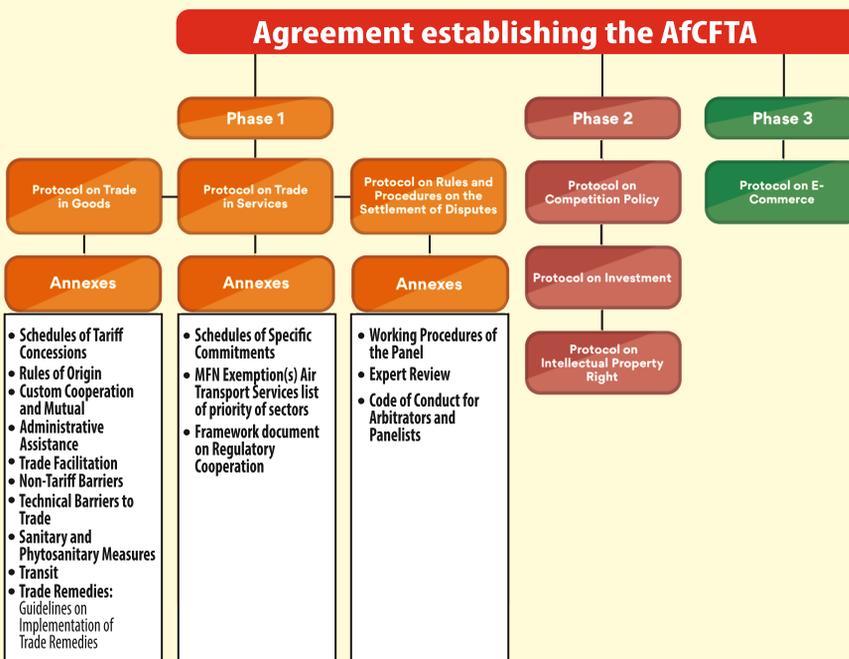
Besides infrastructure gaps, the trade strategy of African nations is making the implementation of the project a tall order.

Kiiza recalls that "In 2018, member states agreed that no country should sign a free trade agreement with a third party before fully implementing the AfCFTA."

However, many countries in Africa have continued to prioritise trade with external powers such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates.

“We must first ensure that regional economic blocs function properly before further opening our markets to external players,” analyst insists.

Furthermore, Kiiza has highlighted that



Dr Abubakar Dantsoho, Managing Director of Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA),

poor connectivity is slowing down intra-African trade as 98 per cent of maritime shipping lines serving Africa are owned by foreign companies. According to him, this dependency has direct consequences on trade efficiency.

Giving an example, he said, "A shipment from Kenya, under the AfCFTA framework, had to transit through Singapore and Dubai before reaching Tema in Ghana."

"As a result, some intra-African shipments take up to six months to be delivered."

Kiiza estimates that it would take "at least ten years" to develop the necessary infrastructure but for this to happen, African governments must invest massively.

"This must be a political priority, supported by resources from national

budgets and dedicated financing."

Beyond infrastructure gaps, another major obstacle to the AfCFTA's implementation is the trade strategy of African nations themselves. "In 2018, member states agreed that no country should sign a free trade agreement with a third party before fully implementing the AfCFTA," Kiiza recalls.

However, in practice, many countries continue to prioritise trade with external powers such as the United Kingdom, the United States, and the United Arab Emirates. "We must first ensure that regional economic blocs function properly before further opening our markets to external players," the analyst insists.

Intra-African trade also suffers from connectivity issues. "98 percent of maritime shipping lines serving Africa are owned by foreign companies," Kiiza

highlights. This dependency has direct consequences on trade efficiency.

One striking example illustrates the problem: "A shipment from Kenya, under the AfCFTA framework, had to transit through Singapore and Dubai before reaching Tema in Ghana. As a result, some intra-African shipments take up to six months to be delivered."

Kiiza estimates that it will take "at least ten years" to develop the necessary infrastructure. However, for this to happen, African governments must commit to greater investments. "This must be a political priority, supported by resources from national budgets and dedicated financing."

The AfCFTA remains an ambitious initiative that could transform African trade. However, its success will depend on the ability of states to tackle structural challenges and prioritize regional integration.

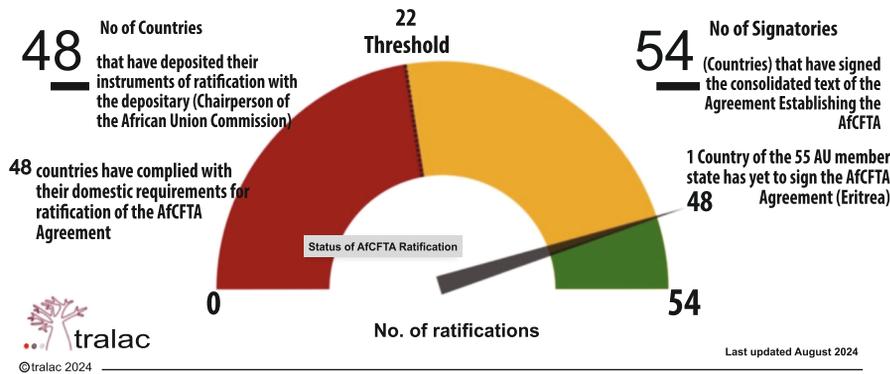
"Without solid infrastructure, a coherent trade policy, and strong government commitment, the AfCFTA risks remaining an unfulfilled promise rather than a true driver of Africa's economic growth," concludes Africa Kiiza.

In a report titled, "Making the Most of the African Continental Free Trade Area: Leveraging Trade and Foreign Direct Investment to Boost Growth and Poverty Reduction", three World Bank specialists posited that African governments should seek to build broad public support for AfCFTA and help businesses benefit from its provisions.

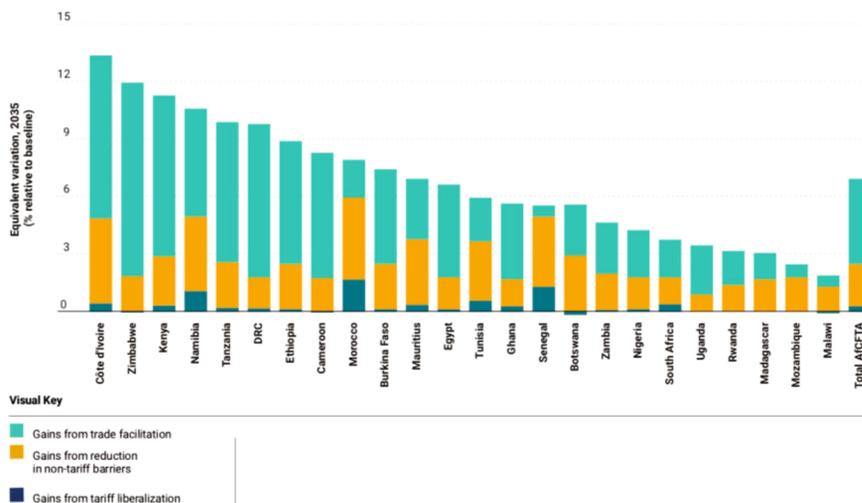
In the report, Roberto Echandi, a Lead Private Sector Specialist in the Trade and Regional Integration Unit (ETIRI) at the World Bank, Maryla Maliszewska, a Senior Economist in ETIRI and trade policy expert, as well as Victor Steenberg, a researcher and policy advisor, posited that if AfCFTA's goals are fully realised, 50 million people could escape extreme poverty by 2035, and real income could rise by 9 percent.

According to them, under deep integration, Africa's exports to the rest of the world would go up by 32 percent by 2035, and intra-African exports would grow by 109 percent, led by manufactured goods.

AfCFTA Ratification Barometer



Real income gains from AfCFTA



OY-ITC Nigeria-Cameroon Move to Access AfCFTA Benefits

A Communique issued at the end of the OY-ITC Nigeria-Cameroon Trade Conference and Awards event organised to encourage both countries to access the benefits of the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).



Picture shows the Nigerian Consul General to Douala Littoral and West Regions of Cameroon, Amb. Enya Francis Ntui, Consul General of Nigeria to Buea, Amb. Coker Obasanjo, President-General of the Nigerian Community, Chief B I C Okwujiaku, and other top ranking officials from the host authority at the conference.

The Organisation of Youth in International Trade and Commerce (OY-ITC), a non-profit and social change initiative at the forefront of promoting non oil export products and services organised a technical trade conference in Cameroon on December 13th and 14th, 2024.

The conference focused on accessing the benefits of the AfCFTA and how to enhance trade and commerce between Nigeria and Cameroon in line with the Federal Government of Nigeria's commitment to leveraging the African Continental Free Trade Area agreement and fostering economic growth through regional integration.

At the end of the conference, the organisers released a communique as follows:

Stakeholders are encouraged to explore the opportunities presented by the Guided Trade Initiative (GTI) which seeks to unlock the full potential of Intra-African trade, especially between Nigeria and its close trading partner, Cameroon.

Objectives Of The Communique

The communiqué which is an outcome of the trade

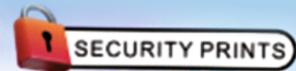
conference, outlines key strategies and opportunities for accessing the benefits of AfCFTA under the GTI.

1. Enhancing bilateral trade between Nigeria and Cameroon.
2. Supporting the diversification of exports and value chain integration.
3. Strengthening institutional and private sector collaboration to overcome trade barriers.

Strategic Priorities:

1. Promotion of bilateral trade opportunities, identifying and promoting sectors with high trade potential, such as agriculture, manufacturing, energy, and services.
 2. Encouraging businesses to take advantage of AfCFTA provisions, including tariff reductions and simplified customs procedures, to export goods to Cameroon and other African markets.
 3. Capacity building, stakeholder engagement, facilitating workshops and capacity-building programmes for Nigerian exporters to understand Cameroon's market demands, regulatory requirements, and trade facilitation processes.
 4. Strengthening dialogue platforms between the private sectors of both countries to identify challenges and propose solutions for seamless trade.
 5. Streamlining trade and border operations improving border infrastructure and implementing technology-driven solutions to ease the movement of goods between Nigeria and Cameroon.
- Enhancing coordination among customs and regulatory authorities to ensure compliance with AfCFTA protocols.
6. Investment in value chain development, encouraging joint ventures and investments in agro-processing, textiles, and other industries where Nigeria and Cameroon have comparative advantages.

AfCFTA aims at creating a single market for goods and services across Africa, facilitating free trade, and boosting intra-African trade, ultimately boosting Africa's economy and trade globally.



“
**IDEAS
WITHOUT
ACTION
AREN'T
IDEAS.
THEY'RE
REGRETS**”
- Steve Jobs



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Appraising ECOWAS' 50 Years of Subregional Integration

By Mark Longyen,
News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was established by its founding fathers on May 28, 1975 with the aim of fostering regional economic integration, mutual cooperation, and political stability among its member states.

The creation of the subregional bloc was driven by the collective desire of member states to address their common challenges and harness shared opportunities.

They sought to translate their common heritage of historical, socio-cultural,

political experiences and ties into regional growth and development by promoting effective cooperation and integrating their development processes.

After nearly 50 years, international affairs pundits posit that ECOWAS has not only emerged as West Africa's most formidable powerhouse but also Africa's most successful subregional economic community.

According to them, ECOWAS has now transitioned from being a mere

international organisation to becoming a community of people, gradually emerging as “ECOWAS of Peoples,” as was encapsulated in its Vision 2020.

The subregional institution has also metamorphosed from being a mere economic bloc into both an economic and political union rolled into one, boasting an avalanche of significant successes in subregional integration, peace, and security.

ECOWAS is now regarded as a pacesetter in subregional integration in Africa, and a global trademark, entrenching the values and culture of democracy and human rights in West Africa.

Recall that it was ECOWAS that provided the bulk of the basis for the African Union's frameworks.

ECOWAS' laudable success story has not gone unnoticed as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), in a recent study, described the bloc as a "model of advanced integration".

The UN body noted that ECOWAS has built a solid institutional architecture, a globally recognised organisation in the broader context of the African Union, when compared to Africa's other subregional communities.

“ECOWAS has strived to adopt



protocols and to define policies and programmes covering almost all areas of integration identified in its initial treaty, and later in the revised treaty.

“In terms of real impact, the performances of ECOWAS, since its establishment, may be deemed to be both great and average at this stage.

“ECOWAS has the potential to accelerate the integration of its member states. It has gained valuable experience in successfully grouping and sustaining countries as members,” the report said.

UNECA added that by May when it will be marking its 50th anniversary, ECOWAS could be largely celebrated for meeting the targets it set in its constitutive treaty and becoming a successful subregional economic community model in Africa.

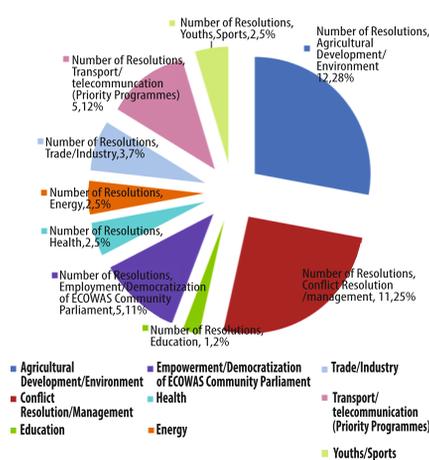
The development is indeed a fulfilled prophecy of sorts, as the organisation boasts a myriad of legendary achievements in the past five decades.

One of the key achievements of ECOWAS is the successful implementation of its 1976 Protocol on Free Movement of persons, goods, and services within the community.

The Protocol, which permits community citizens the right of abode in any member state, has been ECOWAS' calling card over the years, as West African citizens do not have to think about a visa when they cross borders within the subregion.

It has precipitated and strengthened economic integration and created a formidable common market of nearly 400 million people for the subregion.

Gen. Yakubu Gowon, former Nigerian Head of State and founding father of ECOWAS, while reinforcing this view recently, noted that in spite of the bloc's shortcomings, the bloc has achieved a



lot in the past 50 years.

He listed the organisation's major accomplishments to include trade liberalisation, the right of West Africans to live legitimately in any country within the community, and the execution of successful peacekeeping operations, among others.

“ECOWAS is more than a coalition of states. It is a community established for the good of our peoples, based on shared history, culture, and tradition.

“Neither my generation, nor present or future generations will understand or forgive the breakup of our community,” he said.

Gowon, therefore, charged member states to ensure a united ECOWAS, going forward. He, particularly, urged Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger to rescind their decision to exit the bloc.

Corroborating Gowon's view, Amb. Abdel-Fatau Musah, ECOWAS Commissioner for Political Affairs,

Peace, and Security, says ECOWAS has achieved a lot in terms of peace and security in the subregion.

According to him, ECOWAS is the only African subregional economic community where there is no open, high-intensity conflict in spite of the activities of violent extremist groups.

Musah says that ECOWAS has also learned from its past intraregional civil wars and implosion of states in the 1990s, adding that the bloc has no choice but to gravitate to security matters and good governance.

He also observed that if ECOWAS had not been created the whole subregion would have been engulfed in fratricidal conflicts bearing in mind the turmoil and turbulence that became common in the post-Cold War Africa.

“If you remember, a war started in Liberia towards the end of 1989. It continued throughout the 1990s, spreading to Sierra Leone and then to Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire.

“ECOWAS intervened through its multilateral armed forces – the Economic Community of West African States Ceasefire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG).

“This stabilised the situation and eventually provided a soft landing for the United Nations peacekeepers, who came in subsequently,” he said.

ECOWAS has also achieved a lot in its efforts to develop physical infrastructure across West Africa.

This comprises energy, internet connectivity, building rail and road networks, among numerous other projects within the subregion.

One of ECOWAS' flagship projects in its 50 years of existence, that has raised many eyebrows and drawn global applause, is the ambitious, multibillion-dollar Abidjan-Lagos Highway Corridor and Railway initiative.

The 1,028-kilometre transnational coastal highway is designed to connect five West African countries – Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin Republic, and Nigeria – to create an economic corridor that will be instrumental in advancing subregional trade and development.

The project is due to begin in 2026 with its completion expected in 2030.



When complete, the project is expected to turn the corridor into a vibrant economic and industrial hub that will revolutionise connectivity throughout West Africa.

The toll-free motorway will boast four to six lanes, with up to eight lanes in Lagos. There are also plans to build 63 interchanges.

The highway will cover 82 kilometres in Nigeria, 520 kilometres in Ghana, 144 kilometres in Cote d'Ivoire, 90 kilometres in Togo, and 127 kilometres in Benin.

Construction of the road is expected to generate up to 70,000 direct and indirect jobs.

Most of the work will be carried out in the form of public-private partnerships, spearheaded by the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Chris Appoiah, ECOWAS Director of Transport, describes the initiative as an integrated project which, once implemented, will help to achieve the desires of ECOWAS' economic union.

“Our ultimate objective is to ensure that the corridor and the economic activities to be developed along the corridor, contribute to the ECOWAS regional integration agenda,” he said.

According to projections, nearly 50 million people are expected to live within the corridor by 2035, and it could harbour half a billion inhabitants by the end of the 21st century, becoming the largest urban region in the world.

Another key achievement of ECOWAS since it was established, is the creation of the West African Power Pool (WAPP) in 2006.

WAPP is a specialised institution set up to integrate the operations of national power systems into a unified subregional electricity market.

With headquarters in Cotonou, Benin Republic, WAPP's primary objective is to develop electric power generation and transmission facilities.

It is a network that interconnects the entire West African subregion, providing stable and reliable electricity supply at competitive cost.

The WAPP Master Plan, which contains seventy-five priority projects of which

twenty-eight are transmission line projects, was prepared with the support of the European Union.

ECOWAS Commissioner for Infrastructure, Energy and Digitalisation, Sediko Douka, says ECOWAS has also created other specialised agencies to address electricity deficits, requiring about 5.2 billion dollars to bridge the gap.

He listed them to include the Regional Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERERA) in Accra, Ghana; the Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (ECREEE) in Praia, Cape Verde; and the West African Gas Pipeline Authority (WAGPA) in Abuja, Nigeria.

West Africa has increasingly become interconnected economically, with cross-border trade and investment playing a crucial role in driving sustainable development and poverty reduction within the region.

“To date, 14 out of the 15 member states are interconnected. In fact, all 14 mainland countries of ECOWAS are interconnected.

“Only the 15th country, Cape Verde, remains unconnected, which will soon be rectified through the implementation of a high-voltage submarine cable, with feasibility studies due to start shortly,” he said.

WAGP, which later metamorphosed to West African Gas Pipeline Extension Project (WAGPEP), aims at delivering natural gas to all member states.

ECOWAS has further approved the unique merger of WAGPEP and the Nigeria-Morocco Gas Pipeline Project (NMGP).

The pipeline will traverse Benin, Togo, Ghana, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia, Senegal, Mauritania, and terminate in Morocco, with a spur to Spain.

It is an infrastructure of 6,800 kilometres long, including 5,100 km offshore, with a transport capacity of 30 billion cubic feet of natural gas per year.

The project, which will be officially unveiled this year, is expected to accelerate the bloc's industrial and socio-economic development, integrate the economies of the subregion, and improve the living conditions of West Africa's residents.

Over the past 50 years, ECOWAS has also recorded integration successes through the promotion of economic cooperation and facilitation of subregional trade.

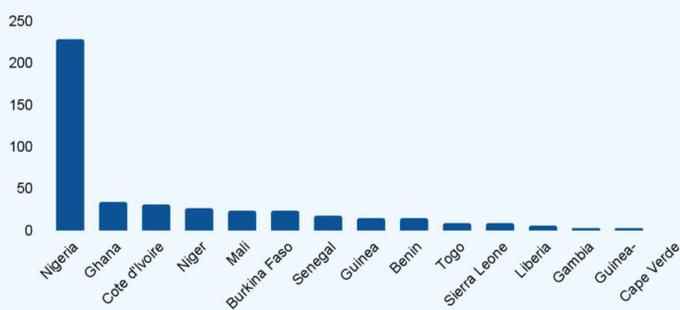
This was done through initiatives, such as the ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) and the Common External (CET) initiatives.

Through these, ECOWAS has worked to reduce trade barriers and promote the free movement of goods and services within the region.

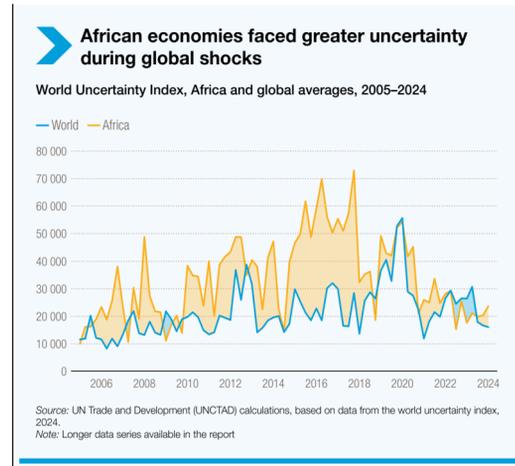
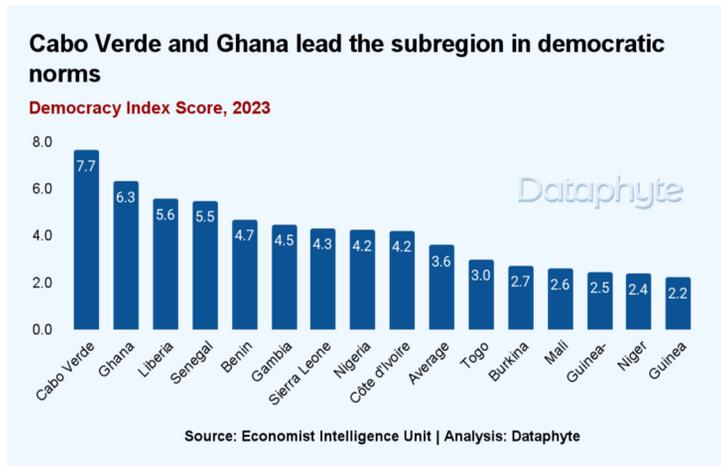
These initiatives have contributed to the expansion of intra-regional trade, fostering economic growth, and

Nigeria accounts for more than half of ECOWAS' population

ECOWAS population (in Millions) 2023



Source: UN World Population Prospects 2024 | Analysis: Dataphyte



creating new opportunities for businesses and entrepreneurs across West Africa.

ECOWAS has also made significant strides in harmonising economic policies and regulations among member states, thereby, creating a more conducive environment for investment and business development.

The bloc's scorecard here is particularly noticeable through its deliberate policy collaborations and engagements with the private sector, like the ECOWAS Small Business Coalition and promoting the multibillion dollar tourism sector through its flagship initiative, ECOTOUR.

ECOWAS has also established regional institutions such as the West African Monetary Institute (WAMI) and the ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID).

Corruption-induced poverty, member states' economic disparities, hunger, poor funding, unconstitutional changes of government, climate change, among others, all constitute obstacles to regional integration.

This has further enhanced the subregion's economic integration efforts, as well as provided financial support and technical assistance to member states.

As a result, West Africa has increasingly become interconnected economically, with cross-border trade and investment playing a crucial role in driving sustainable development and poverty reduction within the region.

Dr Omar Touray, President of the

ECOWAS Commission, sums this up by affirming that ECOWAS remains committed to fulfilling the dreams of its founding fathers and reflecting the aspirations of its citizens.

“We have moved from ECOWAS of states to ECOWAS of peoples, where the demands for democratic governance and transparency are paramount,” Touray stated at the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council meeting in Abuja on Feb. 8, 2024.

In spite of its monumental achievements in the past 50 years, ECOWAS' success story is not devoid of a myriad of challenges, which, though surmountable, collectively, pose as its existential threat.

The challenges range from violent extremism and terrorism to piracy, political instability, elections-related violence, drug trafficking or deadly viruses.

Security threats triggered by violent extremism and terrorism, for instance, pose significant obstacles to regional integration.

Corruption-induced poverty, member states' economic disparities, hunger, poor funding, unconstitutional changes of government, climate change, among others, all constitute obstacles to regional integration.

Dr Mohamed Chambas, former President, ECOWAS Commission, and Chairman, ECOWAS Trade Liberalisation Scheme (ETLS) Task Force, for instance, advocates for a renewed political commitment to regional integration ahead the bloc's 50th anniversary.

He says that ECOWAS must recommit to strengthening the development of regional agriculture value chains, by enhancing cross-border trade in agricultural products.

Chambas charged ECOWAS leaders to step up the protocols on trade facilitation and free movement of persons and goods to realise ETLS' core aim of a “Borderless West Africa and ECOWAS of peoples.”

“As we gear up to mark 50 years of our existence as ECOWAS, it is a moment that obliges us to recommit charting a common path forward, towards a peaceful, prosperous and progressive future for our community.

“I would like to emphasise once again that, where people move, trade moves, and where trade moves, economic development follows and settles in,” he said.

Experts agree that although significant challenges still remain in ECOWAS' path to achieving full economic integration, addressing them requires a concerted effort from member states, institutions, and international partners.

50 years of ECOWAS' existence is, therefore, a mixed bag of model, milestone achievements in regional economic integration amid formidable, though surmountable challenges, like terrorism and the recent exit of Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger from the bloc.

As the bloc's leaders roll out the drums to celebrate ECOWAS' Golden Jubilee in a couple of weeks' time, there is no doubt that the epochal event is a worthwhile celebration. (NAN)



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Gen. Christopher Musa: Of Leadership, Command, and Control

Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa was appointed as Nigeria's Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) by President Bola Tinubu on June 19, 2023 at the height of the struggle against the militant Boko Haram. Sumaila Ogbaje takes a look at his leadership, command and control.



Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa

Gen. Christopher Musa's leadership of the Nigerian Armed Forces has been marked by significant achievements and strategic reforms. As the 18th Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Musa has demonstrated a commitment to

enhancing Nigeria's security and defence capabilities.

Gen. Musa's leadership has been instrumental to shaping the Nigerian Armed Forces into a more effective and efficient force, capable of addressing the complex security challenges facing the

country.

His command philosophy for the Armed Forces is anchored on three pillars including people-centric approach, prioritising troops' welfare, and deepening jointness and collaboration.

Under his command, the military has been effectively engaged in counter-insurgency operations against Boko Haram and other extremist groups. He has pushed for the modernisation of military tactics and the adoption of groundbreaking technologies, including drone warfare and cyber defence capabilities.

He has fostered stronger ties between the military and other security agencies, leading to improved intelligence-gathering and joint operations. He has clearly stated that in countering insurgency, kinetic action represents only 30 percent of the requirement while the remaining 70 percent involves non-kinetic operations which require the collaboration of all stakeholders.

The CDS has also emphasised the need for a whole-of-government and a whole-of-society approach to effectively tackle insecurity across the country.

The military has in the past one year, eliminated several notorious terrorist and bandit leaders in synchronised ground and air operations across the North East and North West zones of the country.

In 2024 alone, the Nigerian troops deployed to various operations across the country eliminated 10,937 terrorists, apprehended 12,538 and rescued 7,063 hostages.

In 2024 alone, the Nigerian troops deployed to various operations across the country eliminated 10,937 terrorists, apprehended 12,538 and rescued 7,063 hostages.

Some of the notable terrorist leaders that



Gen. Christopher Gwabin Musa

were taken out during the year are: Halilu Sububu, Dutse Mainasara Idda, Malam Saleh Umaru, Mohammed Amadu, Abubakar Musa, Adamu Tanko Ibrahim, Yellow Dogon Rakumi, Isiya Boderi, and Alhaji Baldu.

Others are Usman Modi Modi, Kachalla Halilu, Kachalla Tukur, Amir Ibrahim Bukar, Saidu Hassan Yellow, Buba Kachalla Bukar, Bakura Jega and Abba Tukur, amongst others.

It is also worthy of note that one of the most deadly terrorist leaders, Bello Turji, has been on the run since the beginning of 2025 with many of his commanders, including his son, being eliminated by the troops. The Defence Headquarters has since declared Turji a 'dead man walking'.

In the Niger Delta region, efforts of the military have resulted in the increase in

daily crude oil production to nearly 1.9 million barrels per day up from about 1.2 million barrels per day at the beginning of 2024.

Gen. Musa has also exhibited a high level of commitment to enhanced welfare of military personnel leading to improved morale and operational readiness.

For the first time in history, the CDS redesigned the annual Armed Forces Celebration and Remembrance Day to include awards in recognition serving personnel of the armed forces. During the 2025 Armed Forces Day, several officers, soldiers, ratings, airmen and airwomen, received different awards of excellence for exceptional performance. The chief of defence staff himself has also received several awards and recognition for his outstanding contributions to Nigeria's security and defence efforts. These include the Colin Powell Meritorious Award for Soldiering, the Nelson Mandela Exemplary Leadership Award, and the Officer of the Order of the Federal Republic (OFR) national honour.

The Nigerian military has been at the forefront of the country's efforts to combat insecurity, which has been a major challenge to national stability and development. Here's an examination of the Nigerian military's role in the fight against insecurity.

Recognising the importance of cross border collaboration, Gen. Musa has continued to pursue peace with Birkin Faso Mali and Niger, which severed ties with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the coups that upturned democratic governance in those countries.

For instance, as the Chairman of the Committee of Chiefs of Defence Staff of the ECOWAS, Gen. Musa had visited Niger Republic to discuss ways to sustain collaboration in addressing insecurity in the Sahel region and Lake Chad.

According to him, the security challenges in the Sahel have remained the greatest that continued to fuel insurgency in Nigeria.

During the recent 43rd Ordinary Meeting of the committee in Abuja, Musa reassured stakeholders in the sub-

Recognising the importance of cross border collaboration, Gen. Musa has continued to pursue peace with Birkin Faso Mali and Niger, which severed ties with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) following the coups that upturned democratic governance in those countries.

region of the readiness and determination of the military to ensure that West Africa region is fully secured.

He said the meeting was geared towards promoting regional security cooperation within the ECOWAS sub-region and forging common fronts in addressing the security challenges in the area.

According to him, deliberations have been sincere and forthright with collective security being accorded the desired priority.

"In the course of our deliberations, we identified critical vulnerabilities to regional security and demonstrated our firm resolve towards addressing these threats.

"As expected, there were areas of concern between members but more importantly there was firm resolve on the need for collective action.

"This is the spirit of this gathering which is firmly rooted in a resolute commitment to meeting our primary obligation as members of the armed and defence forces of our respective countries which is to defend and protect our peoples from harm and insecurities," he said.

Overall, Gen. Musa's leadership, command and control have been instrumental in shaping Nigeria's response to insurgency, and his efforts have yielded significant results.



(L-R) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala Director-General, WTO, President Donald Trump USA, Zelensky of Ukrain and Vladimir Putin of Russia

Sustaining International Trade amid Global Conflicts

Fortune Abang takes a look at the increasing rate of conflicts across the world and concludes that world leaders need to ensure that global trade goes on without any hindrances.

As conflicts continue to rage between economies across the world and pose threats to international trade, world leaders, diplomats, trade unions, and academics have expressed concern over the consequences of unresolved conflicts to global trade.

Their mind-boggling question is equally not far from not only begging for answers to risks involved in global trade recovery but advancing sustainable solutions to bilateral trade relations.

Experts in international relations have decried the conflicts between Russia and Ukraine, Israel and Palestine and the DR Congo-Rwanda as well as the Sudan crisis, among others. They say the conflicts have scuttled international trade activities and hindered international trade growth.

More so, the exit of the three Sahelian countries of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to form an independent bloc could pose

risks for economic relations and stability of trade in Africa and the world at large.

They also identified an increase in tariffs, political agenda in the wake of climate change crisis, and disintegration by some countries from regional and sub-regional blocs as forms of retaliation from international and

“ Both Russia and Ukraine are key suppliers of essential goods such as food, energy, and fertilizers, supplies of which are now threatened; grain shipments through Black Sea ports have been halted with possible dire consequences, particularly for poorer countries ”

domestic economic disputes, to be among other sources of conflict impeding trade growth.

While this has become important, the analysts observed that the war is taking place as other factors impact global trade, including the latest COVID-19 lockdowns in China, which are again disrupting maritime trade just as supply chain pressures appeared to be easing.

They, therefore, stressed the need for strategic measures aimed at advancing trade even in the face of global conflicts to ameliorate the suffering of citizens in countries experiencing war.

They also suggested a way forward in dealing with unfair trade tariffs on imports as a means to adapt amidst restrictions on international trade, urging governments to work with multilateral organisations to facilitate trade amidst a spate of conflicts.

According to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Director-General, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the war in Ukraine has created immense human suffering. Still, it is also putting the fragile recovery of global trade at risk, and the impact would be felt across the planet.

She said that although the Russian



Gen. Assimi, Mali interim president



Ibrahim Traore, Burkina Faso interim president



Gen. Abdourahamane Tchiani, Niger Republic



invasion started on Feb. 24, 2023, the most immediate impact of the war has been a sharp rise in commodity prices. Okonjo-Iweala said, "Both Russia and Ukraine are key suppliers of essential goods such as food, energy, and fertiliser to Africa and else where. However, the supplies are now being threatened by conflicts. Grain shipments through Black Sea ports have been halted with possible dire consequences, particularly for poorer countries.

"Smaller supplies and higher prices for food mean that the world's poor could be forced to do without. This must not be allowed to happen.

"In a crisis, more trade is needed to ensure stable, equitable access to necessities; restricting trade will threaten the wellbeing of families and businesses and make more fraught the task of building a durable economic recovery from COVID-19."

Similarly, Erik Solheim, Co-Chair of the Europe-Asia Centre, warned that have political agenda and trade tensions hindered globally coordinated responses for green economy revival and advancing international trade.

Solheim, also former Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive-Director of the UN Environment Programme, said during the 7th China International Import Expo (CIIE) Hongqiao International Economic Forum sub-forum with the theme: "Sustainable Trade amid

Climate Change."

That in recent years, with repeated shocks from the global pandemic, frequent geopolitical conflicts and a resurgence of trade protectionism, multilateral trading system had become increasingly fragile.

"Europe and China must work together to defend trade, especially in light of recent political shifts in the U.S., which might increase trade tensions in days to come.

"Without robust trade, the shift to green development could take far longer, leaving global economies more vulnerable," Solheim stated.

Mr Muhammad Aimen, an investment analyst at KTrade Securities, a Pakistan-based stock and commodity firm, said the surge in U.S. inflation to 3 per cent could pose economic challenges to global trade.

Aimen shared his insights during the

"Europe and China must work together to defend trade, especially in light of recent political shifts in the U.S., which might increase trade tensions in days to come.

global virtual analysis of KTrade Securities' research report, discussing the potential effects of tariffs on China, Mexico, and Canada, the U.S.'s largest trade partners, saying such could stoke inflation by limiting access to cheaper labour and goods.

He also warned that the deportation of immigrants could lead to higher domestic prices, as 15 per cent of U.S. workers in construction, manufacturing, and agriculture were immigrants.

Even if these tariffs bring some manufacturing back to the U.S., Aimen questioned whether these industries would be competitive in the global market.

"In other markets, Chinese manufacturers will continue to gain share, and the U.S. risks being shut out," he said.

Tunji Asaolu, Secretary-General of the United World Congress of Diplomats (UN-WCD), emphasised the need for diplomacy not just in establishing international relations but also in sustaining trade cooperation.

He spoke of the need for the international community to prioritise diplomacy in the promotion of trade policies, saying such could greatly affect the risk of conflict.

According to him, it is the role of diplomats to foster sustainable diplomatic agreement in the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, Israel-Palestine, the Sudan crisis, as well as the DR Congo and Rwanda conflict situation.

"The role of diplomats in this regard is key; without negotiations, there can be no way to sustainable agreements between aggrieved parties.

"So the responsibility is onerous on the diplomats to ensure dialogue at bilateral levels, to chat the way forward," Asaolu posited.

The analysts consider tariffs, political agenda, and retaliation from international and domestic economic disputes to have contributed to conflicts impeding international trade growth, urging that there should be constant dialogue to promote regional integration and further deepen bilateral cooperation.

Reaching Beyond Borders

Ladi Christopher looks at how Nigerians in the Diaspora are driving global development across diverse fields.

The Nigerian diaspora has emerged as a significant force for change and innovation around the world. With an estimated 15 million Nigerians living outside their home country, the contributions of these individuals span various sectors, positively impacting societies globally. This article highlights a selection of prominent Nigerians engaged in politics, economics, health, education, entertainment, and more, showcasing their efforts at driving global development.

Politics and Governance: Empowering Change on the Global Stage



Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala
Currently serving as the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO), Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala has garnered worldwide respect for her extensive experience in economics and governance. A former Finance Minister of Nigeria and Managing Director of the World Bank, she is fiercely advocating for equitable trade practices that benefit developing nations. Her leadership is pivotal in navigating complex global trade dynamics and crafting policies that foster sustainable development.



Adebayo Ogunlesi
As the chairman of Global Infrastructure Partners, Adebayo Ogunlesi plays a critical role in global infrastructure development, with significant investments in transport and energy sectors. Having previously served in various advisory capacities, Ogunlesi's efforts in improving infrastructure in both developed and developing countries underscore the importance of robust infrastructure in driving economic growth and stability.

Economics and Finance: Shaping Economic Futures



Iyinoluwa Aboyeji
A co-founder of Flutterwave and Andela, Iyinoluwa Aboyeji is a visionary entrepreneur revolutionising the tech landscape in Africa. His initiatives support startups and promote technological innovation in finance, aiding small businesses in accessing capital and resources necessary for growth. Aboyeji's work leads to financial inclusion that empowers individuals and communities.



Nimi Akinkugbe
A seasoned investment expert, Nimi Akinkugbe is the founder of a financial advisory firm specialising in investment management. Based in Europe, she advocates for financial literacy, focusing on educating Nigerians abroad and at home on effective wealth management strategies. Her commitment to empowering individuals through financial knowledge contributes to broader economic stability.

Science and Technology: Innovating for a Sustainable Future



Mahmoud Bukar Maina

In a preprint posted on AfricArXiv, Mahmoud Bukar Maina – a postdoctoral fellow currently based at the University of Sussex and affiliated with Gombe State University – and colleagues have investigated where neuroscience research performed in Nigeria is published. They found 572 PubMed-indexed articles published between 1996 and 2017, but only one of these was in a 'top-tier' international journal.



Dare Okoudjou

Founder and CEO of Mojaloop is a technology entrepreneur dedicated to creating inclusive financial systems. His work fosters technological solutions that enable financial access to underserved populations in Africa and beyond. Okoudjou's initiatives are crucial for promoting financial equity and transparency.

Entertainment and Media: Cultural Ambassadors on the Global Stage



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie,

An internationally acclaimed author, uses her voice to raise awareness about gender, race, and cultural identity through her writings and public speaking engagements. Adichie's influence extends beyond literature, as she actively engages in advocacy surrounding women's rights and social justice, impacting global



Burna Boy

The Grammy-winning artist has brought African music to the global stage, celebrating Nigerian culture through his powerful lyrics and rhythms. His music transcends borders and fosters cultural appreciation, highlighting the rich diversity of African heritage. His global presence promotes unity and understanding across cultures.

Health: Addressing Global Health Challenges



Dr. Chinenye Nwachuku

graduated from Georgetown University School of Medicine in 2003 and completed a residency at Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers. Dr. Nwachuku, MD is an Orthopedic Surgeon in Easton, PA and has 22 years experience. He currently practices at St. Luke's Orthopedic Care - Anderson Campus and are affiliated with St. Luke's Hospital-Bethlehem Campus, Saint Luke's Hospital Anderson, St. Luke's Hospital-Warren Campus, among others.



Dr. Julius Oni

A Nigerian associate professor of orthopaedic surgery, Dr Oni, has relocated back to Nigeria after spending 25 years in the United States.

In a video that has since gone viral, Oni shared details about his decision, saying, "I reverse Japa from the U.S. to Nigeria 6 weeks ago," referencing the popular Nigerian term 'Japa,' which means to flee or emigrate in search of better opportunities.



Dr. Ayoade Alakija,

A distinguished Nigerian physician and public health expert, has played a crucial role in the global response to health crises. As co-chair of the African Union's Africa Vaccine Delivery Alliance, Dr. Alakija has been instrumental in ensuring equitable vaccine distribution during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her advocacy for access to vaccines and healthcare solutions, especially in underserved communities, underscores her commitment to global health.

Trump needs Nigeria

-Amb Bolaji Akinremi

Trade Horizon Magazine took a time out to have an interview with Amb Bolaji Akinremi, Director, Economic, Trade and Investment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a renowned expert with decades of experience in promoting economic development and trade relations between Nigeria and the rest of the world. He had a lot to say on the impact of the U.S. executive order on Africa trade, and the need to prioritise diaspora voting as platform in advancing nation-building.



*Amb. Bolaji Akinremi
Director, Economic, Trade and
Investment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

The place of diplomacy in international trade and new world order

Amb. Akinremi told the Trade Horizon Magazine crew it had become paramount for people to understand the

principle guiding foreign policies and the role of diplomacy in international relations, to tackle international trade challenges in the new world order.

This is informed by the belief that everybody is for himself and God for all, while underscoring the fact that there are different schools of thought to diplomacy, when it patterns international relations, particularly international trade.

When it comes to international relations, it has to do with everybody for himself. There is the realist. there is the idealist and we must find a balance to that.

President Donald Trump is a realist and not just that, in diplomatic service, we say respect everybody, but we only trust God, and this America has told us directly.

It is just that people don't understand the full meaning of the slogan; in God we trust, which means they don't trust you, but we have come such a long way to trust them.

So, you don't know the full weight of that coinage, but I am not just simplifying it that way. I am just opening your eyes to tell you the reality of international relations. When you are dealing with nations, it is key to note that they always put their own interest first.

It is not when Trump signed his executive order that everybody should have been careful. I don't think it is much of looking for alliances. It is more of what you yourself can do.

There is no country that is an island, but America is able to do this because they have done something for themselves.

America is an example of a country that is first to craft citizenship policy by

birth. Such singular policy gave America an upper hand, because they take the best of all, then ensure their system works and that way you feel safe when you are in their environment.

They make their economy such that you want to go there. So, you are saving your money, putting it in their own system. Houses are so expensive, but people are working, paying taxes, yet more people are going there.

They did all of that for themselves. So, each country now has to rise up and say, how can we be standing on our own feet? Until you are standing, you really cannot call the shots. America is calling the shots because they are standing.

They have all the military equipment and with the dollar as the common denominator all over the world. BRICS is trying, but America has the key. When they see you are going beyond your limits, they introduce something, create something and then, deal with all of you.

BRICS is trying, but America has the key. When they see you are going beyond your limits, they will introduce something, create something and then, deal with all of you.

So, countries must begin to realise their respective potentials and use them to their own maximum benefit. It is when you have done something for yourself like the U.S. that others are envious of, that others cannot do. It is only then that you can call shots. So, ganging up is not the answer to executive order.

Africa Continental Free Trade Area Agreement cannot handle Trump because in Africa you are still struggling with technology and ports are not working effectively, due to poor infrastructure.

When a club of big countries is talking, smaller countries are not there and a powerful leader like Trump is never going to tell you what he discussed with

“There are so many African descendants all over the world that want to contribute to development processes at a home. They want a second passport. So, government policies must be distinct and fashioned in the best way that protects the interests of Diaspora and that is not common.

others.

He is never going to tell you what he discussed with President Vladimir Putin and President Xi Jinping. You might see him shouting at Volodymyr Zelensky, but you don't know what is happening behind closed doors.

This is why it has become important that every nation thinks strategically of what it can do to become more self-reliant, which is how big powers emerged.

So countries must realise their potentials, and they must use them to their advantage.

It is when you have done something for yourself that others are envious of you. It is only then that you can call the shot out there.

The concept that should be in every one's mind is what are we going to do for ourselves after all the big powers sat down and did something for themselves. That's how countries emerge.

And you cannot tell me we do not have the brain

Fostering Diaspora engagement as diplomatic platform in advancing foreign policy

The 4-D foreign policy concept by the Federal Government of Nigeria centered on Development, Democracy, Demography and Diaspora was crafted as four pillars for advancing Nigeria's foreign policy.



Amb. Bolaji Akinremi

The 4-D pillars clearly define the nation's global role, interest and active international engagement.

Diaspora is a key pillar of Nigeria's foreign policy that can be used as veritable tool in bolstering nation building, depending on how government harnesses the potential of its citizens abroad.

This has to do with what government is doing about it, especially to what extent is government using its citizens abroad? Although there is no perfect system anywhere, if your diaspora is important, it is important to give them voting rights to ensure their inclusion in the governance structure.

African countries should not pull down policies that encourage their citizens abroad to participate in the nation building processes.

There are so many African descendants all over the world that want a home and want to contribute to development processes there. They want a second passport. So government policies must be distinct and fashioned in the best way that it protects the interest of diaspora and that is not common.

This is what made America to get to where they are today. They are not going to give it up and allow you to meet up with them.

President Bola Tinubu's Renewed Hope Agenda

The Renewed Hope Agenda is not the

same thing as the 4-D pillar, which is bigger and broader, because the four pillar foreign policy agenda covers much more.

Nigeria has a huge diaspora population abroad, but we need a policy and these policies are not new. We just need to adopt and adapt policies that can incorporate Nigerians in the Diaspora in governance.

A lot of our children, a lot of our citizens are going to countries unregulated. So we need to formulate those policies on diaspora, not just to say we are diaspora as part of our pillars.

We have to move from the past glory of diaspora remittances. A lot of those monies are going to the formal sector, because nobody knows the number of diaspora that we have. Nobody has a record and diary or register of the sectors they are in.

We have them all over the world. We are on their platforms-Canadian Business Network, American-Nigerian Business Association, among others in Canada, Europe, British etc but in terms of government policies, there is no such record.

Countries find something they can design that is unique to them. They password it and they're using it.

So America has arrived where it is today. And it is not going to give up. It is not going to allow you as a country to meet up with it. So whatever we must do to excel as a country has to be by fire, by force.

Interview

When you say by fire, by force, what exactly do you mean? What kind of fire; what kind of force should Africa generate and apply to be able to get there?

Look, this is Nigeria. We should identify our problems. If I ask you today what our major problems are, what would you say?

Why should a country so rich in mineral and human resources be struggling? Number one, we have the problem of insecurity. Number two, we have problem of nation-building and harmonisation. Are the people in the South East seeing themselves as part of Nigeria? And are clearly accepted as such?

What is the alliance that we are forming across Nigeria? We must resolve our problems. And it requires someone who will take the bull by the horn and say “now that I have this authority, this is the right way and this is what we are going to do” and he does it.

Look at the issue of insecurity. We're talking of Fulani herdsmen and so on. Where else in the world do you see cattle going to people's farmlands and eating their crops? Is that not the problem we're facing before Trump came?

We're being discussed in The U.S. Capitol – the Congress as a country of particular concern and what they are saying is that there is religious intolerance in Nigeria and Christians are being targeted.

And Trump is seen to be anointed as the champion of the Christian faith. Whether he actually has Christian virtues is another thing entirely.

The people who brought the gospel to you are the farmers now in the bushes in America. They don't come to the city and they don't go to school, but they are multi-billionaires. They are the ones sending missionaries and they are the ones people are going to report to about Christians being killed in Nigeria. So we are our own enemies, reporting yourselves to these people.

If you are able to sit down and identify this as an economic problem, sit down and consider where you have to move your cattle to say, Lagos, when there's land where you are and all that you need



*Lee Kuan Yew
Singaporean first Prime Minister*

to rear your cattle.

If you have this problem, solve it first. Why are Nigerians succeeding when they travel outside? Because number one, they don't have problem of infrastructure, no headaches that they have here, and then they obey rules and regulations there.

So we need to solve our problems first. We need to agree to live in the modern world where you can feel free to walk on the streets without anybody harassing you.

Trump is not our problem. The U.S. needs us but nobody wants to tell you that they need you. You are rushing after them whereas they are the ones who need you.

“We are revamping the primary health care system expansion of health insurance and medical coverage. All of these are things that can be measured physically, particularly in terms of maternal and child mortality.”

That's why I said by fire by force, meaning you need to sit down and craft a vision for yourself. Identify stakeholders, agree to move together. And I think that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is the best person to do this.

Rome was not built in a day. In just about 2 years, he has taken the bull by the horn and I think we are going in the right direction but we need to be fast about it. We also have to be more intentional about it, deliberate.

In Singapore, Lee Kuan Yew was brutal about his intentions for the country, an island not up to the size of Abuja with only 5 million people and about 1.5 million residents and about 500 tourists. The country is investing in China, America, and Nigeria, among other places.

Singapore pulled out of Malaysia in the mid-sixties because they said they didn't want a country governed by religion. And they began their own journey. He read a riot act to the people. The government fought corruption.

Today, can you succeed in Nigeria without corruption? The system in Nigeria is built for people to be corrupt. By talking about by fire, by fore, I mean you would have to first of all deal with corruption. And dealing with corruption is not rocket science.



*Donald Trump
President of the United States*



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Donald Trump and His Obsession for Denmark's Greenland

President Donald Trump of the United States has not hidden the desire to annex the Panama Canal and Greenlanders part of the U.S. Shepherd Konan delves into what the motivation is.



Donald Trump, U.S president



*Mette Frederiksen
Denmark Prime Minister*

Days before his inauguration on Jan. 20, succeeding Joe Biden, U.S. President Donald Trump made a series of bold claims, especially over Greenland.

He told the BBC that he would not exclude military force from acquiring two targets - the Panama Canal and Greenland - to the United States, if need be.

In March, Trump reiterated that the United States would take control of Greenland "one way or the other," escalating months of increasingly aggressive rhetoric toward the self-governing Danish territory.

"We strongly support your right to determine your own future, and if you choose, we welcome you into the United States of America," he said about

halfway through his 90-minute speech.

Trump also pledged to Greenlanders that America would "keep you safe, we will make you rich, and together, we will take Greenland to heights like you have never thought possible before."

But in between the warm wishes Trump's tone shifted, as he again made the case to Americans that U.S. control of the ice-covered Arctic landmass was crucial to their national security.

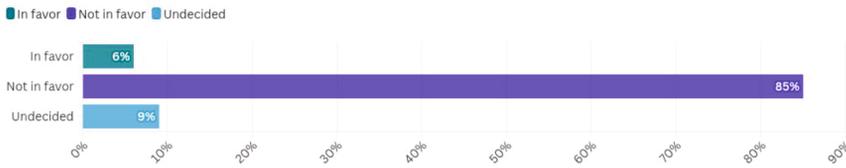
Addressing a joint session of Congress in Washington, Trump said he had "a message tonight for the incredible people of Greenland."

In an early 2025 One Decision podcast episode, the show's guest, Maryland

Democrat Sen. Chris Van Hollen remarked that "Trump's latest comments about the Panama Canal and Greenland

Feelings on Greenland becoming part of the US

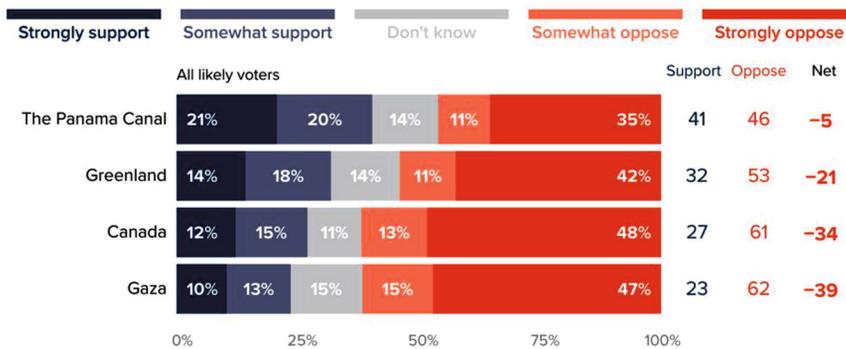
Among Greenlanders



Source: Verian poll

Voters Oppose the U.S. Taking Ownership of the Panama Canal, Greenland, Canada, and Gaza

Do you support or oppose the United States taking ownership of the following areas?



February 8-9, 2025 survey of 1,201 U.S. likely voters

DATA FOR PROGRESS

and Canada show that the world is in for a very rocky ride."

During a conference held at Trump's Mar-a-Lago estate, the U.S. President insisted on the strategic importance of the Panama Canal and Greenland to the United States.

Trump has also been an advocate of "transforming" Canada into the 51st U.S. state following the resignation of the country's prime minister, Justin Trudeau.

Greenland, which is a semi-autonomous territory under Danish jurisdiction, has long been looking to become independent.

Trump's bold declaration about purchasing the world's largest island is tied to both strategic resource abundance and also military-related advantages on an Arctic stronghold that lies on the shortest route between Europe and North America.

As far as expansion of the U.S. military presence at Pituffik Air Base since 1951 is concerned, Reuters explains that such a move could lead to the placement of more radars and technologies able to monitor and identify Russian vessels and nuclear submarines active in the

area situated between Greenland, Iceland, and Britain.

An agreement between The Kingdom of Denmark and the United States of America allowed the U.S. side to construct and move military equipment onto Greenland's territory.

The United States, however, has to notify Danish authorities when engaging in such actions, notes AP.

Trump's bold declaration about purchasing the world's largest island is tied to both strategic resource abundance and also military-related advantages on an Arctic stronghold that lies on the shortest route between Europe and North America.

A European Commission report on Greenland's resource importance pointed out that 25 of 34 "critical raw materials" necessary for the EU industry could be found on the world's

largest island.

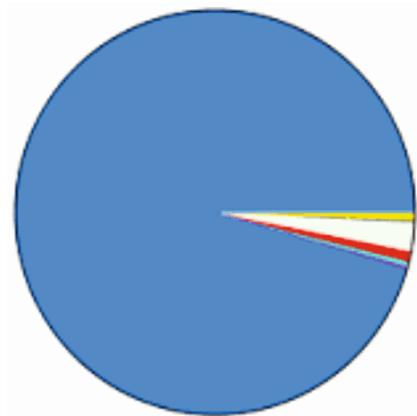
Why is this island so attractive to the United States?

Greenland, the world's largest island, is a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, located in the North Atlantic Ocean, with a vast ice sheet covering over four-fifths of its land area. It is situated east of the Canadian Arctic Archipelago and between the Arctic and Atlantic oceans. It's larger than Mexico but has a very small population, making it one of the least densely populated countries on Earth.

The island is characterized by its vast tundra and immense glaciers, with a massive ice sheet covering over 80% of its land area, reaching a maximum thickness of about 10,000 feet (3,000 meters).

Although it is part of the North American continent, Greenland is politically and culturally associated with Europe, particularly Denmark, and is a self-governing territory within the Kingdom of Denmark.

The island's economy is heavily reliant on fishing and other natural resources



Religion in Greenland (2010) ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾





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We the Family of Late. CHIKWEM FERDINAND AMADI of Umuriogwugwu Ohuba Amawuhie Ubomiri in Mbaitoli L.G.A Imo State hereby announces the transition to Glory of our beloved Mother, Grandmother, Great-Grandmother.



Ezinne Eugenia Ndawe AMAOI *Née Osuoha*

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SONGS OF PRAISE

WEDNESDAY 23rd APRIL 2025 by 4:00PM

venue @ Her family compound, Umuriogwugwu Ohuba Ubomiri, Mbaitoli L.G.A Imo State.

BURIAL SERVICE

THURSDAY 24th APRIL 2025 by 10:00AM

venue St. James Catholic Church, Amawuhie Ubomiri, Mbaitoli L.G.A Imo State.

LYING IN STATE

venue Family Compound, OHUBA Umurogwuwu Ubomiri.

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SUNDAY 27th APRIL 2025 by 9:00AM

venue St. James Catholic Church, Amawuhie Ubomiri, Mbaitoli L.G.A Imo State.

Signed: Hon Chinedu AMADI (PhD)

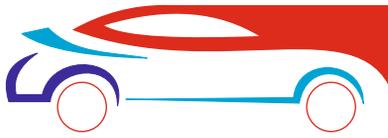
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Dangote Cement PLC



The Realism of Nigeria's Transition to CNG-Powered Vehicles

By Emmanuel Yashim



Following the elimination of fuel subsidy in May 2023, by President Bola Tinubu, and the resultant astronomical hike in the cost of essential goods and services, the search for cheaper alternative sources of fuel for cars and other vehicles became palpable, rising into a crescendo and reaching almost a frenzied pitch for motorists.

This search for cheaper, affordable source of fuel alternatives pushed many to switch to CNG-powered vehicles with the Federal Government having already embarked on advocacy to encourage Nigerians to buy in.

The Federal Government further mandated that all future vehicle, generator, or tricycle acquisitions by the government and its agencies would be decided by their configuration and capacity to run on either compressed natural gas, solar power, or electric energy sources.

This led some manufacturing companies to support the vision and take advantage of the opportunities on offer.

Some of companies are:

1. Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing:

Amid mounting concerns about the high cost of transportation and the sluggish implementation of the CNG policy, President Tinubu recently announced the first phase of domestically built CNG buses from Innoson Vehicles Manufacturing Company Ltd (IVM).

About 20 of the buses were manufactured by Innoson Motors and delivered to the Federal Government by the business. Innoson Motors also announced that it will begin manufacturing 30,000 buses and trucks that run on compressed natural gas (CNG).

2. Hyundai:

In support of Tinubu's CNG Initiative, Hyundai Nigeria recently began to roll out CNG vehicles for various categories of automobile users in the country.

The models include the Hyundai Grand i10, Accent, Creta, and Tucson, which are assembled in Nigeria.

According to Gaurav Vashisht, the company's head of Sales and Marketing, the locally assembled CNG vehicles target most vehicle buyers, including retail customers or status vehicle owners from different corporate companies.

3. Mikano:

As part of the Federal Government's strategy to increase the number of CNG-powered vehicles on the road, the presidential CNG Initiative started visiting important auto factories.

During a tour of the Mikano Car Assembly plant in Ogun state, Michael Oluwagbemi, the programme director/Chief Executive Officer, P-CNG Initiative, said Mikano is one of the manufacturers of CNG-powered cars that has demonstrated a commitment to supporting the government's transition to CNG vehicles.

4. Nord Automobiles The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) recently received a number of Nord compressed natural gas-powered (CNG) buses and pickups from Nord Automobiles Ltd., an automobile manufacturer with headquarters in Nigeria.

The vehicles include 11 Nord Flit buses and eight Nord Tusk pickups. Nord Flit CNG bus is a 15-seater minibus powered by CNG and petrol engine (hybrid), delivering 102/4600-500 kW/rpm.

The Nord Tusk pickup is a unique pickup powdered by a 2.7 litre CNG and petrol engine.

5. Lanre Shittu Motors:

Local vehicle assembler, Lanre Shittu Motors, recently announced assembled buses that run on 100 per cent CNG.

The company also stated that it was willing to support those buying a large fleet, including state governments, with the installation of mobile CNG stations across different locations.

Shittu, who spoke along with the Deputy Managing Director of the company, Lukman Shittu, said 100 units of the buses coming in two specifications would be introduced in the first phase to support President Bola Tinubu's CNG initiative of easing public transportation and cushioning the effects of fuel subsidy removal.

It remains to be seen whether other vehicle manufacturers with large chunks of the market in Nigeria would take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Tinubu-led administration to contribute to the President's reform and be part of it or train conservative.

Safety Protocols For Handling CNG

Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) is natural gas, primarily composed of methane that has been compressed to a much smaller volume than at normal atmospheric pressure, making it a viable fuel for vehicles and other applications

Natural gas is a clean, low cost, domestically available alternative fuel that can power our vehicles safely and efficiently.

The advantages to our energy independence by reducing foreign oil imports, the reduced cost compared to gasoline and less emissions have been well documented. However, there may still be a misconception about the safety of Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) compared to gasoline.

Is Natural Gas Safe to Use?

All fuel sources contain energy that is released through combustion and any fuel can be potentially dangerous if not properly handled. Throughout time we have learned to harness these fuels for heating, light and powering our vehicles.

The fact is that CNG is safer than gasoline as a vehicular fuel based upon two important facts; the physical qualities of natural gas and the structural integrity of the NGV fueling system.

Natural gas or methane is a non toxic gas that is lighter than air. This means that it will not puddle (like gasoline) or sink to the ground like propane, which is heavier than air. Instead, Natural Gas will rise and dissipate in the atmosphere. Natural gas also has a higher ignition temperature. This means that it is much harder to ignite. The storage systems used for compressed natural gas are infinitely stronger than the gasoline tanks found on cars and trucks today.

Few Safety Points to Consider

Compressed natural gas (CNG) is generally considered safe when handled and used properly. Here are a few points to consider regarding the safety of CNG:

Physical Properties – CNG is composed mainly of methane (CH₄) gas

CNG CONVERSION IN NUMBERS. WHAT TO KNOW

30%, 41%, CNG is cheaper, 30% the price of diesel and 41% the price of petrol

20,000-50,000 Nigeria has 20,000-50,000 natural gas vehicles

41% The conversion leads to a 41% savings in energy cost for car owners.



₦100,000-₦300,000
The conversion kit needed to switch a car from petrol or diesel to a CNG engine ranges from



202 trillion
Huge feedstock Nigeria has over 202 trillion cubic feet of proven gas reserves.



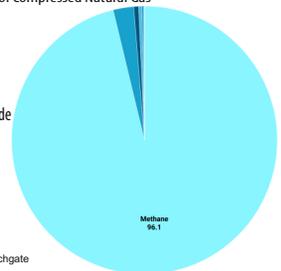
₦175 - ₦270
The price for a cubic meter of CNG varies between ₦175-₦270 depending on the location

BUSINESS DAY



% Composition of CNG
Composition of Compressed Natural Gas

- Methane
- Ethane
- Nitrogen
- Propane
- Carbon Dioxide
- Butane
- Pentane



Source: Researchgate

compressed to a pressure of around 3,000 to 3,600 pounds per square inch (psi). It is lighter than air and disperses quickly if released.

Storage and Transportation – CNG is stored in high-strength steel or composite cylinders designed to withstand high pressures. These cylinders undergo rigorous testing and certification to ensure safety.

Fire and Explosion Risks – CNG is less likely to ignite compared to gasoline or diesel because it has a high ignition temperature (approximately 1,202°F or 650°C). However, in the event of a leak and in the presence of an ignition source, it can catch fire. The main concern is not

the gas itself, but rather the potential for ignition in poorly ventilated areas.

Ventilation – Proper ventilation is crucial when using or storing CNG indoors. Since CNG is lighter than air, any leaked gas tends to rise and disperse rapidly outdoors. Indoors, however, it can accumulate if not properly ventilated, posing a risk of explosion if ignited.

Overall, while CNG is considered safe when handled correctly and in compliance with safety regulations, it does require adherence to specific safety protocols to minimize potential risks associated with its use.



Atlas Oranto: Proudly Exploring Africa

Atlas Petroleum International and its sister company Oranto Petroleum have an extensive footprint across the African continent, holding 22 oil and gas licenses in 12 jurisdictions. With an unrivalled knowledge of African petroleum sectors and players, Atlas and Oranto seek to create long-term value with investment strategies that benefit ourselves and our partners, host countries and their citizens. Established by Nigerian businessman and philanthropist Prince Arthur Eze, our group has been proudly exploring Africa since 1991.

Or Partnerships in Africa

Our technical base is strategically located in Lagos, Nigeria, and our corporate headquarters is in Abuja, giving us direct access to African policy-makers in this regional political hub.

Transforming Communities

Atlas and Oranto place great emphasis on exceeding corporate governance best practices and complying with international health, safety and environment regulations. This ensures that our partners and host nation administrations have absolute confidence in our ethical commercial practices.

Our African Portfolio

The Atlas and Oranto acreage portfolio has delivered success with the drill bit. Our producing assets are currently producing 18,000 barrels of oil per day, a figure anticipated to significantly increase due to already scheduled new development drilling in 2019. The exploration upside of the portfolio offers billion-barrel drill ready prospects in many licences. Appraisal and field development farm-in opportunities are available on a number of licences. Oranto Petroleum has portfolios in Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Liberia, Namibia, Sao Tome and Principe/JDZ, Senegal, South Sudan, Uganda, and Zambia.



Osi Umenyiora with President Bola Tinubu.

Super Bowl

and the Quest to Develop American Football in Nigeria

By Muhyideen Jimoh

The Super Bowl, the championship game of the National Football League (NFL), has become a global spectacle, and its influence is gradually reaching Nigeria, where American football is still in its early stages of development. although not as widely followed as football, athletics, table tennis or basketball, the Super Bowl has gained some attention in Nigeria due to increasing global sports media coverage and the ever increasing number of Nigerian diaspora in the U.S. Nigerian fans, especially in major cities tune in to watch

the game at sports bars or via live streaming outlets. Social media discussions and sports betting have also contributed to its rising popularity.

However, the impact of several Nigerian-born or Nigerian-descent players that have made it to the NFL, has inspired interest back home. Notable names include Osi Umenyiora, Christian Okoye, Emmanuel Ogbah, and more.

Umenyiora, a former NFL star, has been actively promoting American football in Africa through initiatives such as the NFL Africa Programme, which has hosted talent camps in Nigeria.

Sports

On Feb. 28, a Nigerian-born professional American footballer, Morotoluwa Ojomo visited President Bola Tinubu at the Presidential Villa, Aso Rock, Abuja, following his Super Bowl victory with the Philadelphia Eagles.

At the meeting with Tinubu he announced plans to establish a sports academy in Nigeria to empower young athletes and promote American football.

At a separate meeting with the Chairman/CEO of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), Mrs Abike Dabiri-Erewa, in Abuja, Ojomo emphasised that investing in young people is key to Nigeria's future.

He also pledged to collaborate with local organisations to promote flag football (a variant of American football) in Nigeria, with the goal of qualifying teams for the 2028 Olympics.

“In the meeting, we proposed a plan to ultimately build an academy that not only promotes Nigerian-born athletes overseas or Nigerian descendants who come back and visit but also points to the youths and gives them abilities to grow in strength skills. That is what is in the pipeline,” Ojomo said.

He affirmed that while American football is not widely popular in Nigeria, efforts are underway to raise awareness and increase participation. “There is a lot of work being done with the flag football team. Some try-outs are happening in Lagos right now. I think they want to get them ready for the Olympics in 2028,” he explained. Reflecting on his own journey, Ojomo credited his Nigerian upbringing for instilling in him the determination and perseverance that led to his Super Bowl victory.

“I would not be here without Nigeria. I think that there is a saying that the grass is not greener where you go, it's greener when you water it. We have the opportunity to water it,” he said. Ojomo's interesting trajectory began in Lagos, where he was born in 2001. His family moved to the United States in 2009 when he was just seven years old.

Growing up in Texas, he developed an

interest in American football, a sport not widely played in Nigeria.

He attended the University of Texas, where he played 50 games over five seasons, recording 95 tackles and five sacks. His performances earned him recognition and in 2023, the Philadelphia Eagles selected him in the seventh round of the NFL Draft.

Ojomo's journey from Lagos to the NFL is instructive. His success, paired with his intent to give back, challenge Nigeria to think bigger.

Nigeria has the population, the talent, and now a champion willing to lead.

Whether it can build on this moment depends on action, not promises.

Ojomo believes Nigeria can grow its own grass greener. The question is whether its leaders and people will water it together.

With continued investment, exposure, and role models emerging from the NFL, American football in Nigeria has the potential to grow. Flag football, in particular, is gaining traction as an easier entry point, and the inclusion of flag football in the 2028 Olympics could further boost interest.



C.J. Gardner-Johnson #8 and Tyler Steen #56 of the Philadelphia Eagles celebrate after beating the Kansas City Chiefs 40-22 to win Super Bowl LIX at Caesars Superdome on February 09, 2025 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Gregory Shamus/Getty Images

