

## **COMMUNIQUE OF THE 25TH MEETING OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL ON WORKS HELD ON THURSDAY 28TH NOVEMBER, 2019, AT THE MAIN AUDITORIUM, INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE**

The 25th Meeting of the National Council on Works with the theme: "Infrastructure as the Pathway for Prosperity," took place on Thursday, 28th November, 2019, at the main auditorium, International Conference Centre, Calabar, Cross River State. The Council Meeting was preceded by a 3-Day Meeting of Directors and Permanent Secretaries from 25th – 27th November, 2019.

2. The Meeting was declared opened by the Executive Governor of Cross River State, His Excellency, Professor Benedict Bengioushuye Ayade, represented by the Deputy Governor, Professor Ivara Ejemot Esu, OFR. The Honourable Minister of State, Engr. Abubakar D. Aliyu, FNSE presided over the Meeting on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Raji Fashola, SAN, which was also attended by the Chairman, Federal Character Commission, Honourable Abubakar Yahaya Kusada, the Chairman Cross River State House Committee on Works Rt. Hon. Nelson Ofem, the Chief Executive Officer/Registrar, Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), Prof. Joseph O. Odigure, FNSE, Ag. Surveyor-General of the Federation, Surveyor Taiwo Adeniran, representative of the Corps Marshall FRSC, Deputy Corps Marshall, Kenneth Nwaegbe, mni, the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Works and Housing Mohammed Bukar, Honourable Commissioners in charge of Works and Infrastructure from the 36 States, as well as senior officials of relevant Federal and State Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) under the purview of Works, representatives of the Works and Survey Corps in the Armed Forces, Police and Paramilitary, the Academia, International Organizations, Regulatory Bodies and other Stakeholders. The Permanent Secretary, Cross River State Ministry of Works, Dr. (Mrs.) Ihort G. C. Achu delivered the welcome address.

3. In the course of the Meeting, a total of Twenty-Three (23) Memoranda were received, Six (6) Memoranda were merged, Three (3) stepped down and Sixteen (16) considered. The Memoranda deliberated were grouped into four thematic groups:

- i. Road Infrastructure and Job Creation (Direct and Indirect) - 3
  - ii. Road Infrastructure and Poverty Alleviation - 4
  - iii. Road Infrastructure , Wealth Creation and Empowerment of the Informal Sector - 6
  - iv. Governance and Institutional Strengthening - 10
- Total = 23

4. Council considered the issues raised in the Memoranda presented at the Meeting and resolved to:

- i. note that the Nigerian road network occupies an important space in the socio-economic development of the country;
- ii. note that giant strides have been made by Government over time in the development of the road network;
- iii. note that there is a significant mismatch between road development funding needs and the public budgetary provisions;
- iv. note that Government has been exploring alternative sources of funding to improve road infrastructure development financing in the country;
- v. note that these alternative funding sources coupled with the annual budgetary provisions have not only helped to improve road network connectivity and condition, but have led to the generation of employment for the teeming youth of the country;
- vi. note that the Government's Tax Credit Scheme under the Executive Order 007 is a new project funding alternative that is expected to contribute significantly to job creation if effectively harnessed to Nigeria's road infrastructure;

vii. note that the Scheme has the capacity not only to generate employment but will also accelerate road infrastructure provision across the country;

viii. note that proper enforcement of the recently introduced Executive Orders 003 & 005 on local content will no doubt help in employment generation and wealth creation;

ix. note that Road Maintenance activities have the potential to redress the high rate of unemployment and fix the skill gap in Nigeria;

x. note that labour-based methods of road maintenance have socio-economic benefits of generating more jobs and the provision of road infrastructure at a lower cost;

xi. note that an upgrading/equipping of the Ministry's Workshops in different parts of the country would make it a veritable tool for training of citizens across Nigeria in various skills;

xii. note the need for Nigeria to adopt the Singaporean and Malaysian Models in which every citizen is required to have at least one skill he/she is proficient in, to reinforce his/her ability to fend for themselves;

xiii. note that it is a global practice for technological workshop trained personnel to engage themselves meaningfully in designing, manufacturing and maintaining different items that are of great use to humanity and by so doing create lucrative jobs for themselves as sustainable means of livelihood;

xiv. note the strategic role of engineering workshop infrastructure in youth empowerment and wealth creation and militating the issue of insecurity;

xv. note the need for public policy reforms and investment in road infrastructure that would significantly contribute to the pursuit of socially inclusive development and poverty alleviation;

xvi. note that Lagos State in its quest to providing good road infrastructure has directly created jobs in the design, construction, operation and maintenance of road projects for professionals;

xvii. note that increased infrastructure development in rural areas has resulted in high farm and non-farm yields, employment and

empowerment in the informal sector through the engagement of skilled and unskilled workers;

xviii. note that there is now a reduction in transport cost, travel time, easy access to market for local produce, access to health facilities; thereby strengthening the local economy;

xix. note that adequate infrastructure is a necessary condition for sound economic growth and development in the country;

xx. note that the annual budgetary provisions are inadequate to fund the required road infrastructure;

xxi. note the need to revisit the Federal Highways Road Fund Bill and Federal Highway Authority Bill currently with the National Assembly;

xxii. note the need to source for an alternative funding, in addition to the annual budgetary provision to ensure that adequate investment on road infrastructure is achieved;

xxiii. note the need to increase the use of local resources (Labour & Materials) as well as indigenous construction firms in execution of road contracts which will in turn stimulate the economy;

xxiv. note the dearth of skilled and semi-skilled manpower in road construction and the urgent need for training & retraining of artisans, technicians and craftsmen;

xxv. note that the Strategic Federal Highway Rehabilitation & Maintenance Programme (SFHRMP) if implemented, would link all the six geo-political zones with pothole free network of roads and maintenance free for years;

xxvi. note that expending meagre budgetary allocation each year on 37,000 km of roads has insignificant effect on national road network;

xxvii. note that priority on the core roads will reduce travelling time, vehicle operating cost and goods would be more accessible to the zones;

xxviii. note that some of the existing obsolete road maintenance practices should be jettisoned and replaced with proactive programme;

xxix. note that provisional specification would allow contractors and clients to introduce innovations in line with global best practices in highways design, construction, rehabilitation and maintenance;

xxx. note that the Nigerian Institution of Highway Transportation Engineers (NIHTE) in collaboration with other relevant bodies would assist in the issuance of guidelines on the need for a provisional specification on other innovative areas as may be required;

xxxi. note that the introduction of new products and technologies will enhance poverty alleviation;

xxxii. note that vegetation control along the roads will provide security and improve visibility for road users, thereby reducing accidents, loss of lives and properties;

xxxiii. note that the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) during assessment, evaluation and re-certification under Road Transport Safety Standardization Scheme (RTSSS) ensures that Fleet Operators of Articulated Vehicles meet the requirements of RTSSS;

xxxiv. note that the FRSC through its public enlightenment and sensitization programmes engage Unions of Articulated Vehicles on the proper use of the roads where issues regarding the use of their parks are brought to fore;

xxxv. note that the FRSC regularly organise training for drivers of Articulated Vehicles to improve their driving knowledge, skills and other road safety matters;

xxxvi. note that the FRSC during its conduct of Road Safety Audit of roads in the country, usually identify locations along highways where indiscriminate parking of articulated vehicles is prevalent;

xxxvii. note that provision of designated parks along highways in the country will reduce the danger posed by indiscriminate parking of articulated vehicles on the roadway;

xxxviii. note that the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) carries out road safety audit and inspection of roads in the country;

xxxix. note that some roads in the country have deteriorated causing hardship and hazard to motorists;

xl. note that lots of heavy-load carrying activities are on the increase on our highways and the FRSC has been checking through their enforcement in compliance with regulating axle load;

xli. note that urban transport policies, land use, infrastructure/road furniture policies, traffic regulations and enforcement practices are all in favour of car users at the expense of Non-Motorized Transport (NMT);

xlii. note that this results to high rate of pedestrian fatalities which according to World Health Organization (WHO) represents 39% of all road fatalities in African countries including Nigeria;

xliii. note that the near absence of bicycles on the streets, except in some local communities where it is relatively safe to do so is very glaring;

xliv. note that the use of NMT transport results in pollution, increasing transport cost, national fuel consumption etc.;

xlv. note that the absence of NMT contributes to lack of exercise by motorized commuters;

xlvi. note the importance of providing Standard Workshop infrastructure in the development of Engineering Profession in Nigeria;

xlvii. encourage all tiers of Government to invest on road infrastructure as a veritable means of alleviating poverty;

xlviii. encourage corporate organizations to invest in road infrastructure as part of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) towards creating enabling business environment and enhancing poverty alleviation in the country;

xlix. encourage all tiers of Government to set up mechanisms and proceed to develop cycling and walking policy with short, medium and long term strategies;

l. urge Government to call on banks and other financial institutions to buy into the multi-lateral scheme to increase private sector involvement in road project delivery with the attendant multiplier effects of employment generation, wealth creation and crime reduction;

- li. urge all tiers of Government to ensure the strict compliance of Executive Orders 003 & 005 provisions by all construction firms;
- lii. urge Federal Government to set up Construction Banks that can access pension funds for infrastructural development;
- liii. urge all tiers of Government to develop a deliberate policy to compel foreign firms to engage experienced Nigerian professionals at high level management positions;
- liv. urge all tiers of Government to encourage equipment leasing companies by way of tax incentives on equipment leased to local contractors, to improve their participation in Government contracts;
- lv. urge all tiers of Government to encourage the labour-based approach for road maintenance nationwide through the establishment of Road Maintenance Agencies;
- lvi. urge all tiers of Government to support the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency's collaboration with interested stakeholders to develop and implement labour-based routine road maintenance, procurement and delivery mechanism;
- lvii. urge the Federal Government to promptly release budgetary allocations to FERMA to save the roads from further deteriorating;
- lviii. urge Government to further consider alternative sources of road infrastructure development funding other than the SUKUK and Presidential Infrastructure Development Fund (PIDF) for improved road infrastructure development in the country;
- lix. urge all tiers of Government to opt for various forms of Public Private Partnership (PPP) to accelerate roads development;
- lx. urge all tiers of Government to increase local contractor's involvement in construction projects in order to enhance capacity building and ensure that wealth created is retained within the country;
- lxi. urge all tiers of Government to open registers in areas where they lack expertise and reduce the employment of the services of expatriates;

Ixii. urge all tiers of Government to start training and empowering home-grown professionals as enshrined in the Local Content Act/ Executive Order 005;

Ixiii. urge all tiers of Government to initiate policies that will improve investors confidence;

Ixiv. urge Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to formulate a policy that will enable Infrastructure Bank give out loans at a single digit interest rate for infrastructure development;

Ixv. urge States and Local Governments to assess funds from the Capital Market in form of bonds for the purpose of developing their infrastructure towards improving their local economies;

Ixvi. urge all tiers of Government to utilize the potentials in Public Private Partnership (PPP) for the improvement of infrastructural development;

Ixvii. urge Government to set aside 1% of the nation's GDP for a period of five (5) years for infrastructure development which should be reviewed periodically;

Ixviii. urge the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing to adequately fund the ten (10) Nos. training schools under its purview with a view to bringing them to International Standard;

Ixix. urge the Federal and State Ministries of Works to collaborate with Regulatory/Professional Bodies such as Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) to develop strategies in addressing the operations of quacks in infrastructure development.

Ixx. urge all tiers of Government to employ trainees and pay them monthly stipends while on training and at the end of the programme, provide starter packs to enable them establish on their own;

Ixxi. urge the Federal and State Governments to ensure that COREN Engineering Regulations Monitoring (ERM) Team have access to carry out their statutory functions in all engineering projects;



Ixxii. urge Federal and State Government to ensure that only COREN Licensed Indigenous and Expatriate Engineering Practitioners are engaged in all engineering projects;

Ixxiii. urge the Federal and State Governments to ensure that only COREN Licensed engineering consulting and contracting firms are engaged in all engineering projects;

Ixxiv. urge all tiers of Government and other relevant stakeholders demand for COREN Annual Practicing Licence as a condition for pre-qualification of engineering firms and practitioners in all engineering projects;

Ixxv. urge the Federal Ministry of Works and Housing to publish Provisional Specifications on the new Product and Technologies deployed and used for the benefit of other Stakeholders;

Ixxvi. urge Government at all levels to engage direct labour in vegetation control and improve visibility;

Ixxvii. urge States and Local Governments to provide more designated land space for building and operation of parks for articulated vehicles across the country through the use of the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model;

Ixxviii. urge fleet owners to invest in the building of parks along their routes;

Ixxix. urge the Federal Government to invest more on rail line construction to decongest road usage by heavy duty vehicles;

Ixxx. urge Government at all levels to ensure immediate maintenance of potholes on all roads across the country;

Ixxxi. urge all tiers of Government to regulate the importation and local fabrication of trucks that have carrying capacity beyond the acceptable design load of our roads;

Ixxxii. urge all tiers of Government to consider other sources of transportation, e.g. rail, pipeline, etc. to ensure the reduction of pressure on the existing roads;

Ixxxiii. urge all tiers of Governments to establish Standard Laboratories and Workshops with modern facilities and other instruments used in

repairs and maintenance of engineering plants, machines and other purposes;

lxxxiv. urge that Engineers should carry out Equipment Certification before award and during execution of such contracts;

lxxxv. urge the establishment of Federal, States and Expatriate Technical Committees for the implementation of COREN ERM activities;

lxxxvi. urge all tiers of Government to ensure their planning authorities intervene appropriately by controlling developments on road reservations thereby improving visibility;

lxxxvii. urge all tiers of Government to empower Traffic Management Agencies to enforce the use of designated trailer parks;

lxxxviii. approve that all tiers of Government should embark on aggressive advocacy on the mutual benefits of the Tax Credit Scheme to Government and Companies;

lxxxix. approve the establishment/resuscitation and upgrading of workshops by the Federal and State Governments for training of Nigerians on productive skills;

xc. approve the use of Government workshops for the production of useful items such as electrical street lighting poles, manhole covers, road signages, etc.;

xc. approve that companies employing expatriates should be charged with responsibility of stating the timeframe in conjunction with relevant Government agencies within which the Nigerians attached to the expatriate will be trained, failure of which, work permits will be denied;

xcii. approve the Strategic Highway Rehabilitation & Maintenance Programme (SHRMP) where priority concentration of roads maintenance and rehabilitation will be on core roads linking all roads to the Federal Capital Territory as against the present practice of expending meagre budgetary allocation each year on 37,000km of Federal Road which makes little or no positive impact on the national road network; and

xciii. approve the review of existing road design practices, policies and framework for implementation of appropriate measures on non-motorized transportation in Nigeria in line with global best practices of re-engineering cities for people rather than for cars.