

# Lekki Port to recover Nigeria's lost trans-ship cargo, boost Eastern Ports

By Amaka Anagor-Ewuzie

THE Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) has mandated the management of the newly completed Lekki Port and Lekki Freeport Terminal and its terminal operator, to work towards recovering Nigeria's trans-ship cargo lost to other neighbouring West African countries.

Trans-ship cargoes are goods bound for landlocked countries but are imported through Nigerian Ports for the destination country. Nigeria lost those cargoes to Cotonou Port due to inefficiency in port operations.

Kehinde Olubi-Neye, the chief commercial officer of Lekki Freeport Terminal, told journalists in Lagos on Wednesday during a tour of the Lekki Port facility, that the new port, which has invested close to \$100 million to acquire terminal and cargo handling equipment, has the needed equipment and the draft to recover trans-ship cargo bound for landlocked neighbouring countries.

He said the Lekki Freeport Terminal has discussed with stakeholders, including Nigeria Customs Service and they are confident that recovering trans-shipment cargo not just for the hinterland but also for landlocked countries and other regional countries will be back in the country.

He said the port has also seen the opportunity to play a role in the uptake of cargo in the Eastern ports, which is why they are currently having discussions on moving containers discharged at Lekki Port by barge to the Eastern ports of Calabar, Warri, and Onitsha River Port among others to help increase the economy of those ports.

On cargo evacuation from the port, Olubi-Neye said Lekki Port operates an automated system that is linked to the automated gate with the vehicle booking system where truck drivers are required to book appointments in advance.

"This also supports the initiative of the Lagos

State government with regard to the comprehensive call-up system for the Lagos Free Zone, Lekki Port, Dangote Free Zone, Dangote Refinery and the Pinnacle Oil and Gas. We are in active discussions with the Lagos State ministry of transport and other stakeholders on the deployment of the call-up system for the Lekki area and we have confidence that the coming onboard of the call-up system for trucks will address any concerns that prospective port users would have over access to the port," he said.

Beyond the road, he said that Lekki Port is also exploring the possibility of moving cargo by barges and has been able to execute more than five barge moves of over 900 twenty-foot equivalent units of containers (TEUs) from Lekki Port to the Ikorodu area of Lagos.

He further disclosed that the port has completed a truck park very close to the port with a capacity for 150 trucks.