

# Court Strikes out Case on Reversed Shipping Charges

The Federal High Court in Lagos yesterday struck out the case brought against the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) by the Seaports Terminal Operators Association of Nigeria (STOAN) on reversed shipping charges at the ports.

The terminal operators had last week gone to court to stop the council from implementing the decision reversing some shipping charges they had introduced unilaterally some years back to the 2009 rate approved by the Federal Ministry of Transport.

The case was struck out against the terminal operators for non-compliance with the rules of the court.

The presiding judge, Justice Ibrahim Buba, while striking out the case, explained that the parties which came by way of originating summons, did not tell the court the issues for determination.

"Since the court cannot proceed without knowing the right and interest of the parties which are

inextricably tied to the question of determination, the court cannot proceed on that," Buba said.

Counsel to the NSC, Mrs. Funke Agbor, had argued that the court could not proceed with the case since the issues for determination had not been explained.

The council had last week reversed the Progressive Storage Charge to the pre-May 2009 rates, including introduction of other measures that will reduce cost of doing business in Nigerian ports.

The council which is the ports economic regulator had also increased the container Free Storage Period to seven days instead of three days. The council also increased Container demurrage-free days to 10 days.

The regulator had also directed that henceforth, container deposits must be refunded within 10 days after the empties had been returned to the shipping companies.

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