

Weekly STAR

NAGAFF repositions freight forwarding

NATIONAL Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders of Nigeria (NAGAFF) comes first in this week's poll. Freight forwarders form a vital link between the shipper and statutory agencies involved in cargo clearance. Without them, (freight forwarders), the Nigerian Customs Service will find it difficult to deal with the multitude of international trade transactions involving Nigerian freight forwarders. The body helps the practitioners to be highly skilled and conversant with the laws of international trade.

In recent time, NAGAFF has been playing a leading role in the nation's freight forwarding business. The organisation has championed advocacy on the improvement of standards of freight forwarding practice in the country.

It has been at the vanguard of setting professional standards, code of conduct and ethics of the profession. This is possible through efforts by the organisation to instill professional responsibilities in members via training and re-training programmes.

The organisation also, advises government and periodically contributes to the policies on matters relating to freight forwarding and cargo handling with a view to enhancing rapid development of the nation's economy.

Among others, it also assists members in solving problems encountered in the discharge of their professional duties within the ambit of the law.

NAGAFF was formally established on November 30, 1999. Recognising the importance of a professional freight forwarders' association in Nigeria, and given the wind of globalisation and liberalisation, over 3,000 freight forwarders were said to have attended the inaugural meeting.

The organisation, at the time it was established, was a saving grace for freight forwarding practice which until then, was regarded as an all comers' affair. According to reports, an average freight forwarder in Nigeria then was not better than a "motor park tout".

A clear picture of what the organisation represents to freight forwarders becomes clearer when one visits the NAGAFF Village, Apapa. Located at 2A Maybin Street, GRA, Apapa, the expansive compound with a training school is usually a beehive of activities as freight forwarders besiege the premises for one problem or the other."

National President of the association, Dr. Boniface Aniebonam, recently appraising maritime development regretted that the Nigerian ports have never been business friendly.

He argued that there have never been ports where one easily goes into and transacts one's genuine business. Dr. Aniebonam particularly criticised inconsistency in the policies of successive governments in the country.

He identified cargo throughout as the yardstick to measure the level of success in ports operation and regretted that, "those of us who are involved in moving goods out of the ports have not been fairsing well."

The NAGAFF boss decried the level of corruption in the nation's ports, lamenting that it was difficult for any freight forwarder to determine how many days it will take him to clear his goods from the ports.



•Dr. Boniface Aniebonam, President, NAGAFF