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Apapa Port Reopens, Operators Count Losses

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The Director General of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Ziakede Patrick Akpobolokemi has stressed the need for collaboration to ensure the attainment of set goals in the maritime sector of the economy.

According to him, collaboration among government agencies and organs is required to enhance and promote sustainable development in the nation's maritime sector.

He stated this when he received the management team of the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) led by its executive secretary, Mr. Hassan Bello in Lagos. Lagos.

According to him, a smooth working relationship among agencies under the Federal Ministry of Transport would go a long way in providing solutions to challenges facing port operations and other facets of the maritime sector in the country.

He therefore, suggested occasional meetings between the leadership of these agencies to serve as a platform to present

a common agenda to foster the desired development in the sector.

He said: "The era of competition is over. We are now in the era of collaboration because the goal is to make Nigeria a maritime hub in the African continent. Regular meetings among the leadership of NIMASA, NSC, the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), the National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), the Railway Corporation and the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron will definitely provide the adequate forum to rub minds and jointly propose solutions to the Executive and Legislative arms of Government."

While commending the management of NSC for recently attaining the stature of the commercial regulator of shipping activities in the country, Akpobolokemi urged Bello and his team not to relent in their efforts to improve services for all stakeholders in the shipping sector.

He maintained that this was key to the transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan administration.

Responding, Bello com-

mended Akpobolokemi and his team for their doggedness in transforming the nation's maritime sector through various initiatives, especially the newly launched NIMASA integrated surveillance system.

He described the agency as fundamental international institution that had made the country proud among the comity of maritime nations.

Bello noted that as the economic regulator, the NSC was concerned with the efficiency in the ports and the cost of doing business in Nigeria, among other responsibilities. He explained that NSC would require the partnership with NIMASA in order to actualise its mandate.

Meanwhile, Akpobolokemi has applauded the professionalism of the officers and men of the Nigerian Army in combating insurgency even in the face of unwarranted criticisms.

He made the remarks when the Commander, 9 Brigade Nigerian Army, Brigadier General David Lubo paid a familiarisation visit to the agency.

While commending the

detachment of Nigerian Army personnel posted to the agency's Maritime Guard Command, Akpobolokemi assured the Brigade Commander of NIMASA's continuous cooperation especially in the area of securing the Nigerian maritime domain.

"Piracy and sea robbery have taken on violent dimensions employing the use of fire arms and the agency is not empowered to bear arms. This necessitated the agency to enter into memoranda of understanding (MoU) with the relevant security agencies with a view to properly responding to these incidences", he said.

Responding, Lubo who expressed readiness of his Brigade to partner NIMASA to enforce security within the provisions of the law also noted with satisfaction the manner with which the agency has handled the welfare of troops deployed to NIMASA.

He commended Akpobolokemi and members of his management for the giant strides so far recorded in the maritime sector and urged him to remain focused on his assignment.