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Shippers Council cuts port charges

By Simon Echewofun Sunday

The Nigeria Shippers Council (NSC) has cut down the charges for ports following serial complaints from importers and custom agents.

The cut was contained in a notice NSC issued to terminal operators and shipping companies ordering a downward review of their charges.

The Council was appointed in February by the federal government as an economic regulator of the maritime industry, encountering complaints on some charges on freights, clearance and storage at the ports.

The review which took effect from Monday, would affect the progressive storage charge, free storage period, shipping line agency charge, containers' clearing and maintenance fee and container demurrage.

An official of the Council in Abuja said the notice was conveyed after several meetings and consultations with the terminal operators and shipping companies.

The notice had stated that Terminal operators would revert to the storage charge approved on May 1, 2009 which is significantly lower than the prevailing charges.

The free storage period which was

three days has now been increased to seven days for cargoes to stay before the charges commence.

The notice said the shipping line agency's charges for 20 a feet container was reduced from N26,500 to N23,850 and 40-foot container reduced from N48,000 to N40,000.

Shipping agencies were also directed to refund container deposits to importers and agents within 10 working days after the return of the empty containers.

The container cleaning and maintenance fee, for which shipping companies charge about N2,500, has been reduced to N1,500.

The free period before which

container demurrage is charged has been increased from five days to 10 days.

Meanwhile, the Licensed Customs Agents, weekend, commended the NSC for the downward review of the Progressive Storage Charges by terminal operators in Nigerian seaports.

NAN reports that the President, Mr Lucky Akiwero, said the decision would have positive impact on the entire maritime chain trade system.

"The Shippers' Council has taken a right step to addressing some of the issues challenging trade in Nigeria, but they should not rest on this," Akiwero said.