

ANLCA, Customs FOU seeks cooperation on trade facilitation

THE NATIONAL President of Association of Nigerian Licensed Customs Agents (ANLCA), Prince Olayiwola Shittu, recently led a team of senior national officials to the Federal Operations Unit Zone (FOU) 'A' Ikeja of the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS) to seek the cooperation and understanding of the unit in facilitating trade through the seaports, airport and border stations.

This renewed call for partnership follows incessant complaints about officers stopping containers on the highways after they have been duly cleared from the ports or land borders. There has

been allegation that officers from the zone often intercept trucks laden with containers on flimsy suspicions.

At the meeting between ANLCA leadership and deputy comptroller Abubakar Usman Turaki, customs area controller (CAC) of the zone, Shittu noted that although FOU 'A' operationally relies on information to contravene imported goods, he however appealed to the CAC to curtail the excesses of some of his overzealous officers during operations.

He emphasized that while customs enforce government fis-

cal policies, customs agents has the responsibility to implement such policies, which there makes mutually beneficial partnership a sine qua non, as critical stakeholders in the cargo clearance sub-sector of the economy.

Shittu said that stopping cargoes in transit on the highways does incalculable damage to the image of Customs, as well as that of the Agents. The best bet could have been for the officers to track and trail such consignments to its destination, and take action from there.

On the PAAR issue, the National President of ANLCA re-

gretted comments emanating from Customs command, consigning PAAR as an advisory document, rather than a final document for cargo clearance. Reasons adduced to the current stance are because of the dishonest declarations by importers.

He said the twin issues of dispute are valuation and classification of imports.

In his response, Turaki was said to have expressed happiness at the collaboration between his organisation and ANLCA, especially its support of PAAR since its inception. He maintained that Federal operations units only

complement the effort of officers in the seaports, airports and border stations across the Nation.

Turaki said they have challenges in combating smugglers, and therefore seeks cooperation and support, in the onerous task of checkmating dare-devil armed smugglers. He said his officers need encouragement and new tactics to confront the smugglers.

He congratulated the National President and ANLCA, for the achievement of a permanent National Secretariat. Comptroller Turaki said his doors are open to receive complaints from his area of operation.

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