

Establish more dry ports, govt advised

THE Federal Government has been advised to establish more dry docks to create jobs and boost the shipping business as the sea ports now attract over 5,000 vessels yearly.

The Chairman, Nigerian Ports Consultative Council (PCC), Chief Kunle Folarin, made the call in Lagos.

He said dry docks were necessary to improve on ship maintenance and seaworthiness, considering the number of vessels received at the sea ports.

He said more cargoes would be attracted to the ports and trade within the sub-region would be improved if more dry docks were established.

Folarin said the floating docks and the dry docks should be completed with the materials for seaworthiness of vessels.

"A ship cannot sail without be-

ing seaworthy and a ship is supposed to be dry-docked within a time-frame. Then you need dry docks to perform such compliance requirements.

"We probably have one (dry dock), and we are talking of Nigerian ports attracting over 5,400 vessels," he said.

Folarin said the ship owners could use the dry docks for compliance with sea-worthiness certification; for repairs, and for trans-shipment of cargo to other areas within West and Central African regions.

He suggested that the marine environment should be well-utilised through infrastructure development for optimal gain.

"In the context of Nigeria, we

know that we have massive maritime potential.

"Nigeria has all the potential to become a key player. If we have fully utilised the opportunities provided by our maritime domain; we would have seen ship-building yards in Nigeria.

"Certainly, our ports would have been the preferred port and hub for trans-shipment. We would have established competitive port costs that would attract more traffic to the ports.

He suggested that a manpower-building programme should be set up by the government and its agencies.

He said more gains would come from developing skill-acquisition in terms of nautical science, survey, foundry, ship-building skills as complementary to other manpower development programmes.

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