

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 9TH AFRICAN SHIPPERS DAY CONFERENCE HELD FROM 16TH - 17TH JANUARY, 2023 AT ORIENTAL HOTEL, LAGOS, NIGERIA

Introduction

The Nigerian Shippers' Council in collaboration with the Union of African Shippers' Councils (UASC) under the auspices of the Federal Ministry of Transportation organized the 9th African Shippers' Day from 16th -17th January, 2023 at Oriental Hotel, Lagos, Nigeria.

The purpose of the African Shippers' Day is to bring shippers within the West and Central African sub-region together to exchange ideas and experiences on contemporary issues as well as showcase their products to enable them network and conduct business to business transactions.

The theme of the 9th edition of the African Shippers Day was "**African Continental Free Trade Agreement: A Veritable Platform to Mainstream African Shippers into Global Trade**"

During the course of the programme, four papers were presented, namely:

- AfCFTA; Vehicle for Africa's Economic Growth and Development.
- The Role of Incoterms 2020 in the implementation of African Continental Free Trade Agreement.
- Payment Systems in International Trade.
- Coastal Shipping: A Sine qua non for Integration of Trade in Africa.

The presentations were followed by interactive sessions and the following resolutions were reached:

1. **Coastal Shipping and Inland Waterways Development:** Member countries are enjoined to develop their coastal shipping and inland waterways transportation to enhance movement of cargoes among African countries and their hinterlands.

2. **Tariff and Non-Tariff Barriers:** Member countries should ensure that adequate measures are put in place to eliminate tariff and non-tariff barriers that are negatively impacting on trade flows in Africa.
3. **Integration of Transportation Systems:** Member countries should integrate their transportation systems with that of their immediate neighbours to enhance movement of passengers and freights in the continent without disruptions along the transportation corridors.
4. **Domestication of Trade Conventions and Treaties:** Legislatures in the continent should expedite action in domesticating international trade conventions and treaties to promote fair trade practices amongst member countries.
5. **Indigenous Vessel Ownership:** Investment in the ownership of vessels in Africa should be given priority attention and promoted to ensure that freight paid in the carriage of cargo remain within the continent.
6. **Multimodal Transport System:** The development and use of all modes of transportation should be encourage to reduce cost of transportation and promote efficiency.
7. **Improve Transport Infrastructure and Equipment:** More investments should be deployed to the improvement of transport infrastructure and equipment within the continent by member countries.
8. **Encourage Indigenous Technology:** Adequate support and grants should be deployed by member countries to research and development in the continent to develop technologies that would address the peculiar transport and logistics needs of the continent.
9. **Automate Trade and Transport Processes:** The use of automated processes in handling logistics activities should be encourage to reduce delays and minimize the cost of doing business.

10. **Building of Stakeholders Capacity:** Adequate sensitization on AfCFTA and training of all stakeholders in the trade and transport sector should be encouraged to ensure proper implementation of the trade agreements for enhanced efficiency.
11. **Private Sector Participation:** Enabling business environment and awareness should be created to encourage more private sector participation in the trade and transport sector within the continent.
12. **Identify Areas of Competitive Advantage:** Member countries should identify areas of competitive advantage and develop those areas in order to maximize returns on their investments.
13. **Develop Port Connectivity:** Measures should be put in place to promote direct connectivity of all ports in the continent to improve intra-African trade.
14. **Create Container Manufacturing Centres within Africa:** Investments in the building of container boxes should be promoted by member countries to address the high charges levied on African shippers for the use of container boxes by shipping services providers.
15. **Revisit the Sealed Grid Project:** The UASC should revisit the implementation of Sealed Grid system in the subregion, where sealed cargo can pass through different borders from origin to destination without being opened by border agencies along the transport corridors.
16. **Harmonize Standards and Rules in Member Countries:** Member countries should encourage the application of uniformity and same standards and rules for the processing and clearance of cargoes at the sea ports and land borders.
17. **Promote Processing of Raw Materials:** There should be value addition on raw materials before exportation to increase their value and create jobs in the continent.

18. **Formalize Informal Trade:** Member countries should develop modalities to formalize informal trade in their various countries depending on their peculiar situations.
19. **Strengthen Credibility of Financial Institutions:** Banks and Insurance Companies in the continent should be strengthened by member countries to guarantee payments on all categories of trade for shippers in local currencies across borders.
20. **Create more Awareness on payment Systems:** Member countries should strive to create awareness on the benefits of integrated payment systems amongst African countries to promote intra-African trade.
21. **Develop strategic plan of Implementation:** The resolutions of the workshop should be implemented using monitoring models to measure Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with timelines to achieve desired outcomes.

**DONE IN LAGOS, NIGERIA
ON 17TH JANUARY, 2023
THE PARTICIPANTS `**