COMPLAINTS NEWSLETTER

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NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL FACILITATES RELEASE OF BUA CEMENT PLC CONSIGNMENTS VALUED AT $341,256

...Tariff Dispute Resolved, Conglomerate Saves Over ₦100 Million in Accrued Demurrage

...Terminal Directed to Invoice at Historic Rates

AKUTAH PIUS UKEYIMA, Esq, MON, FCILT, Ph.D,
Executive Secretary/CEO - NSC

The Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) successfully resolved a tariff-related dispute between BUA Cement Plc and ENL Consortium Limited, leading to the release of BUA Cement consignments valued at $341,256 and saving the conglomerate over ₦100 million in accumulated demurrage and terminal charges.

The resolution followed a tripartite dispute resolution meeting convened by the Council at its Headquarters in Apapa, Lagos, through its Complaints Unit. The meeting was held to address allegations by BUA Cement Plc that ENL Consortium Limited had wrongly applied newly approved terminal tariff rates retroactively to cargo that arrived before the effective date of the revised tariff regime.

The session commenced with formal introductions, after which the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, speaking on behalf of the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Nigerian Shippers' Council, Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, FCIOTA, PhD, welcomed participants.

Dr. Ambi emphasized that the Complaints Unit is a certified Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) platform and

Continues on page 3

PROLONGED TRANSIT DELAY: NSC RESOLVES DISPUTE BETWEEN NIGERIEN CONSIGNEE AND CLEARING AGENT CARGO SHOULD BE RELEASED BEFORE END OF NOVEMBER 2025, DIRECTS AGENT TO OFFSET CONSIGNEE'S HOTEL COSTS...COUNCIL

...Agent links delay to Misrouting, Regulatory Bottlenecks and Regional Corridor Blockage

In further consolidation of its regulatory oversight in the port and trade facilitation, the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) intervened to resolve a prolonged transit cargo dispute involving 2X40FT containers loaded with building materials destined for Kano for onward delivery to Niger Republic under the ECOWAS Transit Trade Regime.

The intervention followed a formal complaint submitted by the Conseil Nigérien des Utilisateurs des Transports Publics (C.N.U.T), Lagos Office, after the containers remained at the port for over 44 days, despite full cargo release on 14th November 2025.

Representing the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Council, Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, Ph.D., the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, welcomed stakeholders to the mediation session held at the Complaints Unit Meeting Room, Nigerian Shippers' Council Headquarters, Apapa, Lagos.

Dr. Mohammed reiterated the Council's mandate to protect the rights of shippers, resolve trade disputes, and promote efficiency in cargo clearance and transit operations within Nigerian ports and corridors.

In line with the Council's Succession Planning Exercise, Ms. Jessica Jonathan, an Operations Officer was assigned to chair the mediation meeting, while the Case Handler, Mr. Mubarak, also an Operations Officer, presented the complaint and detailed the circumstances surrounding the prolonged delay.

According to the NSC's review, the delay was caused by a combination of operational, administrative, and regulatory challenges, including:

- Severe transit blockage along the Niger Republic corridor
- Inconsistent and conflicting demurrage calculations issued by the Shipping Line
- Regulatory interventions and holds by the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Nigeria Customs Service (NCS), and Federal Operations Unit (FOU)
- Misrouting of the containers to two different bonded terminals by the initial clearing agent, leading to documentation discrepancies
- A two-week suspension of processing following the cancellation of the initial transit approval by Customs Headquarters

The Nigerien Consignee informed the meeting that he had paid over ₦17 million in demurrage to the Shipping Line, in addition to more than ₦13 million spent on logistics and hotel accommodation while personally monitoring the clearance process in Lagos.

The newly appointed clearing agent, Onche Oil & Gas, told the meeting that upon taking over the consignment, it initiated reconciliation of demurrage figures, reprocessing of transit bonds, and correction of documentation errors. The agent also cited additional delays arising

NOT FOR SALE

Editorial MESSAGE

Dr. Bashir Ambi

NAVIGATING GLOBAL TRADE: THE NIGERIAN SHIPPER'S GUIDE TO INCOTERMS 2020

Within the complex framework of international commerce, International Commercial Terms (Incoterms) act as the essential mechanisms synchronizing the global movement of goods. Established by the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), these eleven rules define the critical boundaries of responsibility between buyer and seller. For the Nigerian shipper, these terms transcend simple three-letter acronyms; they serve as vital contractual safeguards against regional logistical volatilities—ranging from port congestion and regulatory shifts to maritime security challenges within the Gulf of Guinea.

The Universal Language of the International Trade

To thrive in international commerce, the global trade community uses Incoterms 2020 to eliminate **'interpretation drift'** between varying jurisdictions. The ICC Academy notes that these terms exist to define the critical pillars of trade: the point of **'Delivery,'** the transfer of **'Risk,'** and the final allocation of **'Costs.'** Without this shared language, a simple shipment from Shanghai to Lagos could descend into costly legal battles over the definition of 'shipping.' As **Jan Hoffmann of UNCTAD** highlights, these rules offer a **'pre-packaged'** legal framework that streamlines global finance and insurance, effectively lowering the cost of doing business.

Risk Transfer and the Maritime Reality:

Understanding the **'Transfer of Risk'** is critical for any Nigerian shipper. With NIMASA maintaining rigorous oversight of vessel safety, the precise timing of liability transfer can determine a firm's financial survival. Take the FOB rule: risk passes to the buyer only when the cargo is physically 'on board.' If an accident occurs at the Apapa Quay during loading, the seller is still liable until the goods are secured on deck. As Maersk warns in its 2024 insights, choosing the wrong term creates a dangerous gap where **'theoretical delivery'** fails to account for the **'physical reality'** of congested, high-stakes port environments:

The Insurance Pivot: CIF vs. CIP:

Are you under-insured? The 2020 Incoterms update introduced a vital distinction between **CIF** and **CIP** that every Nigerian importer must master. Under **CIF**, sellers only provide basic **'Institute Cargo Clauses C'** coverage; however, **CIP** now demands the gold standard: **'All Risk' Institute Cargo Clauses A**. The **Nigerian Shippers' Council** warns that in the face of local 'logistics complexities,' a simple CIF agreement could leave your cargo exposed. Relying on **'Clause C'** is a gamble that may backfire if goods are damaged during critical inland transit before reaching their final destination.

Local Peculiarities: The Nigerian "DDP" Trap

A critical lesson for Nigerian shippers is the inherent risk of **DDP (Delivered Duty Paid)**. While globally marketed as the ultimate 'door-to-door' solution, DDP often falters under Nigeria's stringent regulatory landscape. The **Nigeria Customs Service (NCS)** mandates specific local documentation—most notably **Form M** and the **Pre-Arrival Assessment Report (PAAR)**—which foreign sellers struggle to obtain without a local footprint. Tax experts at **KPMG Nigeria** observe that DDP shipments frequently stall at the border when sellers fail to navigate complex **'Value Added Tax' (VAT)** and **'Common External Tariff' (CET)** requirements. Consequently, local importers are often better served by **DAP (Delivered at Place)**, which empowers them to leverage their own expertise and agency to manage customs clearance efficiently.

Financial Implications and the "Form M" Process:

Incoterms are the silent regulators of foreign exchange. Under **CBN** guidelines, the **'Form M'** process serves as the mandatory gateway to legal trade, yet many exporters overlook how their chosen term impacts their compliance. If a Nigerian exporter opts for **EXW (Ex Works)**, they relinquish control at the factory gate. But there is a catch: if the buyer fails to return the **'Bill of Lading'** or **'Exit Note,'** the exporter cannot prove the goods ever left the country—stalling the legal repatriation of export proceeds. To mitigate this, experts at **Afreximbank** recommend **FCA (Free Carrier)**. By ensuring the seller remains part of the export clearance process, FCA secures the documentation needed to protect the exporter's financial standing and satisfy the CBN.

For the modern Nigerian shipper, Incoterms are far more than 'shipping instructions'—they are high-stakes financial and legal instruments. Whether navigating berthing bottlenecks at **Onne Port** or mitigating road haulage risks from **Lagos to Kano**, your choice of term is what ultimately protects your profit margin. By evolving beyond the 'comfort zone' of traditional terms like **CIF** and adopting multimodal powerhouses like **FCA** and **CPT**, Nigerian businesses can finally align their contracts with the harsh physical and regulatory realities of 2026.

Master the complexity of global trade. For a deeper dive into the legal and logistical frameworks mentioned above, explore these essential industry references:"

- International Chamber of Commerce (2020): The definitive guide to Incoterms 2020.
- Maersk (2024): Expert insights on risk management in emerging markets.
- KPMG Nigeria (2023): Navigating the local regulatory and tax landscape.
- Nigerian Shippers' Council (2025): The latest on maritime insurance and local compliance.
- Afreximbank (2024): Overcoming structural barriers in African export trade.

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Continues from page 1

from the mandatory Customs Approved Escort Certificate requirement for transit cargoes.

After careful evaluation, the Council concluded that the prolonged detention of the containers resulted from overlapping administrative lapses, misrouting by the initial agent, inconsistent demurrage assessments, and regional corridor disruptions, all of which imposed significant financial hardship on the Nigerien Consignee.

To restore normalcy and ensure timely evacuation of the cargo, the Nigerian Shippers' Council issued the following resolutions, as agreed by all parties that;

1. The NSC formally validates the operational relationship between C.N.U.T and Onche Oil & Gas for the handling and movement of the two transit containers to Agadez, Niger Republic.
2. Onche Oil & Gas was directed to secure full gate-out release of the two containers on or before the end of November 2025.
3. The clearing agent should refund hotel accommodation expenses incurred by the Consignee from 19th November, 2025 until the date the complaint was officially received by the Council. Evidence of reimbursement should be submitted to the NSC.
4. The agent is to ensure deployment of a Customs-approved escort team for the movement of the transit cargo to Niger Republic.
5. Onche Oil & Gas was directed to refund the outstanding sum of ₦2,540,000 (Two Million, Five Hundred and Forty Thousand Naira) to the Consignee.
6. The Council directed the agent to share the Terminal Delivery Orders (TDOs) for both containers to confirm release.

The Nigerian Shippers' Council urged both parties to maintain and strengthen their existing business relationship, emphasizing the importance of transparency, professionalism, and adherence to transit procedures to prevent future disputes.

The Consignee, while expressing appreciation for the Council's timely intervention, described the resolution as a relief after weeks of uncertainty, stating, *"Our sincere appreciation goes to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for restoring confidence and fairness in the process."*

Continues from page 1

not a court of law, noting that the Council has successfully resolved maritime and shipping disputes for over two decades. He stressed that the Council's intervention was aimed at promoting trade facilitation, regulatory compliance, and harmonious commercial relationships within the Marine and Blue Economy sector. He further underscored that deliberations would be strictly evidence-based and that all parties were expected to comply fully with the resolutions reached.

In line with the Council's Succession Planning Framework, Mrs. Mary Afolabi Funmilola (POO) was nominated to chair the meeting.

Presenting an overview of the case, the case handler, Mr. Yahaya Abdullahi Wachiko, informed the meeting that the Council had received a formal petition from BUA Cement Plc alleging misapplication of terminal charges by ENL Consortium Limited.

The complaint related to cargo conveyed aboard MV MONICA D (Voyage No. AP23/751), consisting of general cargo covered by two Bills of Lading:

- NJM2302LYGLGS123 – 2 packages (83 CBM) – Electric Motor
- NJM2302LYGLGS124 – 5 packages (155 CBM) – Machinery and Spare Parts

The consignments arrived in Nigeria in 2023, prior to the implementation of ENL's revised tariff.

According to BUA Cement Plc, ENL Consortium Limited retroactively applied the new tariff regime to the cargo while it was already under terminal custody, resulting in prolonged cargo dwell time and the accumulation of excessive rent and demurrage charges. The company further alleged that several written correspondences seeking clarification and resolution were acknowledged but not acted upon, despite repeated engagements with terminal management.

Speaking on behalf of BUA Cement Plc, Mr. Abubakar Abdullahi, Field Officer, explained that delays in clearing the cargo were largely attributable to Customs-related issues. He stated that the company had formally requested ENL Consortium Limited to either grant waivers or apply the old tariff rate that was in force at the time of cargo arrival.

He added that, despite multiple letters, meetings, and engagements with senior officials of the terminal operator, no relief was granted while charges continued to accrue, compelling BUA Cement Plc to seek the intervention of the Nigerian Shippers' Council.

Other BUA Cement representatives at the meeting included Mr. Okpellemuemeh O. Maxwell, Assistant Manager, Mr. Naziru Abubakar, SEC LLO, and Mr. Oyekanmi R. Abimbola, Field Officer.

Representing ENL Consortium Limited, Mrs. Ehilabor Vivian, Commercial Manager and Mrs. Itoya Rhoda, Assistant Commercial Manager explained that following a Council-approved tariff review meeting in October 2023, the terminal sought clarification on the implementation timeline.

They stated that guidance received indicated that the old tariff would apply up to part of October 2023, while the new tariff would take effect from 25 October 2023, and that ENL implemented the tariff accordingly. Mrs. Itoya further noted that previous waiver requests submitted by BUA Cement Plc allegedly lacked sufficient shipment details to enable proper assessment.

Clarifying the regulatory position, Dr. Bashir Ambi stated that while the tariff adjustment was duly approved, published, and communicated to Stakeholders, the consignments in dispute had arrived and remained in terminal custody well before the commencement of the new tariff regime. He therefore held that retroactive application of the new rates was inappropriate and inconsistent with established tariff principles.

After extensive deliberations and a detailed review of all documentary evidence, the Council issued binding resolutions, directing that:

- The consignments fall within the old approved tariff window, and ENL Consortium Limited should invoice BUA Cement Plc accordingly.
- ENL Consortium Limited is to issue revised invoices based on the old tariff on or before the end of December 2025.
- No terminal charges are to be applied for the period 22nd November 2023 to 12th July 2024, during which BUA Cement's correspondences were acknowledged without response.
- ENL Consortium Limited may apply charges only for the period 13th July 2024 to 14th December 2025, being the date the Council formally received the complaint.
- Upon receipt of the revised invoices, BUA Cement Plc is to settle all outstanding charges on or before 30th December 2025 and submit evidence of payment to the Council.
- ENL Consortium Limited was further advised to improve responsiveness to customer correspondence in line with acceptable commercial standards.

The Council commended both parties for their cooperation and urged the maintenance of a transparent, responsive, and mutually beneficial commercial relationship.

Reacting to the outcome, ENL Consortium Limited stated:

"We will comply fully with all the resolutions of the Nigerian Shippers' Council."

BUA Cement Plc, on its part, expressed appreciation to the regulator, saying:

"We express our immense appreciation to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for this timely and fair intervention."

The resolution reinforces the Nigerian Shippers' Council's role as an effective economic regulator and trade facilitator, ensuring fairness, regulatory compliance, and dispute resolution within Nigeria's maritime and port sector.

NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL BROKERS SETTLEMENT IN MAERSK LINE, HEN-NGO MISSING CONTAINER DISPUTE

…Confirms Maersk-Authorised Triangulation of Contested Unit
…Directs Maersk to Unblock Agency and Process Outstanding Refunds

A dispute involving the alleged unauthorized triangulation and disappearance of an import container between Maersk Line Nigeria and Hen-Ngo International Agencies Limited has been resolved by the Nigerian Shippers' Council, resulting in the unblocking and settlement of all outstanding refunds owed to the agency.

The intervention followed a formal petition submitted by Hen-Ngo International Agencies, which alleged that its operations were blocked by Maersk Line over a container it claimed was diverted without its consent.

Representing the Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer of the Council, Mr. Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, Ph.D, the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, welcomed both parties to the mediation meeting held at the Complaints Unit Meeting Room. He reiterated the Council's statutory mandate to protect Stakeholders' interests while promoting efficiency, transparency, and accountability within Nigerian ports.

In line with the Council's Succession Framework, Mr. Hassan Aminu, Assistant Chief Operations Officer chaired the meeting, while the Case Handler, Ms. Jessica Jonathan, Operations Officer, presented the petition and outlined the issues raised by the complainant.

According to the petition, Hen-Ngo International Agencies alleged that container MRKU4981459, which it took delivery of as an Import-Full (IMF) unit, was diverted and used for export by an unknown third party while en route to the designated holding bay. The complainant stated that the alleged unauthorized triangulation and issuance of a linking approval occurred on 6th November 2024, under Case No. 2411-28941427 and Booking No. 244914966.

Hen-Ngo appealed to the Council, insisting that it neither initiated nor requested the triangulation of the container and that its agency was unjustly blocked by Maersk Line as a result of the incident.

Speaking during the session, Mr. Henry Okorie, Chairman of Hen-Ngo International Agencies, confirmed the summary of events and explained that the agency's access to Maersk's services was suspended due to the disputed container. "We received a linking order from Maersk Line for the container, which was later released for export to a third party. We never requested triangulation. The container was strictly an import unit and was meant to be returned empty to the holding bay," Okorie said.

He further disclosed that the agency was not informed of the container's status until about four months later, when it applied for a refund. "We made several attempts to trace the container, but the transporter involved is already in prison," he added.

Responding on behalf of Maersk Line, Mr. Marcus Lawrence stated that the booking referenced by the complainant had expired. "Where a container is declared missing or not returned after the 30-day free-use period, the booking automatically expires and is cancelled. In such cases, liability reverts to the consignee," he explained.

However, following extensive deliberations and a review of documents submitted by both parties, the Council established that Maersk Line did, in fact, authorize the triangulation of the container in question.

At the conclusion of the mediation, the NSC issued resolutions acceptable to both parties in line with global Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) standards.

The Council resolved as follows:

1. The Nigerian Shippers' Council affirms that a legitimate transaction existed between Hen-Ngo International Agencies and Maersk Line.
2. Maersk Line authorized the triangulation of container MRKU4981459.
3. Maersk Line is directed to immediately unblock Hen-Ngo International Agencies Limited and provide documentary evidence of compliance to the Council.
4. Hen-Ngo International Agencies is fully exonerated from all liability relating to the missing container.
5. Hen-Ngo International Agencies is advised to strengthen documentation and record-keeping practices in line with industry best standards.
6. Both parties are urged to enhance collaboration to curb container theft and unauthorized triangulation.
7. All legitimate outstanding refunds due to Hen-Ngo International Agencies are to be processed and paid by Maersk Line without delay.

The Council encouraged both parties to sustain and strengthen their existing business relationship in the interest of operational efficiency and trade facilitation.

NSC'S INTERVENTION ENDS OCEAN NETWORK, DUNAMIX DISPUTE, SAVES CONSIGNEE ₦16M IN DEMURRAGE

The intervention of the Nigerian Shippers' Council in a complaint over demurrage charges filed by Dunamix Investment Concept Ltd. against Ocean Network Express Nigeria Ltd. (ONE) has saved the complainant, also the consignee, more than ₦16 million in accumulated demurrage charges.

The dispute arose from a petition submitted by the law firm, Popoola Taiwo LP, on behalf of its client, AAK Logistics Ltd., over a missing empty container identified as **SEGU5413747,** covered by **Bill of Lading No: ONEYSGNC51486600.**

According to the petition, on April 20, 2022, a truck owned by Dunamix Investment Concept Ltd., with registration number **LSR188YE,** was assigned to return two empty containers to the Tin Can Island Container Terminal on behalf of AAK Logistics. The containers **SEGU5413747** and **KKFU8091495** belonged to Ocean Network Express Nigeria Ltd., for which AAK Logistics serves as an Agent.

While container **KKFU8091495** was successfully returned to the terminal, the second container, **SEGU5413747**, was reported missing and remains unaccounted for. Subsequently, Ocean Network Express issued an invoice dated July 15, 2024, demanding over **₦10 million in detention demurrage** and a **depreciation value (DV) of 4,456** USD prompting the complaint to the Council.

Welcoming parties to the reconciliation meeting on behalf of the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Council, **Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, PhD**, the Head, Complaints Unit, **Dr. Bashir Ambi**, explained that the meeting was convened to deliberate and reach amicable resolutions.

Counsel to Dunamix Investment Concept, **Mr. Stephen**, told the Council that the company had immediately sought information on the container's depreciation value upon discovering it was missing, with the intention of making prompt payment. He argued that the delay was due to the absence of official communication from the carrier and requested that any financial settlement be calculated using the **2022 exchange rate,** when the incident occurred, citing the sharp depreciation of the naira between 2022 and 2024.

However, **Mr. Popoola Taiwo**, representing AAK Logistics Ltd., disputed this claim, stating that Dunamix failed to officially report the missing container until after one of its staff members was arrested in connection with the incident.

Also speaking at the meeting, **Mr. David Audu**, Head, Finance at Ocean Network Express (ONE), disclosed that despite having an informal relationship with Dunamix Investment, the company did not formally notify ONE of the missing containers. He added that, in recognition of the NSC's intervention, ONE agreed to grant a **50 percent waiver on the accrued demurrage charges.**

Following extensive deliberations, document review, and in line with the Council's Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) framework, the NSC issued the following binding resolutions:

1. All resolutions reached at the previous meeting remain valid and binding on all parties.
2. The Council commended Ocean Network Express for its cooperation and willingness to amicably resolve the dispute.
3. Dunamix Investment Concept Ltd. was urged to strictly adhere to the agreed payment deadline of **Friday, October 31, by 4:00 p.m.,** with the NSC copied on all correspondence.
4. Both the depreciation value of the missing container and the demurrage charges were deemed fully resolved, subject to settlement by the agreed deadline.
5. The Council encouraged all parties to sustain cordial business relationship.

Parties at the meeting expressed appreciation for the NSC's intervention, describing the Council's role as critical to protecting stakeholders' interests and strengthening confidence in Nigeria's maritime and logistics sector.

PILLARS BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF COMPLAINTS UNIT

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CONTAINER TRIANGULATION DISPUTE: NSC RESOLVES BLOCKAGE OF AGENCY OPERATIONS

...Confirms All Outstanding Demurrage Fully Settled, Orders Maersk to Unblock Agent and Process Container Deposit Refunds

Recently, a complex impasse arising from an alleged improper container triangulation, the withholding of container deposit refunds, and operational blockage of Glosunresa International Ltd by Maersk Nigeria Ltd, was resolved by the Council which restored normal business operations between the parties.

The dispute centered on the movement history and status of 1X40FT container, out of 7X40FT import containers owned by Maersk processed in 2024 on behalf of the Consignee, Somotex Nigeria Ltd.

The mediation session was convened at the Complaints Unit Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, B-Wing, Nigerian Shippers' Council Headquarters, Apapa, Lagos, under the its Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) framework as the Port Economic Regulator.

The meeting was formally opened by Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, Head, Complaints Unit, represented by Mr. Hassan Aminu, Assistant Chief Operations Officer, who welcomed all parties and reiterated the Council's rules of engagement. He emphasized civility, accuracy, and transparency, noting that mediation is a non-adversarial mechanism aimed at restoring commercial relationships. He thereafter invited Mrs. Oluwatoyin Ojo to chair the meeting.

Presenting the case background, the Case Handler, Barr. Musa Mohammed, explained that, Oge Agbazue & Co. submitted a petition to the Council on behalf of their client, Glosunresa International Ltd that sometime in 2024, their client processed 7X40FT Maersk import containers on behalf of the Consignee, Somotex Nigeria Ltd. A third-party transporter was engaged to return the empty containers to Maersk's designated holding bay.

Subsequently, it was discovered that Container Release Cards were not issued, prompting internal checks by the Complainant. This led to the arrest of the transporter's driver, who confessed that one container was repositioned for export through triangulation, rather than returned to the empty depot. The driver presented an Indemnity Card to support his claim.

The Complainant tendered email correspondence from Maersk, through Ms. Victoria Dike, confirming that all demurrage charges on the disputed container had been fully settled in 2024, prior to the export triangulation.

They further stated that in 2025, when the Agent applied for a container deposit refund, Maersk reportedly blocked Glosunresa International Ltd's operational account, citing a “long-standing unresolved issue” associated with the triangulated container, and declined to process the refund.

The Agent maintained that all seven containers were fully accounted for, that the triangulation was processed with Maersk's approval, and that no opportunity was given to present full documentation before the system blockage was imposed. The Agent stressed that its principal concern was the establishment of a complete and accurate container movement history to prevent future disputes.

Upon the Council's request, the Complainant submitted comprehensive documentation evidencing payment of all outstanding charges.

Representing Maersk Nigeria Ltd, Mr. Ezekiel Eyo acknowledged that the Company recently reviewed its container linkage and triangulation procedures. He explained that Maersk had previously utilized a physical Indemnity Form for triangulation, which has since been phased out. He stated that due to increasing fraud attempts, Maersk now relies solely on email-based authorization for container linkage and movement approvals.

Mr. Eyo disclosed that over 3,000 Maersk containers are currently unaccounted for nationwide, many of which are linked to fraudulent or irregular triangulations. He noted that the disputed container had not been returned to any Maersk-designated terminal and remains untraceable.

He stressed that the operational measures taken by Maersk were not targeted at the Complainant, but were aimed at safeguarding the Company's equipment. Nonetheless, Maersk expressed willingness to sustain a healthy commercial relationship with both the Agent and the Consignee.

In attendance at the meeting were representatives of parties: Maersk Nigeria Ltd, Mr. Ezekiel Eyo, Oge Agbazue & Co., (Complainant), Oge Agbazue Esq., Glosunresa International Ltd, (Agent) Mrs. Ifeoma Margaret Ibekwe, while Somotex Nigeria Ltd (Consignee) was represented by Mr. Olanrewaju Fatai.

After a detailed evaluation of documentary evidence, oral submissions, and clarifications from all parties, the NSC reached the following resolutions:

1. The Council confirmed that a legitimate commercial relationship existed between Somotex Nigeria Ltd (Consignee) and Glosunresa International Ltd (Agent) involving 7X40FT Maersk import containers.
2. Six (6) of the seven (7) 40FT containers were duly returned to the designated empty container yard, while one (1) container was repositioned for export via triangulation.
3. The Council affirmed, based on documentary evidence, that the export triangulation was duly approved and linked by Maersk in 2024.
4. The Council validated that all demurrage and related charges on the disputed container were fully settled in 2024.
5. Maersk Nigeria Ltd is to immediately unblock Glosunresa International Ltd on its operational platform, process all outstanding container deposit refunds due to Somotex Nigeria Ltd, through its Agent, and Communicate full compliance to the NSC on or before the end of December 2025.
6. Maersk was directed to formally notify Consignees in writing before approving any future triangulation, export linkage, or off-terminal equipment movement.

The Nigerian Shippers' Council urged all parties to maintain professionalism and strengthen their business relationships in line with International best practices. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to promoting harmonious business environment, protecting Stakeholders' rights, and ensure transparency in container handling.

NSC RESOLVES CARGO LIEN DISPUTE BETWEEN SHIPPING LINE AND CONSIGNEE

... "Cargo Safety Is Our Concern" ... Nigerian Shippers' Council

...Mediation Saves Consignee Over 40 Million in 30 Minutes

A high-stake demurrage and cargo lien dispute between a Shipping Line, CMA-CGM Nigeria Shipping Ltd and Bolton Multi Commodity KFZE, has been resolved by the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) thereby saving the consignee over ₦40 million and preventing further cargo delay and possible re-exportation.

The resolution followed an unscheduled intervention by the Council's Complaints Unit at the head office of CMA-CGM Nigeria, located at the Leventis Building, Apapa, Lagos. The intervention was triggered by an urgent petition from Bolton Multi Commodity KFZE, a Free Trade Zone–registered investor engaged in the importation of raw materials for local production.

In its petition, the consignee alleged the unlawful withholding of its consignment by CMA-CGM Nigeria over an outstanding demurrage debt allegedly owed by a third-party entity with no contractual or legal relationship with Bolton Multi Commodity KFZE. The company maintained that it had fully met its financial obligations on the shipment in question and bore no liability for debts incurred by other Shippers.

The NSC delegation was led by the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, and included Mr. Hassan Aminu, Assistant Chief Operations Officer, and Mr. Yahaya Abdullahi Wachiko, Operations Officer.

CMA-CGM Nigeria was represented by its Managing Director, Mr. Ferreira Hinelder; Chief Commercial Officer, Mr. Austin Obagidi; and Credit Control Officer, Mr. Ebenezer.

In his opening remarks, Mr. Ferreira commended the Council for its swift response, noting that the matter required top-level engagement. "I had to attend personally because of the high regard we have for the Executive Secretary/CEO and the Nigerian Shippers' Council. Though the notice was short, I considered it necessary because the purpose aligns with our shared objective of fairness and trade facilitation," he said.

However, the Managing Director disclosed that CMA-CGM had earlier written to the Council concerning accumulated demurrage liabilities in excess of ₦1 billion owed by several Kano-based Shippers. "Over ₦1 billion in demurrage is currently sitting in Kano," he revealed, adding that the present case alone involved an exposure of ₦101 million, which the company initially demanded in full before releasing the cargo.

Mr. Ferreira explained that, under Clause 20 of the Bill of Lading and relevant provisions of the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA), the carrier was legally empowered to place a lien on cargo or re-export the consignment to the port of origin if liabilities remained unsettled.

Responding, Dr. Ambi explained that the Council's unscheduled visit was necessitated by the urgency of the situation and the need to halt the continuous accumulation of demurrage charges. "While the Council typically communicates formally, the presence of a cargo under lien required immediate intervention to protect the interest of all parties," he said.

He emphasized that the NSC does not interfere in commercial decisions such as waivers unless there is an infraction on the part of the Service Providers, but as Nigeria's Port Economic Regulator, we ensure fairness, transparency, and equity between Service Providers and Port Users. "Our concern is always the cargo interest. We are here to protect the importer's investment while ensuring that the Service Provider's rights are fully respected," Dr. Ambi stated.

He further disclosed that the Council would soon embark on a stakeholder sensitization programme in Kano to address recurring issues related to demurrage accumulation, cargo lien, and delayed container returns.

Offering professional insight, Mr. Hassan Aminu explained that the Council's first step upon receiving the complaint was to establish contractual liability. "We advised a thorough investigation to determine the actual debtor before escalating the matter," he said.

He noted that while shipping lines are easily traceable for dispute resolution, many freight forwarders and clearing agents operate with fictitious or untraceable addresses, making accountability difficult.

According to him, the Council's intervention helped identify the true party responsible for the accrued detention charges and brought them to the attention of the Shipping Line.

"Our goal is not to demand free services but to prevent avoidable delays, re-exportation, and daily accumulation of demurrage and storage charges," he explained.

Mr. Aminu further warned that re-exporting the consignment to France would impose additional costs on both the Shipping Line and the Nigerian economy, urging CMA-CGM to consider a downward review of its demand.

During the session, the consignee appealed to the Council to prevail on the shipping line to accept a 40 per cent payment of the ₦101 million liability, citing financial constraints and the time-sensitive nature of the cargo. "The Council is our last hope for a fair resolution," the consignee pleaded.

After extensive deliberations and a review of all relevant documents, both parties under the facilitation of the Nigerian Shippers' Council reached a final settlement of ₦55 million, representing a reduction of over ₦40 million from the initial demand of the Shipping Line.

Following the agreement, the cargo lien was lifted, and the containers were immediately released.

All parties expressed appreciation to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for its timely and effective intervention, describing the mediation as a clear demonstration of the Council's commitment to cargo safety, dispute resolution, and trade facilitation within Nigeria's port system.

CARGO MISROUTING: SHIPPERS' COUNCIL RESOLVES DISPUTE ON DIVERSION, SAVES CONSIGNEE EXTRA COST ON 40FT CONTAINER

...."We Appreciate the Council's Intervention... Complainant

The Nigerian Shippers' Council resolved a long-running dispute between Otunba West International, the consignee, and ENL Consortium Ltd., operators of one of the terminals at the Lagos Port Complex, Apapa, over four missing and damaged pallets of Veneer Sheets.

The disagreement, which dates back to February 2022, centered on a consignment of 140 pallets of veneer sheets imported under Bill of Lading No. CG21164QDGLAG33/34/35/36. According to the consignee's legal representatives, Queen Ukadike & Associates, their client, Mr. Tochukwu Awolue retrieved most of the consignment in early 2022 but was unable to collect the final four pallets because they were block-stacked and inaccessible.

Counsel to the consignee, Barrister Adesioye Oluwatobi, told the Council that when the consignee's agent returned to the terminal in July 2022 for the remaining cargo, they were informed the pallets had been released to another clearing agent. The consignee maintains that upon being invited for inspection, the pallets presented were not only in a badly damaged state but were also of a different grade and quality from the imported goods. Mr. Awolue added that although ENL Managers offered a replacement, the alternatives fell short of the original specifications.

ENL Consortium, represented by Mr. Ajayi Adetoye and Barrister Gracious Ijalana, disputed these claims. They acknowledged that the consignee's agent visited in July 2022 but insisted that the cargo remained intact. Mr. Adetoye said the agent later complained that the pallets were damaged but failed to return after being advised to complete a damage form to facilitate compensation. ENL maintained that the goods were never released to another party.

Amid the conflicting narratives, the NSC dispatched a fact-finding team led by the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi, for an on-the-spot assessment. The inspection confirmed that the pallets were in a loose and badly damaged condition. Mr. Awolue again insisted the materials inspected were not those originally shipped.

Following extensive deliberations, the Nigerian Shippers' Council issued a set of resolutions aimed at closing the matter and restoring confidence between both parties.

The Council ruled that:

1. A valid business relationship existed between Otunba West International and ENL Consortium Ltd.

2. The four pallets belonging to the consignee were indeed block-stacked at the terminal, delaying access at the time of retrieval.

3. The Council expressed strong dissatisfaction with the consignee and their agent for leaving the goods unattended for over two years, an action it said runs contrary to Nigeria's trade facilitation principles.

4. ENL Consortium was commended for duly notifying the consignee when the pallets became accessible for delivery.

5. The Council's inspection confirmed the cargo was in a damaged condition.

6. In the interest of trade facilitation, ENL Consortium will compensate the consignee with the value of the four pallets, estimated at ₦2,121,000.00 based on the commercial invoice.

7. ENL Consortium must make the payment and forward evidence of payment to the NSC.

8. The consignee was advised to import only cargo that can be promptly cleared to avoid storage delays stemming from inadequate funds.

9. Both parties were urged to strengthen their business relationship and adopt best practices to prevent future disputes.

The Council emphasized that timely cargo clearance remains essential for port efficiency and reiterated its commitment to mediating disputes in the interest of trade facilitation and stakeholder confidence.

ANALYSIS OF STAKEHOLDERS COMPLAINTS HANDLED WITHIN THE LAST QUARTERS IN 2025

COMPLAINTS HANDLING MANAGEMENT — PERFORMANCE REPORT | Q2–Q4 2025

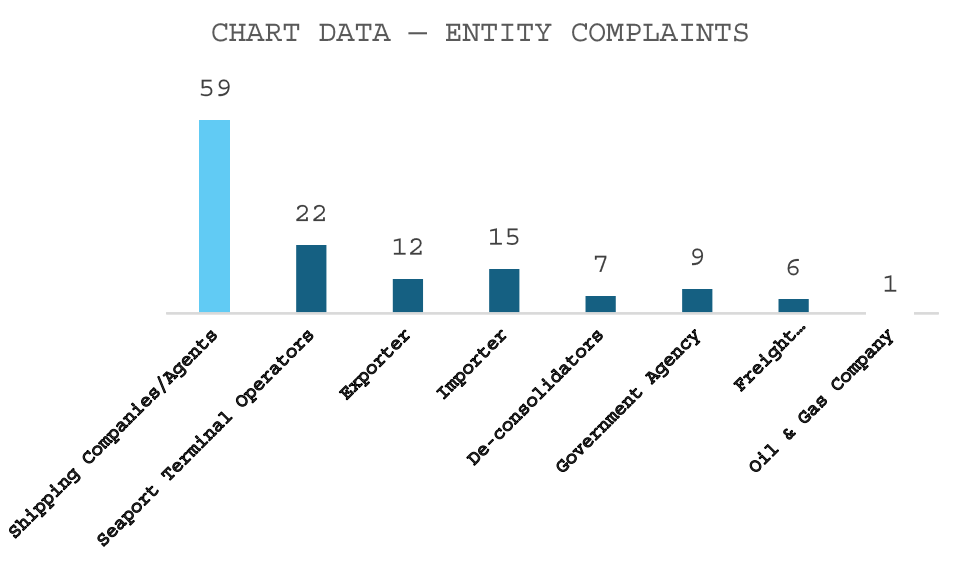
TOTAL COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	TOTAL RESOLVED	RESOLUTION RATE	ONGOING/BACKLOG	TOTAL $ SAVED (NGN)	GROWTH Q2 –Q4
142	86	60.6%	48	₦2.25B	+40.0%

FINANCIAL RECOVERY SUMMARY

Quarter	NGN Amount Saved	USD Amount Saved	Running NGN Total	Complaints Resolved	Avg Saving/Complaint (NGN)
Q2 2025	₦175,806,100	$30,000	₦175,806,100	21	₦8,371,719
Q3 2025	₦2,059,463,218	—	₦2,235,269,318	26	₦79,210,893
Q4 2025	₦16,317,622	$39,779	₦2,251,586,940	39	₦418,401
TOTAL	**₦2,251,586,940**	**$69,779**	**₦2,251,586,940**	**86**	**₦26,181,244**

QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS VOLUME

Quarter	Received	Resolved	Ongoing	Closed	Resolution Rate
Q2 2025	40	21	18	1	53%
Q3 2025	46	26	16	4	57%
Q4 2025	56	39	14	3	70%
TOTAL	**142**	**86**	**48**	**8**	**61%**



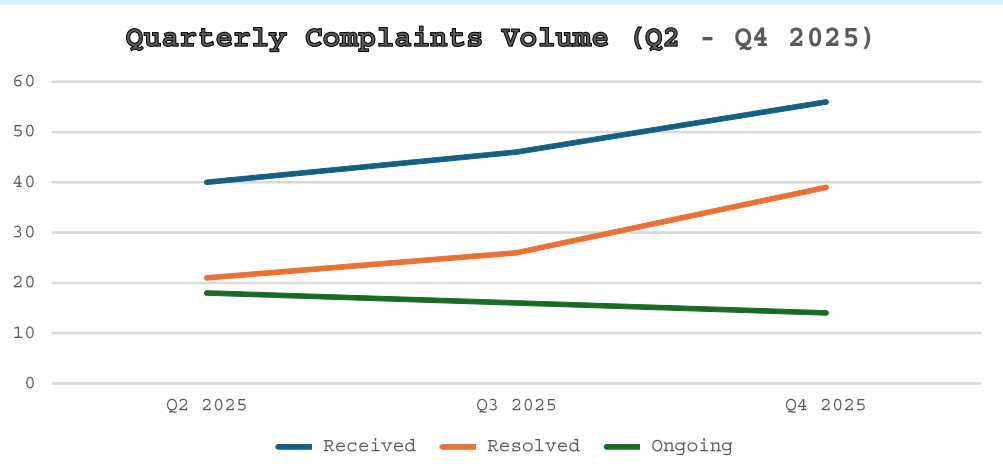


CHART DATA — ENTITY COMPLAINTS

Entity	Total	Share %
Shipping Companies/Agents	59	41.5
Seaport Terminal Operators	22	15.5
Exporter	12	8.5
Importer	15	10.6
De-consolidators	7	4.9
Government Agency	9	6.3
Freight Forwarders/Clearing Agent	6	4.2
Oil & Gas Company	1	0.7

COMPLAINT CATEGORY ANALYSIS | Q2 –Q4 2025

COMPLAINT TYPES — FULL FREQUENCY TABLE (ALL QUARTERS)

Complaint Type	Q2	Q3	Q4	TOTAL	% of Total	Severity Category
Arbitrary Charges/Fees	6	1	12	19	13.3%	HIGH
Cargo Damage/Claims	3	11	4	18	12.6%	HIGH
Demurrage/Storage Waiver	4	7	5	16	11.2%	HIGH
Missing Container/Cargo	3	2	9	14	9.8%	CRITICAL
Container Mismanagement	—	6	6	12	8.4%	HIGH
Commercial Dispute	—	6	4	10	7.0%	MEDIUM
Container Deposit/Refund	5	2	1	8	5.6%	MEDIUM
Unreturned Container	3	—	4	7	4.9%	HIGH
Container Blockage	4	—	2	6	4.2%	MEDIUM
Government Agency Interference	—	4	2	6	4.2%	HIGH
Delay in Container Operations	2	—	3	5	3.5%	MEDIUM
Failure in Service Delivery	4	—	1	5	3.5%	MEDIUM
Debt/Payment Disputes	—	4	—	4	2.8%	HIGH
Overstayed Cargo	1	1	2	4	2.8%	MEDIUM
Cargo Valuation Disputes	—	2	—	2	1.4%	MEDIUM
Theft/Security	2	—	—	2	1.4%	CRITICAL
Transfer/Erroneous Issues	1	—	1	2	1.4%	MEDIUM
Wrong Port of Discharge	1	—	1	2	1.4%	HIGH
Claims Recovery	1	—	—	1	0.7%	MEDIUM
TOTAL	**40**	**46**	**56**	**143**	**100%**	

ARBITRARY GROUPAGE CHARGES: NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL RESOLVES DISPUTE BETWEEN KABIU VENTURES LTD AND SHOTTO LOGISTICS LTD

...Directs Deconsolidating Firm to comply with Council's Approved Tariff Structure

...Shotto Logistics to Register with Council Before 2026

...Council's Intervention saved my Business - Complainant

A complaint bordering on the imposition of arbitrary and unapproved groupage (Less-than-Container Load -LCL) filed by Kabiu Ventures Ltd, a Nigerian importer and manufacturer against Shotto Logistics Ltd, a Deconsolidating Company was recently resolved by the Nigerian Shippers' Council.

The resolution followed a tripartite dispute resolution meeting convened by the Council at the Complaints Unit Meeting Room, 1st Floor, B-Wing, Nigerian Shippers' Council Headquarters, No. 4, Otunba Ayodele Soyode Lane, Apapa GRA, Lagos.

Welcoming the parties, the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, who represented the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Nigerian Shippers' Council, Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, FCIOTA, PhD, reiterated that although the Complaints Unit is not a court of law, the Council is statutorily empowered under its enabling laws to intervene in commercial shipping, maritime, and port economic regulatory infractions within Nigeria's Marine and Blue Economy sector.

Dr. Ambi stressed that, resolutions reached at the Council's mediation meeting are binding on all parties, non-compliance attracts regulatory enforcement actions and parties must conduct proceedings with decorum, avoid interruptions and use of inappropriate language.

He emphasized that the Council's guiding principles remain justice, fairness, transparency, and the preservation of business relationships.

Commending Shotto Logistics Ltd for honouring the Council's invitation through a phone call without waiting for a formal letter, Dr. Ambi noted that the core complaint centered on tariff nomenclatures that were neither approved nor regulated by the Council.

He subsequently nominated Mr. Yahaya Abdullahi Wachiko to preside over the session.

Presenting the case overview, the handler, Mr. Mubarak Abubakar, informed the meeting that Kabiu Ventures Ltd had petitioned the Council over what it described as arbitrary, unjustified, and non-transparent groupage deconsolidation charges imposed by Shotto Logistics Ltd on a consignment of 2 Coils of Galvanized Steel Strips with a volume of 1.4 CBM.

The complainant further alleged the absence of an itemized cost breakdown, lack of transparency, and the application of unapproved foreign-currency charges for local port services, contrary to existing regulatory provisions.

Represented by Mr. Uche Amudu, Kabiu Ventures Ltd confirmed the facts of the complaint and appealed to the Council to intervene by facilitating a downward review of the charges to enable the release of its cargo. He noted that the invoice issued by Shotto Logistics Ltd was presented as a lump sum, lacked itemization, and failed to align with the Council's approved tariff nomenclatures for deconsolidators.

On his part, Mr. Adewole Rotimi, Operations Manager, Shotto Logistics Ltd, explained that the shipment was transshipped from China through Colombo under Global Link Marine. He stated that the charges, denominated in United States Dollars, included; Low Sulphur Surcharge (LSS), China Import Service Fee (CISF); Equipment Imbalance Surcharge (EIS); and Overweight Charges.

According to him, these charges originated from the Port of Loading and were known to the Shipper and Consignee before cargo arrival. He further disclosed that Shotto Logistics Ltd, headquartered in Ghana, is relatively new in the Nigerian market and is still familiarizing itself with the Country's regulatory framework.

In his response, the presiding officer, Mr. Yahaya Abdullahi Wachiko, faulted the invoicing of local shipping and port services in foreign currency, citing Section 20(1) of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Act, 2007, which prohibits the use of foreign currency for domestic transactions within Nigeria.

He clarified that under the Nigerian Port Economic Regulation, the Council-approved tariff nomenclatures for Deconsolidators are strictly limited to, Storage; Documentation; Handling and Stamp Duty.

While acknowledging that cargo characteristics may influence handling costs, the Council found the total charge of ₦1,970,797.99 for approximately 1.4 CBM to be arbitrary, excessive, and unjustified.

Consequently, the Council ordered the immediate removal and discontinuation of all unapproved, alien, and foreign-currency-based charges, noting that such charges are not recognized under the Council's approved tariff structure.

The Council also directed Shotto Logistics Ltd to register with the Nigerian Shippers' Council and obtain the requisite approved tariff nomenclature for lawful deconsolidation operations in Nigeria.

After extensive deliberations and a comprehensive review of all documents submitted, the meeting resolved as follows:

1. The consignment under review was confirmed to be a Groupage (LCL) shipment between Kabiu Ventures Ltd and Shotto Logistics Ltd.

2. Shotto Logistics Ltd was ordered to immediately and permanently cease invoicing or charging for local shipping and port services in foreign currency in Nigeria, in compliance with Section 20(1) of the CBN Act, 2007. Non-compliance will attract regulatory sanctions, including closure and license revocation.

3. All unapproved tariff nomenclatures, including LSS, EIS, CISF, and Overweight Charges, were ordered to be expunged and discontinued with immediate effect.

4. Shotto Logistics Ltd was directed to register with the Nigerian Shippers' Council before 2026 and obtain the Council-approved tariff structure for deconsolidators.

5. Kabiu Ventures Ltd was directed to pay the sum of ₦1,000,000.00 (One Million Naira only) to facilitate the release and delivery of the cargo on or before the end of December 2025 as against the initial invoice of ₦1,970,797.99.

6. Shotto Logistics Ltd was advised to properly sensitize its foreign partners and ensure that duly executed customer consent letters are obtained in cases involving foreign remittance arrangements.

7. Both parties were advised to maintain cordial business relations, ensure mutual cooperation, and comply fully with all applicable regulatory requirements going forward.

At the conclusion of the meeting, both parties expressed appreciation to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for providing a neutral, transparent, and professionally guided dispute resolution platform. Kabiu Ventures Ltd particularly commended the Council, noting that its timely intervention "saved the business," while reaffirming confidence in the Council's role as Nigeria's port economic regulator.

The resolution reinforces the Nigerian Shippers' Council's commitment to protecting cargo owners, ensuring tariff transparency, and maintaining a fair regulatory balance within Nigeria's Port economic environment.

NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL TIMELY INTERVENTION SAVED US FROM PROLONGED LITIGATION

...Highly appreciative and commends the Council's mediation process... Complainant

The Managing Director of Well Worldwide Energy Logistics Limited, Mr. Patrick Igbokwe, has commended the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) for its proactive and professional intervention in a commercial dispute involving his company and Alraine Shipping Agency Nigeria Limited. The dispute, which arose from the delayed berthing of a vessel conveying LPG Propane Gas Tanks from Romania to Nigeria, resulted in a contested detention charge of USD 236,979 and over ₦200 million in storage costs. In this interview, Mr. Igbokwe shares his experience with the Council's mediation process and highlights the importance of regulatory intervention in promoting amicable and timely dispute resolution within the maritime sector.

Good morning, sir. Please introduce yourself.

Complainant: Good morning. My name is Mr. Patrick Igbokwe, Managing Director of Well Worldwide Energy Logistics Limited.

Why are you at the Nigerian Shippers' Council today?

Complainant: My company submitted a petition to the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Shippers' Council seeking their intervention in an ongoing commercial dispute between our company and Alraine Shipping Agency Nigeria Limited.

What exactly is the commercial dispute about, and what led you to the Nigerian Shippers' Council?

Complainant:
Well-Worldwide Energy Logistics Limited had a contract to transport seventeen (17) LPG Propane Gas Tanks, including accessories, from Romania to Nigeria on behalf of Seplat West Limited. The shipment was carried out in three batches: the first batch consisted of six (6) tanks, the second of six (6) tanks, and the third of five (5) tanks.

The issue arose with the arrival of the third batch of five (5) tanks. The vessel, *MV ANUNNAKI*, was being handled by Alraine Shipping Agency Nigeria Limited. Due to either omission or commission, Alraine was also handling another vessel at the same terminal, EKO Support, where *MV ANUNNAKI* was scheduled to berth.

As a result, *MV ANUNNAKI* was unable to berth on the 3rd of October as scheduled. Alraine claimed that the other vessel they were handling had a court-related issue and was under arrest, which prevented them from berthing our vessel for discharge.

This delay resulted in a huge detention cost amounting to **236,979 USD.** Well-Worldwide Energy Logistics Limited maintains that this detention was not our responsibility, as we did not cause the delay. Alraine also refused to pay the detention charges.

Consequently, we petitioned the Nigerian Shippers' Council. In addition to the detention charges, we currently have over **₦200 million** in storage charges at EKO Support on the same cargo.

What do you want the Nigerian Shippers' Council to do for you?

Complainant:
We are seeking the Nigerian Shippers' Council's commercial intervention for an amicable resolution that will enable the release of our cargo. Currently, the cargo has been placed on lien, and we are unable to take delivery unless we pay the disputed detention invoice of **236,979USD**. This is the primary reason we approached the Nigerian Shippers' Council.

Are you satisfied with the mediatory role played by the Nigerian Shippers' Council?

Complainant:
I am very satisfied. I can sincerely and honestly say that my only regret is not being aware earlier of the capacity and scope of work of the Nigerian Shippers' Council. If I had known about their role back in October when this issue began, I do not think we would be in this situation.

I thank God for the opportunity and also appreciate the entire team of the Nigerian Shippers' Council, especially the Complaints Unit under the leadership of Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed. He has been steadfast, firm, and resolute in condemning any action that could cause losses to the Nigerian economy. I am most satisfied with their intervention.

Do you have any advice for other importers facing similar challenges with their consignments?

Complainant:
My first appeal is to the Nigerian Shippers' Council to explore more avenues to publicize their functions and responsibilities, as what they do, in my opinion, is far more effective than litigation, which is often time-consuming and expensive.

Without exaggeration, I have seen a Nigerian agency that is doing its job without fear or favor, and without bowing to threats. I do not know anyone at the Nigerian Shippers' Council. I came here for the first time, and I met a very dedicated and professional team.

Most importantly, when the second party to the meeting was initially unable to attend, the Nigerian Shippers' Council relocated the meeting to ensure it was held. The Head of the Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, was personally present at that meeting. I truly appreciate this level of commitment.

My advice to other shippers, cargo owners, and port stakeholders is to seek the intervention of the Nigerian Shippers' Council first before approaching any other body. This will help achieve faster, more amicable, and commercially friendly resolutions.

Were you charged for these services?

Complainant:
We have not been charged for any of the services. The meetings were purely formal, with only official introductions made by all parties. On the second day of the initial meeting, I left the office without anyone requesting any payment. We shook hands and departed.

Today, which is the second day of the continued meetings, all parties have again been fully engaged. Honestly, I am very happy and truly impressed. If I have the opportunity, I would gladly serve as a canvasser for the Nigerian Shippers' Council so that more people within the maritime industry can utilize their platform for dispute resolution.

There are so many unresolved issues at the ports, with people spending years in litigation. Yet, within just two days, we have made significant progress—about 80% of the issues discussed have been addressed. I sincerely appreciate this.

Please confirm your name once again?

My name is Mr. Patrick Igbokwe, I have been in this industry for years, and I have been here for over 30years doing this job. I am really surprised and embarrassed that I did not know the capacity and responsibilities of the Nigerian Shippers' Council.

I also thank the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Shippers' Council for assembling such an unbiased, proactive, and hardworking team. I particularly commend the Head of the Complaints Unit for going out of his way to personally follow up with us when emails were not responded to and for anchoring the meetings in such a professional, disciplined, and decent manner.

Thank you, I really appreciate

CONTAINER CLEARING DISPUTE: FIVE-YEAR IMPASSE ON 1X40FT CONTAINER WORTH OVER N20 MILLION RESOLVED

...NSC Warns Freight Forwarders Against Cargo Misdeclaration, Emphasises Compliance in Practice
..."Help Me Recover My Lost"..... Complainant

A five-year old container clearing dispute involving the non-release and eventual auction of a 1X40FT container valued at over ₦20 million was recently resolved by the Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) bringing closure to a prolonged commercial impasse and reinforcing its regulatory stance on compliance and ethical freight forwarding practice.

The dispute centered on Container No. MRKU3947840 (Bill of Lading No. 598351059), which contained four vehicles imported in 2020. The complaint was lodged by Ukwuoma Industries Sewing Machine Engineering Co., Aba, Abia State, against Mr. Joseph Okwudili Umezugha of U-Cenet Nigeria Limited, a licensed clearing and forwarding agency based in Apapa, Lagos.

According to the complainant, the clearing agent was engaged in 2020 to facilitate Customs clearance and delivery of the container. An initial payment of ₦2.8 million was made, followed by an additional ₦1 million at the agent's request. Despite these payments, the consignment was never delivered.

Following a report to the Police, the clearing agent allegedly requested another ₦2.8 million, assuring delivery within six weeks, as well as an additional ₦200,000.00 In total, the complainant paid ₦6.8 million, yet the container remained unreleased.

Subsequent investigations revealed that the container was eventually auctioned by the Nigeria Customs Service (NCS). Further findings revealed that the consignment had been under-declared, with shipping documents indicating two vehicles, while physical examination revealed four vehicles, in addition to used clothing and other household items, prohibited under prevailing Customs regulations.

At an earlier tripartite meeting convened by the NSC, Barr. Abubu, counsel to the clearing agent, acknowledged the under-declaration and confirmed the presence of used clothing in the container. He further disclosed that a petition had been written to the Comptroller-General of Customs challenging the auction, on the claim that duty had allegedly been paid.

The NSC, exercising its Participatory Regulatory Model, convened several mediation sessions to resolve the matter amicably, outside the conventional court process.

Addressing parties, the Head, Complaints Unit, Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed, representing the Executive Secretary/CEO of the Council, Mr. Akutah Pius Ukeyima, Esq., MON, FCILT, FCIOTA, PhD, expressed concern over the unusually long duration of the dispute. "The Council's intervention in this matter is guided strictly by fairness, transparency, and verifiable documentary evidence. Disputes of this nature should not linger for years where regulatory mechanisms exist," Dr. Ambi said.

The meeting was chaired by Mrs. Mary Funmilola Afolabi, Principal Operations Officer, while the case handler, Mr. Vincent Nkwocha, Senior Operations Officer, presented a detailed chronology of the complaint, findings, and regulatory actions taken.

The National Association of Government Approved Freight Forwarders (NAGAFF) intervened on behalf of its member. Speaking at the meeting, Dr. Eugene Omemma, National Publicity Secretary of NAGAFF, admitted that professional lapses occurred in the handling of the consignment. "The resolution of this matter is to the credit of the Nigerian Shippers' Council," Dr. Omemma stated, urging the clearing agent to compensate the complainant in order to mitigate her losses and restore professional integrity.

Legal representative of the agent, U-Cenet Nigeria Limited made submission, referencing an ongoing Federal High Court case (Suit No: FHC/L/CS/).

A Legal Officer from the NSC Legal Services Department, Barr. Joy B. Dimka clarified the Council's position, noting that;

- ✓ The clearing agent bears primary liability, having collected funds on multiple occasions without delivering the contracted service.
- ✓ The complainant bears limited contributory liability due to discrepancies between the declared cargo and the Bill of Lading.
- ✓ While a full refund of ₦6.8 million was legally justifiable, a neutral settlement of ₦5 million was considered equitable, taking into account port charges and incidental expenses incurred by the agent.

After exhaustive deliberations and document reviews, the parties reached the following resolutions:

1. The NSC strongly condemned cargo under-declaration, particularly where a licensed freight forwarder is involved.
2. The complainant accepted ₦5 million as full and final settlement of the dispute.
3. The settlement sum shall be paid in structured installments:

- ₦2 million on or before February 5, 2026
- ₦1.5 million on or before March 5, 2026
- ₦1.5 million on or before April 6, 2026

4. All payment evidences must be formally submitted to the Council.
5. A Settlement Agreement shall be executed by all parties in the presence of NAGAFF and Legal representatives.
6. The NSC issued a strong warning against cargo misdeclaration and non-compliance with Customs regulations.
7. U-Cenet Nigeria Limited was advised to strictly adhere to freight forwarding ethics and operate within its statutory authority.
8. The Council expressed satisfaction at resolving a dispute that had lingered for five years before its formal submission.

In closing, the Nigerian Shippers' Council commended NAGAFF for its constructive intervention and urged continued sensitization of Freight Forwarders on compliance, ethical conduct, and dispute prevention. The Council reaffirmed its commitment to protecting Stakeholders' interests, promoting efficiency and transparency.

COMPLAINTS HANDLING: STAKEHOLDERS APPRECIATE THE COUNCIL

APPRECIATION LETTER

"I, Ajayi Adenike is genuinely grateful for the relentless effort administered for the missing cargo case against Holly Trans Limited. This issue took place since July 142025 when I was update that my package can't be found. Since then, there has been no good resolution from the company but with the intervention of the Shippers' Council, through a complaint by e-mail, the process has been swift with fairness among both parties. Meetings were arranged but my shipping company ignored twice which triggered the Head of Complaints Unit Team visiting Holly Trans Limited on a note of warning. Same day, a resolution was met on a round table with an equivalent amount paid back for the missing item within 24 hours. The process was swift.

I sincerely commend the effort of the Head, Complaints for their intervention in this case. It was a success. This process seems impossible at first, but with this positive outcome, I believe all Nigerians can have fair justice. Thanks to other team members of the Complaints Unit. I really appreciate."

FOR: **AJAYI ADENIKE**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RELEASE OF (1/40FT) CONTAINER NO: MSKU9108120

"We write to appreciate your kind gesture to have assisted us on the above-mentioned container on transit to warehouse from maritime police.
Thanks for your cooperation."
Yours faithfully,
FOR: **ADAMS LOGISTICS SERVICES LTD**
SOMTOCHUKWU OKONKWO
MANAGER

APPRECIATION LETTER FOR RELEASE

"We are thanking you for assistance given to us to speedily and easily release of our containers from Maritime Police.
Container are listed below:
MRSU5305523
MSKU0355346
MRKU3597296
TLLU5831831
TCLU8587593

We thank you."

For: **KANASO NIGERIA LIMITED**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

"We want to express our heartfelt appreciation for your invaluable intervention in the release of our container which have a significant difference.
Container No: MRKU2899563 & SUDU6847347 (2X40FT)

Said To Contain: Water Pump
Thank you for your assistance, which had a positive influence during the course of the release of the said container, we really appreciate."
Yours faithfully,

For: MADUX LTD
IHEANACHO BENEDICT

APPRECIATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION AND CLOSURE OF CASE FILE

"I wish to acknowledge the resolution of the complaint lodged by Adeke Ideas Limited against Maersk Shipping Line concerning BL 257130888, Container no: MRKU2757656, arising from the Seaway Bill linkage issue with Roladip Impex Limited.

Following the Council's prompt intervention, Maersk has activated the account, enabled the Seaway Bill, and released the shipment to our buyer. All issues have now been satisfactorily resolved, and we hereby request that the case file be closed.

We appreciate the Nigerian Shippers' Council, especially the Complaints Unit, for their professionalism and timely action, which helped prevent further losses and safeguarded our company's reputation."

Yours faithfully,
AGBATA DENNIS
Chief Executive Officer
For: **ADEKE IDEAS LTD**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION

"I am writing to personally express my heartfelt appreciation for the intervention of the release of our four containers numbers
1. CAAU 9311614
2. MRKU 6125523
3. MRKU 1386589
4. MRSU 5830434

Through your intervention, the job was made easy for us, we can attest to your expertise and cooperation, we are very proud of you and your office and wish you can do more to stop the blocking of containers.
Finally, to be associated with you in recent times."
Yours faithfully,

For: **JOMA EXPRESS COMPANY LIMITED**

APPRECIATION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COMPLAINT RESOLUTION AND CLOSURE OF CASE FILE

"I wish to formally acknowledge the resolution of the complaint lodged with the Nigerian Shippers' Council against Mercy Express Freight Limited regarding issues of estimated billing and non-transparent freight charges on my shipment.

Following the Council's mediation and subsequent investigation, I am pleased to confirm that the matter has been amicably resolved and that Mercy Express Freight Limited has duly compensated me for the overbilling on my shipment with the following details:

- Type of Goods: Sea Groupage Cargo (Solar Energy System - One 550W solar panel, one inverter, one battery, with cables and accessories)
-Bill Reference: EC69 2025-6-27(1578)
- Origin: China
- Customer No.: 29649
- Tracking No.: HLOS222194

I hereby state that I have no further claims or outstanding charges against Mercy Express Freight Limited and wish for the case file to be officially closed.

I sincerely appreciate the Nigerian Shippers' Council, particularly Mrs. Funmi Afolabi of the Complaints Unit and her team, for their professionalism, patience, and commitment in ensuring justice, transparency, and fairness in the resolution process. Their efforts and follow-up brought this matter to a peaceful conclusion, for which I am truly grateful.

Thank you for your intervention and for upholding the rights and confidence of shippers in Nigeria."

Yours faithfully,
For: **FABIAN ASUQUO BOKO**

APPRECIATION FOR YOUR INTERVENTION ON HAPAG-LLOYD MATTER

"We sincerely appreciate your fair and balanced judgment regarding the recent issues with Hapag Lloyd. Your intervention and leadership brought much-needed clarity and resolution to the matter.

We would also like to extend our special thanks to Mrs. Funmi Afolabi for her dedication, consistent follow-ups; calls, and unwavering commitment throughout the process. Her support was invaluable and truly made a difference.

We greatly value the professionalism and fairness demonstrated by your esteemed Council, and we remain deeply grateful.

Thank you."

Yours sincerely,
For: **CENTURY INDUSTRIAL FZE**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION TO NIGERIAN SHIPPERS' COUNCIL

"We write on behalf of our client, AAK LOGISTICS, to express our sincere appreciation to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for the invaluable assistance rendered in facilitating the mediation process between our client and Dunamix Investment Concept Ltd.

The Council's prompt intervention, professionalism and dedication towards ensuring an amicable resolution of the dispute are deeply commendable. The mediation process not only reflected the Council's commitment to promoting fair and efficient trade practices but also underscored its vital role as a regulatory and dispute resolution body within Nigeria's Maritime Sector.

We are grateful for the time, effort and expertise extended by your team throughout the mediation exercise, and we look forward to continued collaboration with the Council in promoting harmony and compliance within the shipping and logistics industry."

Yours faithfully,
Rita O. Adesanya Esq.
For: **POPOOLA-TAIWO LP**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RELEASE OF CONTAINER NO.:MAEU9271551

"We hereby express our appreciation for the fantastic step taken in the release of this container MAEU9271551 from Maritime Police.
Your impact in the industry is highly appreciated.

TOP 100 FLAG STATES IN GLOBAL MARITIME SHIPPING

A	D	A	N	A	C	O	M	O	R	O	S	L	A	T	M	G	A
Y	N	A	M	R	E	G	L	S	H	S	J	D	H	Y	R	N	I
K	W	T	Y	L	A	T	I	V	B	S	U	R	P	Y	C	O	N
J	S	H	I	H	G	W	Z	C	A	M	B	O	D	I	A	K	A
G	T	F	K	G	Q	D	A	F	R	A	N	C	E	W	I	G	U
B	G	D	L	Q	U	C	R	E	W	K	U	W	A	I	T	N	H
H	S	A	M	A	H	A	B	E	L	G	I	U	M	Y	A	O	T
O	I	N	D	I	A	A	A	O	I	T	R	E	W	H	O	H	I
N	G	W	N	Q	R	P	E	N	L	N	W	E	Q	B	R	H	L
D	V	A	C	B	G	U	Q	H	D	I	J	G	E	B	C	G	A
U	S	J	A	M	A	I	C	A	R	B	V	O	E	C	Q	D	T
R	A	D	Y	D	S	E	F	G	O	Q	A	I	N	D	E	H	V
A	O	E	M	A	L	T	A	C	D	S	T	R	A	E	N	N	I
S	D	N	A	L	E	R	I	J	A	P	A	N	B	W	S	B	A
D	U	B	N	S	Q	Q	R	S	U	P	E	O	Q	U	H	I	P
N	O	F	I	U	F	D	Q	A	C	I	N	I	M	O	D	W	A
A	R	D	S	I	T	P	Y	G	E	G	Q	L	R	E	H	A	N
L	G	S	L	T	K	I	R	I	B	A	T	I	N	F	W	D	C
S	E	H	A	I	H	G	Y	B	H	E	O	M	Q	V	D	G	W
I	N	Y	N	R	F	B	H	R	L	D	A	V	O	D	L	O	M
E	E	E	D	U	E	H	F	A	E	R	P	S	O	U	G	T	D
O	T	A	S	A	W	S	S	L	K	A	I	L	O	G	N	O	M
R	N	F	E	M	S	N	Q	T	N	A	M	F	O	E	L	S	I
A	O	H	S	D	N	A	L	S	I	L	L	A	H	S	R	A	M
F	M	K	H	U	H	A	I	R	E	B	I	L	A	W	F	G	N
G	R	U	O	B	M	E	X	U	L	W	W	Y	J	F	S	G	P

ANTIGUA AND BARBUDA	BARBADOS	BELGIUM	BERMUDA
BAHAMAS	BOLIVIA	BRAZIL	CAMBODIA
CANADA	CAYMAN ISLANDS	CHINA	COMOROS
CROATIA	CYPRUS	DENMARK	DOMINICA
ECUADOR	EGYPT	FAROE ISLANDS	FRANCE
GERMANY	GIBRALTAR	GREECE	HONDURAS
HONG KONG	INDIA	INDONESIA	IRELAND
ISLE OF MAN	ITALY	JAMAICA	JAPAN
KIRIBATI	KUWAIT	LATVIA	LIBERIA
LITHUANIA	LUXEMBOURG	MALTA	MOLDOVA
MARSHALL ISLANDS	MAURITIUS	MONGOLIA	MONTENEGRO

To be continued in next edition

DESIGNED BY VINCENT IKECHUKWU

Kindly accept our warmest regards."

Yours faithfully,
For: **ABYEM-DIVA INT'L LIMITED**

APPRECIATION LETTER FOR RELEASE OF CONTAINER NO ZCSU7254666
"I am writing this letter to appreciate the Council for intervening in the release of Container No: ZCSU7254666.
Thank you for working swiftly."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **ATLANTIC COAST SHIPPING NIG. LIMITED**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RELEASE OF CONTAINER NUMBER: MRKU8495208, MRKU6951649 WITH THE CONSIGNEE'S NAME: RUPHAK AGRIC INTERBIZ

"We appreciate your effort for your good work, we hope to work with you next time."

Your faithfully,
FOR: **NEDECA INT'L LTD.**

APPRECIATION LETTER
"This refers to the matter as it bothers on the missing container no.SEGU5413747 and its consequent demurrage.

Following series of meetings and resolutions with the representatives of the Nigerian Shippers' Council, Ocean Network Express Nigeria Limited (ONE), AAK Logistics Limited and Emma Dunamix Investment Concept Limited, in which a conclusive agreement has been reached and the matter brought to bear.

As a company, we thank the Shippers' Council fortheir immense contribution and ensuring that this issue did not escalate beyond proportion, and was resolved amicably and peacefully.

We cannot thank Ocean Network Express enough for their magnanimous waiver on the huge financial liabilities especially in lieu of demurrage that stared us in the face as a result of the missing unit. We thank you for your benevolence and do not take it for granted.

We hope to foster the relations created as a result of this incidence, which we see as a blessing in disguise; to build more business relationships together."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **EMMA DUNAMIX INVESTMENT CONCEPT LTD**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION
"We write to express our gratitude and gladness to your office for the assistance you rendered to hasten the payment of our refund with Ocean Network Shipping company.

We are so delighted and pray that you should continue the quality and good work you are rendering to we Nigerians through your intervention because we know that without your swift response to our letter of appeal that they would not have paid the money back to us because the refund has been with them since May, 2025, not until your questioned them that they acted in less than one week.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation and be rest assured that it is not taken for granted, though that is your official work to help us Nigerians who keep our economy floating."

Yours faithfully,
For: **EMMA JANEFRANCES NIGERIA LIMITED**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RELEASE OF CONTAINER NO MRKU5383288
"This letter is to bring to your notice that the said container which was held from releasing at APM Terminal Port has finally been released due to your intervention.
Sir we are very grateful for your urgent attention.

Thanks."

Yours faithfully,
For: **JAELITH HOLDINGS**

APPRECIATION FOR THE RELEASE OF CONTAINER NO: MRSU3427902
"This letter is to bring to your notice that the said container 1x40ft Said to Contain 12 PACKAGES 2 UNIT OF USED TOYOTA BZX 610 which was put on hold by MARTIME POLICE from Apapa Port Terminal has finally been
We really appreciate your intervention to get a swift release.

Thanks."
Yours Faithfully,
For. **RASH EXPRESS SERVICES**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION
"We write to express our profound gratitude to the Council on the way it handled our matter with Lekki Deep Sea Port.
We came calling to the Council for help to resolve our issue with Lekki Deep Sea Port on huge storage charges which they charged us. We pleaded with the Council to look into the matter to help us resolve the matter and they intervened. We finally got a rebate of 10% which was welcomed by us.
We must not fail to mention the stellar performance and prompt responses from the Complaints Unit headed by Dr. Bashir Ambi Mohammed. He is a precious gift to the Council and other staff there.

We humbly appreciate and express our gratitude to the Council and thanks so much for your concern."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **ROYAL CREST DYNAMICS**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION AND COMMENDATION
"We the Management of Emak Concept Ltd, with hearts full of gratitude and appreciation, do profoundly write to express our gratitude for the diligence and hard work of your entire Management and staff the way you intervened to compel Port & Cargo Handling Services Ltd to refund the money we paid to them for an auction container which they did not deliver, for which they rebuffed all our efforts to retrieve the money, but you did that for us.
We therefore commend your efforts and pray that God gives you the grace and strength to do more.

Accept the assurances of our best regards."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **EMAK CONCEPT LTD**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION
"I am writing this to express my sincere appreciation towards your contribution and commitment on the release of my job B/L NO:258900017, Container no: MRKU2845783 at Maersk Line Shipping Company.

Once again, thank you for every effort that was put in to make sure that the container was released by MARITIME POLICE HEAD QUARTER (KAMSELEM HOUSE), and also it has been released from hold at APMT Apapa Port."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **OGOLUWA CLASSIC LINKS**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION
"The entire Management and Staff of FZ-MALIK GLOBAL SERVICES wish to express our sincere gratitude to the Nigerian Shippers' Council for their diligent effort in resolving the issues we encountered with OCEAN NETWORK EXPRESS SHIPPING COMPANY, your team's professionalism, expertise and commitment to fairness has been instrumental in bringing this matter to a successful conclusion.

We are grateful for your support and guidance provided by your organization throughout the process, your efforts have not only resolved our issues but has also helped us to better understand our rights and obligations as Shippers.
Please accept our sincerest gratitude for your tireless efforts in promoting a fair and efficient shipping environment as we look forward to a continued collaboration with you and appreciate your organization's role in smooth trade resolutions.
Thank you once again for your support.

Sincerely,
FOR: **FZ-MALIK GLOBAL SERVICES**

LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR RELEASE OF CONTAINER NUMBER FFAU7614600
"We write to appreciate Nigerian Shippers' Council for your intervention on the illegal detention of our container by Maritime Police

We are grateful for the release process and the prompt action in notifying APMT to release our container."

Yours faithfully,
For: **BRITISH STANDARD NIG. LTD**

APPRECIATION FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN THE RECOVERY OF REFUND FROM MAERSK NIGERIA LIMITED
"On behalf of Gelix Consulting Ltd, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the Nigeria Shippers' Council for your invaluable support and intervention that led to the successful recovery of the refund of the sum of ₦1,000,140.00 (One Million, One Hundred & Forty Naira Only) due to our company from Maersk Nigeria Limited.

The Council's prompt response, professionalism, and commitment to fairness greatly contributed to resolving the matter amicably. We deeply admire the efficiency with which the investigation was conducted and the clarity of communication throughout the process.

We would also like to specially acknowledge and extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mrs. Funmi Afolabi, whose exemplary professionalism, diligence, and dedicated follow-up ensured that the refund process was concluded successfully. Her attention to detail and willingness to go the extra mile demonstrates dedication to duty, character and integrity.

Thank you once again for your continued support to Shippers and Stakeholders across the country. We look forward to maintaining a positive and collaborative relationship with the Council as we continue our operations.

Please accept the assurances of our highest regards."

Yours Faithfully,
For: **GELIX CONSULTING LTD**

NOTICE TO ALL STAKEHOLDERS: GRATIFICATION? NO, WE APPRECIATE

The Complaints Unit Staff of Nigerian Shippers' Council have pledged to adhere strictly to our organization's policy of neither asking nor taking gift in the course of resolving Stakeholders' complaints.

Kindly assist us by **NOT** seeking to influence our complaint handlers with your favours. We need only Letter of Appreciation to be forwarded through the Office of the Executive Secretary/Chief Executive Officer, Nigerian Shippers' Council.

However, in a situation where gratification is pressed on the Complaint Handlers, they are to declare it to the Management.

Our passion is to resolve complaints fairly without inducement from Stakeholders. Please, report anyone who engages in unethical conduct. Send an SMS or call; 07035250035,08023021173, 07040955718, 08053030010, whatsapp - 08099858537 or email to: complaints@shipperscouncil.gov.ng

QUOTE ME

"We wish to express our gratitude to the Council for the well taken decision. We undertake to abide by the decision."
Chris Ogboba for GABTHUB

"Shippers' Council is truly doing a great job in terms of interfacing between agents and Government agencies. Kudos to them, I am impressed with the outcome of the meeting."
Royal Express Ltd