

Ondo Shows Commitment To Establishment Of Deep Sea Port, Spends N24bn

In its determination to ensure the smooth take-off of the Olokola Deep Sea Port (OK DSP) in the Southern District of Ondo the Ondo State government has committed a sum of N24billion on constructing a 3-lane access road to the Zone to provide smooth passage for the thousands of trucks that would move goods to and from the Port.

The State Government has expressed its readiness to harness its vantage position as the State with the longest coastline in the nation by establishing a Deep Sea Port within the Olokola Free Trade Zone (OKFTZ) which it operates with its close neighbour, the Ogun State.

Governor Olusegun Mimiko who disclosed this on Wednesday while declaring open the Maritime Economic Summit in Akure with its theme: “Harnessing Maritime Development Opportunities in Ondo State,” underscore the inter-relationship between the OKFTZ as an industrial base and the planned multipurpose Deep Sea Port providing a fantastic synergy as a true recipe for success. He disclosed that the commitment of the whopping N24 billion to the road project was a pre-emptive measure to avoid undue traffic congestion like that in Apapa Port at the OK DSP.

Governor Mimiko who noted the vantage position and the advantage of the Port to the economic development of Ondo State and the entire South-West enthused that it would thus serve as a supply base with shorter sailing times and thus provide cheaper services when completed.

His words:“I consider this Summit to be of utmost relevance to Ondo State in two respects. Firstly, we partner with Ogun State government in the establishment of the Olokola Free Trade Zone (OKFTZ) not only to transform the region into a major trade and distribution hub of oil and gas and related businesses, but also, to resuscitate and energize maritime activities that must necessarily be ancillary to the operation of an integrated multi-purpose Deep Sea Port (OK Deep Sea Port) along a coastline that is reputed to be the longest in West Africa

“The Port project is expected to serve as the hub of maritime activities in West Africa, providing a clear alternative to extant port facilities in Nigeria. Bear in mind that Nigeria controls over 65 percent of the ship traffic and cargo trade generated by the West and Central African sub-regions.

“It is increasingly obvious that the off-shore oil and gas blocks are moving westwards. We now have these blocks right in front of the Zone. The Port will thus be a supply base with shorter

sailing times and thus cheaper services. As we all strive to make the Local Contents Act a success, the Port provides the opportunity for ship building, ship repairs, breaking up and recycling of ships.

Ondo State is blessed with natural resources.

“With the Port, our bitumen could now be processed and exported, just as other minerals could now be mined and shipped out at viable costs. Needless to also note, that the Port will help facilitate exportation of agricultural produce, such as rubber and palm oil, both of which are being produced in large quantities in Ondo State.

In his address, the Managing Director of Nigerian Ports Authority, Alhaji Abdul Salam Mohammed said that the Authority was working on a 25-year Port Development Master Plan for the nation to streamline and plan phased development of port capacity in the country. He however disclosed that Ondo State being one of the most peaceful States in the Niger-Delta region aside from its natural endowments has its takes to facilitate a viable sea Port in the region.

According to him, Ondo State with its coastline and geographical, educated population and natural endowment would definitely find port development as an opportunity to open up its economy and attract private sector investment.

Also speaking at the occasion, the Chairman of Nigerian Ports Consultative Council, Otunba Kunle Folarin stated that the objective of the summit was to unlock the potentials of maritime wealth that abound in Ondo state and transform it into workable and productive economic agenda. He was full of kind words for Governor Mimiko for providing the enabling environment for the economic development of the State and for his commitment to the OK DSP.

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