

Work Begins On Deep Sea Port In Ondo State As Mimiko Inaugurates Technical Committee

Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko at the weekend took a practical step in his determination to actualise the establishment of a Deep Sea Port in the Southern belt of the State as he instituted a Technical Committee on Deep Sea Development that would fast track the speedy development of the Port.

Governor Mimiko had on Monday last week while playing host to officials of the Nigerian Ports Consultative Council (NPCC) disclosed the readiness of his administration to cash in on the vantage position of the State which has the longest coastline in the nation and the presence of the Olokola Free Trade Zone (OK FTZ) to establish a Deep Sea Port within the shortest time possible.

And to show its seriousness to the establishment of the Port, Dr Mimiko disclosed that the State Government has already committed the sum of N24bn on the construction of a 3-lane access road to the Zone with a view to ensuring smooth passage for the thousands of trucks that would move goods to and from the Port when completed.

His words: “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.

Addressing members of the Technical Committee which has the State Commissioner for Finance, Mr. Yele Ogundipe as Chairman, the Governor stated that they must see the fast tracking of work on the establishment of the Deep Sea Port in the coastal area of the State as their major task. “Today, we are inaugurating a Joint Technical Committee on Deep-Sea Development to move forward the issue of Deep Sea in the line with the Federal Government’s Port Reforms. We have already begun talks with the technical partners in this project to put in

place the mechanism that will drive us. This Deep-Sea is more than ten years late and we cannot wait any longer.

“Going by our natural endowments, we should actually be a maritime, oil and gas industrial hub of Nigeria based on the fact that we have the longest coast in Nigeria.” I expect that we meet in the next two weeks. I want us to move as fast as possible and we are ready to do anything that we make move faster. We are committing the political will to move forward,” the governor stated.

Other representatives who are to serve in the technical team to work with the Nigeria Ports Authority nominees are the Commissioner for Transport, Otunba Omoniyi Omodara, the Commissioner for Works, Engineer Gboye Adegbenro and the Coordinator, Public Private Partnership, Prof Bolodeoku while the Secretary of Olokola Free Trade Zone Technical Committee, Mr Akinbami would serve as the Secretary.

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