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Alake

ON RESCUE
MISSION

PHOTO CREDIT: Emmanuel Oshodi, the Honourable Minister's Photographer

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Editor's Note

This publication is the result of the resolve of the aides of the Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Oladele Alake to capture the strategist at work in the first year on the saddle for the records. Many thanks to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR for appointing Dr. Oladele Alake to reposition and reform the Solid Minerals Sector. We were inspired by his vision to re-position the solid minerals sector for domestic growth and international competitiveness so that the sector could truly empower the Nigerian people.

We have watched him drive this vision with jaw-dropping energy and routine. As a commentator in this publication noted, even Sundays are not excluded from his working days. It is significant that he delivered his maiden press conference after attending the church service on Sunday September 3, 2023. He delivers his mandate 24 hours of the day, seven days of the week. When does he have time to sleep? People wonder. Dr. Alake brings to the job the investigative curiosity of the journalist that recommends voracious consumption of intelligence, an evaluative perspective of the editor enriched by experience and expertise and administrative speed in executing policies that combats red tapism and drudgery.

Despite a notice that puts his visitors' days on Thursdays and Fridays, his doors are, in reality, open all days of the week. Giving access to citizens and engaging them directly are the norms in his office. The publication is in six sections. First is the cover, a panoramic report of the evolution of the Seven Point Agenda and setting up the working environment. Second, Impressions put on record the views of the bureaucrats who run the Ministry and the agencies. We are grateful to the Permanent Secretary, Dr. Mary Ogbe, for leading this section.

In the third section, under the blurb, Strategist At Work, we document the implementation of the Seven Point Agenda including innovations in positioning the sector in the mind of the domestic and international audiences using media messages and channels such as radio programming, television drama and documentaries.

Key deliverables of the Seven Point Agenda such as the establishment of the Mining Marshals, the formation of the Nigerian Solid Minerals Company, Sanitising the Licencing system, Developing country-wide geological data through the Second Phase of the Nigerian Integrated Mineral Exploration Programme and Expansion of artisanal co-operatives are also highlighted. Under For the records, we share the progress report on actualising the seven point agenda, presented during the first anniversary of the administration of President Bola Tinubu.

This provides a status update of the first document for public consumption. The seventh section, titled, Flashback takes us down memory lane to show that Dr. Alake walks his talk. We have re-published three of the articles he wrote in his column, Eyeview, elaborating his views on three subjects, civility in public appointments, the character of the national economy and his vision of Africa. Those who can connect the dots between these views, penned over 20 years ago, and his actions in government today, will attest to his ideological consistency. Finally, while the jury may still be out there over the impact of Alake's policies in the first year, we cannot ignore feedbacks of perception and action.

The final section allows us to get the reaction to Alake's policies from an unbiased observer and appreciation from a miner, who, for over 10 years, could not access his validly licenced area due to illegal occupation and mining. However, with the establishment of the Mining Marshals, over 1,000 illegal miners have been flushed out of the site today and the henchmen are smelling the coffee. As aides, we agreed that there would be no better day to present this special publication than October 6, 2024, Dr. Henry Oladele's 68th birthday. This is not just a birthday gift. It is an injection of our collective adhesion to his vision and our prayer that his past has been a story told, the next year shall be written in gold.

*KEHINDE BAMIGBETAN
SPECIAL ADVISER TO THE HONOURABLE MINISTER*



Alake

ON RESCUE MISSION

BY KEHINDE BAMIGBETAN
SPECIAL ADVISER

No other ministerial appointment shocked Nigerians. On August 15, 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu released the list of ministerial appointees assigning Oladele Alake, erstwhile Special Adviser, Information, Strategy & Special Duties to the newly separated Ministry of Solid Minerals Development. The naysayers, mostly political opponents, went to town. Their argument: Alake has spent over 40 of his professional life in journalism and would find it difficult to find his feet in the technical woods of solid minerals where geologists and mining engineers hold sway.

They were wrong. First, Alake's forte isn't just ferreting and disseminating information to audiences. His most critical asset, honed over four decades of engaging the public and private sectors, is strategy. This was the conclusion of the authors who x-rayed his profile when he clocked 60 eight years ago. In the book, *The Writer as Strategist*, the authors identified the minister's infinitesimal capacity to develop sequences of activities to nip crises, douse conflagration or build counter-forces against imminent threats as the essence of his persona, and the core of his craft.

The ideological application of such a prodigious asset for progressive causes was witnessed by the whole nation when he held the hands of the opposition to the fire during the 2023 general elections. With the stories of corruption, mismanagement and lack of regulatory elan as the ills dogging the heels of the solid minerals sector, Mr President needed a man with integrity and strategic insight to clean up and position the sector.

Second, Nigeria had witnessed seasoned journalists who took such seemingly alien assignments and made good. The roll call: Lateef Jakande, Editor and later Managing Director of Nigerian Tribune newspapers, became the governor of Lagos State in 1979 and executed five cardinal programmes that delivered housing estates, free health and education and massive infrastructures. He later became the Minister of Housing that completed Gwaringpa, the largest housing estate in West Africa. To mention a few others: Olabisi Onabanjo, Olusegun Osoba and Christopher Kolade.

And truly, as soon as he was sworn in, the fallacy of the proposition, became more and more obvious. The Minister sat through presentations of every department, agency and unit, studied the handover notes and roadmaps of his predecessors and within one month declared a Seven Point Agenda as the strategy for positioning the Solid Minerals sector for domestic consolidation and international competitiveness.

Why a ministerial Agenda?

An agenda sets the content and direction of governance. The Renewed Hope Agenda, the manifesto of the ruling All Progressives Agenda, set general principles and programmes that the President planned to apply to meet the yearnings of the Nigerian people. By delegating the powers to manage the Solid Minerals Sector, the Presidency expects the Minister to drill down to deliverables.



The first component of the Seven Point Agenda is the formation of the Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation, NSMC. Realising that attracting big investors is a major challenge of the sector, the SMSC is the face of the Nigerian Mining Sector in the global business space, the go-to company for transactions and deals to deepen the capital formation that will keep investors coming.

The Minister, through consultations, sought to avoid the pitfalls of the defunct Nigerian Mining Corporation in coming up with the structure by comparing the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation, NNPC with the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas, NLNG, company. Leaning towards the latter, he is proposing a NSMC with 25 percent shares held by the Federal Government of Nigeria, 25 percent by Nigerians through a public offer, and 50 percent by private corporate placement with the condition that no private placement exceeds 10 percent.

These are the fundamental principles that consultancy firms working on the formation of NSMC and in-house project committee are working on with the goal of delivering the corporation by fourth quarter this year.

Interestingly, the announcement of the structure has sent the investment sector into a swirl of speculations as firms take positions to get a share of what promises to be a cash cow in profits. The icing on the cake is the fact that the NSMC will take off with several juicy mineral assets reserved over the years and may be a holding company with mineral-based subsidiaries to harvest specialised expertise in exploration, mining and sales.

This leads to promotion of joint ventures. The establishment of the NSMC is expected to position Nigerian companies to invite and partner with foreign and local companies for joint venture agreements. According to the Minister, Nigeria is open for the business of mining and must lay the grounds for the ease of doing business in the sector. This requires strong regulatory enforcement to ensure a level playing field for all players in compliance with the law.

If the first is creating a buzz, the second component, the country-wide geological exploration of 10 key minerals, is generating tempting offers. The idea is simple. Today, the system for obtaining mining licence relies on the prospective miner to approach the agency in charge, the Mining Cadastral Office, of his or her intention to mine a particular place with evidence that the community has given him a letter of consent. He gets a reconnaissance permit or the three-year exploration licence to confirm his hunch that the mineral is there and is of commercial quantity. Then, if he is a Nigerian, he applies for a Small Scale Mining Licence or if a foreigner, a Mining Lease.

The Minister has reviewed this system and is convinced that, besides, being a waste of time and money for the investor, it puts the government at the curious disadvantage of relying on the prospective miner for geoscientific information. To de-risk investment and enable the government acquire the precise geological data, the Ministry proposed N70 billion to the National Assembly as the budget for the nationwide geological

exploration. Investors would then buy the data to inform the acquisition of licences.

However, faced with other budgetary considerations, the National Assembly did not provide the funds, leaving the Ministry with no other option than to offer the opportunity for investment. In recent times, international geological exploration companies, such as GeoScan of Germany and Ecumene of United Kingdom are pitching to fund the exploration. This means, sooner than you think, the minister's mission will be accomplished.

Securing the solid minerals sector manually and through technology is the third component. This includes the establishment of the Mining Marshals and introduction of satellite technology to monitor mining operations. The two boxes have been ticked. On March 20, the Minister formally inaugurated the Mining Marshals, drawn from the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC following consultations with the Ministry of Interior. With 60 officers per unit per the Federal Capital Territory and each of the 36 states of the federation, the Mining Marshals took off with 2,220 units. About a month after, the NSCDC boosted the Marshals with 350 additional 350 officers. As more weapons and vehicles are supplied to energise the marshals, the enforcement of the Nigerian Mining and Minerals Act will get stronger.

Security technology is also being applied on a wide scale to monitor mining operations nationwide. With improvements in satellite and global positioning systems, the Ministry is working with experts to set up remote monitors that will track movement of minerals nationwide.

Reporting the fourth component, the international promotions of Nigeria's solid minerals potentials to attract investment, and the relentless marketing of the sector across continents by the Minister and his team, would make you wonder where Dr. Alake sources his energy. International conferences are smart venues for marketing because they bring prospective investors under one roof. They save the country the cost of visiting prospects country by country and enable you to develop a network that you can continue to persuade to do business long after the conference has ended.

The Minister has put this intelligence to great use in the course of his first year in office. Beginning with the Africa DownUnder Conference in Perth, Australia in November, 2023, he has traversed London, Riyadh, Cape Town, Doha and other conference destinations marketing the Nigerian solid minerals sector to the world. (For more details, read Chinemerem Nancy Nwaka's Investment Report).

The marketing did not start from those far-away cities. It began right from his office where he assembled a crack, highly responsive and vigilant crew comprising thoroughbred professionals as soon as he settled down. Tope Ajayi, Special Assistant to the President on Media, who also worked with Alake on the presidential campaign recruited most of the team comprising Twitter influential and blogger, Kemi Asekun as Special Assistant, Digital Media;



Segun Tomori, until recently on the media team of former Minister of Youth & Sports Sunday Dare, as Special Assistant, Media; Emmanuel Osodi and Idrees Olanrewaju, photographer and videographer on President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Campaign, continue their specialty in the new dispensation. Later, Lara Owoeye-Wyse, formerly Special Assistant, Broadcasting to former Senate President Lawan, joined as Special Assistant, Broadcast.

When working with this team, Dr. Alake puts on his editorial garb and dons his cap as communications strategist. Events are meticulously curated to deliver the most effective impact. Take for instance, a courtesy visit. As soon as the visitor enters, he is treated to the establishment shots. The door is closed to enable both discuss in privacy. Afterwards, the door opens, the crew takes group pictures and does the interview.

Then begins the editorial framing. What should be the peg of the news? Which picture to use? The headline to craft? Is Tomori ready with the draft? Kehinde, (that's me) have you edited it? The Honourable Minister signs off the copy after taking the final decisions on the deadline and the pictures. He decides when to embargo and release. In short, we are back in the newsroom!

In June, he broke new grounds, launching two radio programmes and the Twitter Space. The first, Solid Minerals Update, to enlighten the domestic audience on Radio Nigeria, on Thursdays; and Uncovering Hidden Gems, on Voice of Nigeria for the international audience, on Mondays and Saturdays. The debut on Twitter Space attracted over 300 participants and the shared version is gaining listeners in gallops. This is a peek of how much the Minister puts into creating the marketing that has pushed the solid minerals sector into the consciousness of Nigerians and generating immense goodwill.

There has been some misrepresentation of the fifth component because it is actually two in one. The idea seeks to solve the problem posed to the sector by artisanal miners estimated to constitute 80 percent of the sector's labour through a carrot and stick policy. Many of them grew up in lands rich in minerals where mining is secondary to farming. Through practice, they develop the sharp eyes to identify mineral veins and the skills to dig out minerals which they sell to live. In the absence of nationwide scientific geological data, they are the "experts" on the ground. Even educated researchers rely on their trained eyes to collect data.

However, their activities violate the law that compels miners to obtain government's permission or licence to

mine. This is why they are referred to as illegal miners. Since the enactment of the Nigerian Mining and Minerals Act 2007, the government has made efforts to integrate them within the law. The law set up Artisanal Mining, as a department in the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development to achieve this transition by encouraging them to form co-operatives. The Minister's call on artisanal miners to form co-operatives seeks to intensify the efforts of the department. The threat to treat miners who fail to form co-operatives as illegal miners seeks to demonstrate the risk they run by failing to comply.

So far, the policy is working. While the ASM department recorded less than 40 new co-operatives between January and August, 2023, following the 60-day threat, the number from September 2023 to March 2024 rose by 152!

The sixth component of the Seven Point Agenda is Local

Value Addition through the establishment of processing centres and factories. According to the Minister, value addition is also critical to youth and women employment because by domesticating the transformation of raw minerals to semi-industrial commodities, employed youths and women can learn new skills and apply them for sustenance. Similarly, the value of exports will increase because the exports of processed minerals will attract higher foreign exchange.

Locally, the Minister has encouraged companies starting processing centres by fasttracking approvals and personally attending the turning of the sod. For instance, recently in Apo, Federal Capital Territory, the minister

laid the foundation of a lithium plant. A few weeks later, he was in Nasarawa state to witness the take-off of a multi-million naira lithium factory. Beyond his expectations, his efforts to canvass fellow ministers of mining, first in Riyadh and later, Cape Town brought a torrent of goodwill. In Riyadh, the ministers formed the African Minerals Strategic Group and elected him the pioneer chairman!

Protecting mining communities from exploitation by companies is the thrust of the seventh component. Although the law compels mining companies to sign a Community Development Agreement, CDA with the community before commencing mining, the Minister was shocked that fewer than 45 of licensees of Small Scale Mining Leases and Mining Leases had negotiated and signed CDAs with the communities where they were mining. The Minister had to read the riot act: failure to sign CDA will, thenceforth be a condition for revocation of licences.

Leadership is vision matched with action. There is no doubt that the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development under Dr. Oladele Alake is a compelling case study for public officials and academics to follow.

“While the ASM department recorded less than 40 new co-operatives between January and August, 2023, following the 60-day threat, the number from September 2023 to March 2024 rose by 152!”



WORKING WITH DR. DELE ALAKE

BY DR. MARY OGBE | PERMANENT SECRETARY



As the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, I have had the distinct privilege of working closely with Dr. Dele Alake, a leader whose dynamism and dedication are truly inspiring. Dr. Alake embodies the energy and drive one often associates with youth, and it is remarkable to witness his tireless commitment to advancing the solid minerals sector in Nigeria. His work ethic is unmatched, and he approaches every task with a level of intensity and focus that ensures no stone is left unturned.

One of Dr. Alake's most admirable qualities is his inclusive leadership style. He is not just a boss; he is a mentor who takes the time to carry everyone along, ensuring that every team member feels valued and heard. His support for women within the ministry is particularly noteworthy, as he consistently champions gender equality and provides opportunities for women to excel in leadership roles.

Dr. Alake's passion for Nigeria is evident in every initiative he undertakes in the Ministry, for him Nigeria always comes first, even sometimes at his own personal cost. He

is deeply committed to the growth and development of the solid minerals industry, recognizing it as a key driver of Nigeria's economic prosperity. Under his leadership, the mining sector is rapidly transforming into a safe and secure environment, attracting both local and international investors with its potential and promise. Despite his kind and approachable nature, Dr. Alake is firm in his resolve to see things through.

He ensures that what needs to be done is done, and he holds every member of the team to the highest standards of excellence. His leadership style is a perfect blend of compassion and discipline, making him both an effective and inspiring leader.

His unwavering dedication to Nigeria and to excellence is something that we all strive to emulate as we work together to realize the full potential of our nation's solid minerals sector. As you celebrate another year as minister, I am grateful and proud to work with and be associated with the reforms you have brought to the sector and the vigor with which you do it.



Celebrating Dr. Henry Oladele Alake

By: Engr. Simon Nkom

The news of the appointment of Dr Henry Dele Alake, who was then Senior Special Adviser, SSA on Communication and Strategy to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR as the Minister of Solid Minerals Development was received by everybody in the sector with surprise. This was not unexpected as most Nigerians thought he would likely be heading to the Ministry of information, where he has proven his mettle excellently well and based on his professional training and calling as a versatile journalist. His performances as a slick communicator and a pro-democracy activist are well documented.

The concerns of stakeholders in the sector were focused on how he would cope with the intricacies that characterize the sector and how he would navigate the sector that requires so much passion, dedication and considered not lucrative going by the size of the budget profile of the ministry compared to the heavy spending high profile ministries in the country.

Dr Alake assumed office on August 16, 2023. At his first interaction with the Ministry personnel, He came across as someone who was unfriendly, very serious, focused and extremely fixated on the assignment he has been sent to undertake. He left no one in doubt that he was determined to deliver on President Tinubu's agenda for the sector. Most individuals in the ministry left that briefing that day with trepidation and anxiety about what is to come. The Minister visited the Nigeria Mining Cadastre Office (the agency I head under the Ministry) on a facility and familiarization tour on Tuesday, 21st November 2023. The entire staff of the Agency were very anxious on what the outcome of the visit would be.

Against the advice of many of my colleagues and staff, I decided to lay bare all the challenges the MCO was confronted with and the steps taken to solve those challenges as I took him through the operation of the MCO. I decided against embellishing any information and provided the raw fact as it concerns my agency. I

was ready to ensure that nothing was hidden from the attention of the minister as I had suspected he would have had some information from several sources and individuals concerning the MCO. I knew he is a man that loves to hear the fact and no embellishment, so, I gave him all the facts even when I knew some of those facts could portray MCO in bad light, but they were the facts, nevertheless.

That visit defined our working relationship I have now come to realize that behind that very serious looking gaze is a mind determined to achieve defined goals hastily and put down his imprimatur on the sector. He is so laser focused at achieving his stated objectives for the sector that you may think he has been in the sector for that long. He is a very positive individual that always emphasize the need to learn how to relate with whoever. as we are all Nigerians, and that we will not import people from elsewhere to achieve our national developmental goals. He has channeled his public speaking gift into attracting the needed attention to the sector. His oratory prowess has been deployed in showcasing the possibilities of the Nigerian minerals and mining space. Even as he continues to understand the nuances of the sector, he has not shied away from engaging whoever that cares to listen about what the sector has to offer.

He has become a chief marketer and promoter of the huge potentials of the Nigerian mineral and mining sector, earning him the commendation of his brother ministers from across the continent in recognition of this gift of compelling storytelling. Dr Alake's commitment to the economic growth and overall rebirth of the mining sector in the country and beyond is unwavering. What else can I wish him but God's grace, peace of mind and more excellence? I and the entire staff of the Nigeria Mining Cadastre Office wish him long life, good health, and prayed a continuous growth from strength to strength. Happy Birthday Sir, wishing you a day filled with joy and a new year filled with more work and happiness. Engr. O. S. Nkom Director General, Mining Cadastral office



Driving us to Aim Higher

By Hajia Fatima Shinkafi

Executive Secretary, Solid Minerals Development Fund

At the Nigerian Solid Minerals Development Fund, we had several on-going projects at the time our supervising ministry, the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development was blessed with the appointment of Dr. Oladele Alake as the Honourable Minister. Determined to promote indigenous entrepreneurship in the mining industry to lead to the emergence of the country's elite category of junior miners, we had initiated talks with the Africa Finance Corporation to raise funds to fund emerging mining companies through a highly competitive selection process.

The Presidential Artisanal Gold Mining Initiative, PAGMI had taken off truly by organising artisanal gold producers to sell their wons to the government. It was already clear that mobilising gold from this set of producers, refining them and selling to the apex financial regulatory authority held a lot of promise to the management of the foreign exchange management and the wisdom of keeping gold for future intervention.

In Ebonyi, State, our collaboration with the state government to facilitate salt mining was making a lot of headway and we were reaching out geological survey companies all over the world to sensitise them to the opportunities offered by Nigeria's search for real rime, geological data on er 44 minerals. Right from the first encounter with the Honourable Minister during the presentation of our status report, we found a passionate, dogged, committed leader conscious of the great trust

that President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has in him and the raison d'etre of the assignment he was deployed to the ministry to discharge.

There was no doubt that he had given himself deadlines on the deliverables of his appointment and needed the co-operation and the understanding of everyone on the job to achieve it. Within a month, he announced the Seven-Point Agenda and rolled out carrots and sticks to achieve them. Artisans reluctant to form co-operatives got a three-month deadline and those who complied were promised state support.

The Minister assured SMDF of his support and has walked his talk every inch of the way. When it was time to launch the SMDF and Africa Finance Corporation's Strategic Collaboration to address the dearth of expertise and funding for early stage mining projects, Dr. Alake was there to demonstrate his conviction in the feasibility of the project to pave the way for financial close. Launching the AFC-SMDF Investment Manual, Dr. Alake brought his legendary gravitas to bear on the solution to a continental challenge. Many Nigerians were surprised to read the story on the presentation of gold bars to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

This game- changing development was masterfully orchestrated by the Honourable Minister to get the President's full backing to a policy that has been on the shelves. The National Gold Purchase Programme, designed to increase the country's reserve and boost the value of the Naira, involves collaboration with the London Bullion Market Association to ensure compliance with its Delivery Standards. With the minister's backing, SMDF was able to make history: we delivered the first commercial transaction under the National Gold Purchase Programme.

This programme is an all winners' game. While the Central Bank opened its gold reserves, the thousands of artisans who sold to the programme exchanged over N6billion in commercial transactions. At the SMDF, we aligned strongly with the minister's agenda for comprehensive, nationwide database of geological data. It is one of the opportunities we offer to numerous partners who wish to support our country's efforts to sanitise and reposition her mineral sector.

GeoScan, XCalibur and many others trust SMDF to interface with the Ministry on such matters, hence the high level of seriousness of the Honourable Minister in backing our initiatives on the GeoScan agreement. As the Honourable Minister reflects on his one year in office on the occasion of date of birth, it is indeed, for the Ministry of Solid Minerals and its agencies, a double- double. For we have not just a minister but one whose words open doors and whose integrity and influence has no parallel. This is just the beginning of many firsts to come. Congratulations!



Dele Alake

and the power of positive influence

By **Temitope Ajayi**

Senior Special Assistant
to President on Media

Only a few people are likely to be keener to see President Bola Tinubu succeed in whatever he does than Mr. Dele Alake. The two men are a mutual admiration society, who make no pretense about their strong, long-standing feelings of esteem for each other.

Long before President Tinubu became Governor of Lagos State, where he tapped up Alake to serve as his Commissioner for Information and Strategy, there was a Tinubu—a hotshot accountant with Mobil, and Alake, a firebrand editor at National Concord Newspapers.

It was natural that both men would be into each other because of their inclination for service and public interest. While President Tinubu left the safe, glamorous and highly rewarding private sector job for the treacherous world of politics to seek election into the Senate of the aborted third republic, Alake was a blinding journalism star and a torn in the flesh of military dictatorship. President Tinubu won his election into the Senate in 1992 to represent Lagos West, marking the start of political career in progressive politics and becoming a man of real horsepower in every defining moment in Nigerian politics since then.

He was at the centre of the victory of Chief MKO Abiola in the June 12, 1993 Presidential election. He was, through his political activism, a major figure in the Senate of that era as well as in the pro-democracy movement birthed by the cruel annulment of the freest and fairest election ever held in Nigeria by the military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida.

The struggle for the de-annulment of the June 12 election was intense and draining. Every actor in the struggle paid a steep price. Editors and journalists joined forces with civil rights activists and political actors to wage an unrelenting battle against military dictatorship. Alake, as editor of National Concord Newspaper owned by Chief Abiola, was bang in the middle of the struggle. Prior to the annulment of the election, Alake had worked with President Tinubu and other leaders of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) to mount a robust presidential campaign. When SDP was struggling with finding a niche and how to position itself, it was Dele Alake, a strategic thinker, who took charge and delivered the firecracker political advertising and public relations that made SDP a smash hit to Nigerians within a very short time.



This saw him bringing on board the late Mr. Sesan Ogunro, a top-shelf advertising professional and Chief Executive of Eminent Communications, to work on the SDP and Abiola as political brands, with Abiola positioned first as an aspirant and later, a candidate.

In the intervening period, the Tinubu-Alake relationship grew stronger. The struggle for the validation of June 12 became more ferocious when General Sani Abacha torpedoed the agreement he had with the progressive politicians and civil rights activists to handover power to the winner of the annulled election after the palace coup against the Interim National Government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan on November 17, 1993.

While the exiled pro-democracy activists led by Chief Anthony Enahoro, General Alani Akinrinade, Professor Wole Soyinka, Commodore Dan Suleiman, Senator Bola Tinubu, Professor Bolaji Akinyemi and others mounted international campaigns against the Abacha regime that had become unhinged, the lot fell on journalists and other human rights activists back home to keep the flame burning. Alake ran a lot of special and covert operations for Chief Abiola, who was in detention, and President Tinubu, who operated from exile.

It was, therefore, not surprising that upon return of Nigeria to another political transition in 1998, Alake and other leaders within the pro-democracy fold and political leaders in the South West supported Senator Tinubu to become the Governor of Lagos State. When then Governor Tinubu formed his cabinet in Lagos State, it was natural to have Alake as his Commissioner for Information and Strategy.

For the eight years Tinubu was governor, Alake was a formidable manager of information and the media ecosystem. He deftly managed many of the public relations crises that threatened to consume the Tinubu administration. He batted back all the missiles hurled by the opposition to create a legitimacy crisis for the Tinubu administration, providing the necessary cover. The administration recorded tremendous success in Lagos across sectors, most importantly the re-engineering of the state finances. That enabled the state to flourish and fund its future development.

Since Tinubu's tenure, Lagos has been breaking new grounds as the centre of excellence and viewed as a model of good governance. After leading the opposition for eight years, after which the All Progressives Congress won the presidential election in 2015 through President Muhammadu Buhari, it was obvious that Asiwaju Bola Tinubu would gun for the presidency after Buhari.

Towards the end of 2021, it was already clear that the long-awaited time had come. On January 10, 2022, after a visit to President Buhari, Asiwaju Tinubu addressed the State House Press Corps on the purpose of his visit and publicly declared his intention to run for the presidency. From that moment on, opposition within and outside his party kicked off a vicious campaign against his ambition. The bid for the APC presidential ticket was more bruising than a prize fight.

When it appeared the campaign was falling apart on the media and communication turf, Asiwaju mandated Alake to return home from the United States to take charge. On his return, Alake brought a new vision, energy, and verve into the campaign. This delivered a vigorous pushback of the opposition. The social media caught fire with his first round on TV interviews from New York in days leading to the APC party presidential primaries.

The interviews provided rich repertoire of contents that energized the Tinubu supporters on social media platforms, who used them to counter digital militias of the opposition.

Since President Tinubu assumed power, Mr. Alake has been a positive influence within the administration and a stabilizing factor. First as Special Adviser on Media, Communication and Strategy and later as the Minister of Solid Minerals. A day has not passed without Mr. Alake looking for the best interest of the Tinubu administration.

He has been the go-to-person for anyone who feels genuine concerns for how the government can perform better. Many Nigerians and supporters of President Tinubu believe and, for the right reason too, that he is best qualified and positioned to fundamentally change Nigeria for good because of his antecedents as an advocate of fiscal federalism, good governance and his demonstrable competence during his leadership of Lagos State.

For many aides, associates, cabinet colleagues and friends of the President who feel that things can be better done, they go to Mr. Alake to pour out their minds, knowing that he has the ears of the President and will never shy from offering sound advice to the Commander-in-Chief. There is no doubt about the fact that President Tinubu and his minister, who he describes as his own brother, enjoy each other's company. President Tinubu reportedly told someone that Mr. Alake earned his place with him and he will remain his soul mate for life.



Investment Report

Dr. Oladele Alake kicked off his tenure as the Honorable Minister's of Solid Minerals Development was kicked off with his attendance at the Africa Down Under (ADU) conference in Perth, Western Australia in September 2024. The visit heralded what was to become a global and local investment promotion of the Nigerian solid mineral sector. The Minister's presentation at the conference spurred a lot of attention as key mining companies and stakeholders such as Atlantic Lithium, ASX Ltd. etc. were in attendance at the conference. During his time in Perth, the Minister also had meetings with Mr. Bill Johnston, the former Minister for Mines, Petroleum, and Hydrogen Industry and discussions about collaborations between Australia and Nigeria were discussed. As a follow-up to the ADU, in April 2024, the Honorable Minister was invited as a keynote speaker to the

virtual Nigeria-Australia Business Investment Forum held in Melbourne and organized by the Australia Africa Chamber of Commerce.

Following the meeting in Australia, the Honorable Minister attended the UN General Assembly (UNGA) event in New York, USA. During the visit, the Minister participated in the US-Africa Business Summit organized by the Corporate Council on Africa in which he gave a keynote address on the need to look towards Nigeria as an important source of the globally in-demand critical minerals. It was also an opportunity for engagements with investors and financiers such as the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) who expressed interest in unlocking financing for projects such as infrastructure related mining projects.



In the same month of September, under the directive of the Honorable Minister, the DG of the Nigerian Geological Survey Agency (NGSA) attended the Korea-Africa Economic Cooperation (KOAPEC) Ministerial Conference in Busan, South Korea. It was reported that successful meetings were held with state-owned mining company Korea Mines Rehabilitation Corporation (KOMIR) and the Korean Institute of Geosciences and Mineral Resources (KIGAM). During the meeting, the South Korean entities expressed interest in being willing to re-visit Memorandums of Articles (MOUs) previously signed with Nigeria for mineral exploration of critical minerals. It is expected that these discussions will be pivotal by the time of the incorporation of the new Nigerian mining company; a critical part of the Minister's 7-point agenda as the new company will be a vehicle for joint ventures with entities such as the South Korean KOMIR.

In October 2023, as a proof of the effectiveness of the Honorable Minister's investment drive, Canada-based Orosur Mining through its UK subsidiary Lithium West Ltd announced its investment of over USD\$5m in Nigeria's lithium pegmatite belt in an area spanning more than 332km² in Kwara, Niger and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Orosur Mining is a South American mineral exploration company dual listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange (TSX) Canada and the Alternative Investment Markets (AIM) London focused on the discovery and development of high quality precious and base metals deposits. Their entry into Nigeria is an indication of Nigeria's readiness for international junior miners which is a precursor to the entry of the majors.

The London Mines and Money event held in November 2023 had companies such as Anglo American, BHP, Barrick and others in attendance. The Honorable Minister's speech gave an overview of Nigeria's mining policy and regulatory framework and emphasized the government's commitment to attracting investment and sustainable development in Nigeria. Following the presentation, the Minister had a meeting with the United States Assistant Secretary for Energy and Natural Resources Geoffrey Pratt in which discussions were held about areas of synergy between Nigeria and the United States in developing Nigeria's critical minerals for mutual benefit of both nations and leveraging on the historic bi-lateral relationship between both countries.

At the sidelines of the event, meetings were also led by the ministry's delegation with companies such as Demerara Resources Ltd, Woodcross Resources Ltd, etc. Today, Woodcross Resources is at advanced stages of establishing a tin refinery in Nigeria - the first of its kind. Woodcross Resources which is currently operating in a tin smelting facility with a production capacity exceeding 1,000 tonnes of London Metal Exchange (LME) Grade A has set its eyes on Nigeria. This is a welcomed investment considering Nigeria's strong history of tin production in Jos, Plateau State. In March 2024, the Woodcross team came into Nigeria and had a meeting with members of

the Ministry to inform and keep the ministry abreast of its activities post the meeting at the London Mines and Money. They informed the Ministry that they have secured the necessary financial backing it requires with commitment of \$50m upwards and noted that their project is expected to generate \$300m in annual export revenues over the next 4 years.

In London, the Minister also had a key meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister of the United Kingdom orchestrated by Carousel Bi Energy - a company desirous of establishing a lithium battery giga factory in Nigeria and by extension investing in the lithium value chain - exploration, mining, mineral processing and power generation. This engagement is still ongoing evidenced by following up meetings at the Future Mineral Forum in Saudi Arabia and the recent MinDiver World Bank investment roadshow held in London in May 2024.

In a report submitted to the Ministry in December 2023 by Emma Priestly, the World Bank consultant to the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development for investment promotion, she noted that Nigeria perception about the Nigerian mining sector has gone from 'no way' to 'what has Nigeria got'. This is a clear sign of progress and evidence of the change in the nation's perception of being solely an oil and gas country to be a potential mining destination. The report noted interest from investors and financiers such as Stand Hanson, Greg Wales, Chesterfield Resources Ltd, Critical Minerals and much more expressing interest in investing in Nigeria.

In January 2024, the Honorable Minister led the delegation to the Saudi Arabia Future Minerals Forum (FMF). At this conference, the Minister formed the Africa Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG) and was appointed its Chairman. In recognition of this group, in April 2024, the Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Bandar Ibrahim Al Khorayef





wrote to the Honorable Minister about Saudi Arabia's willingness to engage with the AMSC for the coordination of mining investments and securing supplies to meet the Kingdom's supply needs for energy and electric batteries. Meetings were also held at the sideline of the FMF with Saudi Prince bin Fahad bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al Saud Faisal who expressed interests in investing in Nigeria through his family office amidst other investor meetings.

Foreign Affairs, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia wrote to the Honorable Minister to an Expression of Interest for Nigeria's participation in initiatives agreed to during the roundtable - 1) the establishment of a critical minerals framework and green metals hubs 2) sustainability expectations and 3) center of excellence. The goal is to build and strengthen the super region made up of Western and Central Asia and Africa. Nigeria's



As a follow-up to the meeting held in London with the Deputy Prime Minister, a meeting was held with the Scientific Advisor to the UK Minister of State for the Department of Trade & Industry, Investment Security Unit, Industry and Economic Security - Minister Nusrat Ghani. These meeting was a continuation of exploring possible synergies between the UK and Nigeria in the area of critical minerals. It is expected that relationships such as this will be leveraged on at the incorporation of the new mining company or when the new exploration program for the sector is defined and announced. The Minister also had a meeting with the Director of the Corporate Council on Africa and the Chairman of Jean Boule Group - Mr Jean-Raymond Boule. During the meeting Mr Boule expressed interest in investing in Nigeria and informed the Minister that he is currently prospecting; it is hoped that they will make adequate progress in their activities in Nigeria.

participation in this initiative is expected to bring about investment into the nation through frameworks and approaches that will be clearly defined through Nigeria's participation in the initiative.

The Mining Indaba held in Cape Town, South Africa presented another opportunity for the Minister and the ministry's delegation to promote the Nigerian solid mineral sector. The Minister delivered a speech on the



A key outtake of the FMF following the Minister's participation in the ministerial roundtable was that Nigeria is to participate in the Minerals Innovation Acceleration Park (MIAP) is designed to connect the super region for positive impact by building capacity in the following areas: 1) Geological database for exploration; 2) Mining technologies incubators 3) Mining start-up accelerators and 4) Social-environmental programs and infrastructure. In May 2024, through the Ministry of

panel discussion titled 'Positioning Africa to succeed in diversifying global value chains'. Prior to heading out to Cape Town, the Minister had met with David Greene -



In May at the just concluded MinDiver London roadshow for the marketing of the final results of the MinDiver project, investors attended and expressed interest in Nigeria and in the new Decision Support System (DSS) technology. Investors and financiers such as Avenor Mining, Techmet, Carousel Bio Energy, Arkwright Advisory Ltd, Lagata, Hannam & Partners, Beacon Securities, SP Angel and much more were in attendance. Each company in attendance made different enquiries about investing in the Nigerian mining sector which is expected to lead to market entry of some of them in the near future.

Charge d'Affaires of the US Embassy. This meeting led to a meeting in Cape Town with President Biden's Advisor on Energy and Infrastructure - Mr. Amos Hochstein and the Acting Special Presidential Coordinator for Global Infrastructure and Investment Helaina Matza. The focus of the meeting was on infrastructure development with references to the ongoing Lobito Corridor project - a railway infrastructure project being built through mineral and oil rich parts of Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Zambia - connecting Southern and Central Africa, and provides access to Eastern Africa and a pathway to the Atlantic Ocean.

Following the conference, Emma Priestly also shared a list of other investors that had been engaged with that were expressing keen interest in the sector such as AMED Funds, Shore Capital, etc.

The US through its Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is unlocking \$250m of investment for the project. It's important that Nigeria's potential and capacity for a program like this is noted by the US. It is expected that as Nigeria progresses on its exploration programs and definition of the mining economic corridor, we will be able to secure a program similar to the Lobito Corridor that will bring about a positive shift to the sector through ease of transportation and export of goods. At the Indaba, meetings were also held with the Indian delegation and discussions are currently ongoing with them on how to invest in Nigeria and collaborate on specific areas such as gemstones and jewelry which India has a competitive advantage on.

Besides the international promotion activities, under the leadership of the Minister and his focus on value addition, Nigeria has seen a steady rise in companies establishing mineral processing plants in the country - this is a clear evidence of the future envisioned by the Minister where unprocessed minerals are no longer being exported. For example, in April 2024, the Minister attended the commissioning of the Asba Group's lithium processing plant which it stated is worth \$50m and in a follow-up letter to the Minister, they stated that they will be making further investment in a tin/tantalite processing plant worth \$146m and a Tin/Columbite processing plant in Bauchi state worth \$67m which brings their investment to approximately \$263m.

At the Canadian Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada (PDAC) conference in March, a key highlight was the presentation by DFR Gold. DFR Gold (TSXV: DFR) is a Canadian-listed, West African gold explorer and developer. They were keen to talk about their Gurara Project in Niger State and the progress made in exploration being done in partnership with PW Nigeria as the operating partner. In May, it announced the restructuring and acquisition of controlling interest in the Gurara Project which the CEO stated will enable it focus on the project - this is good news for the sector as its important more junior miners and publicly listed companies are operating in the space.

Weekly, the Minister is inundated with meetings with various types of investors - Asia, Australia, Europe, Middle East, Americas who meet him to express interest in investing and participating in different parts of the mineral value chain. The Mining Cadastre Office (MCO) has noted the increase in license applications since the start of the Minister's tenure which is evidence of an increase in investment. In April for example, he met with Glencore - one of the world's largest globally diversified natural resources companies which in 2023 recorded revenues of \$217.829bn. As a major mining company, their interest in our sector is sign of Nigeria's repositioning in the eyes of global majors and large investors which we expect to start realizing in the near future.

It is apparent that the policies and investment promotion drive of the Honorable Minister is paying off for the sector. Mining is a long game - a long-term sector which takes a while for investments made in it to materialize - it's not one for overnight success. Thus, we expect the seeds being sown today to materialize over time for the benefit of not just the mining sector but for the Nigerian economy as a whole.



AMSG! NIGERIA LEADS AFRICA'S MINING SECTOR RESURGENCE

By Segun Tomori | Special Assistant, Media



The 30th edition of “Investing in Mining Indaba” recently held in Cape Town, South Africa provided another opportunity for African countries through their ministers of solid minerals/mineral resources to consolidate on the pact to forge a common front in projecting the continent's interest in the global mining industry.

Nigeria and Uganda had led over a dozen other African countries into a coalition, early January, on the sidelines of the Future Minerals Forum in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, to make a case for local value addition and maximum beneficiation from its vast mineral resources for citizens and member countries.

The coalition gave rise to the African Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG) and Nigeria's Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Dele Alake, was unanimously elected as the pioneer chairman on the sidelines of the mining conference in South Africa. Moving swiftly to

rally his colleagues for concerted action, Alake declared that the era of carting away solid minerals without commensurate value addition to develop Africa's economy is over.

His said, “We must speak with one voice on value addition as a prerequisite for investment in the mining sector. Let those who want our minerals know that if you go to country A, you have the same regulations and laws guiding the sector. You go to country B; you find the same. So, there is no divide and rule anymore. That is when we can show sincerity of purpose, and the world will begin to take Africa seriously. On behalf of our president, I pledge our full support to achieve our objectives”.

Doubling down on the resolve of Africa, the minister, while speaking as a panelist on the theme, “Positioning Africa to Succeed in Diversifying Global Value Chains”,



emphasised the necessity of creating the value chain from exploration, to mining, processing, inventory management, transportation and then delivery to the end-consumer.

“All these processes require infrastructure, and in my engagement with private sector players over time, I have discovered that a lot of them prefer to engage in investments in mining sites close to ports. That means there is a need for transportation – roads and rails. I'm thinking that the best approach is to collaborate with consumer nations who need these raw materials on the provision of infrastructure without jeopardising local value addition”, he added.

Highlighting why Nigeria should be the destination of choice for prospective investors in the Lithium value chain, Alake stressed that the country is experiencing a “Lithium boom”, citing the preponderance of the critical metal in several localities, which are literally on the surface of the earth, in most locations. “This will culminate in lower production costs for extraction compared to other countries.”

Reiterating the need for Public Private Partnerships (PPP) in cahoots with multilateral financial institutions to unlock the requisite funding for mining sector development, the minister informed his audience that Nigeria has taken the lead with the establishment of the Solid Minerals Development Fund (SMDF) to build the capacity of local investors to engage in minerals exploitation.

“The SMDF is also in partnership with the African Finance Corporation (AFC). This body has been responsible for encouraging local investment in the mining sector, and appreciable results are coming in. They are also through the AFC involved in the Lobito corridor involving Angola, Zambia, and DRC. We are encouraging the same corridor to be put in West Africa, starting with Nigeria because we have these mineral resources in abundance”.

Speaking further on financing, Alake charged African countries to take a cue from Nigeria by taking a critical look at the SMDF model. “While we look forward to the foreign financial institutions, I will recommend to other African countries to also look inwards. The SMDF in Nigeria is sourcing its funds from other economic engagements. I will recommend this policy initiative to other African countries”.

Back home in Nigeria, reforms of President Bola Tinubu on the mining sector are gathering momentum. Just recently, an inter-ministerial committee tasked with developing a blueprint for securing natural resources established by the president and chaired by Alake has since swung into action.

The administration envisages the setting up of a specialised security outfit made up of well trained operatives, equipped with requisite technology and ammunition that will secure natural resources, comprising solid minerals, forest flora and fauna, and the marine economy. The last meeting involved heads of security agencies, and they were given time line to come up with a robust action plan that will assist the committee in turning in its report.

In line with the minister's 7-point agenda, plans are ongoing to bequeath an efficient governance structure for the mining sector with the establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) tentatively called Nigerian Mining Corporation. The corporation is conceptualised to be private sector driven, with cumulative equity for the private sector pegged at 50%, government 25% and the Nigerian public 25%, respectively. Learning from past experiences, this model is designed to minimise government's interference and guarantee the corporation's efficiency and stability, even beyond any administration.

Already, the National Assembly through the House of Representatives has begun the process of amending the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act 2007 in collaboration with the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development. When the amendment is concluded, the proposed mining corporation and other reforms will be backed by relevant statutes. Just last week, the House Committee on solid minerals organised a public hearing on the bill for amendment of the Mining Act and took submissions from top officials, agencies of the ministry, mining industry stakeholders, among others.

During a recent interview with Channels TV, Alake hinted at an impending revocation of more mining licenses. Late last year, 1,633 mining licenses were revoked due to default in payment of annual service fees, and he had vowed to wield the big stick on other categories of defaulters. This is necessary as part of efforts to free up the space for genuine investors and those who are ready to abide by regulations.

In all of these, what is not in doubt is that Nigeria is playing a pivotal role in Africa's mining sector renaissance. Summing up the new direction as chair of the AMMSG during Cape Town's Mining Indaba, Alake affirmed, “We are sanitising the mining environment, creating the enabling environment to attract investments whether local or foreign. This time around, emphasis will be on local value addition. So that, henceforth, Africa can gain maximally from its abundant natural resources”.



NIGERIANS URGED TO SUPPORT MINING MARSHALS

Hauwa Gidado, Abuja

Nigerians have been encouraged to support the newly established Mining Marshals, a security force tasked with safeguarding Mining sites across the country. The Assistant Commandant of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps NSCDC who doubles as the Commandant of the Mining Marshals, Mr. Attah Onoja, made the call during an exclusive interview with Solid Minerals Correspondent, Hauwa Gidado, in Abuja, the Nation's capital.

Mr. Onoja emphasizes the Mining Marshals' commitment of enforcing existing laws and working collaboratively with other law enforcement Agencies and stakeholders to secure Mining sites.

The Commandant explains that, Mining Marshals are drawn from the Thirty-Six States and the Federal Capital Territory commands of the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), with primary responsibility in combating the illegal mining operation. He urges Nigerians to support the Mining Marshals, in their quest to protect the mining sector, that can thrive and contribute to the Nation's economy.

ACC. Onojah made the call in an interview with Voice of Nigeria in Abuja, Nigeria. "Nigerians should see the Mining Marshals as a Nigerian project, not an individual project, not a project of the Minister of Solid Minerals but a Nigerian project to save the mining sector, because the mining sector needs to breathe, The Mining Marshals are a critical unit established by the Commandant General of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, NSCDC, Dr. Abubakar Audi. The Commandant of the Mining Marshals who is also the Assistant Commandant of the NSCDC also expressed readiness to deal with anybody undermines the Mining Regulations in the country.

"The Mining marshals will stop at nothing in ensuring full compliance to extant laws governing mining regulations in Nigeria and whoever is found wanting regardless of position, their affinity the law will take its course and its important Nigerian's begin to know that. It's a rare privilege to be on national such and we will have to account for this opportunity, so any body meeting us should know that we coming with this mind set that we are coming in to safe the mining sector".

Speaking on the idea behind setting up of the Mining Marshals, ACC Onoja said "the Mining Marshals came up as a result of a pressing need of Nigeria as a nation to take adequate care of the mining sector and part of the core mandate of the Nigerian Civil and Defence Corps is protection of critical national assets and infrastructure. To this end there will be no agency that will be better positioned or poised to delivering such assignment or mandate other than NSCDC".

He further said that the proactiveness of the Commandant General of the NSCDC, Dr. Abubakar Audi, Mni in a bid to strengthen to further strengthen its role brought about the Mining Marshals in collaboration with the Ministry Of Solid Minerals Development. "Before now NSCD have been responsible for protecting of national critical asset and infrastructure, To have a specialised unit that will meet a pressing demand, talking about deriving revenue from the mining sector, activities of illegal miners Nigeria, the Issues of insecurity and the relationship between illegal mining and threats within Nigerian environment came up with the idea of setting up the commandant genera's transport and Mining Marshals and

Looking at the resolve of the minister of Solid Minerals, Dr.



Oladele Alake decided that what NSCDC is doing was in tandem with seven point agenda of the Ministry of Solid Minerals, the relationship or partnership between NSCDC and Solid Minerals is to achieve the task of combating illegal mining with the aid of Mining police that led to the official unveiling of this particular operation on the 21st of March, 2024. The whole idea is to ensure that illegal mining is purged to its barest minimum.”

The Commandant of the Mining Marshals also spoke on the current strength and deployment of the Mining Marshals across Nigeria. “From the commencement of operation the strength of Mining Marshal started 2,220 operatives cutting across the whole country in all the States, more operatives are coming in, we are still on the phase of mobilising more men. All the State of the federation will be adequately taken care of in the terms of Mining marshals”

Speaking on how the Mining Marshals ensure that operators and stakeholders in the sector comply with mining regulations and laws, ACC Onoja said “One of the ways we started this on inception was to ensure that before our operations, we contacted relevant stakeholders in writing telling them of the commencement of the operation nationwide, by extension that connotes sensitisation, most of these stakeholders acknowledged the receipt of our notice. We started within FCT, speaking to other States, we inaugurated operation there, commenced operation, and operatives within that State will now be fused in to work with them and lead those who are supposed to man that State and we proceed to other States.

On strategies been implemented to prevent illegal mining and mineral theft: “The scope of our operation is principally anchored on ensuring full compliance to extant laws. Talking about Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2007 and Mining regulation of 2007 and contained in this document are the relevant provisions that must be complied with by all intending investors in the sector or miners or companies or individuals who want to carry out one or two activities within the sector. The Ministry of Solid Minerals is the home of mining activities, whatever you do is regulated by the Ministry of Solid Minerals. Our duty is to ensure enforcement of these regulations that is already known to all miners.” “Where we have intelligence about illegal mining depending on the nature of the case, sometimes there are peculiar situations, we will write letter of invitation, served the companies and give them specific time and when we invite them we invite them in agreement with investigative activities and by so doing we will be able to unearth their level of compliance and we liaise with Ministry of Solid Minerals where relevant as well as mining cadastre office and this has helped in cases we have handled including in cases we have charged to court.

We notify that we don't require anything asides maximum cooperation that will ensure full compliance with mining regulations and the whole essence of this is that we are

able to contribute our own quota to ensuring that the dwindling revenue within the mining sector is improved.” Speaking on how the Mining Marshals collaborate with other law enforcement agencies and stakeholders to achieve their goals.

“Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps is one security organisation that believes in synergy and every unit, department in NSCDC observes this to the letter because it is the cardinal focus of the commandant general that in fighting insecurity there must be synergy and cooperation amongst sister security agencies, so that is also transmitted to the Mining Marshals”.

We have community leaders cooperating with us; it all boils down to approach. Community leaders are stakeholders in security, it's their domain, and we educate them to achieve results.

He also said the Mining Marshals are poised to using technology “in the team we have drone pilots, there are some terrain that are not motarable, we have a case in view now and for security reasons and intelligence, I won't disclose the location, the advanced intelligence sent to that location we realised that over 18 to 20km before the location is not motarable, you can only go there on bike, it will take the aid of a drone pilot and his team to ensure that you get adequate mapping of the terrain to have a well informed operational decision to be carried out, the Mining Marshal is fully aware of the role and importance of technology in effective execution of this task and assignment.”





Mineral Resource Decision Support System Goes Live

Byline, Yemisi Ajayi | Special Assistant, Special Projects



Nigeria's Mineral Resource Decision Support System (DSS)

In a bid to create an accessible flow of information and data for prospective investors all over the world, the Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Oladele Alake has championed the use of technology to ease access to data and open up the industry.

In pursuit of this goal, the Minister showed renewed interest in the Mineral Decision Support System, one of the projects initiated under the Mineral Diversification project funded through World Bank loan.

Determined to push it to public consciousness, he assigned the Special Assistant, Special Projects to make the activation of the Web facility a reality.

The Nigeria Mineral Resource Decision Support System (DSS) is a comprehensive software platform that serves as a one stop shop for investors seeking credible and decisive information about Nigeria's mineral resources, facilities, and infrastructures.

Developed by BEAK consultants, the innovative platform is designed to empower stakeholders to make informed decisions, drive sustainable development, and unlock economic opportunities in the mining sector.

On the platform, <https://miningdecision.minesandsteel.gov.ng/nmrdss/> investors can explore Nigeria's abundant mineral landscape.

Discover the vast potential of Nigeria's mineral resources with the Nigerian Minerals Resource Decision Support

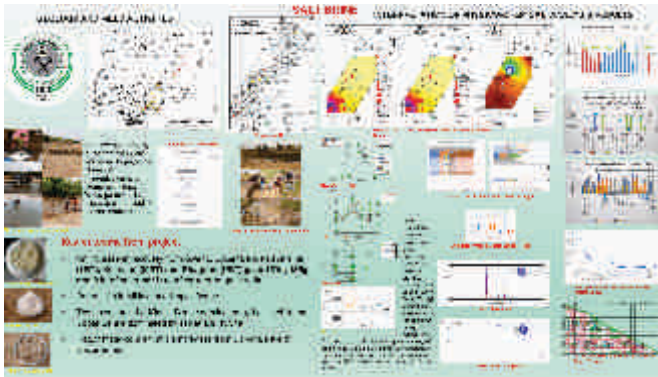
System Software (DSS). Our platform offers a range of features to help users navigate Nigeria's diverse geological terrain and identify promising mineral prospects. The key features include:

1. Comprehensive Data: Gain deep insights into Nigeria's mineral wealth.
2. Interactive Mapping: Visualize geological formations, mineral occurrences and infrastructure facilitating informed decision-making.
3. Customisable Basemaps: Tailor your visualizations with customisable basemaps, enabling you to focus on the data that aligns with your specific objectives and preferences.
4. User-Friendly Interface: With an intuitive interface, our platform is accessible to both technical and non-technical users.
5. Data-Driven Decision Making: Leverage available data and visualization tools to make informed decisions, from identifying promising mining areas to planning infrastructure development.

The DSS is driven by the Centre of Excellence Committee which was constituted by the Federal government and was publicly launched on the 14th of May 2024 at the PTDF conference Hall.

Since the launch, hundreds of investors have used the site. According to the figures generated by the system, between June 12 and August 8, this year, 4,525 visitors processed information from the site.

A country by country breakdown shows that China is leading while Germany, United States, Canada and Ghana are on the queue.



THE CASE FOR NIMEP II

Byline Dr. Abdulrazak Garba | Former Director General, Nigeria Geological Survey Agency

The road map recommended the creation of National Geodata Infrastructure which included the National Geodata Centre Developed to Store and Archive Geosciences Data. Three such infrastructures were developed in NGSA HQ in Abuja hosting the main servers while the other two smaller servers are hosted in NGRL and NSRMEA in Kaduna.

All these were developed under the MinDiver project and was acknowledged as commissioned under the previous administration. The National Geodata Center is an infrastructure designed and developed to host over 100 year geoscience information generated by NGSA to date and other institutions under the then Ministry of Mines and Steel Development.

The NIMEP project is a program designed to generate exploration dataset in brownfield and greenfield environment in identified metallogenic provinces using integrated approaches. This project focused on five areas namely

- Gold, Platinum group elements (PGM) and vein Lead-Silver Gold Occurrences
- Pegmatite belt of Nigeria containing rocks hosting Tin, Tantalum, Niobium and Lithium minerals
- Lead, Silver, Zinc in the Benue Trough
- Baryte Mineralization in Benue Trough
- Iron ore occurrences comprising banded and sedimentary types

The NIMEP phase I project was designed not as an end on its own but a means to an end.

The project was hugely successful and was able to achieve the following results:

- Exploration targeting methodologies for different mineral commodities considered
- Tracts of mineralization on three of the major commodities
- Identification of possible targets with good drill intersection on Gold, lithium and PGM

- Analytical data of thousands of soils and drill cuts samples in areas investigated for investors and researchers and other stakeholders. These datasets are unprecedented in the history of the country
- The dataset generated formed the basis for the development of the first metallogenic map and lithostructural map of Nigeria which was launched at the AFNIS conference by the President of the Fedreal Republic of Nigeria, President Bola Ahmed Ahmed Tinubu GCFR
- The Identification of hard rock lithium in part of the states investigated namely Kwara, Ekiti and Nassarawa which attracted a lot of investors into that commodity

The Gold evaluated in Tsauni and parts of Osun has continued to form the basis of interests to investors at both local and international for a Consequent on the unprecedented successes achieved in the above the administration of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu is considering leveraging on the successes achieved on the last NIMEP I project to consolidate and kickstart NIMEP phase II to generate more geosciences data to populate the NGDC. This is very imperative because mining is driven by data and Nigeria is beginning to have coherent dataset that can be leveraged upon to develop mining projects and mines. The last NIMEP project was only able to cover less than 5% of the countrys landmass. When we position this with countries like the following:

- Burkina Faso that expends \$30million of dollar to carry out exploration annually.
- South Africa spent 500,000,000 million rands equivalent of \$27 million to carry out exploratory drilling on different commodities by their national geological survey between 2019 and 2020.
- All the advanced countries are still carrying out geological mapping and exploratory campaigns to support their exploration and mining efforts.

The National Geodata Centre is meant to take custody of all geoscience data generated in the country. The need for aggressive generation of geoscience data set either NIMEPII, Big Data is a terminology used to depict gathering of large varied data such as geophysical, geochemical, exploration, hydrological etc. these are expected to add up as "Big Data" required to develop the industry.



RAISING THE BAR OF MINERAL LAWS

By **Chukwudi Anyanwuocha** | Special Assistant, Legal

The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development under Dr. Oladele Alake is on record for initiating several legal initiatives. These include:

1. Strategic Partnerships for Resource Exploration

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Federal Government of Nigeria and the German firm GeoScan GmbH. This partnership focuses on the search and location of an estimated \$700 billion solid minerals deposit within the country. By leveraging GeoScan's advanced geospatial technologies, this initiative is expected to unlock untapped mineral resources.

Impact: This will significantly boost Nigeria's economic potential, attract substantial foreign investment, and create numerous job opportunities in the exploration and mining sectors.

2. Legislative and Policy Advancements

Working with the legislature in respect of the Council of Mining Engineers, Geoscientists, and Allied Professions Bill 2023 which amends the existing law. This bill aims to improve on the regulation of professional practices within the mining sector, ensuring that industry standards are maintained.

Impact: This will foster professionalism, ethical conduct, and competency in the mining industry, leading to higher quality and more sustainable mining operations. Working with the legislature for a comprehensive review of the Nigerian Minerals and Mining Act of 2024. Impact: This review is aimed at modernizing the legal framework, streamline regulatory processes, and promote sustainable mining practices, thereby improving the overall business environment in the mining sector.

3. International Commitments and Sustainable Development

Executed the Charter of Intergovernmental Organisations - UN Alliance for Sustainable Development

Goals (UNASDG), aligning Nigeria's mining operations with global sustainability goals.

Impact: This commitment is expected to promote environmentally responsible mining practices, reduce the ecological footprint of mining activities, and support sustainable community development, ensuring long-term benefits for both the environment and local communities. Signed the ECOWAS Charter on Gender Mainstreaming in the Geo-Extractive Sector on behalf of the Ministry.

Impact: This initiative underscores a commitment to gender equality and inclusive practices within the industry. It is anticipated to empower women, improve workforce diversity, and enhance social equity in the mining sector, leading to a more inclusive and equitable industry.

4. Regulatory Reforms

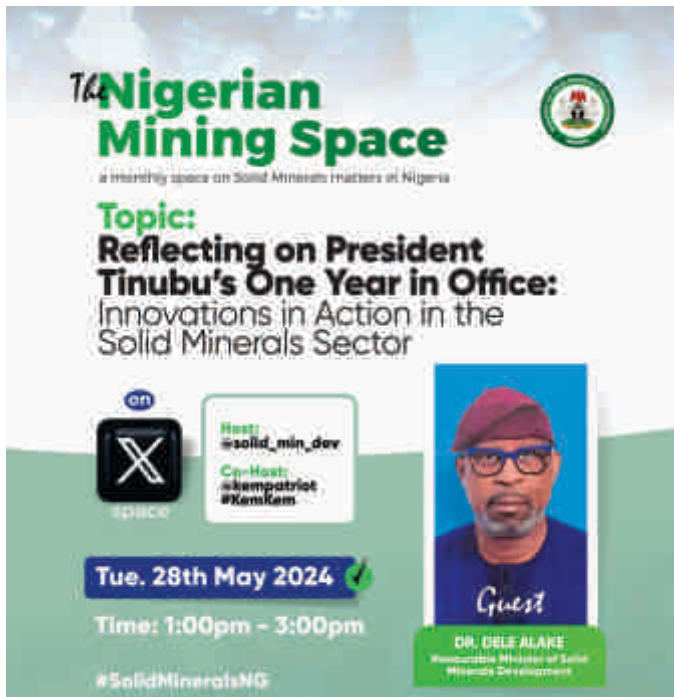
Executed the Nigerian Mineral Value Chains Regulation 2023, aimed at enhancing the efficiency, transparency, and economic benefits of mineral value chains across the country.

Impact: This regulation is expected to optimize the value derived from mineral resources, improve local beneficiation, stimulate economic growth, and ensure that the benefits of mining are more broadly shared among the Nigerian population.

5. Institutional and Capacity Building

Established the Mines Marshals, a specialized unit designed to ensure compliance with mining regulations and improve safety and security within mining operations.

Impact: This initiative aims to reduce illegal mining activities, enhance operational safety, and ensure adherence to environmental standards, leading to a safer and more sustainable mining industry.



Boosting Mining with Digital Media

By Kemi Rahma Asekun | Special Assistant, Digital Media

A key highlight of Dr. Alake's leadership is the strategic use of social media, particularly Twitter, to broadcast the activities and updates in the solid minerals sector. Recognizing the platform's open and inclusive nature, Dr. Alake has transformed how the sector communicates with the public. His initiative, the "Week in Review" series, which has accumulated over 800,000 views across various platforms, is a testament to the power of digital outreach. Shared on Twitter and across more than 100 WhatsApp groups weekly, these updates have successfully piqued public interest in Nigeria's solid minerals industry, likened to the awakening of a sleeping giant.

In addition to regular updates, Dr. Alake has also engaged as a guest on Twitter Spaces directly addressing public concerns and misconceptions surrounding the solid minerals sector. These interactive sessions have been invaluable in fostering transparency and providing clarity on key issues. By participating in these open forums, Dr. Alake has given the sector a fresh face, connecting it more deeply with the public and providing a platform for honest and constructive dialogue. This approach has significantly helped to demystify the industry, opening up the solid minerals space to a wider audience and enhancing trust between the government and its people.

There is a quote by Dale Carnegie that Dr. Dele Alake seems to hold dear: "When dealing with people, remember you are not dealing with creatures of logic, but creatures of emotion." This quote, prominently displayed on an app he uses often, captures the essence of who Dr. Alake is — a leader who embodies empathy, wisdom, and a deep understanding of human nature.

Working with Dr. Alake is a unique and enriching experience. He is not just a leader but also a teacher, a father, a friend, and a guide. His innate understanding and

compassionate nature inspire everyone around him to give their very best in every endeavor. His remarkable intelligence means mediocrity is never an option; he constantly challenges those around him to rise to the highest standards.

What stands out most is his unwavering commitment to the greater good and his vision for a better Nigeria. Dr. Alake's dedication ensures that the only path to tread is straight and narrow, leaving no room for shortcuts or compromise. He is a leader who allows no concern to go unattended, no detail to be overlooked.

His work rate is nothing short of astonishing — mouth-gaping, in fact. Even many of us who are younger find it hard to keep up with his relentless pace and drive. Dr. Alake's energy and focus are inspiring, setting a standard that propels everyone around him to achieve their absolute best.

Working with Dr. Alake over the past year has been a truly remarkable journey filled with growth, learning, and a deep sense of purpose. His ingenuity and tireless work ethic have created an environment where excellence is the norm, and every day brings new opportunities for inspiration and achievement.

Dr. Dele Alake is more than a leader; he is a beacon of hope, a champion for change, and a true example of what it means to serve with integrity and passion.

On this special day, we celebrate not just a remarkable leader but an incredible human being. May your year ahead be filled with continued success, good health, and the fulfillment of all your noble dreams for our nation. Thank you for being an inspiration to us all.



BROADCASTING MINING: THE MAKING OF MINING STORY ON AIR WAVES



By Alaba Balogun | Deputy Director, Press

Following the assumption of Office of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR, in May 2023; the mining sector of our dear country has never remained the same. It has grown tremendously both in revenue and contribution to the gross domestic product of the country.

The biblical saying that the stone rejected by the builders has become the chief corner stone of the building- is ever true. Under the present administration and in line with its renewed hope agenda; the mining sector of the economy is steadily growing to be its focal point for diversifying the economy and; for unlocking our untapped vast mineral resources (more than 34) buried underneath our soil as a viable and alternative source of wealth for the benefit of Nigerians.

The Ministry of Solid Minerals Development, having an astute and visionary leader at the helm of affairs; HM Dr. Dele Alake has implemented its seven point agenda in every ramifications. So far, it has proven to be the elixir and game changer, requisite for repositioning a once comatose sector.

Since assumption of Office of Dr. Dele Alake as the Honourable Minister, several initiatives and policies of the Ministry have sanitized and reformed the sector and strengthen regulations; all in a bid to make the mining fields safe and enhance its operating environment.

Flowing downwards, is the realization that since several milestone achievements have come to play in the sector to the admiration of stakeholders and captains of industry and, policy makers in government; the HM Dr. Dele Alake instituted a special radio programme that will educate and inform the public through the airwaves-this is the genesis of the Ministry's special radio programme broadcasting mining stories in collaboration with the Radio Nigeria and Voice of Nigeria-vital information organs with extensive networks across the country to reach out to local and foreign audiences.

It is pertinent at this juncture to state that HM Dr. Alake intended to make an average Nigerian believe that the mining sector is the next crude oil. Forging a collaborative partnership with Radio Nigeria and Voice of Nigeria has therefore left an indelible mark in our Listeners psyche.

It will therefore interest our Listeners to know that broadcasting mining debuted May 2024, still waxing strong to the delight of Listeners -featuring every inch of enunciated policies in the Ministry's seven-point agenda. A behind the scene activity before going on air begins with an editorial meeting every Tuesday to review, discuss next topic of focus and strategize on whom to interview as our next resource person on air. Having Mr Kehinde Bamigbetan, Special Adviser to the HM, as the Chairman Editorial meetings created an aura of seamless connections with operators, experts and captains of industry for interviews and ensuring programme sustainability as well.

But who are the other members? Special Assistant to HM on Broadcasting, Lara Owoeye-Wise; both Producers from Radio Nigeria and VON (Mrs. Rabi Momoh and Hajia Hauwa Gidado), Deputy Director Press, Mr. Alaba Balogun; HM Videographer, Alhaji Idris and Tony Ekpo, Asst. Chief Inf. Officer.

So far so good, Directors-General/CEOs of Agencies of the Ministry have been interviewed and featured prominently on air, with meaningful expose' on their mandates and achievements, commentaries on regulatory policies for the sector.

For instance, Engr. Simon Nkom, Director-General of Mining Cadastre Office MCO has enlightened our Listeners at different times on various issues surrounding application for Mining License, review of rates of Royalties, mining Lease etc.

Similarly, operators and experts have enlightened the public during the programme on some of Nigeria's priority seven critical minerals eg. Gold, Coal, Lithium, Baryte, Lead-Zinc and Bitumen. Feelers from Hauwa Gidado Producer (VON) over Listener ship from countries across the world indicated twenty one nations in the past thirty days; spanning Europe, Asia, Africa and American continents.

Again, it was recorded that there were 736,500,000 impressions, referring to Listeners searches, saves and, including those people who tuned in and out; thus, encompassing everyone that came across the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development special programme on airwaves, transmitted by VON. Besides, a cursory analysis further tells us that global representation of different countries in our programme showed that China, the US and India stand out, making up 37% of the total.

This indicates these three countries have significant impact as dominant players. Furthermore, European influence is also substantial with a mark of 29% by Listeners from the UK, Germany, France and Russia.

While Asia's growing importance make up 35% among the Chinese, Indians, Indonesians and South Koreans. Africa's notable contribution amounted to 17% global representation spanning Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt, Morocco, D.R.Congo, Ghana. Meanwhile, the US, Canada, Mexico and Columbia together account for 23%, showcasing the America's significant presence. From the foregoing, Hajia Hauwa quoted feedback(s) from Listeners as saying- global diversity is crucial for our program's success as well as, regional representation to enhance balanced perspectives. Secondly, content quality should be consistent to keep our audience engaged. Thirdly, the Ministry/VON must strive to optimize its Spotify content for better discoverability and lastly, considering collaborations or promotions to further boost our reach.

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ALAKE IN THE EYES OF THE MEDIA

By Segun Tomori
Special Assistant, Media



When I was appointed Special Assistant on Media and by extension, Spokesperson to Dr. Dele Alake, the Minister of Solid Minerals Development, I knew it wouldn't be an easy ride. Dr. Alake is a seasoned media and communications veteran, so I realized I had to bring my best to the table and strive to improve myself, to meet his high standards.

Beyond press releases, feature articles, and media content, I knew managing his media presence and shaping his public relations would be more effective if I understood his persona and thought process.

But how could I do this? I decided to let my first press statements serve as a lens into his mind, providing insight into how he wanted his office to be projected. Typically, press release preparation requires attending events and meetings, where I record the Minister's speeches.

He often speaks extempore, so written speeches aren't always reliable. To capture the essence of the story, I closely observe his tone, body language, and key points, which inform my writing. Before each release goes out to the press, the boss reviews it. His edits on my early drafts provided me with a glimpse into his preferences.

Sometimes, he'd say, "I don't think this paragraph is necessary," or suggest critical additions. Occasionally, he'd instruct, "Send to Keinde," referring to Hon. Kehinde Bamigbetan, the Special Adviser who coordinates the Minister's office, similar to a Chief of Staff.

In my early days, my drafts were heavy on direct quotes until Dr. Alake suggested, "Can you reduce the quotes and adjust the tone a bit?" I thought to myself, "This is what happens when you work with an award-winning editor and communications strategist."

If it's not excellent, it is not good to go!" I'm a quick learner, so within a few weeks, I adapted to Dr. Alake's style and preferred messaging. Edits from the boss became fewer, and once Hon. Bamigbetan gave the green light, we were good to go.

One of my early feature articles, "100 Days: Alake's Midas Touch Spurs Global Interest in the Mining Sector," struck a chord with oga. I knew this because after it made the front page headline of This Day newspaper, I informed him excitedly.

He responded, "Yes, I sent it to Nduka and asked him to use generously." He referred to Nduka Obaigbena, the publisher of the newspapers. "Boss must like this article, so much," I said to myself. I basked in that euphoria and gave myself a pat on the back! (Laughs) At 67, going on 68, Dr. Alake's work ethic is nothing short of remarkable. His drive to transform the mining sector is palpable, and sometimes we wonder, can he rest a bit? His response to our concerns is always, "I've worked round the clock for over 40 years as a journalist, editor, and public servant—it's too late to stop now."

On some days, there are three or four stories to manage, and we find creative ways to spread them across press releases. If you don't know the minister at close proximity, you'll think he'll slow down when on foreign trips.

You're mistaken! I recall our trip to the Future Minerals Forum (FMF) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. When I informed him that some international media outlets were seeking exclusive interviews, he agreed. But before I could say "Jack," he had already engaged with at least seven prominent media outlets some without prior notice! That's aside from the bilateral meetings, side events, and panel sessions that he actively participated in.

In the ten months I've worked with Dr. Alake, I've learned that he prefers to operate at his own pace. If you try to push him, you'll meet a brickwall; instead, just simply do your work and present suggestions. Whether or not he responds immediately, rest assured, he takes note and acts when the time is right. If Dr. Alake weren't a journalist, he could easily have excelled in stand-up comedy.

His knack for breaking the tension with humour or delivering a perfectly timed joke with an apt, unfaultable description is something to behold. But make no mistake—when it's time for business, the atmosphere shifts to one of focus and respect for boundaries.

Shaping the media image of a man often regarded as a "Prime Minister" has been both challenging and rewarding. Working with him has inadvertently mentored me, honing my skills and making me a better media and communications strategist.

As they say, "The reward for good work is more work." So, we move! Segun Tomori is the Special Assistant on Media to the Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development.



WATCH OUT FOR *HIDDEN RICHES* FIRST MINING TV SERIAL ON NTA

By Lara Owoeye-Wyse | Special Assistant, Broadcast Media



One of the extra-ordinary initiatives of the Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals Development under the leadership of the Honourable Minister, Dr. Oladele Alake in raising awareness is the innovative television series, *Hidden Riches*. The TV series "Hidden Riches" is a drama aims to shed light on the diverse mineral wealth of Nigeria, the efforts for the ministry at rebranding the sector while engaging audiences through compelling storytelling

This work, produced and directed by the legendary Bem Pever stands as a beacon in the Nigerian film industry. Bem is known for his passion for producing original African stories that delve into the heart of culture, tradition, and identity. As the founder of Take 7 Media, a prominent film and TV production company based in Abuja, Nigeria, Bem has made significant contributions to the industry, shaping narratives and showcasing the rich heritage of African life to both local and global audiences.

We began filming on September 9, this year with a cast and crew that stand at over two hundred. It has moved from location to location using the latest filming technology and high-end locations.

Project Milestones:

The scriptwriting process was successfully completed in August 2024. The final draft was approved, enabling the project to move swiftly into the pre- production phase. The pre-production commenced immediately after script approval and was completed by the end of August 2024. During this phase, casting, location scouting, set design, and logistics were finalized.

Principal photography began in early September 2024 in various locations across Abuja. We are currently on schedule with a dedicated crew of over 67 professionals and a cast of 168 actors. Filming in Abuja is expected to

wrap up by 30th October 2024 barring any unforeseen disruptions.

After the Abuja shoot concludes, the team will relocate to a mining site in Kaduna State. Filming in Kaduna is scheduled to commence on 1st to 4th October 2024.

Post-production has already started alongside filming. The team is working diligently to ensure timely completion of editing, visual effects, and sound design. We anticipate having the first two episodes fully edited and ready for review by the end of October 2024.

Still ahead are key processes such as

Completion of Filming:

The series will finish all principal photography in Abuja by 30th October 2024. Filming in Kaduna will run throughout October, focusing on the mining site for several key scenes.

Post-Production time line efforts will continue, with the goal of completing the entire series within the agreed schedule.

The "Hidden Riches" project is progressing smoothly, with significant strides made in script development, pre-production, and filming. Over one hundred cast and crew are on set daily to deliver this masterpiece.

"The collaboration of the talented cast and crew has been instrumental in ensuring that we stay on track. Even though the production is faced with various challenges, we remain committed to delivering a high-quality, impactful series that will not only entertain but also promote the nation's solid mineral wealth." Pever said.

Hidden Riches will make its debut on the Nigerian Television Authority, NTA at 8pm on Sundays next quarter.



The Minister Puts the Boots to the Ground

*By Segun Tomori
Special Assistant, Media*



On March 26, 2024, the Honourable Minister for Solid Mineral Development, Dr. Oladele Alake took a step further in his efforts to promote the campaign for local value addition and reduction of export of raw minerals by embarking on inspection tour to the factory of the African Mineral Resources and Mines Limited in Kaduna State.

The gigantic \$600m African Natural Resources and Mines Limited (ANRML) facility involves magnetite iron-ore mining through to beneficiation, and pelletisation processes which results to Direct Reduced Iron (DRI). Welcoming the minister, the Managing Director, Mr. Alok Gupta said the group has around 35 state-of-the-art manufacturing plants and facilities located in various locations across Nigeria, creating employment opportunities.

He noted that the investment and expansion in manufacturing with the latest functional technology provide long-term employment to thousands of Nigerians. Drawing parallels between the experience of ANRML and the economic situation in the country, the Minister asserted that the same ingredients of resilience, courage and laying of a solid foundation that made the company a success story are critical factors guiding the economic restructuring of the present administration, expressing optimism that it will culminate in economic transformation."

I want to use you, the African Natural Resources and Mines Ltd., as a concrete example of what can happen when you set your mind to it. We have set our minds in this administration and invariably in Nigeria to achieve success, that's why Mr. President is restructuring the economy. When this company started 7 years ago, we saw one of the foundations through the video documentary, the amount of concrete that went in to erect a foundation, just to carry a giant edifice. That's what we are going through.

When we get through the gestation period, the results will manifest, and it will herald prosperity," Dr. Alake added. Less than a fortnight after, on April 4, 2024, the Minister visited the Segilola Resources Operating Limited (SROL), Ilesha, Osun State. He was received by the Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Segun Lawson.

who stated the readiness of the organisation to sustain the harmonious relationship it has with its host communities adding that about 29% of the company's current workforce has been drawn from the three host communities of Imogbara, Odo-Ijesha and Iperindo.

His words: "Last year, we produced just under 85,000 oz of gold. There has been a lot of knowledge transferred to Nigerians. Our local employees make up 98% of our workforce here and in 2023, we executed over 25 community projects. Over 61% of our procurement is in the country and we import the materials we can't get in the country. So, the total workforce on the site today is

1,933 people." Speaking after visiting the mining site, process plant facilities and livelihood restoration program facilities (fishponds and vegetable farms for the host communities), Dr. Alake commended the management for working hard to sustain its relationship with the host communities, further noting, "I have seen for myself here today and it is very commendable.

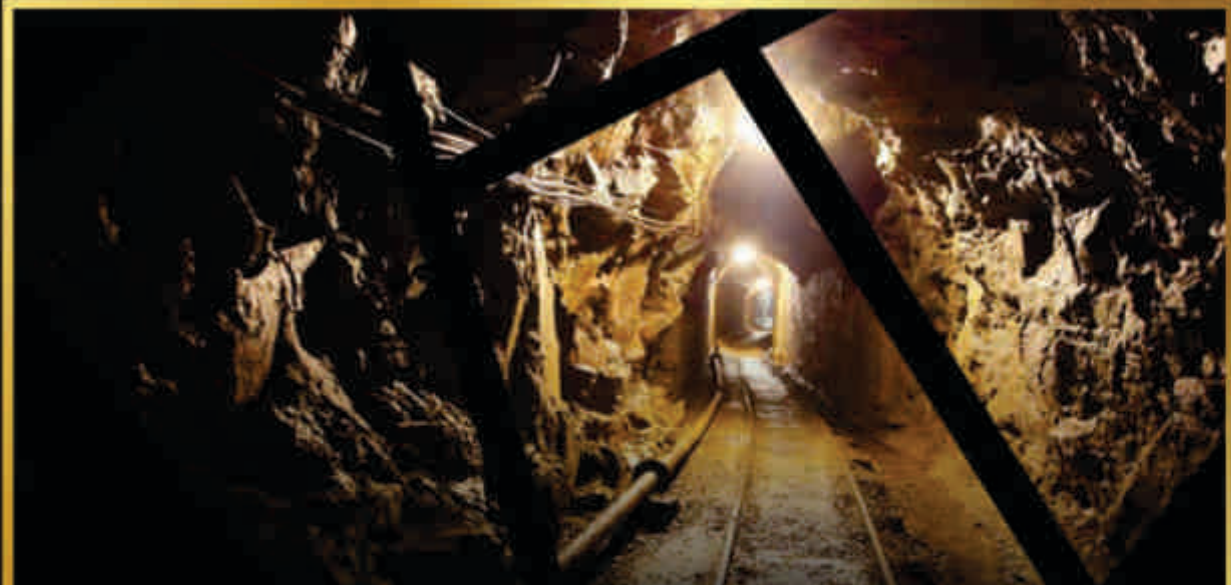
There are so many mining companies who also signed community development agreements but fall short in delivery... You can be rest assured of the Federal Government's support to grow the company, to ensure that the government derives maximally the royalties, revenues, taxes that are accruable, that are demanded of you by law.

Once those things are done, you have no problems. We would do everything to ensure that you remain a shining example to others and we will be commending you to other miners who are in the same business, but who are not operating with your processes." "I must say that, one other thing that gladdens my heart is to see young Nigerians in charge here.

It is really very laudable, and I am going to report this to the President. You have also, from the statistics I have seen, drawn a substantial percentage of your workforce from the host communities, and your workforce is also about 98% Nigerian, which is why I said it is wholly a Nigerian company." That also is worthy of emulation by other companies, and I am going to report all of these back to the President, that this is a company that is really serious, focused, knowledgeable and courageous, and we should give it all the support that it deserves." The minister has also travelled to inspect disaster zones.

Following the blasts that shook Bodija estate in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State to the roots earlier in the year, the Minister was at the site to assess the situation on January 21, 2024. He later dispatched a team of mining geologists, environmental experts and bomb experts led by the Director, Mining Inspectorate, Imam Ganiyu to investigate the incident. In its findings, the team traced the blast to the storage of dynamite in a residential area. It affirmed that dynamite was declared illegal as explosive for mining operations for over a decade.

Also, following the pit collapse that trapped several miners in Bazakwoi, a village in the Adunu community, Paikoro Local Government Area of Niger State, the Minister visited the governor, Muhammad Bago and met the traditional rulers of the community to condole with them. His timely intervention in dispelling the rumour that the pit was run by illegal miners helped to inform the public on the true situation.



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Vice President Senator Kashim Shettima arriving the State House Conference Hall for AFNIS 2024



Vice President Senator Kashim Shettima, cutting the tape to declare AFNIS 2024 open



Solid Mineral Development Minister Dr. Oladele Alake addressing ministers of mining and dignitaries at AFNIS 2024



On an inspection of Segilola Gold Refinery, the Minister watches drilling on site



CEO, Segilola, Mr. Segun Lawson takes the Minister and aides round the refinery



Holding gold bars: Dr. Alake (middle), CEO, Segilola, Mr Lawson (left) carrying newly refined gold bars at Segilola.



Dignitaries at AFNIS 2024, including ministers of mining of several African Countries



The Minister And Subnationals

By Segun Tomori, Special Assistant, Media

While solid minerals fall under the exclusive purview of the federal government, Dr. Dele Alake has prioritized collaboration with sub-national entities since taking office. This approach aims to resolve friction between the federal and state governments, fostering mutual understanding necessary for advancing the nation's mining sector.

In addition to engaging with individual governors, the minister, earlier in the year, convened a meeting with governors under the auspices of the Nigeria Governors Forum (NGF). 33 Governors attended the meeting with 32 attending in person and one virtually. This candid session allowed Dr. Alake to articulate his vision for the sector, encapsulated in a 7-point agenda aimed at creating a more competitive and sustainable mining environment.

Dr. Alake emphasized the importance of partnership with the governors, noting that this dialogue reflects the federal government's commitment to incorporating sub-national input in its efforts to reform the sector. He reiterated his dedication to cooperative federalism as a means to address potential conflicts in mining administration, asserting that, despite mining being under the exclusive legislative list, both levels of government can collaborate effectively.

Without mincing words, Dr. Alake asserted that states are bound by the constitution to seek approval from the

federal government before making policy pronouncements on mining activities in their states.

"Our actions, both at the federal and state levels, should align with the constitution and be conducted procedurally, so we do not appear at odds with one another. To remove contentious issues, we announced that states are free to apply for mining licenses, positioning them as critical stakeholders in the industry. This initiative aims to foster a sense of belonging among sub-nationals and ensure their cooperation in optimizing the mining sector for the benefit of citizens and the country", he added.

Several states have responded to the minister's call for active participation, applying to operate as Limited Liability Companies. The minister noted, "I have approved licenses for states that submitted applications, without hesitation, as part of our policy to support the engagement of federating units. This is a step towards ensuring they benefit from our natural resources."

Under Dr. Alake's stewardship, states have been encouraged to leverage the Mineral Resources and Environmental Management Committee (MIREMCO) to play significant roles in local mining operations. The influence of sub-nationals within MIREMCO is notable, with the chair and five out of ten members



Needed: A Cautious Economic Policy

NATIONALCONCORD, March 13, 1989

THICK plumes of blowing fumes beclouded the immediate horizon, vehicles snaked along the main approach to Lagos Island from Carter Bridge, men, women and children crisscrossed roads, some scuttling in and out of buildings, clutching wet handkerchiefs to douse eye irritation occasioned by tear gas canisters and the general pandemonium, all presented the observer with vivid impression of an emerging social unrest in a metropolis, which has witnessed relative peace in recent times.

From all indications, last week's three days riots in Lagos occurred ostensibly to protest the gruesome killing of two unfortunate brothers by a trigger-happy policeman, who swore he acted in self-defense. At normal temperature and pressure, the mishap alone could not have prompted the spontaneous violent mob reaction, which engulfed parts of metropolitan Lagos. In the first instance, that would not be the first time civilians got killed by trigger-happy policemen. In recent times, specifically in the last one and a half months, the rate of death through 'accidental discharges' from police guns had sought to befuddle the age-old perception of the police as a friend, indeed, as a protector of the public. In all previous cases, public protest against police misdemeanors never went beyond mild threats of reprisals.

But in these times, the nation is not at normal temperature and pressure. While climatic temperature is up due to unbearable atmospheric heat, the average citizen is groaning under the weight of cascading social pressures. Thus, according to the matter making rounds, last week's incident seemed a cathartic action by citizens who rightly or wrongly, have been sfemed, femed and generally sapped to comatose.

Though the merits (if any) and the demerits (very many) of last week's riot do not form the focus of this piece, the allusion to it is expedient in explaining the present mental and physical state of the common man which should serve as a basis for anticipating future public reaction to public policies. One such policy which, though yet to be implemented, has commanded public attention and constitutes the subject of debate where two or three citizens are gathered, is the proposed removal of the subsidy on petroleum. Having made economic sacrifices in the last four years relentlessly, the average Nigerian believes, either wisely or ignorantly that removal of subsidy on petroleum will herald the total annihilation of the common man.

Now a highly emotive issue such as the removal of subsidy on petroleum demands to be handled with all caution that this administration can muster. While government may have cogent reasons to contemplate withdrawal of subsidy on fuel, sight must not be lost on its debilitating impact in the country. In informed circles, the government's dilemma is often appreciated. The ominous question is how many Nigerians are adequately informed or even wish to be informed?

According to Arthur Burns, formerly of the United States Federal Reserve Board, when a bad economic situation lingers for too long, there are no longer good economic policy options.

This statement, though made up in the seventies, seem to aptly sum up the Nigerian situation of today. Caught between the devil and the deep blue sea, the government would appear unable to stimulate economic growth and offset foreign debt without making the citizenry unduly beleaguered.

The government's case is clear. If Nigerians rejected the IMF loan with a thunderous no, it is only logical that a government should introduce some belt-tightening measures. This, the government has for the past two years been trying hard to do through the structural adjustment package. On their part, the citizens have been (special text: However, as economically sound as it seems to remove fuel subsidy, the fact that the price of petroleum directly affects the welfare of every citizen must not be glossed over. For the past four years, inflation and retrenchment have combined to make the purchasing power of the average consumer very negligible.

Besides, various ministers have sounded discordant notes to the public on the need to pay more for erratic social services.)

making strenuous efforts to adjust to the hard times in the belief that at the end of the dark tunnel there will be light. However, government maintains that SAP cannot be effectively consolidated without the removal of subsidy on fuel. Apart from this, the alarming rate of smuggling of petroleum to neighbouring countries cannot be curtailed without withdrawing fuel subsidy. From available statistics, about one third of the 30,000 barrels of crude oil consumed in our neighbouring countries everyday are smuggled out of Nigeria.



The Minister as Rib Cracker

By Kehinde Bamigbetan

On a lighter note, one of the ways the minister lightens the pressure of routine while at work is his jokes. Many of them are anecdotal, recalling experiences gathered over the last 67 years.

After graduation, the young Alake was deployed to Benin for his National Youth Service Scheme. On one occasion, he teamed up with his friends to attend a party in Port Harcourt. They arrived the park to board a vehicle and were searching when a tout approached and offered to board them on a saloon car a few metres away. He told them fare and each of them paid, then he said he was going to call the driver. More than an hour later, they were still expecting the tout when one of the men in the garage asked what they were waiting for. When they showed him the car they were hoping to board and that they were expecting the driver, he opened the bonnet for them. The car had no engine! It was parked there, apparently awaiting repairs. The morale, despite their degrees, a common tout had taught them the difference between street sense and akada sense!

Those who are close to the Minister are aware of his love for pounded yam. Pounded yam is the favourite of the Ekiti people, a culture he wears like a badge. But only a few know that his demand for this delicacy, served with the “asepo” version of vegetable and okro, defies territorial limitations. On a recent trip to New York, this matter of pounded yam came up again, and the only available place was in downtown Harlem. Now, Harlem has never been a place for the faint-hearted. On the way to meet the meal, the minister recalled how he had to pass through Harlem to keep an appointment, over 20 years ago. The taxi ran into a bumper to bumper movement. Thinking that he was close to his destination, Alake stepped out to complete the rest by foot. When he asked a man how really close he was, he could hardly hear what he said. What was left of the man's nicotine stained set of teeth was incoherent ramble. Applying a perception trip to look as tough and rough as the boys in the hood, he said he kept his hand under his jacket, his ankle at an angle that

suggested he was ready to pull a gun at any moment. With his chest out, he swaggered down the street like a formidable foe. But, as he encountered more and more marijuana -blowing, bodily pierced, scarred faces of the underworld, even his false gait was not enough to assure him the required confidence. He was due to return to Nigeria the next day, if any of the boys squared up to him there, he didn't know what would happen. He started to pray. But even prayer had to be assisted with works. On sighting a cab, he waved it down and entered. Less than two minutes later, the cab pulled up. He had actually walked much of the distance and was just two blocks away from his destination!

A few of the stories were encounters with his wife and life partner, Mummy Sumbo Alake. In Egypt on a government business, he called madam to let her know he would be touring the ancient pyramids. An avid reader of Athur Lewis, his love of history directed his curiosity to the Egyptian mummies. A Christian prayer warrior, his wife teased him that she hoped he was not going to bow to the gods of the pyramids and warned him to be careful. Asserting his masculine confidence, Alake allayed her fears, saying he was more than capable to pull the feat.

Anyway, Dr Alake proceeded on the journey and arrived the pyramids, obtained the services of a tourist guide and joined a group. The pyramids were structured in low corridors that required tourists to crouch and crawl their way to where the mummies were. But midway, he started to feel an eerie sensation, it was as if something in him was going to give way. He decided to crawl back and as soon as he emerged from the hole, lost consciousness. He resumed consciousness, minutes later and returned to the hotel. Well, it wasn't necessary to tell madam that he didn't carry out his threat!

Stories like these keep the minister's audiences laughing, almost cracking their ribs between taking and executing assignments. Many visitors are reluctant to leave him after listening to his jokes. With the Honourable Minister, there are no dull moments. As he marks the date of his birth with mirth, it is fit to pray that may his jokes never dry.



FROM THE EYES OF AN INSIDER

By Mayowa Ojo, Special Assistant, Administration

Dele Alake, as he prefers to be addressed is an award - winning Journalist, technocrat, activist, Politician and the current Nigerian Minister of Solid Minerals Development. He doubles as the Chairman of the African minerals strategy group (AMSG). A group of Ministers of mining in Africa.

In the last three (3) decades, Oga undoubtedly has traversed political and career paths only a few of his contemporaries would dare, with lots of accomplishments trailing him. Long before our paths crossed, the name 'Dele Alake' has been a household name for me, and indeed a brand on its own.

Dele Alake became even more resonated during my media sojourn in Lagos in the early 2000s. But in all honesty, I never met him physically until when he became a minister and assumed duties at the Wuse 2 Headquarters of the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development in Abuja.

When I was redeployed to his office where I had previously served in the last dispensation as an aide, vide a circular No. MMSD/S/38/S.19/11/193 dated 23rd August, 2023, he never objected.

Under Alake's watch, the Nigerian Solid Minerals sector is currently undergoing a deep reform with his 7 - point agenda towards full economic diversification and repositioning of the critical sector as one of the bastions of Nigeria's future prosperity.

The 7 - Point Agenda as unveiled by him at a media conference upon assumption at the ministry are as follows:

1. Establish the Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation Limited which shall be private sector - driven
2. Enter Joint Venture with Mining Multinationals
3. Invest in big data gathering on specific priority minerals and their deposits
4. Integrate illegal miners to join artisanal cooperatives
5. Mines surveillance Task Force and Mines Police
6. Comprehensive review of all Mining licenses
7. Creation of six (6) Minerals Processing Centres to focus on value addition.

Since his assumption as the Honourable Minister on



August 23, 2023, the administrative or leadership style of Dr. Henry Oladele Alake in the ministry of solid mineral development is largely seen as unconventional in an environment ought to be rigidly structured in the civil service ethos.

Although, this reality might not be unconnected with his radical journalism background as widely held by some close observers. Barely one year in the office, 'Oga Alake,' has been able to traverse the entire ministerial terrains in an exceptional mode of relationship among the top echelon of management staff and chief executives of agencies under the supervision of the Ministry with visible impacts on ministerial performance across board.

His structured engagements with the management and intermediate staffers during various official functions among others readily come to mind and are all testimonials to the disposition above.

With an unrestricted access that looks like an essential component of standard operating procedure in place, work and social relationship across staff strata in the ministry have been transformed. More specifically, the engaging leadership style of Dr. Alake has brought about visible improvements in the following areas:

1. Budgetary allocation increase in both overhead and capital for the 2024 fiscal year in the Ministry;
2. Increased number of mining cooperatives registered under Artisanal/Small Scale Mining Scheme, thereby bringing about reduction in illegality in the sector;
3. Seamless procurement processes, leading to Due Process Certification and or No Objection on acquisition of fixed asset and provision of a solution framework targeted at monitoring activities of the illegal miners across the country from the ministry's headquarters;
4. License review is bringing about transparent licensing regime; and
5. Advent of mining marshals is also frontally addressing the menace of illegal mining across states amongst others.

Fundamentally, Dr. Dele Alake deserves kudos for his positive impact on the mining sector.



Africa: Self reliance is the answer

AT last! the much bally-hood United Nations Special Session on Africa's economic problems has come and gone with the wind. Africa, however, remains the same impoverished, uncared for and unloved by all including Africans themselves.

Starting with Bob Geldof's Live Aid Concert through his well-orchestrated Sport Aid and culminating in the UN special session, those who could afford to dream must have believed that Africa was probably nearing the end of its economic woes. I for one did not for a moment delude myself that those who pillaged and pilloried Africa in the first instance would be so magnanimous now to generously donate towards her economic recovery - a step considered suicidal in certain European quarters. The logic in this reasoning is that for the developed world to sustain its high tech economy, Africa must conversely continue to wallow in abject poverty.

Further, it is believed that the luxurious lifestyles of the Northern hemisphere was founded, nurtured and consolidated on the sweat and toils of African slave labour hence any attempt at shoring up Africa's economy will mean a reduction in the luxuriant living of the developed societies. Can anybody visualize such a situation?

All these points were pondered on before the opening of the UN special sessions and reinforced my deep skepticism about any possible success of the session. To start with, the arrival of the Sports Aid torch in New York on May 25 had added colour and flavour to the UN session.

The event had helped to focus world attention on Africa's chronic economic problems and it heightened

expectations from the UN special session. The hope and expectation however crash-landed as widely suspected by realists.

The very first signal that Africa should not expect undue sympathy or concrete commitment emanated from within America, the seat of the UN special session. As the special session opened up, Americans, including Ronald Reagan, directed their attention to their more pressing domestic problem of hunger. The United States, a nation of over 200 million people and the richest in the world paradoxically has over 30 million hungry people.

It was therefore the clearest demonstration of America's great insensitivity to Africa's problem to embark on a nation-wide symbolic gesture of linking hand in sympathy with America's hungry while the whole world was expected to be seriously involved in evolving lasting solution to Africa's myriad problems.

Ironically too, most of the hungry in America are blacks. To show their disdain for Africa's plight, there were ridiculous suggestions in the American local Press that Africans had come with their begging bowls.' Nevertheless, President Abdou Diouf of Senegal made spirited efforts in presenting the African case to the Assembly. He eloquently enumerated the various economic woes of the continent and summed up by linking Africa's economic growth to the entire world's economic development.

Professor Bolaji Akinyemi too was unambiguous in his call for higher targets of Official Developmental Assistance for Africa (ODA). However, after all the rhetorics here and there, Africa, at the end of the day



failed to secure any concrete commitment towards converting some of her debts to grants and the improvement of commercial debt re-negotiation. Apart from Canada and the Netherlands that promised token assistance through conversion of all ODA loans of the most impoverished African states into grants, no other developed country committed itself.

The United States did not waiver from its age-long position maintaining that the growth and development of the US economy is the only avenue of promoting economic growth and development of the entire world. Would anyone blame them? George Shultz, Secretary of US State Department stated categorically that Africans are primarily responsible for their own economic recovery. Nothing could be truer.

The African Priority Programme for Economic Recovery (APPER) 1986 - 1990 sought to commit the international community to providing 45 billion dollars, out of the 128 billion dollars required to implement the programme.

African countries indicated their readiness to generate the remaining \$82 billion for the programme. But the developed countries were not impressed. Should we be taken aback at this turn of events? No. If anything, the poor outcome of the UN special session showed that self-reliance is the salvation of Africa. It amounts to self-delusion to expect the developed countries, whose economies thrive on our poverty to seriously aid Africa out of its present economic doldrums.

If we are to learn anything from history, it is definitely not to expect any gratuitous aid from our age-long exploiters. In the first instance, these developed countries, aside from their exploitative political paraphernalia, also possess the economic instrumentality (special text: There still exists economic structures built by colonialism and maintained through neocolonialism exemplified by the nefarious activities of the multi national corporations that continue to milk independent African states. Africa's economic headache is not only the existence of exploitative exchange pattern...) for further exploitation of Africa.

There still exists economic structures built by colonialism and maintained through neocolonialism - exemplified by the nefarious activities of the multi national corporations that continue to milk independent African states. Africa's economic headache is not only the existence of exploitative exchange pattern but the fact that these nations are virtually mere satellites, revolving round the big powers.

Their economies are tied to one hard currency or the other hence they are very vulnerable to outside forces. Having damaged Africa's economy beyond repair, is it not wishful thinking therefore to turn cap in hand to these same exploiters and expect them to sympathise? They will only sneer at our own folly and naivety.

What Africans fail to perceive is that the developed countries are placed in comfortable positions with the knowledge that we are perpetually tied to their apron strings through debts owed them.

Once we can liquidate our debts, we must have severed one of the thick strings that attach us to the big powers and we expect them to aid us out of their clutches?... Impossible!

Quite apart from the economic manipulations, Western powers also engage in open, blatant and forceful exploitations epitomised by the situation in South Africa. America and Britain specifically refuse to support economic sanctions against Botha's South Africa on the spurious excuse that sanctions do not work but Reagan was strident in his vociferous call for the same sanctions against Libya.

Still, the Americo-British alliance could not contemplate military action against Pretoria but found the same military raid as the only method of stemming Libya's alleged terrorism. What more examples of hypocrisy and double speak do Africans require before they see the light? Britain has over N7 billion investments in South Africa and it is estimated that about 250,000 jobs in Britain are dependent on the apartheid enclave. Should we then realistically expect Britain to champion anti-apartheid cause?

Never!

It should now be clear to all and sundry that Africa's political and economic salvation lies within Africa. Only Africans can change their own destinies with their own hands. The very first place to start is embarking on total self-reliance. To expect our exploiters to help us out of our predicament is to say Jesus was a black man. The lack of commitment, by the developed countries towards salvaging Africa's economy should be an eye opener to Africans. Charity must begin at home. We have had enough of rhetorics and wishful thinking.

Time for action is now.



Civility In Public Appointments

NATIONAL CONCORD, November 23, 1987

WITH the military incursion into the art of governance, the practice of proclaiming public appointments through media announcements emerged in the political, administrative scene of Nigeria. A military administration which displaces participatory democracy mandatorily, eliminates the conventional procedure through which public appointments ought to be made.

Like vetting of potential appointees via the House of Representatives and or the Senate as the case may be. Under the democratic system, members of the public are afforded the chance to comment on the appropriateness or otherwise of prospective appointees.

This type of system moreover offers the public prior knowledge of potential office holders and also erases any dissonances, inconsistency and equivocation in public appointments. It has however become quite obvious that the military in Nigeria is enamored of the ideas of making public appointments through the media.

The main reason for this style is not particularly clear but pundits are wont to pin it on the fact that any military regime's presence is usually heralded through the radio, which is part of the media. And since there is this preference for media from the onset, military regimes like to keep the public non-pulsed at any available opportunity.

The reasoning goes further that since the appointee and /or the public is astonished anytime an appointment is made via the media, why should the military not stick to this style! Others however assume that due to the nature and structure of the military epitomized by the strict adherence to hierarchical order and the-obey-the-order-syndrome, appointments within this structure dispense with such finesse as prior consultation with appointees.

Once military authorities decide to appoint an officer to a position, such an appointee is notified through a signal and the appointee, whether he likes it or not, assumes his new position with military dispatch. Such a tradition of making appointments is believed by some to account for the military's predilection for making civil appointments through the media.

Nevertheless, as convenient and expedient as this style may be for the military, it is flawed in many respects and has caused untold public embarrassments on many occasions. It would be recalled that such media announcements of public appointments was one of the major reasons given by normally fastidious late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in rejecting his

membership of the Constitution Drafting Committee in 1975. The late sage deposed that his consent was not sought before including his name in the list. To those squeamish about decorum, it was a one down for the government. In fact, in recent years, appointments to public offices through the media have become rather sloven, untidy, muddled and devoid of decency.

This is besides the perplexities, bewilderment, angst and apprehension caused those whose names are so proclaimed. This style does not confer any complements on government procedures. Immeasurable harm is particularly done to the ego of those whose names are announced but who turn out not to be the genuine appointees. Sometimes ago, in late 1987 for example, one A.S. Iyang was announced as a member of the Constitution Review Committee, CRC. As misfortune would have it, one headmaster of a school in Port Harcourt who answers to that name hurried to Abuja for the swearing in ceremony basking in the delusion that he was the right appointee.

The man was sworn-in and he attended the CRC's inaugural session with other members. The man's consternation and discomfiture could be best imagined when one month later, he was unceremoniously told he should go back home as he was not the right person. The excuse given was that his name got muddled-up with another A.S. Inyang who was the genuine appointee.

To government, that was the end of the matter. Chikina! But it proved the beginning of Headmaster, Inyang's dilemma. The man had taken six months leave of absence from his job while another man had taken up his position. The man became helpless, confused and frustrated. Other similar cases have occurred elsewhere in the country since then.

Another somewhat comparable faux pas occurred recently during the recomposition of the National Electoral Commission (NEC). It was understood that an overexcited and exuberant official released the new NEC list naming Justice Olakunle Orojo as the new chairman. After repeated media announcement of this list, another list emerged naming Professor Humphrey Nwosu as the chairman.

Justice Orojo's name had been expunged without mincing words. This blunder was inexcusable. Making public appointments without consultation with candidates apart from the embarrassments caused such people is to say the least indecorous, inappropriate and unbecoming. Such a style is fraught with serious security implications and underscores the laxity with which appointments to public offices are handled. NATIONAL CONCORD, March 13, 1989



RENEWED HOPE: ACTUALISING A BETTER NIGERIA IN THE SOLID MINERALS SECTOR

A presentation by the Honourable Minister of Solid Minerals Development, Dr. Oladele Alake at the Sectoral Updates Series to mark the First Anniversary of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administration at the National Press Centre, Radio House, Abuja on May 23, 2024



It is my pleasure to present to you today the impactful achievements that the Renewed Hope Manifesto of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR and our great party, the All Progressives Congress has recorded in the Solid Minerals Sector which I superintend over as the Minister of Solid Minerals Development.

ROLE AND MANDATE

The Role and mandates of the Ministry are as follows: Ensure the orderly and sustainable development of Nigeria's mineral resources* Develop the minerals sector to contribute to the industrialization of Nigeria

* Create an enabling environment for private investment, both foreign and domestic by providing adequate infrastructure for mining activities and identify areas where government intervention is desirable in achieving policy goals and proper perspective in mineral resources development Accelerate the development of technical and professional manpower required in the Minerals sector

Generate revenue for Government through collection of fees, royalties, taxes Provide information and knowledge for enhancing investment in the sector Working with security institutions to ensure safety and security in the sector through strict monitoring of movement and usages of explosives
PRESIDENTIAL PRIORITY In operationalising the Manifesto, the Presidency identified 8 (Eight) Key priorities. These were issued by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation on January 15, 2024.

With its vision on the diversification of the economy as the guiding principle, the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development was identified as a critical machinery for achieving Priority Number 4: To Unlock energy and natural resources for Sustainable Development.

THE SEVEN POINT AGENDA AND DELIVERABLES

You may recall that in June, 2023, Mr. President appointed me as his Special Adviser on Special Duties, Communications and Strategy. The appointment provided a historic opportunity to

participate in the strategic conversations on how best and how fast our new administration could redeem the promises of Renewed Hope that the Nigerian people voted for. We were guided by our experience in Lagos State where Mr. President was the Executive Governor for Eight years, between 1999 and 2007, and ran a mass-oriented, grassroots-based popular democracy marked by the vigour to create wealth and the rigour to spread state welfare to the poor and underprivileged.

It was in the course of those discourses that it became clear that the task of unlocking the wealth underground that the Solid Minerals Sector held had to be assigned to a trustworthy goal-getter and person of integrity who could sanitise the sector and transform its hidden potentials to become a sustainable base for wealth creation. I thank Mr. President for reposing such a great trust in me by saddling me with the assignment and assure the Nation, that, with our hands on the excavators, crushers and drillers, we are mobilising the men, the intelligence, the strategy and the material to leave a worthy legacy that future generations will admire.

Such a commitment required the development of a critical path, a roadmap, a strategic trajectory for the resurgence of the sector to resume its role in capital formation and wealth generation. In September, 2023, following a comprehensive review of the state of the industry and the implementation of the existing roadmap, we announced the Seven Point Agenda. The components are

- (i) Establish the Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation
- (ii) Joint Venture Partnership with Mining Multinationals
- (iii) Gathering the Big Data
- (iv) Promoting International Investment
- (v) Securing the Investment Environment with Mines Surveillance Police and Technology
- (vi) Formalisation of Artisanal Miners into Co-operatives
- (vii) Socio-Economic Development of Mining Communities Following the adoption of the



Seven Point Agenda by the Federal Executive Council and recognition of its therapeutic impact on the national economy by the office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, these components have been broken into 18 deliverables which form the Contract between the Ministry of Solid Minerals and the Presidency. I hereby present the progress report of the Agenda encapsulating the deliverables.

1. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NIGERIAN SOLID MINERALS CORPORATION

The Ministry initiated the necessary legislative framework for the establishment of the Nigerian Solid Minerals Development Corporation through the proposal seeking budgetary provision for approval in the 2024 budget. The Ministry is grateful to the Committees on Solid Minerals Development in the Senate and the House of Representatives and other committees of the National Assembly whose passionate commitment to our collective vision made the approval possible.

Furthermore, in February, this year, the House Committee on Solid Minerals Development chaired by Hon. Gaza Gbewi organised a policy dialogue on the draft bill to set up the NSMDC. This three-day robust discourse shed more light on the vision and mission of the NSMDC as a private-sector driven corporation that will be structured to have not more than 25 percent government shares, 25 percent shares to be held by the public and 50 percent of the shares by private investors.

While we are co-operating with the legislative committees, the Ministry has commenced the process of incorporation with the target of bringing the corporation on stream by the fourth quarter of 2024.

The vision of an efficiently-run institution which we are applying to the formation of the SMDC is already manifest in the supervision of two key agencies of the Ministry: the Mining Cadastral Office, MCO and the Solid Minerals Development Fund.

MINING CADASTRAL OFFICE

The MCO, mandated to administer the issuance of mining licences, has been repositioned in the last 12 months to improve service delivery and increase revenue generation. The eMC+, the application software has been modified to cope with challenges. The modifications include completion of e-Recording and Archiving of Mineral Title documents; Completion of Acquisition, Geo-referencing and Geocoding of Topographic Maps of Nigeria for integration into the Mining Cadastre Digital Database and the Completion of Production of Thematic Mapping of Mineral Title Restricted (Protected) Areas for integration into Nigeria Mining Cadastre Digital Database.

The efforts to sanitise its operations led to two revocation exercises. The revocation 1,619 titles that defaulted in payment of their Annual Service Fees and 912 dormant (inactive) mineral titles. These measures have led to increased confidence in the system and more applications. Within the period under review, the Office received 10,534 applications out of which 4,651 applications were received unassisted Online submissions while, 5,883 was MCO Online assisted

submissions. Also, a total of 3,177 companies submitted Mineral Title applications for both new Titles and modification of existing Titles. Of these companies; 3,084 were local companies while 93 were companies with international affiliations. In the month of April 2024, not less than 559 new applications were received via the eMC+. The MCO issued 40 new Exploration licences, 71 new Small Scale Mining Licences and Four new Mining Leases.

These figures show significant increase in investment into the sector. These licensees have gone to start and commenced operations. In the last one year, not less than 258 new operational Mining and Quarrying Companies employing over 9,030 people have commenced operations. Compared with 134 new operational Mining/Quarrying Companies with 4,690 employment generation in the corresponding period 2022/2023, 126 more companies have joined and are providing jobs for 4,340 more persons.

The quantum leap in applications and operations have led to more revenue, surpassing the figures recorded in the previous years by 59.6 per cent. According to the figures, revenue generated in the period under review is N6,203,536,161.00 over N3,886,953,950.00 generated in the corresponding period from May, 2022 - April 2023.

A total of Sixteen Billion, Three Hundred and Ninety - Five Million, Six Hundred and Forty Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy - One Naira Fifty-Eight kobo (N16,395,640,771.58) was generated from May, 2023 to April, 2024 against the total target of N10,566,635,560.24. This comprises collections from Royalty and Fees. This shows an achievement of the sum of N6,746,317,807.09 as surplus surpassing the target.

The Ministry generated and collected the sum of Fourteen Billion Nine Hundred and Thirty - Eight Million One Hundred and Sixty - Four Thousand Three Hundred and Thirty - Five Naira Forty - Three Kobo (N14,938,164,335.43) as at the year ended 31st December, 2023.

This represents 72.1% positive variance and 172.1% performance when compared with the annual budgetary target of N8,680,197,621.00 for year 2023.2.

SOLID MINERALS DEVELOPMENT FUND AND JOINT VENTURES

The Ministry through Solid Minerals Development Fund (SMDF) partnered with GeoScan GmbH to Advance the Exploration and Development of Nigerian Critical Minerals Resources using Innovative Proprietary Technology. It has also entered an agreement with African Finance Corporation to raise Project Development Facility to fund companies facing the challenge of raising capital to execute their early-stage exploration projects. No fewer than 20 candidates have been shortlisted and are undergoing the training to prepare to manage their portfolio efficiently.

Another initiative of SMDF is its partnership with the global exploration agency, XCalibur. Both are working together to advance Nigeria's geological data capabilities. The SMDF is the face of the Ministry as the partner of choice for international mining companies. It mobilises capital for critical and strategic mining projects, attracts foreign direct



investment and fast-tracks the delivery of Final Investment Decisions.

3. GATHERING OF BIG DATA

The most critical precondition for the real take-off of the sector is the gathering of precise geological data. An investor is not just interested in the location of a particular mineral. Without robust, precise, and accurate data internationally authenticated by the geoscience community and transparently published for easy verification and adoption, international investment will be a pipe dream. The Ministry proposed a N70 billion Exploration Project to scale this hurdle. Although it was not accommodated in the current budget, we shall continue to make a strong case for this project as the elixir to the pains of mineral exploitation in Nigeria. Hopefully, discussions with Geo Scan, XCalibur and other international partners might prove useful to the dream.

The Nigerian Geological Survey Agency, NGSA, despite limited funds, continues to engage in research to unravel the mineralogy of the Nigerian landscape. In the year under review, it performed the following feats:

- (i) Geo-Information and Archiving of Data
- (ii) Digitization, and archiving of NGSA legacy data for Geodata Centre (Aerial photographs, maps, Bulletins) Phase 2
- (iii) Production of digital geotourism map and database of the south west geo- political Zone of Nigeria.
- (iv) Regional mapping on 1:100,000 scale of the following sheets: Baro (205), Gulu (206), KotonKarfe (227), Aiyegunle (226), Yashikera (157) Okuta
- (v) Geochronological sampling/mapping of Age dating and mineralization potential of the Kalangai-Zungeru-Ifewara Fault zone, SW Nigeria Phase 2
- (vi) Mettalic Mineral Exploration Data Gathering : . Jebba (Sheet 181), Niger and Kwara states;
- (vii) Geochemical Mapping of Lafiagi sheet 203 in Kwara state
- (viii) Geological enhancement and development of Lithium, Tantalum, Niobium, Nickel, Chromium and Cobalt
- (ix) Pegmatites mapping for Lithium mineralization in Bauchi, Gombe, Taraba and Adamawa state
- (x) Assessment of Kaolin around Kaoje in Kebbi and Kutegi, Niger State To Kee

To keep its researchers in shape, the NGSA, in this period under review organised the following training programmes:

- (i) Capacity Building on Hydrogeochemical Mapping
- (ii) Training Course in Sedimentological Techniques for Data Collection, Analysis and Presentation
- (iii) Basic training on documentation and archiving of aerial photographs in NGSA Kaduna for Geodata Centre.
- (iv) Training programme on effective corporate communications strategies and geoscience information document management tools
- (v) Workshop on advanced data collection analysis and interpretation for policy making
- (vi) International training on ICP-MS operations systems optimization and instrument calibration routines.
- (vii) Training on Laboratory safety, hazards, disposal of

- (viii) hazardous substances and risk management.
- (viii) Training on the application of laboratory information management systems (LIM)
- (ix) Capacity Building on Monitoring and Evaluation
- (x) Capacity Building on techniques and tools of project management

Equipment is critical to data gathering and analysis. Since the inception of this Administration, the NGSA acquired the following equipment. These include:

- (i) Procurement of Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (Libs) Analyzer.
- (ii) Provision of additional all-in-one solar security light and maintenance/repairs of the existing ones at NGSA HQ and Earthquake Monitoring Centre, Katanpe.
- (iii) Installation of Thermo Scientific iCAP Qnova Series Triple Quadrupole Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometer (ICP-MS) at NGSA HQ. And (iv) Installation of Thermo Scientific TRACE 1600 Series Gas Chromatograph at National Geosciences Research Laboratories (NGRL), Kaduna.

4. PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENT

The Investment Promotion and Mineral Trade Department has spearheaded a series of initiatives to catalyse investment, promoting sustainable development, and enhancing international cooperation within Nigeria's mining sector. The department's achievements during the period from May 2023 to May 2024 include:

- (i) Hosting the Africa Natural Resource and Energy Investment Summit (AFNIS) 2023.
- (ii) Nigeria Mining Week 2023:
- (iii) Technical Cooperation with Australia at the Africa Down Under Conference in September 2023, Perth - Australia.
- (iv) Engagement of prospective investors and partners, including British Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden, the Commonwealth Secretariat and the United States Assistant-Secretary for Trade Jefferey Pyatt at the Mines and Money Conference in London:
- (v) Establishment of Africa Minerals Strategy Group (AMSG) and Election of Nigeria as the pioneer Chairperson of the Group at the Future Minerals Forum in Riyadh-Saudi Arabia, January 2024
- (vi) Engagement of stakeholders and adoption of the AMSG at the Indaba Conference in February 2024, Cape Town- South Africa
- (vii) Launch of Nigeria Mineral Resources Decision Support System (NMDSS): the Nigeria Mineral Resources Decision Support System (NMRDSS), a cutting-edge marketing strategy designed to enhance the ease of doing business in the solid minerals sector. This innovative platform leverages data-driven insights and streamlined processes to attract investments, facilitate informed decision-making, and drive sustainable growth within the industry.
- (viii) Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Lithium Processing Plant Projects in Abuja in the Federal capital Territory and Nasarawa State.
- (ix) The Policy of Value Addition canvassed by Nigeria at



local and international fora is gaining traction as more companies are expressing interest in the pit to processing value chain by setting up mineral processing centres. Similarly, the AMSC has adopted Value Addition as a policy for execution.

5. SECURING THE INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT WITH MINES POLICE AND TECHNOLOGY

The inauguration of the Mining Marshals, introduction of various technologies to monitor activities at the mines and sensitisation through the Mass Media are three prongs in a determined and unprecedented onslaught against illegal mining. The scourge of illegal mining violates the legal restrictions against mining in public institutions such as national parks and educational institutions, religious centres or community properties.

The Mining Marshals, 60 in each of the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory totalling 2,220 personnel, have brought instant succour to investors who, hitherto, watched helplessly while their cadastral units were pillaged by bandits and illegal miners. Many investors are besieging the Ministry with desperate requests for intervention and we are responding with appropriate rapidity. Efforts to improve the kit and armoury of the Mining Marshals will enable us to increase the fleet, expand the field of operations and combat effectively the rarely restricted operations of illegal miners. The expected impact is that more miners will resume legal operations, increase mineral exploitation, pay appropriate royalty and encourage more investors to come, convinced of the security of the mining environment and the establishment of Law and order.

Also, the establishment of the Marshals has enabled the Mines Surveillance teams to concentrate on intelligence gathering to track and monitor illegal miners for apprehension and prosecution. This, indeed, is a major achievement of the Administration, as records show that no fewer than 133 persons are currently being prosecuted for illegal mining notably in Cross River, Kogi, Oyo, Gombe, Taraba and Niger States.

6. FORMALISATION OF ARTISANAL MINERS

The honourable option for illegal miners in Nigeria today is to co-operate with the government by joining co-operatives and following the good examples of others who have abandoned their evil ways and become legitimate miners. Recall that on the occasion of the declaration of the Seven Point Agenda, I gave illegal miners 30-day deadline to join co-operatives. This was later extended to 60 days. It is gratifying to note that between September 2023 and March, 2024, the Ministry registered 152 new co-operatives.

Our plan to gather more data on miners by collaborating with federal and state government agencies and serious expansion of our field services to persuade thousands of illegal miners to follow the path of the Law will enable us to multiply the current figures and develop a mass co-operative movement in the Mining Sector that sees the Government as friendly allies in the efforts to protect the environment. Through the formalization of the ASM, the Ministry has facilitated the creation of 70,650 jobs for our youths. In the last one year, the department has facilitated the establishment of 343 mineral buying centres across the country.

7. SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF MINING COMMUNITIES

The ministry under my leadership has encouraged communities

to form committees to negotiate community development agreements which address the concerns of their members on compensation before exploration, employment during exploration, quarrying, and mining and sustainable community socially responsible programmes during and after rehabilitation of mined sites. Officials of the Ministry have been mandated to prioritize this and facilitate the appropriate appropriation to maintain peace and harmony in the communities.

The ministry under my leadership has encouraged communities to form committees to negotiate and sign community development agreements which address the concerns of their members on compensation before exploration, employment during exploration, quarrying, and mining and sustainable community socially responsible programmes during and after rehabilitation of mined sites. Officials of the Ministry have been mandated to prioritize this and facilitate the appropriate appropriation to maintain peace and harmony in the communities. The Ministry in collaboration with African Centre for Leadership, Strategy & Development (Centre LSD) on 16th November, 2023 unveiled the 2023 Revised Guidelines for the Production of Community Development Agreements (CDAs) in the Solid Minerals Sector. The Ministry has also directed that the CDA must be signed before the commencement of mineral exploitation in any community. The availability of the CDA Guidelines to operators has led to increased number of approvals. During the period under review, 35 were approved, making it a total of 269 so far since inception. This has improved the relationship between Mining Operator and their respective Host Communities resulting in reduced conflicts and youth.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME (EPRP)

During the period under review, 65 Environmental Protection and Rehabilitation Programme (EPEP) Reports were approved, making it a total of 486 approved since inception. This has helped as a tool to monitor compliance with environmental regulations in the sector.

FUEL STORAGE PLAN (FSP)

A total of 35 FSPs were approved in the period under review bringing the total number of approved FSP from inception to 65.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) PROCESSES

Between May 2023 to May 2024, the ministry, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Environment participated in: 18 Site Verification Exercises, bringing the total number to 238 since inception; 7 Panel Review Exercises, bringing the total number to 125 since inception;

CONCLUSION

Gentlemen of the Press,

There is a saying that the past is a story told, the future can be written in gold. This is my conclusion when I reflect on the achievements accomplished and the vision that lies ahead all of us. Like all sectors of the economy, there has been no dull moment in grappling with the challenges posed by the various forces within the sector. At the recent retreat of the Ministry, we rededicated ourselves to the task ahead by developing the change mindset that encourages everyone to be agents of transformation. As the common saying goes, tough times never last; tough people do. Thank you for listening.

Dele Alake's Lofty Ideas

By Olanrewaju Osho On Sep 10, 2023





As most people were enjoying their desired rest in the first weekend of September 2023, Nigeria's new Minister of Solid Minerals, Henry Oladele Alake and his inner caucus for the task ahead were ensconced in the cauldron of the renewed hope working. They were working tirelessly in preparation for the press conference to unveil the new agenda for the transformation of Nigeria's mining sector.

The heavens wouldn't have fallen if Mr. Alake had delayed the unveiling of his agenda to the first working week of September, but the infectious passion with which he has embraced his appointment and approval to head the 'new' ministry wouldn't let him wait that long. He elected therefore to host the press conference in the afternoon of Sunday, 3rd September, 2023 while many of his fellow ministers and fellow Nigerians were busy enjoying the serenading calm, comfort and caresses of Sunday's typical restful bliss. Call the press conference the 'Big Ideas' conference and you will be absolutely spot on.

From commencement to completion, Mr. Alake left no one in doubt about his passion, preparedness and the possibilities to make things work in a manner Nigerians have never experienced in one of the country's most promising but acutely under-performing sector of the economy. The first big information the Minister of Solid Minerals, Mr. Dele Alake revealed is the audacious declaration that the ministry under his leadership will be primed to add at least 50% to the Nigerian economy.

This is quite ambitious to say the least and many Nigerians are already positing that the target is outrightly unattainable. Others see the target as analogous to having an exaggerated opinion of one's abilities. But eh! since when has big dreams become a crime? It's a naked truth amongst the discerning that expecting the solid minerals sector to contribute up to 50% to the country's Gross Domestic Product is not something that is completely impossible.

However, in a sector that has never been stable enough to find its feet, it will be understandable if not many Nigerians share the confidence and optimism of Minister Alake and his leadership team. The 2021 contributions of the solid minerals sector to Nigeria's GDP stood at the 0.63 per cent.

The performance was an improvement compared to previous years where it contributed 0.45 per cent in 2020 and 0.26 per cent in 2019. Despite this improvement, the contributions of the industry to the nation's economy is still negligible and disappointing considering its humongous potentials. The low output in the industry is because over 90 percent of the activities of the mining industry are dominated by

artisanal operators. The previous administration set the target of increasing the output to 5% in 2025 based on their knowledge and assessment of the sector's lethargic progression year on year.

The annual Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative ("NEITI")'s Solid Minerals Audit Report produced during Buhari's first tenure put the statistics of the performance of the sector during Goodluck Jonathan's years at N33.86 billion in 2013, and in 2014 at N55.82 billion accounting for just 0.11 percent of GDP. Things improved a bit in 2015 and a marginal growth was recorded. The revenue increased to around N69.2 billion and this amounted to 0.33 percent contribution to GDP.

In Muhammadu Buhari's second year in office, figures published by the National Bureau of Statistics ("NBS") showed that the minerals and mining sector contributed 0.55 percent to Nigeria's GDP. The corresponding figures for Botswana, DRC and South Africa for the same period stood at 40 percent, 25 percent and 18 percent respectively. The federal government generated N193.59 billion from the solid minerals sector in 2021. The figure showed an increase of N60.32 billion or 51.89 per cent growth when compared to the 2020 revenue of N116.82 billion which was only 0.45 percent.

Nigeria doing just 0.63 percent when our contemporaries like Botswana, DRC and South Africa are clocking over 40 percent, 25 percent and 18 percent respectively isn't praiseworthy in any way. This becomes even more worrisome when you consider that the total revenue Nigeria earned from between 2007 to 2021 is just N814.59 billion with 2021 earnings being the highest.

Nigeria is endowed with 44 different mineral types in varying commercial quantities. They are classified as industrial minerals, energy minerals, metallic ore minerals and construction minerals. These minerals include barite, kaolin, gypsum, feldspar and limestone (industrial minerals); bitumen, lignite and uranium (energy minerals); gold, cassiterite, columbite, iron ore, lead-zinc and copper (metallic ore minerals); and granite, gravel, laterite and sand (construction minerals).

These different mineral resources are scattered all over the country and could be found in more than 500 different locations. The way these 44 mineral resources are divinely strategically scattered all over Nigeria unlike the liquid resources simply mean that there is hardly any state or local government council in Nigeria that is not endowed with one mineral type or the other. They bear irrefutable testimony of Nigeria's



uncommon blessings and endowments naturally. A sound understanding of how the appropriate harnessing of these resources can catapult Nigeria to an enviable position in the committee of the richest 25 nations on earth can indeed make a brilliant, sincere, passionate and committed minister to dream of leveraging on their worth to add 50% to the country's GDP.

The missing link in the ability of Nigeria's extractive industry over the past decades to help unleash the uncommon greatness of Nigeria has been the absence of innovative leadership, accountability, patriotic zeal, adequate technical capabilities and much required finance to unlock the great potentials therein.

Dele Alake through his Lord's Day press conference unveiled a 7-point agenda that revealed he has a clear understanding of these inhibiting factors. Asides from driving the sector to contribute 50% to Nigeria's GDP, the 7-point agenda lays out the other plans to help achieve this lofty goal.

The ministry is poised to attract Foreign Direct Investment to the country through the innovative offerings in the works; promote the creation of the Nigerian Solid Minerals Corporation, Joint Ventures with Mining Multinationals, Big Data on specific seven priority minerals and their deposits, 30-day grace for illegal miners to join artisanal cooperatives, Mines Surveillance Task Force and Mine Police, Comprehensive review of all mining licenses and the creation of six (6) Mineral Processing Centres to focus on Value-Added products. Alake's 7 – point agenda looks good to jumpstart this critical sector and make it more competitive in the committee of nations with high – performing extractive industries. Unfortunately, agendas don't drive themselves.

Agendas are mere underlying intentions or motives that could become realities if well pursued. They could also perish without seeing the rays of light if poorly implemented. To translate this lofty 'Agenda for the Transformation of the Solid Minerals for International Competitiveness and Domestic Prosperity' into reality, the minister and his tactical squad must be ready to leave no stone unturned and be determined to do every necessary thing to achieve the objectives.

The first thing to do is to fully understand what the target of 50% of Nigeria's GDP means in monetary terms. According to the Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI)'s latest audit report referenced earlier, the federal government generated N193.59 billion from the solid minerals sector in 2021, N116.82 billion in 2020 and N79.96 billion in 2019 despite the country's huge solid mineral deposits in the

country. Nigeria's GDP in 2021 reached around 173.5 trillion NGN, over 390 billion U.S. dollars. This is an increase of around 30 trillion-naira increase over the 144.210 trillion naira in 2019.

The GDP growth rate in 2022 stood at 3.10 per cent, a decline from the 3.40 per cent recorded in 2021 according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS). If we work with the 2021 figures, 50% of the GDP is 86.75 trillion naira. This is a hefty target that Mr. Alake and the staff of the ministry must pursue to add to the country's GDP. Taking a flight from 0.63 percent (N193.59 billion) to 50 percent (N86.75 trillion) is not going to be a tea party.

Achieving the target even becomes more interesting when you are the Minister in a government headed by a President who has great appetite for increasing revenue growth for development projects. Mr. Alake and his team may have to aim for a revenue figure that is twice or even thrice the 86.75 trillion-naira baseline. The second issue the minister must address is that of the quality of human capital of the ministry. They are the ones required to take ownership of the transformation agenda and drive the creation of the conducive environment necessary to deliver the target. Nigeria's civil service has a lot of brilliant men and women.

The service is also hugely populated with thousands of workers who lack the kind of patriotic zeal and professionalism needed to drive this kind of ambitious vision. The poor quality of the civil service is one of the biggest challenges to the successful implementation of good policies in Nigeria. If this agenda will not be thrown into the dustbin of history unaccomplished, the minister must develop a special capacity re-engineering program to turn every employee to a passionate advocate of the agenda.

Political will is the third key requirement needed to make this kind of lofty vision come to fruition. Already, the political will to dream has been boldly communicated by the Honourable Minister who chose the solid minerals industry out of passion to make great things happen there. The same will to dream has been communicated by the President who graciously assigned Mr. Alake to pick that portfolio.

Political will must be sustained across board and all the way if these 7 point agenda must be achieved. The political will to dream is not automatically tantamount to the will to do and is much more than dreaming and doing. The will to dream is good, but the will to do is better. Beyond dreaming and doing, the will to dare to see a vision, a dream or an agenda to its logical end is paramount. It is the will to dare that enables one to



overcome the obstacles that could arise to frustrate the efforts. Nothing good will be achieved without the will to dare. To turn the fortune of Nigeria's solid minerals sector (and any sector for that matter) around, there are many internal and external forces to dare and upstage. The field of daring the monsters, demons and strong forces of opposition is not a place for the chicken-hearted.

The minister and all his line officers will therefore need loads of courage and unwavering determination to achieve positive results. The greatest energy of the will to dare, is integrity. When the hand of a change agent is clean, the confidence to courageously dare every obstacle is unbreakable. But once the crusaders and vision drivers themselves are tainted with the leaven of corruption, compromises and racketeering, the energy to dare is quickly drained by the lure of venality.

In pursuing the lofty agenda to transform Nigeria's solid minerals industry for 'International Competitiveness and Domestic Prosperity', the issue of sustainability must be accorded premium priority. In making sustainability a premium priority, the physical environment of the communities where the solid minerals are located and institutionalizing local content development must be creatively addressed.

This is to avoid the mistakes made with the extractive activities around Nigeria's liquid minerals for over six decades. It's not a thing of pride that the oil producing communities in Nigeria continue to grapple with the challenges of oil spillage, environmental degradation and gas flaring after nearly sixty decades of operations. It's also not a thing of pride that the technical operations of the sector remain largely in the hands of foreign oil companies and expatriates.

To promote the environmental protection of the host communities, best practices in environmental justice should be upheld all the way. Anything short of this will bring greater loss on the long run than the financial gain to be made in the short run.

In institutionalizing local content development agenda for the solid minerals industry, a careful analysis of the the local content development initiatives for the oil and gas industry must be done and rigid timelines of actualization must be set.

It was the desire to increase Nigerians participation in the Oil and Gas industry that led to the enactment of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGIC) Act which received Presidential assent in April 2010. The Local Content Act defines local content as "the quantum of composite value added to or created in Nigeria through utilization of Nigerian

resources and services in the petroleum industry resulting in the development of indigenous capability without compromising quality, health, safety and environmental standards".

Local content is described as the development of local skills, oil and gas technology transfer, and use of local manpower and local manufacturing. The dawn of the local content policy arose as a result of the realization that the multinational or international companies had significant dominance in the petroleum sector.

The Local Content Act is a pivotal mechanism that enables Nigerian Companies to contribute enormously towards the growth of the Nigerian economy by encouraging value addition, job opportunities, and also the award of various oil contracts and projects. The Local Content Act established The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB).

The Local Content Board is charged it with the responsibility "to make procedure that will guide, monitor, coordinate and implement the provisions of the Act". The Local Content Board monitors the activities of the operators, all alliance partners and contractors.

Oil was discovered in Nigeria sixty – four years ago. The failure to infuse the local content vision in the oil and gas sector development early enough is responsible for the continuous dominance of foreigners in the sector. The Ministry of Solid minerals must learn from this to lay a solid foundation for the development of the solid minerals sector for national prosperity.

**Olanrewaju Osho was the candidate of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) for Senate in FCT during the 2023 elections.*



Appreciation
June 24,2024
Minister Dele Alake, CON
Honourable Minister
Federal Ministry of Solid Minerals
Aguiyi Ironsi Way
Abuja

Hon. Minister,

HUGE CONGRATULATIONS

I write to congratulate you and indeed the ministry of solid minerals for your breakthrough in connecting the solid minerals sector with the federation revenue grid as symbolised with the recent presentation of gold bar to the President, C in C and the netting of five million dollars therefrom to Nigeria revenue pool.

One watches with delight your initiatives and rigorous efforts within and outside our country in revamping the solid minerals subsector since your assumption of office. I am of the persuasion that the instant dividends from gold, within a year of your stewardship, is a salutary outcome for your industry and hardwork. Huge congratulation sir.

I also salute the relevant agency within the solid minerals bureaucracy through which this feat was accomplished. Kudos to all.

Honourable Minister, Nigeria is abundantly blessed with the deposits of nature. From Ekiti to Osun to Zamfara to the alluvial plain along the Bight of Benin. I humbly urge you and your ministry to be encouraged by this initial result which should serve as catalyst for more groundbreaking promontories.

Best wishes for more successes sir.

Sincerely,

Olugbenga P. Faseluka, PhD, BL, FCARB
Lugbe
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19th September 2024

Dr. Oladele Henry Alake,
The Honourable Minister for Solid Minerals Development,
2 Luanda Crescent,
Off Adetokunbo Ademola Crescent, Wuse II,
Abuja, Nigeria.



Dear Sir,

Re: APPEAL FOR APPROVAL FOR THE DEPLOYMENT OF MINING MARSHALS ON MINING LEASES IN KOGI AND KWARA STATES.

We hereby wish to write further to our appeal for the approval for the deployment of Mining Marshals to our mining leases in Kogi and Kwara State submitted vide our letter dated 4th April 2024.

Further to the approval granted by your office, we are glad to report that the clearance operation by the Mining Marshals on our mining lease ML19325 has been a success and the professional delivery of the site from the activities of a large number of illegal miners is highly commendable.

We are therefore using this medium to thank you Sir for the approval granted for the clearance operation as well as the provision of adequate resources to the Mining Marshals for the operation. With the successful operation on our site we are sure that the capability of the Mining Marshals as set up by the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development under your watch for the task ahead is not in doubt.

Further to the successful operation we have commenced the mine development program with the provision of a motorable access road to the site to be followed immediately by the construction of on-site accommodation for workers as well as other items required for modern day mining project.

We thank you sincerely and pray for more successes such as recorded on our site in your efforts aimed at implementing the objective of the Federal Government of Nigeria towards the complete eradication of illegal mining in the country.

Yours faithfully,
For: North South Extractive Company Limited

Onasanya Olumuyiwa Emmanuel (08023046217)