

A COMMUNIQUE FOLLOWING PAPER PRESENTATION, DELIBERATIONS AND DECISIONS FROM A ONE-DAY CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY AFRICAN MARITIME ART EXHIBITION, AMAE, ON “ICT DISRUPTIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BLUE ECONOMY” HELD AT THE NIGERIAN INSTITUTE FOR OCEANOGRAPHY & MARINE RESEARCH (NIOMR) ON FRIDAY, 24TH NOVEMBER, 2023 WITH THEME “THE CONVERGENCE: MARITIME MEETS ICT”

PREAMBLE

The second edition of the African Maritime Art Exhibition (AMAE 2023) was held on Friday, November 24, 2023 at the Nigerian Institute for Oceanography & Marine Research (NIOMR). It had the theme, “The Convergence: Maritime Meets ICT” and featured an Art Exhibition and a novel Conference with the topic, **“ICT Disruptions for the Sustainability of the Blue Economy”**.

The maiden edition of the African Maritime Art Exhibition which was an all-Art exhibition event had the theme, “Footprints on Water” and was held in October 2022 at Alliance Francaise; Mike Adenuga House, Ikoyi, Lagos.

The African Maritime Art Exhibition (AMAE) initiative is an offshoot of Hazi's, a platform, gallery and promoter of Art from Africa, founded by **Ezinne Azunna**, a seasoned journalist and the Executive Creative Director, Maritime TV Africa. Using the mediums of Photography, Textile art, Paint, Sculpture, Motifs and others, AMAE, as the singular niche Exhibition in Africa, provides vivid leverages, connecting personages and corporate interests in support of the Blue Economy.

AMAE 2023 Conference session held on the first day while the Art Exhibition continued for two days. The event was chaired by **Capt. Emmanuel Iheanacho**, a former Honourable Minister of Interior and a seasoned Maritime Practitioner, who was aptly represented by **Mrs. Jean Chiazor-Anishere**, Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) and former Continental President, Women in Maritime Africa (WIMA), while the Special Guest of Honour, the Honourable Minister of Marine and Blue Economy, **Mr. Adegboyega Oyetola, CON** was well represented by **Prof Busayo Fakinlede**, who is the Minister's aide and a professor of Hydrodynamics and Naval Architecture. Special Guests included the Managing Director, Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA) represented by **Mr. Charles Okaga**, Port Manager, Apapa Port Complex; the Executive Secretary/CEO, Nigerian Shippers' Council (NSC) represented by **Chief Cajetan Agu**, Director, Consumer Affairs; and the Registrar/CEO, Nigerian Institute of Oceanography & Marine Research (NIOMR) represented by **Dr. Adegbie Adeshina**, Director of Research & Geology/Geophysics and Mr. Charles Ebuebu, Director General, Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) who was represented by **Mrs. Ayo Tayo-Ogunkorode**, Chief Technical Officer of the Agency in company of the DG's wife, **Mrs. Helen Ebuebu**. They all presented goodwill messages.

Mr Idongesit Udoh, Digital Adviser to the UK Government & Country Lead/ Programme Adviser of the Global Digital Access Programme, Nigeria delivered a paper on "ICT DISRUPTIONS FOR THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE BLUE ECONOMY."

The Panel of Discussants who reviewed the paper presented included: **Vivian Chimezie-Azubuikwe**, Director General, Nigerian Chamber of Shipping (moderator), **Koni Duniya**, President, Female Seafarers Association of Nigeria (FESAN); **Temilade Ogunniyi**, Commercial Manager, AP Moller Terminals; **Engr. Ajibade Hamzat**, Engineering Manager, Radial Circle; **Dr. Adegbie Adeshina**, Director of Research & Geography/Geophysics, NIOMR.

In attendance were also some dignitaries such as but not in the least limited to the following personages; **Jette Bjerrum- the Consul General, Danish Embassy**, **Enoh Ugbona- MD EKOEXCEL**, **Mr. Chris Borha- Badagry Port**, **Mr. & Mrs. Ubong Essien**, **Capt. O.N. Iwebuke**, **Mrs. Eunice Ezeoke**, **Mrs. Grace Kanabe**, **Mrs. Ifeyinwa Akerele**,

GOODWILL MESSAGES

The several goodwill messages are summarised as presented hereunder;

- Expanding from Art Exhibition into Conference was described as a welcome development for which the organisers of AMAE 2022 / 2023 should be commended for **ennobling** the "Silent Advocacy";
- AMAE has provided the platform and the opportunity to converge and discuss how art is interwoven in the Maritime/Blue Economy. The synergies that the two industries portend should be explored to exploit the measureable gains in our developmental strides.
- The Blue Economy estimated at \$296 billion in Nigeria, is a significant economic cornerstone, a potential catalyst for growth, a source of livelihood, and a nexus of innovation, with a myriad of opportunities for diverse careers.
- The Blue Economy in an intricately interwoven symbiotic relationship with the maritime industry creates about 50 million jobs across Africa, and fosters a dynamic ecosystem that enables several socio-economic units like arts and information communication technology to further the statistics.
- The broadcast industry, through innovative content creation, leveraging on cutting-edge technologies, such as virtual reality and augmented reality can contribute to the vibrancy of the Blue Economy.

- The Nigerian Maritime Industry should consciously delve into the application of Artificial Intelligence, AI to its processes for more optimal benefits and in line with current global trends.
- Art is a way of reaching to the consciousness of people. Several Nigerians are sea-blind, therefore Art and the objective deployment of social media, conventional media and all other forms to get people to explore and harness the multiple and unquantifiable value from the marine/blue economy becomes needful and urgent.
- The Port Community System comprises of several linkages with important segment / unit players who can disrupt the system by their actions and inactions. The productivity of the Nigerian Ports can be spiked and boosted if stakeholders in the community play their roles positively. For instance, if PHCN, a member of the Port Community provides consistent power supply to the Ports, it will support the Ports to attain International Maritime Organisation, IMO standards on Vessels' engine running requirements while at berth. If the Navy also deepens its protective/preservative roles, our security reckoning will lift Ports productivity indices and help Nigeria attain winnable status at IMO. A Peer Review of West African Ports indicate a declining status in the fortunes and ratings of the Nigerian Ports due mainly to negative ICT disruptions and non-compliance by the players in the Port Community to several Standard Operating Procedures, SOPs. Stakeholders have continued to be encouraged to train and leverage on ICT systems.

PAPER PRESENTATION

The Paper on the Topic; "ICT Disruptions for the Sustainability of the Blue Economy" was presented by **Idongesit (ID) Udoh** who identified the ICT challenges of the Nigerian maritime industry as;

- Inadequate regulatory framework and link capacity building;
- Lack of infrastructure (political, social and economic)
- Environmental and unregulated practices
- Lack of technological adoption

On ICT Disruptions, he identified three areas that the Nigerian Maritime Industry can leverage on namely;

- Real-Time Monitoring and Surveillance and Security
- Climate Resilience and Predictive Analytics
- Documentation, Storage and Cyber Security

PANEL OF DISCUSSION

The discussion panel was constituted of five persons and the paper presenter. The highlights of the discussions and the compliment of contributions by the conferees is chronicled as follows:

- Agreed that the Nigerian economy is significantly dependent on the maritime industry and hence innovations and developments in technology (ICT), will serve to further the deepening of economic gains for the country.
- Agreed that ICT or AI is a cross-functional tool that can provide seamless interrelationships across niche or sectoral areas, hence a must-use service / system to link up maritime externalities for the purpose of attaining high success rates in deliverables.
- Identified the wide generational gap between the current operators and the upcoming operators, who need to be encouraged to be part of the drive for the ICT change in the Blue Economy
- Agreed that the high inefficiency in the Port System is occasioned by the non-inclusive application of technology (ICT) across the administrative and operational centres of the port system. It was sadly noted that People by-pass port systems and/or are not adopting systems that create value for the Nigerian port system.
- There is urgent need to dismantle bureaucratic processes that are bottlenecks to effective deployment of ICT within the marine and blue economic sector of the economy.
- Lamented that Seafarers in Nigeria rank highest in the world's unemployment ratings and as the expedient link, there should be deliberate effort to reverse this trend and train them adequately on ICT to yield them to the global ship-work demands.

DECISIONS / RESOLUTIONS

In addition to the foregoing deliberations and contributions of conferees, the following resolutions were arrived at;

1. The focus should shift from ICT to the more inclusive Artificial Intelligence (AI) system which has become more pervading as an extension of ICT to catch up with current global systems and realities.
2. There should be collaboration and cooperation among stakeholder organisations which ICT can particularly foster mutually beneficial inter-Governmental relationships with the Marine and Blue Economy sector. An identified synergy between Agriculture and Research Development

organisations and the Marine / Blue economy was a case in point to deepen manufacturing, exportation and employment generation.

3. The need for a more regulated ICT environment is urgent for a proper harmonisation of regulatory - operational linkages in our policy / service delivery system.
4. ICT was recognised as the main disruptive tool for real-time surveillance and security of our business and national entities and for leverages on effective and predictive business analytics that draw on documentation, storage and cyber security aspects.
5. A partnership between maritime universities, institutions schools and young graduates to foster an industry- student relationship that will engender and focus attention to the needs of the Nigeria maritime industry.
6. Automation and digitalization are essential to derive and implement efficiency in the port system. Training programmes on ICT and AI should be given priority attention to entrench technological depth within our Port service delivery.
7. The government and strategic stakeholders should embark on strategic investments like the design of a "Tech-driven" Marine / Blue economy to enhance a sustainable maritime future for Nigeria.
8. There should be increased awareness building for the Arts, encouraging the exploration, exploitation and development of art mediums especially as a tool to foster cultural richness, creativity and visibility to the vast multiplicity of the Blue Economy ecosystem.
9. The AMAE platform should be encouraged and supported as a worthy Art-Conference niche platform to continue to serve the industry with the conferences and art exhibitions on a yearly basis, exploring themes expedient to the growth and development of the Maritime and Blue Economy. Particularly, the support of the Marine and Blue Economy Ministry was enlisted, to co-opt AMAE in its enlightenment campaigns.

Dated: 25th November, 2023

Convener/Programme Director:
African Maritime Art Exhibition, AMAE 2023

Rapporteurs:
Conference Communiqué

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