



# The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



e-newsletter

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## Interview with Engr. Chief M. D. Derefaka FNSE on the Challenges of Potable Water Production & Distribution.

Engr. Chief Mark Daso Derefaka FNSE, is the Executive Director Engineering of the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority Port Harcourt. He is a graduate of Civil Engineering from Loughborough University of Technology, United Kingdom and has been working as a water engineer. He worked in Kano State with the Water Resources and Engineering Construction Agency which is a state government owned body that deals on dams and water supply to the people of Kano State. He worked there for about years before he joined the Niger Delta Basin Development Authority Port Harcourt, under the Federal Ministry of Water Resources.



Engr. Chf. M. D. Derefaka FNSE

**E-Newsletter:** Sir, can you tell us about the challenges of water production and distribution in Rivers State?

**Engr. Derefaka:** We are not confined to Rivers State; we are for the federal government. The challenges are enormous. We cannot allow the situation as it is now, because we have bore holes in every compound which is the worst thing that can happen to us. It is not a good thing because we are depleting the aquifer in our own region, and when we do that eventually we will have problems. What we did during a committee programme with the government is; we divided Rivers State into some zones where we have what we call integrated system. What we need in this country is like what was done in Kano; Lagos is doing it; it is the

integrated system. That is; you have one big station to supply water to so many communities. Port Harcourt can be divided into various zones, and water will be supplied in a regional scheme kind of. When you go to the rural areas, you can have a big dam with the water station, and then supply to various towns. We have petroleum products been carried from Port Harcourt to as far as Kaduna through pipelines; if petroleum products which are difficult materials can be carried that far, water which is the safest can also be carried from Port Harcourt to Bonny. We have fresh water bodies that can be carried from one place to the other using large sizes of pipes. In Port Harcourt here, the existing system at Rumuola which has an integrated system with so many bore holes, takes water from the bore holes and pumps it to Diobu. Diobu which does not have bore holes stores the water, pump it to the overhead tank and distributes to Diobu area and takes some to Moscow Road station. At Moscow Road station, it goes to the tank and distributes to Borokiri and other areas. That is the system that is best for this country and it is obtainable all over the world. Unfortunately, the systems in Port Harcourt broke down and it has remained like that. I think, up till the civil war and indeed after the civil war, we still had pipe-borne water flowing. Nobody had bore-holes but now for each compound there is a bore-hole and this is causing a lot of problems; diseases and all that. People just drill without the knowledge of the right depth. Whatever water they hit, they take, and they think it is good water. When you look at it, it looks clean, yes it is good water but you don't know where it is coming from or its content.

## NSE PH BRANCH EXCO MEMBERS PAYS COURTESY VISIT TO THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF RIVERS STATE, ENGR. TELE IKURU FNSE

On Thursday May 26th 2011, the Executive Committee members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch led by the Chairman Engr. Dr. A. H. Igoni MNSE, paid a courtesy visit to the Deputy Governor of Rivers State Engr. Tele Ikuru FNSE in Government House, Port Harcourt. The EXCO members of NSE PH Branch were warmly received by the Deputy Governor.



L-R: Engr. Goodluck Ikenyiri MNSE (Secretary), Engr. Denis Dania MNSE ( Vice Chairman), Engr. Dr. A. H. Igoni MNSE (Chairman) & Engr. Tele Ikuru FNSE (standing)

Some members of NSE PH Branch EXCO during the courtesy visit to the Deputy Governor of Rivers State

**The Nigerian Society of Engineers' Council Meeting Was Held on Sunday May 22nd 2011 at the Raw Materials Research and Development Council (RMRDC) auditorium in Abuja.**



President of NSE & Chairman of Council Engr. Chief O. A. Ajibola *FNSE* (middle), Deputy President of NSE Engr. M. B. Shehu *FNSE* (left) and the Executive Secretary of NSE Engr. K. A. Amshi *FNSE* during the council meeting.



Some members of Council during the meeting

**Inauguration of NSE Young Engineers Development Committee**



President of NSE Engr. Chief O. A. Ajibola *FNSE* (middle), Deputy President of NSE, Engr. M. B. Shehu *FNSE* (3rd left), Engr. Mrs. Valerie I. Agberagba *FNSE* (3rd right) & members of the NSE Young Engineers Development Committee shortly after the inauguration of the committee by the President of NSE on Saturday May 21st 2011 at the NSE Headquarters, Abuja.

**Interview with Engr. Chief M. D. Derefaka *FNSE***

Drilling borehole is like you drilling oil, the environment becomes unstable which may result to problems in many years to come. Water Board facilities are being controlled by the government. You cannot run a water scheme like that. For instance, in Kano State the water system is given to bodies to run. If we can have private partnership of which the government said it is ready to do, it will be a very good thing for us. Though the challenges are enormous but very simple if engineers would be listened to.

**E-Newsletter:** *Thank you very much sir. What advice do you have for people who drill their own bore-holes in their premises?*

**Engr. Derefaka:** The advice is, though it is common now, but I think it is not a good idea. They are doing it because it is the last resort, because government is not forth coming in providing water for them. I still remember my lecturer in the university Prof. Pickford, he told me that he was disappointed when he came to Nigeria and saw so many tube-wells (water bore holes). I have to tell you the truth that as a student then I didn't know what he was talking about because I didn't know much about bore holes at that time; we only learn it in the class; but when I came back to the country, I saw that tube-wells were used when water can be gotten from dams. I will

advise people not to drill boreholes because they don't even know what they are drinking.

**E-Newsletter:** *Ok sir. But as a last resort for them, what should they do?*

**Engr. Derefaka:** They should try and talk to government; they should come together and plead with government to provide pipe-borne water. There is no alternative to the pipe-borne water system. The bore hole is not an alternative to pipe-borne water. It is not the best. One important thing is the aquifer we have; we don't even know what is even happening to it. The places are all been vibrated and when it is vibrated, you can see collapses here and there. Those of us in the riverine areas are more susceptible to these things, and it is not good. The government should try and provide pipe-borne water; it is not expensive as they think it is.

**E-Newsletter:**  
*Thank you very much sir.*

*Engr. Chief Derefaka *FNSE* & Engr. Otunne Otuneh*



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**NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!**

All members of NSE PH should pay their **Annual Branch Dues of N4,500 for Corporate Members and N6,500 for Fellows to UBA ACC. NO: 0234-031-0000962 (Port Harcourt Main Branch)**. Also pay **National Annual Subscription of N7,500.00 for Corporate Members & N9,500 for Fellows** directly to **AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613** & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank