



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



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Interview with Engr. Chief Aloysius C. Uchime

Engr. Chief Aloysius C. Uchime, is the Chairman Nigerian Institution of Mechanical Engineers Port Harcourt Chapter.

E-Newsletter: *Sir, what can you tell us about manufacturing generally and manufacturing in the country?*

Engr. Uchime: Manufacturing enables goods to be produced on a larger scale using machinery and the appropriate technology. With the rapidly increasing world population and sophistication, there is an increasing demand for businesses to produce goods in large quantities, right quality and at a competitive cost. These are basic requirements for businesses anywhere in the world to survive, grow and be profitable enough to meet their responsibilities. In time a company's ability to meet her social responsibilities will be crucial to her survival in Nigeria. With the world being a global village now a key requirement for the survival of businesses in any part of the world is quality at the right price. Key to maintaining quality assurance at a competitive rate is technology. Many manufacturing in Nigeria still use technologies that are out of date, and this makes some of our goods uncompetitive. Sometimes that survival of such companies is threatened because the spare-parts are no longer being manufactured. Global technology is evolving at a very fast rate so obsolete technology is often discarded. Manufacturing industries cannot thrive without infrastructure. Our local industries cannot compete effectively in this global village if they had to provide their own roads, water and electricity supply. So they challenges being faced by manufacturing in Nigeria are quite enormous.

E-Newsletter: *Do Nigerian manufacturers take quality and standards as priority?*

Engr. Uchime: In business it is the survival of the fittest, so Nigerian manufacturing have no choice but to make quality assurance a priority. Having said this, many are not able to invest in quality because of the enormous challenges. Such companies fail sooner than later. Availability of comprehensive standards and their enforcement by the relevant Government Agencies is another challenge. A lot of cheap and inferior imports are dumped into the Country unabated thereby undermining the



Engr. Chief A. C. Uchime

effort of those striving to adhere to standards. People in the income group (and there are many of them) patronize these cheap import even though they do not last, because of their economic situation.

E-Newsletter: *What are the challenges faced by manufacturers in Nigeria.*

Engr. Uchime: The challenges very depend on whether the manufacturer is small, medium or large scale but there are some challenges common to all. **FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE MANUFACTURERS:** the challenges range from low capital to difficulty in breaking into the market dominated by large scale manufactures. Others are ensuring clean, efficient quality products and acquiring managerial and technical skills. In this category having a strong entrepreneurial spirit, persistence and being focused to satisfying the customer's needs will help a great deal.

FOR LARGE SCALE MANUFACTURERS: There are also limitation of material availability at the right quality and price. **MAINTENANCE** of the machines could also be a challenge in the area of man- power availability and of standard spare- parts. **MAN-POWER AVAILABILITY:** While there are many institutions giving formal training to technologists and technicians, the quality and orientation of these graduates are often questionable. These are need for a lot more to be trained informally on the job to have the required maintenance skills. **STANDARD SPARE -PARTS AND NEED FOR MACHINE TOOLS INDUSTRIES:** Nigerian has an unchecked translocation of machinery that at a time satisfied our immediate needs but later added to a pile of unserviceable junks that have been overtaken by improvements in technology. So their spare-parts are no longer being manufactured. A Country can only be truly developed if she possesses the technologies to produce/ reproduce machines and spare-parts. This starts with the technology to produce two things- bearings and gears. To be able to produce gears and especially Anti - Friction bearings, quality and strict adherence to manufacturing specification and standards in mechanical mass production and manufacturing technology is a must.



On Saturday 31st January 2014, the Executive Committee of the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch had a training on "Effective & Efficient Organization Management in the 21st Century" at the Branch secretariat.



On Wednesday 28 January 2015 members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch attended the 31st Inaugural Lecture of the Rivers State University of Science & Technology, Port Harcourt titled: Engineering & Management of Soil, Water & Waste. The lecture was presented by the Chairman of the Environment Committee of NSE Port Harcourt Branch Engr. Prof. Miebaka J. Ayotamuno (in academic gown).



On Wednesday 28 January 2015, members of the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch attended the 13th Inaugural Lecture of the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. The lecture titled "Dispelling-The Nigerian Experience" was delivered by Engr. Prof. Chris Ahiaikwo in purple gown.

In my opinion, it is unavoidable to fund and develop the base industry which is the machine tools industry. This is the mother industry. A strong sustainable machine tool industry is inevitable. Let me explain that machine tools are defined here as all types of metal cutting and metal forming machines like milling machines. Lathes, shapers, Grinders, Polishers and Drilling machines etc. these are machines that can be used to produce other machines. Until we can mass produce other machines, we shall remain dependent on others. Presently we have isolated machine shops primarily for machining and fabrication but this is not enough, what is needed is a machine tools industry that is an amalgamation of interdependent industries that complement each other. Some of these are: Machine tools manufacturing outfits, Metallurgical industries, Electric cable industries,

Electrical motors and control industries, Chemical and paints industries, Bearing manufacturing outfits, Lubrication and oil industries. Nigeria has an abundance of good brains that can make this possible, but the authorities have not looked hard enough in this direction. We have not adequately utilised our Engineers and some other professionals. Unless and until we do, we remain where we are. I believe that no nation can truly develop faster than her engineers so she must encourage them by challenging them.

E-Newsletter: *Thank you sir.*



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NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE Port Harcourt Branch should pay their Annual Branch Dues of N5000 for Corporate Members and N7,500 for Fellows to UBA Account No. 1000183629 (Port Harcourt Main Branch). Also pay National Annual Subscription of N9,000.00 for Corporate Members & N11,500 for Fellows directly to First Bank Account No. 2020502052 & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made into the bank accounts.