



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

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An Interview with Engr. Dr. E. J. S. Uujamhan *FNSE* on the Effect of Consulting Engineering and Local Content in Nigeria

E-Newsletter: You have been in the Engineering profession for some years and if we say you are a mentor we are not making mistakes. So we want to use this forum to learn from you especially in the aspect of consulting engineering and means of enhancing this local content. Before we proceed can you just tell our reading audience about yourself and your contribution to engineering profession briefly so they can know you?



Engr. Dr. Uujamhan, *FNSE*,

Engr. Uujamhan: Thank you very much my name is Uujamhan Joseph. I have First degree in Mechanical engineering; Master in Petrochemical engineering and a PhD in Fluid Flow and I have been in engineering practice by way of consulting since 1981. With my PhD and practice in the profession I do not know the contributions I have made to engineering. I would rather leave people to say what I have done to the profession. In respect to the topic we have come to discuss today, I think that it is a correct topic for discussion not necessarily because it is 2020 but because local content is the main way by which the old engineer, young engineer can realize himself within in his borders. We do not see how Nigerians can actualize their hope and aspirations in Germany, America or anywhere, but they can realise their potentials more within. This is because consulting engineering like any other thing does not originate from Nigeria, there are many things to learn from other people and I think quite a number of disciplines from the engineering profession have been really understood my many of our people. However, in the area of oil and gas, power, Nigerians have not practiced it for a long time so there is need for strategic partnership. That partnership should be such that qualified Nigerians are involved and learn from them. I also do not see any time that Nigerians will not need foreigners and I do not see any time that foreigners will not need Nigerians there is always collaboration. A lot of research work that is being done abroad, we have to filter down and since we are not doing much research work here it means that in our learning process we have to depend on a larger extent on what have been done by other people that means when we pair with them on the ratio of 50: 50 or 60:40 then we will not have any problem. The second thing is that people make progress on the bases of rating performances. If you have a Nigerian given a job this year and next year he is not given the same type of job, two years, three years he will forget but in other part of the world they are brought by rateability. They have already known before that he had completed one project that he will be given another one. This contractor will be learning gradually. But for the Nigerian engineer or contractor, when he is given the job once he will finish and deliver he will not get another one perhaps for next ten years and to learn in this circumstance it is late. The issue of local content will continue for such a time that we are able to establish ratio up to like 70:30 or 75: 25 or more in favour of Nigerian personnel and provision of facilities.

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much. In the area of strategic partnership, how do you see the provision of enabling environment? For instance the security situation of this country, what do you think that we can do to attract these foreigners in helping us in achieving this vision 2020?

Engr. Uujamhan: When you invite people to come to Nigeria they look at you as people that are not serious for so many reasons. The first thing is that you have not put basic infrastructure in place. Here is the person you want to come to your country; he cannot remember any time electricity failed them but here in Nigeria electricity fails once, twice, thrice in three hours and even for months, he will never take you serious. So by way of infrastructure, there will be no water around you will see people going to fetch water, there are no roads so

certain basic infrastructures are missing but the worst of it all is security. No person would want to leave his own country and come to your own to enter fire even if you are paying in billions of Naira. Security aspect of it is an issue, one of the major areas that are making things difficult for us. I think government effort in this aspect have to be total. Even as they discriminate against Nigerians there are lot of work to do. When I attended an international conference I found out that they are even looking for Engineers. They do not have enough engineers to do their work but here in Nigeria there are enough engineers but there is no job to do. In coming to Nigeria they are afraid that there is no continuity in the job they are coming here to do they cannot build a future. Where there is no infrastructure and incentives, they don't have also the security so these are the discouraging areas and it is not attractive.

E-Newsletter: In your opinion what can government do to eliminate this issue of kidnapping? This is a very serious issue, foreign investors are leaving and interested ones are scared to come.

Engr. Uujamhan: Security is one of the first things we should invest in. Some of the policemen that we have who are supposed to protect us cannot really protect us. There are a small percentage of people in the police force who are arm robbers themselves, except the police force is clean and ready for their job, we cannot go any further. Secondly our government must have a way of employing and providing labour for our people, some of the arm robbers that are out there are there because of frustration, they don't have job. There are numbers of jobs to be done, our roads are bad. We have billions of Naira being kept even unspent in our budget where as construction is the main area in which development is measured. If those people are very busy they will not have time planning evil and if we go all over the world today there is no crane out of five that is not from Dubai, United Arab Emirate. There is no crane in Nigeria; I don't see what is going on. In fact Abuja is slowing down. So our government policy is creating fora for insecurity because they are not doing their job. Some of the budget components that are put in place are not even implemented. Some people are not working, does not justify that people should go on stealing and kidnapping people. There is saying that an idle mind is the devil's workshop. If these people are working there will be less crime. Secondly, the infrastructure we are talking about, the lower level manpower are brick layers, carpenters, welders, etc; they first of all need electricity even barbers and you don't have electricity you cannot get them and you are even polluting the environment with generators and all that. So really our government owes the inhabitants of this nation a lot by making it possible for crime to thrive. And there is need for strategic investment. For us to realize vision 2020 we need to have a massive investment in infrastructure particularly power, road, water and education.

E-Newsletter: Let us look at the consulting engineering firm in this country. Do we have a better base or authentic realistic data base of all consulting firm in this country for auditing, if not what is your opinion? What do you think could be done in this area?

Engr. Uujamhan: I always describe the consulting industry as intellectual arm of the constructing industry and the Association of Consulting Engineers in Nigeria is the resource centre of the data and details of consulting engineers registered with the body in Nigeria. The problem we have is that many of the consulting houses have not obtained the basic requirements. As I said proficiency is held on the basis of performance rate. ISO 9000 says that how do you do this thing? You write it down, the methodology of which you use in doing it you write it down and by the time someone else

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comes into the system he would have known how it is done, even if he has not been there before, it is written down you go in and do. You cannot see such thing in Nigeria, So when you do an audit it is theoretical because there are very few consulting firms that have done the same thing twice in the last five years. So people are running up and down when they see this kind of structure, plan they go there and do it, when the same person goes they move unto that one, you find out that the quality audit which we want to do will not give you a result that is repeatable because by the time you go there some of the people that were working there have left to go and find something else to do. All this happen because we lack bases. The budget of 2008 was approved in July 2008 and there was a supplementary budget in August and another in October and those works have not be done. I work in pipelines and I also work in power and my contractors are not working because they have not been paid, we are trying pushing them and you know you cannot push to their detriment, so it will affect performance, besides one cannot rate them. That is why we are asking government to come back again, the people that are doing these works are Nigerians and we cannot have sustained practices if we are not encouraged. One man can not employ all the people in this country and the civil service does not have the capability to absorb everybody. So if we cannot establish thriving consulting industry it means we cannot have a striving development anywhere. So we want to re-educate our people, "look please improve on consultancy". Those are the people who do planning and monitor the work that has been done to the taste it ought to be. I put a lot of blame on our leadership and I hope our leadership will know that they can improve on both the technical content of our work, the security of our work by involving Nigerians to do works.



Engr. Dr. Uujamhan, FNSE, & Engr. Dr. Ujile

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much for the audience you have given us.

NSE PH BRANCH 2009 1ST QUARTER GENERAL MEETING

NSE-PH Branch held the 2009 1st Quarter General meeting & Technical lecture on 29th January 2009 at the branch secretariat. The technical lecture on Information & Communication Technology in the Niger Delta-The Way Forward was presented by Engr Otunte Otuneh, (MNSE) & Engr Chf G Massari, (FNSE). Highlights of the lecture will be published in the next edition of the e-newsletter



Executive Committee members



Some NSE PH members at the meeting



Engr Otunte Otuneh, MNSE

NSE PH BRANCH MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch has started the process of the production of the 3rd Edition of the Membership Directory. Every member is expected to submit his/her personal data to the administrative secretary with the following information: Name (Surname first), Address (Office/Residential), NSE NO., Field of Engineering, Grade, E-Mail/Mobile Phone No, Other title(s).

First Quarter 2009 Programme of Activity

	MONTH	ACTIVITY	DAY/DATE	TIME	VENUE
FIRST QUARTER	JANUARY	General Meeting- Ratification of 2009 Budget, Committees Composition , Programme of Activities etc.	Thursday 29th	5.00pm	Branch Secretariat
	FEBRUARY	Technical visit to Gbaran Project SPDC New Gas/Oil field in Bayelsa	Saturday 28th	8.00am	Branch Secretariat
	MARCH	Workshop: The use of Engineering software for analysis and Design AutoCad 2009	Monday 16 th – 28 th Sat	9am –5pm	Branch Secretariat
		Seminar for Professional Interview	Thursday 19 th	9am – 5pm	Branch Secretariat
		Symposium: The effect of Corrosion on Engineering facilities & infrastructures	Thursday 26 th	5.00pm	Branch Secretariat

NOTICE! NOTICE!! NOTICE!!!

All members of NSE PH should pay their **annual branch dues** of N4000 and **compulsory levy** of N5000 towards the Engineer Resource Center to UBA ACC. NO: 0802080000194 (Port Harcourt main Branch). Also pay **National Annual Subscription** of N5,500.00 directly to AFRIBANK ACC No. 1420202215613 & forward all tellers to the secretariat for reconciliation. All payments should be made at the Bank