



# The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

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## An Interview with Engr. Dr. Chris Ahiakwo on incessant power outages in Nigeria

*E-newsletter: Before we start, our reading audience will like to know about you and your contributions to the engineering profession.*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** I am Engr. Dr. Chris Ahiakwo. I teach in the Rivers State University of Science and Technology Port Harcourt. I was the Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of the university. Like you know, I am a registered engineer. My contributions to the engineering profession are very enormous. For instance, my work had been on Fault Analysis of the Nigeria network Distribution and my recommendation had been adopted by NEPA (PHCN). What they are doing now is what I proposed in my thesis, the deregulation. The recent training of technical personnel and the deregulation exercise originated from my recommendations. I do hope that if all that were recommended are implemented, there would be improvement in the sector.



Engr. Dr. Chris Ahiakwo

*E-newsletter: That is like how many years ago?*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** That should be about ten years ago.

*E-newsletter: As a former HOD of electrical engineering of RSUST, what is your view on the current power outages in this country?*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** The present power outages of this country is caused first of all by inadequate generation, transmission and poor distribution network and in my mind the only way we can improve the system is making sure that this three sub-sectors of the power system are properly handled. The generation, transmission and the distribution sub-subsectors should be critically looked into technically and financially. Now it is easy to improve power generation system but it is fairly difficult for the transmission and the distribution. I had a study just last week (last week of March). I was at Akwa Ibom State and I found out that the power that is being distributed to the whole Akwa Ibom State is fed by only one feeder which is bad. They were originally designed for three feeders. The other two are bad, they are now feeding on one and as a result of it they are now doing load shading. So what we can now do is the improvement of the transmission subsector which means investment in monetary terms, in the transmission and not only privatizing it to a company but also breaking them into different fragments. For instance each state should be maintained by different companies so that there will be competition all over. The same thing too with the distribution sub sector should be applied. If we do like that there will be improvement and introducing more Independent Power Producers (IPPs). Most of the IPPs can be broken down to the introduction of solar power suppliers. If we can get the government to encourage individuals and even companies to getting their own solar power system, in fact the house owner should be able to install solar power

energy in his house to take care of emergency lighting points. Once we do that we now see that the dependence on NEPA or PHCN will be reduced.

*E-newsletter: You are talking of investment in monetary terms, in the time past the federal government has been telling us they have invested in these areas and they have been pumping in monies amounting to billions of naira and yet we experience failure. What is responsible? Is it mismanagement or the lack of personnel or will? What is your opinion on this?*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** Now, it is the combination of all of them. One misappropriation and lack of political will to deal with defaulters. I will give you an example. Three years ago we were invited to study fault system for NEPA (PHCN) around Enugu area. We did the studies and submitted estimate of what it will take to rectify the fault. So to my greatest surprise the study was diverted to another company and what they used in doing the work that has never been done up till today is four times more than what we proposed that would have been used for that job, but the job is still lingering till today and I am sure that money has been paid out. So these are the things. So mismanagement is part of it and lack of political will to deal with those who are involved.

*E-newsletter: Recently Federal Government said they would be able to generate, transmit, and distribute 6000 Mega Watts by the end of this year. Do you think that it is achievable? Is that enough for the one hundred and forty million citizens of this country?*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** We just pray they realize it first and foremost. If they can realize it we will know that we are getting to somewhere, because in the time past, what the power system of this country has been designed for is 610 MW, and this has not been actualized. It is either at most 20% of that. So if by the end of this year they actualize what they have proposed, we will clap hands for them. But I am seeing a situation where it will be difficult for us to actualize it if that money is invested in thermal generations that we have and even the hydro is not enough but if that money will be invested in different IPPs that will now be hooked to the national grid then we will be getting to somewhere. The orientation of the staff of NEPA (PHCN) has to change and our politicians should stay clear of the process. Nobody should be allowed to divert fund to private accounts.

*E-Newsletters: Probe panels have been setup to investigate. Most times in this country, when panels are setup we don't see the positive result. What is your view on these probe panels?*

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**Dr. Ahiakwo:** Yes. Why we don't have results for probe panels is that it's like whatever thing that is happening as far as fraud is concerned is a network. Because it's a network, one person is being picked up and by the time they start digging on the facts either they will find out that there are also other people involved or other people who are behind the scene will want to block it so the thing will not come to light so that their names will not be mentioned. So fraud in this country is a network, and because of the network nature of fraud, they try to frustrate the effort of those probing them.

*E-Newsletter: We want to thank you for this moment given to us. Before we draw the curtain, what advice do you have for the citizens of this country, the government and those in authority concerning power?*

**Dr. Ahiakwo:** Yes. As far as power is concerned, I will want us (citizens of this country) to be careful with those we put into offices as our representatives in government and the politicians because these things start from them. If we have those who are sound morally and politically with integrity in place they will be able to force discipline and integrity into the society. Once the people we elect are not disciplined and they are people without integrity they will initiate the corrupt practices that is happening in various sectors of our economy including our power industry. But once we have the right people in place, they will be able to checkmate fraud and ensure that the power sector is properly handled. I believe God that we will not continue to remain like this. There will be a change one day. So the power is in us that when we are electing people we open our eyes properly and know those we are voting into positions of trust.

*E-News: Thank you very much. We do hope that when next we call you will give us the audience for the E-Newsletter.*



Engr. Dr. Orumu

**T**he Nigerian Institution of Civil Engineers (NICE) Port Harcourt Chapter now has Engr. Dr. Solomon Teminusi Orumu, MNSE, MNICE as the Year 2009 to Year 2010 Chairman. The investiture took place on Friday 24th April 2009 at the Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch Secretariat. The immediate past chairman of NICE PH chapter Engr. Amateso Emmanuel O., MNSE, MNICE handed over to the new chairman at the event.

**MADAM RACHAEL DORATHY ADANO GOES HOME @ 101**

It was a moment of glory and celebration of life as Madam Rachael Dorathy Adano's body on board a custom built concord limousine car was laid to mother earth at the ripe age of 101 years, on Friday, April 3rd, 2009 at her home town in Oleh in Isoko South Local Government Area of Delta State. The late Madam Adano was born in 1907 to the family of OYOYO in Oleh town and died in 2008. She was survived by five children (3 daughters and 2 sons) amongst whom is Benson. O. Adano, the Managing Director and Chief Executive Director of Adano Engineering Construction Ltd. The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch heartily commiserates with the family of Benson Adano while wishing their late mother a happy rest in the bosom of the Lord.

**NSE PH VISITS NYSC**

Members of the Executive Committee of the Nigeria Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch on Wednesday, 22nd of April 2009 visited the Rivers State National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) secretariat. The ten member team of NSE PH Exco lead by the branch chairman, Engr. Bateim Ogariawo, was received by the state co-ordinator of NYSC Mrs. G. A. Obioha. The branch chairman explained to the state coordinator that the Nigerian Society of Engineers holds in high esteem the professional development of engineers right from the formative stage through the National Youth Service scheme, and expressed dismay at the indiscriminate posting of corps engineers to secondary schools for teaching. He said as part of Nigerian Society of Engineers and the Council for the Regulation of Engineering (practice) in Nigeria (COREN) policy on professional development of engineers, the NYSC is one of the mandatory years of compulsory supervised intensive industrial training scheme (SITSIE) for engineers, and noted that the posting of engineers to teaching derails the scheme. The state Co-ordinator of NYSC Mrs. G. A. Obioha acknowledged the concern of the engineers, particularly the Nigerian Society of Engineers. She explained that the decision of the state directorate to post corps members, including engineers to schools indiscriminately was based on the directive of the Rivers State Government Policy, because of the dire need of man power, by the state government, in secondary schools especially in rural areas, and noted that this was done with great incentives from the state government. She explained that by the policy establishing NYSC, the state government have the power to influence the use of corps members including posting in their state and so she does not have the power to violate such rules. She informed that the state government was bent on the policy without any green light yet to renege irrespective of the great financial burden. She further remarked that 1/3 of the corps member posted to the state are engineers. However, the directorate promised to synergise with the NSE in the organisation of training programmes that would enhance the profession development of corps engineers.



NSE PH EXCO members &amp; NYSC Rivers State coordinator

**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