



# The Nigerian Society of Engineers



## e-newsletter

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An interview with the COREN President, Engr. Habu A. Gumel, FNSE, OON, during the COREN 18<sup>th</sup> Assembly at the International Conference Centre, Abuja

**E-newsletter:** Thank you for the audience you have granted us. We want to look at the theme of the COREN Assembly for this year. You have decided to choose the theme; "Engineering Education and Training- key to Infrastructural Development. How did you come about it? But before then our reading audience would like to know briefly about you.

**President:** Thank you very much. My name is Engr. H. A. Gumel. I am a past president of Nigerian Society of Engineers and presently I am the President of COREN.

**E-Newsletter:** As said earlier on, what prompted the council to choose this theme for the 2009 Assembly?

**President:** We have (LOC) Local organizing committee which was appointed by council. The LOC met and brought about three topics out of these we decided to choose Engineering Education and Training which is very important key to development in any country. For us to have a strong foundation in our profession we have to continually educate ourselves. We have to be kept abreast with recent technology in order to meet up with the rate at which the world is going. This is the main reason for choosing this theme. Both senior and junior engineers should be aware of this fact.

**E-Newsletter:** What is the idea of COREN in terms training/regulation of engineering education in Nigerian universities and other training institutes? Is there any scheme on ground to ensure that this is achieved?

**President:** What we are trying to achieve is to have a solid foundation for our engineering faculties in the universities, so that they don't produce half baked engineers. That is the reason for Accreditation. We do Accreditation in all the universities in Nigeria to ensure that their curriculum is up to standard anywhere in the world and to make sure that our laboratory is well equipped to the standard anywhere in the world otherwise we will be producing half baked engineers. From the statistics of accreditation conducted in Nigeria it is discovered that almost all our universities laboratories are not up to standard. If a university is not accredited by COREN, their graduates cannot practice, and they are not recognized. We held a workshop few weeks ago for all Deans of faculties, to remind them of the importance of maintaining standards in engineering. There is no short cut. I want to appeal to government and private sectors to come to the aid of our universities. Maintaining standards require funding not only

from the government but also from private sectors in terms of industrial training opportunities, equipment and facilities upgrade of our laboratories, and workshops.



Engr. Habu A. Gumel, FNSE, OON

**E-Newsletter:** Let us consider the two schemes that enhance training, Supervised Industrial Training Scheme In Engineering (SITSIE) and Engineering Regulatory Monitoring (ERM). Looking at the situation on ground, can you rate the activities of SITSIE and ERM? What has been the performance of ERM since inception? What are the drawbacks that stalled SITSIE?

**President:** Well the problem with SITSIE is the issue of funding. This program has been approved by the federal government many years ago.

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## Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria , COREN

### Communiqué of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Engineering Assembly August 11 & 12, 2009

The 18<sup>th</sup> edition of Engineering Assembly held at the International Conference Centre, Abuja on August 11 & 12 2009, was attended by the representative of the President and Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces President Umar Musa Yar' Adua, GCFR. It was also attended by the immediate past President of Federal Republic of Nigeria, Engr. Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, FNSE, GCFR and Federal Ministers of Works, Housing and Urban Development, Sports, FCT and Power. Governors of Edo and Yobe States were represented.

There were also over 3,000 engineers, engineering technologists, technicians and craftsmen in attendance. Nine papers were presented and discussed, including one from the immediate past president of the American Society for Engineering Education.

Speakers decried the state of engineering education and infrastructure as fallout of poor funding of engineering faculties, low progression in academic profession, and overuse of inadequate and obsolete training facilities. Challenges such as ill-equipped workshops, obsolete equipment, industrial actions, poor energy supply and limited access to internet resources contribute to the degradation of training in engineering institutions.

All these lead to a decline in the state of engineering training.

In order to improve the situation and restore the status of training that will make our indigenous engineers the key to vision '20-2020' and the future development of our infrastructure, it is recommended that:

- A review of the engineering training curricula to integrate entrepreneurship and programmes aimed at producing global engineers in tune with the Washington Accord, and the provision of legislative backing for internship in engineering is an issue that COREN must pursue with vigour.
- COREN must pursue implementation of the following Presidential directives
- That Engineering contracts signed by the public sector containing provision to employ at least two registered engineers.
- All works departments in the local, state and federal governments must be headed by registered engineers;
- All engineering projects worth up to five hundred million naira (N500m) must be reserved for indigenous Engineering firms.
- The assembly noted the absence of adequate training schools for craftsmen and calls on State Governments to establish at least a technical school with state of the art facilities in each senatorial district.
- The assembly noted that in spite of the contributions of the engineering family, response to its demand for an upward review of remuneration in the public sector has not received adequate attention.



Engr. Dr. Ujile &amp; Engr. Gumel

We have not been able to fund it alone. That is why this issue was raised in the opening ceremony. I'm happy that in the past President (Olusegun Obasanjo) speech, he stated clearly that government should look into this program with the view to allowing it to take off immediately. This program is to help junior engineers as they come out of the universities. All we are asking is that they should make provision in the budget of 2010 so that this program can take off. Everything this program needs is already in place, all we need is funding. As far as ERM is concerned the major problem we have is the collapses happening here and there and the issue of non professionals doing engineering jobs. Presently, ERM has been established in every part of the country. We have provided Toyota Hilux vehicles to enhance logistics. We have bought the voluntary service of senior engineers. What we give them is in a form of allowance because they have taken upon themselves to serve their country and profession. They are charged with the responsibilities to

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inspecting project site, making sure that designs are of standard and are stamped by registered engineers. And to make sure that the supervision is undertaken by qualified engineers. We also have the Investigation Panels who are charged with the responsibility of looking into failed projects like collapses. They investigate the causes and make report. A Tribunal is then set. The tribunal is backed up by the Chief Justice of the Federation. We have some cases pending now very soon we will be looking into them. We are only registered engineers, so we hand over **quack engineers** to the law enforcement agency. Let me use this medium to appeal to the law enforcement agency to look into the matter critically whenever we hand over these people to them. These collapses pain us, they fall back to us, they paint our profession (black) sub-standard. Supervision should start from the design, and then to the site, the laying of foundation until the project is completed. When someone is given the permission to construct a two – storey building they go ahead to convert it to three floors thinking they are cheating government. This is a collective responsibility; we have to work together to achieve sanity in our profession. Quackery is not acceptable in the engineering profession.

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

*for the explanation. Another issue we want us to look at, is that of the Oil and Gas services companies. These collapses are also happening in the oil and gas sector. Cases of oil spillages, gas leakages etc have been reported, perhaps because of corrosion problem that has never been attended to. Is ERM looking into this area? Secondly, is there any thing COREN is doing to ensure that design carried out in country is reviewed within the country, e.g HA-ZOP (hazard and operability)?*

**President:** Beside the ERM team, we have what we call sectoral ERM team. These are senior engineers who were appointed to look into the areas of Oil and Gas, aviation, agriculture, power and so on. This team along with COREN to making sure we get there. Gradually we are penetrating into these areas. COREN checks the qualifications of people that are there. Some of these expatriates that are brought into this country are not even qualified. That is why we have an agreement with the Controller General of Immigration that once the resident permit of any expatriate within this country expires, he must produce his COREN certificate upon renewal of his permit. Yes we accept globalization but not at the detriment of our local professionals. We are not saying that foreign professionals can not work within our country; all we are saying is that the

right, qualified people only should be allowed to practice. In the issue of design you raised, it also cuts across all sectors not only in the Oil and Gas. When project is given to foreign company, they take it back home for the design aspect. This should not be so in all cases. Our professionals have to make input. If they are taking the design over to their place, our professionals have to go along with them. They should also be involved in the building of the project at every level. This will make maintenance easier. Maintenance culture is yet to be established. For every structure you have, provision must be made for maintenance over the years. A lot of thing has gone bad because of no maintenance culture. I am happy to say that all the assembly we have been having, we have been sending our communication to government and we have been pushing them. It is as a result of this push that you heard yesterday about the white paper. The problem we have is the implementation. So we have gone a long way and I'm happy to say that Government is now listening to us.

**E-Newsletter:** Thank you very much for the opportunity you have given us. We do hope that the government, industries and those who are not yet registered with COREN would learn. Once again thank you.



Some engineers at the Port Harcourt International Airport returning from Abuja after the 2009 COREN Assembly on the 13th of August 2009.

Prospective members of NSE in a seminar on the 14th August 2009, in preparation for the professional interview. Inset is Engr. Prof. H. I. Hart addressing them.



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### 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: 080208000194 (Port Harcourt main Branch). Also pay National Annual Subscription of N7,500.00 for 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