



# The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH



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INTERVIEW WITH APWEN PRESIDENT, ENGR. MRS. EGO OJUKWU ON PROSPECTS AND EXPECTATIONS FOR WOMEN ENGINEERS ON 2009 COREN ASSEMBLY THEME

*E-Newsletter: Madam thank you very much for accepting our invitation. The theme of the 2009 COREN Assembly is: 'Engineering Education-Key to Infrastructural Development'. As the Chairperson of the female division of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, what are your prospects and expectations for female members with respect to the 2009 COREN Assembly; considering the attitude of the society and men towards female engineers? However, before we go into our discussion, we would like you to tell our reading audience briefly about yourself and your contributions to the engineering profession.*

**Mrs. E. Ojukwu:** I am Mrs. Ego Ojukwu, a Fellow of the Nigerian Society of engineers, COREN registered. The present president of the Association of professional women Engineers in Nigeria (APWEN), the female division of the NSE. I graduated from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 1973. A Bachelor of engineering degree in electrical/electronic engineering. I finished my pupillage and started work with the Ministry of Aviation. This Ministry later metamorphosed to Federal Aviation Authority then to Federal Air Port Authority of Nigeria. Finally, I was moved to the Nigerian Estate management authority, where I retired as a General Manager in charge of electronic communications. At the time of my retirement, I was in charge of all the electronic communication equipment in all the Nigerian airports. I have contributed my quota to ensuring that they are improved. I was the project manager for satellite that involved fifteen air ports; eight in Nigeria and seven in other African countries. This was sponsored by the European Union. This was the first time aviation industry used satellite communication for their facilities. I want to tell you that it is important to get involved in training and development. If you don't train anybody you will be left behind no matter what you think you know and also continuous training was a tool that was very necessary from my experience in aviation industry. I will like to encourage us that whatever we do in industry, we should really consider training as a very important tool for progress. Thank you.

*E-Newsletter: Thank you madam. When you were the General Manager, you must have put*

*certain structure in place perhaps indoor and out door training. Now that you are no longer there, how do you rate the level of training now both in government and industry?*

**Mrs. E. Ojukwu:** Training is normally considered important but most of the time it is neglected when they are making budget. I must tell you that the topics we were handling during the session this morning (at the COREN ASSEMBLY) you will notice that they were hammering on the importance of training. No matter what one thought he/she studied years ago, if you don't keep on studying you will not get anywhere. I have been asking question at my former place of work, I notice that they are carrying on training but whether they are keeping it at the right rate is what I can not say but I know that when I went into some offices some of them weren't there because they have travelled for one form of training or the other. So I want to encourage training as a very important tool for engineering development.

*E-Newsletter: Now let's look at women engineers in this country, there are certain jobs people feel or look at as exclusively for men. For instance working off-shore, what is APWEN doing to stop this discrimination in the engineering profession?*

**Mrs. E. Ojukwu:** Thank you very much. I want to tell you that one thing that is emphasized in APWEN is that engineering education is not gender sensitive. There is no difference between a man and a woman when it comes to engineering. We have encouraged them and will still encourage them to take up their jobs as professional engineers forgetting what the sex is; because during school days, when exam was set, there was no different exam set for female and if you look closely most of the female did well more than their male counter parts. So anybody that goes to work and look at gender is wasting time. We have encouraged them that even child bearing should not stop them from doing their work. I always give example of myself when I



Engr. Mrs. Ego Ojukwu

was having my children. I dress properly and I climb if there is need to climb and do my job even with pregnancy and I think that is the height of it. If I can do that other women can do likewise. Another example I have given was the threat that we will not get married, that everybody would see us as men. Rather, it is the opposite, we are married to responsible men with children and we are well respected in the society. My first daughter is already an electronic engineer. So I don't see why anybody should be scared. It is your brain and not physical competition. It is what your brain can do for you. It also depends on how you can use your brain to improve the situation in Nigeria that is important.

*E-Newsletter: Let us go into the recruitment of more women into the engineering profession. Today the percentage of women in the engineering profession has increased and it is obvious that such tremendous increment did not just occur out of the blue. Can you tell us the strategy adopted to achieve this goal?*

**Mrs. E. Ojukwu:** Thank you very much. You have hit the nail on the head. We go on Career Talk in schools and we talk to them. We also appear as role model and not a story tale. You know the first female head of service was an engineer and that is the first time an engineer became the head of service of the federation and she is an APWEN member. Such a person in our team when we go for career talk is enough to convince any girl. She can tell that they can go beyond this and as I told you before, some times when we go on career talk some of us are even pregnant. So they can see that even with pregnancy, you can do your work as engineers. So they get encouraged and I'm happy to know that models are coming up. In APWEN we started with less than ten members, now we have seven hundred members.

*E-Newsletter: Thank you very much. You know in Nigeria the percentage of female engineers in politics is very low. Is there anything APWEN is doing to encourage our female engineers to venture into politics?*

**NSE PORT HARCOURT BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009**

On Thursday 24th September 2009, The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch Annual General Meeting (AGM) was well attended by Members and Fellows. At the end of the day's deliberations, new Executive Committee (EXCO) members were elected to run the branch effective January 2010. The newly elected officers were:

S/No	NAMES	DESIGNATION
1	Engr. H. I Igoni, <i>MNSE</i>	Chairman
2	Engr. Denis A. A Dania, <i>MNSE</i>	Vice Chairman
3	Engr. Goodluck Ikenyiri, <i>MNSE</i>	General Secretary
4	Engr. Emmanuel Idoniboye, <i>MNSE</i>	Assistant General Secretary
5	Engr. Minabo Jack, <i>MNSE</i>	Treasurer
6	Engr. (Mrs.) Antonia Ohagwa, <i>MNSE</i>	Financial Secretary
7	Engr. Otunte John Otuenh, <i>MNSE</i>	Publicity Secretary
8	Engr. Rueben N. Okparanma, <i>MNSE</i>	Technical Secretary
9	Engr. Ebitei Charles, <i>MNSE</i>	Assistant Technical Secretary
10	Engr. Orupabo Edward, <i>MNSE</i>	Welfare Secretary
11	Engr. Gibson Belief, <i>MNSE</i>	Internal Auditor
12	Engr. Humphrey Amadi, <i>MNSE</i>	Membership Secretary



Fellows and senior members of the branch at the AGM

In his acceptance speech the new branch chairman elect Engr. Dr. H. Igoni expressed appreciation to senior members and Fellows for training him when he was the vice chairman to become the next branch chairman. He made a promise that his team would not disappoint the branch. We congratulate the new EXCO and wish them God's guidance.



The newly elected EXCO members that will pilot the affairs of the branch in 2010



The branch chairman Engr. Ogariawo & some EXCO members



Engr. A. H. Igoni, *MNSE*, newly elected PH branch chairman, 2010

**INTERVIEW WITH APWEN PRESIDENT, ENGR. MRS. EGO OJUKWU** ...contd. from pg 1



Engr. Dr. Ujile & Engr. Mrs. Ojukwu

**Mrs. E. Ojukwu:** Thank you very much. I'm happy to tell you that one of us is the commissioner of works in Benue state. Besides, during the fiftieth celebration of the Nigeria society of engineers, we received letter to send in names of APWEN members for recognition and award. We recommended her and we are happy that NSE gave her an award. It's a form of encouragement to show us that there is need for us to come out of our shell and go into politics and you know that if you use the meticulous nature of women especially women engineers, if applied to political situation in

Nigeria, the country will move forward.

*E-Newsletter: Thank you very much madam for the audience you have given us. We do hope that our reading audience especially women would benefit from the wealth of your knowledge. Once again we say thank you.*

**The Nigerian Society of Engineers Professional Interview/Examination was held on the 24th — 26th September, 2009.**



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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: 0802080000194 (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