



The Nigerian Society of Engineers

PORT HARCOURT BRANCH

e-newsletter

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Interview with Engr. M. Bulama (FNSE) on the Effect of Energy on the Economy, Human Development and Environment.



Engr. Buluama

E-newsletter: We appreciate the audience given to the e-newsletter NSE PH Branch today at Bauchi at this Yankari 2008. We have considered the problems of energy dearth in the country have constituted and the effect these have on the economy, human development and environment. Before we go into the details, can you tell our reading audience your profile and contributions to the engineering profession?

Engr. Bulama: My name is Engr. Bulama, the 24th president of the Nigerian Society of Engineers.

By the time I wanted to become NSE member I found it difficult to get people to sign my forms as required, so I had to travel far to get my forms signed by financial cooperate members. I participated in forming Maiduguri branch twenty-five years ago, one of the seven registered members at that time and immediately after that they had an election and I became the secretary. So since twenty-five years I have been an active member of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. I obtained my first degree in Civil Engineering, masters in Structural Engineering from ABU and Imperial College respectively. Since that time I have been practicing engineering in the consulting industry. Quite a number of my consulting services are on government projects from the local, state and federal level in addition to private sector projects like the bank industry, hospitals and so on.

E-Newsletter: Thank you very much. It has been a lot of experience, over twenty-one years in practice. Now when we are talking about power though you are a civil/structural engineer but with your interaction with other divisions of the profession and your experience you should be able to know the way forward for this country. In the area of man power development when we are talking of power generation what is your opinion on this? Remember we talk of coal, gas as other sources of power development because inadequate power generation is the problem that has stalled other developmental activities in this country.

Engr. Bulama: Yes, as I have told you my twenty-one years experience have made me to interact with other professional like Mechanical engineers, Electrical engineers, Hospital engineers as well as the Civil and Structural engineers. In addition to the twenty-five years that I have participated in NSE from branch level to national level, I have been relating closely with the energy engineering when it comes to power, infrastructure in general. Two weeks ago I had the opportunity of delivering my lecture as the past president, Nigerian Society of Engineers on bridging infrastructural deficit in Nigeria. The three critical infrastructures that I described consist of Power, Transportation and water. When dealing with power which is energy, I looked at power generation, power transmission and power distribution. I looked at the present situation and the various targets of Government's seven point agenda that government have placed as its main program and also its aim in making Nigeria one of the twentieth developed Nations by the year 2020. I also had the opportunity of serving in the vision 2010 committee. What we have produced, the present capacity which is 4000MW is quite low. During the regime of Olusegun Obasanjo, we tried to talk to some of our colleagues in the various power generating plants and the information we had was that the highest production was 150MW that was real information from our colleagues. By 1999 when a new government came into power most of us had lost hope, by the time the government decided to increase production capacity to 4000MW some of us told our colleagues working there

that it was too low and it is not the kind of thing that government should come and say as a target. That time a country in Africa was producing 42000MW by 1999 and politically at the African level we are talking about Nigeria being among the twentieth developed countries. Then we see our president coming into a new government and declaring about 4000MW which is not up to 10% of what other African country is producing, as a professional one would feel bad. It portrays that some of our colleagues in that sector were not telling the man the truth. It is shameful that 4000MW power generation target should come out from our president for a country of over 130 million people. That time Egypt was producing 26000MW. In terms of prosperity, population, most of these countries cannot be compared with Nigeria. Since 1999 till date we have not been able to achieve half of the 4000MW that was set as a target. In 1996 we had the vision 2010 committee which was unfortunately not implemented by the new government.

Now looking at coal as a source of power generation, we looked at all the possible sources of production, the gas was there, diesel, we abandoned the diesel but most of the towns forty years ago were generating power from diesel that was a possibility. We didn't look at nuclear fifteen years ago because we felt that the potential in coal, hydro, gas, diesel, even the possibilities of various stations the consensus was if you are producing 1600MW fifteen years ago you should look at all the possibilities because yesterday there was various arguments on which source to use. In fact now we should be looking at solar in other to catch and meet the demand of our people we need all the possibilities. You know at the rural level if we possibly develop solar, we don't need to connect all local government and settlements, it is very expensive. You generate power let's say in Lagos or Port Harcourt and you take it to the most remote parts of Nigeria where also the demand is very low, it may be better if you leave them with solar. We need to diversify so that the small amount generated could be optimally utilised. Industries require power to function effectively and reliability could be ascertained. Most of these things we are taking to rural areas as you know it is very difficult to recover the operational cost. So we have the challenge to go out for all these sources. We should look at the volume of what we are producing. The estimation made by Infrastructural Committee of NSE (we had notable engineers in that committee) has shown that Nigeria in the year 2010 (if Nigeria is to be developed as one of the twentieth developed countries) we need **200,000MW**. It is a huge volume and the other thing with the gas is that Nigeria has encouraged the participation of Private sector in the production of Oil and Gas. Although they are talking of joint venture, I'm sure you know of the profit sharing method which has been adopted. In this profit sharing method, when you bring someone for investment and that he provides all the funds he needs alone and agree only to participate in the profit sharing and at the end of it you tell him that you want to use that gas for the production of power in your place, the man has no option than to ask you to buy from him at the international rate because he has to recover his expenses and if you agree to that you are likely going to be producing at a very high cost. Most times we enter into agreements that we are not fully aware of because we are seeing the Gas but we cannot make use of it. You have committed yourself already by agreeing to only participate in profit sharing that is the problem.

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E-Newsletter: That means a lot of policies have to be put in place. In the area of Gas we have failed. Some people projected that the gas should be used but they forget that it takes three years to set up a gas plant, build plant, the laying of pipeline, the distribution network, the maintainability etc. Let us consider one of the states in the South-South Geopolitical zone for example; some politicians embarked on gas turbine projects for the state but there was no engineering in planning and execution; no accurate enquires from the right source so it was a whole failure. A professional would have given them a detail of how to go about it because it requires a lot of parameters. Now the question is; those professionals close to the politicians do they feed the politicians with rightful information?

Engr. Bulama: The challenge you see in everything that has private sector participation is going to be similar to the situation we find ourselves in the oil and gas sector. This is because they are the one controlling the budget and also the corporation. They put some standards that even in our own country we cannot be employed until we meet their standards. Government now has come forward to set the local content committee, all of us are not happy, I always tell people that if we have been able to employ a lot of the youth and trained to be employed in oil and gas they would have been the one protecting a lot of these facilities now because we created a situation whereby they have seen a lot of white people going up and down, they should be employed. We are likely to face this situation, now in the coal, investors are likely to develop the policy. It is not going to be like the Nigerian Coal industry we use to have before. Government is not going to put money and make it a government coal Company. it is likely if you have money or some friends in overseas that have money can lend you and you can go to Orji River environs and start up by the time you do that, you have the money you are likely to employ people that have the skill in that industry and we will come to the point that we may not have problem with maintenance just as we don't have problem of the maintenance of the facilities that are under Shell, Chevron etc but we will have the problem of



Engr. Bulama with Engr. Dr. Ujile during the interview at Bauchi

they will not only demand engineering qualifications, but also some level of experience this is what they are doing to us. Now the man is about thirty or thirty-five years we all know that there is no way that we have achieved that in our local content. In fact if you check thirty-five it is likely to be under twenty and by the time they were saying it was fifteen, it was under ten that was our findings from NSE. This is what is likely to happen because government is likely to invite international coal business men and women to come and develop that ministry. Our problems is not maintaining those facilities, it is having the technology because we should take over entire operation of the ministry.

E-newsletter: Thank you very much. What advice do you have for our engineers especially the senior ones and others so that we can generate the required power all over the place, as to achieve vision 2020?

Engr. Bulama: My advice is that the senior engineers that have the experience should go into these new opportunities that are being offered by the country not only in the power generation area but also in the highways because the government is now giving infrastructural concession for private sector participation. Thanks

UPCOMING EVENT

Technical visit to Gbaran Project SPDC

Date: 28th FEB. 2009

Time: 8:00am


for more detail contact the NSEPH Branch Secretariat



Engr. Ogolo, the Branch Chairman at reception

NSEPH Branch Received Engr. F. Ogolo(FNSE)

The Nigerian Society of Engineers Port Harcourt Branch Exco at its February meeting on Thursday 5th of February received Engr. Ogolo back from Head Quarter after a successful tenure as the Executive secretary of the Nigerian Society of Engineers. The small get together witnessed free speeches from members congratulating him for a job well done. In his response, Engr. F. Ogolo expressed appreciation for the honour given to him by the branch.



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**NIGERIAN SOCIETY OF ENGINEERS,
PORT HARCOURT BRANCH
2009 1st Quarter Programm of Activity**

MONTH	ACTIVITY	DAY/ DATE	TIME	VENUE
J A N U A R Y				
	Technical visit to Gbaran Project SPDC	Saturday 28th	8:00am	Branch Secretariat
F E B R U A R Y				
	Workshop: The use of Engineering software for analysis and Design AutoCad 2009	Monday 16 th – 28 th Sat	9am – 5pm	Branch Secretariat
M A R C H				
	Symposium: The effect of Corrosion on Engineering facilities & infrastructures	Thursday 26 th	5.00pm	Branch Secretariat

Sign: ENGR. Denis A. A. Dania, MNSE, General Secretary

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