

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
STRUCTURE:
THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT &
PRIVATE SECTOR INTERFACE**

BEING A PAPER PRESENTED

BY

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**ON THE OCCASION OF
1ST APAPA ECONOMIC SUMMIT, 2017
HOLDING AT
ROCKVIEW HOTEL, APAPA.**

ON

21-22 NOVEMBER, 2017.

The Chairman of Today's Occasion,

The Honorable Chairman, Apapa Local Government,

Honorable Executive Members of Apapa Local Government,

Respected Members of the High Table,

Gentlemen of the Press,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I consider it a great honor and privilege to be invited to address this respectable audience on the occasion of the 1st Apapa Economic Summit, 2017. I am particularly thrilled that Apapa Local Government is, by this Summit, demonstrating its commitment to the search for new and engaging ways of achieving higher economic performance and raise the bar of its services to the people and establish greater relevance.

To those of us who are players in the private sector of the economy, its is a matter of deep excitement when we find the public sector, namely, government, taking the lead in the search for a partnership that will combine the stability, structure and order of the public sector with the drive and dynamism of action for which the private sector is specially noted.

Of a truth, it has become a widely accepted fact that, in the race for achieving higher economic performance and record inclusive growth, governments, at

whatever level, can no longer do it alone. The public sector achieves more and at greater pace when it engages the private sector actively in a new economic development model through Public-Private Participation initiatives (PPP).

Once again, please accept my commendation for the wisdom and aptness of the choice of theme for this first-ever Apapa Economic Summit.

Lagos State boasts abundant natural endowments and a dense and highly diversified human population. The State's array of endowments include but not limited to vast maritime assets, particularly the presence of two of the largest and busiest seaports in the country, and indeed, in the West African sub-region. These are Apapa and Tinian Island ports. Lagos state is also blessed with a large and dynamic entrepreneurial population of about 20 million, with the largest population density recorded ever on the continent. This unique endowment confers on the state the benefit of a large and attractive consumer market for the vast range of products and services available in the state.

Apapa Local Government is squarely at the center of these vast endowments, natural and man-made, conferring it a special pride of place in the comity of its other 19 peers. A number of great businesses opportunities abound as spin-offs to the presence of the seaports that Apapa LGA can encourage private sector enterprises to take full advantage of, to the guaranteed benefits of all stakeholders. These are the "low-hanging fruits" of maritime business opportunities that the Local Government can create the right conducive enabling environment for to

upscale the level of its economic development. The maritime-based investment opportunities through PPP initiatives include:

- Hospitality and Leisure Entertainment sub-sector
- Transportation and Truck Park Management / Haulage Services
- Warehousing, Packaging and Storage services
- Security and service management systems
- Shop repair
- Insurance
- Seafarers Hostel Accommodation and Entertainment Facilities
- Ship Chandelling Services and Water Supply
- Wastes Disposal
- Tank Farm Management and Ancillary Services
- Admiralty and channel Management sub-sector
- Power and Utilities Services
- Clearing and Forwarding

Prospects for improvement of the economic growth of the local government can certainly be made brighter through sustained collaboration with the private sector aimed at stimulating their interest in investment in the renewal of urban infrastructure, such as transport, power supply, water, waste management, etc. Government must begin to develop measures that will encourage investors to remain and expand within the local government area. One of such areas is

improvements in security, both of the individual, private businesses and the general society. The goal of the Local Government must be well defined, and firmly anchored on the aims to transform it into a model LGA that is productive, sustainable, functional, safe and secure. Clearly, how strongly the LGA supports the success of private enterprise for faster growth will determine how quickly the modernisation plan of the Local Government will come to light.

Already, Apapa Local Government has in recent times shown strong signs of its commitment to a robust transformation agenda. Evidence abounds of sustained improvements in infrastructural development, job creation and security. The local government can even achieve more and become more competitive if it sets its focus on the following measures:

- Seek to diversify its internal revenue-generation base within the context of the most modern and inclusive ideals of IGR practice
- Reduce areas of bureaucratic bottle necks
- Strengthen its creation of enabling environments for private businesses, especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to thrive.

CHALLENGES OF APAPA LGA.

While prospects for the rapid economic growth of the LGA are envisaged to be strong, the challenges on the way to its quick realization are admittedly formidable.

Two of these can be mentioned:

- Uncontrollable demand for expansion of infrastructural arising from rapid population growth.
- Taming the monster of an unprecedented traffic gridlock that has almost totally locked down the economy of the area, robbing it of most of the benefits of its status as an “ocean LGA”.

Finding new and ingenious ways of decongesting the perennial gridlocks on Apapa highways and feeder streets is one sure way of making Apapa LGA attractive to investors, turning it into a preferred destination for business. As things stand currently, the traffic situation can best be described as a development partner’s worst nightmare, inhibiting business and endangering human health and well-being. Bringing the traffic situation quickly back to normalcy will greatly help Apapa regain its status as a leading commercial hub in the state with renewed capacity to fully unlock the growth potentials of the area.

THE WAY FORWARD

As noted earlier, government’s commitment to poverty reduction through sustained economic growth must be expressed through increased support for growth of SMI’s and the general informal sectors of the economy. This means the pathways for dialogue and consultation between the LGA and the business community need to be widened and kept open to ensure continuous growth in volume of its IGR. The task will require clear enunciation of its inclusive strategies, backed up by close adherence to the acknowledged principles and ideas of corporate governance.

Phenomenal economic growth through PPP initiatives is feasible so long as all parties to the arrangement can be held accountable not to default in meeting their counterpart roles and obligations. Also of importance is the need to establish functional and credible monitoring and feedback mechanisms to strengthen investor confidence and trust in the partnership.

I daresay that Apapa LGA has hit the bull's eye in this quest for enhanced economic growth by seeking wider dialogue on the subject through the hosting of this Economic Summit.

I thank you for your attention.