

PPPRA: CONSOLIDATING THE PRESENT AND BUILDING THE FUTURE OF NIGERIA'S DOWNSTREAM SECTOR

It is often said that necessity is the mother of invention. The crises that bedevilled the petroleum products supply chain, especially Premium Motor Spirit (PMS), informed the Federal Government's decision in May 2003 to set up the Petroleum Products Pricing and Regulatory Agency, PPPRA.

Not many Nigerians, especially motorists, would want to recall the harrowing experiences of the past at filling stations across the country, queuing for fuel that was not there, or in few instances where it was available, they could not afford. To address this and other issues associated with the downstream sub-sector of the Oil and Gas industry, the government came up with the PPPRA through an Act of Parliament, and the Agency since inception has been living up to expectations even in the face of daunting challenges.

Successive Boards and Managements in the Agency have remained faithful to the mission and vision of the founding fathers and this has led to a remarkable progress in the downstream sub-sector of Nigeria's oil industry, which the PPPRA is a major Regulator. It is expected that by the time the much-awaited Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB), recently sent back to the National Assembly by President Muhammadu Buhari for review is passed by the Legislature and accented to by the President, the Agency would be further strengthened to perform its role in the downstream sub-sector.

In spite of these challenges, the Agency has continued to record laudable feats to further consolidate its achievements. The last one year has brought remarkable changes and achievements heralding the dawn of a new era in PPPRA. With the support of a formidable Governing Board under the leadership of Muhammad Lawan Buba and a resourceful Management led by Abdulkadir Saidu, the Executive Secretary, the Agency has recorded giant strides that will no doubt reposition it for greater efficiency and better service delivery. Some of these, which are clear institution-building achievements include:

- i. Review and update of the Code of Conduct for Industry Operators.
- ii. Ensuring products availability nationwide through affective regulation and collaboration of all stakeholders especially the NNPC
- iii. Rapid expansion of the domestic LPG market through various advocacy and interventions by the Agency in collaboration with the office of the Vice-President and that of the Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources.

- iv. Sustenance of a conducive investment climate resulting in infrastructural development and job creation. The on-going Dangote refinery construction project is a testimony to this.
- v. Development of competencies and skills of personnel through intensive, sustained training and capacity building programmes embarked upon by the Management.
- vi. Collaboration with other Government Agencies, like the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on public enlightenment and sensitization programmes.
- vii. The Agency is currently developing Customer Service Care Line towards establishment of a call center.
- viii. Digital archiving of documents and ongoing effort towards computerization of work process as regards collation of industry data.

It is disturbing that some media reports ignore these laudable and obvious achievements but instead embark on what appears to be a clear case of campaign of calumny against the Agency and is clear that those persons who choose to turn a blind eye to innovations going on, instead took to various media outlets painting a picture of unhealthy rivalry among government Agencies which does not exist.

PPPRA, under the current Administration has become a foremost Regulatory Agency in the downstream oil and gas sub-sector to reckon with in terms of accurate and reliable data. The Agency has stepped up its oversight function of monitoring, supply and distribution of petroleum products nationwide in collaboration with other Agencies, a trend that elicits applause from motorists and members of the public as the perennial petroleum products scarcity has been confined to dustbins of history.

The current PPPRA Executive Secretary being a seasoned Administrator, on assumption of office with the support of the Governing Board, put square pegs in square holes to 'ensure greater transparency, accountability and efficiency, as well as good governance in line with the change agenda drive of the present administration'.

PPPRA is alive to its responsibilities and is being positioned strategically as a foremost Commercial Regulator in the downstream oil and gas sub-sector. The Agency under the present leadership, enjoys collaboration and mutual working relationship with relevant Ministries and Agencies of government.

Abdulwaheed Odusile

Abuja