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# The Reforms

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7<sup>th</sup> Edition

## BPE Reshaping Public Assets In Line With Nigeria's Economic Recalibration

Following the shifting tides of Nigeria's economic recalibration under **President Bola Ahmed Tinubu**, few institutions are as central - and as strategic - as the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE). Originally conceived to drive Nigeria's privatization and commercialization programs, the BPE under the present administration has evolved into a high-stakes instrument for fiscal consolidation, national asset optimization, and public-private partnership (PPP) deepening.

In this analysis we highlight some of the remarkable steps taken so far by the BPE in delivering its core objectives.

As the federal government charts a bold course away from decades of underperformance in state-owned enterprises (SOEs), BPE has emerged as a core implementation engine of the President's Renewed Hope Agenda - transcending its historical role to embrace more expansive, reform-driven objectives.

### Efficiency and Fiscal Discipline

The BPE's role in prioritizing the rationalization and restructuring of the public sector as part of a broader economic liberalization strategy has been redefined beyond mere divestment to that of transformation agent - tasked with repurposing dormant or underperforming government assets into productive drivers of gross domestic product (GDP) growth and job creation.

In his inaugural speech, the President made it clear: "Our public institutions must work efficiently or give way to private sector innovation."

This statement laid the groundwork for one of the most aggressive realignments in Nigeria's asset management history, with BPE acting as the technical facilitator of state divestiture, PPP project structuring, and commercialization of key federal entities.

Under the leadership of Dr. Ayodeji Gbeleyi, the agency is evolving into a strategic enabler of re-



Mr. Ayodeji Gbeleyi, Director-General of BPE

form - helping unlock value across sectors, expand infrastructure access, and attract private capital to

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**Simplifying TAX and Maximising Revenue**

areas long stifled by public inefficiency.

In line with the administration’s macroeconomic recalibration - marked by the removal of fuel subsidies, exchange rate unification, and fiscal discipline - the BPE is leading a new era of productive partnerships, public asset optimization, and energy sector transformation.

**From Privatization to Value Optimization**

Since its establishment under the 1999 Public Enterprises Act, the BPE has overseen the privatization of over 140 federal enterprises. But today’s mission is broader. Instead of just divesting government ownership, the BPE is helping to mobilize investments, ensure sectoral accountability, and manage public-private partnerships (PPPs) with an eye toward long-term national value.

bit above 14,000MW. So it’s not a tall order to believe that in the near term, 12 to 18 months, we can scale up capacity to probably increase that 5,500 by a minimum of 50 percent, because the generation capacity is there.”

This optimism is driven by the recent unbundling of the Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) and the creation of the Nigerian Independent System Operator (NISO)—an entity now responsible for systems operation, market coordination, and strategic planning of the national grid.

“We will begin to see improved, reliable, and steady power supply... NISO is now fully unbundled from the former transmission company of Nigeria. The TCN is now left with its own licence of transmission service provider, responsible for building and maintaining the national infrastruc-

- but often underperforming - public asset portfolio. This includes:

- The concession of Zungeru Hydropower Plant, a 700MW facility expected to impact millions.
- The repositioning of historic infrastructure such as Tafawa Balewa Square and the National Theatre through PPPs.
- New industrial parks in partnership with state governments and private developers.

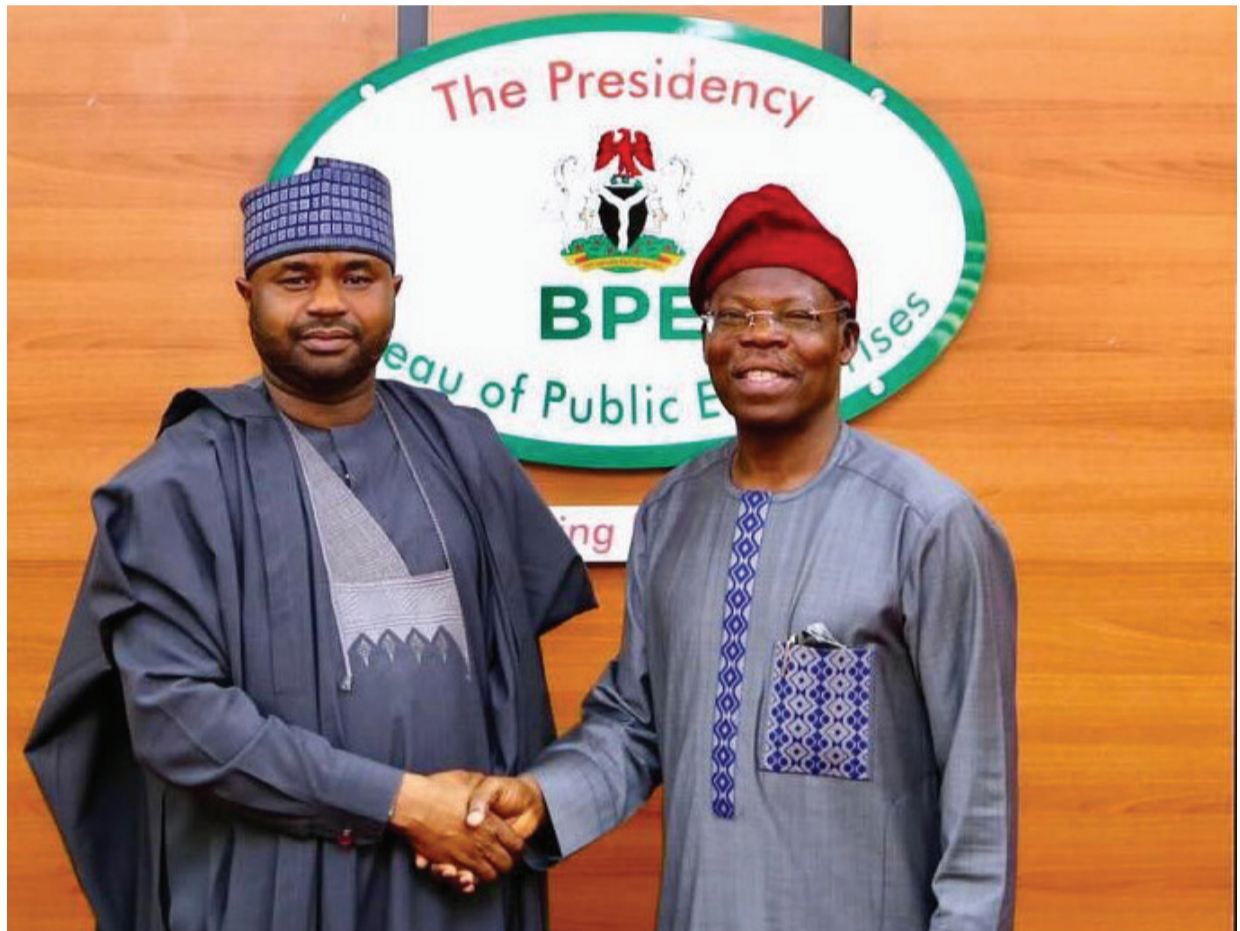
In 2023 alone, the Bureau generated over N190 billion from asset-related transactions and remittances. As part of a wider national asset register initiative, the BPE is identifying assets suitable for leasing, equity restructuring, or reinvestment - rather than outright sale.

**Challenges Remain - but Reforms Are Taking Root**

The BPE’s ambitious agenda does not come without friction. Labor concerns, institutional overlaps (especially with ICRC and MOFI), and public skepticism - especially regarding previous privatizations - remain persistent challenges.

To address these, BPE is pushing for a new Public Enterprises Reform Bill, which will modernize the Bureau’s legal framework, embed transparency tools, and expand powers to enforce performance standards in post-privatization contracts.

Importantly, the Bureau now publishes quarterly updates on project milestones, partner evalua-



L-R: Dr. Zach Adedeji, Executive Chairman of FIRS, with Mr. Ayodeji Gbeleyi, Director-General of BPE, at the bureau’s headoffice in Abuja.

In recent months, the Bureau has supervised concessions in energy, transportation, and industrial infrastructure, and partnered with the Ministry of Finance Incorporated (MOFI) to catalogue and monetize dormant federal assets.

“We are entering a new era where public assets must generate tangible economic value for Nigerians,” Dr. Gbeleyi emphasized recently.

**Energy Sector Reform: A Litmus Test**

Electricity remains Nigeria’s most critical bottleneck to industrial growth. The current available supply is estimated at just 5,500 megawatts (MW) - a fraction of the 14,000MW nameplate capacity of the country’s generation plants.

According to BPE, Nigeria could boost this supply by at least 50% in just 12 to 18 months, if ongoing grid improvements are sustained.

“Compare that with the fact that the total nameplate capacity for generation in the country is a

ture grid,” BPE explained.

**Infrastructure Investment and Metering Reform**

The BPE is also closely aligned with federal efforts to improve electricity distribution, access, and reliability. Backed by \$500 million in World Bank financing, Nigeria is ramping up efforts to upgrade distribution networks and deploy 3.2 million new electricity meters. The government’s own presidential initiative will soon add another 2 to 3 million meters, taking total national coverage toward 7 million new metering points.

“We expect to see significant improvement in terms of electricity access for all Nigerians.”

**Wider Asset Monetization: Concessions, Equity, and Efficiency**

Outside of power, the BPE is focused on maximizing the economic utility of Nigeria’s extensive

**We are entering a new era where public assets must generate tangible economic value for Nigerians**

tions, and concession metrics - an effort aimed at building trust and accountability.

**The Future of BPE: Catalyst, Not Contractor**

What makes this phase of the BPE’s evolution distinct is its centrality to Nigeria’s national recovery and growth plans. As fiscal reforms free up resources and tax modernization boosts revenues, this administration is now betting on efficient asset management to deliver real, on-the-ground transformation.

“The evolution of NISO into a neutral system operator reflects our commitment to reliability, transparency, and neutrality,” Dr. Gbeleyi said, emphasizing that these values are key to investor confidence and public trust.



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**EDITORIAL****FG's VAT Decision Reflects Compassion But Calls For Clearer Fiscal Roadmap**

**R**egarding mounting economic headwinds and global uncertainties, the federal government's choice to maintain the current value added tax (VAT) rate reflects a commendable sense of responsibility to the welfare of its citizens. At a time when poverty is deepening and food insecurity remains a pressing concern, delaying a VAT hike signals leadership that listens; one anchored not only in policy but in people.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its recent Article IV Consultation Report, raised concerns that this decision could cost Nigeria up to 0.5 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) in revenue. Yet, the same report acknowledges the government's valid rationale: with only a fraction of the federal cash transfer programme fully deployed, raising VAT now could worsen the hardship already confronting millions of vulnerable Nigerians. In this light, we believe that the government's stance is both morally defensible and strategically sound.

Nonetheless, the implications of this decision ripple beyond federal coffers. State and local governments - already grappling with limited fiscal space - may bear the brunt of the revenue

shortfall unless other revenue or support structures are quickly activated. This is where strategic clarity becomes urgent. We are of the opinion that while the present course of delaying VAT hike shields the most vulnerable from additional burden, it must be supported by mechanisms that ensure subnational resilience.

To the government's credit, its reform efforts are far from passive. Since 2023, major strides have been made to overhaul Nigeria's tax framework. The modernisation of VAT and company income tax (CIT) regimes, alongside the introduction of digital monitoring tools and tighter exemptions, is already yielding results. In just one year, revenue and grants have grown from 9.8 percent of GDP to 14.4 percent - a significant gain underpinned by currency reforms and improved compliance.

But reform without direction breeds uncertainty. The IMF has rightly pointed to the need for a clearly articulated medium-term revenue strategy. One that outlines concrete timelines for future policy shifts. Such a roadmap which we believe would not only boost investor confidence but also serve as a guiding framework for respon-

sible fiscal planning at all tiers of government.

This is not the moment for hesitation. Inflation although recently drops remains high, public debt is rising, and 41.1 percent of federal revenues now go toward interest payments. The room for error is shrinking. While the decision to delay VAT is justified today, it cannot become an indefinite posture. A transparent, time-bound plan for revenue reform is no longer optional - it is essential.

For this reason, we urge the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms to continue its work with renewed urgency. The administration's commitment must be matched by decisive action, honest communication, and measurable milestones. The goal is not just to shield citizens from pain, but to convert reform into long-term, inclusive progress.

Ultimately, the strength of Nigeria's fiscal strategy would be judged not just by its compassion in the moment, but by its preparedness for tomorrow. The President Tinubu administration has made the right call by choosing empathy over expediency - but now, we believe, the government must back that compassion with a roadmap that charts the way forward.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

That President Tinubu's reforms are part of the Renewed Hope Agenda, designed to reposition Nigeria across critical sectors including education, energy, infrastructure, and innovation.

Stay tuned for more updates on reform milestones, policy impact, and opportunities for Nigerian citizens. Have feedback or questions? Send us an email at: [editor@thereforms.ng](mailto:editor@thereforms.ng)

**Time to Tell Nigeria's Story – The Position of The Reforms Newspaper**

**F**or far too long, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) has been misunderstood, misrepresented, and misquoted – not for a lack of achievements, but for a tragic deficit in communication. Today, *The Reforms*, a National Newspaper, rises not as a mouthpiece, but as a credible national platform to correct the narrative and restore public confidence in Nigeria's reform-driven trajectory.

Let us be blunt: in the past, government's communication structures had been lethargic, inconsistent, and often reactive. Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), despite overseeing groundbreaking reforms across agriculture, power, finance, education, digital innovation, energy, and infrastructure, had largely failed to communicate their successes with clarity and consistency. In their silence, distortions flourished. In their delays, misinformation had taken root.

This was not just a national communication failure – it was a vacuum of narrative power.

It is precisely in this void that *The Reforms* has emerged as a strategic imperative. Our mandate is not to whitewash governments' actions or spread propaganda. We are beholden to spin doctors or political handlers. We are beholden only to the truth – the verifiable, policy-driven, people-impacting truth of Nigeria's reform journey.

The FGN has rightly endorsed *The Reforms* as the non-partisan channel through which MDAs and private sector partners can boldly articulate the ongoing transformation of the Nigerian economy and society. From economic diversification and tax reforms to housing delivery, digital governance, energy transition, and ease of doing business, among others, – we are committed to amplifying facts, not fiction.

Nigeria is not standing still. The country is moving – and moving fast. But without strategic story-

telling rooted in fact and transparency, that movement may be missed or, worse, maligned.

To the MDAs: You are implementing reforms. But reforms do not speak for themselves. You must. And *The Reforms* is here to help you do just that – professionally, objectively, and impactfully.

To the private sector: You are stakeholders in the reform process. Let your voice be heard. Let your innovations and contributions to national development be documented in a newspaper founded on the principle of national interest above noise.

It is time we tell our own story – the Nigerian story – not through borrowed voices or external media filters, but through a deliberate, intelligent platform that understands the nation and its nuances.

This is not a plea. This is a national call to action.

Partner with *The Reforms*. Let the story of Nigeria's rebirth be told by those who live it, lead it, and believe in it.

# Nigeria's Inflation Rate Eases To 22.22% In June: Signs of Recovery Amid Reform Push



Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, Statistician-General of the Federation

By Musa Ibrahim

Amid Nigeria's ongoing wave of economic reforms under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration, new data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) indicates that the country's inflation rate has begun a tentative descent, offering a glimmer of relief to consumers and policymakers alike.

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and Inflation Report for June 2025, Nigeria's headline inflation eased to 22.22%, a notable decline of 0.76 percentage points from the 22.97% recorded in May 2025. The development marks the second consecutive monthly decline and the lowest inflation rate the country has recorded since early 2024.

"This decline reflects the impact of monetary tightening and structural adjustments underway in the economy," said a senior NBS statistician during the report briefing in Abuja. "While the numbers are still high, the trend offers cautious optimism."

## What is Driving the Numbers?

Despite the yearly decline, month-on-month inflation rose slightly to 1.68% in June, up from 1.53% in May, indicating that prices are still increasing - albeit at a slower annual pace. The primary contributors to headline inflation include:

- Food and non-alcoholic beverages (8.89%)
- Restaurants and accommodation services (2.87%)
- Transport (2.37%)

Food inflation, which has historically driven headline rates, eased significantly on a year-on-

year basis to 21.97% which was 18.90 percent points lower - a sharp fall from 40.87% in June 2024. This dramatic decline is largely attributed to a recent rebasing of the CPI, which now better reflects current consumption patterns and economic structures.

"The significant decline in the annual food inflation figure is technically due to the change in the base year."

However, on a month-on-month basis, food prices rose by 3.25%, up from 2.19% in May 2025. Items driving this increase include green peas, fresh pepper, crayfish, tomatoes, and plantain flour - indicating continued price volatility in perishable goods.

## Regional Breakdown

Disaggregated state data highlights stark regional disparities. Borno State recorded the highest year-on-year inflation at 31.63%, followed by Abuja (26.79%) and Benue (25.91%). At the other end of the spectrum, Zamfara (9.90%), Yobe (13.51%), and Sokoto (15.78%) recorded the slowest annual inflation.

In terms of food inflation, Borno again topped

**This decline reflects the impact of monetary tightening and structural adjustments underway in the economy**

the chart at a staggering 47.40%, followed by Ebonyi (30.62%) and Bayelsa (28.64%) - a reminder that while national averages are falling, some states continue to face crippling cost-of-living pressures.

Month-on-month food inflation was highest in Enugu (11.90%), Kwara (9.97%), and Rivers (9.88%), suggesting food insecurity remains a serious concern in some southern and central states.

## The Core Picture

Stripping out volatile farm produce and energy prices, core inflation stood at 22.76% year-on-year in June. This figure is especially relevant to policymakers as it reflects deeper structural price movements unaffected by seasonal food shocks.

The core inflation rate rose by 2.46% month-on-month, up sharply from 1.10% in May - indicating persistent inflationary pressures in housing, education, health, and transport.

Meanwhile, new sub-indices introduced after the CPI rebasing revealed intriguing trends:

- Farm produce prices dropped by 13.3%,
- Energy costs fell by 11.0%,
- Service prices jumped by 3.26% - showing the uneven effect of reforms across economic sectors.

## Inflation and the Reform Context

The easing inflation rate comes on the back of tight monetary policy pursued by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) under Governor Olayemi Cardoso. Key policies include raising the Monetary Policy Rate to 26.75%, halting Ways and Means deficit financing, and unifying exchange rates to reduce FX market distortions.

"We are seeing the early fruits of disciplined policy choices. The numbers show that inflation, though still high, is beginning to respond to macroeconomic tools," said an analyst at a Lagos-based financial advisory firm.

## CPI Rebasing

The June 2025 report also marks the first major inflation reading since the NBS rebased the CPI basket. The agency updated its methodology, shifting the base year from 2009 to 2024, with 2023 as the reference for household spending weights.

Statistician-General of the Federation, Prince Adeyemi Adeniran, noted that the rebasing aligns the inflation metric with the current economic structure. It now includes emerging sectors and accounts for evolving consumption patterns.

"This update allows for more accurate and timely macroeconomic planning. It also provides a better basis for international comparison," Prince Adeniran stated during the press release.

While June's inflation figures offer a positive signal, significant risks remain - particularly in food security, energy pricing, and regional disparities. Structural constraints in logistics, power supply, and FX liquidity continue to exert pressure on household budgets.

Nonetheless, the downward trend in inflation is a welcome development for a government eager to demonstrate reform dividends. As the CBN tightens further and fiscal consolidation continues, analysts will be watching closely to see if Nigeria can sustain this trajectory into the second half of 2025.

# Presidential Adviser Urges Larger Budgets As Path To Economic Renewal, Infrastructure Growth, Poverty Reduction

By Jennete Ugo Anya

As the country navigates a key phase of economic transformation, the call for a larger national budget in 2026 is echoing from the very top. Dr. Tope Fasua, Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Economic Affairs, says the country must think big, spend bold, and build fast - if it hopes to break the cycle of poverty and reposition itself for long-term prosperity.

Speaking at the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) 2025 Mid-Year Review and Outlook Conference recently, Dr. Fasua did not hold back. His virtual presentation, titled 'Half-Year Economic Review and Performance of 2025 Budget: Implications and Opportunities for Business,' was both an analytic and a rallying cry. The message: Nigeria must double down on infrastructure investment and economic restructuring if it wants to lift millions out of what he described as a "vicious circle of multidimensional poverty."

## Poverty and Infrastructure's Direct Link

Citing reports that place 130 million Nigerians in multidimensional poverty, Dr. Fasua was emphatic that this hardship is tightly linked to the country's chronic infrastructure gaps. "Multidimensional poverty is solely about the level of Nigeria's infrastructural development," he said, stressing that progress on roads, schools, power, and healthcare could change those numbers drastically. "If we repeat that same report early next year, we may find that 20 to 30 million people have been lifted out of that poverty," he projected, attributing the potential turnaround to the President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration's increased focus on infrastructure at both federal and state levels.

## New Economic Order Emerging

Dr. Fasua painted a picture of a changing economic structure - one that is shedding dependence on oil exports and building resilience through diversification. Crude oil exports declined by 50% in 2024, he revealed, while Nigeria saved \$15 billion in petroleum imports thanks to improved local refining capacity. That figure dropped to \$10 billion in 2024, and the goal now is to eliminate petroleum imports entirely. "This economy is changing irrespective of our biases," Dr. Fasua declared, pointing to the creative industry and non-oil exports such as cocoa - Nigeria's second-highest export earner in 2024, climbing from \$800 million to \$2.6 billion.

## Budget for the People

While larger national budgets often trigger debate about funding sources and deficit worries, Dr. Fasua believes that perspective is missing the point. "The whole idea of a budget is what you want to do for your people," he said. "I am of the opinion that we need a larger budget. I am hoping that the 2026 budget will be much larger than



Dr. Tope Fasua, Special Adviser to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on Economic Affairs

2025." It is a vision anchored in investing to grow, rather than cutting to survive.

## Made in Nigeria, Backed by Policy

Dr. Fasua also challenged the business community to make the government live up to its "Buy Made in Nigeria" policy, arguing that it is a direct channel for boosting local production and empowering the Naira. "It is a plus and plus for Nigerian businesses," he said. "Position to get the benefits. Remind the government of what it has promised in that policy."

**I am of the opinion that we need a larger budget. I am hoping that the 2026 budget will be much larger than 2025**

## Reimagining the Fiscal Framework

Also speaking at the conference, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele, Chairman of the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, echoed the theme of systemic overhaul. According to him, tax reform is just one piece of the puzzle. His committee is also tackling spending efficiency, revenue from government assets, and constitutional amendments to rebalance fiscal federalism.

"Our analysis suggests that NNPC Limited alone should give government between \$10 billion and \$15 billion every year... that is more than our combined collections from many taxes," Oyedele noted.

He also raised concerns about local government finances, revealing that in 2023, all local governments across Nigeria reported less than N15 billion in total revenue - a number that fails to reflect the taxes citizens pay.

"How do we ask questions on accountability if we do not know what you are doing with your budget?" Mr. Oyedele asked, calling for public access to local government budgets and audited accounts.

For Dr. Fasua and Mr. Oyedele, the moment is ripe for transformation. With reforms in motion, petroleum dependency fading, and infrastructure in focus, 2026 could be a watershed year - if the country dares to dream big with its budget.

The takeaway from the LCCI conference was clear: Nigeria's economy is evolving. The challenge now is to match that evolution with bold policy, bigger investments, and unwavering accountability.



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# NCC Unveils Sweeping Reforms To Drive Nigeria’s Digital Future, Tighten Bulk SMS Oversight, Enable Innovation



Mr. Aminu Maida, Executive Vice Chairman of NCC

By Jennete Ugo Anya

Nigeria is entering a pivotal phase in its digital transformation journey, as the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) rolls out landmark reforms designed to future-proof telecom regulation, expand broadband access, and restore sanity to the increasingly critical Application-to-Person (A2P) messaging ecosystem.

At a high-level stakeholder forum held in Abuja, the NCC revealed that Nigeria’s teledensity had risen to 79.65%, with broadband penetration standing at 48.81% as of May 2025. These indicators not only reflect rapid digital adoption nationwide, but also highlight the urgent need for a regulatory environment that keeps pace with innovation.

“We are now at a turning point where the nature of innovation demands a regulatory paradigm that is not only responsive but enabling,”

said Dr. Aminu Maida, NCC’s Executive Vice Chairman, represented at the event by Barrister Rimini Makama, Executive Commissioner for Stakeholder Management.

### The General Authorisation Framework

To align regulation with the pace of technological change, the NCC introduced the General Authorisation Framework - a new licensing model designed to empower startups, enable experimentation, and ensure public interest is protected as digital services proliferate.

At the heart of the framework are three flexible regulatory tools:

- **Proof-of-Concept (PoC):** For real-world testing of novel solutions before full-scale deployment.
- **Regulatory Sandbox:** A safe testing ground for disruptive ideas like Open RAN and spectrum sharing.
- **Interim Service Authorisation:** For

temporarily licensing emerging services not covered under existing rules.

The draft framework, according to NCC’s Director of Licensing and Authorisation, Usman Mamman, was developed through cross-depart-

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**We are now at a turning point where the nature of innovation demands a regulatory paradigm that is not only responsive but enabling**

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mental collaboration and global benchmarking - drawing lessons from regulatory best practices in the UK and Singapore.

“We studied Ofcom’s Sandbox model and Singapore’s Infocomm testbeds to craft a licensing approach that encourages innovation while safeguarding market integrity,” Mamman noted.

The new framework also aligns with national policy goals, including the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, the National Broadband Plan, and the Nigerian Communications Act 2003. It integrates safeguards like data protection protocols, cybersecurity provisions, and mandatory consumer redress mechanisms.

### Sector Voices Weigh In

Stakeholder input formed a key part of the policy dialogue. Groups like the Industry Consumer Advisory Forum (ICAF) emphasized the need for clearer consumer protection, while MTN Nigeria called for better delineation between interim and full licences to avoid regulatory overlap.

“The final framework will be carefully harmonised with national digital strategies and the real needs of stakeholders,” said Mohammed Yusuf, NCC’s Head of Telecoms Law and Regulation.

The NCC reaffirmed its commitment to transparency and inclusivity, keeping the draft open for public consultation and urging feedback from industry players, civil society, and academia.

### New Rules for A2P Messaging

In parallel with its broader licensing reforms, the NCC also unveiled a targeted framework to overhaul Nigeria’s Application-to-Person (A2P) messaging sector - a crucial space for banking alerts, healthcare reminders, OTPs, and political communications.

The Commission introduced a N10 million, five-year licence for all A2P messaging operators, alongside a directive for centralised routing of international SMS traffic through NCC-approved channels.

“It has been observed that the excessive use of Short Message Service has led to fraud, spam, and illegal activities,” the NCC stated in its explanatory note. “The problem is likely to worsen



Dr. Aminu Maida, Executive Vice Chairman of NCC

as mobile connectivity and digital services continue to grow exponentially.”

The reforms target widespread abuse of bulk messaging systems, including grey routing, phishing scams, and revenue leakages through untracked international traffic. The new rules aim to enhance transparency, secure communication channels, and recover billions in lost telecom revenue.

#### Key Requirements for A2P Licensees:

- Full compliance with data encryption and privacy standards.
- Prohibition of grey routes and unlicensed SMS traffic.
- Mandatory reporting of traffic volumes and pricing to the NCC.
- Transparent interconnection practices with other providers.
- Proven record of ethical, secure messaging operations.

While large corporates and global messaging platforms are expected to welcome the new rules as a path to clearer operations, smaller players may face pressure to consolidate or partner to survive the high compliance costs.

“This is a positive development, but it will change the playing field. Only serious players with clean operations and financial capacity will survive,” said a telecoms consultant in Lagos.

#### Digital Sovereignty, Economic Resilience

The NCC views its licensing overhaul - including the A2P reforms - as part of a broader strategy to strengthen digital sovereignty, boost cybersecurity, and build a resilient innovation economy in Nigeria.

By insisting on local routing and strict licensing, the Commission aims to ensure that sensitive communication data stays within Nigerian jurisdiction, while enhancing law enforcement’s ability to track and prevent digital crimes.

The Commission has launched ongoing consultations with banks, telecom operators, tech firms, and members of the public to fine-tune the rollout. However, NCC insiders affirm that the core principles - compliance, transparency, and security - are non-negotiable.

“We are opening the floor for feedback, but the message is clear: this is not business as usual,” an NCC official said.

#### Toward a Smarter Digital Nigeria

From rethinking how telecom services are licensed, to sanitising the bulk SMS sector, the NCC’s reforms mark a bold step toward a smarter, more inclusive digital Nigeria. As the country prepares for new frontiers - AI-driven platforms, smart cities, and rural broadband expansion - analysts see a regulatory shift that balances innovation with accountability.

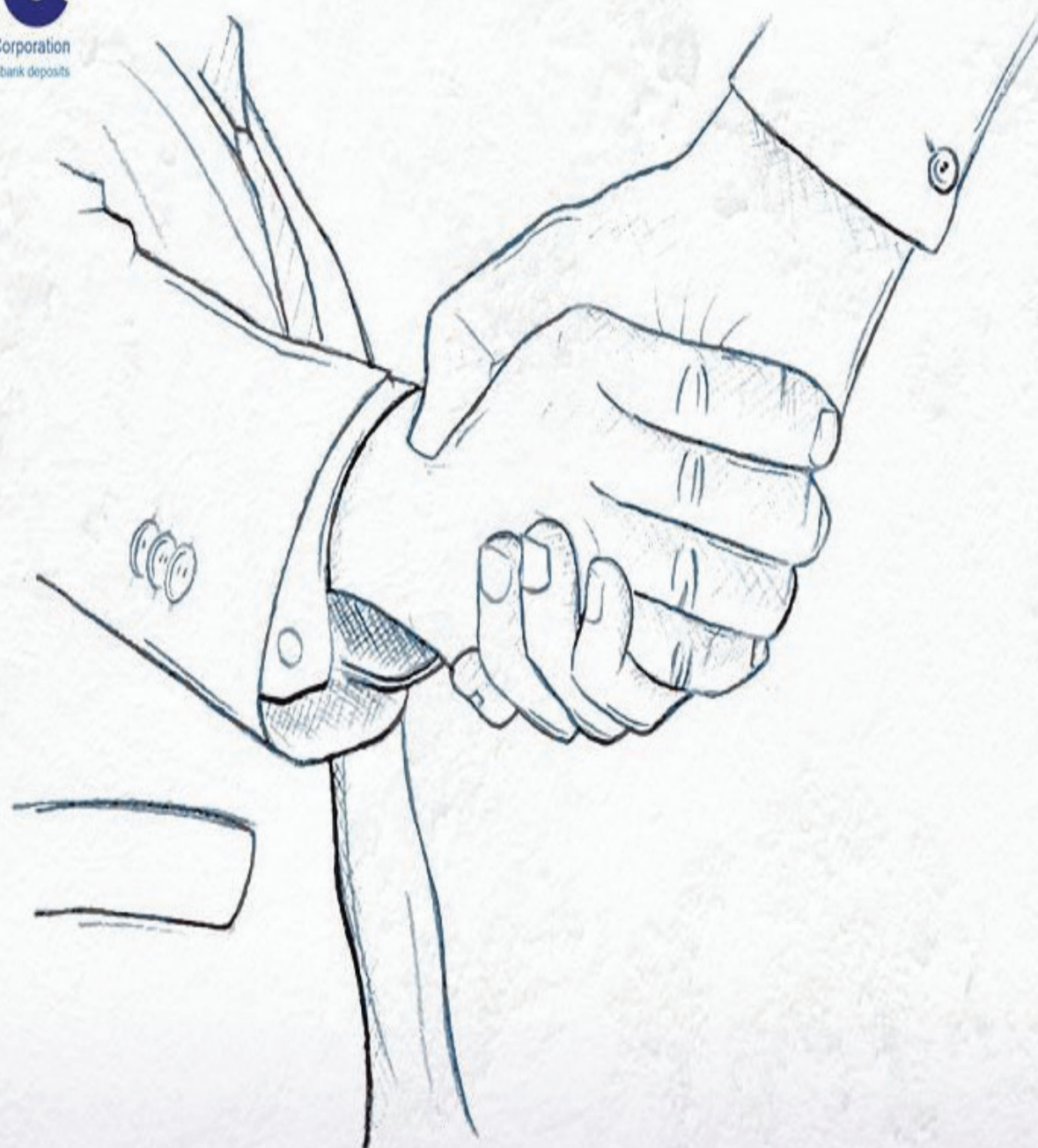
The future of Nigeria’s telecom sector, it seems, is not only being reimagined - it is being decisively restructured.

**The final framework will be carefully harmonised with national digital strategies and the real needs of stakeholders**

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# Naira Gains Signal Recovery As Rewane Says Nigeria Is Leaping Out of Economic Crisis

By Ahmed Ahmed

In what appears to be a ringing endorsement of the federal government's recent economic strategies, Mr. Bismarck Rewane, renowned economist and CEO of Financial Derivatives Company, has declared that Nigeria is fast emerging from the throes of economic instability.

He attributed this turnaround to the bold monetary policy reforms and transparency introduced by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) under the current administration.

Speaking on Channels Television's Business Morning, Mr. Rewane underscored the stabilisation of the naira and a declining inflation rate as proof that Nigeria's economy is not only recovering but doing so with deliberate, disciplined strides.

"The currency has strengthened because of the discipline in the monetary policy framework, explicit inflation targeting, and a more transparent foreign exchange market," Mr. Rewane explained.

In recent months, the naira has shown remarkable resilience, appreciating against major global currencies - a marked shift from the volatility of previous years. As of June 2025, inflation dropped to 22.22%, a significant improvement from the spikes seen throughout 2023 and early 2024.

Mr. Rewane credits this progress to a consistent and coherent macroeconomic strategy, particularly in tightening fiscal leaks and restoring investor confidence.

This optimistic outlook aligns with the broader reforms initiated by the federal government aimed at stabilising the economy and attracting both local and foreign investments. Key among these are foreign exchange liberalisation, subsidy reforms, enhanced revenue collection, and strengthened institutions.

The CBN, under Governor Olayemi Cardoso, has taken bold steps, including upward adjustments to the Monetary Policy Rate (MPR), which currently stands at 27.50%, to curb inflation and defend the naira. These policy measures, though tough, are yielding visible results.

Mr. Rewane also hinted that the apex bank may soon ease its grip slightly by cutting the MPR by 25 basis points at the next Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting, signaling cautious optimism that inflation is becoming more manageable.

"If we did not have that policy discipline, Nigeria's inflation data today would be frightening both domestically and internationally," Mr. Rewane said. "But right now, everybody seems to align that the Nigerian economy is leaping its way out of crisis."

For an economy that faced multiple shocks - from global supply disruptions and oil market fluctuations to structural bottlenecks and fiscal inefficiencies - this resurgence is no small feat. It reflects a growing sense of coordination between monetary and fiscal authorities under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

From subsidy reform to tax policy realignments and the push for economic diversification, the federal government appears intent on recharting the path toward long-term sustainability. These efforts are being bolstered by the Ministry of Finance and the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC), which are ramping up in-



Mr. Bismarck Rewane, CEO of Financial Derivatives Company

investor engagement and productivity-based initiatives.

In all, Mr. Rewane's remarks mirror a growing sentiment that the economic recovery is not just theoretical - it is becoming visible in data, in mar-

kets, and most importantly, in confidence.

If current momentum holds, Nigeria could be on course for a more stable macroeconomic outlook in 2026 and beyond - a reality made possible by the government's steadfast commitment to reform.

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**If we did not have that policy discipline, Nigeria's inflation data today would be frightening both domestically and internationally**

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# FRSC Steps Up As Nigeria Battles Spike In Road Crashes



By Kingsley Benson

In the face of growing concerns over road safety, the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) and the federal government have continued to demonstrate resolve in tackling Nigeria's persistent road traffic challenges. While recent data has shown a spike in road crashes and fatalities, authorities say the numbers reflect both improved data tracking and a renewed urgency to address the root causes.

According to the FRSC, Nigeria recorded 2,650 crashes in the first quarter of 2025, resulting in 1,593 fatalities and 9,298 injuries. While the figures reflect an 8.3% rise in deaths and a 7.4% increase in injuries compared to Q1 2024, experts point out that the trend is also a function of better surveillance, faster emergency response documentation, and an expanding national highway network.

"The figures do not just represent loss - they point to areas where interventions are now being made more proactively," an FRSC spokesperson said. "We are identifying patterns, mapping black spots, and taking action with stakeholders at all levels."

## Rising to the Challenge

Under the current administration, several key reforms have been initiated to support the FRSC in its mission. The agency has recently intensified its crash prevention campaigns, deployed more highway patrol units, and expanded community-based road safety education across the country. New strategies also include technology-based surveillance, emergency response coordination, and inter-agency cooperation with state governments and the Ministry of Works.

"The federal government is investing more than ever in road infrastructure rehabilitation, intelligent traffic management systems, and vehicle inspection reforms," the spokesperson added.

Despite these efforts, tragic incidents continue to occur - a sobering reminder of the scale and com-

plexity of the problem.

In Q1 2025, multiple high-profile crashes were recorded, including:

- A bus crash in Plateau State that claimed 19 lives on January 11.
- A trailer collision in Kwara State on January 22 that killed 18 people.
- A fiery bus crash in Ondo State on February 1 that took 30 lives.
- A collision in Kano on February 14 involving a trailer and a goods vehicle that left 23 dead.

And in June, a tragic accident on the Kano-Zaria Expressway claimed the lives of 22 young athletes, while other fatal crashes occurred in Osun, Jigawa, Ogun, and Lagos states.

## Tackling the Underlying Issues

Authorities are candid about the root causes of these tragedies. A major percentage of the crashes have been attributed to human factors - including wrong-way driving, reckless overtaking, over-speeding, and driving under fatigue or influence.

Patrick Adenusi, Technical Director of Safety Beyond Borders, noted in a phone interview that tanker overloading, non-compliance with safety standards, and driver fatigue remain critical concerns. "We need stronger synergy between the FRSC, oil marketers, and private fleet operators. It is about shared responsibility," he said.

The federal government, through agencies like the Ministry of Transportation and the Nigerian Highway Authority, is already ramping up road maintenance efforts and deploying more visible road signage to reduce crash-prone detours and confusion.

## The Road Ahead: Reforms, Not Rhetoric

With the onset of the rainy season - a known high-risk period for road travel - the FRSC is accelerating preventive strategies. These include:

- Pre-trip vehicle inspections at major terminals.

- Real-time highway monitoring and mobile enforcement teams.

- Driver refresher training, especially for long-haul and interstate drivers.
- State-level partnerships to enforce the use of seat belts and speed limiters.

Stakeholders also expect the second quarter crash statistics - due later this month - to provide insight into the impact of these intensified safety measures.

Meanwhile, the Presidency has reiterated its commitment to ensuring that the nation's roads are not just motorable but also safer for all road users. Ongoing investments in road expansion and intelligent traffic systems under the Federal Government's Infrastructure Renewal Programme are designed to support the FRSC's work in the long term.

## Changing the Narrative

Rather than a signal of failure, many experts argue that the spike in reported crashes reveals the maturity of Nigeria's road safety reporting infrastructure - and a clear-eyed determination to confront the problem head-on.

"The days of underreporting or ignoring crashes are over," said a senior FRSC official. "We are building a culture of accountability, from the roads to the motor parks."

Nigerians are urged to join the effort - by respecting road rules, avoiding dangerous driving habits, and reporting violations. As one campaign slogan aptly puts it: "Road safety is everyone's business."

## Toward Safer Roads, Together

While the road to full traffic safety remains long and winding, what is clear is that the FRSC - backed by the federal government - is not standing idly by. Through a mix of enforcement, infrastructure, education, and technology, the agency is pushing back against a tide of crashes with every tool at its disposal. The journey may be tough, but the direction is right - and the commitment, unwavering.



# NIGERIA FIRST

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**Let us be blunt: in the past, government’s communication structures had been lethargic, inconsistent, and often reactive.**

**MDAs, despite overseeing groundbreaking reforms across agriculture, power, finance, education, digital innovation, energy, and infrastructure, had largely failed to communicate their successes with clarity and consistency. In their silence, distortions flourished. In their delays, misinformation had taken root.**

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The  
Reforms  
Championing good governance. Driving Development

## NOA Emerges As Nigeria's New Game Changer In Anti-Graft Fight



Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu, Director - General of NOA

By Anita Dennis

In an era where Nigeria's fight against corruption demands more than arrests and prosecutions, the National Orientation Agency (NOA) is fast emerging as a silent but strategic powerhouse.

Under the leadership of Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu, the agency is redefining public reorientation, proving that the most effective anti-corruption efforts may begin not with handcuffs, but with hearts and minds.

### From MAMSER to Modern Mobilisation

The journey of NOA is rooted in the bold aspirations of MAMSER - Mass Mobilization for Self Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery - launched in 1987 by the Babangida military regime. Then, the nation was challenged to reject ostentation, bigotry, and corruption. With Prof. Jerry Gana at the helm, MAMSER became a formidable force for civic reawakening.

But when the programme morphed into NOA in 1993, expectations soared. Positioned to replace the Ministry of Information's propaganda machinery, NOA's new mission was to unify the country through civic education, cultural renewal, and public accountability.

Over the years, however, NOA seemed to fade into bureaucratic obscurity - until now.

### A Leadership Renaissance

Mallam Issa-Onilu's appointment as Director-General (DG) has breathed new life into NOA. A media strategist with a deep understanding of Nigerian socio-political psychology, Onilu is transforming NOA into a modern instrument for national renewal.

Through innovations like NOAConnect, NOA TV, NOA Radio, CHEETAH Online, and the Civic Integrity Tracker, the agency is repositioning itself at the center of national consciousness. These platforms provide real-time civic engagement, data on federal government programmes, and digital transparency tools - empowering citizens to hold institutions accountable.

The flagship CHEETAH Online portal, for example, allows users to access Federal Data Management

(FDM) systems, the Nigeria Unity Portal, and even monitor integrity indicators via the Nigerian Integrity System. It's a bold, tech-forward move towards digital citizenship.

### Grassroots Structure, National Impact

With over 3,000 NOA offices spread across Nigeria's 774 local governments, the agency is uniquely placed to lead behavioural change campaigns at scale. The real strength lies in its unmatched grassroots penetration - one that even traditional law enforcement agencies like the EFCC and ICPC cannot claim.

If adequately funded and mobilized, these local units could become Nigeria's most powerful anti-corruption architecture - reaching homes, streets, farms, markets, and minds.

### Behavioural Change: The Missing Link

Recent comments by EFCC Chairman Ola Olukoyede underscore the need for this new strategy. "The fight against corruption is not only about arrest and prosecution. The real work lies in systemic preventive measures," he declared. He lamented that despite countless arrests, corruption persists because behavioural patterns have not changed.

This, precisely, is where NOA fits in. According to Issa-Onilu, the agency has rolled out the NOA Anti-Corruption War Update (NACWU) - a daily intelligence digest tracking 15 corruption-related vulnerability indicators including fear index, rumor density, and digital risk profiles.

"The truth is, unless the mind of the citizen is re-oriented, no policy or programme, no matter how brilliant, will succeed," said Issa-Onilu.

What NOA needs now is more than applause - it needs investment. With sustained funding, structural support, and public-private collaboration, the agency can solidify its position as Nigeria's civic vanguard.

Issa-Onilu's model - anchored in facts, tech, civic media, and real-time engagement - is not just an experiment. It is a blueprint for building a new Nigeria where transparency is not enforced by fear but embraced by conviction.

At a time when Nigeria is searching for a national rebirth, the NOA may well be the compass that leads the way.

## FG Incurs N1, 949bn Gross Tariff Subsidy Shortfall In 2024

By Ahmed Ahmed

The total gross electricity subsidy tariff shortfall incurred by the federal government to the power sector in 2024 amounted to N1, 949 billion.

The debt was incurred as a result of a lower-than-cost-reflective tariff as computed by the commission for the year under review.

According to data sourced from the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission's newly released 2024 Annual Report, the debt was incurred as a result of a lower-than-cost-reflective tariff as computed for the year under review.

As a result, NERC said that the government undertook to cover the resultant gap (between the cost-reflective and allowed tariff) in the form of tariff shortfall funding, which amounted to a total of N1, 949.17 billion in 2024.

The report, however, did not state whether or not the subsidy had to be paid by the federal government.

Further analysis of the report showed that in the first quarter of last year, the gross tariff subsidy incurred by FG was N633 billion, in Q2 2024, the tariff shortfall dropped to about N380 billion, in Q3 same year, the shortfall climbed to N464 billion, and by Q4, the tariff shortfall had climbed further to N471 billion.

This is as the Distribution Companies (Discos) again posted a sharp 40 percent year-on-year revenue increase in April 2025, amid a total billing of N257.57 billion for the month.

The NERC indicated that for the month under consideration, the electricity utility companies raked in N199.85 billion, a record in recent times.

According to NERC, despite the record sum collected, it translated to a collection efficiency of 77.6 percent, an improvement on March's 71.1 percent collection rate, still falling short of the funding needed to ensure full liquidity and sustainability in the Nigerian Electricity Supply Industry (NESI).

The impressive rise in billing occurred despite the total energy received by the Discos dropping to 2,622.46 gigawatt-hours (GWh), a 9.2 percent decrease from the previous month.

Of this, the volume of electricity billed to customers stood at 2,184.61 GWh, a decline of 5.8 percent, signalling that that the revenue jump was not driven by improved energy delivery, but largely by higher end-user tariffs, especially for Band 'A' customers, who are billed what has been described as cost-reflective rates of approximately N209 per kilowatt-hour, following the April 2024 adjustment from the previous N66/kWh.

The tariff reform, which more than tripled the cost of power for Band A customers, was intended to reflect the true cost of service and reduce the federal government's subsidy burden. It also aimed to boost cash flows to Discos and Generation Companies (Gencos) while attracting investor confidence in the sector.

In the first quarter of 2025, total billing in the power sector hit N744.27 billion, with N553.63 billion collected, resulting in a quarterly collection efficiency of 74.4 per cent, down from 77.4 percent recorded in Q4 2024.

Over the same four-month period ending in April, the billing figure rose to about N1.02 trillion, but under-recovery hit N260 billion, reflecting persistent payment challenges among consumers, growing energy poverty, and uneven service delivery.

One of the most pressing concerns remains the Aggregate Technical, Commercial, and Collection (ATC&C) losses, which stood at an average of 39.6 per cent in Q1 2025.

## FIRS Considers Focusing On Clarity, Trust, Digital Ease



Dr. Zach Adedeji, Executive Chairman of FIRS

By Jennete Ugo Anya

Considering Nigeria's shift from traditional enforcement-led tax policies, the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) has unveiled a new strategy that puts education and trust at the heart of Nigeria's tax administration reform.

Speaking at the 2025 Emerging Taxpayers' Group (ETG) Tax Clinic held in Abuja, Dr. Zacch Adedeji, the Executive Chairman of FIRS, emphasised that the agency's approach is no longer about coercion but cooperation - a change he described as "transformative."

"When citizens clearly grasp their tax obligations, rights, and the value of their contributions to national development, compliance is no longer a burden - it becomes a civic responsibility," Dr. Adedeji declared to a packed audience of small business owners, entrepreneurs, and informal sector players.

### From Crackdowns to Conversations

Themed 'Tax Clinic for Tax Clarity,' the event marked a defining moment in how the federal tax authority intends to engage with Nigeria's growing base of emerging taxpayers. Dr. Adedeji reaffirmed that a people-centered tax system - one built on understanding rather than fear - will deliver more sustainable results.

"Tax compliance is not just about enforcement; it is about understanding and trust," he reiterated, adding that the FIRS is committed to making taxation simpler, more transparent, and more inclusive.

The message was clear: enlightenment, not enforcement, is now the lead driver of Nigeria's revenue generation strategy.

### Digital Tools, Simpler Processes

The clinic showcased the deployment of Tax-Pro-Max, FIRS's flagship e-tax platform, along with new taxpayer segmentation models designed to streamline tax obligations for different business

categories.

These innovations, Dr. Adedeji said, were critical in reducing friction, enhancing access, and ensuring fairness in the tax system.

"We are redesigning how taxes are collected - not just through automation, but by tailoring our services to the unique needs of our citizens," he explained.

FIRS officials manned Interactive Support Desks at the clinic, offering on-the-spot assistance to attendees and demystifying tax registration, filing, and dispute resolution processes.

### Bridging the Trust Deficit

One of the most compelling voices at the event was that of Professor Bolaji Owasanoye, who provided insight into the legal frameworks behind tax dispute resolution. He stressed that voluntary compliance thrives in systems where taxpayers believe in the fairness and integrity of the law.

"When taxpayers see fairness, predictability, and redress, they are more willing to comply," Prof Owasanoye noted, citing global best practices.

He highlighted that taxation cannot be divorced from governance. "People will pay when they see what their taxes are doing and trust the institutions collecting them," he said.

### Practical Engagement for Everyday Taxpayers

Beyond policy talk, the clinic was a hands-on engagement platform. It featured:

- Panel discussions on tax compliance barriers and record-keeping best practices
- Advisory desks for real-time issue resolution
- Breakout sessions focused on challenges faced by informal sector businesses and micro enterprises

For many attendees, the experience was their first personal interaction with tax officials that felt consultative rather than confrontational.

## Reforms Nuggets

### Nigeria Meets OPEC Quota For Second Time In 2025

Nigeria's crude oil production rose to 1.505 million barrels per day (mbpd) in June 2025, meeting OPEC's quota for the second time this year.

(Source: OPEC Monthly Oil Market Report)

### Month-on-Month Growth:

The June figure marks a 3.58% increase from May's production of 1.453 mbpd - the highest since January 2025.

### Budget Benchmark Reached:

The current output matches Nigeria's 2025 budget benchmark of 1.5 mbpd, providing relief after months of underperformance.

### Production Trend So Far in 2025:

- January: 1.539 mbpd
- February: 1.46 mbpd
- March: 1.40 mbpd
- April: 1.48 mbpd
- May: 1.45 mbpd
- June: 1.505 mbpd

### Secondary Source Data:

OPEC's secondary data puts June production even higher at 1.547 mbpd, up from 1.528 mbpd in May - a 1.24% increase.

### Africa's Top Producer:

Nigeria retains its position as Africa's leading oil producer, ahead of Algeria (927,000 bpd).

### Crude Price Update:

Global crude prices hover around \$70 per barrel, driven by tightening supply and rising demand.

### OPEC+ Adjustment Coming:

OPEC+ will raise total output by 548,000 bpd in August 2025, increasing production from July's level.

### Global Output Overview:

Total crude oil production by OPEC+ countries averaged 41.56 mbpd in June, a 349,000-bpd month-on-month increase.



## Unlocking Economic Potential Through Reform, Resilience



### REFORM TALKS

with

Enam Obiosio

In a country long burdened by economic inertia, Nigeria definitely is charting a new course because over the past two years, a bold and far-reaching reform agenda has taken root under President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration.

It is an agenda defined not just by ambition, but by difficult choices - ones that many before had promised but few had dared to implement. From removing long-standing fuel subsidies to restructuring fiscal and monetary policy, the Nigerian government is attempting to realign the economy toward inclusive, sustainable growth.

The reforms have not gone unnoticed. The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its 2025 Article IV Consultation with Nigeria, acknowledges the scope of the transformation and the results already emerging. Still, the IMF makes clear: this is just the beginning. The path ahead remains steep, and success will depend on whether the gains of reform reach ordinary Nigerians—and whether the government can cushion the vulnerable from the pains of transition.

"Nigeria's potential is beyond doubt," says Axel Schimmelpfennig, IMF Mission Chief to Nigeria. "But achieving it will require continued reforms and an effective social safety net to carry the most vulnerable along."

#### A Grim Inheritance, A Bold Response

When the Tinubu administration took office in 2023, Nigeria was grappling with a convergence of crises: stagnating growth, rising poverty, food insecurity, and inflation. Between 2014 and 2023, real per capita GDP declined by an average of 0.7% annually. Inflation crossed the 20% mark, while public debt and subsidy burdens left little fiscal space for social or capital investments. Currency instability forced Nigerians to depend on volatile parallel markets.

The government's response was swift - and controversial. Fuel subsidies, which once consumed up to a quarter of Nigeria's budget, were removed. The Central Bank stopped its practice of financing fiscal deficits, while a unified exchange rate regime replaced multiple FX windows. By the end of 2024, net foreign exchange reserves had risen from just under \$4 billion to \$23 billion. Investor confidence returned, credit rating agencies upgraded Nigeria, and a historic return to international capital markets was recorded.

Private sector-led milestones followed. The \$20 billion Dangote Refinery began exporting jet fuel to the U.S. and Saudi Arabia. Nigeria achieved a record trade surplus, and for the first time in decades, local refineries began operating at scale.

Yet, beneath these macro-level successes, the

reality for many Nigerians remains harsh.

#### Reform Without Relief?

The IMF warns that while reforms are necessary, they must be paired with relief for those hit hardest.

"Nigeria lacks an effective social safety net to cushion the impact of shocks on the most vulnerable," notes Christian Ebeke, IMF Resident Representative in Nigeria.

The removal of subsidies, for instance, though economically sound, has made life more difficult for millions already teetering on the edge. The government has responded by expanding cash transfer programs and scaling up food production. Over 280,000 farmers have received subsidies under a new dry season farming initiative. The National Agricultural Development Fund (NADF), now operational, was allocated significant funding to drive mechanization, irrigation, and rural infrastructure.

But many challenges remain. Electricity access



is still limited. Poor roads and logistics chains dampen trade. Health care and education remain underfunded. Without a comprehensive safety net, reform fatigue could set in - diminishing public support and eroding the momentum gained.

#### Three Urgent Priorities

The IMF outlines three strategic imperatives that Nigeria must pursue to consolidate its gains:

##### 1. Inclusive Growth Must Take Center Stage

It is not enough for GDP to grow - it must be inclusive. More Nigerians must feel the impact of reform through jobs, access to finance, and lower cost of living. A fully digitized, scaled-up cash transfer system, capable of supporting the poorest households, is urgently needed.

##### 2. A Stronger Budget Framework Is Crucial

Nigeria needs realistic, transparent budgeting. Fiscal assumptions must match economic real-

ities. Public expenditure must be tracked and measured for performance. Ministries must be accountable not just for spending but for delivering value. As the IMF warns, "delivering effective investments in people and infrastructure requires strong expenditure management."

##### 3. Domestic Revenue Mobilization Is Non-Negotiable

Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio remains among the lowest in the world. The government must continue to expand the tax base and ensure that everyone pays their fair share. While 2024 saw non-oil revenues rise to N21.6 trillion, more effort is needed. Until revenue improves, the fiscal room to invest in infrastructure and social programs will remain constrained.

##### Not Just a Turning Point - A Test of Leadership

President Tinubu's reforms have bought Nigeria time and credibility. But credibility is fragile. The next phase - delivery - is the true test of leadership.

The Compendium of Reforms released by Dr. Tope Fasua, Special Adviser To The President On Economic Affairs Through The Office Of The Vice President, in May 2025 paints a hopeful picture: 160,000 new hectares cultivated, \$6 billion balance of payment surplus, N132 billion budgeted for agriculture, N55 billion for student loans, and N100 billion set aside for consumer credit. But behind each number are citizens whose lives either improve - or remain unchanged.

Nigeria is not short on ambition or blueprints. What it now needs is institutional strength, public trust, and a moral commitment to ensure that reforms work for everyone - not just the elite.

As Schimmelpfennig cautions, "The right policies can help Nigeria realize its potential as an African and global economic powerhouse—but only if they are sustained and inclusive."

Nigeria's moment is here. Whether it will rise, stumble, or stall depends on the courage of its leaders—and the resilience of its people.

**... delivering effective investments in people and infrastructure requires strong expenditure management**