



L-R: Sen. Abubakar Bagudu, Honourable Minister of Budget & Economic Planning; Mr Kola Adewusi, Deputy Governor of Osun State; Hon Ekperikpe Ekpo, Honourable Minister of Gas; Prof Abubakar Sulaiman, Director- General National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies; Sen Hope Uzodinma, Governor of Imo State; Sen. Godswill Akpabio, Senate President ; Vice President Kashim Shettima; Mr Lucky Aiyedatiwa, Governor of Ondo State; Hajija Mariya Bunkure, Honourable Minister Of State FCT, and Mr Taiwo Oyedele, Chairman Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, during the closing ceremony of the 2nd Edition of National Economic Council Conference at the State House Conference Centre, Abuja .

Photo credit: State House

Stability Claimed, Liquidity Risks Persist

● Claims Of Macro Calm Mask Unresolved Funding Pressures, With Election Spending And Weak Real-Sector Flow Threatening The Durability Of Recent Gains

By Kingsley Ani

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) stated that recent monetary and foreign exchange reforms have stabilised the macroeconomic environment, strengthened the naira and restored investor confidence. The claims were presented at the National Economic Council conference, alongside federal fiscal officials who linked reforms to improved state finances and long-term growth ambitions.

Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, the CBN Governor: "We are now net buyers in

the foreign exchange market... the premium between official and parallel market rates has collapsed to under two percent."

He however warned: "We are not yet out of the woods... the election cycle is another risk."

Senator Abubakar Bagudu, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning: "Nigeria's reforms have become a global reference."

Mrs. Doris Uzoka-Anite, Minister of State for Finance: "The country requires 10 per cent annual growth over the next decade to actualise a \$1 trillion economy."

CONT. ON PG 3



Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, Governor of CBN

FG Targets EV Industry Ownership

By Hannah Yemisi

The Federal Government signed an agreement with South Korea's Asia Economic Development Committee (AEDC) to establish Africa's first electric vehicle manufacturing plant. The project begins with assembly and progresses toward full local production, targeting capacity of up to 300,000 vehicles annually and about 10,000 jobs.

The deal was executed by Honourable Minister of State for Industry, Sen. John Enoh and AEDC Chairman, Yoon Suk-hun, as part of a broader clean mobility and industrialisation strategy.

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NEC Moves Reform From Theory To Measurable Public Outcomes

● How NEC Is Turning Economic Reform from Policy Intent into State-Level Delivery on Jobs, Security, Industrial Growth and Everyday Welfare Outcomes

The National Economic Council (NEC) conference in Abuja marked a quiet but decisive change in tone. Economic change was no longer framed as something to be explained or defended, but as something that must be felt. Leaders at both federal and state levels aligned around a simple test: do these choices improve how people live and work? That question now anchors discussions on revenue, security, production and social spending. Responsibility is also being redistributed. While the centre

provides stability and direction, governors are expected to turn policy into visible progress within their local economies. The message was clear. Progress will now be judged by outcomes on the ground, not by the elegance of policy design. **Enam Obiosio** writes ...

At the recent National Economic Council (NEC) conference, federal and state authorities collectively repositioned economic reform as a delivery obligation tied to citizen welfare.

CONT. ON PG 2

Tax Administration Becomes Nigeria's Primary Fiscal Engine

By Olumide Johnson

The Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) set a N40.7 trillion revenue

target for 2026 at its management retreat in Abuja, representing a 44 percent increase over the N28.29 trillion collected in 2025. The target continues a

multi-year expansion from N6.4 trillion in 2021. Executive Director, Government and Large Taxpayers, Amina Ado, said that the perfor-

mance was operational rather than inflation driven: "We were given a target of N25.2 trillion... at the end of last year we were able to deliv-

er N28.23 trillion... we achieved 112% of our target."

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MACROECONOMIC

CONT. FRM COVER

The presidency directed that macroeconomic measures must translate into employment, infrastructure and welfare gains, while states were tasked with tax harmonisation, human capital spending, domestic production expansion and non-kinetic security responses anchored on poverty reduction.

MEMO

The conference converted reform from a credibility narrative into a performance contract. President Bola Tinubu’s position, delivered by Senate President Godswill Akpabio, was explicit that macroeconomic policy will now be judged by tangible welfare outcomes rather than fiscal metrics alone.

He stated, “The decisions we make here must translate into visible improvements in the daily lives of all Nigerians, in jobs created, businesses supported, roads constructed, schools strengthened, healthcare improved and opportunities expanded.”

He further emphasised that policy continuity is essential, saying, “Reform is not an event. It is a process. It requires courage, patience and consistency.”

And he added a political accountability benchmark, “The renewed hope agenda is not a slogan. It is a national commitment, and that commitment demands that we move beyond dialogue to delivery.”

The implication is structural. Reform success is no longer measured at the federal treasury but at the subnational economy. The centre stabilises the macro framework, states must now transmit growth.

The tax harmonisation directive reveals the economic logic. Nigeria’s fragmented internal market imposes transaction costs that suppress productivity. Aligning state tax regimes effectively builds a domestic common market, lowering operational friction for businesses and improving capital efficiency.

Security policy was also reframed. The council linked insecurity to labour market failure, not just policing capacity, recommending non-kinetic interventions targeting unemployment and poverty. This embeds economic policy in-



L-R: Vice President Kashim Shettima, and Sen. Godswill Akpabio, Senate President, during the recent NEC conference in Abuja.

side the national security strategy.

On energy, the directive to expand domestic refining signals a shift from revenue extraction to industrial ecosystem development, reducing foreign exchange leakages and strengthening value chains.

State governors reinforced the investment narrative. Ogun State Governor, Dapo Abiodun, said: “There’s stability in the forex market. There’s confidence in holding the naira. Macroeconomic policies are the biggest enabler of investor confidence.”

Lagos State Governor, Babajide Sanwo-Olu, emphasised implementation risk, noting that citizens only benefit when resolutions are executed beyond government circles.

Collectively, the statements show the reform phase is shifting from stabilisation to transmission. The central government provides policy credibility, states now carry execution credi-

bility.

DATA BOX

- Conference duration: 2 days
- Delegates: over 300
- States with harmonised tax law passed: 12
- States with pending tax bills: 13
- States yet to commence: 11
- Policy horizon: National Development Plan 2026-2030

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Winners

Domestic manufacturers, infrastructure developers, logistics operators, formal sector SMEs, institutional investors.

Losers

Import arbitrage traders, fragmented local tax collectors, informal levies ecosystem, pure trading intermediaries.

POLICY SIGNALS

- Macroeconomic reform entering delivery phase.
- Security policy merging with economic inclusion.
- Energy strategy shifting toward industrialisation.
- Federalism evolving toward coordinated taxation.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

- Macro stability becoming baseline assumption.
- Return potential tied to state-level execution quality.
- Production and infrastructure sectors move to centre of opportunity set.

RISK RADAR

- Uneven state implementation capacity.
- Resistance to tax harmonisation.
- Lag between policy adoption and welfare impact.
- Infrastructure bottlenecks limiting domestic production gains.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Policy Direction

Shift from reform announcements to visible economic impact.

Fiscal Governance

Nationwide harmonised tax framework and coordinated fiscal federalism.

Security Framework

Economic inclusion as part of internal security architecture.

Industrial Strategy

Domestic refining, value-chain expansion and import substitution.

Growth Model

Bankable projects across agriculture, manufacturing, logistics, energy and digital infrastructure.

Human Capital

Higher per capita spending on education, health and youth employment.

Investment Climate

Stronger public-private-subnational partnerships and concessional financing.

Stability Claimed, Liquidity Risks Persist

● Claims Of Macro Calm Mask Unresolved Funding Pressures, With Election Spending And Weak Real-Sector Flow Threatening The Durability Of Recent Gains

CONT. FRM COVER

MEMO

The reforms represent a shift from crisis management to credibility management.

Macroeconomic stabilisation here is less about growth acceleration and more about rebuilding price signals. Exchange rate convergence and reserve accumulation restore transactional confidence, but they do not automatically restore productive capacity. Stability is a nec-

Stability has been engineered through constraint; its durability depends on political restraint rather than monetary capability



Mr. Olayemi Cardoso Governor of CBN

essary precondition for investment, not evidence of investment.

The sharp contraction in deficit monetisation indicates a policy regime change. Reducing fiscal dominance strengthens monetary transmission but transfers adjustment pressure to households and firms through higher borrowing costs. Stability therefore reflects discipline rather than expansion.

The election cycle warning reveals the fragility of the gains. Liquidity surges historically undermine disinflation paths. The risk is not policy design but policy continuity. Nigeria's inflation history shows reversals typically occur when political spending overrides monetary restraint.

The roadmap's emphasis on orthodox policy signals a long term re anchoring of expectations. However, credibility must

persist across political cycles to convert stability into sustained capital formation. Without that, stability becomes episodic rather than structural.

DATA BOX

Balance of payments surplus: \$3.42bn (Q3 2025)

Inflation: 15.15% (DEC 2025)

External reserves: \$49bn

Ways and Means to GDP: 8.68% (2022) → 0.69%

MPR tightening: +875 basis points

Past FX backlog: over \$7bn

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Long term investors requiring predictable FX pricing
- Banks benefiting from recapitalisation

framework

Portfolio investors seeking real returns

Losers

- Highly leveraged borrowers facing high rates
- Speculative FX holders
- Short term consumption dependent sectors

POLICY SIGNALS

- Orthodox monetary policy replacing intervention driven framework
- Fiscal and monetary coordination prioritised over stimulus
- Credibility positioned as primary economic policy objective

INVESTOR SIGNAL

- Improved FX transparency reduces repatriation risk
- Policy credibility improving but politically sensitive
- Investment horizon shifts from tactical to medium term

RISK RADAR

- 1 Election related liquidity expansion
- 2 Inflation relapse under fiscal pressure
- 3 External shocks from global trade tensions
- 4 Reform fatigue across political actors
- 5 Weak transmission to real sector growth

Stability has been engineered through constraint; its durability depends on political restraint rather than monetary capability.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Core policy actions:

- Monetary tightening of 875 basis points
- FX market unification and backlog clearance
- Reduction of Ways and Means financing to 0.69% of GDP
- Banking recapitalisation programme

Africa's Energy Talk Is Mature, Delivery Still Infant

At yet another global energy gathering, we heard Africa speak with clarity. The difference this time was that the message sounded less diplomatic and more diagnostic. The continent's problem is no longer resource scarcity, it is coordination failure.

When NNPC Ltd Group Chief Executive Officer, Bashir Bayo Ojulari, argued in London that Africa must align infrastructure, policy and capital to secure its energy future, we were effectively being told what markets have priced for decades. We do not lack hydrocarbons, gas reserves, sunlight, or wind corridors. We lack systems.

Our persistent mistake in African energy strategy has been the belief that national sovereignty equals national sufficiency. Each country wants a refinery, a pipeline network, a pricing regime and an export strategy designed around domestic political cycles. The result is fragmentation so severe that we behave like 54 isolated energy islands sitting on a shared geological basin.

The economic consequence is predictable. Investors price political risk, regulatory divergence, transit uncertainty and contract enforceability into projects before drilling even begins. By the time financing closes, African energy is already structurally expensive, not because geology is complex but because governance is.

Ojulari's emphasis on shared infrastructure therefore goes beyond engineering. It is fundamentally about cost of capital. A pipeline that crosses five jurisdictions without harmonised transit rules is not infrastructure, it is a legal exposure. Financing institutions understand this, which explains why African projects often reach memoranda of understanding but

rarely financial close.

The Nigeria–Morocco Gas Pipeline and the expansion of the West African Gas Pipeline illustrate the paradox. Technically viable, commercially relevant, geopolitically beneficial, yet perpetually slow. The bottleneck has never been steel in the ground but alignment above ground. Tariffs, guarantees, currency convertibility, dispute resolution and security responsibilities remain negotiated repeatedly rather than standardised once.

Energy markets reward predictability more than potential. Europe buys gas not only because suppliers have molecules but because they have rules. We have molecules without rules coherence. That is why we export raw energy while importing refined energy products at a premium. The inefficiency is institutional, not geological.

The call for harmonised pricing frameworks, transit protocols and technical regulations therefore targets the core issue. When regulatory regimes differ widely across borders, capital does not disappear, it migrates. Investors simply fund jurisdictions where project timelines can be modelled with confidence. We then interpret this migration as a global capital shortage instead of a credibility shortage.

The Petroleum Industry Act in Nigeria is frequently cited as reform. Its true value is not domestic improvement but regional demonstration. It signals that stable rules unlock dormant investment appetite. The logical next step is continental replication, otherwise we reset investor confidence independently and repeatedly, a costly redundancy.

The proposal for joint investment platforms among National Oil Companies is equally prag-

matic. Individual African NOCs negotiating separately against global capital pools resemble small buyers facing wholesale markets. Collective balance sheets change negotiating power, reduce financing premiums and transform projects from sovereign risk into regional assets.

Gas, as Ojulari suggested, sits at the centre of this strategy. For us, gas is not merely a transition fuel but an industrialisation fuel. Power stability determines manufacturing viability, fertiliser production determines agricultural productivity, and both determine economic diversification. Without gas integration, we debate energy transition while lacking energy foundation.

The climate dimension further complicates matters. We contribute marginally to global emissions yet face pressure to decarbonise without industrialising. The only defensible pathway is coordinated development, producing energy efficiently while lowering carbon intensity gradually. Fragmented systems cannot achieve this balance because scale efficiencies never materialise.

Regional diplomacy therefore becomes energy policy by another name. Cross border infrastructure requires security cooperation, fiscal coordination and long-term political continuity. Where political horizons remain short, infrastructure horizons collapse.

The lesson from Ojulari's remarks is uncomfortable but necessary. Our energy challenge is no longer technical competence or resource availability. It is institutional courage. We must surrender a measure of national control to gain continental stability. Markets already demand it, capital already prices it, and industrialisation depends on it.

EDITOR'S NOTES

Why StakeBridge Exists

Nigeria does not suffer from a lack of information. It suffers from a lack of clarity. Every reform cycle produces volumes of data, statements, and commentary, yet ordinary readers, investors, and decision-makers are often left asking the same questions, what actually changed, who gained, who lost, and what happens next.

StakeBridge Media exists to answer those questions without noise.

We are not economists writing for economists. We are journalists who believe that policy, markets, and corporate decisions should be explained in plain language, anchored in evidence, and framed around consequences. Our reporting begins where traditional coverage often stops, at the decision point.

That is why we practise Decision Memo Journalism.

Each story asks a simple set of questions. What decision was made. Why it mattered. Who benefited. Who bore the cost. What signal readers should watch next. This structure is not a style choice. It is a discipline.

Nigeria's economy is too important for vague optimism or abstract critique. Citizens deserve reporting that respects facts without hiding behind jargon. Investors deserve context without hype. Policymakers deserve scrutiny without hostility.

StakeBridge is a bridge between data and meaning. We did not chase headlines. We traced outcomes. We showed how inflation slowed but food prices stayed high. How FX calmed but confidence remained conditional. How reforms stabilised the system but jobs lagged behind.

This is the work we will continue to do.

Not to predict the future, but to clarify the choices shaping it.

Enam Obiosio

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Bol Opens Non-Interest Window, Development Finance Targets Untapped Capital

• Unlocking Preference-Driven Capital For Msmes, Underserved Industries

By Ayo Susan

The Bank of Industry (BOI) obtained the approval of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to operate a non-interest banking window, enabling the development finance institution to provide Shariah compliant and ethical financing products to businesses that avoid conventional interest-based credit. The bank says the move expands access to industrial finance, especially for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and underserved sectors, while allowing financing of assets and raw materials through alternative structures.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Regulatory Action

CBN authorises Bol non-interest banking operations.

Strategic Objective

Broaden borrower base and mobilise new funding pools.

Target Segment

MSMEs and faith-sensitive enterprises excluded from conventional lending.

Financing Method

Asset backed and non-interest structured products.

Policy Alignment

Inclusive growth and formalisation of informal capital demand.

Institutional Role

DFI expanding from lender of last resort to market access platform.

MEMO

The approval is less a product expansion and more a market recognition exercise. Development finance in Nigeria has historically been supply constrained, but evidence increasingly shows the constraint is also preference based. A portion of capital demand does not reject borrowing, it rejects interest.

Mr. Olasupo Olusi, Managing Director (MD) of the BOI, framed the shift as structural inclusion, stating, "This license marks a pivotal moment in the bank's journey of transforming Nigeria's industrial sector. With this license we can reach a new category of borrowers who before now could not be served." The key phrase is new category, indicating latent credit demand rather than insufficient liquidity.

He further noted the window would "introduce innovative financing solutions and deepen support for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises." The implication is that the MSME financing gap is partly cultural and contractual, not purely collateral based.

Nigeria's credit architecture has long attempted to solve access using subsidised interest rates and intervention funds. The non-interest framework changes the mechanism entirely. Instead of cheaper loans, it offers different contracts, asset backed financing and risk sharing structures that mirror trade rather than debt.

The Central Bank's approval therefore signals regulatory acceptance that financial exclusion is behavioural as well as economic. By enabling value aligned finance, authorities aim to formalise businesses that remain outside the banking sys-



Mr. Olasupo Olusi, Managing Director (MD) of BOI

tem for non-price reasons.

Operationally, the development finance institution shifts from balance sheet lender to transaction facilitator. Financing raw materials and equipment under structured arrangements ties credit directly to production activity, reducing diversion risk and improving repayment discipline.

The policy consequence is subtle but material. Industrial policy is moving away from subsidising interest to redesigning finance architecture. If successful, the approach expands credit without expanding public debt.

DATA BOX

Institution established: 1959
Reconstituted as NIDB: 1964
Current structure formed: 2001

Nigeria's credit architecture has long attempted to solve access using subsidised interest rates and intervention funds

Primary beneficiaries: MSMEs and underserved enterprises
Financing scope: Assets and raw materials

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Winners

Faith sensitive businesses, informal manufacturers, MSMEs lacking collateral strength, equipment suppliers tied to structured finance.

Losers

Intervention credit programmes reliant on interest subsidies, informal lenders benefiting from exclusion gaps.

POLICY SIGNALS

Regulators recognise preference driven financial exclusion.
Industrial policy shifting toward contract innovation rather than rate intervention.
Formalisation strategy targeting behavioural barriers to credit uptake.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Potential expansion of bankable SME universe.
New asset backed financing opportunities in manufacturing supply chains.
Lower default risk if financing tied directly to productive assets.

RISK RADAR

Operational capacity to structure non-interest products.
Legal enforcement clarity for alternative contracts.
Possible perception risk if products mimic conventional lending structures.
Limited awareness among target borrowers may slow adoption.

... Administration Becomes Nigeria's Primary Fiscal Engine

CONT. FRM COVER

She added:

"The results we saw last year were not really just about inflation... it was more about the improvements we have seen during the year and the actions we took."

Non-oil taxes remain central.

"Our success was really driven by the non-oil collection, which we could impact by the actions we took during the year."

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- 2026 revenue target set at N40.7 trillion
- Non-oil taxes designated primary growth driver
- Automation, e-invoicing and compliance enforcement expanded
- Petroleum tax assessments and audits to be digitised

MEMO

The revenue target is less a fiscal forecast and more a structural repositioning of the Nigerian state.

Historically, government revenue expanded when oil prices rose. Now revenue expands when compliance rises. The shift redefines the state from resource collector to economic participant. The tax authority's strategy reveals a move from extraction to surveillance-based administration, where data visibility replaces commodity dependence.

The significance lies in what is being taxed. Company Income Tax, VAT and digital reporting are tied to domestic economic activity rather than export cycles. That stabilises fiscal predictability but transfers volatility to firms. Government earnings become counter-cyclical while private sector margins become pro-cyclical.

Automation further changes enforcement mechanics. Instead of selective audits, compliance becomes continuous monitoring. The tax burden therefore shifts from negotiated settlement to system-calculated liability. In practical



terms, discretion declines while certainty rises. The macroeconomic implication is subtle. Fiscal sustainability is no longer tied primarily to oil output but to economic formalisation

- Financial institutions with traceable transaction systems

Loses

- Informal operators outside tax net
- High cash-based business models
- Firms relying on compliance ambiguity

POLICY SIGNALS

Revenue policy shifting from commodity dependence to compliance dependence
Digital reporting becoming core fiscal infrastructure
Tax administration replacing borrowing as fiscal adjustment tool

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Improved fiscal predictability lowers sovereign risk premium
Corporate tax transparency increases operating cost certainty
Formalisation expands addressable market but tightens margins

RISK RADAR

- 1 Over-enforcement slowing SME growth
- 2 Compliance cost inflation in weak sectors
- 3 Data integration capacity constraints
- 4 Subnational coordination gaps
- 5 Economic activity migrating back to informality

The target indicates a fiscal transition, Nigeria is attempting to finance the state through visibility rather than volatility.

Historically, government revenue expanded when oil prices rose. Now revenue expands when compliance rises

rates. Growth of government revenue now depends on the breadth of participation in the recorded economy.

This transforms taxation from a revenue instrument into an economic mapping tool. The state is expanding its informational footprint as much as its fiscal intake.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Government fiscal stability
- Formal sector competitors gaining fairness

DATA BOX

2021 revenue: N6.4 trillion

2022 revenue: N10.18 trillion

2023 revenue: N12.34 trillion

2024 revenue: N21.7 trillion

2025 revenue: N28.29 trillion

2026 target: N40.7 trillion

Projected 2026 mix:

Non-oil revenue: N24.84 trillion

Oil revenue: N7.3 trillion

Africa's Growth Outruns Its Finance, Capital Markets Remain The Missing Infrastructure

By Jeremiah Obeche

The OECD's Africa Capital Markets Report 2025 shows African companies raised about \$220 billion in equity over 25 years, representing only 1% of global issuance and roughly 0.5% of the continent's combined GDP.

The report concludes that the continent's capital markets remain too shallow to support long term development, leaving economies dependent on banks and foreign borrowing.

OECD: "Capital markets in Africa are not yet playing their expected role as engines of growth and shock absorbers."

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- Structural findings from the report:
- Equity issuance concentrated in a few countries
 - Heavy reliance on bank financing
 - High sovereign yields spilling into private borrowing costs
 - Weak market depth constraining infrastructure and climate financing

MEMO

Africa's development constraint is increasingly financial architecture rather than economic potential.

The data shows the continent produces growth but cannot fund it internally. Companies expand until they reach the limits of bank lending, then stall. Banks finance working capital, not transformation capital. Without deep equity and bond markets, scaling becomes episodic instead of continuous.

The consequence is structural. Governments borrow abroad because domestic markets lack capacity. Businesses borrow short term because long term funding is scarce. Both introduce fragility. External shocks translate directly into currency pressure, inflation and fiscal stress because domestic absorbers do not exist.

Market concentration worsens the issue. With

most capital formation occurring in a few countries, the majority of African economies operate outside meaningful financial intermediation. The continent therefore behaves as separate financial islands rather than a unified capital pool.

The climate implication reveals the long term cost. Energy transition and infrastructure require patient capital measured in decades. Banking systems structured around short tenor deposits cannot supply it. Capital markets normally fill this role. In their absence, projects either shrink or depend on foreign funding.

The problem is not absence of investors but absence of investable pipelines and liquidity depth. Without tradable markets, capital cannot recycle efficiently. Each investment remains iso-



lated rather than forming a self sustaining financing ecosystem.

DATA BOX

- Equity raised: \$220bn in 25 years
- Share of global issuance: 1%
- Share of Africa GDP: ~0.5%
- Countries dominating issuance: South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria
- Local currency bond real yield: ~5%
- USD African bond yield: ~9%
- High risk rated countries: about 80%

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Foreign lenders financing sovereign borrowing
- Large corporates with access to international markets
- Banks maintaining dominance in domestic financing

Loses

- Small and medium enterprises seeking growth capital
- Infrastructure developers needing long duration funding
- Domestic investors lacking diversified instruments

POLICY SIGNALS

- Financial sector reform shifting from regulation to market depth creation.
- Regional capital market integration becoming economic priority.
- Development strategy constrained by funding structure rather than policy ambition.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

- Opportunity exists but liquidity risk remains high.
- Returns elevated due to structural scarcity of capital.
- Market entry depends on risk tolerance rather than opportunity availability.

RISK RADAR

- 1 Continued dependence on foreign currency borrowing
- 2 Interest rate spillover from sovereign to private sector
- 3 Capital flight during global tightening cycles
- 4 Infrastructure financing gap widening
- 5 Climate transition delays due to funding limitations

Africa's challenge is no longer proving it can grow, but building financial systems capable of sustaining that growth.

Africa Tries Deal Platform, Not Donor Pipeline As Adesina's Summit Targets Capital Formation Gap

By Jeremiah Obeche

The former President of the African Development Bank (AfDB), Dr. Akinwunmi Adesina, co-founded the Global Africa Investment Summit (GAIS) to connect African governments with global chief executive officers (CEOs) and institutional investors and accelerate investment led growth across the continent.

The platform aims to unlock sovereign assets and channel capital into sectors such as energy, agriculture, critical minerals, and digital infrastructure.

Adesina: "Africa must unlock its vast sovereign assets to generate wealth. The Global Africa Investment Summit is the globally trusted platform to unlock mega deals and assets by connecting Africa to global capital."

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

- Strategic elements of the initiative:
- Transition from aid mobilisation to deal origination
 - Structured engagement between governments and institutional capital
 - Focus on prepared large-scale assets rather than policy advocacy
 - Positioning Africa as an investable market rather than a development case

MEMO

The summit is less a conference than an attempt to fix Africa's transaction deficit.

Capital scarcity in Africa has rarely been absolute. Global liquidity exists, but it requires bankable entry points. The continent's constraint has been converting opportunities into executable deals. Fragmented markets and unstructured public assets increase transaction costs beyond acceptable investment thresholds.

GAIS attempts to operate as a market maker, effectively standardising the interface between public assets and private capital. The objective is not persuasion but packaging. Investors do not typically reject African returns, they reject African uncertainty.

The emphasis on sovereign asset unlocking reveals a change in development thinking. Governments are being encouraged to treat state owned resources as balance sheet items capable of attracting structured finance rather than as administrative holdings.

The platform also responds to geopolitical shifts. As protectionism rises, capital prefers scale and predictability. Africa individually offers neither, collectively it does. The summit therefore aggregates opportunities to simulate market depth.

The inclusion of global political and corporate figures signals credibility construction. Large invest-

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Privatisation Returns, Government Converts Reforms Into Asset Liquidation

By Olumide Johnson

The federal government plans to begin selling selected state-owned assets to private investors in 2026 as part of a broader strategy to convert macroeconomic reforms into capital inflows and growth acceleration.

The finance ministry confirmed the government is identifying assets and transaction timelines while also negotiating equity participation in state refineries with foreign investors. The policy follows subsidy removal, exchange rate liberalisation and tax restructuring reforms designed to stabilise the economy and improve investment conditions.

MEMO

The planned asset sales mark a shift in Nigeria's reform logic. The first phase addressed distortions, subsidy removal, currency liberalisation and tax overhaul. The second phase now attempts to monetise credibility by attracting capital. The government is no longer merely fixing prices, it is selling balance sheet.

Finance Minister Wale Edun framed the move explicitly as an investment conversion strategy. He said, "The plan is to offer some assets in 2026." The phrasing indicates readiness rather than exploration, meaning transaction preparation has already entered technical stages.

He also linked reform credibility to investor behaviour, noting, "What we have put in place has made Nigeria very competitive in terms of the economic conditions and very attractive in terms of the incentives for investors. I think investors are now more comfortable to invest in Nigeria." The policy argument is therefore clear, stabilisation was not the end goal, it was a prerequisite for asset transfer.

Historically, Nigeria privatised telecoms and power assets but retained structural control levers, creating hybrid markets where private operators bore cost while government retained pricing influence. The current proposal signals a different orientation, optimisation of assets



Mr. Wale Edun, Honourable Minister of Finance & Coordinating Minister of the Economy

rather than administrative control.

Edun reinforced this logic saying, "We are interested in public private partnerships, optimization of our assets by having others come in and invest." The emphasis is optimisation, not disposal. Government intends to convert idle public capital into productive private capital.

In macroeconomic terms, the state is attempting to transition from revenue collector to market enabler. Growth is expected to rise modestly, but the real target is investment depth, not just gross domestic product (GDP) expansion. The policy therefore measures success less by immediate proceeds and more by long run productivity gains.

DATA BOX

Planned asset sale start: 2026

Projected growth: 4.4% vs 4.2% previous year

Reform start year: 2023

Previous privatisations: Power sector 2013, telecom operator 2015

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Winners

Institutional investors, infrastructure operators, energy sector financiers, project developers, capital markets intermediaries.

Losers

State enterprise management structures, rent dependent supply contractors, fiscal dependence on inefficient public corporations.

POLICY SIGNALS

Government transitioning from subsidy reform to ownership reform.

Public balance sheet being repositioned toward private capital participation.

Energy sector moving toward commercial governance.

Reforms entering structural rather than macroeconomic phase.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Country risk premium declines if transactions are transparent.

Infrastructure and utilities become primary entry sectors.

Returns tied to operational turnaround rather than regulatory arbitrage.

RISK RADAR

Political resistance to asset sales.

Valuation disputes and transparency concerns.

Labour union opposition in legacy enterprises.

Regulatory uncertainty post transfer.

Possibility of partial reform where ownership changes but market controls remain.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Policy Objective

Move from fiscal adjustment to capital mobilisation.

Ownership Structure

Partial or full sale of government commercial assets.

Sector Focus

Energy infrastructure, refineries, and other underperforming public enterprises.

Financing Model

Public private partnerships and equity participation.

Macroeconomic Link

Privatisation positioned as the second phase after stabilisation reforms.

Growth Target

Use private capital to lift medium term growth trajectory.

Targeted Concessional Finance, IsDB Shifts From Lending To Stabilisation

By Johnson Emmanuel

The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) launched a concessional financing fund dedicated to its 27 least developed member countries, restructuring how multilateral capital reaches fragile economies. The facility deploys subsidised Shariah compliant loans and grants allocated using vulnerability indicators such as income level, debt sustainability and exposure to external shocks. Alongside the launch, the bank signed infrastructure and education financing agreements with Uzbekistan to expand connectivity and human capital capacity.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Institutional Reorientation

Prioritise vulnerability-based allocation over broad lending.

Funding Structure

20 percent of annual net income plus periodic member replenishments.

Financial Instruments

Concessional loans and targeted grants.

Sectoral Priorities

Infrastructure, food security, human capital, climate resilience.

Strategic Goal

Increase concessional financing share to about 15 percent of approvals.

Catalytic Model

Use concessional capital to crowd in co-financing investors.

MEMO

The fund represents a recalibration of development finance logic. Traditional multilateral lending assumed capital scarcity was the primary constraint in poorer countries. The new model recognises affordability of capital is the deeper constraint. Instead of providing more loans, the bank is altering loan quality.

Muhammad Al Jasser, Chairman of IsDB, stated that the fund is “backed by robust financial measures, including 20 percent allocation of the bank’s annual net income and periodic replenishments from member countries.” The importance lies in predictability. Development funding becomes institutional rather than episodic.

He added the facility aims to triple concessional financing to about 15 percent of approvals, “unlocking co financing that multiplies the impact of every dollar invested.” The bank is positioning itself as a risk absorber that enables commercial capital entry into fragile markets.

This shifts incentives for recipient countries. Borrowing is no longer determined by access but by vulnerability. The framework reduces the cycle where weaker economies accumulate semi commercial debt that later requires restructuring.

The Uzbekistan agreements illustrate operational intent. Road financing targets logistics efficiency and trade access, while the SmartEd education programme expands workforce productivity. The bank is tying finance directly to economic multipliers instead of general fiscal support.

The broader implication is institutional. Multilateral banks are evolving into stabilisation platforms that structure markets rather than simply fund governments.

DATA BOX

Countries covered: 27

Net income allocation: 20%

Target concessional share: ~15% of annual approvals

Road project phase financing: \$70 million of \$192 million

lending terms, projects reliant on general budget financing.

POLICY SIGNALS

Development funding moving from volume to affordability.

Multilateral institutions positioning as catalytic



Highway reconstructed: 143 km

Local roads rehabilitated: 30 km

Population affected: 200,000

Education project phase financing: \$94.06 million of \$160.25 million

New institutions: 58

New classrooms: 2,431

Students annually: 72,930

Teachers trained: 36,115

investors.

Infrastructure and human capital prioritised over fiscal transfers.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Expanded blended finance opportunities.

Lower sovereign risk in supported countries.

Greater pipeline of structured development projects.

RISK RADAR

Implementation capacity in fragile economies. Dependence on continued donor replenishment.

Political sensitivity around vulnerability ranking.

Execution delays in infrastructure projects.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Winners

Fragile economies, infrastructure developers, blended finance investors, education sector contractors.

Losers

Countries dependent on standard multilateral

... Deal Platform, Not Donor Pipeline As Adesina's Summit Targets Capital Formation Gap

CONT. FRM PG 7

ments follow coordinated assurances rather than isolated pitches. The summit is designed to compress perception risk through collective endorsement.

Africa's challenge is no longer narrative, it is preparation. The platform acknowledges that growth potential alone does not mobilise funds. Only prepared transactions do.

DATA BOX

Africa share of global FDI: 6% in 2024

Population: ~1.3 billion

Consumer market: \$1.4 trillion in 2015 projected \$2.5 trillion by 2030

Focus sectors: critical minerals, energy, agriculture, digital infrastructure

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

Governments with bankable infrastructure assets
Institutional investors seeking long horizon growth markets

Advisory and structuring firms preparing transactions

Loses

Aid dependent development models

Unstructured state owned enterprises

Small fragmented project promoters unable to meet scale thresholds

POLICY SIGNALS

Development strategy is shifting from funding requests to asset commercialisation.

African states are being positioned as issuers of investment opportunities rather than recipients of assistance.

Regional aggregation is emerging as a substitute for individual country scale limitations.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Entry improving if projects become standardised and risk priced collectively.

Returns tied to execution quality rather than macro potential.

Opportunity concentrated in large prepared assets rather than early stage ventures.

RISK RADAR

1 Asset preparation lag undermining credibility

CPPE Challenges Import Substitution Orthodoxy, Competitiveness Put Ahead of Compulsion

By Hannah Yemisi

The Centre for the Promotion of Private Enterprise cautioned against legislating trade restrictions to force domestic value addition, arguing that such measures risk distorting markets without adequate production capacity.

Chief Executive Officer Dr Muda Yusuf stated that sustainable industrialisation requires competitiveness and sequencing rather than coercive controls.

Yusuf: "Trade restrictions should not be matters for legislative enactment; rather, they should be fiscal and trade policy instruments with sufficient flexibility."



DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Core economic arguments raised:

- Processing capacity must precede export restrictions
- Structural cost barriers undermine local manufacturing
- Rigid bans can weaken producers and processors simultaneously
- Policy flexibility preferred over statutory prohibition

MEMO

The warning reframes industrial policy from protection to preparation.

Nigeria's value addition strategy has historically relied on restricting imports or exports to compel local processing. The assumption is that scarcity creates industry. The CPPE argument reverses this, suggesting capacity creates industry while scarcity creates inefficiency.

The critical issue is cost structure. Power, logistics, finance and technology gaps mean local processors often operate above global cost benchmarks. When exports are restricted under these conditions, produc-

ers lose pricing power while processors gain captive supply but not competitiveness. The economy shifts income rather than creating value.

The distinction between legislative and fiscal tools is central. Laws create permanence, while economic conditions require adjustment. Binding restrictions lock policy into static assumptions even as exchange rates, demand and capacity evolve.

The warning also highlights a sequencing problem. Industrialisation historically follows productivity improvements, not precedes them. Forcing processing before efficiency improvements risks producing high cost domestic goods unable to compete either locally or internationally.

The policy debate therefore becomes distributive rather than developmental, determining who absorbs inefficiency rather than eliminating it.

DATA BOX

Policy concern: legislative trade restrictions

Key constraints: power cost, logistics inefficiency, finance access, technology gaps

Affected sectors: agriculture, solid minerals, manufacturing value chains

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Competitive manufacturers operating efficiently
- Consumers benefiting from price stability
- Export oriented producers retaining market pricing

Losses

- Inefficient processors reliant on protection
- Primary producers under forced pricing structures
- Policy frameworks dependent on static restrictions

POLICY SIGNALS

Industrial policy debate shifting from protectionism toward productivity.

Economic reforms increasingly focusing on cost structure rather than market closure.

Flexibility in trade management becoming priority over statutory bans.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

More predictable policy environment if flexibility adopted.

Manufacturing investment viable only after infrastructure improvement.

Protection dependent investments face long term uncertainty.

RISK RADAR

- 1 Political pressure favouring protectionist legislation
- 2 Producer income distortion reducing supply incentives
- 3 Persistent infrastructure deficits sustaining high costs
- 4 Policy reversals undermining industrial planning
- 5 Domestic goods uncompetitive in export markets

The intervention suggests industrial growth depends less on restricting trade and more on reducing structural production costs.

... Targets EV Industry Ownership

CONT. FRM COVER

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Core structural intentions:

- Phased shift from assembly to full manufacturing
- Technology transfer and workforce training integration
- Development of local supplier and battery ecosystem
- Domestic production to reduce EV cost barriers

MEMO

The project is less about cars and more about industrial positioning.

Electric vehicles globally represent a supply chain transition rather than a transport transition. Batteries, electronics and software determine value capture. By localising production, the country aims to enter that value chain instead of remaining an import destination.

The phased assembly approach reveals realism about capability gaps. Immediate full manufacturing would fail due to skills and infrastructure constraints. Gradual localisation allows competence accumulation while maintaining investor confidence.

The policy logic is demand creation through supply presence. EV adoption in Africa remains low largely because prices and charging infrastructure lag scale. Local production attempts to reverse causality, increase availability first to stimulate ecosystem development.

The partnership choice also matters. Collaborat-

ing with a technologically advanced manufacturer reduces learning cycles and embeds standards early. Industrial policy here functions as capability acquisition rather than tariff protection.

However, the project's success depends on complementary systems. Without reliable electricity, charging networks and component suppliers, assembly risks remaining isolated. The investment therefore implicitly commits the state to parallel infrastructure expansion.

DATA BOX

Planned annual capacity: 300,000 vehicles

Projected jobs: ~10,000

Africa EV fleet: ~30,000 vehicles mid-2025

Private EV share: <1% of vehicle sales

Implementation model: assembly to full manufacturing

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Local manufacturing workforce
- Component and battery suppliers
- Regional automotive distribution networks

Losses

- Used vehicle import channels
- Fuel dependent mobility segments
- Pure import dealership models

POLICY SIGNALS

Industrial policy shifting toward technology acquisition.

Energy transition linked with manufacturing localisation.

Regional trade integration expected around au-

tomotive supply chains.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Long term opportunity tied to ecosystem development.

Returns dependent on infrastructure rollout rather than immediate sales.

Industrial partnerships becoming central to climate strategy.

RISK RADAR

- 1 Power supply reliability affecting adoption
- 2 Charging infrastructure rollout delays
- 3 Cost competitiveness versus imports
- 4 Limited supplier base localisation
- 5 Policy continuity across implementation phases

The agreement positions the country as a potential producer in the clean mobility chain, but execution will determine whether it becomes an industry or remains an assembly initiative.



Capital Returns Before Capacity, Nigeria's \$18.2bn Oil Pipeline Still Dependent On Structural Fixes



Mr. Heineken Lokpobiri, Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil)

By Ayo Susan

Nigeria approved 28 field development plans valued at \$18.2 billion, with combined recoverable potential of about 1.4 billion barrels of oil.

The announcement was made by the Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources (Oil), Mr. Heineken Lokpobiri, during the 9th Nigeria International Energy Summit (NIES 2026) in Abuja.

The government also recorded four of Africa's seven largest Final Investment Decisions (FIDs) between 2024 and 2025, alongside production growth to roughly 1.7 to 1.83 million barrels per day.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Policy instruments credited for the shift:

- Petroleum Industry Act fiscal clarity
- Cost Efficiency Incentives Order 2025
- Upstream asset divestments to indigenous firms
- Project One million Barrels production expansion programme

Lokpobiri: "This did not happen by accident; it is the result of steady work, policy clarity, and better governance."

MEMO

The approvals are less about new oil than about restored negotiability. For nearly a decade, upstream Nigeria was not resource constrained, it was contract constrained. Investors priced legal uncertainty, regulatory latency, and exit risk higher than geological potential. Capital withdrew accordingly.

The state has now attempted a sequencing correction. First, fiscal predictability via the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA). Second, operating cost compression through tax credits. Third, exit facilitation allowing international oil companies (IOCs) to leave onshore acreage without litigation drag. Only after these steps did investment reappear.

What the \$18.2 billion figure actually signals is

not expansion, but re-permission. Projects that were economically viable became politically executable.

However, approvals are not barrels. The sector's historical failure point has never been licensing, it has been conversion. Nigeria consistently produces fewer barrels than it sanctions because midstream integrity, security costs, and contracting structures distort project economics after FID.

The minister implicitly acknowledged this by warning about "briefcase engineering, procurement, and construction (EPC) firms". The local content regime has shifted from capacity building into gatekeeping, where compliance sometimes substitutes competence. That creates a paradox, reforms attract capital while procurement architecture dilutes execution.

Thus the state has succeeded at restoring in-

vestor entry but not yet industrial throughput. The pipeline of projects is credible, the pipeline of delivery remains conditional.

Falade's remark that indigenous firms now account for over 50% of production confirms a structural ownership shift. Yet ownership transfer is not equivalent to capability transfer. Financing depth, engineering capacity, and service sector productivity remain the real determinants of whether sanctioned barrels become exportable barrels.

Nigeria has moved from a confidence deficit to a capacity test.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Indigenous upstream operators, asset transfers
- Government revenue outlook, higher taxable base
- Service financiers, structured oil-backed lending
- Deepwater operators, regulatory certainty

Loses

- Inefficient EPC intermediaries if enforcement tightens
- Rent-seeking licensing middlemen
- Gas-to-power sectors competing for capital allocation
- Import-dependent refiners if upstream exports rise faster than domestic supply

POLICY SIGNALS

Nigeria is repositioning from resource nationalism to revenue maximisation.

The policy emphasis has shifted from ownership control to investment throughput.

Local content enforcement is likely to move from quota-based compliance to performance-based certification if execution delays persist.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Positive: Contract stability, exit clarity, rising indigenous participation.

Neutral: Production gains tied to security and logistics performance.

Caution: Sanctioned capital may concentrate in short-cycle barrels rather than long-horizon deepwater if EPC credibility is unresolved.

The market message is investable geology, conditional infrastructure.

RISK RADAR

1. Conversion risk, approvals not translating to sustained production
2. Procurement inefficiency from weak technical capacity filters
3. Oil price volatility affecting marginal field economics
4. Pipeline security relapse reversing output gains
5. Fiscal pressure causing future renegotiation temptations

Nigeria has restored entry confidence. The next credibility phase will depend on whether sanctioned barrels become reliably exported barrels.

DATA BOX

- **Approved field plans:** 28
- **Investment value:** \$18.2bn
- **Estimated reserves potential:** 1.4 billion barrels
- **Africa major FIDs secured by Nigeria:** 4 of 7
- **Production level:** 1.7 to 1.83 mbpd
- **Increment from Project One million Barrels:** ~300,000 bpd
- **Active rigs:** 14 in 2023 → over 60
- **Divestment output addition:** ~200,000 bpd
- **Indigenous share of production:** >50%

Clicks Bets On Focus Over Features, Physical Keyboard Returns As Anti-Distracted Technology

By Ogbuefi O. Emelike

Former BlackBerry employees launched a new smartphone with a built-in physical keyboard called the Communicator through their company Clicks. The firm also introduced a slide out accessory called the Power Keyboard compatible with existing smartphones.

Co-founder, Jeff Gadway: "Smartphones have become really good at a lot of things, but when you're good at everything, you're not great at anything in particular."

The device targets messaging and productivity users and will retail around \$399 with shipments scheduled later in the year.

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

interaction volume. The Communicator reverses this logic by optimising intentional interaction. It treats distraction as a market inefficiency rather than a feature.

By prioritising messaging and task execution, Clicks is targeting a behavioural niche, users who want connectivity without immersion. The physical keyboard becomes a productivity filter. Tactile input slows consumption while accelerating deliberate communication.

The positioning as a secondary work device confirms this. The company is not trying to replace mainstream smartphones but to coexist with them. That reduces adoption resistance while creating a specialised category between

tion tools

Enterprise users separating work and personal devices

Accessory ecosystem providers supporting niche hardware

Loses

High engagement app ecosystems dependent on-screen time

Single device productivity assumptions

Manufacturers competing only on feature accumulation

POLICY SIGNALS

Consumer technology demand is fragmenting into purpose specific devices.

Attention management emerging as a hardware design principle.

Digital wellbeing shifting from software controls to physical design choices.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Niche hardware markets viable when tied to behavioural shifts.

Revenue potential limited scale but higher loyalty segments.

Category success depends on sustained dissatisfaction with mainstream smartphone usage patterns.

RISK RADAR

1 Market remains niche rather than expanding segment

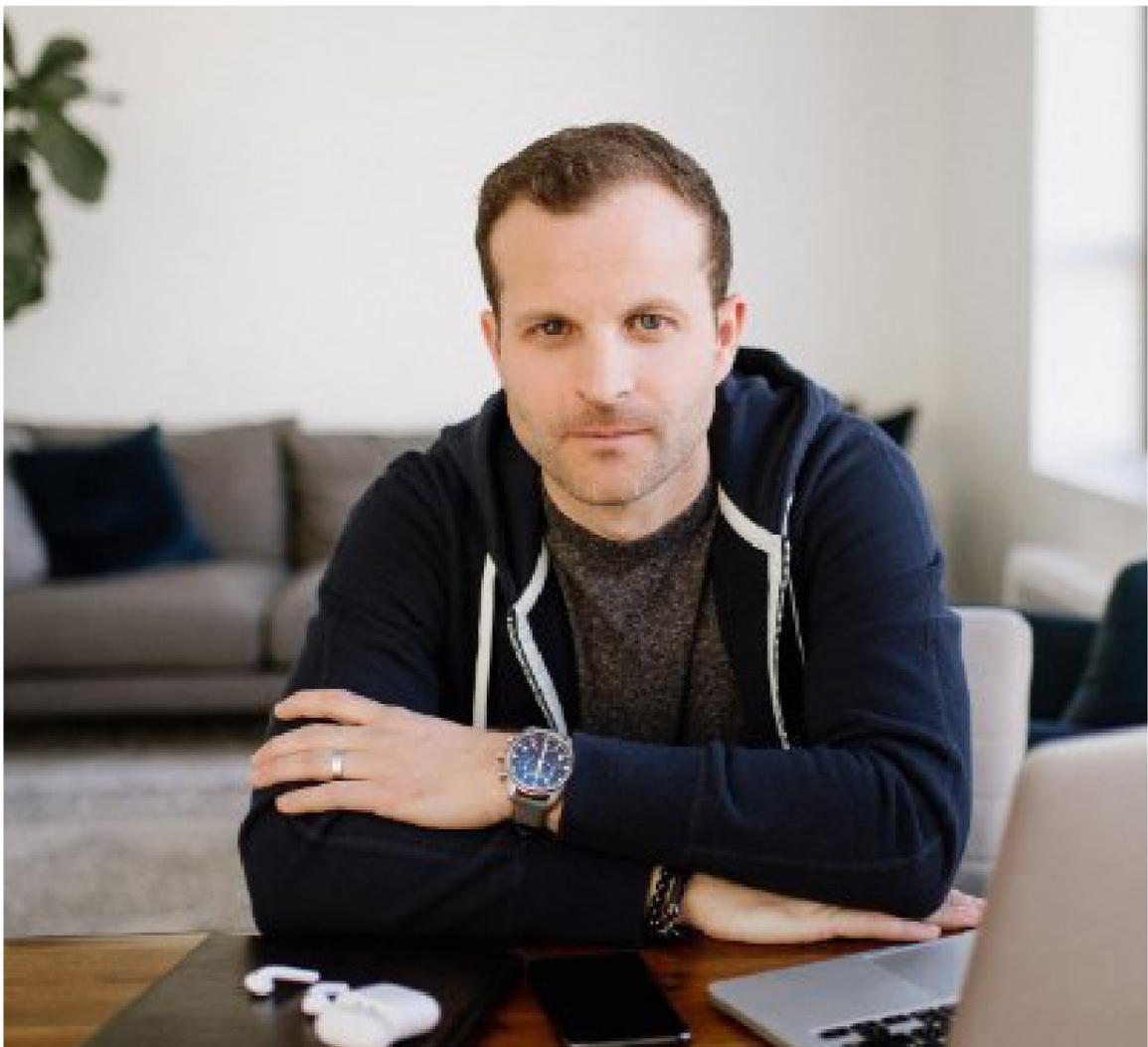
2 Rapid software imitation by mainstream manufacturers

3 Consumer reluctance to carry secondary devices

4 Productivity positioning undermined by competing minimalist apps

5 Hardware differentiation insufficient against ecosystem lock in

The device represents a counter trend to feature maximisation, monetising user intent instead of user attention.



Mr. Jeff Gadway, Co- Founder of Clicks

Strategic positioning of the product:

- Focused functionality over multipurpose smartphone design
- Productivity oriented second device positioning
- Hardware differentiation instead of software ecosystem competition
- Nostalgia used as behavioural segmentation rather than branding

MEMO

The product is not competing in the smartphone market, it is competing in the attention market.

Modern phones maximise engagement time because business models depend on screen in-

phone and productivity tool.

Gadway's remark about customers unfamiliar with physical keys indicates the device is not purely nostalgic. Younger users seeking digital boundaries form part of the addressable market. The product therefore monetises digital fatigue rather than past loyalty.

Technically, the innovation is modest. Strategically, it is a reframing of value. Instead of selling more capability, the device sells controlled capability.

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

Users seeking distraction limited communica-

DATA BOX

Product: Communicator smartphone

Accessory: Power Keyboard attachment

Operating system: Android 16

Price: \$399 preorder

Customer behaviour: 45% never previously used physical keyboards

Star Power Now Drives Nollywood Revenues

● Box Office Growth Is Consolidating Around Bankable Faces, Signalling A Shift From Story-Driven Demand To Performer-Led Revenue Models



Mr Macaroni: N1.362bn
Toyin Abraham Ajeyemi: N1.349bn
Scarlet Gomez: N1.320bn
Odunlade Adekola: N640mn

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

Recognisable actors commanding casting leverage
 Studios reducing revenue uncertainty
 Distributors marketing personality driven titles

Loses

Unknown actors competing for lead roles
 Script originality without marketable faces
 Low budget productions lacking promotional reach

POLICY SIGNALS

Creative industry evolving toward intellectual property monetisation.
 Talent management becoming central economic infrastructure.
 Cultural exports increasingly tied to recognisable personalities.

INVESTOR SIGNAL

Film financing increasingly resembles brand endorsement economics.
 Projects with proven actors carry lower revenue volatility.
 Portfolio strategies may prioritise talent partnerships over studio ownership.

RISK RADAR

- 1 Overdependence on limited talent pool
- 2 Audience fatigue toward recurring faces
- 3 Rising actor compensation inflating budgets
- 4 Reduced experimentation in storytelling
- 5 Box office concentration around few titles

The data suggests Nollywood is entering a bankability era where audience confidence attaches to individuals rather than productions.

By Ovio Peters

West Africa’s cinema market recorded N15.6 billion box office revenue in 2025 across 2.79 million admissions and 81 Nollywood releases. A ranking of the year’s highest grossing actors shows films increasingly anchored around identifiable lead performers.

Top performers included Tobi Bakre (N1.438billion), Debo Adedayo also known as Mr Macaroni (N1.362billion) and Toyin Abraham Ajeyemi (N1.349billion), with others such as Scarlet Gomez, Odunlade Adekola and Timini Egbuson contributing hundreds of millions in ticket sales.

MEMO

Nollywood has shifted from content led demand to personality led demand.

Earlier industry growth relied on volume production and genre experimentation. The 2025 data shows audiences now select films through trust heuristics. A known face reduces uncertainty about quality, making actors financial assets rather than creative participants.

The economics resemble franchise cinema without formal franchises. Actors themselves become recurring intellectual property. Producers therefore reduce marketing risk by investing in recognisable leads rather than untested narratives.

The rise of digital era personalities reinforces this. Performers who built follow-

ings outside cinema convert attention into ticket sales. Social visibility functions as prerelease distribution. Marketing increasingly occurs before production begins.

Ticket pricing behaviour confirms maturation. Average tickets reached N5,596 during economic pressure, yet admissions remained strong. Viewers are paying not for cinema generally but for specific personalities, indicating demand selectivity rather than broad expansion.

The implication is structural. Financing decisions will increasingly follow casting decisions. Capital allocation moves toward bankable individuals rather than scripts.

DATA BOX

Regional box office: N15.6bn

Admissions: 2.79 mn

Nollywood releases: 81 films

Average ticket: N5,596

Top grosses

Tobi Bakre: N1.438bn

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Industry structure emerging:

- Box office revenue clustering around identifiable stars
- Repeat casting driving attendance predictability
- Distribution success tied to performer brand recognition
- Pricing resilience despite higher ticket costs

Digital Payments Now Face 30-minute Refund Rule

By Ayo Susan

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) released a joint exposure draft proposing a 30-minute refund timeline for failed airtime and data purchase transactions. The framework introduces shared liability rules between banks and telecom operators and creates a real time monitoring infrastructure for transaction failures.

CBN Director of Consumer Protection and Financial Inclusion, Aisha Isa-Olatinwo: "The framework aims to institutionalise accountability and eliminate unclear liability between banks and telecom operators."

Regulators also confirmed quarterly compliance audits and sanctions for breaches, while industry participants have until February 20, 2026 to submit comments.

MEMO

The policy targets a structural weakness in Nigeria's digital payments ecosystem, dispute ownership.

Failed airtime transactions historically persist because the value chain is split. Banks process funds, telecoms deliver service, switching infrastructure connects both, yet accountability is diffused. The new rule converts customer pro-

DECISION HIGHLIGHT

Key regulatory measures:

- Mandatory refund within 30 minutes
- Central transaction monitoring dashboard
- Quarterly SLA compliance scorecards
- Real time validation of ported numbers
- Maximum of two transaction retries
- Automated success or failure SMS notification
- Joint regulatory audits and sanctions

The framework also redistributes operational risk. Previously, consumers absorbed transaction uncertainty. Under the proposal, the ecosystem must absorb latency risk. This forces investment in infrastructure quality rather than complaint management capacity.

The policy therefore functions less as consumer relief and more as network discipline. Payment reliability becomes a measurable financial obligation across telecom and banking rails.

DATA BOX

- Refund timeline: 30 minutes
- Retry limit: 2 attempts
- Compliance reporting: Quarterly
- Regulatory action: Audits and sanctions

POLICY SIGNALS

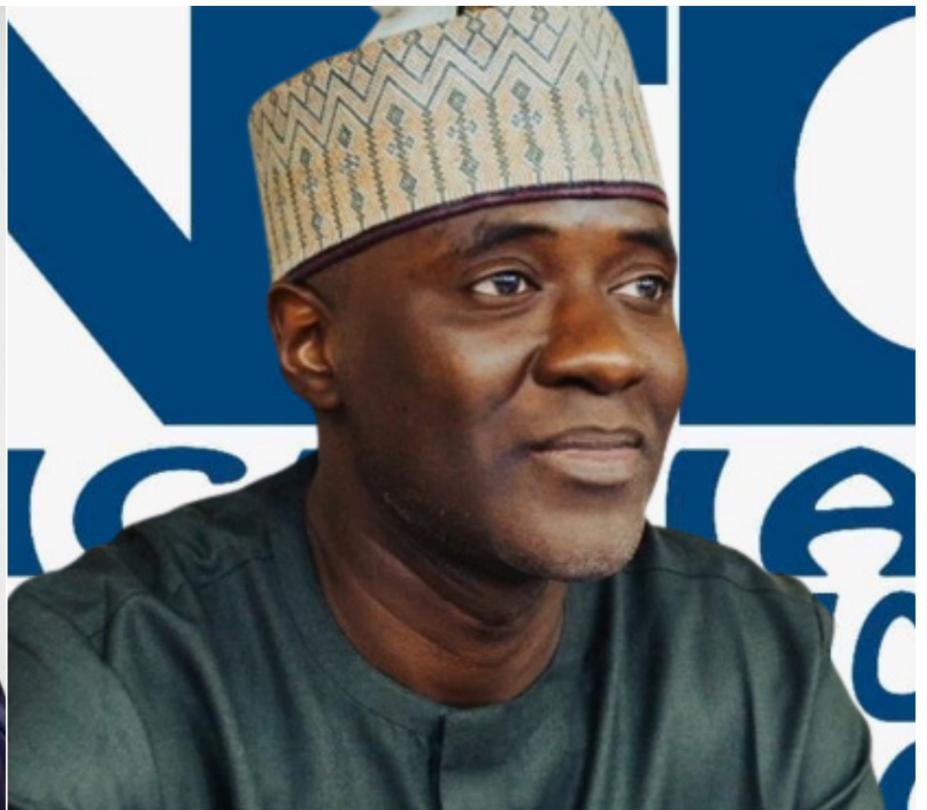
- Inter regulator supervision of shared infrastructure sectors
- Consumer protection evolving into operational regulation
- Digital payments classified as critical national utility

INVESTOR SIGNAL

- Improved payment reliability supports fintech adoption
- Operational expenditure in telecom and banking likely to rise
- Long term expansion of digital transaction volumes probable



Mr. Olayemi Cardoso, Governor of CBN



Dr. Aminu Maida, CEO of NCC

tection into an operational metric rather than a complaint resolution process.

The 30-minute deadline effectively transforms refunds from a customer service issue into a settlement obligation. That distinction matters. Once reversals are time bound, reconciliation must become automated. Manual investigation becomes economically impractical.

The central monitoring dashboard reveals the deeper regulatory objective. Visibility replaces trust. Regulators are no longer relying on institutional reporting but on system generated evidence. Compliance therefore shifts from declarative to verifiable.

Consultation deadline: February 20, 2026

WHO WINS / WHO LOSES

Wins

- Consumers receiving immediate reversals
- Fintech platforms dependent on trust reliability
- Regulators gaining transaction visibility

Loses

- Operators relying on delayed reconciliation
- Institutions monetising float from failed transactions
- Manual dispute resolution intermediaries

RISK RADAR

- 1 System downtime triggering mass reversal obligations
- 2 Disputes over liability allocation between operators
- 3 Increased compliance costs passed to users
- 4 Cybersecurity exposure through central monitoring hub
- 5 Enforcement inconsistency across smaller providers

The framework converts payment failure from inconvenience into regulated default, shifting the ecosystem from reactive service recovery to engineered reliability.

When the Seat of Power Abandons the Power Grid



THE CLOSING BELL

With

Enam Obiosio

I have spent years listening to official explanations about Nigeria's electricity crisis. Every administration promises reform, every regulator announces enforcement, every distribution company speaks about losses, and every citizen buys another generator. Now the most symbolic building in the country has taken a different decision. The Presidential Villa is preparing to leave the national grid.

The State House Permanent Secretary, Temitope Fashedemi, disclosed that Aso Rock will fully disconnect from public electricity by March 2026 after completing its solar power project. The installation, finished late 2025 and undergoing testing since December, is expected to replace grid supply almost entirely. He cited the State House Medical Centre, which has reportedly operated for months without generator use and has drawn only minimal power from the Abuja distribution company.

I do not consider this merely a procurement update. I consider it a policy statement, even if unintended.

Governments communicate priorities not only through speeches but through survival choices. When the seat of power chooses energy independence instead of grid dependence, it acknowledges a hierarchy of trust. The state trusts solar technology more than it trusts its own electricity system.

Officials argue the decision is financial. The Energy Commission said the Villa's electricity bill was estimated at tens of billions of naira annually. Debt records had also shown hundreds of millions owed to the distribution company before reconciliation and settlement. From an accounting standpoint, installing solar is rational. From a governance standpoint, it is revealing.

The central paradox is this. For decades citizens were told the grid would improve if they were patient. Today, the state itself has chosen not to wait.

I understand the technical logic. Distributed energy systems are efficient for high security facilities. Batteries remove outage risk. Solar reduces diesel dependence. Ageing generators become unnecessary. The Permanent Secretary even reported overbilling during testing, transformers charging for power not delivered. Anyone familiar with Nigeria's electricity billing disputes recognises this immediately. What households complain about daily has now been documented inside the most protected compound in the country.

Yet symbolism matters in public policy. The Presidential Villa is not just another consumer. It is the ultimate reference point for national confidence. When it exits the grid, the message travels farther than any official press release.

I am aware defenders compare the move to the White House using solar. The comparison misses context. In the United States, solar supplements a

functioning grid. In Nigeria, solar replaces a failing one. The distinction defines the policy meaning.

For years, Nigeria has pursued centralised generation expansion, transmission upgrades and distribution reform. The theory assumed scale would solve reliability. In practice, reliability has migrated toward private self-generation. Homes buy inverters, estates install mini grids, companies operate captive plants, and now the presidency installs its own independent system.

Energy reform has therefore evolved from national infrastructure to personal infrastructure. Each consumer builds a private solution while the public network weakens further from declining demand confidence. The Villa's departure accelerates that psychological shift. If the presidency cannot rely on the grid, why should industry?

I do not blame the decision makers. I blame the structure that made the decision inevitable.

The electricity market has remained trapped between politics and economics. Tariffs rarely match cost. Subsidies appear without funding clarity. Distribution companies cannot recover investments. Transmission expansion lags demand growth. Consumers distrust meters and billing. Regulators mediate disputes rather than enforce discipline.

Energy reform has therefore evolved from national infrastructure to personal infrastructure

The system survives, but it does not perform. Solar then enters not as innovation but as escape.

The government allocated billions of naira across two budgets for the Villa's solar mini grid. Critics call this an admission of failure. I consider it an admission of realism. Leadership compounds cannot operate on national optimism. They operate on operational certainty. Security facilities cannot experience outages. Hospitals cannot rely on load shedding schedules. At some point engineering outruns policy promises.

The deeper issue is equity. When elites exit public systems, reform urgency declines. I worry less about the Villa having electricity and more about the grid losing its most powerful stakeholder. Institutions improve when those with influence depend on them. Once they no longer do, deterioration becomes politically tolerable.

Nigeria has lived this pattern before. Public schools declined after private schools became widespread among decision makers. Public health-care weakened after medical tourism expand-

ed among officials. Infrastructure accountability weakens when leaders have alternatives.

Energy risks following the same trajectory. A country where the governing centre is powered by a private mini grid may gradually accept a future where national electricity becomes optional rather than foundational.

I also note the discovery of overbilling during the testing phase. This is perhaps the most instructive part of the entire episode. For years, citizens accused distribution companies of estimated billing abuse. The debate often became emotional, framed as consumer frustration versus technical explanation. Now a federal installation has reported charging for electricity not supplied. That changes the credibility equation. It confirms the market's core trust deficit.

Electricity systems function on confidence as much as engineering. Consumers must believe meters reflect usage, utilities must believe tariffs will be paid, and investors must believe contracts will hold. Nigeria's power sector suffers from simultaneous distrust across all participants. Solar independence becomes rational behaviour under distrust conditions.

I do not see the Villa's solarisation as the end of the grid. I see it as evidence of its transformation. The future Nigerian electricity market will likely be hybrid, decentralised, layered. National transmission will matter for industry and regional trade, but urban reliability will increasingly come from embedded generation and storage.

The danger is not decentralisation. The danger is abandonment.

If policymakers interpret this moment merely as cost savings for a government facility, they will miss its structural significance. The presidency has unintentionally conducted a pilot project in energy autonomy. Citizens will replicate it as technology prices fall. Businesses will finance it as outage costs rise. Utilities will face declining high value customers. The grid will carry mainly those who cannot afford alternatives.

That outcome would redefine electricity from a public service into a residual service.

I therefore read this development as a warning rather than a scandal. The lesson is not that solar is bad. The lesson is that reliability determines legitimacy. People do not remain loyal to infrastructure that does not serve them. They route around it.

By March 2026, when Aso Rock disconnects, Nigeria will cross a psychological threshold. The debate will no longer be how to fix the grid for citizens. It will become whether the grid remains central to national life at all.

I believe that question is far more consequential than the installation of panels on any rooftop, even the most powerful one.