

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON HYDROGRAPHY AWARENESS IN AFRICA HELD AT CONFLUENCE BEACH HOTEL LOKOJA, KOGI STATE, NIGERIA, 24TH-26TH OCTOBER, 2011.

In realization of the lack of Hydrography awareness in Africa, the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG), through Working Group 4.5 (Hydrography in Africa) of Commission 4, organized a 3-day workshop with the theme “Hydrography and National Development”. Participants, who came from as far away as Ghana and Canada, were heartily welcomed to the workshop by the workshop organizer and Chair, Working Group 4.5 Surv. (Mrs.) Angela Kesiena Etuonovbe. In her address, she highlighted the importance of Hydrography and enjoined participants to appraise where they are now in Hydrographic practice in Africa, and to ponder where they should be in the next century.



Some Attendees at the Workshop on Hydrography Awareness, Lokoja, Nigeria.
Chair, Working Group 4.5 and workshop organizer, Mrs. Angela Etuonovbe stands at the center

The Chief host of the workshop, His Excellency, Governor Ibrahim Idris, represented by Surv. M. O. Abolarin, Deputy Surveyor-General of Kogi State, in a brief remark, congratulated the organizer of the workshop and described the theme of the workshop as apt. He informed

participants of the abundant mineral resources and tour sites in the state and enjoined them to visit the beautiful sites. He wished the participants fruitful deliberations.

In a keynote address, the Honourable Minister of Transport, Sen. Idris Umar, represented by the Managing Director, National Inland Waterways Authority (NIWA), Arc. Ahmed Aminu Yar'adua apologized for the inability of the Honorable Minister to attend the workshop for official reasons. He informed participants about the efforts of NIWA to develop the inland waterways in Nigeria, especially the River Niger and River Benue, in order to address the inadequacies of road transportation by dredging the waterways and providing jetties for various communities along the waterways.

The President, Nigerian Institution of Surveyors (NIS), Surv. Chief Yakubu Maikano, on behalf of himself and the institution, congratulated the organizers of the workshop and expressed hope that hydrographic surveying practice in Nigeria will never be the same again at the end of the workshop. Similarly, the President, Surveyors Council of Nigeria, (SURCON), Sur. G. A. Agunbiade thanked the organizers of the workshop and highlighted some of the key functions of SURCON for hydrography and called for closer collaboration between SURCON and Hydrographers.

Goodwill messages were received from the Nigerian Port Authority (NPA), Hydrographic Society of Nigeria and the Hydrographer of the Nigerian Navy.

Four technical papers were presented by resource persons drawn from Nigeria, Ghana, and Canada.

The workshop noted as follows:

1. That the significance of hydrography in the general development of nations cannot be over emphasized.
2. That despite this significance and the fact that its practice has been on for over a century, the level of hydrography awareness is very low in Africa.
3. That there is no institutions in Africa offering Category A (Professional) Category B (Technologists) training in hydrography. Even those engaged in technical training are very few.
4. That there are no strong institutional and legal framework that enhance or facilitate the development of hydrographic practice in Africa.
5. That the few hydrographers we have in Africa are mostly in Oil Industry and the Navy.

The workshop calls on the nations of Africa with Coastal and Maritime Zones to:

1. Set aside 5% of their national income derived from the maritime sector for the development of Hydrographic Surveying in Africa.
2. Strengthen existing institutional and legal frameworks to facilitate the development of Hydrography in Africa, using such organizations as ECOWAS, AU and similar regional bodies.
3. Establish training institutions in Hydrography capable of training Category A (Professionals) and Category B (Technologists) Hydrographers.
4. Collaborate on issues of hydrography so as to synergize and fast track the development of hydrographic practice.
5. Encourage IHO and the various concerned African countries to step-up their partnerships for the development of Hydrography in their various domains.
6. Encourage all hydrographers in Africa to be proactive and work assiduously for the development of hydrography.
7. Ensure that all Government Survey Directorates establish Hydrographic Offices in their organizations.
8. Ensure that all surveying professional institutions in Africa create more awareness on Hydrography.

Working Group 4.5 thanked FIG, and all the sponsors and participants for attending, and wished them safe journeys to their various destinations. The participants were encouraged to attend subsequent workshops, conferences and seminars so as to take hydrography to the next level in Africa.

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