

Okowa Performs Groundbreaking for N15bn Tower Fabrication Firm at Issele-Uku



Ifeanyi Okowa

Omon-Julius Onabu in Asaba

Delta State Governor, Dr Ifeanyi Okowa, yesterday performed the groundbreaking of the multi-billion naira Tower Manufacturing and Testing, Industrial Fabrication and Hot Dip Galvanising Facility in Issele-Uku, Aniocha North Local Government Area of the state, with a promise that his administration would sustain its infrastructural and human capital development programmes in order to stimulate increased local and foreign investment in the state.

The project, which is at the instance of DELFRASCO Industries Limited, is Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative involving the company and the State Government through the Delta State Investment Development Agency (DIDA).

Okowa said that the state is richly endowed with human and natural resources, including about 40 percent of Nigeria's gas reserves, pointing out that his administration has put in place policies and programmes to ensure an enabling environment for investment to thrive.

The governor said that the coming of DELFRASCO Industries further buttresses his administration's commitment to diversifying the economy of Delta and enhancing its business competitiveness.

Okowa said, "Since 2015 when we came on board, we have enabled the ease-of-doing-business in Delta State through several policy initiatives, including the establishment of Delta State Investment Development Agency (DIDA).

"It is gratifying that efforts in this regard are yielding the desired dividends and, I daresay, Delta is becoming the investor's preferred destination. I urge the private sector in Delta to take full advantage of all incentives put in place to bolster ease-of-doing-business in the state.

"Aside from the establishment of DIDA, we introduced measures to facilitate quick and painless access to land, harmonised the tax regime, and have accelerated infrastructural growth.

"With an expanding market and a vibrant youth population, any investor in Delta is sure of a handsome return on investment."

"Upon completion, this will be Nigeria's and indeed, Africa's first and largest multi-industry local content industrial complex, providing products and services to power, oil and gas, telecom, agriculture and other industries.

"Major customers are expected to include Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), Nigeria LNG Train 7 Projects, EPC Contractors in Energy and Infrastructure Projects and telecom infrastructure providers.

"It is envisaged to meet the present and future demand for tower manufacturing in Nigeria as well as the whole of Africa, and contribute positively to the socio-economic development of Delta State and Nigeria."

He listed the benefits of the new project to include becoming a hub for power transmission technology, creation of over 1000 direct jobs, generating foreign currency earnings for Nigeria through export of towers to other parts of Africa, development and training of Nigerian manpower, amongst others.

The governor stated that Delta remained Nigeria's gas and energy capital, holding about 40 per cent of the country's gas reserves and supplying over 50 per cent of its daily gas demand.

"This administration will continue to create the enabling environment for companies and industries to thrive and provide gainful employment for our youths in a safe, secure, and supportive environment.

"I am particularly pleased with the manpower development component of this project as it will complement the various skills training and entrepreneurship development programmes of this administration."

The governor, who was in company with his deputy, Mr Kingsley Otuario, also lauded the land owners and entire Issele-Uku community for its support and cooperation with the state government, urging to continue in the same spirit to enable completion of the project on schedule.

While commending DELFRASCO Industries Limited and the project partners, Delta Investment and Development Agency (DIDA) for commitment and tenacity, the governor said, "The location of this industry demonstrates your confidence in Project Nigeria while giving fillip to our administration's industrialization drive. It is my earnest expectation that this project will flourish, and that God will reward you abundantly for taking the bull by the horns."

Chairman of DELFRASCO Industries Limited, Chief Chukwuma Okolo, in his remarks, noted that the project was one of its kind in Africa, with its integrated tower fabrication testing and galvanising facilities.

He underscored the enormous significance of the project, which is expected to render various services to telecommunication companies, agricultural as well as oil and gas industries, noting that fabrication and testing of towers for electricity transmission were still being done outside the shores of Nigeria.

As an export facility and a world-class training centre for Deltans and Nigerians, the first set of facilities would be completed in the first quarter of 2022 while all facilities were expected to be completed at the end of the year, Okolo further disclosed.

Dr. Thomas Inugonum, representative of Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN), expressed delight at the take-off of the project, assuring that TCN would partner the company to ensure early completion of the project.

“Tower Manufacturing, Testing and Galvanising, and Fabrication will create so many jobs for the youths of this area,” Inugonum said.

President-General, Issele-Uku Development Union, Chief Kenneth Ofodile, thanked Governor Okowa for supporting the establishment of the project in the community, saying the people looked forward to a robust relationship with the company.

The ceremony was attended by the state’s Deputy Governor, Mr Kingsley Otuario; former Deputy Governor of the state, Chief Benjamin Elue; Obi of Issele-Uku, Obi Nduka Ezeagwuna and top government and private sector functionaries.

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