



HIGHLIGHT OF THE MEETING BETWEEN NECA AND THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR HELD ON TUESDAY, 7TH SEPTEMBER 2010 AT THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTER OF INTERIOR, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INTERIOR, ABUJA

I. PREAMBLE

Following complaints from NECA member-companies on the challenges faced on the issuance and renewal of Expatriate Quota positions, an advocacy visit was made to the Honourable Minister of Interior on Tuesday, 7th September 2010, to discuss the issues and make recommendations on improving the system.

NECA's delegation which was led by Mr. O. A. Oshinowo, the Director-General of NECA was received by Captain Emmanuel Iheanacho, the Honourable Minister of Interior.

At the meeting, the Director-General of NECA congratulated the Minister on his appointment as the Minister of Interior and applauded his prompt response to the request for the visit. He gave a brief history about NECA and assured the Ministry of NECA's support and collaboration with the attendant benefits.

II. ISSUES ON EXPATRIATE QUOTA POSITIONS

The NECA delegation brought the following issues to the attention of the Minister:

- The importance of employing expatriates in Nigeria.
- Bureaucratic bottlenecks in the procedures for the issuance and renewal of expatriate quota positions. Bank transaction was identified as one of the bottlenecks.
- The need to have a bank in-house at the Ministry in order to hasten the process.
- Seeming inconsistency in policies and procedures in the Ministry.
- Inadequate mode of communication between the Ministry, its Agencies and the Private sector. (Absence of use of Information Technology)
- The imperative for a specified timeline of a maximum of 3 weeks for processing expatriate quota.

III. THE MINISTER'S PERSPECTIVE

In his remarks, Captain E. Iheanacho appreciated the delegation and noted the esteemed contributions of NECA to the socio-economic development of the country. He affirmed that his Ministry was aware of the bottleneck presently faced in the issuance and renewal of expatriate quotas, and



informed the delegation that the Ministry had taken the following steps towards addressing it:

- The Business Advisory Committee (BAC) has been suspended due to its seeming bureaucratic processes that tend to delay the issuance and renewal of the expatriate quota.
- The Ministry is presently upgrading its facilities and will be on-line within a short period.

While affirming that the Ministry has been consistent with its policies, he nevertheless, embraced the suggestions and recommendations made by the NECA delegation. He advised that NECA, through its various programmes and interventions (i.e. TSDP) should intensify its efforts towards the development of scarce skills for the country.

IV. CHALLENGES FACED BY THE MINISTRY

The delegation was informed of some of the challenges faced by the Ministry as follows:

- The use of Middle-men, erroneously called “touts” by Companies in the handling of their Expatriate Quota Applications.
- Lack of proper documentations by some companies and the middle-men.
- The security risk associated with internet practice however, the Ministry is taking steps to address it.
- Ministry complained of communication gap is due to some problems beyond them (Bureaucracy linked to limitations of human and financial resources).

V. CHALLENGES FACED BY IMMIGRATION

A member of the delegation from the Ministry of Interior, Mrs. Rose C. Uzoma, the Comptroller General of Immigration opined that one of the problem faced at the immigration on the issue was the contradiction in data details/qualification information.

According to her this slows down the procedures. She however urged private sector companies not to exaggerate the qualifications of expatriate (s) when applying for quota or its renewal.



VI. SUGGESTIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS BY NECA DELEGATION

The Director-General of NECA thanked the Honourable Minister for the audience and suggested the following on improving the system at the Ministry of Interior:

- The Minister should approve the presence of a Bank in the premises of the ministry, to ensure smooth payment transaction.
- There should be an annual interactive session between the Ministry and the Organised Private Sector to examine topical issues relating to expatriate quota and residence permits.
- Since the Ministry complained that the communication gap is due to some problems beyond them (Bureaucracy linked to limitations of human and financial resources), he suggested the use of courier services and the charges for courier services should included in the bills.
- The Ministry should maintain time-lines in the procedures of either application or renewal of quota position(s).

He stressed that touts are not used by NECA Members but rather Consultants who render professional services. He suggested that the Ministry could work out modalities that would specify the necessary qualifications for these professionals.

VII. CONCLUSION

The Minister appreciated the suggestions made by NECA. He opined that the Ministry would consider them and was, infact already implementing some of the suggestions. He concluded that:

- the idea of having a bank in-house would be favourably considered after weighing the security implications.
- the interactive session between the Ministry and the Organised Private Sector would be a frequent event.
- the ministry embraced the suggestions of using courier services instead of relying on its own structure to dispatch mails.

The Minister added that the visit gave him a clearer insight on the importance of NECA to Nigeria's economy and assured the delegation of a closer tie between NECA and the Ministry of Interior.