

Newsletter

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Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson visits the CNSSL Corporate Headquarters, Awoyaya, Lagos September 12, 2014



Group Photo: Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson (3rd from right), GCEO CNSSL Group, Engr. Gbenga Adebayo (centre) with management and staff of CNSSL Group



Engr. Gbenga Adebayo welcomes the Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson to the CNSSL GHQ, Communication Centre, Awoyaya, Lagos.

Speech by the Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson on her to visits the CNSSL Corporate Headquarters, Awoyaya, Lagos

September 12, 2014

The Group CEO of CNSSL, Engr. Gbenga Adebayo, members of your management team, representatives of members of staff and of course friends and colleagues in the media.

Good morning. Really, it is a pleasure to be here and I must thank Gbenga Adebayo for been so persistent and insistent because this visit has been in the making for probably about a year or so. And you know, I am really glad that I have been able to finally make it today. I want to start by saying that when I was appointed as the Minister of Communication and Technology in July 2011, I hadn't heard of about Engr Gbenga Adebayo nor CNSSL but I wanted to establish what I called the CEO Advisory Group. This will be a group of about a dozen or so CEOs in the industry who I meet with every quarter to have no agenda but just discuss about the industry-where the industry is going, what they think Government should be doing, what they think the private sector should be doing- and you know, no minutes were recorded. It was a very frank and open meeting. I remember when I was trying to put together the list of friendable CEOs that will be part of this group, my Special Adviser on media who is here today Mrs. Efem Nkaga who used to work with This Day-I think she was the editor of the ICT section in This Day-, she said to me if you don't have Engr. Adebayo on this group then you don't have anybody. So, I placed a call to him and he didn't know me either. I asked him and of course he immediately said yes.

But it just shows you that everybody is watching. I may not have known but people knew that Engr. Adebayo was an important factor in the ICT sector and I took Efem's advice. Engr Adebayo has been a very important member of the CEO advisory group. If he is in town, he is always there, meets everybody and always makes extremely great contribution. He has been supportive of the ministry and to the minister over the last 3 and half years.

I am just short of words. I am totally blown off with what I have seen today.

Again when we did the assessment of the industry and we looked at BPO, we didn't want that many BPO company, but we felt that Nigeria was in a very good position to develop a strong and sustainable BPO industry. All we needed, was for Nigeria to be seen as a place where we could do this kind of business and that is why your core values are so important, because they would say Nigerians are not trusted, 419 ,nobody would trust you know ,Nigerians to pick up the telephone and manage customers and manage whatever it is.

But I think this is something I know that is very dear to Adebayo's heart because I looked at it- my understanding of the importance core values. As I was coming up the stairs, I did read the core values. He paused and showed me what the core values are. Those are very important because I think that is what is driving this business because if you don't have any value things that you have consciously said that you would do and that you would not do, then, you cannot grow a business that is 6,000 and maybe 20,000 in the next few years. What has impressed me the most is that when we talk about employment -job creation for young people we look to all kind of places but I have always maintained and believed that the ICT sector is one of the critical sectors for employment and job creation. When I walked into those rooms to see hundreds of young Nigerians answering these calls, there was just a sense of discipline you don't see in many parts of this country- sense of conscientiousness- because I am sure they knew the minister was coming, their CEO was there but they just continued their work because they knew what they were there for. For me, it just shows that those core values are not just things that you place on your wall for decoration, there are things you instilled in your staff and they abide by them and I think that is very important and I congratulate you for that.

One thing I want to say, first of all, I didn't know what CNSSL was; you are a conglomerate now, because conglomerate by my definition you have verged into many areas. You are now into agriculture, broadcasting, call centres, communication, engineering and all of that.

One thing I always say is we have to tell the good story about Nigeria and this is a good story. This is a story of one man, an entrepreneur,

who is brought together a very strong management team and has developed a company, a business that will be there I believe long after he decided to go and do other things. With these, I think we need to be able to tell these stories. What I have seen here today just validates my own passion of Nigerian and local content and we are pushing that agenda very strongly. I just like to be able to tell these kinds of stories that here is a company that had 22 people 7years ago, within these seven years grew to 6,000, in another 3 years or so I am sure you will be 10,000. These are fantastic stories that we need to tell. I'm seeing this documentary for the first time, we need to find a way of actually telling this story to many more Nigerians and people outside the world because the belief is that we can't do anything good in Nigeria. When I talk about local content, I have been all over we were in Washington a month or so ago basically not apologizing but telling them that we have a Nigeria content agenda and we are not ashamed of it because we believe we can build successful ICT companies in Nigeria and we will continue to begin to give examples CNSSL is one, Zinox (Computer warehouse group); these are very successful companies employing hundreds, thousands Nigerians and having good stories to tell.

I think what is quite important for me here is, there is an adage that I like to say: when you do well you ought to do good. And just seeing the amount of corporate social responsibility you are getting into with I think it is tremendous because really when you do well. It is important you have to do good by supporting the communities in which you are working at, even has you make money you create opportunities for other people to make money and you give some to the people who are not able to do the things that you can do. That is why when you do well you find out that you just continue to do well. I really congratulate all CSR initiatives and also bringing MTN into that fold because some of the things I hear all the time is that MTN is making so much money and they don't do anything for the communities .

I am glad that CNSSL was able to bring MTN to do something I know they do a lot more through their foundation but I think it's important they showcase how they are supporting the community and the state in which they do business.

Just going back to the issue of Business Process Outsourcing (BPO), a number of studies that has been done like the world bank looking at the readiness of Nigeria to be a BPO centre. Clearly they haven't seen, I don't know if you have gotten them to come to CNSSL and I think that is one thing I need to do because they believe in the readiness of Nigeria to be a BPO centre but it is important for this publication to have this kind case study where we can showcase the fact that we can do this.

We need a good CEO that can go around the world marketing Nigeria companies that is in the BPO business because right now you are very much focused on your domestic market. But I think that you have the track record and the credibility to begin to offer BPO services to country outside of Nigeria. I think you are ready for that and we would like to let you know that we would support at that. I have been to call centres in India; they are not different than this, discipline young people in very conducive environment.

It's a very stressful job and having proved that you can do that of one of the largest telecoms company in Africa and probably maybe in the world in a few years. I think your track record is there and I would encourage you to begin look outside of Nigeria as the market is still growing and as other sectors become more expensive, they begin to come to the cheaper. I think Nigeria is well positioned. We speak English, we are in a good time zone, we have the skills and competencies to do this, and we have a demographic dividend of young people that we can actually continue to employ. I really think CNSSL is poised for global.

You should be a company with Nigerian antecedence for global ambition.

So I just want to congratulate you again and I will tell this story everywhere I go.

One thing I want to say is listing on the stock exchange what it does for you is that it gives you that visibility for a start, gives you that capital you may require to take that business to the next level and many more Nigerians to share in the success of your story.



**GCEO CNSSL Group, Engr. Gbenga Adebayo takes the Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson on a facility tour through the CNSSL Contact Centre operation floors.
Below: Sharing the CNSSL core values with the minister**



CNSSL GCEO giving his welcome speech.



The Minister giving her speech



Cross-section of the board room meeting during the Ministers visit.



Engr. Gbenga Adebayo presenty the CNSSL Coompany Book, "A people & A Story", to the Minister



(L-R) General Manager CNSL - Mr Deboh Ajiga, CNSL GCEO, Engr. Gbenga Adebayo, Minister of Communication Technology - Mrs Omobola Johnson and the Special Adviser to the Minister on Local Content - Mr. Seyi Onabanjo



GCEO CNSL Group, Engr. Gbenga Adebayo and the Minister of Communication Technology, Mrs Omobola Johnson

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Address : 33A Bishop Oluwole Street, Off Akin-Adesola road, Victoria Island, Lagos, Nigeria

Tel: +234 802 773 8898

Email: info@royaltimes.net | publisher@royaltimes.net