DREDGING OF THE INLAND WATERS AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF THE WATERWAYS FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Inland waterways transportation is a key component of the intermodal transportation network and is essential to Nigeria’s economy, environment and quality of life. IWT has a significant part to play in the states of Niger, Kogi, Anambra, Delta, Bayelsa, Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Benue, Adamawa, Cross River and Lagos. The waterways in these states connect several minor ports/jetties and the major port of Baro, Lokoja, Onitsha, Warri and Apapa as well as the host of industries located along the river. Inland waterways have remained the most neglected segment of Nigerian transportation system. Though inland water transport (IWT) is comparatively a cheaper and efficient means of transportation, in the nearest future, the utilisation of this mode of transport shall be enhanced by the successful completion of the ongoing dredging of the river Niger. Anticipated derivable benefits from the dredging of the Niger Water system would among others, include: ocean remediation, upland restoration, improved transportation system, economic viability, increase volume of cargo, improved communication, Job opportunities, decongestion of sea/coastal ports, and improved lifespan of roads, filling degraded basins and pits, creating and restoring wetlands for water quality treatment and habitat and creation/restoration of other habitats, such as, oyster reefs and bird habitat.

Key words: Inland Waterways Transportation, Dredging, River Niger, Mode of Travel

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