

Interview with Eng. Reuben Okeke General Director, National Power Training of Nigeria (NAPTIN)

China Daily: For the readers of China Daily, can you please present the main prerogatives and objectives of NAPTIN?

Mr. Okeke: THE NATIONAL POWER TRAINING INSTITUTE OF NIGERIA (NAPTIN) was established in March 23, 2009, as an institute to provide and meet the training needs of the Nigerian Power Sector.

NAPTIN was set up to fulfill the following mandate:

- To serve as a focal point for human resource development and workforce capacity building as well as research centre on matters relating to power in Nigeria and possibly Africa in general
- To offer comprehensive hands-on engineering and technical training programs for professionals and graduates in the Power Sector
- To ensure maintenance of industry common standards, dissemination of new ideas and technology to the Power Industry
- To assist in identifying employees' competency gaps and training needs
- To provide manpower development advice to industry participants
- To ensure a high maintenance culture is utilized throughout the Industry in order to enhance efficiency through training
- To develop management, leadership, regulatory and ICT skills through training
- And to design professional certificate programs that will ensure proficiency and global recognition
- NAPTIN's Vision is: "To be a Lead Centre of Excellence in Providing Training, Sharing Knowledge, Conducting Research, and Providing Policy Advisory in Power Utilities Reform in Nigeria through Development and Implementation of State-of-the-Art Training and Capacity Building Programs in Partnership with National and International Stakeholders".

NAPTIN's Mission is: "To Promote a Centre of Learning that will Support the Rapid Development of the Power

Sector and Change the Mindset of the Utility Workers by Focusing on the Culture of Training".

China Daily: How do you interact with other government agencies, such as Ministry of Power or NERC?

Mr. Okeke: NERC is the regulator and referee for all market players or participants in the Nigerian Power Sector. NAPTIN is the Agency set up and mandated to provide capacity building and coordinate training activities in the Power Sector. The Federal Ministry of Power performs a supervisory and oversight function on NERC, NAPTIN and other Agencies and Parastatals under the Ministry. NAPTIN and NERC have very cordial relationship as operator to a regulator and vice-versa.

China Daily: How does NAPTIN contribute to boost and improve power in Nigeria?

Mr. Okeke: The Power sector is a capital and technology intensive sector. Power projects require specialized technical manpower during the project design and construction phase as well as during operation and maintenance (O&M) phase. Due to the technology intensive nature of the sector, technical and managerial competency is highly critical in ensuring timely implementation of projects and optimum performance upon commissioning.

Every single unit of energy added to existing energy and every act of diligence, accuracy and efficiency displayed by any technical or non-technical personnel on the field or in the office to have sustained the energy we have is a product of learning from training. This is where NAPTIN stands to contribute to the improvement of Power in Nigeria.

Addressing these technical and managerial human capital requirements needed to drive the Power Sector can only be achieved through a structured learning and

capacity building process. Learning in itself cannot be achieved without training.

NAPTIN is making effort to address this key human resource challenge in the power sector and to define strategies for attracting fresh talent, retaining existing manpower and building capacity for training and development.

China Daily: What are the main challenges in terms of training and human capacity development?

Mr. Okeke: The following are the main challenges in terms of training and human capacity development in the Nigerian Power Sector:

- Urgent need to match the galloping growth of skilled technical manpower with infrastructure and power expansion. At present, the skilled technical manpower in the sector sustaining the present infrastructure and power is inadequate
- Limited infrastructure/space and training equipment for capacity building compared to the huge manpower to be trained
- Lack of structured training and recruitment over a large period have largely caused the dearth of qualified technical manpower
- Presently, paucity of funds causing inability to undertake planned training activities
- Funding inadequacy to meet up with scheduled training and re-training.

China Daily: What kind of international cooperation and partnerships has NAPTIN put in place to date?

Mr. Okeke: Through the Ministry of Power, NAPTIN has been enjoying the benefit of various International cooperation.

At the moment, NAPTIN has enjoyed a lot of attention for its activities under the Nigerian-German Energy Partnership. Also, under various collaborative arrangements and cooperation, NAPTIN has undertaken various projects with the Japan International Cooperation agency (JICA); the United States Trade Development Agency (USTDA), the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the World Bank.

Some of the collaborations have also brought NAPTIN

into close working relationships with similar power training institutes such as the National Power Training Institute of India (NPTI) and the Israel Electric Corporation (IEC) training Center, Israel.

China Daily: How can NAPTIN benefit from its cooperation with Chinese Partners, such as Private Investors or University, Training Institutes?

Mr. Okeke: Cooperation with Chinese partners may be in the form of exchange programs with Chinese power training institutions/universities, twinning programs and sponsorships, internships, etc. NAPTIN is willing to also learn from the experience of established Chinese electricity industry practitioners, who may be willing to offer technical assistance to NAPTIN directly or to Nigerian utilities through NAPTIN.

Additionally sponsorship to Nigerian Universities on Electric Power related capacity building may also be channelled through NAPTIN

China Daily: Can you tell us about the MOU that we recently signed with Chinese partners?

NAPTIN is presently undertaking a collaborative training arrangement with SEPCO III-Pacific Electric Power Training Centre. Under this program NAPTIN is leveraging on the expertise of the SEPCO III-Pacific Training Centre's expertise in the area of gas turbine to offer specialized training to its NGSDP trainees, who eventually will be key players/actors in the Nigeria Power Sector.

China Daily: What is your final message to the readers of China Daily?

Mr. Okeke: Our final word to readers of China Daily is first, one of goodwill to the entire Government and people of the Republic of China and secondly, that NAPTIN is proud to be associated with the nation of China.

We are proud of the world-wide acclaimed fact of the diligence of the Chinese, especially in the field of industry and technology, and it is therefore a privilege to be associated with the diligence that the Chinese people represent.