

NUPENG CAUTIONS MARITIME UNION ON CALL FOR RELOCATION OF TANK-FARMS IN APAPA

The Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG) attention has been drawn to the recent statement credited to the President-General of the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria, Comrade Anthony Nted, and the issuance of a 14-day ultimatum to government to relocate tank farms from Apapa because of the traffic gridlock.

NUPENG does not want to join issues with the Maritime Workers Union as it has the right to issue an ultimatum to government on issues that affects its members but frown at the demand of the relocation of tank-farms from Apapa and evacuation of Petroleum Tankers from the roads.

The Union observes that the traffic gridlock in Apapa is caused by many factors, which include the heavy-laden containers that ply the Apapa bad road, with most of them falling off on vehicles causing traffic jams with deaths recorded. These trucks and trailers ply the Apapa ports daily causing gridlock on the already bad road. Be that as it may, there is gridlock on virtually on all roads in Lagos and that has not given rise to demand that all vehicles must be evacuated.

The tank-farms located at Apapa receive petroleum products from ships and the tankers go there to load for onward distribution to the nooks and crannies of the country.

The Union states that for the Maritime union to blame the tankers going to load fuel at the tank farms as the cause of the gridlock is a misnomer. The Petroleum Tanker Drivers Branch of NUPENG have their Internal Vehicle Inspection Officers (V.I.O) who make sure that the vehicles are orderly in the tank farm areas to load petroleum products.

They have even devised a means of using the GSM to alert those whose turn are next to load instead of all of them crowding the area. The V.I.O's make sure that the tankers are in good order that is why you hardly see any breakdown on the highway, except containerized trucks coming from the ports. The union therefore rejects the accusation that Petroleum Tankers are solely responsible for the gridlock.

The Maritime Workers Union should have therefore looked internally before making the outburst that the gridlock in Apapa is solely caused by tankers, when the trailers and trucks the dock workers load and commercial drivers driving recklessly contribute greatly to the menace on the road.

The Union therefore appeals to the Federal Government to expedite action on the rehabilitation of the Apapa road, as it will go a long way to ease the congestion on the road. NUPENG also calls on the Lagos State Government and tank farm owners to provide more space for tanker parks to accommodate more tankers.

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