ACCI ABUJA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY NIGERIA

NATIONAL POLICY ADVOCACY CENTER ...for pro business policies

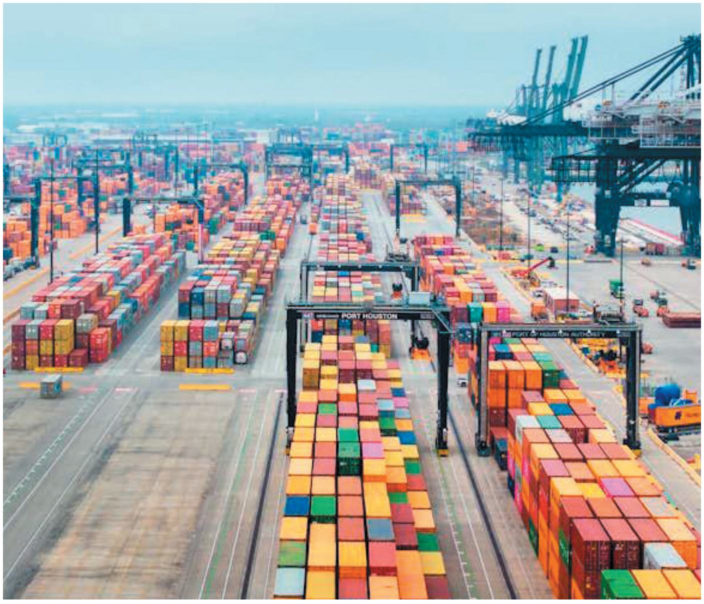
Driving Investment and Growth: **Unlocking The FCT's Economic Potential Through Free Trade Zone**

REPORT

June 2026

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Free Trade Zones (FTZs) have evolved beyond being optional policy instruments to become critical drivers of industrialisation, economic diversification, investment promotion, and export-led growth. As Nigeria intensifies efforts to reduce its dependence on oil revenues, create sustainable employment, and maximise opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the strategic importance of FTZs has become increasingly evident. Beyond their traditional role in manufacturing and logistics, modern Free Trade Zones now serve as catalysts for growth in technology, healthcare, financial services, pharmaceuticals, media, and other knowledge-based industries.



60+
Free Zones

31
Operational Zones

11
Under Construction

18
Inoperative Zones

580+
Zones Entreprise

6
Key Sectors

A Free Trade Zone is a designated economic area where businesses operate under a liberalised regulatory and fiscal framework designed to stimulate investment and international trade. Investors within the zones benefit from incentives such as exemption from customs duties on imported equipment and raw materials, zero VAT and withholding tax on transactions within the zone, 100% foreign ownership, unrestricted repatriation of profits, simplified foreign exchange procedures, and duty-free treatment of exports. These incentives significantly reduce the cost of doing business while enhancing Nigeria's competitiveness as an investment destination.

According to the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA), Nigeria currently has 31 operational Free Trade Zones, 12 under development, and 18 inactive zones. Collectively, these zones have attracted over US$30 billion in foreign direct investment, supported more than 500 enterprises, and generated over 25,000 direct jobs, with Nigerians accounting for more than 80 percent of the workforce. These figures underscore the significant contribution of the FTZ programme to national economic development while highlighting the untapped potential that remains.

Within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), key Free Trade Zones—including the Abuja Technology Village, Centenary City Free Trade Zone, and the Idu Industrial Area—offer significant opportunities to position Abuja as a regional hub for innovation, manufacturing, commerce, logistics, and investment. However, despite their strategic importance, the zones continue to face challenges ranging from inadequate infrastructure and regulatory bottlenecks to policy inconsistencies, limited financing, weak connectivity, and underutilisation of available facilities.

The webinar was anchored by Mrs. Amina .A. Samuel, who skillfully moderated the discussions and engaged the distinguished speakers in insightful conversations on the transformative role of Free Trade Zones in driving economic growth and national prosperity. Through a series of thought-provoking interviews and panel discussions, speakers examined policy reforms, investment opportunities, infrastructure requirements, and strategic initiatives necessary to revolutionize the Free Trade Zone landscape in the FCT. The conversations underscored the importance of collaborative action among government, industry, and development partners in positioning the FCT as a leading hub for trade, manufacturing, logistics, and investment in Nigeria and across Africa.

This report examines the current state of the FCT's Free Trade Zones, highlighting their strategic role in driving economic transformation, assessing the opportunities they present, identifying the key barriers to their optimal performance, and proposing practical recommendations to unlock their full potential as engines of industrial growth, investment, and sustainable development.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria's aspiration to achieve sustainable economic growth, diversify its productive base, and enhance global competitiveness requires deliberate strategies that stimulate private sector investment, industrialisation, and export-led development. As the country seeks to maximise the opportunities presented by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Free Trade Zones (FTZs) have emerged as one of the most effective policy instruments for attracting investment, promoting manufacturing, facilitating technology transfer, and creating quality employment.

Globally, successful Free Trade Zones have transformed economies by providing investors with an enabling business environment supported by modern infrastructure, streamlined regulations, fiscal incentives, and efficient trade facilitation. Countries such as China, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, and Morocco have leveraged Free Trade Zones to accelerate industrial development, expand exports, attract foreign direct investment (FDI), and integrate into global value chains. Nigeria possesses similar potential, given its strategic geographic location, large domestic market, abundant natural resources, and youthful workforce.

In Nigeria, The Free Trade Zones programme has attracted over US$30 billion in foreign direct investment, facilitated the establishment of more than 500 enterprises, and generated over 25,000 direct jobs, with Nigerians accounting for more than 80 percent of the workforce. Despite these achievements, many zones continue to operate below their full potential due to infrastructure deficits, policy inconsistencies, regulatory bottlenecks, inadequate financing, and weak linkages to domestic industries and regional value chains.

Within the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Free Trade Zones present a unique opportunity to transform Abuja into a leading destination for investment, innovation, manufacturing, technology, logistics, and high-value services. The Abuja Technology Village, Centenary City Free Trade Zone, and the Idu Industrial Area possess significant comparative advantages arising from the FCT's strategic location, political stability, expanding infrastructure, proximity to government institutions, and access to national and regional markets. If effectively developed and integrated into Nigeria's broader industrialisation agenda, these zones can become powerful engines for economic diversification, enterprise development, export promotion, and job creation.

However, unlocking the full economic potential of the FCT's Free Trade Zones requires stronger collaboration between government, regulators, investors, infrastructure providers, and the private sector. Addressing challenges relating to infrastructure, regulatory efficiency, investment facilitation, security, policy consistency, and access to finance will be critical to enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of the zones.

It is against this backdrop that the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI), through its National Policy Advocacy Centre (NPAC), convened the webinar titled "Driving Investment and Growth: Unlocking the FCT's Economic Potential through Free Trade Zones." The webinar provided a platform for policymakers, regulators, investors, industry leaders, and development partners to examine the current state of Free Trade Zones in the FCT and Nigeria, identify existing constraints, explore emerging investment opportunities, and develop practical recommendations for strengthening the role of Free Trade Zones as catalysts for industrial growth, investment attraction, export expansion, and sustainable economic development.

2.0 OPENING REMARKS

2.1 Welcome Address

In the opening remarks participants were welcomed to the webinar, "Driving Investment and Growth: Unlocking the FCT's Economic Potential through Free Trade Zones," organized by the National Policy Advocacy Centre (NPAC) of the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI). Dr. Chidi Onwumere the Executive Director of NPAC, emphasized that the dialogue was timely and aligned with NPAC's mandate of promoting evidence-based policy advocacy, fostering public-private collaboration, and creating an enabling business environment that supports investment, industrialization, and sustainable economic growth.

In his remarks, Dr. Onwumere highlighted the growing momentum surrounding the development of Free Trade Zones (FTZs) in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). He noted recent interventions by the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) to resolve issues affecting the Abuja Technology Village (ATV), as well as the proposed Abuja City Walk project, as clear indications of the Federal Government's renewed commitment to expanding the FCT's economic frontiers under the Renewed Hope Agenda. He also referenced the licensing of the Abuja Industrial Park Free Zone as evidence of the significant opportunities available for investment, manufacturing, exports, and job creation.

Dr. Onwumere underscored the strategic importance of the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) in the success of the FCT's Free Trade Zone ecosystem. He explained that the Bureau's role in privatization, commercialization, infrastructure reform, and efficient management of public assets is essential to creating a competitive, private-sector-driven investment environment.

According to him, effective collaboration between the BPE, NEPZA, the FCT Administration, and other stakeholders would be critical to unlocking the full potential of the zones.

While acknowledging the progress made, Dr. Onwumere stressed that infrastructure development alone would not guarantee the success of the Free Trade Zones. He called for a robust and coherent policy framework that addresses regulatory bottlenecks, improves the ease of doing business, optimizes the use of public assets, and ensures that economic growth generated through the zones translates into tangible benefits for businesses and citizens alike.

He further urged participants to focus their discussions on key policy issues, including aligning Free Trade Zone policies with national economic reforms, enhancing the ease of doing business, leveraging enterprise reforms to maximize public asset utilization, and ensuring that the growth of the zones creates opportunities for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and the wider economy.

The executive director concluded by expressing appreciation to NEPZA, the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), and other stakeholders for their continued partnership with ACCI and NPAC. He expressed confidence that the webinar would generate practical, evidence-based policy recommendations capable of strengthening the performance of Free Trade Zones and positioning the FCT as a leading investment and industrial hub in Nigeria.

Free Trade Zones in FCT

- **The Abuja Technology Village**
- **Centenary City Free Trade Zone**
- **Idu Industrial Area**

“The success of Free Trade Zones depends not only on infrastructure but on strong policies that enable business, remove regulatory barriers, and deliver inclusive economic growth.”

2.2 Keynote Address: FCT's Vision

Delivered by: Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA)

Dr. Olufemi Ogunyemi, The CEO of the Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA) who was represented by Mr Augustine C Onyekwelu gave the keynote remark tittled topic: "Positioning the FCT as a Regional Investment Hub through Efficient Free Zone Development."

The keynote address provided an insightful overview of the current state, opportunities, and challenges of Free Trade Zones (FTZs) in Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

Mr. Onyekwelu reaffirmed that the establishment of Free Trade Zones was a deliberate policy initiative of the Federal Government aimed at promoting export-oriented industrialization, attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), diversifying the economy, generating employment, facilitating technology transfer,

> "The African Continental Free Trade Area presents a transformative opportunity for the FCT's Free Trade Zones to serve as a gateway to a market of over 1.4 billion people–but only if supported by world–class infrastructure, policy stability, and competitive investment incentives.

increasing foreign exchange earnings, and strengthening backward linkages across key sectors. He noted that the scheme has recorded significant achievements, with 60 licensed Free Trade Zones and over 941 enterprises operating across the country, contributing meaningfully to Nigeria's economic development.

Focusing on the FCT, he highlighted the Abuja Technology Village, the Centenary Economic City, and the Abuja Industrial Park as strategic investment platforms capable of transforming the nation's capital into a regional investment hub. While acknowledging their enormous potential, he observed that these zones have yet to attain their full capacity due to persistent structural and operational constraints.

According to the keynote speaker, the FCT possesses unique competitive advantages, including its status as the seat of government, the presence of diplomatic missions and international organisations, a youthful and skilled workforce, strategic connectivity to major transport corridors, and a relatively secure investment environment. These factors, he noted, position the FCT to become a leading destination for investment, innovation, manufacturing, technology, and regional trade.

Drawing lessons from successful Free Trade Zones such as the Lekki Free Zone, Ogun Guangdong Free Trade Zone, Calabar Free Trade Zone, and Kano Free Trade Zone, as well as international examples from China, Dubai, and Morocco, Mr. Onyekwelu stressed that sustained success depends on quality infrastructure, policy consistency, efficient regulation, strong institutions, and coordinated government support.

He identified several critical challenges limiting the performance of Free Trade Zones in the FCT. These include inadequate infrastructure—particularly unreliable power supply—policy inconsistencies affecting investor confidence, administrative bottlenecks, high operating costs, limited access to long-term financing, weak integration into regional and global value chains, insufficient investment promotion funding, land disputes, and overlapping regulatory responsibilities among government agencies. He noted that many investors have been adversely affected by recent policy changes, particularly those relating to fiscal incentives, underscoring the need for broader stakeholder consultation before implementing reforms that impact investment commitments.

Mr. Onyekwelu further emphasized the importance of stronger collaboration between NEPZA, the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), and other relevant stakeholders to address land administration issues, improve infrastructure, streamline regulatory processes, and create an enabling environment that inspires investor confidence. He disclosed that NEPZA is currently digitising its regulatory and approval processes and strengthening its one-stop-shop framework to improve service delivery and reduce bureaucratic delays.

Looking ahead, he encouraged the FCT to leverage its comparative advantages by promoting export-oriented manufacturing, agro-processing, technology and innovation parks, logistics, and business services. He observed that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a significant opportunity for the FCT's Free Trade Zones to serve as a gateway to a market of over 1.4 billion people, provided the necessary infrastructure, policy stability, and investment incentives are in place.

In concluding the keynote address, Mr. Onyekwelu reiterated NEPZA's unwavering commitment, under the leadership of Dr. Olufemi Ogunyemi, to repositioning the FCT as a competitive investment destination. He called for sustained collaboration among government institutions, the private sector, development partners, and the business community to unlock the full potential of the FCT's Free Trade Zones and drive industrialization, economic diversification, and inclusive national growth.

3.0 The New Investment Landscape – The Nigeria Tax Act 2025

Delivered by: Nigeria Export Processing Zones Authority (NEPZA)

> “ FCT has the potential to become one of Africa’s premier Free Zone destinations, but success depends on stronger domestic linkages, SME integration, local sourcing, and bold global investment promotion.

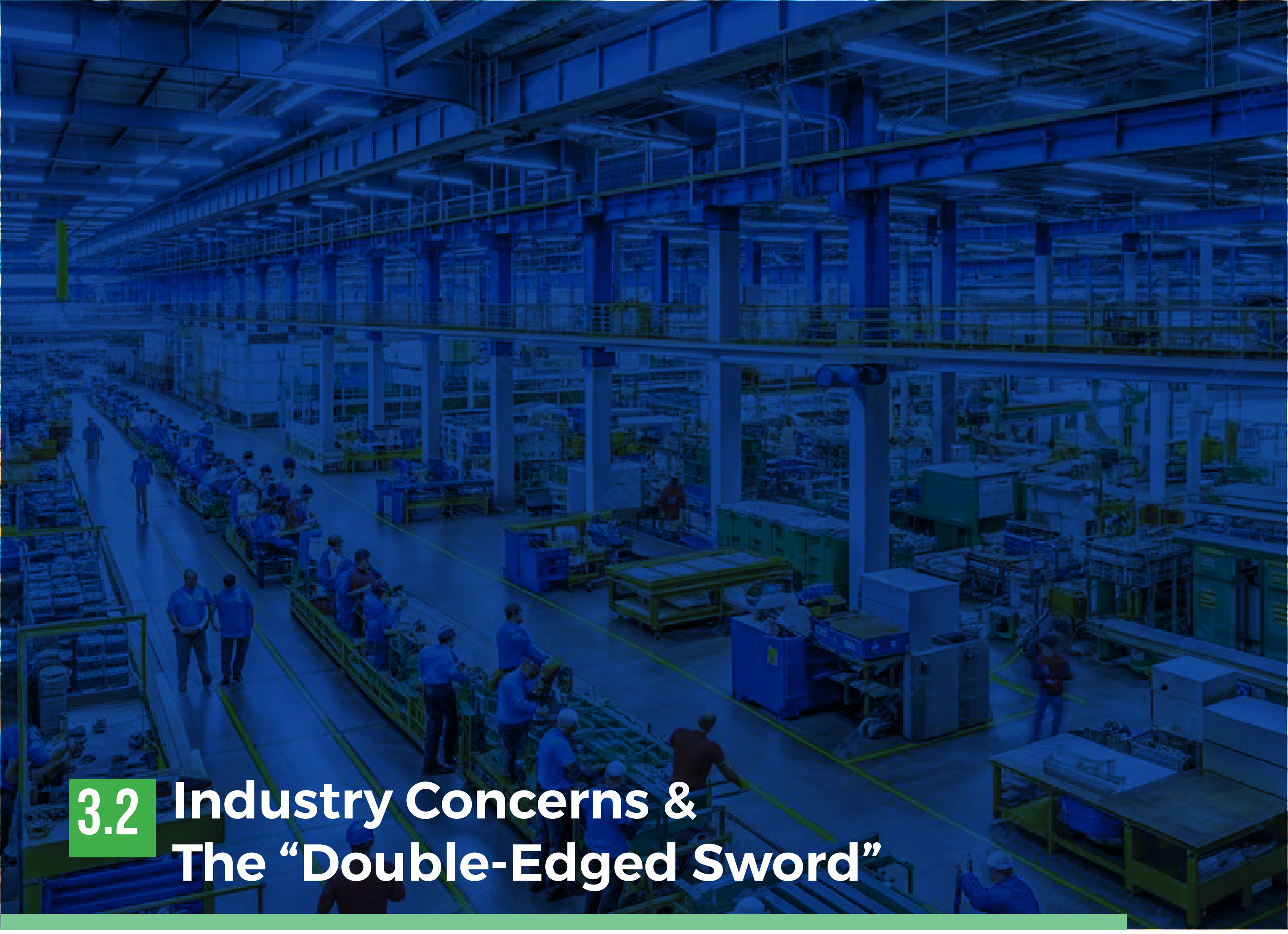
3.1 Key Reforms Under the NTA 2025

Conditional Tax Exemption: Tax benefits are now explicitly tied to export performance. Free Zone Enterprises (FZEs) must derive a significant portion (typically at least 75%) of their income from exports to retain full benefits.

- **Taxation of Domestic Sales:**
Sales into Nigeria’s customs territory, previously a grey area, are now clearly taxable. Provisions for full taxation of profits from domestic sales will take effect from January 1, 2028.

- **Compliance and Reporting:**
FTZ operators are now subject to stricter compliance requirements, including filing annual tax returns and adhering to transfer pricing rules, even when their activities are zero-rated.

- **Global Tax Alignment:**
Large multinational-linked manufacturers will face a minimum effective tax rate of 15%, aligning Nigeria with emerging global tax standards under OECD guidelines.



3.2 Industry Concerns & The “Double-Edged Sword”

Mr. Toyin Elegbede, Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Economic Zones Association (NEZA), represented by Mr. Wale Akaani, Membership Manager of NEZA, delivered a presentation titled “Free Trade Zones in the Federal Capital Territory: Barriers to Performance and Pathways to Growth.” He highlighted the strategic role of Free Trade Zones (FTZs) as globally recognised tools for attracting investment, promoting exports, creating jobs, facilitating technology transfer, and driving industrialisation.

Drawing from the experiences of countries such as China, the United Arab Emirates, Singapore, Morocco, and Mauritius, Mr. Elegbede noted that Special Economic Zones have transformed national economies into globally competitive investment destinations. While Nigeria has licensed over 50 Free Trade Zones, he observed that the FCT, despite its strategic location, political significance, and proximity to major markets and institutions, has yet to fully realise its Free Zone potential.

Mr. Elegbede outlined the unique strengths of the FCT that position it as an ideal location for successful Free Trade Zones. He described Abuja’s central geographical location as providing seamless access to all parts of the country while its status as Nigeria’s political and administrative capital offers investors direct access to policymakers, regulators, diplomatic missions, and development partners. He also highlighted the Territory’s rapidly growing consumer market, relatively high per capita income, expanding transport and digital infrastructure, and enormous potential for service-oriented Free Zones focusing on ICT, financial services, healthcare, education, tourism, and innovation.

He identified several key challenges hindering the performance of the FCT's Free Trade Zones, including:

- **Inadequate infrastructure,** particularly unreliable power supply, poor road networks, insufficient water and waste management systems, and weak broadband connectivity.
- **Policy and regulatory uncertainty**, arising from inconsistent fiscal policies, overlapping regulatory mandates, bureaucratic delays, and policy reversals that discourage long-term investment.
- **Multiple taxation** and regulatory encroachment, which undermine the statutory incentives available to Free Zone enterprises and increase compliance costs.
- **Limited access to long-term infrastructure financing,** weak integration with domestic supply chains, security concerns affecting investor confidence, and a widening skills gap in high-growth sectors.

Recognising the comparative advantages of the Federal Capital Territory, Mr. Elegbede underscored the need to strengthen linkages between Free Zone enterprises and the domestic economy through supplier development programmes, SME integration initiatives, local sourcing frameworks, and skills transfer partnerships. He stressed that successful Free Zones should stimulate economic opportunities beyond their immediate boundaries.

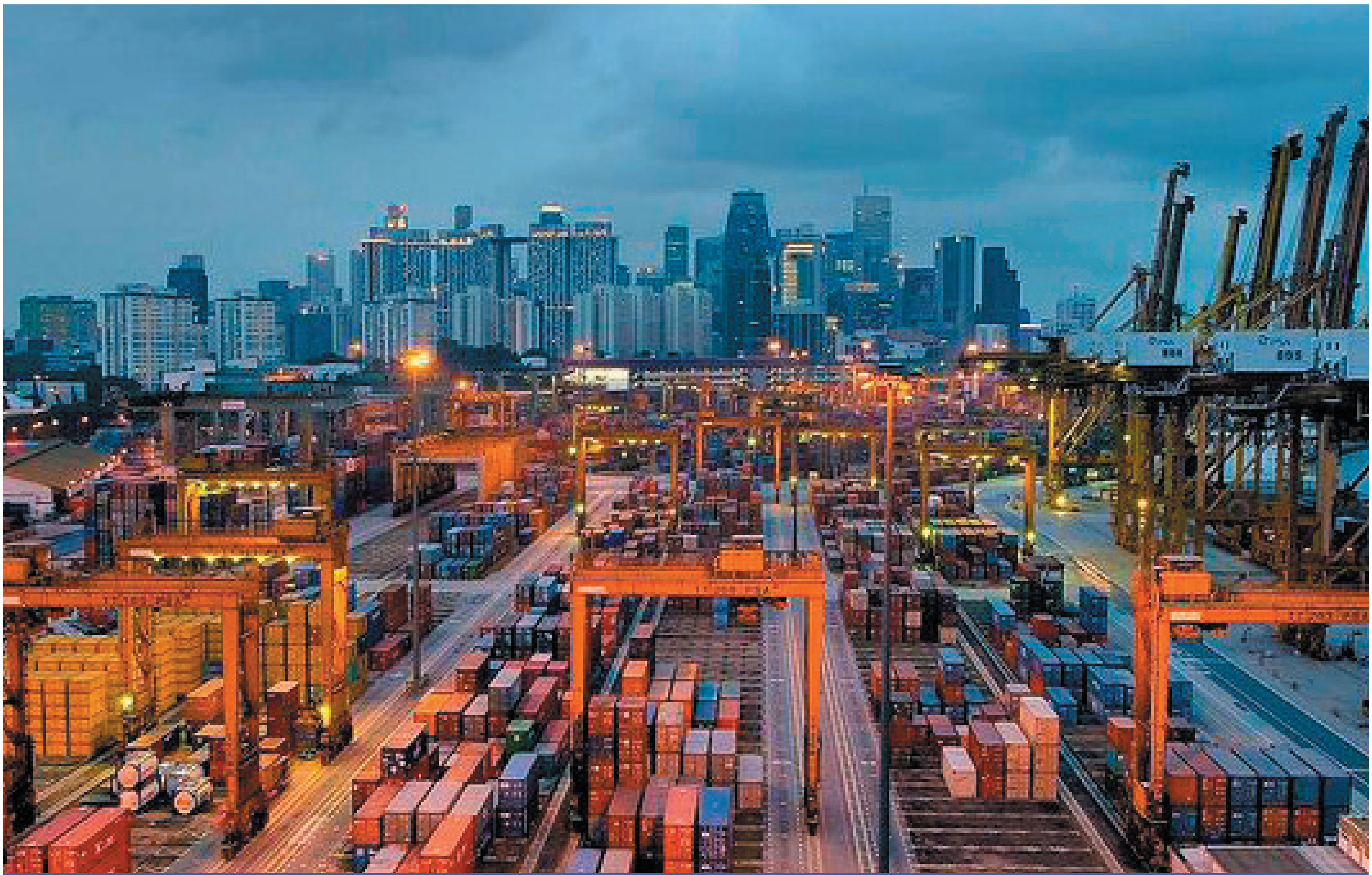
In addition, he called for more aggressive global investment promotion, positioning the FCT as Nigeria's investment gateway, West Africa's business capital, and a regional hub for innovation and service industries. He encouraged targeted investment campaigns aimed at attracting strategic investors into priority sectors.

Concluding his presentation, Mr. Elegbede emphasised that the Federal Capital Territory possesses all the essential ingredients to become one of Africa's leading Free Zone destinations. He noted that the major challenge lies not in the absence of potential but in addressing the barriers constraining performance. He urged stakeholders to work collaboratively to bridge infrastructure gaps, ensure policy consistency, strengthen regulatory coordination, promote innovation, and improve the ease of doing business.

He concluded by expressing confidence that with deliberate reforms, strategic collaboration, and sustained commitment from government, regulators, developers, investors, financial institutions, and the private sector, the Free Trade Zones in the Federal Capital Territory can evolve into globally competitive engines of investment, industrial growth, innovation, employment generation, and national economic prosperity.

Permissible Activities in Free Zones in Nigeria

- Construction & Light Manufacturing
- Solid Minerals & Metals
- Oil & Gas
- Agribusiness & Agro Allied



4.0 Abuja Technology Village (ATV) – A Hub for Innovation

The presentation on behalf of Mr. Mohammed Ali, Senior Manager, Estate and Construction Management, Abuja Technology Village (ATV), was delivered by Ms. Sa'adatu Idris, Head of Innovation, Platform and Partnerships. She provided an overview of the Abuja Technology Village's progress, strategic partnerships, and the challenges affecting its ability to realise its vision as a leading technology-driven Special Economic Zone.

Ms. Idris explained that ATV, established in 2009, was created to promote innovation, entrepreneurship, research, and investment in key sectors such as information technology, biotechnology, mineral technology, and energy technology. She noted that, despite initial setbacks, the Village has made notable progress in infrastructure development with the support of the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA), including the provision of internal roads, electricity, water supply, and other essential utilities.

She highlighted several investment successes, including the establishment of MZV (granite tile manufacturing), Cherrywood Furniture Factory, and Superamari, which assembles electric vehicles, tricycles, and motorcycles. She also identified the partnership with NASENI as a major milestone, with the development of a technology campus and an electric vehicle assembly plant reinforcing ATV's position as a hub for innovation and industrial development.

Despite these achievements, Ms. Idris identified several key challenges limiting the growth of the Village, including:

- **Inadequate infrastructure,** particularly inconsistent power, water supply, and utility services, which increase operational costs.
- **Macroeconomic instability** and policy inconsistency, reducing investor confidence and making long-term investment decisions more difficult.
- **Land encroachment,** which has significantly reduced land available for planned developments and remains a major obstacle to expansion.
- **Administrative delays,** regulatory bottlenecks, security concerns, and lengthy approval processes, all of which discourage investment.
- **Limited institutional visibility** and strategic promotion, resulting in low awareness of ATV's investment opportunities despite its strategic importance.

"Strengthening institutional visibility, strategic communication, and public promotion is essential to positioning Abuja Technology Village as a globally competitive innovation and investment destination."

To unlock the Village's full potential, Ms. Idris called for improved infrastructure, greater policy consistency, stronger institutional collaboration, enhanced public promotion, and the resolution of land and regulatory challenges. She emphasised that leveraging the improved business climate by showcasing the Territory's investment opportunities, particularly within the Abuja Technology Village, would further position the FCT as a globally competitive investment and business hub.

She concluded that with sustained government support and strategic reforms, the Abuja Technology Village can attract greater foreign direct investment, stimulate technology transfer, foster innovation, create employment opportunities, and make a significant contribution to the economic transformation of the Federal Capital Territory and Nigeria.

5.0 Intervention from the Regulator

Mr. Abiodun Akanbi, Chief Investment Officer of Abuja Investments Company Limited (AICL), suggested an intervention that reinforced the key issues raised by previous speakers while providing an investor's perspective on repositioning the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as a leading investment destination.

He noted that while Nigeria attracted approximately US$10.37 billion in foreign capital inflows in 2026, the majority comprised portfolio investments, with only a small proportion representing long-term Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). He stressed that Free Trade Zones (FTZs) remain one of the most effective platforms for attracting productive investments that drive industrialisation, technology transfer, infrastructure development, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

Mr. Akanbi emphasised the need for stronger investment promotion and increased public awareness, observing that many investors remain unaware of the FCT's operational Free Trade Zones, including Abuja Technology Village and Centenary City. He noted that AICL has continued to promote these investment destinations through domestic and international investment engagements, including roadshows in London.

Highlighting the FCT's improving business environment, he referenced the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) sub-national rankings, where the FCT moved from 31st to 4th position nationally. He described this as evidence of ongoing reforms aimed at improving the ease of doing business and creating a more investor-friendly environment.

Some of the key interventions and recommendations;

- **Strengthen Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Attraction**
  Prioritise policies and initiatives that attract long-term productive investments rather than relying predominantly on portfolio investments.
- **Leverage the Improved Business Environment**
  Capitalise on the FCT's improved PEBEC ranking by marketing the Territory as one of Nigeria's most investor-friendly destinations.
- **Enhance Information Sharing**
  Establish mechanisms for regular communication and collaboration among stakeholders to improve investment facilitation and project implementation.
- **Position the FCT as a Global Investment Hub**
  Develop a coordinated strategy to brand and promote the FCT as Nigeria's investment gateway and a globally competitive destination for business and innovation.
- **Promote Free Trade Zones as Investment Hubs**
  Position the FCT's Free Trade Zones as strategic platforms for industrialisation, technology transfer, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.
- **Strengthen Inter-Agency Collaboration**
  Foster stronger coordination among government institutions, investment promotion agencies, Free Trade Zone operators, and the private sector to eliminate duplication and maximise investment outcomes.
- **Promote Strategic Investment Projects**
  Continue supporting flagship developments such as the Abuja Technology Village and Centenary City as catalysts for attracting both domestic and foreign investors.
- **Build on Ongoing Ease of Doing Business Reforms**
  Sustain the reforms that have improved the FCT's business environment and continue implementing measures that simplify business registration, approvals, and investment processes.

Mr. Akanbi urged stakeholders to leverage the improved business climate by showcasing the FCT's investment opportunities, particularly its Free Trade Zones, to domestic and international investors. He also called for stronger collaboration among government institutions, investment promotion agencies, Free Trade Zone operators, and the private sector, noting that greater coordination and strategic partnerships are essential to maximising investment opportunities.

He concluded by reaffirming Abuja Investments Company Limited's commitment to promoting investment in the FCT, supporting strategic projects such as Abuja Technology Village and Centenary City, and working with stakeholders to position the Federal Capital Territory as a globally competitive investment and business hub.

6.0 Institutional Reforms and Private Sector

> "Sustained reforms, strategic partnerships, and quality infrastructure will transform the FCT from an administrative capital into a thriving industrial and investment hub at the heart of Nigeria's economic future."

Mr. Michael Magaji, Director of Infrastructure at the Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE), delivered a presentation on "Institutional Reforms and Private Sector Participation: Accelerating Growth in FCT Free Trade Zones." He emphasised that Free Trade Zones (FTZs) have become powerful instruments for industrialisation, export promotion, job creation, technology transfer, and economic diversification. He noted that the FCT possesses significant potential to replicate the success of leading global Free Trade Zones through the right policy framework, institutional reforms, and private sector investment.

Drawing on global examples such as the Jebel Ali Free Zone (UAE), Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (China), and Tanger Med Free Zone (Morocco), as well as Nigeria's Lekki Free Zone, he highlighted how strategic infrastructure investment, policy consistency, and strong institutional coordination have transformed these zones into globally competitive industrial hubs. He also observed that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents a major opportunity for Nigeria's Free Trade Zones to serve as gateways to a market of over 1.4 billion people.

While recognising the strategic importance of Abuja Technology Village, Centenary City, and other emerging industrial clusters, Mr. Magaji identified inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic delays, financing gaps, limited investor awareness, regulatory inefficiencies, and weak institutional coordination as key challenges affecting the performance of the FCT's Free Trade Zones.

Incentives Available to Business in Free Zones

- Duty-Free Import
- 100% Repatriation
- Tax Holiday
- Immigration Wavier
- Market Access

6.1 Recommended Key Institutional Reforms for Strengthening FCT Free Trade Zones

- **Strengthen Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Attraction**
  Prioritise policies and initiatives that attract long-term productive investments rather than relying predominantly on portfolio investments.

- **Promote Free Trade Zones as Investment Hubs**
  Position the FCT's Free Trade Zones as strategic platforms for industrialisation, technology transfer, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

- **Leverage the Improved Business Environment**
  Capitalise on the FCT's improved PEBEC ranking by marketing the Territory as one of Nigeria's most investor-friendly destinations.

- **Strengthen Inter-Agency Collaboration**
  Foster stronger coordination among government institutions, investment promotion agencies, Free Trade Zone operators, and the private sector to eliminate duplication and maximise investment outcomes.

7.0 RESOLUTIONS

1

Launch Targeted Global Investment Promotion for FCT Free Trade Zones

Implementing focused investment promotion campaigns to showcase the FCT's Free Trade Zones that attracts high-value investors, and position the Territory as a premier destination for trade, manufacturing, and innovation.

2

Develop Sector-Based Clusters

Promote sector-specific industrial clusters that encourage collaboration, improve productivity, attract targeted investments, and strengthen value chains across priority industries.

3

Strengthen Collaboration Between Operators and Regulators

Foster regular engagement and effective coordination between Free Trade Zone operators and regulators to address challenges, improve compliance, and create a more efficient and investor-friendly business environment.

4

Strengthen Institutions and Policy Framework

Strengthen institutional capacity, improve inter-agency coordination, and ensure consistent, transparent policies that enhance the ease of doing business, boost investor confidence, and support sustainable economic growth.

5

Improve Infrastructure Delivery

Prioritize the provision of reliable power, transport, water, and digital infrastructure to reduce operational costs, enhance productivity, and attract sustainable investments.

6 Promote Off-Grid Energy Solutions

Deploy reliable off-grid energy solutions, including solar and gas-powered systems, to improve productivity, reduce energy costs, and enhance the operational viability and competitiveness of businesses within the FCT's Free Trade Zones.

7 Establish an Integrated Research & Development and Startup Incubation Centre

Develop an integrated research, innovation, and startup incubation centre within the Free Trade Zone to accelerate technology commercialization, support entrepreneurship, and attract innovation-driven investments.

8 Align Zone Export Rules with AfCFTA Protocols and Rules of Origin

Harmonize Free Trade Zone export regulations with AfCFTA protocols and rules of origin to expand market access, strengthen regional trade, and enhance the competitiveness of businesses operating within the zones

9 Streamline Levies, Digitalize Processes, and Enhance Regulatory Synergy

Streamlining levies, digitalizing regulatory processes, and strengthening coordination among regulatory agencies will reduce delays, eliminate multiple charges, curb extortion, and improve the ease of doing business.

10 Strengthen Contract Enforcement

Strengthen contract enforcement and regulatory compliance to ensure the full utilization of Free Trade Zones, enhance investor confidence, and promote sustainable industrial development.

8.0 Closing Remarks

Dr. Chidi Onwumere
Executive Director, NPAC

In his closing remarks, Dr. Chidi Onwumere expressed appreciation to the speakers, panelists, participants, and partner institutions for their valuable contributions to the webinar. He noted that the discussions reaffirmed the strategic role of Free Trade Zones in driving industrialization, investment, exports, job creation, and economic growth in the FCT and Nigeria.

He highlighted key recommendations from the deliberations, including improving infrastructure, strengthening policy consistency, streamlining regulatory processes, enhancing institutional collaboration, increasing investor awareness, and promoting greater private sector participation. He emphasized that sustained collaboration among government, regulators, the private sector, development partners, and the Abuja Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) is essential to overcoming existing challenges and unlocking the full potential of the FCT's Free Trade Zones.

Dr. Onwumere reaffirmed the commitment of the National Policy Advocacy Centre (NPAC) to advancing policy dialogue and ensuring that the webinar's recommendations are shared with relevant stakeholders to support ongoing reforms. He concluded by encouraging continued partnership and effective implementation of the recommendations to position the FCT as a leading destination for investment, innovation, industrial development, and regional trade.

ABUJA INTERNATIONAL TRADE FAIR

SINCE 2006

21st Edition

Theme

Resilience

Trade, Taxation and the Economy

25TH SEPT - 6TH OCT, 2026

Venue

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