

REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES TO MARK THE MAIDEN NATIONAL BICYCLE WEEK HOSTED BY THE FEDERAL ROAD SAFETY CORPS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS COMMITTEE ON BICYCLE TRANSPORTATION FROM 18TH TO 24TH NOVEMBER, 2013.

The need to provide residents additional mode of transport that meet the needs of all ages and address both individual and national concerns gave rise to the campaign for planned bicycle transportation in Nigeria. Since inception in 2010, The Federal Road Safety Corps has continually engaged stakeholders at all levels through the inauguration of the National Stakeholders Committee in 2011. The key aim was to evolve a holistic approach to an all inclusive cycling advocacy that will culminate in residents cycling along the roads in Nigerian cities. Having made substantial progress in providing foundational issues that will advance the advocacy, the committee recommended for the annual hosting of a National Bicycle Week. The Week is designed to be the hallmark of cycling advocacy and public awareness each year. This recommendation received the approval of the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive, Federal Road Safety Corps, subsequently, the Maiden Edition of the National Bicycle Week was held from 18th to 24th November, 2013

The weeklong event had as its theme; **“CYCLING FOR LIFE”**, the focus was to showcase the enamours benefits of cycling to the environment, health, social interaction, reduced traffic congestion, transportation cost and by implication, its benefits to life.

It was also an opportunity to ratify the draft National Cycling Policy and Strategy 2014 - 2017 prepared by the National Stakeholders Committee on Bicycle Transportation in Nigeria.

Series of events were held to mark the week long campaign. The events included Press Briefing to herald the entire program, cycling city rides and road show along major streets of Abuja and other cities across the country, Advocacy visits to key stakeholders, bike art



From right, President, Cycling Federation of Nigeria, AlhMohammed Nur Sherif, The Corps Marshal FRSC, Osita Chidoka, OFR, Deputy Corps Marshal Operations, BO Oyeyem and President National Union of Road Transport Workers, Alh. Najim Usman durin the press briefing



From left; FRSC Governing Board Chairman, Mr Felix Chukwu, National Cordinator, Special Marshal, Mr Sini Kwabe, senior officers of the Corps and stakeholders undertaking the city ride



FRSC Cycling club and other cyclist being led by Osita Chidoka during a city ride in Abuja

and a mass rally. Stakeholders visited included Federal Ministries of Works, Transport, Federal Capital Territory, and Environment, The National Assembly, Former Minister of Transport and Nigeria's present Ambassador to Canada, Chief Ojo Maduekwe, Presidents, Road Transport Employers Association of Nigeria, and National Union of Road Transport Workers.

Participants

Members of the National Stakeholders Committee which includes relevant Federal Ministries, Parastatals and Agencies, NGOs on health, Cycling user groups, Transport Institutes, Bicycle Manufacturers, and dealers mobilised their staff/members who took part in the series of activities carried out.

Workshop Session

As part of the programme for the week, a workshop session was held at the VIP Lounge of the National stadium, Abuja where four papers were presented:

- i. **Imperative of Infrastructure Provision and Availability of Bicycles/systems to meet public demand, presented.** by Engr.Sunday Umanah, Director, Central Workshop and equipments, Federal Ministry of Works, Abuja, and member of the National Stakeholders Committee on Bicycle Transport.
- ii. **Benefits of Bicycle Transportation in a Developing Economy:** Presented by Dr. Sydney Ibeanusi, focal person, UN Decade of Action on Road Safety and Director, at the Federal Ministry of Health.
- iii. **Improving Public Acceptance of Bicycle Transportation through an all- Inclusive Stakeholders Advocacy:** by Prince Eka Williams, from the Cycling Federation of Nigeria, Abuja.
- iv. **The draft National Cycling Policy and Strategy 2014-2017: What we Intend to Achieve.** Presented by the Corps Marshal and Chief Executive, represented by ACM Kayode OLAGUNJU, Ph.D, Head of Policy, Research and Statistics, Department, Federal Road Safety Corps, Abuja



Engr. Sunday Umanah, Director, Federal Ministry of Works presenting his paper during the workshop while Dr Sydney UN Contact Person, Decade of Action and Dir Fed Min. of Health, Mrs Ogun of National Orientation Agency, FRSC's DCM BO Oyeyemi and Alh Sherif, President of Cycling Fed. watches on



Senator Idris Kuta responding to his guest while Senate Leader, Udoma Egba and The Corps Marshal watches on



The rally taking off at the federal secretariat through the various routes to FRSC HQ, Zone 3

Discussions and Ratification of the Draft National Cycling Policy and Strategy, 2014-2017

After the presentations, a discussion session followed where stakeholders brainstormed on the key issues that may pose serious challenge to the realisation of the vision. The issues as encapsulated in the draft National Cycling Policy and Strategy presented by the Corps Marshal was extensively debated. At the end of the discussions, the draft document was ratified by stakeholders. To symbolically mark the ratification and commencement of the cycling initiative in Nigeria, a bicycle was unveiled. A Communiqué was presented at the end of the workshop.

Other Advocacy Visits

The Campaign also featured visits to All Saints Anglican Church, Wuse Zone 5 and Wuse Central Monques respectively, where worshipers were admonished to embrace cycling as a mode of transport.

The Core message of the weeklong campaign

The core message of the week centred on the following;

- i. the need for Stakeholders already in the committee to increase their interactions and advocacy visits to opinion leaders, pressure groups, Print and Electronic media, Traditional Rulers, Religious bodies.
- ii. the need for stakeholders to intensify public enlightenment and advocacy for the use of bicycles as a means of transportation nationwide with massive grass root mobilization.
- iii. the need for Government at all levels to commit 15% transportation and road infrastructure budget as dedicated fund for provision of Bicycle lanes, facilities and promotion. Government should provide safe and conducive cycling environment for riders of bicycles through short, medium and long term planning.



The Corps Marshal speaking with Chief Ojo Maduekwe (left) in his residence



Chief Ojo Maduekwe and the team Cycling to the Fed. Ministry of Environment



Officials of the Federal Ministry of Environment receiving their guest

- iv. the need for every Nigerian to choose at least one day in a week not to use motorised vehicle, instead to use a Bicycle to commute within the city from where he/she resides especially if such distance is within 20kms.
- v. the need for parents to purchase bicycles and encourage their children to ride bicycles instead of being dropped off in their schools in a car or taxi, especially if the school is within 5-10kms from their homes.
- vi. the need for Tax incentives to be given to manufacturers of bicycles to reduce their cost, this extend to companies who assemble same in Nigeria.
- vii. the need for Government to develop policies to encourage local manufacturers of bicycles for mass production at affordable prices.
- viii. the need for City Planners and Administrators to include bicycle transportation issues in all urban planning and implementation programme including bicycles lanes in development of new layouts and adjustment in existing roads to accommodate cyclists



Osita Chidoka inaugurating the FRSC Cycling club as part of activities to mark the week



Cross section of participants at the Saturday rally in Abuja

It was a unique opportunity to put cycling on the front burners in the nations' transportation and urban planning sectors. The week is designed to be a motor vehicle free week in subsequent editions.

