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Nigeria: Maritime Safety - FG Signs LRIT Pact With IMSO

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The Federal Government yesterday took step to link up with the global shipping communication network as the government yesterday in London, UK signed the Long Range Identification and Tracking System,(LRIT) Services Agreement with the International Mobile Satellite Organisation (IMSO).

Nigeria was represented at the signing ceremony by the Director General of Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Mr. Temisan Omatseye, while IMSO was represented by its Director General, Captain Esteban Pacha-Vicente

Speaking shortly after the event, Mr Omatseye expressed his appreciation to IMSO for the dedicated work the organisation continues to carry out to ensure the integrity and timely worldwide operation of the LRIT system. He also discussed with IMSO, the possibilities that the LRIT system offers to Nigeria to improve maritime safety and security, including monitoring transit and operations of ships in the area.

The agreement represents the institutional arrangements between IMSO and NIMASA as operator of the Nigerian National LRIT Data Centre, at governmental level.

Head Public Relation of NIMASA, Ms Ego Nwakocho in a statement, disclosed that NIMASA has also signed a contract with Pole Star Space Applications Limited to operate Nigeria's National Data Centre on its behalf, saying the NIMASA DG, Mr. Temisan Omatseye equally signed on behalf of Nigeria, while the DG IMSO, Captain Esteban Pacha signed for the organization, which is an arm of IMSO.

This agreement positions Nigeria to fully comply and implement with the LRIT scheme which links the global shipping system

Nigeria's is the 26th LRIT Services Agreements that have been signed.

The LRIT Services Agreement, prescribed in the IMSO Convention, establishes the relationship between IMSO, as the LRIT Coordinator appointed by IMO, and the LRIT Data Centre for the audit and review of each Data Centre. A Model LRIT Services Agreement was approved for this purpose by the IMSO Assembly at its Twentieth Session on Malta in 2008.

The IMSO LRIT Audit Procedures provide that the LRIT Data Centre Operator should sign an LRIT Services Agreement/Contractual Arrangements with IMSO before the Audit takes place, and settle its financial obligations with IMSO before the final audit report is submitted to the IMO Maritime Safety Committee.

Six LRIT Data Centres were integrated into the original LRIT production environment at the end of 2008, and are due to be audited by IMSO at the end of 2009/beginning of 2010.

In addition, a further 31 LRIT Data Centres have been integrated into the LRIT system by IMSO, and will be audited during 2010 in line with the dates of their integration.

A further eleven LRIT Data Centres, including the Nigeria National Data Centre, are in the process of testing, and are expected to be integrated shortly:

This will bring the total number of LRIT Data Centres integrated by the end of 2009 to 48 overall. These Centres integrate more than 80 percent of the world's registered fleet.

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