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## **Seafarers Training and Certification in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Imperatives of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria.**

**Kevin Okonna and Ushie Beshel**

Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron, Akwa Ibom State

[kevinokonna@gmail.com](mailto:kevinokonna@gmail.com)

Department of Educational Technology, University of Calabar

Email: [beshelushie1117@gmail.com](mailto:beshelushie1117@gmail.com).

### **Abstract**

Over eighty percent (80%) of international trade by volume are carried by sea on more than 99,800 merchant ships of 100 gross tons or more. Over 1.9 million seafarers are engaged globally to carry the international seaborne trade, including about 25,610 engaged in Nigeria. The safe, secure and efficient operation of the ships and carriage of international trade are dependent on training and certification of seafarers in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (as amended) (STCW Convention). This paper presents in detail the actions taken by Nigeria to ensure the training and certification of seafarers in accordance with the provisions of the STCW Convention, including the establishment of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron. The role and contributions of the Academy to training of seafarers in Nigeria have been presented in detail, including the list of ex-cadets/ex-students serving at executive positions in leading maritime organizations. The paper has also identified some challenges to seafarers training and certification in Nigeria and presented the recommendations to resolving the challenges.

*Key words: Seafarers, Training, Certification, Maritime, Academy*

### **Introduction**

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) (2021) has reported that by early 2021 the world fleet comprised about 99,800 merchant ships of 100 gross tons and above used to carry about 80% of international trade by volume. Globally, the report estimated that there were around 1.9 million seafarers working to carry the international seaborne trade and cited the 2021 BIMCO/ICS Seafarer Workforce Report which estimated the global supply of seafarers at 1,892,720. Of these, 857,540 were officers, and

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1,035,180 were ratings. The report highlighted a current shortfall of 26,240 of shipboard officers certified in accordance with the provisions of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (as amended indicating that demand for seafarers in 2021 outpaced supply. The report also warned that the industry must significantly increase training and recruitment levels if it is to avoid a serious shortage in the total supply of officers by 2026 with a predicted need for additional 89,500 officers. The UNCTAD in 2020 estimated the total number of seafarers supplied by Nigeria to be 25,610 comprising 1.08% of the global total of officers (8,918) and 1.61% of the global total of ratings (16,676).

Nigeria is a coastal State and an oil and gas industry dependent economy. The mainstay of the national economy (oil and gas) are mostly produced offshore and traded by sea on ships. The training and certification of seafarers in Nigeria cannot, therefore, be taken for granted. The training and certification of seafarers is critical to ensuring the supply of competent crews for operating ships and the achievement of the objectives of “Safe, secure, and efficient shipping on clean oceans” of the International Maritime Organization’s (IMO). But, the training and certification of seafarers is not a one-off action. For both officers and ratings, it is graduated and based on levels of competency required for operating the different types of ships and involves training and retraining, certification and recertification for continual demonstration of competence and for upgrading to higher levels of responsibilities.

In view of its importance, the standards for training and certification of seafarers have been established internationally, except for non- conventional vessels on inland waters. The International Convention on standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (as amended) [STCW Convention] provides the globally accepted minimum standards for training and certification of seafarers. (IMO, 2017).

This paper focuses on discussing the training and certification of seafarers in compliance with the standards in the STCW Convention, and presenting the perspectives of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, (the pioneer maritime training institution in Nigeria) on this very important aspect of the maritime industry. Accordingly, in the following sections this

paper highlights the training and assessment standards in the STCW Convention, highlights the legal framework for providing seafarers training and certification in Nigeria in compliance with the STCW Convention. The paper also discusses the role of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria in the training and certification of seafarers since its establishment in 1977. It also lists the actions taken to reposition the Academy since the intervention of the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2017 and proffers solutions for the reported poor performance of candidates in Certificates of Competency (CoC) examinations in Nigeria. The challenges to seafarers training and certification in Nigeria are presented with suggested remedial actions before the conclusion.

### **STCW convention and the training and assessment of Seafarers for certification**

The STCW Convention and its Code contain several mandatory provisions that specify the standards for training and certification of seafarers as well as contain the recommended guidance on how to execute the mandatory requirements. Regulation I/6 and Section A-I/6 of the STCW Convention requires that all training and assessment of seafarers for certification should be:

- i) structured in accordance with written programmes, including such methods and media of delivery, procedures, and course material as are necessary to achieve the prescribed standard of competence; and
- ii) conducted, monitored, evaluated and supported by appropriately qualified persons.

In order to standardize the development of written programmes for training, examination, assessment and evaluation of competence of seafarers, the Tables of Competences in Chapters II, III, IV, V, and VI and the corresponding sections and tables in Part A of the STCW Code specify the competences, knowledge, understanding and proficiency, methods for demonstrating competence and the criteria for evaluating competence for all seafarers' training programmes and courses.

Furthermore, and in consideration of the mandatory requirements for structured and written programmes by the STCW Convention for all trainings leading to the certification of seafarers, the

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IMO has published the Model Courses. The Model Courses serve as guidance to maritime training providers and Party State Administrations, for the development of all programmes of training or mandatory courses specified in the Convention. These documents are of immense value for the training and certification of seafarers.

### **Legal framework for seafarers training and certification in Nigeria**

The STCW Convention requires Parties to communicate relevant information to the IMO including the text of laws, decrees, orders, regulations and instruments promulgated on the various matters within the scope of the Convention. As part of the steps to giving full and complete effect to the provisions of the STCW Convention in Nigeria, important laws and regulations have been promulgated and communicated to the IMO in accordance with Article IV, Regulation I/7 and Section I/7 of the STCW Convention. These laws and regulations provide the legal framework for the provision of training and certification of seafarers in Nigeria and include:

- i) Merchant Shipping Act, 2007 (now undergoing the process of amendment) and its subsidiary Regulations. Section 216 of the Merchant Shipping Act (MSA), 2007 gives effect to the STCW Convention (as amended) and Section 2 of the Act delegates the power of the Honourable Minister to the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) as the Agency to implement the Act. (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2007).
- ii) The Merchant Shipping (Training Institutions) Regulations 2010 provides the conditions to be considered for the grant of recognition to any institution involved in the preparation of seafarers for certification, in compliance with the STCW Convention. (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).
- iii) The Merchant Shipping (Training and Certification of Seafarers) regulations 2010 provides the conditions for the issuance of certificates of competency to qualified candidates and all other requirements. concerning the recognition of certificates, validity of certificates, etc. (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

iv) The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Act, 2007 (CAP 224 LFN 1990) (now undergoing the process of amendment) established the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) with the responsibility for executing the provisions of the Act, the Merchant Shipping Act and its amendments and all other Federal Legislation on Maritime Labour, Safety and Security. (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2007). The Agency is therefore responsible for implementing Nigeria's responsibilities with respect to the STCW Convention and has established guidelines for accreditation of Maritime Training Institutions (MTIs), training programmes and professional development short courses for the certification of seafarers, (NIMASA, 2020).

v) The establishment Act of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria (CAP M3 LFN 2010, formerly Decree No. 16 of 1988) established the Maritime Academy of Nigeria with the following functions:

- a) To admit and train the various levels of personnel required for running and operating ships of the merchant navy.
- (b) To train technical manpower for ports, marine engineering, workshops, piloting and navigation, marine insurance, hydrography and other related services; and
- (c) To provide such other forms of instructions as the Academy may, from time to time, decide to undertake. (The Federal Government of Nigeria, 2010).

### **The role of the Academy**

The Maritime Academy of Nigeria, as the pioneer maritime training institution, has been playing a leading role in the training and preparation of candidates for seafarers certification in Nigeria in compliance with the STCW Convention, 1978 (as amended). The Academy was first established as the Nautical College of Nigeria, Oron in 1978 and has been involved in the training of officer cadets and ratings for the human capacity development of the maritime industry in Nigeria and globally. The following sections discuss the contributions of the

Academy to training and certification of seafarers in line with the STCW Convention (as amended).

### **Development of Merchant Navy Officers Training Programmes**

In line with the Training and Assessment provisions (Regulation I/6) of the STCW Convention, the Academy pioneered the development of Merchant Navy Officers training programmes in Nautical Science and Marine Engineering in Nigeria to the National Diploma (ND) and the Higher National Diploma (HND) levels, in collaboration with the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE, 2021). The Nautical Science Diploma programmes were developed to satisfy the Mandatory minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of a navigational watch on ships of 500 gross tonnage or more (Regulation II/1, Section A-II/1 and Table A-II/1). The Diploma programmes in Marine Engineering were developed to satisfy the Mandatory minimum requirements for certification of officers in charge of an engineering watch in a manned engine-room or as designated duty engineers in a periodically unmanned engine-room (Regulation III/1, Section A-III/1 and Table A-III/1). These academic qualifications are very useful for the seafarers, particularly at the point of leaving the sea to seek employment or other endeavours ashore. Other institutions are now utilizing the developed NBTE curricula for offering these training programmes.

### **Development of Preparatory Courses for Certificates of Competency (COC)**

#### **Examination**

Academic qualifications alone are not enough for a seafarer to work on board a ship. A Certificate of Competency (CoC) or Certificate of Proficiency (CoP) issued in accordance with the STCW Convention is required before being assigned shipboard duties at any particular level. The STCW Convention requires eligible candidates for Certificates of Competency (CoC) examination to undertake Preparatory Courses before such examinations. The Academy has played a critical role, in collaboration with the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), for the development and implementation of the Preparatory Courses for CoC

examinations in Nigeria. Currently, there are preparatory courses for a total of twelve (12) Certificates of Competency examinations at the Academy. These include preparatory courses for:

- i) Officer in charge of a Navigational Watch (OOW) examination (Unlimited and Near Coastal Voyages (NCV))
- ii) Chief Mate NCV examination (<3000 GRT and  $\geq 3000$  GRT)
- iii) Master NCV examination (<3000 GRT and  $\geq 3000$  GRT)
- iv) Officer in charge of an Engineering Watch (OOW) Examination (Unlimited and Near Coastal Voyages (NCV))
- v) Second Engineer NCV Examination (<3000 KW and  $\geq 3000$  KW)
- vi) Chief Engineer NCV examination (<3000 KW and  $\geq 3000$  KW) (MAN, 2022).

### **Development of Mandatory Short Courses and other Professional**

#### **Development Short Courses for the Certification of Seafarers**

There are different mandatory short courses leading to the issuance of certificates of proficiency and relevant for the certification of seafarers. These are mostly provided for in Chapters V and VI of the STCW Convention. The Academy has pioneered the development of the basic and advanced mandatory courses, courses for training ratings and courses for seafarers on non-convention vessels. It has on offer a total of twenty-three (23) accredited STCW-mandatory and other professional courses for the certification of of competency of seafarers (MAN, 2022).

In 2006, the Academy obtained the accreditation of the United Kingdom Maritime and Coast Guard Agency (UKMCA) for its STCW Basic Training and was accepted for the training of personnel for the Nigerian Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Ltd/NLNG Ship Management Limited (NSML) working on United Kingdom flagged ships. In the last five years, the Academy has developed and obtained accreditation for a total of eight (8) mandatory courses.

#### **Development of ratings training programmes**

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The Academy has also developed, obtained accreditation and has on offer ratings training programmes in compliance with International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers, 1978 (as amended). These include:

- i) Ratings Forming Part of a Navigational Watch course
- ii) Ratings Forming Part of an Engineering Watch course
- iii) Ratings as Able Seafarer Deck course
- iv) Ratings as Able Seafarer Engine course

### **Impact of the Contributions of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria**

The impact of the contributions of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria since its establishment can be better appreciated in taking stock of ex-cadets and other graduates from the Maritime Academy of Nigeria who have provided and are providing services to different organizations in the maritime industry in Nigeria and internationally. These include the great teams of ex-cadets and other graduates working in the critical sections of the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA), Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Nigerian Shippers Council (NSC), Abuja MOU on Port State Control, the National Assembly as legislators, Nigeria Liquefied Natural Gas (NLNG) Ship Management Limited (NSML), ExxonMobil Nigeria Unlimited, Starzs Investments Company Limited, Bricks Limited, ECM Maritime Services, Hartmann Offshore Nigeria Ltd, and others too numerous to mention here.

The Academy is proud to note that many of the ex-cadets and other graduates of the Academy had since risen to become top Executive Management Staff and Chief Executive Officers of very key organizations providing strategic services to the shipping industry. A select few of these ambassadors of the Academy include: Capt. Ibraheem Olugbade (former Alternate Permanent Representative to the IMO), Capt. Temilola Okesanjo (General Manager, Shipping, NLNG), Late Engr. Dr. Anthony Ishiodu (former Acting Rector of MAN), Capt. Sunday Umoren (Secretary General, Abuja MOU), Professor Abiodun Sule (Executive Secretary, Nigeria Institute of Oceanography and Marine Research), Dr. Kevin Okonna (Acting Rector, Maritime

Academy of Nigeria, Oron. Hon. (Capt.) Ajao Adejumoh (Member of the House of Representatives), Capt. Ebubeogu Iheanacho (former General Manager Security, NPA), Capt. Jerome Angyunwe (General Manager Marine, NPA), and Mr. Emmanuel Miguwa (CEO of Bricks Limited) and many others.

### **Outcomes of the restructuring and repositioning of the academy**

The discussions during the 2016 World Maritime Day Celebration hosted by the Federal Ministry of Transportation in Eko Hotel & Suites, Lagos on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016 focused on the falling standards of training at the Maritime Academy of Nigeria and the industry stakeholders were very loud in calling for the urgent intervention. The Ministry responded immediately with the constitution in January 2017 of the Committee on the Restructuring and Repositioning of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria under the chairmanship of Chief Adebayo Sarumi.

In consideration of the report of the restructuring and repositioning Committee, the Federal Government in September 2017 approved the appointment of a Rector, Commodore Duja Emma Effedua (Rtd) and the constitution of an Interim Management Committee (IMC) headed by Chief Adebayo Sarumi and comprising the Rector and one of the authors of this paper (Dr. Kevin Okonna). The following section presents the successes achieved in the Academy since September, 2017.

**Successes of the restructured and repositioned Maritime Academy of Nigeria** Since September 2017 after the appointment of the new Rector and constitution of the IMC for a duration of six (6) months, the Academy has been massively repositioned in terms of Management structure, infrastructure for World-class maritime education and training, installation and utilization of state-of-the-art teaching facilities and is delivering qualitative training to both cadets and other trainees in the institution. These milestone achievements in quality and capacity development to position the Academy in a vantage position to participate in future opportunities in the global space for maritime education and training include:

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- i) Restructuring of the Management structure and appointment of most suitable staff to critical positions to extract effectiveness and efficiency in operations;
- ii) Reduction in cadets in-take to a maximum of 30 cadets per class in line with IMO recommendations;
- iii) Installation of the complete set of most modern simulators for the training of cadets and for commercial courses for the certification of professional seafarers. The simulators include:
  - i) A 360 Field-of-View Full Mission Bridge Simulator;
  - ii) A Full Mission Engine Room Simulator;
  - iii) A Multi-Functional Simulator Classroom with 30 student stations comprising eight (8) different simulators namely; Radar/ARPA simulator, ECDIS simulator, Navigation/Manoeuvring simulator, GMDSS simulator, Dynamic Positioning simulator, Liquid Cargo simulator, Engine Room simulator, and High Voltage simulator iv), An Ocular Vision Simulator with 15 student stations;
  - iv) Employment of professional seafarers to deliver instructions with the simulators and teach other courses, including two foreign lecturers;
  - v) Trained fifteen (15) instructors and ICT/Maintenance staff for the simulators in India;
  - vi) Development and receipt of accreditation for a total of fourteen (14) mandatory courses, including twelve (12) simulator-based courses for certification of seafarers for delivery on the newly acquired simulators, including.
    - 1. Radar Navigation, Radar Plotting and Use of Automatic Radar Plotting Aid (ARPA) Course
    - 2. Electronic Chart Display and Information System (ECDIS) Course
    - 3. Global Maritime Distress and Safety System (GMDSS) – General Operators Certificate (GOC) Course
    - 4. Liquid Cargo and Ballast Handling Simulator Course
    - 5. Bridge Watchkeeping Preparatory Course

6. Ship Manoeuvring Simulator and Bridge Team Work
  7. Engine Room Watchkeeping Preparatory Course (At Support Level)
  8. Engine Room Simulator Course (Marine Engineering at Operational Level)
  9. Engine Room Simulator Course (Marine Engineering at Management Level)
  10. High Voltage Course
  11. Boiler Familiarization Course
  12. Auxiliary Engine Familiarization Course
  13. Transportation of Hazardous Goods by Sea (HAZMAT) Course
  14. Security Awareness for All Port Facility Security Personnel
- vii) Completion of installation and use of two standard survival pools for training;
  - viii) Completion of installation of complete set of Helicopter Underwater Escape Training (HUET) facilities and the pool and commencement of use of the facilities in collaboration with SEFtec Company of Ireland.
  - ix) Completion of a fourth pool for lifeboat training in the Academy.
  - x) Completion and use of a World-class Auditorium and use for graduation of cadets in 2020 and 2021.
  - xi) Completion and utilization of the main library, including an e-library;
  - xii) Completion and use of an ICT Centre;
  - xiii) Provision of smart classrooms and lecture theatres with smart boards and high-tech multimedia teaching facilities that were utilized for online teaching and learning during peak of the COVID-19 pandemic;
  - xiv) Provision of books and computers to cadets free of cost;
  - xv) Completion and utilization of the Nautical Building accommodating the School of Nautical Studies, the simulation suites and administrative offices;

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- xvi) Renovation of the former Administrative Block and conversion to a Specialized Seafarers Training Centre (SSTC) with fifteen smart classrooms and offices;
- xvii) Remodeling and equipping of School of Engineering;
- xviii) Renovation and rehabilitation of blocks of classrooms for School of Maritime Transport Studies;
- xix) Re-modeling and rehabilitation of the Medical Centre;
- xx) Completion and utilization of Marine Engineering workshops;
- xxi) Completion and utilization of Marine Exhibition Hall;
- xxii) Re-modeling and utilization of cadets hostels with en-suite toilet facilities for only two cadets per room;
- xxiii) Remodeling and completion of the short courses hostel with sixty (60) en-suite and well-furnished rooms;
- xxiv) Remodeling and completion of parks, sports and recreational facilities;
- xxv) Holding of cadets graduation event every year;
- xxvi) Redesign and inclusion of security features in certificates;
- xxvii) Development and production of course files in all courses in the Academy;
- xxviii) Partnership with Ship Owners Association of Nigeria (SOAN) for shipboard training of cadets;
- xxix) Partnership with the International Maritime Organization for raising standards in the Academy through donation of books and publications;
- xxx) Partnership with the Nautical Institute (NI), United Kingdom and the Institute for Marine Engineering, Science and Technology (IMarEST) to register Nautical Science and Marine Engineering cadets with the institutes.
- xxxi) Re-accreditation of the ND and HND programmes by the NBTE;
- xxxii) Development, accreditation and offer of additional eight (8) mandatory courses for professional certification of seafarers;
- xxxiii) Won the Best Maritime Institution in Nigeria award.

It is noteworthy that the entire industry stakeholders that raised the alarm over the falling standards in the Academy during the 2016 World Maritime Day celebration have expressed their satisfaction and acknowledged widely the turnaround within a span of about four (4) years in the Academy. Excerpts of acknowledgements by key industry stakeholders of the fast transformation of the Academy are as follows:

*“The Minister of Transportation, Rt. Hon. Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi has applauded the Management of Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Oron over its dedication and commitment to transforming and restructuring the institution to meet international standards.”*

Ignatius Ushie, Transport Day Newspaper, 17 February, 2021

*“It has been a series of expression of surprise on the turn around witnessed at the Academy by Effedua-led Management. ....”*

Senator Gbemi Saraki (Minister of State for Transportation). In Kagbare (2022).

*“It is a thing of joy that the story has changed for good. I know some prominent persons who are pushing to send their children to this Academy, isn't it wonderful?”*

Engr. Greg Ogbeifun (Foremost shipowner). In Kagbare (2022).

*“Nigeria now has a maritime Academy to be proud of.”*

Capt. Tajudeen Alao, President of Nigeria Association of Master Mariners.

19 October, 2021.

The confidence of the industry in the quality of training in the Academy has resulted in more graduates of the Academy being offered employment and opportunities for STCW mandatory sea service with reputable companies. These actions have addressed the requirements in the amended STCW Convention.

### **Preparations for certificates of competency examinations**

The aim of every trainee or student/cadet in a seafarer training programme or mandatory course is to be examined and be certificated by the appropriate authority. The

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responsibilities for the examination and issuance of certificates of the competency (CoC) to seafarers rest with the Maritime Administration of the Party, in Nigeria, the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA). The Agency therefore assesses and issues eligibility to candidates for the examinations. The approved Training Institutions provide Preparatory Courses for the candidates with eligibility from NIMASA and the Agency subsequently conducts the examinations for candidates that participated in the preparatory courses and issues Certificates of Competency (CoC) to qualified candidates.

In recent times, there have been expressions of concern about the poor performance of candidates in Certificates of Competency (COC) examinations in Nigeria which the former Rector of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria, Commodore D E Effedua (Rtd.), has already presented the position of Management on the issue. The following section of this paper reiterates the views of the Academy on the factors affecting the performance of COC candidates in Nigeria as earlier expressed by the Rector of the institution.

Firstly, the entry qualification to any training programme is a critical factor in the ultimate performance of the trainees. There have been concerns about the adequacy of the types and capacity of the ships on which the applicants for eligibility clearance from the NIMASA for Certificates of Competency (CoC) examinations claim to have served their mandatory one year sea time. Any inadequacy in meeting the eligibility requirements portends a very serious threat to the ultimate performance of the candidate in the examinations.

The Rector had expressed the concern of the Management of the Academy that:

*A number of the CoC candidates may never have had any formal education in Navigation/Seamanship or Engineering, but qualified to sit for the examination by reason of having served on board vessels for at least 36 months as prescribed by the Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping (STCW) which automatically makes them eligible to write the Examination, (Effedua, 2022).*

The Preparatory Courses are not even formal training programmes, but only for preparing the candidates based on the fundamental knowledge, understanding and proficiency to be verified

by the eligibility clearance process. It is very important to get the eligibility clearance process very right to ensure good performance.

Secondly, the participation of the candidates in the Preparatory Programmes is another very critical factor to good performance in the examinations. Again, Effedua (2022) expressed the frustration of Management of the Academy that:

*... these candidates hardly attend classes. Candidates register for the examination but only about 30% of the registered candidates end up attending all the classes. For example, over 70 per cent of the candidates who wrote the 2021 COC Examination attended classes sparingly and some others attended classes less than 20 times and many others did not attend classes at all after registration. The Academy maintains an attendance register which is usually forwarded to NIMASA to keep the Organisation updated.*

The consequence of any candidate without the requisite foundation for preparatory programme and absence from the preparatory classes can only be poor performance in the examinations. The Academy, however, recognises the persisting adverse effect of the candidates' absence from the COC Preparatory Classes and the inability of the Shipowners to release their crew for the six-month classes while they are needed for their duties onboard ships and in the companies. Consequently, the Academy observed through Effedua (2022) that:

*It is therefore necessary for NIMASA and Stakeholders to come together in order to resolve this impasse, otherwise the challenge will persist and only exceptional candidates will continue to pass the examinations.*

The solutions proffered in the foregoing sections are considered by the Academy as being very necessary to addressing the poor performances of some of the COC candidates and lead to the increase in supply of more competent seafarers to the maritime industry.

### **Challenges to seafarers training and certification**

The challenges to seafarers training and certification which need urgent collaboration amongst stakeholders to speedily resolve them for the benefit of the industry include:

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- i) Lack of ships berths for STCW mandatory sea service of merchant navy officers, especially female cadets and for unlimited ship services is limiting the country's capacity in training and certification of seafarers.
- ii) The delay in the commencement of certification of seafarers for unlimited management level services has limited the country's capacity in training and certification of seafarers.
- iii Paucity of authenticated statistics on the domestic seafarer workforce demand and supply situation in Nigeria has negative impact on strategic decision making.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has highlighted the standards in the STCW Convention and its code considered critical to the subject of seafarers training and certification. It has also highlighted the legal framework established by the Federal Government of Nigeria to provide the institutional capacity for ensuring the training and certification of seafarers in Nigeria. The paper has discussed the role of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria in providing leadership in seafarers training and certification in Nigeria. Excerpts of the expression of satisfaction by key industry stakeholders with the transformation of the Academy have also been presented.

The positive outlook in the BIMCO/ICS prediction of increasing demand for seafarers to operate the world merchant fleet has been presented with the indication that the industry must significantly increase training and recruitment levels if it is to avoid a serious shortage in the total supply of officers by 2026. This is a strategic information for continued investment by stakeholders in the training and certification of seafarers in Nigeria. The paper also presented and discussed the challenges to seafarers training and certification in Nigeria and made recommendations relevant for

### **Recommendations**

1. The maritime industry stakeholders should urgently collaborate to find solution to the challenge of lack of opportunities for STCW mandatory sea service on

board ship for merchant navy cadets and resolve the negative effect on the recruitment of females into the seafaring profession.

2. The Nigerian Government should be directly involved in ensuring that shipowners registered in Nigeria provide opportunities for STCW mandatory onboard training of merchant navy cadets in Nigeria and seek Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with shipowning countries and companies for training opportunities on board ships for Nigerian merchant navy cadets. The National Policy on Marine and Blue Economy should provide for this intervention.
3. The government, through NIMASA, should ensure the availability of appropriate types of ships for relevant STCW mandatory sea service to qualify candidates for examinations leading to the issuance of certificates of competency at the management level.
4. The Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) should partner with the Academy to complete the development of the curricula for management level certificates of competency preparatory courses, development of the examination and assessment procedure as well as ensure the availability of trained instructors, examiners and assessors for management level certificates of competency.
5. The Government should collaborate with maritime industry stakeholders at the national level to undertake relevant research and establish the authentic seafarer workforce demand and supply situation in Nigeria for the benefit of strategic decision making concerning training and certification of seafarers.

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