

## **SHORT BIO OF MFON EKONG USORO (MRS)**



Mfon Ekong Usoro holds an LL.M in Maritime Laws from University College London, an LLB (Hons) from the University of Buckingham, B.L (Hons) from the Nigerian Law School and a BSc (Hons) Sociology from the University of Calabar. She is on leave of absence as the Managing Partner of Paul Usoro & Co., a leading law firm in Nigeria. Usoro has extensive and current experience in trade in legal services, participation in negotiations at diplomatic meetings and achieving consensus for adoption of negotiated instruments amongst member States at the regional and continental levels.

### **1. Relevant Regional, Continental and International Experience**

Usoro is the Secretary General of the Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control for West and Central African Region (Abuja MoU) – an Inter-Governmental Organization operating under a Cooperative Agreement with the International Maritime Organization with full diplomatic status. The Abuja MoU comprises of 22 member States abutting the Atlantic from Mauritania to South Africa. As the Secretary General, Usoro established teams of experts from member States for the development of constitutive documents, port State Control procedures, takes the lead in negotiation and secures adoption of those documents by the member States and has successfully attained a high level of harmonization of procedures, implementation and coordination among the member States. She has held the position for over 8years.

Mfon Usoro has at various times consulted for the African Union Commission. Working with a group of experts, she was pivotal to the drafting and negotiation of the African Union Maritime Transport Charter 2009. She is periodically invited by the African Union Commission Department of Infrastructure to participate in workshops/chair meetings held in Addis Ababa, Cairo etc. Usoro is a member of the African Network for Women in Infrastructure (ANWIn), an African Union Commission initiative.

Consulted for UNEP [Nairobi] and UICN [Senegal] to work with two other consultants from South Africa and Togo for the revitalization of the Convention for Co-operation in the Protection and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the West and Central Africa Region [Abidjan Convention].

Usoro was for several years, the sole Maritime legal consultant to the Maritime Organization for West and Central Africa (MOWCA), an inter-governmental body of countries in West and Central Africa headquartered in Cote d' Ivoire. In that capacity produced the:

- Memorandum of Understanding on the Establishment of a Regional Integrated Coastguard Network in the West and Central Africa Region 2008. As the Chairperson of the Ad-Hoc Committee on the Establishment of the Sub-Regional Integrated Coastguard Network negotiated and developed a consensus MOU among member States for presentation to and adoption by the Ministers of Transport of the sub-regional organization.
- Draft Framework for Sub-regional Cabotage and the Memorandum of Understanding on Sub-regional Cabotage in October 2001.

Usoro was appointed in 2009 to chair the ministerial committee of the Maritime Organisation of West and Central Africa (MOWCA) regional Maritime Development Bank in 2009.

For a period spanning over a decade, Usoro regularly attends meetings of the Implementation of IMO Instrument Sub-committee of the MSC Committee of the International Maritime Organization in London and has been privileged to chair twice the IMO Workshop for Secretary General and Database Managers of Regional Port State Control regimes.

She for more than a decade has been actively involved in discussions on liberalization of legal services including attending meetings at the WTO as a member of the International Bar Association Bar Issues Commission, International Trade in Legal Services. In 2012 contributed to *“Adopting Regulatory Objectives for the Legal Profession”* published by Professor Laurel S. Terry, The Dickinson School of Law, Pennsylvania State University, Pennsylvania, in the Fordham Law Review [Vol. 80].

## **2. Nigerian Bar Association Experience**

- Vice Chairperson, NBA Lagos Branch Bar Centre Building Committee, 2018 – to date;
- Chairperson, NBA Section on Business Law, 2010/2011;
- Chairperson, Conference Organizing Committee, 4<sup>th</sup> Section on Business Law Annual Conference, 2009;
- Alternate Chairperson, NBA Liberalization of Legal Services Working Group (2012-2014)
- Member, Technical Committee for Conference Planning (TCCP), NBA Annual General Conference 2017;
- Chairperson, Technical Sub-Committee, TCCP, NBA Annual General Conference 2018;
- Chairperson, Content & programme Sub-Committee, TCCP, NBA Annual General Conference 2019;
- Chairperson, Technical Sub-Committee, TCCP, NBA Annual General Conference 2020;
- Chairperson, NBA African Continental Free Trade Agreement, 2020;
- Past Treasurer, Nigerian Maritime Law Association

## **3. Law Reform Efforts**

Mrs. Usoro has robust experience in legislative drafting and advocacy and led the Paul Usoro & Co [PUC] team in the drafting and legislative advocacy of the following Legislation, Regulations and Bills:

- Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency Act 2007.
- Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria Act 2007.
- Coastal and Inland Shipping (Cabotage) Act 2003.
- Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria (Annual Subscription and Other Fees) Regulations, 2010.
- Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria Act (Professional Misconduct and Discipline Regulations) 2010.
- Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria Act 2007 (Registration of Freight Forwarders) Regulations 2010.
- Council for the Regulation of Freight Forwarding in Nigeria Act (Organs and Offices of the Council Regulations) 2010.
- Coastal and Inland Shipping Cabotage (Bareboat Registration) Regulations 2005.
- Coastal and Inland Shipping Cabotage (Ship Detention Order) Regulations 2005.

- Carriage of Goods by Land (Road and Rail) Bill 2019
- Ports Bill 2010 (House of Reprs consultancy).
- National Transport Commission Bill 2005 and the 2008 revised Draft (World Bank/BPE consultancy).
- Port and Harbour Authority Bill 2005 and the 2008 revised Draft, (World Bank/BPE consultancy).
- Draft Environment Management Bill 2000

#### **4. Relevant National Experience**

Mfon Usoro is a trade law expert and represents the Nigerian Bar Association at the Nigerian Coalition of Services Industry (NCSI). Mfon was recently appointed the Chairperson of the National Consultative Forum on Trade and Trade Related Negotiations, NOTN.

She was privileged to lead the brainstorming sessions at the services industry consultation on the Nigerian Draft Schedule of Specific Commitments organized by the Nigerian Office for Trade Negotiations in February 2020. She participated as a panelist in 2 panels at the recent National AfCFTA Forum on "Effective Implementation for Industrialization and Inclusive Economic Development in Nigeria" on 5-6 December 2019 co-organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).

At the level of the NBA and apart from representing the NBA at NCSI, Usoro was the Alternate Chairperson, NBA Liberalization of Legal Services Working Group (2012-2014) and past Chairperson, NBA Section on Business Law.

Mfon Usoro is the pioneer Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, (NIMASA). Left the Agency in 2007. She is the chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Finalization of the National Transport Policy for Nigeria.

#### **5. Corporate Boards**

Usoro currently serves as Chairperson, Board of Directors of TIB Asset Management Limited; a Non-Executive Director (Independent), on the board of The Infrastructure Bank Plc; a Non-Executive Director (Independent), on the board of First City Monument Bank Ltd; a Non-Executive Director, on the board of Board of Geometric Power Limited.

#### **6. National Honours**

Mfon Usoro was conferred with the *Officier de L'Ord de Mono*, a national honour of the Republic of Togo in 2002; and *Chevalier de l'Ordre du Merite Maritime*, a National honour of the Republic of Cote D' Ivoire in 2015.



Mfon Ekong Usoro