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Interferry Co-Hosts Lagos Ferry Safety Conference to Promote Maritime Safety in West and Central Africa

In the next chapter of its FERRYSAFE project, Interferry, the association representing the ferry industry worldwide, is taking a leading role in addressing ferry safety in Africa with the upcoming Lagos Ferry Safety Conference on June 25-26, 2025, in Lagos, Nigeria. The conference is co-hosted by the Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa (MOWCA) and the Lagos Waterways Authority (LASWA), underscoring the collaborative spirit needed to tackle this crucial issue.

The maritime industry in Western and Central Africa plays a vital role in regional transportation and trade. However, the sector faces significant challenges, including aging vessels, inadequate infrastructure, inconsistent enforcement of safety regulations, and a lack of sufficient training for crew members. Enhancing safety standards is crucial for protecting lives, fostering economic growth, and ensuring the sustainable development of the region's waterways.

MOWCA, under the leadership of Dr. Paul Adalikwu, is actively working to foster greater cooperation among its member states. A key objective for MOWCA is to attract stable investments and financial resources to elevate ferry safety standards across West and Central Africa, recognizing that financial stability is fundamental to implementing sustainable safety improvements.

"For MOWCA, this conference aligns perfectly with our strategic objectives of fostering collaboration and enhancing maritime safety across our member states and beyond. We believe that through collective effort and the sharing of expertise, we can achieve significant advancements in ferry safety and create a more secure environment for waterborne transportation," said Dr. Paul Adalikwu, Secretary General of MOWCA.

Lagos, a bustling megacity built around a lagoon and the Atlantic Ocean, relies heavily on its waterways for transportation. Ferries provide a vital link for commuters and commerce, navigating the complex network of lagoons and creeks. Recognizing the importance of safe and efficient water transport, the Lagos State Government established LASWA to manage and regulate the sector and enhance navigation and promote its social and economic benefits.

Affirmingly, General Manager Oluwadamilola Emmanuel said, "In Lagos, we live on, with and from the water. Shipping is the best means of transportation in a city located in a lagoon. That's why we want to build dozens of new piers and put more ferries into service to facilitate the daily journeys of our inhabitants. In order to ensure the safest transportation possible, we are seeking exchange and dialogue with Interferry and MOWCA to evaluate how we can best benefit from their experience for safe ferry transport in our urban structure."

The Lagos Ferry Safety Conference builds upon the momentum generated by Interferry's 2024 Africa Safety Seminar held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and the following Africa Safety Workshop in



Marrakech, demonstrating the association's ongoing commitment to the African continent by fostering dialogue, sharing best practices, and strengthening collaborations. The initiative is part of Interferry's FERRYSAFE project and a direct outcome of Interferry's Strategic Plan 2024-2026, which prioritizes the promotion of domestic ferry safety in developing regions as a key objective of the organization.

Mike Corrigan, CEO of Interferry, highlighted the organization's commitment, saying, "Interferry is dedicated to driving improvements in ferry safety globally, and this conference in Lagos is a crucial step in our engagement with the West and Central African region. We are confident that this collaborative platform will lead to tangible outcomes and contribute to a safer and more sustainable ferry industry."

Interferry is a highly respected global ferry trade association with consultative status at the International Maritime Organization and similar influence at the European Union as well as many other maritime governance authorities. With membership exceeding 280 companies and representing plus 2,200 individuals in more than 40 countries, its primary purposes are to represent the ferry industry on regulatory and policy matters including safety and sustainability; to speak on behalf of the worldwide ferry sector which provides transport for over four billion passengers and 370 million vehicles annually; and to facilitate networking and communications among its members.

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