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Interferry and MOWCA Sign Landmark MOU to Advance Ferry Safety in West and Central Africa

The Lagos Ferry Safety Conference, co-hosted by Interferry, the Maritime Organisation for West and Central Africa (MOWCA), and the Lagos Waterways Authority (LASWA), successfully concluded last week in Lagos, Nigeria. The two-day event marked a significant step forward for regional maritime safety. A major highlight was the signing of a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Interferry and MOWCA.

This MOU solidifies cooperation for effective, safe, and sustainable ferry transportation in Africa. Key areas of joint action include information campaigns for policymakers and the public on ferry safety and sustainability. The agreement also covers training seminars for maritime personnel, technical staff, and safety officials. Both organizations will work to strengthen legal and regulatory frameworks for ferry development. Studies on domestic ferry markets, including needs assessment and infrastructure sustainability, are also planned. Additionally, the MOU fosters cooperation between Interferry members and local operators to improve ferry company operations in West and Central Africa. The agreement also facilitates the exchange of information and mutual invitations to meetings, ensuring continuous dialogue.

"The signing of this MOU with MOWCA marks a pivotal moment for ferry safety in the region," stated Mike Corrigan, CEO of Interferry. "We are incredibly enthusiastic about this increased cooperation. By working closely together, we can share best practices, implement robust safety measures, and cultivate a more sustainable future for ferry transport. We eagerly anticipate the positive impact our shared efforts will have."

Dr. Paul Adalikwu, Secretary General of MOWCA, expressed his satisfaction. "We are extremely pleased to formalize our partnership with Interferry through this MOU. This agreement is a testament to our shared dedication to improving maritime safety. We look forward with great hope and excitement to a future of collaborative initiatives that will significantly enhance ferry safety across West and Central Africa."

The Lagos Ferry Safety Conference itself brought together 220 policymakers, operators, regulators, and stakeholders. Discussions focused on critical aspects of ferry safety and operational efficiency. Delegates explored navigation and weather forecasting, emphasizing clearer waterways through buoyage and channelization, alongside the vital role of accurate weather data to prevent incidents and ensure safe passage for ferries.

Fleet maintenance was another key area. Participants shared best practices on drydocking, repairs, vessel modification, and the importance of predictive maintenance for marine engines. The human element in ferry safety was also highlighted. The need for well-trained crew, stronger collaboration with training institutions, and more cadetship placements for African cadets were central themes.



This conference represents Interferry's continued commitment to promoting domestic ferry safety in developing regions, a key component of its FERRYSAFE project. As laid down in its Strategic Plan 2024-2026, this initiative follows the successful Africa Safety Seminar held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in April 2024, and a Safety Workshop in Marrakech in October 2024, demonstrating Interferry's ongoing dedication to improving maritime safety on the African continent. The dialogue will continue, with further discussions planned at the upcoming Interferry2025 conference in Sorrento, Italy, on October 4-8 2025, ensuring sustained momentum in these vital safety initiatives.

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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