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Media Relations Office
Mr. Moses Duku

Mobile: +234 805 222 5465
Phone: +234 803 906 7000 | ext. 4635
Email: moses.duku@julius-berger.com

Julius Berger Projects: Wike Flags-Off Construction of PH Ring Road Project

Immediate past Governor of Rivers State, Nyesom Ezenwo Wike, on Monday, flagged-off the Port Harcourt Ring Road project construction with assurances to His Excellency, Governor Siminalayi Fubara and the people of the State that, with Julius Berger as the contractor for the properly-funded project, it will be completed and commissioned ahead of the scheduled delivery date.

Speaking before he flagged-off the project, the former Governor lauded the contractor saying that, "...on this project, with Julius Berger (as the contractors), I can assure you that Julius Berger will not wait for the projected three years to complete the job." Wike said, "...by the time Julius Berger Nigeria Plc finishes this work, you will be happy, your children will be happy and everybody will be happy, because you would have made the people happy." In his speech, Gov. Fubara reminded all at the landmark event that the day's event was in continuation of the contract signing ceremony which was executed last Wednesday, adding that the development will eventually silence doubters in the State, further informing that, "...we have paid for the project." Recalling that he listened very well to the speech made earlier by the Managing Director of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Engr. Dr. Lars Richter, the Governor said, "I listened to the Julius Berger Managing Director just now; especially where he talked about connecting communities. This is very true." Governor Fubara expatiated further, saying, "...this Port Harcourt Ring Road project is not about connecting Local Government Areas. It is about connecting communities. This project will bring about new cities in Rivers State as accessibility to the State capital will become far much easier."

Gov. Fubara further urged full cooperation from leaders and youths of the communities in the six LGAs where the Ring Road will transverse saying, "I urge the communities where the project passes to cooperate with the State Government and the contractors for successful accomplishment of the project. We seek your cooperation. Compensation will be paid. However, for any one or group who will try to sabotage us concerning the works of the Port Harcourt Ring Road, we will bring down the big hammer on

Julius Berger Nigeria Plc • RC No. 6852 • TIN 01372101-0001

Registered Office: 10 Shettima A. Munguno Crescent | Utako 900 108 | FCT Abuja | Nigeria
Website: www.julius-berger.com • Email: info@julius-berger.com • Phone: +234 803 906 7000

Directors: Mr. M. Sunmonu, CON, Chairman • Mr. G. Marks, Vice Chairman (German) • Engr. Dr. L. Richter, Managing Director (German)
Mr. C. Hausemann, Financial Director (German) • Alh. Z. I. Bayi, Director Administration • Mr. T. Meletschus, Director Corporate Development (German) • Mr. C. O. Anya, Esq.
Dr. E. N. Azudialu-Obiejese, OFR • Engr. J. Damulak • Amb. A. S. Daura, MFR • Mrs. B. A. Disu, CAL • Mr. E. C. Ebi, MFR, FCIB, FIOD • Engr. G. M. Sheikh • Mrs. G. O. Talabi

such individuals or group. As for Julius Berger, we all know you have a good reputation for doing quality projects. Please do not fail us.”

Earlier in his speech at the event, the Group Managing Director of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, Engr. Dr. Lars Richter described the Port Harcourt Ring Road project as a sign of the continuing success of the State Government’s and the company’s collective journey to progress. He said: “...the Ring Road will be a shining example not just of connecting places but connecting communities for development.” Dr. Richter added that the project will also alleviate traffic congestion in some parts of the communities even as great opportunities for solid foundation of the communities will be built.

At the commencement of the event, the State’s Commissioner for Works, George Kelly Alabo gave the project description as follows: the project has been on the drawing board for decades. It has a length of 50.15km with 45 km dual carriageway, 4.8km of 6 flyovers and a 350m river-crossing bridge.

During the contract signing last week, Gov. Fubara said of the N195.3billion contract sum for the Port Harcourt Ring Road, the Rivers State Government will pay 77%, totalling about N150billion to commence the works. Governor Fubara also assured the contractor, Julius Berger that the State Government is committed to paying the balance once it is certified that Julius Berger has completed about 75% of the job. He therefore admonished Julius Berger thus, “...you have been doing well. Continue in that tradition and we will continue to give you our necessary support.”

According to Gov. Fubara, the project will span six Local Government Areas of the State including, Port Harcourt, Okrika, Eleme, Echie, Ikwerre and Obia-Akpor, even as he advised the people of the project area to responsibly cooperate with the contractor to accomplish the project as scheduled. In the same vein, Governor Fubara strongly cautioned traditional rulers and youths of the listed Local Government Areas and their communities not to hinder the work of the contractor in any way whatsoever. Describing the project as the single biggest project to be undertaken by the state, Governor Fubara optimistically added that, “when all these places are opened up by the completion of this project, people, including industrialists, real estate investors, and other derivative businesses will come. Businesses will open up, as we can see that people have even already started acquiring land all along the project corridor. That is to tell you the importance of the road.”

Finally, the Governor disclosed that the project will be completed within 36 months arguing that he awarded the contract this early in the life of his young Government because it is the only way it will be completed in the next four years of his administration. Said he: “This project will run for 36 months so that before the twilight of the current administration we will complete and commission it.”

At the flag-off event were former Governor, Sir Dr. Peter Odili, Distinguished Senators and Honourable Members of the House of Representatives, Honourable Members of the Rivers State Executive Council, the Honourable Speaker and Members of the Rivers State House of Assembly as well as the Chairman and members of the Rivers State Council of Chiefs. The Julius Berger delegation led by the Managing Director, Dr. Lars Richter, FNIQS, also had the Deputy Regional Manager South-south/South-east, Engr. Rimon Marisho, Project Manager, South-south/South-east, Engr. Taner Oezerkan, the Regional Project Coordinator, South-south/South-east, Chief Sam Ngbor; and the company’s Head of Media Relations, Prince Moses Duku, Fnipr, in attendance at the ceremony in Port Harcourt.