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Engineering Construction Quality and Project Delivery Speed – Hon. Minister of Works, his Excellency, Engr. David Umahi

The Federal Government has described Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, the country's leading engineering construction company as unbeatable in technical quality, and also matchless in project delivery speed.

The remarks were made by the Honourable Minister of Works, a meritorious, seasoned, and reputable engineer by vocation. The Minister who was also the immediate past Executive Governor of Ebonyi State is worthily, substantively reputed to be a consummate developmentalist whose interventionist infrastructural works in Ebonyi State stand visibly strong and functional as a lasting testimony to his qualitative engineering professionalism.

The Honourable Minister, amongst others, was accompanied on the visit by Distinguished Senator Lawal of Kaduna State and Senior Officials of the Federal Ministry of Works. The Ministry officials included the Director of Highways construction and Rehabilitation, Engr. Folorunsho Esan; the Director, Highways, North-West, Engr. Taiwo W.A; the Director, Highways, North-Central, Engr. Aganaba; the Deputy Director, North-West Zone, Engr. Goni Mohammed; Federal Controller of Works, Kaduna State, Engr. Ibrahim Nmadu; and Federal Controller of Works and ER, Engr. Yakubu Usman.

Briefing the Minister on the progress of works on site, all relevant officials of the Federal Ministry of Works ascribed the delay of works, particularly within Section 1 of the project between Kaduna and Abuja to, amongst other compelling factors, earlier serious security challenges, Right-of-Way issues as well as the onset of the rains. The security challenges, however, have been significantly mitigated by Government intervention as the contractors are now fully back on site and working progressively on the project. Speaking on behalf of the Managing Director of Julius Berger Nigeria Plc, who was out of the country during the Minister's visit, the MD's representative, the Project Manager of the Abuja-Kano Road works,

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Engr. Finn Drosdowski thanked the Honourable Minister and his entourage for coming on the inspection visit. While thanking the Federal Government for the project awarded to Julius Berger, Drosdowski assured the Minister that all things being equal, Julius Berger's usual reliability to deliver the road project is a foregone conclusion. ***"The works are progressing, and the project will be accomplished"***, he said. Engr. Drosdowski also thanked the Honourable Minister for his kind words regarding Julius Berger's attested premium technical quality, operational effectiveness, and project delivery speed. ***"These historical corporate values remain the driving force behind the company's engineering work on the Abuja-Kano Road project, as indeed in all of the company's projects"***, he said.

Minister Umahi who expressed his satisfaction at the excellent quality of work being executed by Julius Berger on the project, however expressed his concern about the pace. He promised to look into any factors that may be impeding the pace of the works. The Minister added that he would speak with the Nigerian Sovereign Investment Authority (NSIA), which is the funding agency for the project to see how funding can be improved for the project. According to the Honourable Minister, ***"...We will look into all issues affecting the pace of the works, including funding. No contractor can work at a requested pace on a project without commensurate or properly structured funding."***

Engr. Umahi said he was instructed by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, *GCFR*, to physically tour and inspect the ongoing works to factually see and report on the progress and status of the project. The Minister emphasized that, ***"President Tinubu seriously wants this project accomplished for the beneficial use of the Nigerian people."*** Engr. Umahi added that the Tinubu Government is determined to work with the contractors to get the project completed and delivered even in 2024, and with some portions to be implemented with concrete paved with asphalt. ***"We (the Federal Government) will work with the contractors and that goal will be achieved"***, he said. Umahi also said he will continue to visit the project until it is successfully completed and delivered for the beneficial use of the people.