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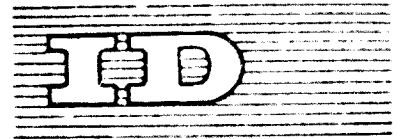
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D00490



Distribution
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ID/W.34/85
20 October 1969

United Nations Industrial Development Organization

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Interregional Petrochemical Symposium on the
Development of the Petrochemical Industries in
Developing Countries

PET.SYMP. A/34

Lagos, UDSR, 20 - 31 October 1969

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PETROCHEMICAL INDUSTRY
IN NIGERIA

by

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Summary

1. No petrochemical complex has been established in Nigeria, but feasibility reports on its establishment have been submitted and are being studied by the Government.
2. Aspects of the complex include: polyvinylchloride (PVC), polyethylene, LHC, LFG, caustic soda, calcium carbide and fertilizer industries.
3. PVC is imported primarily for plastic shoes production; it showed a phenomenal import growth rate of about 60 per cent by weight between 1962 and 1967.
4. Polyethylene statistics are scanty. However, available figures showed a growth rate of 70 per cent and 40 per cent in 1964/1965 for low and high density resins respectively.
5. Statistics on calcium carbide, used as soil stabilizer and for generating acetylene for miscellaneous purposes, show fluctuation from year to year and therefore permit no growth rate estimation. A shrewd guess of 15 per cent growth rate is possible on local condition considerations.
6. Textile industry apart, 90 per cent of imported caustic soda is used in soap industries; future possible outlets are in the manufacture of hypochlorides, paper pulp and in glass industries.
7. Nigerian crude oil are uniquely low in sulphur; products like fuel oil are therefore essential in countries with stringent atmospheric pollution laws.
8. 94 per cent of associated gas produced in Nigeria is flared, while only 6 per cent is utilized for power generation and as fuels. Consequently, gas wells discovered are always shut-in.
9. Nigerian soil is generally high in acidity, deficient in sulphur and nutrients, and hence low in yield. Government which is the greatest purchaser of fertilizers heavily subsidises their sales in order to break through the sceptical attitudes of farmers to the use of fertilizers. Three types of phosphates and nitrogenous fertilizers are sold.
10. LFG is at present imported, and there is no local utilization of it, the recognised greatest user of natural gas resources.
11. A growth rate of 20 to 25 per cent in the use of fertilizers is realistic and export possibilities to neighbouring countries exist. Urea industry is to be export-oriented.

12. After 1972, it will be necessary to either build a new refinery or expand appreciably the present refinery capacity of 42,000 BPD to satisfy local market demand.

13. Economic association is advisable if establishment of industries is to be feasible and rapid. The much talked about West Africa Association could be used as a spring-board.

14. It is imperative to train Nigerians for the proposed industries to curtail the use of expensive foreign staff.

15. Pioneer status, frequent review of import duty reliefs, tariff protection on raw materials etc., are some deliberate incentives offered by the Government to create an attractive investment climate.

16. Capital necessary for the establishment of petrochemical industries are necessarily high. Long-term low-interest credits are therefore essential and desirable.

1. Preamble

There is at present time no petrochemical complex in Nigeria. The objective of this paper is therefore oriented to pointing out:

- (1) the extent of the abundance of resources available locally from which chemicals, fertilizers, pharmaceuticals etc. are traditionally derived;
- (2) the future prospects, Government incentives and concessions geared towards achieving the establishment of such petrochemical industry;
- (3) problems encountered and areas in which assistance is required with particular emphasis on the nature of the assistance.

1.1 Available resources

Nigeria is well able to supply units in Africa, South of Sahara, in the production of crude oil which was at a time at a rate of 42⁰,170 BPD. The present drop in production is unrepresentative as it has resulted from the present national crisis. It however, ranks as the third largest producer in Africa and the tenth in the world. There is every indication, judging from the present level of activities, that production may double before long. Tables 1.1 and 1.2 show the historical crude oil and natural gas production since 1961.

Crude oils produced in Nigeria have a variety of desirable properties the characteristics of which are shown in table 1.3. A typical crude oil assay is shown in table 1.4. In all these analyses one would see too clearly that Nigerian crude oils are uniquely low in sulphur content, a property which renders them and products, like fuel oil, derived therefrom, readily acceptable for world markets.

Some 75 per cent of the crude oil produced at normal times in the local refineries is retained for products consumed locally. The remaining 25 per cent is exported. At the present, the local refinery is non-operational, hence all the crude oil produced is exported.

As detailed elsewhere (1), most petrochemicals are derived from the crude oils. Table 1.5 shows the rate of gas separated from the crude oils. Table 1.6 shows the properties of the gas which is used for typical flares. Only 5 per cent of the gas is utilized for various purposes but mainly for power generation in the refining industry and the oil fields. The remaining 95 per cent of the produced gas is currently being flared.

In addition to the associated gases produced, there are however, many other gas fields discovered during the normal course of oil exploration. These gas wells are shut-in since there is yet no reason for their production.

In addition to the availability of natural gas as raw material, Nigeria is particularly fortunate in possessing many of the other mineral resources used as basic raw materials by the chemical industry. These include coal, lignite limestone, lead, etc. Granted that these alone do not guarantee the successful development of chemical industries to utilize them, the availability of these raw materials nevertheless provide a basis for their establishment and subsequent progressive expansion.

Table 1.1

Crude oil production, consumption and exportation, 1964-1968

Year	Oil produced (bbls)	Oil consumed locally	% consumption/production	Oil exported
1964	43,000,000	-	-	43,000,000
1965	109,373,704	1,230,000	1.2	108,143,704
1966	152,420,100	11,720,000	7.69	140,700,100
1967	116,553,292*	5,100,000	4.38	111,453,292
1968	51,000,000*	-	-	51,000,000

* production is unrepresentative; this was reported from the present national crisis.

Table 1.2

Nigerian Crude Oil Assay

Crude	API gravity		35.0
	Four point	°C	- 5
	Sulphur	%	0.12
LPG	Yield	%	2.0
Light naphtha	Yield	%	12.0
	Octane		76
	Paraffin	%	60
Heavy naphtha	Yield	%	14.0

Table 1.2 (cont'd)
Nigerian Crude Oil Assay

Napthene	Yield	%	49
Aromatics	Yield	%	14
Smoke point			20
Gas oil	Yield	%	18
	Cetane		48
	Four point	°C	- 20
Heavy gas oil	Yield	%	5.0
Residual oil	Yield	%	35.0
	Sulphur	%	0.4
	Carbon residue	%	3.0
	Four point	°C	+ 30
	Vanadium PPM		1
	Nickel PPM		17

Table 1.3

Aggregates of specifications of crude oils available
from various oil fields

<u>Properties</u>	<u>Test method</u>	<u>Range of specification available</u>
Water content % by vol.		0.0 - 5.0
Gravity at 60/60°F		0.74 - 0.97
Gravity at 60°PAF I		11 - 60
Gravity at 100°F Kinematic oil	11°API	5,000 - 50,000 cS
	60°API	1.0 - 9.4
Flash point (open cup) °C	ASTM D97-57	below-25 to + 40
Flash point (closed cup) °C		below-21 to + 45
Acid content (oil in oil) wt	ASTM D1551-53T	0.04 - 0.5
Acid content (residue) wt		0.1 - 0.7
Alumina wt	IF 143/57	0.04 - 0.5
Iron wt		0.6 - 7.0
Sulfur content (oil) wt		0.001 - 0.01

Table 1.3 (cont'd)

<u>Properties</u>	<u>Test method</u>	<u>Range of specification available</u>
ASTM distillation range	IP 24/55	
IBP recovery at °C		30 - 120
10% " " °C		60 - 234
20% " " °C		80 - 270
30% " " °C		100 - 290
40% " " °C		above 120
50% " " °C		" 140
60% " " °C		" 160
70% " " °C		" 194
80% " " °C		" 230
90% " " °C		" 286
Recovery at 300°C % by vol. residue		23 - 96 4 - 72

Table 1.4

Natural gas production and consumption 1964-1968

Year	Gas produced (MCF)	Gas consumed (MCF)	Consumption/production	Gas vented (MCF)
1964	36,332,062	1,883,446	5.19	34,448,616
1965	79,436,052	3,445,054	4.34	75,990,998
1966	102,952,751	6,233,332	6.07	96,719,419
1967	13,025,730*	5,540,467	5.96	37,485,182
1968	51,628,025*	5,188,534	10.05	46,439,491

*) Productions are unrepresentative; this has resulted from the present national crisis.

Table 1.5

Analyses of associated gas
(Mole %)

N ₂	0.5	0.7
CO ₂	3.7	0.2
C ₁	83.7	76.0
C ₂	1.3	15.0
C ₃	3.8	5.7
ic ₄	2.8	0.5
nc ₄	2.3	1.1
others	<u>2.5</u>	<u>0.8</u>
	100.0	100.0
specific gravity with respect to air	0.760	0.730
heat of combustion gross BTU/SCF	<u>1,230</u>	<u>1,270</u>

2. Projects

Many studies have been carried out and some are currently in progress either on Government initiative or in accordance with general understanding with Government by private firms on the **techno-economic evaluation** and feasibility of establishing a petrochemical complex and fertilizer industry in Nigeria. Reports of preliminary surveys, detailed feasibility studies, concrete proposals and recommendations have been submitted. Government is currently studying these reports which include proposals and recommendations that have been submitted on various aspects of a petrochemical complex namely: polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyethylene, LNG, LPG, caustic soda, calcium carbide and fertilizer industries. These products have been chosen on the basis of general review of the local chemical industry.

Local demand for most of the basic chemical products is small and plant capacities based mainly on the internal market are in general, considered un-economic. This has been the main inhibition to development and establishment of a petrochemical complex.

Detailed information on the demand trend of these important products are given below.

2.1 Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)

PVC is imported into Nigeria in the form of pure resin, compound resin, semi-finished products and finished products. Available statistics in table 2.1 show that there is a phenomenal growth rate between 1962 and 1968 of about 60 per cent by weight import of PVC. Resins account for up to 70 per cent of the plastic resins imports.

In Nigeria, polyvinyl chloride is imported mainly formoulding into cheap plastic shoes with seasonal demand,

Table 2.1

Imports of PVC compound resins and
total artificial resins into Nigeria
1962 - 1968

Year	Total artificial resins import (tons)	PVC compound (tons)
1962	2,440	1,200
1963	3,860	2,000
1964	3,300	2,200
1965	5,100	3,000
1966	7,800	4,000
1967	6,700	4,900
1968	8,500	5,500

for extended vinyl tiles, PVC pipes, wire and cable insulations, coated and impregnated fabrics, calendared sheets and films. Prospects are bright of a substantial growth rate which the Nigerian economy is capable of sustaining.

Pure resin is imported at a price of about £130 per ton c.i.f. while there is a 33.33 per cent import duty on it.

2.2 Polyethylene

Available statistics on this product are scanty. A growth rate, between 1964/1965, was 70 per cent for the low-density resin, 40 per cent for the high-

density resin and 50 per cent for the total.

Low-density resin is used for the manufacturing of films and sheeting while the high-density resin is used for moulding. Some articles are however, moulded on a mixture of high- and low-density resins.

Table 2.2 shows the imports of the two categories of the resins.

Table 2.2

Imports of polyethylene into Nigeria separately showing
the low-density and high-density polyethylene 1963-1968
(tons)

Year	Low density	High density	total
1963	250	100	350
1964	600	500	1,100
1965	1,000	700	1,700
1966	1,500	800	2,300
1967	1,700	800	2,500
1968	1,850	950	2,800

It is believed that in particular, the consumption rate of low-density polyethylene resin in Nigeria shown in recent years can be sustained.

4.3.3. Calcium Carbide

Table 2.3 shows the statistics of calcium carbide imported into Nigeria. The information does not permit of the determination of the growth rate. Calcium carbide is used in Nigeria as a sinter stabilizer, to generate acetylene for welding, miners' lamps, hunting and mining.

On the basis of the various local conditions taken into consideration, an annual growth rate of 15 per cent seems most likely.

Table 2.3

Imports of calcium carbide into Nigeria 1962 - 1968

<u>Year</u>	<u>Calcium carbide</u>
1962	2,300 tons
1963	1,120 tons
1964	2,000 tons
1965	1,800 tons
1966	1,180 tons
1967	1,600 tons
1968	1,400 tons

2.4 Caustic soda

Table 2.4 shows the statistics of caustic soda imported into Nigeria since 1962.

Table 2.4

Imports of caustic soda into Nigeria 1962 - 1968

<u>Year</u>	<u>Caustic soda</u>
1962	6,400 tons
1963	7,000 tons
1964	9,000 tons
1965	8,900 tons
1966	10,000 tons
1967	12,000 tons
1968	13,000 tons

The major industrial consumers of caustic soda are the soap industry where it is used as one of the vital raw materials and the textile industry to pretreat cotton fabrics prior to bleaching and printing. Soap manufacturing industries consume over 90 per cent of the caustic soda imported into Nigeria usually in flaked and solid forms.

The import duty on caustic soda is £3 per cwt or £60 per ton. The average c.i.f., price of the chemical is between £35 and £45 per ton depending on the

and source of import.

The use of caustic soda may in future be diversified to include the mercerization of cotton, retins to give them high lustre, for the preparation of hypochlorite for bleaching cotton, for paper pulp and in the tanning industries. The growth rate of about 5 per cent is quite possible in the next ten years.

LPG and LNG

Table 2.5 shows the statistics of the demand for LPG locally since 1965 until the refinery was put out of commission as a result of the present situation in the country. The local demand was met from the local refinery between 1966 and 1967. A surplus was reported before the local refinery was commissioned and after it was restarted with a time.

The very natural gas reserves are those that are derived not for generation of power in industries but power stations through gathering lines. The use of LNG has not yet been introduced in Africa.

Export of LNG is recognized as the most substantial potential for natural gas. Natural gas production with crude oil in excess of the small amount used as fuel in a plant is important, being flared.

Table 2.5

Imports of LPG into Nigeria and refinery offtakes 1965-1968

<u>Year</u>	<u>Imports</u>	<u>Refinery offtakes</u>
1965	5,346 tons	-
1966	5,003 tons	786 tons
1967	3,474 tons	1,812 tons
1968	5,624 tons	-

2.6 Fertilizer industry

Nigeria is predominantly an agricultural country. The variety of crops is immense. Cash crops like cocoa, rubber and oil palm are grown in the southern part. Food crops like yam, beans are grown in the southern belt. Cotton, rice, sugar, millet are grown in the central part. Groundnuts are the major crops from the northern part.

The soils vary generally, but on average, are high in acidity, deficient in calcium and nutrient. As a result they have low yield and productivity. There

is a predominance of small sized farms. Even agricultural techniques are far from being described as modern. There is now, however, a new approach, whereby Government establishes large-sized plantations, but these are relatively few at the moment. Farmers seem to be reluctant and suspicious of them, hence the introduction of fertilizers is not readily accepted as the farmers are partly keen on experimenting with them to increase productivity, this partly due to a natural conservatism as to their poverty. Government is, however, currently heavily subsidizing the sale of fertilizers in the hope that farmers may eventually appreciate their usefulness.

There are, as a result of the different soil conditions, different categories of fertilizers imported into the country. These are mostly phosphatic fertilizers as well as nitrogenous fertilizers. There is, without any doubt, a market in Nigeria large enough to the establishment of local fertilizer industries.

2.6.1 Phosphatic fertilizer

This is required mostly in the Northern states for cultivating groundnuts. Three types are mainly imported, namely: single superphosphates, triple superphosphates and fortified superphosphates. Table 2.6 shows the import statistics of phosphatic fertilizers in Nigeria since 1960. An average growth rate of between 20 to 25 per cent is expected.

There are export possibilities to neighbouring African countries with similar soil conditions as to be in the north. Although raw materials for the production of phosphatic fertilizers are not available in the country, high quality phosphate rocks are nevertheless available in a neighbouring country while the ready availability of pure sulphur is in fact not a problem as it is readily available in the world market.

The establishment of a phosphatic fertilizer industry in the country is justified on the projected increase in demand for this category.

Table 2.6

Imports of phosphatic fertilizer into Nigeria 1962-1968

<u>Year</u>	<u>Phosphatic fertilizer imports</u>
1962	7,500 tons
1963	8,300 tons
1964	13,000 tons
1965	10,500 tons
1966	16,000 tons
1967	29,000 tons
1968	32,000 tons

2.2.2 Nitrogenous fertilizers

Table 2.7 shows the historic import statistics from 1962. Most of the nitrogenous fertilizers are imported in the form of ammonium sulphate. However, urea and superphosphate fertilizers are also imported. Recommendations vary on the representative fertilizer which can be acceptable on the basis of the soil conditions all over the country. Some reports recommend ammonium sulphate with which soil fertility improves, while others recommend urea which is universally acceptable and can therefore be exported.

Considering the possibility of an annual growth rate of between 25 to 30 per cent and ready availability of raw materials locally, it would appear that the establishment of such an industry either mainly to satisfy the local demand or for export is not only justified but over-due.

Table 2.7

Imports of nitrogenous fertilizers into Nigeria 1962-1968

<u>Year</u>	<u>Nitrogenous fertilizers</u>
1962	4,000 tons
1963	3,000 tons
1964	8,000 tons
1965	11,000 tons
1966	11,000 tons
1967	29,000 tons
1968	32,000 tons

3. Future prospects

Prospects of an ever expanding local market and the ever increasing sources of raw materials paint a rosy picture for the future. For example:

3.1 Refinery

Local demand is such that the existing refinery of capacity 42,000 BFD cannot cope after 1972. It will then either have to be expanded appreciably with new plants and units installed, or a new refinery will have to be located elsewhere. Table 3.1 shows the local demand and the variety of petroleum products. Where a new refinery is established there is a possibility of manufacturing products such as aviation gasoline, which will find a ready market particularly in the neighbouring countries since they are not produced in any of the refineries in West Africa which are only geared to producing the straight forward conventional products.

Table 3.1

Statistic of annual import and consumption of petroleum
product grades for 1968

<u>Products</u>	<u>Total imports</u>	<u>Total consumption</u>
Liquified petroleum gases (tons)	5,900	5,750
Aviation spirit	2,330	2,100
Motor spirit: (1) premium grade	40,350	38,300
(2) regular grade	42,280	41,010
Dual purpose kerosene:		
(1) household	44,780	34,410
(2) aviation turbine	9,280	15,120
Automotive gas oil:		
(1) gas oil	77,930	78,250
(2) Diesel oil	9,980	5,570
Fuel oil: (1) high pour	39,070	38,460
(2) low pour	37,050	30,020
Lubricating oils	2,470	5,840
Greases (000lbs)	1,320	2,110
Petroleum jelly, waxes etc.(000lbs)	6,080	7,050
Bitumen and asphalt (tons)	12,040	21,440
Others	2,160	470

to table 3.1: The figures are given in thousands of imperial gallons unless otherwise stated.

1. Petrochemical Industries

The British Overseas Petroleum Company's petrochemical complex, which is based on refinery-offtake gases, to produce polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low-density polyethylene (LDPE) and caustic soda is being completed. The complex will manufacture products at the following rates:

PVC	37,000 tons/year
LDPE	25,000 tons/year
Caustic soda	27,000 tons/year

and a unit will be feasible by 1974/1975 when the refinery can be commissioned.

1.1.1 Ethanol

Natural gas, raw material for this industry, is abundantly available. About 90 per cent of the associated gas produced is flared while only a few thousand cubic feet are used. There is even a possibility of an increase in natural gas production to the extent of 100 million cubic feet per day. The market, where it exists, takes only small quantities. The establishment of a 100,000 gallon ethanol plant is likely to be export-oriented.

1.1.2 Fertilizers

1.1.2.1 Superphosphate

A large new area to grow earlier, the demand justifies even with a 10 per cent increase in output by 1971/72 of a single superphosphate plant with a capacity of 12,000 tons per year. Such a project is considered to be technically and economically feasible.

1.1.2.2 Nitroperoxide

Current demand for nitroperoxide is about 10,000 tons per year. A plant with a capacity of 60,000 tons per year is being planned. There is also a possibility for an export market as the raw materials are available if the production of nitroperoxide is not excessive and a suitable world market can be found for it.

4. Problems encountered

4.1 Re-grouping into larger economic units

With a population of about 10,000,000 the market in Nigeria is undoubtedly the largest in West Africa and one of the largest in Africa. However, the demand is not large enough to derive all the benefits of scale from the technical-economic point of view which is the main consideration in the establishment of a petrochemical industry.

It is therefore imperative for the formation of economic associations be formed to widen the market and improve the unit demand. West Africa is a region of co-operation opportunities and the possibilities must be taken about in this respect.

4.2 Integration of demand

Realization will be necessary to concentrate on only one category of products and not attempt to reproduce the wide variety now imported. To achieve this objective, it will be important to manufacture a product which will be acceptable to the users of other varieties. This will involve some problems in changing the technique to which they have been accustomed. For example, farmers who use ammonium sulphate, urea and calcium cyanamide as sources of nitrogen will be made to use only one of these fertilizers thereby requiring for a particular product that particular product to be feeding of urea, say, efforts will have to be made to re-educate those other farmers who have been used to ammonium sulphate or calcium ammonium nitrate as a source of urea and in using it correctly and effectively.

4.3 Transportation

Nigeria is far from those countries in the world where related products are consumed in appreciable quantities. As a result, the advantages of cheap and abundant raw materials are offset by unnecessarily high freight and other costs. By using supertankers however, the freight element can be drastically reduced but unfortunately, the harbour facilities need to be greatly improved to enable such tankers to be used in our harbours. It is worthy of mention here that in spite of these limiting factors, however, results of detailed studies have shown that the export of LNG, LPG and liquid ethylene as basic chemical raw materials are still feasible projects.

4.4 External markets

In most cases where from the technical-economic point of view a project is judged to be feasible, it is very difficult to find an external market for it. The re-

study of area production is a very valid case in point.

Equipment

Most of the machinery required for the establishment of the industries ne-
cessary for the economic development of countries like Europe and America. The freight
charges for the transportation of this machinery in most cases render such
investments unprofitable or uncompetitive with machinery located in the developed
countries of the world. Because of the cost of freight, the investments required in
the production of machinery in undeveloped countries like Africa cannot
be compared with the capital available with it to have to borrow from outside sources
to obtain the money. The terms of repayment are
generally onerous.

Availability of local personnel

Most of the countries in Africa, for instance, do not possess enough or fertilizer
and other types of machinery. There are not very knowledgeable men in these
countries to operate the machinery without having adequate local expertise
to handle the machinery. The use of foreign experts is a
very costly proposition. It is generally found that foreign experts are usu-
ally not available in sufficient numbers to meet the needs of such industries.
Therefore, the importance of local personnel in these fields prior to the
establishment of the industries is obvious.

Local assistance

The local assistance required is that which is connected with the estab-
lishment of the industries where investigations indicate that the pro-
gram is feasible. Local assistance is required in:

Availability of personnel

Most of the countries in Africa do not have properly equipped for prepar-
ing personnel to operate machinery. It is well to have with whatever expertise
available to the establishment of the industries.

The personnel to be trained in these courses will necessarily have to be backed
up by practical training in the field. This objective, however, requires courses
to be conducted in the countries that have vast technical know-
ledge in these fields.

Availability of capital

The program of development which will be feasible and attractive to be estab-

listed if the market were available for the resulting products. In this respect a guaranteed world market would be ideal. As an important first step, however, it is important for most of the countries in Africa to co-operate with one another and to group themselves into economic units with a view to increasing the demand for the particular products, the production of which will then benefit from the economies of scale of production. Any assistance which can be provided in ensuring the achievement of these objectives will be beneficial to the establishment of a lot of projects.

5.1 Capital

Most petrochemical industries require such capital which developing countries cannot generate without resorting to borrowing. Financing in terms of long-term low-interest credits to purchase required parts is indeed a major assistance which Nigeria seriously requires.

6. Government policy and incentives

The primary objective of Government is limited towards a rapid economic development achievable through long-term growth and development of the country. The importance of rapid expansion and development of the industrial section of the economy cannot be over-emphasized. There is a deliberate programme to encourage the establishment of industries which will manufacture those products hitherto imported and there are additional incentives to those industries which in addition are export-oriented. Agro-allied industries, petrochemical and chemical industries are very high up in Government priority list of those industries.

The type of incentives Government normally grant those industries include pioneer status, assurance for frequent review of import duty reliefs, adequate tariff protection or desired raw materials, adequate import duty concession on the constructional capital goods, ability to obtain required foreign exchange, to name but a few.

On the basis of these incentives and provisions, the availability of essential raw materials, the steady local market growth rate which is sustainable by the economy, the Government expects the establishment of a large petrochemical complex in the near future.





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