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# **NIGERIA'S NEW PORT ECONOMIC REGULATOR: WHAT THE NPERA ACT 2026 CHANGES**

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President Bola Tinubu's assent to the Nigerian Ports Economic Regulatory Agency (NPERA) Act, 2026 marks a significant development in the legal framework governing Nigeria's port sector. The new legislation establishes NPERA as the dedicated economic regulator for the nation's ports, replacing the Nigerian Shippers' Council's previous statutory framework and giving its regulatory functions a specific legislative foundation.

The Act introduces a more structured framework for the economic regulation of port services, with NPERA empowered to oversee tariffs, rates and charges, promote competition, regulate relevant service providers and protect the interests of users of regulated port services. The framework also provides for the resolution of commercial disputes within the port sector, areas in which regulatory oversight had previously operated under a combination of legislation, policy directives and administrative arrangements.

The establishment of NPERA is particularly significant because it seeks to provide clearer statutory authority for economic regulation within a sector involving multiple public and private stakeholders. The Act is intended to strengthen regulatory certainty for shipping companies, terminal operators, freight forwarders and other port users, while providing a formal mechanism for addressing tariffs, charges and competition-related concerns.

It is pertinent to however state that the implementation of the Act will, require careful coordination with existing institutions, particularly the Nigerian Ports Authority (NPA), which retains significant statutory responsibilities relating to port infrastructure and operations. Recent commentary has highlighted the importance of clearly delineating the respective functions of NPERA and NPA to minimise regulatory overlap and uncertainty.

With NPERA now commencing operations as the statutory economic regulator, the immediate focus will shift from the enactment of the legislation to its implementation. For operators and users within Nigeria's maritime sector, the new framework signals a move towards more clearly defined regulatory obligations and greater emphasis on transparency, competition and accountability in the provision of port services.

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