WELCOME ADDRESS

BY

**MR. M.D.B. LADAN**

DIRECTOR OF PETROLEUM RESOURCES

AT

**THE 18TH** **INTERNATIONAL BIENNIAL HSE CONFERENCE ON THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA**

HELD AT

EKO HOTELS & SUITES,

LAGOS, NIGERIA

**NOVEMBER 26-28, 2018**

* **The Chief Guest of Honour, His Excellency the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Professor Yemi Osinbajo**
* **The distinguished Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki**
* **The Honorable Speaker of the House of representatives Yakubu Dogara.**
* **The Executive Governor of Lagos State, Mr. Akinwunmi Ambode.**
* **The Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources Dr. Emmanuel Ibe kachikwu**
* **The Honourable Minister for Niger Delta Affairs Usani Uguru Usani**
* **The Honourable Minister of State for Environment Ibrahim Usman Jibril**
* **Distinguished Senators and other Members of Parliament here present**
* **Permanent Secretaries**
* **CEOs of Oil and Gas Companies and Service Providers**
* **Captains of Industry**
* **Gentlemen of the Press**
* **Research Institutions and Students**
* **Potential Investors**
* **Distinguished ladies and Gentlemen**

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to this 18th edition of the International Biennial Health Safety & Environment (HSE) Conference on the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria.

We are honoured that you accepted our invitation to participate in and contribute to this HSE conference despite your other important commitments and service to our dear nation. Your presence here in your various capacities as captains of industry, top government officials, thought leaders and critical stakeholders in the petroleum industry, indicates the great importance you attach to HSE, and the critical role it plays in our industry. The Petroleum industry has been at the forefront of HSE innovations in the last few decades often in response to the peculiar challenges that the industry faces, and this conference that is dedicated to HSE in the oil and gas industry has over the years played a huge role in driving HSE innovation and awareness.

The first in the series of this biennial HSE conference on Health, Safety and Environment was held in Port Harcourt in 1979 with subsequent editions holding every other year with a continually expanding sphere of participants from around the globe.

Going down memory lane, it is recalled that the emergence of this conference was in response to a heightened environmental consciousness as well as global need for sustainable development. Interestingly, that same impetus that gave rise to the maiden edition has returned as the main focus of today’s 18th edition, namely, Sustainable Development, but with a slightly different twist, which I will explain briefly. The oil and gas industry has for several decades maintained a pride of place at the top of the global energy mix despite the threat posed by renewable and cleaner energy sources. However, recent concerns about global warming, exponential improvements in the efficiency of renewable energy alternatives and the politics of oil pricing have combined to pose almost an existential threat to the global petroleum industry. The threats of renewable energy sources which in the past were almost always dismissed by energy industry experts have today become more real than ever and I would like to draw your attention to a few of the more recent trends. Three among the biggest technology companies have made attempts at electric cars to replace gasoline and diesel engines. While the attempt of Apple may not have made it to production yet and that of Google was suspended after clearly successful street trials, that of Tesla actually took the world by surprise. Not only did the first two releases of Tesla outsell sales forecasts, they were actually oversubscribed, and the demand keeps rising while new models are being added. As we speak, some of the big IOCs here seated are funding gigantic researches into alternative fuels, which include the use of cheap, common algae. As sweet as Nigeria’s crudes are renown to be globally, we have recently lost our most valued customers, and our gas buyers are themselves now competing with us in the same marketspace as suppliers.

Ladies and gentlemen, all of these point to one fact, namely, if Nigeria is to continue to benefit from its vast petroleum resources, now more than ever is the time to build sustainability into its prospecting, drilling, production, transportation and usage, as well as management of its wastes. And this task rests on the shoulders of not only the DPR but all stakeholders. It is thus fitting that all the theme for this current edition of the conference is: “Driving Sustainability in the Oil and Gas Industry through Improved Stakeholders’ Environmental Stewardship”. On our part, the DPR and its parent Ministry of Petroleum Resources believe that a lot is still achievable in the quest for sustainability, and we invite all stakeholders to join us in making that a reality.

Dear participants and invited guests, this year’s conference promises not only to probe deep into the many HSE issues and challenges facing the sustainable development of the Oil and Gas Industry but also provide the platform and framework for proffering innovative and practical solutions to these challenges to the benefit of our valued environment, workforce, host communities and your existing or potential investment initiatives.

Permit me therefore to give you some quick heads-up on the key expectations from the current edition of this auspicious conference.

The conference will feature four (4) very topical plenary sessions bothering on all aspects of HSE and sustainable development of oil and gas resources. In addition, a total of thirty-six (36) painstakingly selected technical papers will be presented in the various syndicate/breakout sessions and I encourage you to plan to attend as many of these sessions as you can accommodate.

We are indeed privileged to have His Excellency, the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo with us, who has graciously accepted to conduct the opening ceremony for the conference exhibition. The exhibition is a key aspect of the conference and will showcase the various innovative products and services on offer by our valued exhibitors and further demonstrate the potentials and readiness of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry for sustainable development.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we trust that at the end of this 3-day conference, all stakeholders here gathered will come up with a communique that reflects our collective commitment to sustainable development, with actionable ideas and recommendations for enhancing the HSE performance of the industry.

Once again, I extend a warm welcome to you all and wish you very valuable and fulfilling deliberations.