**KEYNOTE ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE VICE PRESIDENTOF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, PROFESSOR YEMI OSINBAJO AT THE 18TH INTERNATIONAL HSE BIENNIAL CONFERENCE ON THE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY IN NIGERIA.**

**PROTOCOLS**

* **The Distinguished Senate President, Dr. Bukola Saraki**
* **The Honourable 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**

I am pleased to bring you the warm greetings and felicitations of President Muhammadu Buhari on this occasion of the opening ceremony of the 18th International Health Safety and Environment (HSE) Biennial Conference on the Oil & Gas Industry in Nigeria. It is noteworthy that the theme of the conference which is centred around sustainability dovetail’s seamlessly with this administration’s vision and policy for the Oil and Gas Industry as a vehicle for driving the industrialization and growth of the Nigerian economy in a transparent, responsible and sustainable manner. As a gathering of all stakeholders in the oil and gas industry I am confident that your deliberations will yield important policies and ideas that will guide government in the formulation of policies for achieving sustainable development of not only our oil and gas resources, but also serve as a model for our other extractive industries that are not yet as mature.

Before you commence your deliberation however, permit me to share some broad policy challenges, insights and ideas that the government is currently finetuning.

No discussion about the future of the Oil and Gas can be divorced from the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) which represents the most ambitious and comprehensive reform in decades of the oil and gas industry in Nigeria. While there have been varied reactions to Mr. President’s recent decision to return the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB)to the National Assembly for slight amendments, permit me to state unequivocally that this administration remains fully committed to the Passage of the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill (PIGB) and we are working closely with the National Assembly to ensure its timely passage. The reforms proposed in the PIGB reflects our collective desire to entrench transparency and sustainability of oil and gas operations in Nigeria to enable the country finally to realise the full potential of her hydrocarbon resources.

Resolving the security challenge in the Niger Delta remains on the front burner for this administration as we seek to create a peaceful business climate that will attract investors and bring massive development to the Oil Producing Communities. While the government is fully sensitive to the genuine agitations of the host communities for greater participation in, and control of oil and gas resources, the law and order element to the problem has to be tackled headlong to allow for a peaceful business environment. The proposals in the host community bill currently undergoing review represent a paradigm shift in the relationship between oil and gas operators and their host communities and the Federal Government in collaboration with state government and other stakeholders is fully committed to comprehensive reforms that empower the communities and move them from stakeholders to actual shareholders and partners in the oil and gas business. This will result in the formulation of a comprehensive livelihood strategy and development plan for the Niger Delta to complement the efforts of the various interventions by the Federal Government though the Niger Delta Ministry, NDDC and the Amnesty program.

The Federal Government’s commitment to the ease of doing business was reflected in the Executive Order 1 signed on May 18th 2017. The order had five main planks including: Transparency; Default Approvals; One Government; Port Operations and Entry Experience of travellers and visitors. As the mainstay of the Nigerian Economy, there is a dire need for ease of doing business in the oil and gas sector. The current regime of multiple and sometimes conflicting regulators/regulations is a serious drawback on the ease of doing business in the petroleum industry. While we continue to seek to resolve these conflicts using the instrument of law, I wish to remind the various agencies and ministries of their primary responsibility to promote efficient service delivery and serve as the engine room for driving the collective policy of “one government”. I therefore enjoin all the conflicting agencies to close ranks, finetune and improve cooperation and document their resolutions in binding MOUs that will ease the burden of over-regulation of the oil and gas sector.

I am also pleased to announce to this gathering of Environmental experts that the Federal Government has fully commenced the clean-up of impacted oil spill sites in the Niger Delta. This is a massive undertaking that reflects the Government’s commitment to restoring livelihood in the Niger Delta and deserves the support of all Nigerians. I also appeal to the host communities to assume greater and more responsible stewardship of oil and gas infrastructure in their communities even as the Government works to incentivise their efforts through the host community bill.

So as you carry on with your deliberations I enjoin you to work together with the Government to achieve sustainability of oil and gas operations while proffering innovative solutions to some of the challenges that we still face.

The Honourable Minister of State for Petroleum Resources had indicated that I would be launching a few long awaited regulatory documents that aim to further entrench HSE and sustainability in oil and gas operations . Permit me the honour therefore to hereby launch:

1. The **new edition of the “Environmental Guidelines and Standards for the Petroleum Industry in Nigeria (EGASPIN 2018)”** which I’m aware the entire industry has been eagerly awaiting. As you are all aware, the EGASPIN is one initiative of the Ministry of Petroleum Resources that still continues to receive accolades from around the globe as probably the most comprehensive environmental statute and guidebook for its targeted industry. May I also inform you that for its wide acceptability and usability, plans are underway to elevate it to the status of a regulation very soon. You should also expect a similar update of the MOSR (Mineral Oils Safety Regulations) in the coming months.
2. Secondly today, as the culmination of an initiative that started since the past two editions of the HSE conference and in response to the yearnings of the industry for a document and guidebook on occupational health matters specific to the peculiarities of the oil and gas industry I am pleased to launch the **Occupational Health Guidelines for the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria**.
3. Thirdly, taking a cue from recent global experiences, the Ministry of Petroleum Resources, in conjunction with other key relevant ministries initiated a guidebook for the management of the few but significant contacts our oil and gas workforce make with radioactive sources. I hereby equally launch today, the **Naturally Occurring Radioactive Material (NORM) Management Guidelines for the Oil and Gas Industry in Nigeria**.

it is my hope that these documents will be fully implemented and result in a heathier workforce, a safer work environment and environmentally sustainable oil and gas operations.

On that note, I like to thank you all for listening and wish you a very successful conference.