



# ***Petroleum & Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN)***

**...An affiliate of Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC)**

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## **PRESIDENT SPEECH FOR NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

**I**t is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to the first National Executive Council (NEC) meeting of our great Association in 2010. The last few months since our last meeting in Kaduna have been very challenging for us both within the Association and the Nigerian nation. Many events have happened that had caused a gloomy atmosphere for our members. But to God be the glory, we are weathering the storm despite all these challenges. This address focuses on how far we have gone in pursuing the plans that can further grow our Association and improve the welfare of our members. It also dwells on the some of the interventions we have made to ensure that government policies concerning our Oil and Gas Industry benefits not only our members but also the whole country and as well grow the economy.

### **Insecurity in the Country**

Let me first start by asking that we observe a one minute silence for the departed souls of two of our members with NPDC, Benin, Edo State, Messrs Danjuma Bashir and Malabu Ahmad, who were gruesomely murdered by unknown persons on their way to Abraka for a weekend post-graduate programme in circumstances that revealed copious police laxity and suspected complicity. May their Souls rest in perfect peace, Amen.

We have petitioned the Minister of Police Affairs and copied other stakeholders, including security agents, such as Police, SSS on the murder of these our great colleagues and we demanded that the murderers should be fished out.

We can all recall how, we as an Association, like other Nigerians rejoiced with the Federal Government at the initiation of the Amnesty Programme in the Niger Delta. However, the slow pace of the implementation of the Amnesty Programme has resulted to the resurgence of kidnappings and attacks on our members and Oil and Gas installations in the Niger Delta region.

Our members and their families have continued to be victims of such attacks, kidnapping incidents and even murder for no other reason than that they work in an industry that sustains our Nation's economy.

Insecurity in the country has degenerated to a very high level hoisting an atmosphere of uncertainty over safety and security of lives and properties in the country. This is worsened by the obvious inability of the government at all levels of governance to institute necessary protective mechanism that can guarantee adequate security in the country. Today, virtually all parts of the country are bedeviled with one crisis or the other.

Our Association wonders the impact of the security agencies, from the Police, State Security Services (SSS) to the Military charged with the responsibility of ensuring security of lives and properties in the country. Records before us attest to the fact that they have failed by the shoddy handling of the recent crises in various parts of the country, as regards the intractable Jos crisis and the border clashes in Enugu, as well as the Ajegunle crisis in Lagos, among others. Events in the Oil and Gas Industry have also given credence to the failed state of the security situation in the country. This obviously suggests beyond reasonable doubt that the mounting security challenges in the country are above the capacity of our present Security Agencies.

We have drawn the attention of the Acting President, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan to this insecurity through an Open Letter, which was published so that the whole Nigeria and the whole world will see our contributions to correct the loopholes in Our security system.

From all these, it is clear that the security agencies, (the Police, SSS and Military Intelligence etc) lack basic capacity and adequate surveillance infrastructure to nip these cases in the bud. This situation must not be allowed to continue. So we demand that Government should as a matter of urgency fund, equip, holistically overhaul and reposition the Security Agencies in the country to enable them combat crime and generally provide adequate safety and security of lives and properties in our country. This is as in other climes where such basic Government responsibility over citizens is being dutifully discharged.

We also planned to make the situation of the security in the country the theme of this Year's May Day.

## **Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB)**

There are subsisting concerns on the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), as many people, especially stakeholders in the Oil and Gas Industry, have not seen transparency in the manner the National Assembly and the Executive arm of government are processing the bill.

We also included in the Open Letter to the Acting President the demand that the National Assembly should publicize on the web the authentic version of the Bill being processed as well as reflect all amendments so far made to promote transparency, accountability and ensure robust contributions from all stakeholders. This will prevent attendant future crisis and greatly douse the tension and suspicion that currently trails the exercise thus promoting its quick passage and subsequent popular acceptability.

In addition to our earlier positions on the Bill, we hereby reiterate that the National Assembly should adequately accommodate in the Bill our expressed concerns on labour issues bothering on Job Security, Staff Pension and Gratuity, Equity Participation, Employees Transfer /Transition matters and Conditions of Service as they appropriately apply to both employees in the National Oil Company (NOC) and those under the Incorporated Joint Venture (IJV) Companies( as stipulated in Section 139 of the Bill under the NOC).

## **NIGERIAN CONTENT**

As we are all aware the Nigerian Content Policy as it is being presently pursued cannot achieve much for the country. As an organization, we are aware that the Policy is aimed at increasing the level of indigenous participation and technical capacity in order to domesticate high percentage of oil and gas operations in Nigeria.

We have also called on the Acting President to ensure that Nigerian Companies are enabled to appropriate the gains such as drastic reduction in unemployment level and increase in our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) through exportation of expertise that, are inherent in this laudable policy beyond the present regime of registration of companies, change of company names, and cooption of notable Nigerians as disguised owners of foreign companies etc.

## **STATE OF THE REFINERIES**

We are also aware that the current state of the refineries in the country was fuelled by policy inconsistency and lack of direction on the part of government and top Management of NNPC. We have drawn the attention of the Acting President to the problems that are confronting the refineries such as inability to evacuate products from

Warri Refining & Petrochemicals Company Ltd (WRPC), haulage problems and unavailability of space for product storage and the lingering issue between NNPC and SPDC over the pumping of large amounts of Condensate to the Warri Refinery.

## **POWER**

Just as we appreciate the direct intervention of the Acting President in resolving the lingering power supply instability in the country as implied by the domiciliation of the Ministry of Power in the Presidency, we demanded the Acting President to go beyond the rhetoric of politics that have characterized the realization of constant power supply to the country in the past and confront headlong the hydra headed monster of inadequate power supply that had crippled the nation's industrial, social and economic growth.

## **CORRUPTION AND TRANSPARENCY**

Corruption is another major problem hindering the development of the country which this government must develop the required political will to stamp out. We want everybody to be involved in the monitoring of corrupt activities of our political leaders by monitoring the level of budget implementation, especially from the local government level.

## **PICKETING**

In fulfillment of the directive of NEC on picketing of some companies that have engaged in anti-labour practices and have disregard all entreaties to embrace peaceful industrial relations means of settlement of such disputes, the Association picketed Mobil Producing locations in Lagos, Port Harcourt and Eket. Belbop offices in Lagos and Warri were also picketed. We are here now to review the outcome and look at the way forward to resolve the issues.

## **MAY DAY**

As part of the usual ritual and as a strategic trade union Association in the country, we are observing this year's May Day celebration in Abuja, as part of the TUC team. We have prepared well for the celebration and each zone should be involved in the celebrations in their respective zones. All arrangements are on ground for successful celebrations. For us the theme of the May Day will be "Provision of Security" as a mark of respected for our two departed colleagues.

## **PENGASSAN HOUSING SCHEME**

The Housing Project is on course and by the grace of God, we will deliver as at when due. We are impressed with Our performance at the payment of the first milestone, we

encourage us to pay the second milestone so that the project can be concluded as we have planned.

## SECRETARIAT BUILDINGS

**Port Harcourt:** We have succeeded in purchasing the land for the building of the secretariat in Port Harcourt and the building will commence in earnest to house our zone in that area.

**Warri:** We are building on the property we have in Warri and we are trying to move it to the foundation level. This is to allow us concentrate on the Port Harcourt building and finish it on time.

**Abuja:** We are yet to get suitable property in Abuja for our proposed National Secretariat. We will still continue the search.

**Lagos:** Pending the time when we will get suitable property in Abuja, the renovation of the National Secretariat in Lagos will soon commence. The committee set up for the purpose has assessed and listed necessary things to be done on the building.

## CONCLUSION

As we continue to appraise the industry and public policy with a view to making desirable impacts on issues that bothers on members' terms and conditions of employment as well as welfare issues. It is pertinent that our radical values in the new world order is best employed as a way of exerting pressure and challenging other partners in the industrial relations playfield with data and knowledge base on whatever issues at stakes.

I appreciate your kind attention.

Long Live PENGASSAN

Long live Nigeria