

ADDRESS BY THE PENGASSAN PRESIDENT, COMRADE FRANCIS OLABODE JOHNSON DURING A COURTESY VISIT TO THE KADUNA STATE GOVERNOR, MALLAM NASIR EL-RUFAI AT THE GOVERNOR'S OFFICE IN KADUNA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 2019

On behalf of the Central Working Committee (CWC), National Executive Council (NEC) and all the members of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), I want to thank Your Excellency, the Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir el-Rufai and the State Executive Council, most sincerely for receiving the leadership of our Association, and for affording us the opportunity to come and share our thoughts with you despite your tight schedule.

Kaduna state, especially the state capital Kaduna city, has been in prominence since 1916, when the then Colonial Governor-General, Sir Frederick Lord Lugard moved the then Northern Region capital from Zungeru to Kaduna. Since then the state's importance in the nation's political, social and economic system cannot be underestimated. Indeed Kaduna state is home to many premier industries in the country including Peugeot Automobile Nigeria (PAN), many Textile Companies and coming home to us, the Kaduna Refinery and Petrochemical Corporation. Indeed Kaduna state is the bedrock of the industrialization of this region.

The role of trade unions in the development and evolution of our democratic dispensation cannot be over emphasized. Indeed PENGASSAN and NUPENG were at the forefront of the June 12 struggle which led to the takeover of the Association by the military. While we commend the Federal Government for the recent recognitions of the heroes of democracy, we wish to draw attention of the Government to people like former PENGASSAN President, Comrade Bola Owodunni; General Secretary, Comrade Milton Dabibi; NUPENG President, Comrade Wariebe Agamene and General Secretary, Comrade Frank Kokori and appeal that the Government should Honour these individuals.

Indeed trade unions are social partners complementing the efforts of the Government in building a virile and productive economy. We support government efforts at all levels which is geared at bringing professionalism, encourage competence and increase productivity in the economy. We however reiterate that Government cannot do this alone without the support of critical stakeholders such as trade unions led by

our umbrella bodies, the Trade Union Congress (TUC) and the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC). We appeal to His Excellency to engage the Labour unions in whenever reforms are being introduced.

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN) was founded in 1978 with the objective of protecting jobs and improving the welfare of its members. We are proud to state that within our Association, we have the best brains in the various professions in this country be it Petro-technology engineers, lawyers, geologists and geophysists, medical professionals, accountants etc. It is on this basis that we wish to commend and appreciate His Excellency on the appointment of one of our own, Honourable Comrade Ruth Ankali as the Commissioner for Commerce, Industry and Tourism.

Your Excellency Sir, we are here today to avail you of the activities of our Association in the state, which is the capital seat of the PENGASSAN Kaduna Zone, the largest zone in PENGASSAN comprising 18 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). **The aspiration of the current leadership of our Association is to establish some projects in Kaduna, Abuja, Port Harcourt, Warri and Lagos that would serve a dual purpose of capacity building and generating alternative source of revenue and wishes to solicit your support in actualizing our quest, when the time comes.**

Our Association will be 40 years in existence in few days and we are soliciting the assistance of the State Government, as we are planning the 40th Anniversary on September 13, 2018 and Your Excellency is being specially invited as we intend to launch a N2 billion fund towards the setting up of Oil and Gas Learning and Development Centers across the four zones of PENGASSAN including Kaduna, being the Oil and Gas hub in Northern Nigeria. To this end, we request the assistance of the Kaduna state government by providing us with some plots of land within the state capital to enable us build a befitting oil and gas learning and event center in the state.

Let me state that our Association has adopted an industrial relations approach which prioritises engagement and providing alternative options to the policies and bills/laws that affect our Association and members. We have made meaningful contributions into various policies including the Joint Venture (JV) Cash Call issues, the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) and the management/operations of the Refineries, among others.

Sir, we are not unconscious of many events in the country, especially as we move towards the 2019 Election Year. The Government should avoid situations where political activities will weaken the economy. We urge the politicians to exhibit and ensure that their utterances and actions should encourage unity in the country and development of our democracy. We advise the Government to evolve all efforts to end wanton killings of innocent Nigerians by armed bandits and kidnappings across the Country. We call on the Government to ensure that justice is meted to victims of various clashes in the country. We are calling on the Government to invest recovered loots in developmental programmes such as power, education, health and transport infrastructures.

While we appreciate the reception given to us by Your Excellency and the State Executive Council for this courtesy visit, we are assuring you of our continuous support and collaboration in ensuring harmonious industrial relations in the state and the zone.

Thanks and God bless you for this opportunity.

Long Live PENGASSAN!

Long Live Kaduna State!!

Long Live Kaduna State Government!!!

Comrade Francis Olabode Johnson

25th July, 2018.