



# ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE, NIGERIA

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## **A COMMUNIQUE AT THE 3<sup>RD</sup> NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' SEMINAR ON ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY WITH THE THEME "BUILDING NATIONAL COHESION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY", ORGANIZED BY ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE (ESMI) HELD ON THE 31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST, 2023 AT EDO HOUSE, CENTRAL BUSINESS AREA ABUJA.**

**PREAMBLE:** ESMI National President, Martin Iorsamber speaks; "The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Stakeholders' Seminar on Environment and Safety (NSSES) which we are holding today demonstrates the scale and ambition of building national cohesion through environmental safety akin to the International Conference on Environment and Safety (ICES) and the Regional Stakeholders' Seminar on Environment & Safety, enshrined in the Institute's ANNUAL engagement platforms. Our many years of experience cover areas of: Health, Safety & Environment Management, Waste Management, Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Food Safety & Security, Job Hazard Analysis, Unsafe Act Auditing and Disaster Management & Ecological Management. The overall aim of this Stakeholders' Seminar is to provide cogent Environmental Safety information, evidence and policy direction for sustainable urban population, development and management; critical to the quality of human life, peace and security of our people so as to foster National Cohesion through inter-cultural understanding, tolerance and mutual respect, while stimulating innovation and employment".

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**KEYNOTE ADDRESS:** The Keynote Speaker at the event, His Excellency Engr. A. A. Sule, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State, admonished all Nigerians to learn to see environmental challenges as a collective responsibility. In his words “we must learn to be together in tackling environmental challenges as I am aware, the Environment and Safety Management Institute started Environment and Safety Volunteers and other projects that will encourage and engage Nigerians, especially women and youths, in ensuring environmental safety for all citizens, and I salute their courage and task them to redouble their efforts”. In another breath, the governor equally gave instances of how Nasarawa State has continued to ensure safety in mining activities across the state. “In Nasarawa State, we have instituted the Executive Order (2), 2023 to regulate mining for a safer environment and society for both humans and the ecosystem”.

**FOCUSED DISCUSSIONS:** The Lead Discussant, Hon. Arc. Ukura Patrick laid the background as to how we all, are very conversant and frequently use the phrase “Conducive Environment”. He succinctly defined the environment as the sum-total of everything that surrounds mankind hence, as human beings, we owe our environment the Duty-of-Care. In retrospect, man is at the center of the environment, given that, mankind is perhaps amongst other elements of nature, considered as the most advanced element with the capacity to determine Possibility of Significant Harm (POSH).

Others speakers at the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Stakeholders’ Seminar on Environment and Safety, focused on:

- A. Sustainable Waste Management as a catalyst for National Unity and Environmental Harmony in Nigeria. (Presented by: Oluwaseye Ebenizer Esq.)
- B. National Security & Dimensions to Environmental Safety Management. (Presented by: CSP Vandefan Tersugh James Rtd. JP)

C. Environmental Volunteerism as Catalyst for curbing Unemployment in Nigeria. (Presented by: DSC Abigail Bolaji Obafemi)

### **PARTICIPANTS AT THE 3<sup>RD</sup> NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' SEMINAR ON ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY**

Distinguished dignitaries and delegates at the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Stakeholders' Seminar on Environment and Safety, Abuja includes; His Excellency, Engr. A. A. Sule, the Executive Governor of Nasarawa State who was represented by the Nasarawa State commissioner for Environment and Natural Resources Hon. Yakubu Kwanta, the Speaker House of Representative, Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, ably represented by the Vice Chairman, House Committee on Environment, Hon. Terseer Ugbor, who Chaired the Seminar and honourably assisted by the Chairman, House Committee on Water Resources, Hon Ojema Ojotu. Representatives of the Inspector General of Police, Federal Road Safety Corps Marshal, and Chief of Air staff added colour to the occasion. Delegates at the event were drawn from Federal Ministries of Education, Environment, Health, Works and Housing, Water Resources, Niger Delta Affairs, Agriculture and Rural Development, Information and Culture, Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation, Youths and Sport Development, Foreign Affairs amongst others. The Academia were not left out as a contingent of post graduate students of Faculty of Environmental Science, Nasarawa State University Keffi, led by the Head of department of Environmental Science Associate Prof. Mohamed Alkali equally participated. NGOs and the Private Sector as well as numerous environmental enthusiasts also graced the event.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> National Stakeholders' Seminar on Environment and Safety, Abuja came to a climax with the induction of new members into the Environment and Safety Management institute (ESMI) as Associates, Full-Time Members, and Fellows of the Institute.

### **OUR COMMITMENTS: BUILDING NATIONAL COHESION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY**

1. We identified that waste generation, pollution, contamination, negligence and degradation of the environment remain the major cause of climate change which in turn brings about, drought, poverty, disease and communal conflicts. In contrast, sustainable waste management will reduce pollution, preserve the ecosystem, conserve natural resources, mitigate climate



change, prevent contamination, erosion and flood and enhance cleaner air and water.

2. We envisage that if adequate strategic measures are not taken to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change, it will exacerbate environmental dilemmas: population explosion, flood, soil erosion and nutrients depletion, deforestation and disruption of wetland and fresh water, unsustainable natural resource exploitation and general pollution/contamination, all of which are drivers of climate change.
3. We reaffirm the outcomes of efforts by government of nations, Conference of Parties (COP) and UN agreements, Charters, Protocols, Conventions targeted at providing sustainable strategies to ameliorate the negative impacts on the environment. Example, Paris 2015 Agreements, the Kyoto Protocol, Basel Convention on Biological diversity etc. We underline the need to encourage the Nigerian government to domesticate all these treaties, conventions, agreements and charters on environment.
4. We reinforce the concerns that environmental dilemmas have no borders hence, emphasized the need to identify, prevent, mitigate, monitor, adapt and adopt techniques that ameliorate all known environmental dilemmas through the promotion of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Audit (EA), Environmental Management Plan (EMP) etc.
5. We reiterate that there is essential need for third party participation and collaborations on environmental issues in Nigeria giving impetus to the fact that environmental management becomes an essential component of project implementation and delivery. The gains of collaboration include; shared vision, breakdown of barriers, empathy and understanding, equal participation, strength in diversity, collective achievement, build trust by removing isolation, leading to national unity.
6. In its scope, the concept of sustainable waste management amplified waste reduction, reuse, recycling, composting, waste-2-energy and proper waste disposal in order to birth the principles of environmental protection, public health, resource conservation, energy savings, community engagement and economic benefits, long term sustainability, circular economy and global responsibility.
7. We reaffirm that community engagement plays a pivotal role in promoting environmental consciousness through empowering individuals and

communities to understand, appreciate and actively contribute to environmental protection and sustainability which goes to foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibilities via waste segregation, reduced environmental impacts leading to health benefits, behavioral change and empowerment, education/awareness, long term sustainability and policy influence.

8. We commit to the role of waste management policies in promoting environmental unity and harmony through collaboration and partnerships, infrastructure development, economic opportunities and equitable resource allocation using the instruments of legislation which will reduce tensions related to disparities in waste services and access to clean/safe environment.
9. We promote technological innovations and approaches for waste management which hold the potential to revolutionize waste handling to engender greener future through the deployment of smart bins and sensors, waste sorting robots, waste-2-energy technology, plastic recycling innovations, E-waste recycling, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and reverse vending machines for waste management.
10. We recognize that national security in all its dimensions; military, infrastructure, computer, political, economic and environmental dimensions, requires unity of purpose and cooperation by stakeholders to find ways of creating sustainable relationship with the environment aimed at protecting and preserving the ecosystem as we strive to balance development with economic growth and sovereignty. Doing so will reposition the environment as the cornerstone for building national cohesion through sustainable strategy.
11. We acknowledge environmental volunteerism as catalyst for curbing unemployment in Nigeria bearing in mind the natural and cultural diversity of indigenous people and recognize that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, national cohesion for sustainable environmental safety. We join the Keynote speaker, His Excellency, Engr. A. A Sule, in calling on the Federal Government to Kick-the-ball-rolling by keying into the existential Environment and Safety Volunteers (ESV) established since 2017 by this noble institute, as a means of creating employment for youths and women across the country.

12. We reaffirm government commitment in exploring volunteerism as a tool to effectively engage citizens as a means of creating employment, given the continuous rise in the nation's unemployment figures. We recognize that, the environmental movement would not exist without the help of thousands of dedicated volunteers. Environmental NGOs in Nigeria constantly need assistance from youths to achieve their objectives and in the process, such unemployed youths acquire skills, receive stipends for feeding, transportation and lodging allowance which creates more patronage to street food vendors, commercial drivers and guest house/hotels in those areas. Women Environmental Program (WEP) trained women farmers on the production of organic pesticide in Gwagwalada and the women got self-employed through the skills provided by the NGO. Also waste-4-Cash and waste-4-wealth initiative by environmental NGOs is earning most unemployed youths some stipends.
13. We acknowledge that our journey will involve governments as well as parliaments. The essential roles of national parliaments, state and local council legislation through their enactment of laws, adoption of budgets and their oversight roles in ensuring accountability for effective implementation of our commitments.

**OUR COMMITMENTS: STRATEGIC ACTIONS IN TANDEM WITH THE RENEWED HOPE AGENDA OF MR. PRESIDENT, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.**

14. Today we are also taking a decision of great national significance as enunciated in subtitles 1 - 13 above of our commitments to building National Cohesion through Environmental Safety. As we have the chance of saving the planet; first by sustaining ourselves, our rich cultural diversity, vibrant communities and collective spirit of resilience, youth and women engagement, public awareness, innovative solutions, community led initiatives, education, positive role model and volunteerism, backed up with government commitment and international collaborations; Nigeria's Renewed Hope Agenda of Mr President, **Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR**, will manifest viz:
  - i. **Income Generation and GDP Growth:** Humongous revenue shall be generated from Levies, Permits, Licenses, Fees, Taxes and Fines payable through Environmental Sustainability Initiatives across the nation as such



- revenues can be channeled into National Youth Empowerment Schemes like NYSC, NDE, ESV etc.
- ii. **Reduction in Insecurity:** Insecurity will be greatly reduced and the overstretched national security forces shall regain stability and control.
  - iii. **Employment Generation:** Millions of active youths shall become trained and meaningfully engaged to earn income and a living through Sustainable Environmental Management and Compliance.
  - iv. **Health Benefits:** Health hazards and communicable diseases will be reduced as a result of clean environment and safe drinking water for all.
  - v. **Peaceful Co-existence:** Nigerians will co-exist harmoniously in a symbiotic relationship even amongst mix-farming/grazing communities putting an end to farmer/herders' crises.
  - vi. **Food Security and Inflation:** Cattle rustling, kidnaping and banditry which hitherto deprived farmers from cultivation in the last decade will become a thing of the past and food price will become stable.
  - vii. **Reduction in Humanitarian Crises:** Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps scattered across Nigerian states with its attendant humanitarian crises will fissile out and families will return to their ancestral homes.

### **OUR COMMITMENTS: CREATING EASE-OF-ENVIRONMENTAL-SAFETY FOR NATIONAL COHESION THROUGH GOVERNMENT-BUY-IN AND SUPPORTIVE-ACTION**

15. Elatedly, we appeal to the federal government to as a matter of urgency in promoting professionalism; engage the services of accredited environmental professionals to undertake Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in determining potential resources, capacity and vulnerability of host community for sustainable policy decision on mineral resource exploitation; constitute a National Environmental Safety Team (NEST) to:
  - i. Identify Sites of Special Scientific, Cultural and Traditional Importance (SSSCTI) so as to conserve, preserve and reserve our most valuable antiquities.
  - ii. Develop National Environmental Quality Standards (NEQS) comparable to International Environmental Standards (IES).

- iii. Provide Sustainable Development Indicators (SDIs) to guide town planners and developers
- iv. Constitute Inter-Ministerial Committee and appoint a Coordinating Minister of Environment, Humanitarian Affairs and Food Security. This will help mitigate, adapt and respond to climate change and its dilemmas already staring at us as a nation. The Inter-Ministerial Committee working with the Coordinating Minister of Environment shall implement the Job Development Plan (JDP) on Environmental Resource Utilization (ERU) and take stock of revenues accrued through Levis, Permits, Licenses, Fees, Taxes and Fines payable through Environmental Safety and Sustainability Programs across the nation and redeem to FIRS.
- v. Institutionalize Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) as a national policy tool
- vi. Establish Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) in order to harness intellectual property gains in all environmental disciplines and concerns.
- vii. Create Environmental Safety Courts to deal with issues of pollution (polluter-pay principles), deforestation, environmental sanitation and ecological maleficence.

### **OUR COMMITMENTS: PRAYERS FOR LEGISLATIVE ACTION AND PARTNERSHIP**

16. We also stress our open appreciation to the 10<sup>th</sup> National Assembly Leadership and worthy parliamentarians of both chambers on their renewed efforts in ensuring sound environmental safety regulations through quality legislation and charge them to expedite action on the passage of the **Bill for the Chartered Institute of Environmental Safety and Management, SB1015 & HB 667.**

### **CONCLUSION: BUILDING NATIONAL COHESION THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY**

17. We reaffirm our unwavering commitment to achieving both the letters and spirit of this communique and utilizing it to the full to transform our communities, LGAs, Constituencies, Districts and Nigeria in general.



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