

WELCOME ADDRESS DELIVERED BY THE ADMINISTRATOR, NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE, HON. JUSTICE R. P. I. BOZIMO, OFR AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE 2ND NJI/IPELP NATIONAL ENERGY WORKSHOP HELD ON 5TH OF APRIL 2016 AT THE ANDREWS OTUTU OBASEKI AUDITORIUM, NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE

PROTOCOL

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you all to this 2nd National Energy Workshop. This Workshop has been organized in further realization of the main objective of the National Judicial Institute under Section 3 (1) of the National Judicial Institute Act, Cap N55 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, which provides as follows:

“The Institute shall serve as the principal focal point of judicial activities relating to the promotion of efficiency, uniformity and improvement in the quality of judicial services in the superior and inferior Courts.”

The theme of this Workshop is *“Emerging Legal and Policy Reforms in the Petroleum and Power Sectors of Nigeria”*. The choice of this theme is deliberate. This Workshop is meant to sharpen the skills of Judges towards effective administration of justice. It also provides us with an invaluable opportunity to invigorate our commitment to and enthusiasm for our noble calling to serve on the Bench.

My Lords, Ladies and Gentlemen, you will agree with me that the only constant thing in life is “CHANGE”. As society evolves, we must also continue to be dynamic in order to adequately address the conflicts that will inevitably arise. To this end, My Lord the Honourable the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed, *GCON, FNJI*, has moved steadfastly and purposefully towards establishing various programmes and policies necessary to ensure speedy case disposition, streamlined case processing and transparent administration of justice. Although we may not shout about these achievements from the roof tops, I am proud to say that the Judiciary has continued to work assiduously to examine various areas of the law and implement procedural innovations and rules. These changes have led to improvements in the effectiveness and efficiency of Court processes.

The Oil and Gas Sector contributes the largest share of revenue to Nigeria’s economy. The recent slump in crude oil prices in the International Crude Oil Market therefore birthed the recent reforms in the Oil and Gas Sector.

The impact of the Petroleum Sector on the environment has been a subject of litigation on several occasions before the Courts. The arbitrary and large scale flaring of gas in the oil-producing Niger Delta region, constitutes a high risk to communities situated in the vicinity of crude oil exploration and drilling facilities. Genuine concern for those who suffer the devastating and destructive effects of gas flaring has provoked several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to approach our Courts for redress. Oil spillage and gas flaring are agents of environmental degradation and for several years, it has remained a ground for litigation to demand compensation.

Like the Oil and Gas Sector, the Power Sector has also been undergoing several reforms as well. In 2005, the Electricity Sector Reform Act was passed. The recent unbundling and privatization of electricity generating and distribution companies is a laudable reform in the Power Sector. However, disputes which have accrued from the privatization process in the Power Sector such as compensation of disengaged staff, are before our Courts on a daily basis. These burning issues, to my mind, will form part of our discussions at this Workshop.

It is important to note however, that disputes which arise in the Petroleum and Power Sectors can also be resolved by other avenues apart from the Courts. This Workshop shall avail distinguished participants the opportunity to refresh their minds on Dispute Resolution Processes in disputes between Foreign Oil Companies and Developing Oil Producing Countries like Nigeria. Furthermore, issues such as the Multi- Jurisdictional Approach to Dispute Resolution as well as the role of the Nigeria Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) in the Power Sector shall be adequately discussed during the course of this Workshop.

The main objective of this workshop is to sharpen the skills of the participants towards an effective discharge of their duties in the Administration of Justice.

The topics which have been chosen for discussion are tailored towards enlightening the distinguished participants on the proper decisions to hold when matters pertaining to the Petroleum and Power Sectors are before their Courts.

The topics for deliberation are apt and germane in their relevance. I would urge participants to pay rapt attention and participate actively in all deliberations during this Workshop.

My Lords, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, I would at this juncture express my sincere gratitude to the Honorable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman, Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute, Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed, **GCON, FNJI** for granting the Institute the approval to organize this Workshop.

I must also express my sincere thanks to our esteemed Resource Persons, Discussants and Chairmen of Sessions for their gracious acceptance to take on various functions assigned to them during this programme. The interest you have shown in the build up to this programme is inestimable and heartwarming.

I wish you all very fruitful and rewarding deliberations.

Thank you and God bless.

Hon. Justice R. P. I. Bozimo, OFR
Administrator,
National Judicial Institute

My Lords, distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my honour and privilege to invite My Lord, the Honourable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria and Chairman, Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute; Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed, *GCON, FNJI*, ably represented by my Lord, Hon. Justice W. S. N. Onnoghen, CFR, Justice of Supreme Court and Chairman, Education Committee of the Board of Governors of the National Judicial Institute, to deliver the Keynote Address and declare the 2nd National Energy Workshop open.