

ADDRESS BY ALHAJI BAHIR M. BORODO, MFR, PRESIDENT OF MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (MAN) ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2008 MAN ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR HELD IN LAGOS ON TUESDAY 4, NOVEMBER 2008.

PROTOCOLS

I am delighted to welcome you all to the first ever Environmental Management Seminar organised by the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) in collaboration with Rosebank Consulting.

The theme of the seminar – **“Preparing Businesses in Nigeria for Environmental Challenges & Opportunities”** is indeed relevant and appropriate when viewed against the background of Nigeria’s enormous environmental and social challenges.

It is natural for business enterprises to always think about the financial environment under which they operate to provide essential goods and services for overall economic development.

However, the preservation of our richly endowed environmental natural resources is equally important and essential to long term business sustainability.

Environmental resources provides some of the much need capital and raw materials for business operations and services to thrive, and they are physically manifested in form of land, forestry, aquaculture, biodiversity, water, energy, and of course, a pollution-free atmosphere and water courses.

Adverse interference with the environment arising from human and business activities has resulted in diverse environmental and social problems such as air and water pollution, soil degradation, waste generation, urban slums fuelled by exponential population growth, noise pollution and unsustainable consumption of water and energy supplies.

Presently, we are faced with the threats and challenges of climate change and global warming.

The impact of climate change and global warming to an emerging economy like ours could be enormous and detrimental to business growth and development. These extreme environmental impacts manifest in the form of rising incidence of flood, desertification, land and coastal erosion, famine, food shortages.

These extreme environmental impacts of climate change and global warming manifest in the form of rising incidence of **flood, desertification, land and coastal erosion, famine, food shortages** and many more.

There are real signs to indicate that all is not well with our local environment.

For example, coastal and commercial cities of Lagos, Warri and Port Harcourt are experiencing rising sea level at an alarming rate of 3% per annum which is a cause of perennial floods.

The North Eastern part of the country has been experiencing massive desertification and drought which threatens food security while several

communities in the South East have completely disappeared altogether due to soil erosion.

Although Nigeria and indeed the whole of Africa's aggregate contribution to global CO2 emissions is low, the continent remains vulnerable to the risks posed by the adverse impacts of global warming and climate change.

Nigeria and indeed the whole of Africa cannot afford to do nothing. Consequently, action must be taken no matter how little by individuals, the civil society, the organized private sector and national governments to respond to the challenge of climate change.

This is a wake-up call for business concerns in Nigeria to begin to seriously consider the impact of their activities on the environment and commit through internal policies and programmes to improve their environmental performance.

MAN believes in sound environmental performance and practices by businesses within the overall context of sustainable development in order to safeguard our natural resources for the benefit of incoming generation.

We support the introduction of green and alternative clean energy usage such as solar, wind mills, hydro and nuclear power generation to address our present energy crisis and also to mitigate the impact of carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuel which contributes to global warming.

In our 2009 pre-budget memorandum to the Federal Government, MAN recommended a green energy strategy that would encourage the use of

biofuels to replace kerosene, coal, charcoal and firewood in Nigerian homes that has contributed to massive deforestation in the country.

The use of biofuels will generate employment, reduce the dependence on imported petroleum products and save the country substantial foreign exchange.

Furthermore, MAN advocates for a zero duty and VAT exemption on all imported renewable energy materials and components to enable the government achieve its target of increasing the share of electricity from renewable energy currently at 0.7% to 7% by 2025 while incentives should be granted to companies to encourage commercial production of solar panels and wind mills in the country.

MAN further calls on the Federal and State Governments to streamline the functions and activities of agencies responsible for the enforcement of environmental regulations and policies. This will minimize possible overlap and conflict of roles among environmental regulators and remove the anxiety of companies who are often in a dilemma on the issue of multiple regulators exercising authority on the same subject matter.

Kindly permit me to express MAN's willingness to work as partners with environmental regulators with a view to ensuring that by consensus, we adopt and implement environmental **global best practices** that will complement the realization of the Vision 2020 and the 7-point reform agenda.

As our modest contribution, we are committed to raising the profile of environmental management and sustainable development within the organized private sector.

To this end, MAN with the support of Rosebank Consulting will from Q1 2009 sponsor series of environmental training/development programmes in order to build the capacity of senior managers and executives on how to formulate and implement in-house environmental policies, programmes and initiatives.

In this regard, we would appreciate the support of international development partners towards achieving this goal.

Finally, I would like to express our gratitude to all the corporate sponsors who have provided the support to organise this environmental management seminar and though their sponsorship have unequivocally demonstrated the importance they attach to environmental issues and sustainability.

I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

Alhaji Bahir M. Borodo, MFR

Manufacturers Association of Nigeria

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