

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY VP, INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
PORTS AND HABOURS (AFRICA) AND MANAGING DIRECTOR,
NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY, HADIZA BALA USMAN ON THE
OCASSION OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PORTS AND
HARBOURS AFRICA REGIONAL CONFERENCE HELD IN ABUJA,
NIGERIA**

His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari, President,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,

His Excellency, Dr Bukola Saraki, Senate President,
Federal Republic of Nigeria,

Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss
Mustapha

Rt. Honourable Yakubu Dogara, Speaker House of
Representatives, Federal Republic of Nigeria

Former Head of State and Chairman of this occasion, Gen
Abdulsalami Abubakar GCFR,

Honourable Minister, Federal Ministry of Transportation, Rt

Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Ameachi,

Honourable Minister, Trade and Investment, Dr

Okechukwu Enelamah

Service Chiefs,

Heads of Government Agencies and Parastatals here

present,

Royal Fathers here present,

President, International Association of Ports and

Harbours, Mr. Santiago Garcia Mila,

Managing Director, International Association of Ports and

Harbours, Dr. Patrick Verhoeven

Representatives of the International Maritime

Organisation (IMO),

Secretary General of Port Management Association of

West and Central Africa (PMAWCA),

Heads of Ports Authorities of African nations,
Captains of industries,
Maritime stakeholders,
Gentlemen of the press,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

I am delighted to welcome you to the first ever
conference of the African Region of the International
Association for Ports and Harbours which opens today.

The IAPH was established in 1955 to promote the
development of ports and create a worldwide synergy for
effectiveness amongst all member countries through
strong member relationships.

In the 63 years of its existence, the association has grown into a global alliance representing 180 Members Ports and 140 Port related businesses in 90 countries. The IAPH promotes collaborations and information-sharing which helps to resolve common issues and continually improve on service of ports to the maritime industries.

Some of the common strategies the association employs to achieve its mission of strengthening relationships among member ports include: facilitating interactions and ideas sharing for problem-solving and formulation of best practices policies.

And since this is an industry, global in nature with the success of one affecting the other, the association also leverages members' expertise through technical committees and programmes that create platforms focused on resolving complex port and maritime industry concerns and building greater efficiency and sustainability for ports worldwide.

It is in the furtherance of this objective that members of the association in the African Region decided to put together this conference to provide a platform for the discussion and the formulation of ideas that would create policies for the effective administration of our ports and ultimately increase our collective capacity for efficiency.

Although this is an African conference, global key organisations like the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, UNCTAD are here to avail us the opportunity to latest global best practices and opportunity that exists for the development of ports in Africa.

And our colleagues from various African trade corridors including the Lagos Abidjan, Walvis Bay Corridor Group, Antwerp Port Authority, Guangzhou Port Authority and administrators from African Ports such as Transnet National Port Authority (South Africa), (ii) Kenya Ports Authority, (iii) Douala Port Authority (Cameroon), (iv) Nigerian Ports Authority, (v) Cotonou Port Authority (Benin), (vi) Abidjan Port Authority (Cote d'Ivoire), (vii) Dakar Port Authority (Senegal), (viii) Tanger Med Port (Morocco), (ix) Port of Alexandria (Egypt) are available to share experiences and gain new insights on our to improve our operations and attain better efficiency.

There is no doubt that Africa holds a special place in the global maritime space, with 39 of the 54 countries on the continent endowed with littoral assets, the development of the continent is to a large extent, tied to the optimal exploitation of its vast maritime resources.

And since we, as brothers and sisters on the continent are also affected by relatively identical limitations and concerns, this conference gives us the opportunity to explore ways of cooperation for the development of our ports and the economies of our countries, ultimately.

Given our limitless potential and the concerted efforts of national leaders on the continent to explore the potentials that our ports bear, there could be no better time for us as administrators of ports across the continent to ponder on the best ways to improve connectivity to the hinterland where most of the cargoes that we receive at our ports are designed for.

There is no doubt that one of the determinants factors for the relevance of ports is the speed and seamlessness with which owners of cargo are able to move their consignments out of the ports and that Africa really does still have a lot of work to do in this area.

For these and so many other reasons, the theme for the conference, **African Ports and Hinterland**

Connectivity, is one that will hopefully unleash the potential of our ports to contribute to development.

I implore all participants to open their minds to speak out and learn new things that will justify this meeting and affect our organisations and countries positively. I once again, welcome you to this conference and wish you very happy and fruitful deliberations.