SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY, THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA PhD, CON, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF A 3-DAY INTERNATIONAL RENEWABLE ENERGY CONFERENCE AT UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA UNIVERSITY KATSINA FROM 29TH – 31ST OCTOBER, 2024

Protocols

It is important for me to begin my address by acknowledging the fact that, it is an unusual time, and strange time, like the one we are facing globally which requires an emergency and unusual approaches. Attention of the world today has turned towards 'climate change' and the urgency for 'climate action' by all stakeholders. In fact, it is a collective action. As such, all hands must be on deck if we are to save the world from the ravages of man's actions and of course the natural phenomenon. But, then, climate change, whether caused by our actions and in-actions or changes in the natural order of things, is a reality. We

must all hearken to it by giving it the needful attention. It is on this sound note that, I address you today as an advocate of climate action.

Let me therefore, begin by expressing my utmost pleasure and appreciation to the organizers of this International Conference on Renewable Energy for deeming it worthy to bring our attention to the realities on the ground, and then, of course, for choosing Katsina State as the venue of the occasion. Let me add that, the theme of the conference coincides with the policy direction of this government on ‘clean energy’ for the sustenance of the environment. It is important for us to understand that ‘environmental sustenance’ is vital if we are to be safe from the hazards; with the flooding and desertification at our immediate doors, we know that these are ominous signs of even bigger threats to our existence.

Today, uncontrollable, and sometimes insatiable man-made activities, are threat to us all. From indecent manufacturing activities, to the cutting down of forests and uncontrolled consumption, we are at the receiving end. And then, of course, there are ‘natural disorders’ beyond human control, ranging from variations in solar activity, greenhouse gases, volcanic activity and the changes in the earth’s orbit and rotation. We must all swallow the bitter pill: global warming is not rhetoric. It is the reality of our existence today and we must be pragmatic, rational, and practical in containing it.

Conscious of these facts, we have plans for the environment from the onset. Since the coming of this administration concerted efforts have been made to key into renewable energy as one of the means of attaining habitable clean environment that is devoid of air pollution, the emission of carbon and other

harmful smokes that endanger the survival of biodiversity. As a government we understand that protecting human lives, variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even microorganism that make up our natural environment is essential, because these species and organisms work together, in an intricate web, in the ecosystem to maintain carbon balance in the atmosphere. This is expected to address Sustainable Development Goals' 4,5,7,9 and 13.

This conference is not a belated activity, though it should have come earlier than now. But, Alhamdulillah, we are here, now, to reflect and chart pragmatic ways forward. It is my belief that, the outcome of the discussion, which I will particularly urge that it be documented, will support the government's drive and complement the efforts of other stakeholders in the circle. At this point, all ideas, no matter how abstract, are welcome; they will

ultimately help us to mitigate existential threats and then ensure a habitable environment free of pollution, which retards the progress and development of human lives.

Mr. Chairman of the occasion, distinguished guests and the participants most who are experts in the area, ladies and gentlemen, part of the modest contributions of this government in attaining a clean energy and a habitable environment is embracing renewable energy for the development of our people. Our aim is to ‘decarbonize’ the electricity sector in phases, such that by 2030 we can be safe to say we have attained 300MW of installed capacity, of which 90% will be renewable energy.

As a government, we have set up machineries in motion, including ‘energy transition’ plans to achieve net zero emissions by 2060, passage of the required bills, and have already committed humungous

resources, all geared towards a single purpose, which is clean renewable energy. This includes partnership with the National and International bodies, as well as the private sector, aware that clean energy is everyone's business. These modest efforts are already yielding good fruits, but most of it will be felt in no distant future. The ultimate goal is to be prepared to face nature's reckoning.

On this note, I wish to inform this important gathering that, Katsina State Government has recently awarded contracts for the provision of street solar lights across the length and breadth of five (5) strategic points in Katsina metropolis and the neighboring Batagarawa Local Government Area. In most of the areas, we are replacing existing 'carbon-emitting' diesel powered street light with environmentally-friendly solar lightening system covering well over 63km. Apart from being

environmentally-friendly, this solar-lightening project will help curb, to some extent, security threats to the lives and properties with a 24 hour illumination of the environment, not to mention of course the beautification of our city.

The areas to benefit from this multi million naira project in particular include KTARDA Headquarters-Shinkafi-Barhim Housing Estate, Sir Usman Nagogo Road-Katsina Central Mosque, GRA fly-over-WTC Road-Steel Rolling Mill Roundabout, and Dutsinma Road-Alqalam University-Kofar Kwaya-Kofar Kaura Underpass Bridge. This is only the first phase.

And in our effort to ensure an uninterrupted academic calendar, on the one hand, and to sustain 24-hrs power supply to the Campus so as to promote an atmosphere of learning and research, on the other, our administration has approved the contract for the provision of solar security lights at Umaru Musa

Yar'adua University to the tune of N98,246,649.00. It is our hope that this project, when completed, will also enhance the security of the Campus in this era of uncertainties.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, in addition to all these efforts, these solar-lighting projects will, going by our estimates, reduce cost of supplying diesel and, ultimately, the maintenance of generators and payments of monthly electricity bill. For a start, the construction of the Phase 1 of the first off-grid solar mini-grid at the seat of government, the Muhammadu Buhari House, is in progress. Another one at the General Hospital, Katsina that will energize healthcare service and delivery is also in progress. There is also the stand-alone solar battery energy storage system being developed in many MDA's to reduce cost of governance and address climate change effects. Through our efforts also, we are

currently quantifying power consumption, believing strongly that data is essential to planning.

At this juncture, let me add that, we will, on our part, continue to ensure that the policy of renewable energy is maintained. We are not unaware of the threat posed by the global climate change, hence our resolve to be proactive in facing the danger squarely. A number of think-tank groups and experts on climate change and renewable energy have been assembled, and they are putting all hands on deck to mitigate the effects of climate change on our environment. *In sha Allah*, we will not relent in this crusade.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen, I wish to implore you to discuss freely, critically and objectively to come up with workable solutions that will further spur the government to tap in from your vast skills, experiences, and knowledge in achieving the goals of renewable energy. It is

important that we also receive a comprehensive report of these engagements.

With these few remarks, I wish you fruitful discussions, and hereby declare the conference open.

Bissalam and thank you for listening.