ADDRESS DELIVERED BY CHAIRMAN OF THE NORTHERN STATES’ GOVEORNOR’S FORUM RT. HON. (DR). SIMON BAKO LALONG, KSGG, CON ON THE OCCASION OF THE OFFICIAL COMMENCEMENT OF INTEGRATED FIELD DEVELOPMENT OF OIL PROSPECTING LICENSES 809 & 810 (KOLMANI RIVER II OIL FIELD) ON TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2022.

PROTOCOLS

1.  It is with great joy that I address you on this occasion of the ground-breaking ceremony of commercial oil drilling in Northern Nigeria located here at Kolmani OPL 801 and 810. On behalf of the Northern Governors Forum and entire citizens of the 19 States, I express our deep appreciation to President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR who has broken the jinx of prospecting for oil in the region and bringing the long search to the level of exploitation.

2.  With this ground breaking ceremony, it is very clear that Mr. President cares about the economic prosperity of all parts of the country and is more determined to ensure that the vast natural resources of the nation are utilised for the growth and development of the immediate communities and the country at large. Thanks to his visionary and decisive authorization, we are happily gathered here in Kolmani River to celebrate the first ever commercial discovery of Oil and Gas in Northern Nigeria.

3.  Since the founding of the New Nigerian Development Company Limited (NNDC) by Premier of Northern Region, the Late Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna of Sokoto in 1949, the company has been made several efforts in pursuing investments in various sectors including the oil and gas sector. Today, the NNDC has been granted a second life-line when His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari graciously authorized NNPC Frontier Exploration Services to commence Exploration for Oil and Gas in OPLs 722, 733, 809 and 810.

4.  It is therefore my honor and privilege, on behalf of the Governments of the 19 Northern States, the Board of Directors and Staff of the NNDC, to once again appreciate Mr. President for coming to the rescue of one of the few surviving legacies of Sardauna. The historic Commercial discovery of Oil and Gas in Oil Prospecting Licenses 809 and 810, located in Kolmani River area of Bauchi and Gombe States would significantly impact positively on the energy needs of the country with attendant effects on the lives of the citizens of the two States and the entire region.

5.  With Government’s policy direction, many result-oriented steps required to successfully harness the hydrocarbon reserves in this area will lead to forging strategic partnerships with professional private companies with world-class track record of Oil & Gas Operational Excellence and financing capacity. The take-off of the project will result in building of Oil and Gas processing facilities, modular refineries, fertilizers manufacturing, and power plants in and around the general area and neigbouring States.

6.  Ultimately, the supply of petroleum products, chemical fertilizers, electricity and other derivatives to the region will drastically change the economic fortunes of the region. Most importantly, a lot of jobs will be created while business opportunities will spring up like never before. That is why the Northern Governors Forum is determined to support and collaborate with the Federal Government and NNPC Limited to ensure that all Field Appraisals are done to maximize the full potential of hydrocarbon resources in the region.

7.  We therefore appeal for the renewal of NNDC Lease for 20 years before the end of this administration’s tenure; the timely conversion of OPL 809 & OPL 810 into Oil Mining Leases; and granting the consent of the Minister of Petroleum Resources to NNDC to assign interests to Nigerian Upstream Investment Management Services, its development partner. Our excitement is that there are more discoveries to be made if the exploration activity continues across the region as witnessed here today.

8.   Your Excellency, Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, we are aware of the need for greater peace and security within the region to enable the exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbon resources in the region to be carried out without any hindrance. As Governors, we are ready to work with the Federal Government, security agencies and the exploration companies to ensure that there is no threat to lives, equipment or any activity within Kolmani and the region at large.

9.  While relishing on the significance of this event, we wish to draw attention of the stakeholders particularly the producing companies that will be working in the fields to take very seriously the concerns for environmental protection while undergoing their activities. We should be proactive to mitigate any negative impact on the environment and the well-being of the people using the lessons learnt from the Niger Delta and other parts of the world.

10.                Finally, we also want to strongly advocate for collaboration of the Federal Government and its relevant agencies in the training and capacity building for local manpower that will participate in this new venture. Similarly, we expect that the producing companies will take very seriously the development of local manpower in order to meet the local content requirement. Such actions will go a long way in making sure that we have a seamless process that will serve the interest of the nation.

11.                Thank you and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Rt. Hon. Dr. Simon Bako Lalong, KSGG, CON

Executive Governor of Plateau State and Chairman Northern Governors Forum.

22nd November 2022.