



**AN ADDRESS PRESENTED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, THE GOVERNOR OF
CROSS RIVER STATE, SENATOR LIYEL IMOKE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE STAKEHOLDERS SUMMIT ON THE STATE ENVIRONMENT AT
THE MAIN BOWL, CULTURAL CENTRE COMPLEX, CALABAR ON
THURSDAY,
26TH JUNE, 2008**

Your Excellency, the Deputy Governor of Cross River State, Barr.
Efiok Cobham

The Secretary to the State Government, Barr. Fidelis Ugbo

The Chairman of Occasion

Distinguished Resource Persons

Stakeholders on the State Environment

Participants

Distinguished Invited Guests

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let me begin by warmly welcoming all of you to Calabar, our capital
city and to sincerely thank you for honouring our invitation.

Calabar offers a unique blend of business and leisure and stands out as the city to beat in physical cleanliness and grandeur, suitable for such interactions as this. Your choice of Calabar as host city for this summit was therefore a wise one.

We are all gathered here today to once again take a critical look at environmental issues which will hopefully impact positively on our overall objective of having a clean environment. I am of the fervent hope that this will be achieved at the end of this summit.

The world is today being ravaged by a myriad of environmental problems, posing real challenges to our collective survival. These global crises range from food shortages, natural disasters, to inclement weather and global warming. I am however very confident that with your presence and commitment at this workshop, we shall be able to provide a framework for addressing these issues.

Here in Cross River State, we still confidently boast of having the largest remaining, relatively undisturbed tropical high forest left in Nigeria. Over (6,700 km) Six Thousand, Seven Hundred Square

Kilometers of forest reserve provide home for highly endangered wildlife species and plants. Also, the enormous vegetation cover provided by the forest estate, serves as a carbon sink for global Green House Gas emissions and provides many other eco-system services.

Our land and mineral resource endowments offer the raw material base for agro-forestry, eco-tourism, industrial development and alternative livelihood sources for host communities. With all these in place, we are desirous of taking advantage of the benefits accruing from the global carbon credit market.

Nevertheless, we also acknowledge the fact that our forest reserves are daily being depleted by the activities of illegal woodcutters, pollution and other forms of forest degradation. Also, the major coastal areas, waterways and the mangrove ecosystem are all being threatened by colonies of invasive Nypa Palms and the Marine ecosystem has been impacted by limited oil spills and over exploitation of fish.

On our part, we are committed to the restoration and sustenance of our environment, guided by a policy thrust built upon a "**Clean and**

Green" philosophy. It is through this that we hope to reclaim whatever we have already lost in our forest and mineral resources.

In this regard and in pursuance of this policy, we have embarked on aggressive environmental programmes in all of our urban centres in the state. You can therefore see why this summit is not only timely but highly imperative at this time.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am of the fervent hope that the theme of this summit which is, **Developing and Sustaining a Green and Safe Environment for Present and Future Generations**, is a well thought-out theme which will ably guide the deliberations of this event.

Permit me to at this juncture commend the initiative of the organizers of this summit and to equally urge the Resource Persons to give of their best during their presentations. It will also be appropriate to request the participants to avail themselves of the opportunities offered at this summit to, not only be enriched by the knowledge but to pass it on to others in the society. It is only then that we can say we have succeeded in our drive to improve our environment.

On that note, I now have the pleasant task of declaring this stakeholders summit on our Environment, officially open.

I thank you all.