

Welcome Address by the President, Nigerian Academy of Engineering- Engr. (Mrs.) J. O. Maduka, FIET, FNSE, FAEng, MFR, at the Inaugural Workshop of the Africa Catalyst Project held on Tuesday, February 28th, 2017 at Julius Berger Hall, University of Lagos.

Captains of Industry

Fellows of the Academy

Africa Catalyst Project Team Members

Other distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

I wish to welcome all of you to this very important workshop which I hope will be of immense benefit to our nation, and which will kick start the conversation about the improvement we need to make, in order to reposition engineering in this country. I am therefore very delighted to see all of you here today, as I assure you all that this workshop will be quite worthwhile.

The Nigerian Academy of Engineering was founded to promote excellence, in general, the advancement of engineering science, education, practice and technology, and collaboration with related professional disciplines and industry for the advancement of society, economy and humanity. Part of the Academy's aims is to facilitate dissemination and exchange of ideas among members and other similar bodies and establishments. This includes anticipating and assessing the changing needs of the country and to advise appropriate bodies on the technical resources that should be applied and to sponsor programs aimed at meeting these needs. This is the basis of the Africa Catalyst Project.

Africa Catalyst Project is a project of the Nigerian Academy of Engineering in partnership with the Royal Academy of Engineering titled **The Development of Nigerian Standards for Professional Engineering Competence (Nigeria-SPEC)**.

The main aim of the pilot project is to develop Nigeria-SPEC and specify the competences required of different grades of engineering practitioners in Nigeria to ensure that post-secondary education institutions are able to produce graduates with the engineering skills and knowledge base necessary for sustainable economic development of the country.

This inaugural workshop affords us the opportunity to begin the conversations on Assuring Competencies in Engineering, which will set the ball rolling towards the achievement of the Nigeria-SPEC. It is quite obvious that there is a disconnect between what our engineers are training to do and what the real challenges of their immediate society are. This is part of what is responsible for unemployment, the massive exodus of engineers to management and banking, and the current suboptimal contribution of manufacturing to the economy of Nigeria. It is a well-known fact that there is no developed nation in the world that did not pay keen attention to science and engineering. It is therefore obvious that engineering is not a consequence of development but a precursor to development. If we must get it right in this country, we must renew our commitment to science and engineering, especially. The Nigerian Academy of Engineering is launching this effort, and we are glad that you are out to support us. Indeed, the achievement of the goals of Africa Catalyst Project demands collaboration between the academia, the industry, engineering professionals and the regulators of engineering in Nigeria. I therefore urge you to see your participation in this workshop (and by extension, the Africa Catalyst Project) as a commencement of an endeavor that will birth transformation of engineering in Nigeria – a transformation you would be proud to have pioneered.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I wish you all a very fruitful workshop, a pleasant stay in Lagos and for those who travelled here from outside Lagos and outside Nigeria, a safe trip back home. Thank you for your attention!

**Engr. (Mrs.) J. Olu Maduka, FIET, FNSE, FAEng, MFR
President, Nigerian Academy of Engineering.**