



African Refiners & Distributors Association  
جمعية المكررين والمسوقين الأفارقة  
Association des Raffineurs & des Distributeurs Africains

ARA annual conference in Cape Town March 12-14:

**AFRICAN OIL REFINERS & DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION REPORTS SOME BIG WINS IN BATTLE AGAINST CONTINENT'S 'DIRTY AIR'**

***East Africa and Ghana tighten quality to near-European levels***

With some primary industry players having successfully tightened their quality standards to near-European levels, African refiners are claiming major wins in the battle against the continent's 'dirty air'.

This emerged from the 13th annual conference of the African Refiners and Distributors Association (ARA) at the Century City Conference Centre in Cape Town this week.

A turnout of more than 500 delegates heard high-level speakers outline major successes in the past year when Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Ghana tightened quality to almost European levels, albeit with considerable difficulty. Nigeria announced that they will be improving their import product specifications later this year.

In countries with refineries that require investment to meet the higher product quality, plans were outlined that will result in radical change by 2020 in accordance with the ARA's policy.

But many speakers pointed out that the problem could not be solved by only improving the fuel. Tighter regulations on vehicles (particularly used imports) as well as mandatory testing to ensure that they meet environmental standards, were also essential.

Several speakers addressed the issue of supplying fuel to the shipping industry, where radical quality changes are being imposed by the International Maritime Organisation (IMO). Durban-based South African refiners will be particularly hard-hit by this as fuel supply to ships offers a vital outlet for their fuel oil.

Technology companies presented their processes to resolve these problems and finance companies addressed ways to pay for the expensive investments involved. But the costs are considerable and represent a major challenge for refiners and distributors.

The conference also placed female and youth employment in the "downstream" petroleum industry high on the agenda, and delegates heard what could be done to encourage women and young people to embark on careers in the industry.

The incoming ARA president Mr. Hillaire Kaboré, Chief Executive of SONABHY, the Burkina Faso National Oil Company, said he was pleased with the commitment from all sectors to supply clean fuels to help improve African air quality. He commented. *"The pressure on our industry to take action is intense and I am sure that our members will rise to the challenge. I look forward to next year's meeting to hear what bold steps have been taken to improve the air quality in Africa"*.

*The ARA was formed in 2006 to provide a pan-African voice for the African oil refining and distribution industry. The ARA annual conference is the premier meeting place for downstream oil in Africa. For further details see [www.afrra.org](http://www.afrra.org) or contact the ARA on [info@afrra.org](mailto:info@afrra.org)*