

Bridges to Our Energy Future

22nd World Petroleum Congress Istanbul July 10-13 2017

The 22nd World Petroleum Congress is referred to by many as the 'Olympics of the oil and gas industry' and brings together the strongest players in the world's energy sector. It took place in Istanbul from July 10 till 13 under the theme "Bridges to our Energy Future"

The triennial Congress covered all aspects of the industry from technological advances in upstream and downstream operations to the role of natural gas and renewables, management of the industry and its social, economic and environmental impact. In addition, outside stakeholders such as governments, other industry sectors, NGOs and international institutions also joined in the dialogue.

The Dutch WPC delegation, headed by the committee's chair Marjan van Loon, President Director of Shell, consisted of representatives from oil and gas companies and manufacturers and made a strong contribution to both the plenary and the parallel technical sessions. The complete program can be found on the www.world-petroleum.org website, what follows is a short personal selection of highlights and themes across the different congress sessions

Director General of the WPC, Pierce Riemer, reminded participants that since the last congress in Moscow in 2014 took place the global economy has slowly recovered, together with the oil price and all projections indicate a robust growth in energy demand, with oil and natural gas as key components of the world's energy matrix up to 2050. The United Nations has recently increased its global population projections from 9 billion to 10 billion people for 2050 and it could get higher. WPC is working with the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID) to focus on the issue of energy poverty and highlight all the efforts that the industry is doing around the world to combat this. During the Congress, the online Energy Access Platform was launched, which sets out these, and as a joint industry initiative this will provide a platform to promote initiatives of the oil and gas sector to facilitate access to safe, affordable and reliable energy wherever it is needed. With energy access now strongly embedded in the Sustainable Development Goals as SDG 7, energy poverty alleviation becomes a global priority.

The theme of the congress Bridges to our Energy Future was picked up by many of the Keynote speakers.

Shell CEO Ben van Beurden said the world needs to cross three important bridges to address the existing energy challenges, making a parallel to the three bridges that now cross the Bosphorous Strait in Istanbul. "First there is the bridge of perception. The energy transition is regularly portrayed in terms that compare it to a revolution, a moment in time when everything changes," he said. "In truth, different countries and different sectors will advance at different speeds. The second bridge to be crossed relates to solutions. In transport, battery electric cars are gaining consumer acceptance in some parts of the world, while wind and solar are contributing more and more to the global energy supply, he said. Van Beurden highlighted that, as the world "decarbonises", hydrogen fuel cell vehicles will be needed, as well as liquefied natural gas as a transport fuel and the next generation of sustainable biofuels. "Different challenges throughout this energy transition will require different solutions. There is no one, single answer to all these challenges, and that means there will be many winners," he predicted. The third and final bridge is perhaps the most difficult to achieve, Van Beurden said. Shell will be investing up to \$1 billion per year on its new energies division by the end of the decade, and is supporting other initiatives such as the Carbon Pricing Leadership Coalition, launched in Paris in November 2015. Even as the world moves forward with different solutions and at different speeds, it must commit to moving in one direction.

BP's Bob Dudley struck a similar cord when he explained that today's energy industry faces tough challenges in meeting global energy needs and adopting to the realities of climate change. Demand is continuing to grow, "driven by fast-growing economies like Turkey", Dudley told a plenary session. "We need to respond by making our businesses fit with a low carbon world," he said. "First, by providing more energy than ever before, and second, reducing carbon emissions

more than ever before. Operational excellence, as well as key partnerships, will be crucial in achieving the task at hand. The company aims to simplify by "doing less, not more" and roll back bureaucracy, aiming to use "common sense at a large scale" across the organisation. Technology, where "what used to take weeks can now literally take minutes", will also be crucial Dudley said. Renewables will play a role and are seeing a "competitive" business case in some circumstances, according to Dudley. So will natural gas, which is being produced by six of the seven major projects the company is bringing online this year.

Another major focus of the program was on the need to capture and retain talent in the energy industry and to address the gender balance with urgency

There is widespread concern that on a global level the sector will see a shortfall in numbers of petro technical professionals by the end of the decade. Creating opportunities for young talents is a key issue to retain talent: the sentiment of uncertainty about the future of the industry seems to be impacting on the industry's human capital perspectives, as only 43% of respondents intend to remain in the oil & gas industry for their whole career, almost 30% less than respondents on the 1st Young Professionals perception of the industry survey. Providing development opportunities and trusting young people to lead positions of responsibility regardless of age is key to retain valuable and dynamic talent reaching for constant challenges.

Furthermore a study was released during the congress on gender balance within the industry from the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and the World Petroleum Council (WPC) which revealed that women account for only 22% of the industry's workforce, one of the lowest among major industries, and the percentage drops significantly at higher levels.

BCG's Katharina Rick, one of the authors of the report, said: "Despite in-depth analysis, we could not find any statistically significant difference among companies in different countries and regions. "This consistency reflects the powerful influence of the industry's current culture. This culture needs to change materially if the industry hopes to make meaningful strides towards gender balance." "Unless companies develop a critical mass of women across all roles meaningful progress towards gender balance in the industry will not occur," Rick said. Research was based on detailed interviews of more than 60 male and female senior industry executives worldwide and a survey of around 2000 male and female industry professionals.

A few varied points of interest to close off this rich palette of offerings:

You can watch the newly released and informative film 'The Journey of the Drop' at the WPC website www.world-petroleum.org

US Secretary of State and former ExxonMobil chief executive Rex Tillerson accepted the prestigious Dewhurst Award and delivered a surprisingly open and personal speech about his experiences in the industry during his 41 years with ExxonMobil. Tillerson, who was notified of his selection for the award last year, joked that he had expected to make the visit to Istanbul as a leisurely and relaxing trip after his expected retirement from the US oil giant. It was not to be. The next WPC congress will be held in Houston early December 2020, and Tillerson assured the audience he would show his gratitude by being present at that event. Quote: "I will be there, in some capacity, one way or the other."

And finally, Huisman, one of The Netherlands' leading drilling companies, was awarded the prestigious World Petroleum Congress Excellence Award for Technical Development for small to medium sized companies. Huisman received this awarded for the abstract titled: 'Robotized Drilling, not talking, but doing' about the what, how and why of the Huisman robotized drilling systems and it's prove: the Huisman Innovation Tower (HIT). The winners were announced by H.E. Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Chairman, International Foundation for Energy and Sustainable Development, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy & Industry, Qatar. Great recognition for the visionary role that Joop Rodenburg, now the company's CTO, has played in this development (photo)

