

## **COMMUNNIQUE**

The Zonal Sugar Forum for North East Nigeria, organized by National Sugar Development Council was held on 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2010 at Zaranda Hotel, Bauchi. The theme of the forum is “Role of the Sugar Sector in National Economic Development”.

The Chairman of the occasion was Alhaji Tijjani Maksha, the Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture and National Resources, Adamawa State, Yola represented by Alhaji Mustapha Raji, Programme Manager, ADP Adamawa State, while the Special Guest of Honour was Alhaji Yerima Aliyu Giade, the Honourable Commissioner of Commerce and Industry, Bauchi State.

The keynote address was delivered by Alhaji Nadada Umar, the Director-General, Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), Abuja.

Goodwill messages were delivered by the representatives of the Hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry, Honourable Commissioners of Agriculture and Natural Resources as well as the Programme Managers of ADPs of the States in the zone. The forum attracted participants from the public and private agencies as well as the academia.

At the forum, the following papers were presented for discussion:

- i. Wealth Creation, Rural Development and Poverty Reduction: Role of the Sugar Sector by Mr. G.O. Isibor, M.D. BUA International Sugar Refinery, Lagos
- ii. Food Security and Self-Sufficiency in sugar by the year 2020: Prospects and Challenges by Alhaji Suleiman Olarinde, Managing Director; Dangote Sugar Refinery, Lagos.

After the various discussions on the papers presented by the resource persons, participants arrived at the following resolutions:

- Participants noted that the development of mini sugar plants processing clusters could be an effective strategy for developing the sugar sub-sector if and only if the sugarcane outgrowers programme is properly developed and adequately funded.
- Participants therefore recognized the need to provide adequate support for the outgrowers farmers, in terms of credit, inputs, infrastructure etc, in order to facilitate the production of the raw material, sugarcane required for processing by the cluster mini-plants.

- Participants also noted that the sugar industry is a veritable tool for generating large employment opportunities for both unskilled and skilled labour and could therefore, be effectively applied as a strategy for wealth creation and poverty alleviation in addition to ensuring rural development since the industry is rural based.
- Participants advocated for adequate funding of NSDC to provide the needed enabling environment that will attract sufficient private sector investment into the sugar sub-sector.
- The commitment of the existing sugar refinery companies to backward integration programme to produce raw sugar from local sugarcane at the shortest possible time was stressed by participants. This is in recognition of the abundant natural and human resources that the nation is endowed with.
- In line with international best practice, the need to strengthen the R&D through provision of funds to the existing research institutes and establishment of new ones was stressed as well.
- The importance of a need-driven research and adequate training of the Research Scientists were recognized as veritable means of addressing the problem of slow of R&D results by indigenous sugar producers.
- Participants expressed the need to strengthen the NSDC to give the needed encouragement to the Nigerian Entrepreneurs to establish Model Factories in areas where sugarcane thrives well. This is to engender the proliferation of SME investments and the growth of sugar industry in the country.
- Finally, participants emphasized the need for direct support to the sugar industry through various incentives and the need for consistency in government policies as relates to the industrial sector.