

COMMUNIQUÉ

The North-West Zonal Sugar Forum organised by the National Sugar Development Council (NSDC), Abuja was held at Gusau Hotel, Zamfara State on Monday 22nd December 2008.

The Forum, whose theme was “*The Sugar Sector - A Tool for the Achievement of the 7-Point Agenda*” was chaired by Alhaji Musa Salihu Honourable Commissioner for Education, Kano State, while Alhaji Shu’aibu Abdulsalam Magami, the Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Zamfara State, who was represented by Alhaji Mainasara Bello (Ciroman Gusau), Director General, Ministry of Agriculture, was the Special Guest of Honour.

The Keynote Address on the theme of the Forum, was delivered by the Honourable Commissioner for Agriculture, Katsina State represented by Alhaji Abbashe Saidu (Wamban Daura). Participants at the Forum were drawn from both private and public sectors, including the Honourable Commissioners of Agriculture and Programme Managers of Agriculture Development Projects (ADPs) from Kano, Katsina, Sokoto, Zamfara etc, Representatives of River Basin Development Authorities (RBDAs), members of Small Scale Sugar Producers Association of Nigeria (SSSPAN), Private Consultancy Companies etc.

Papers highlighting key aspects of the main theme were also delivered followed by lively discussions. At the end of the Forum, participants resolved as follows:

1. Commended the National Sugar Development Council for providing the enabling environment for the sugar sector especially the mini sugar plants to thrive and run profitably.
2. Emphasized the need for NSDC to critically look into the problems of local sugar producers vis-a-vis competition from imported sugar.
3. Drew the attention of Governments at all levels to the fact that the wholesale capitalist model of a private sector-led economy may not work, going by the recent experience of the global financial crisis.
4. Therefore, emphasized the urgent need to follow the model of intervening in national industrial development through the provision of incentives to support industrial production as generally obtainable in developed economies.
5. Observed the need for good governance and consistency in industrial policies so as to ensure continuity of useful programmes and projects.
6. Noted and commended the efforts of various Governments to solve the problem of power as it affects industries in the country especially through the Independent Power Projects (IPP).
7. However, sought the intervention of the Governors' Forum to engage NSDC in exploring the potentials of the sugar sector to harness resources available in the country for rapid industrialization and job creation.

8. Bio-technology was identified as one the tools that could be adopted to solve the nation's power and energy problems.
9. Therefore called on NSDC to utilize tissue culture and micro-propagation techniques to rapidly multiply cane seeds for distribution to farmers.
10. Also called on NSDC to continue engaging stakeholders through its Sugar Forum to provide solutions to the problems of the sector until self-sufficiency in sugar is achieved.
11. Called upon the Federal Government to empower the NSDC in establishing a Sugar Research and Training Centre, to solely address the Research, Development and Manpower development needs of the sugar sector.
12. Finally participants noted that the country possesses unlimited potentials for sugarcane and sugar production which should be exploited to gainfully engage our restive youths and at the same time solve the problems of sugar, ethanol and electricity insufficiency in the country.

National Sugar Development Council, Abuja.

Monday 22nd December, 2008.