

COMMUNIQUÉ

The Zonal Sugar Forum for North Central Nigeria was held at Kwara Hotels, Ilorin, Kwara State on Tuesday 20th October 2009. The Forum was chaired by Hon. Solomon Agidani, Chairman, House Committee on Industries and the Special Guest of Honour was Engr. Prof. Mohammed G. Yisa, the Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Kwara State. The keynote address was delivered by Mrs. Josephine Kuteyi, Chairperson/CEO, Josepdam Sugar Company Limited, Bacita. Goodwill messages were also presented by Honourable Commissioners for Agriculture and CEO of ADP's of States in the zone.

2. The two papers presented at the forum were:

- a. ***Achieving National Self-Sufficiency in Sugar: Prospects and Challenges of North-Central Nigeria by Alhaji Abu Sani Bello.***
- b. ***Sugar Production: A Tool for Accelerating National Economic Development by Dr. Emmanuel H. Kwon – Ndung, Nasarawa State University, Keffi***

The papers were critically examined by participants and various observations, suggestions and recommendations were made. Participants expressed the following opinions;

- Acknowledged the availability of abundant land, water and human resources to produce enough sugar for meeting both local demand and generate foreign exchange through export.
- Noted that the lack of full exploitation of the available resources has made Nigeria one of the top 10 highest sugar importing nation.
- Noted the benefits of a fully developed sugar sector to national economy in terms of employment generation, wealth creation, industrialization of the rural sector, enhanced standard of living, poverty alleviation, increased national GDP, etc.
- Noted the need for Government to address the problem of R&D to boost sugar production by setting up more Sugar Research Institutes to develop new sugar processing technologies and high yielding/adaptable sugarcane varieties.
- The NSDC is enjoined to explore technologies that take advantage of sugar by products as a means of power generation to support sugar production.
- The NSDC should be further empowered to collect appropriate levy (10% of CIF) on all imported sugar and that the money taken from this levy account (N4.9 billion) be refunded to enable the Council to carry out its functions
- The government through the NSDC must put in place appropriate infrastructure to support the sugarcane outgrowers interms of supply is seed cane, land preparation and other input support.

- Emphasized the need to empower NSDC to regulate and monitor sugar production, importation and trade in order to protect local investment in sugar sector.
- Emphasized the need for NSDC to have a deliberate policy of collaboration with NNPC and Energy Commission to further strengthen the government initiatives on bio-ethanol production for cleaner environment.
- Encouraged the NSDC to further strengthen support for the sugarcane outgrowers scheme to supply the needed raw materials to sugar factories.
- Apart from providing a conducive policy and infrastructural environment for the sugar sector, participants emphasized the need for government to articulate a definite long term plan for developing the nation's industrial sector – especially the sugar sector.
- The NSDC should be empowered with appropriate legislation to strongly monitor and regulate the activities in the sugar sectors.
- The on-going amendment of the NSDC law should ensure that a certain percentage of the sugar levy and commitment from the sugar companies is set aside to support R&D and training in the sugar sector.

National Sugar Development Council, Abuja.

Tuesday 20th October 2009.