

## COMMUNIQUÉ

The Sensitization Workshop for Stakeholders in Sugar Sub-Sector organized by National Sugar Development Council (NSDC), Abuja was held at Imo Concorde Hotel, Owerri, Imo State on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009.

The Sensitization workshop whose theme was “*Diversification Options in the Sugar Sector*” was chaired by Alhaji Sanusi Maija’ma, President National Association of Small Scale Industry (NASSI), while Dr. Jeff Ojinika, Hon. Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Imo State was the Special Guest of Honour.

The Keynote Address on the theme of the Workshop was delivered by the Executive Secretary, National Sugar Development Council, Abuja while Goodwill Addresses were delivered by Hon. Commissioner for Commerce and Industry, Imo State, Bank of Industry, NEXIM and NOTAP representatives. Participants at the workshop were drawn from both private and public sectors, including Development Financial Institutions (DFIs), Organized Private Sectors (OPS), Private Consultancy Companies, Representatives of Sugar Companies, Members of the National Association of Small Scale Industries, (NASSI) and Representative of National Office for Technology Acquisition and Promotion (NOTAP) etc.

Other papers highlighting key aspects of the theme were also presented by Engr. Braimah Ogunwale, Chief Engineer, Dangote Sugar

Refinery, Lagos and Mr. Oluwatoyin Bamikole, Chief Consultant, Zenith Agro-ethanol Nigeria Limited and lively discussions followed. At end of the Workshop, participants resolved as follows:

- Stakeholders noted that if the country can invest heavily in the various sugar sector diversification options as highlighted, the sector will not only generate a lot of employment opportunities but also produce various value added products;
- Stakeholders appreciated the need for the country to exploit the huge potential in the country to produce sugar to meet the national demand and even export the surplus;
- Participants noted the challenges that existed in the accessing of fund by Small and Medium Scale Industrialists and advocated for a better cooperation with the lending agencies like Bank of Industries (BOI), Nigerian Export and Import Bank (NEXIM), etc;
- Advocated for a follow-up by Council to ensure that projects are actually set up in the next one or two years at the identified sugarcane producing sites to increase local sugar production;
- They solicited for easy access to fund for the large sugar factories to enable them use more effective technologies to generate power;
- Expressed the need for government to play the required pivotal role to really encourage investments in the sugar sector by providing the required enabling environment especially with regard to infrastructures and policy environment and consistency to sustain industrial investments;

- Participants also noted the critical importance of Research and Development as a means of fast-tracking development in the sugar sub-sector and therefore advocated for more funding of sugarcane Researchers and Research Institutes as obtained in countries like Brazil, Cuba, Sudan etc. Specifically, Institutes that will solely concentrate on sugarcane research was advocated for;
- Participants also noted the need for Council to intensify its sensitization programme to get its message to all stakeholders including policy makers, investors, farmers and consumers etc;

**National Sugar Development Council, Abuja**  
**Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September, 2009.**