

FG draws master plan to develop staple crops in Anambra

Federal Government said it has embarked on development of master plan for Staple Crops Processing Zones (SCPZs) in the country. Dr. Uche Nwafor, South-East Regional Director of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, announced this at a stakeholders' workshop in

Awka yesterday.

The workshop was organised by the Federal and Anambra Governments in collaboration with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO).

Nwafor said the Adani-Omor Rice Production zone had reached advanced stage and the consultants from

UNIDO had been on field tour of the area.

"The stakeholders have gathered here to advance the business of agriculture in line with the Transformation Agenda of the Federal Government.

"Experts have been chosen from different parts of the value chain to develop master plan for the building of agric-

business in industrial zone for Enugu-Anambra rice belt," he said.

The leader of the UNIDO team of consultants, Dr. Emelike Okoro, said the model produced would strengthen the economy when implemented.

Okoro said the model was fully home grown and used local man power with little or

no exported employment.

"We are Nigerians and aware of our peculiarities, our model will make use of local manpower.

"We, therefore, enjoin Nigerians to patronise our rice because they are cheaper and richer," he said.

Commissioner for Agriculture in Anambra, Ndubuisi Menakaya, thanked the Federal Government, and expressed the hope that the project would transform the living standards of the people.

Represented by Albert Dimaka, Permanent Secretary in the ministry, Menakaya said the progress made so far showed that the ATA was on course.

"We need to change our orientation toward agriculture. We have to see it as a profitable venture, a business and something one can engage in and be satisfied.

"Addressing these issues informed the designation of some areas like Adani-Omor as SCPZs as it will help to improve the production of rice potential in the area," he said.

In his remarks, the state chairman, All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN), Nnamdi Meko, commended the initiative, saying, "it has been the yearnings of farmers in the state."

He urged the government to carry farmers along in the planning stage of its policies.

Nigeria can generate N1.2trn from tourism - Ex-ANAN boss

Former President of Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN), Dr Samuel Nzekwe, has disclosed that Nigeria can generate N1.2 trillion from tourism yearly, if the required infrastructure are provided.

Nzekwe told the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) yesterday in Lagos that government should make substantial capital allocation to develop infrastructure like roads, power supply and adequate security.

"All over the world, tourism is a big revenue earner to governments and infrastructure can create the enabling environment for this to happen. Nigeria is capable of generating a quarter of its total annual revenue from tourism, if the sector is well managed."

He said that apart from generating revenue, tourism could create employment opportunities for youths and reduce the crime rate.

"Provision of basic infrastructure would bring about Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs). When people are coming into a country, they are able to see the available business opportunities."

Nzekwe said with its natural endowments, the country could be a great tourists' destination in the world, stressing that by promoting tourism, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Nigeria would improve because there would be increased productivity.

He urged advised the Federal Government to start preparing the 2014 budget in earnest and make it as comprehensive as possible, insisting that late passage of the budget could weaken its performance.

The ex-ANAN boss added that government should provide necessary schedules to back up the budget for easy passage by the National Assembly, maintaining that aside allocating substantial funds to capital expenditures, National Assembly should improve on its oversight functions.

He, however, called on the National Assembly to ensure that funds meant for capital projects are effectively utilised to improve the economy, advising government to reduce recurrent expenditures to check wastage.



L-R: Representative of the Alafin of Oyo Empire, Princess Arewa Shade Adeyemi; Member, House of Representatives, Kehinde Odeneye and Publisher/Chairman, the International Links Magazine, Niyi Dada, during the launching of the magazine at the Muson Centre, Onikan, Lagos...at the weekend. Photo: Bankole Damilare.

Amosun tasks Yewa indigenes in UK on investment

Governor Ibikunle Amosun of Ogun has charged members of the Yewa Descendants Union in the United Kingdom and Ireland to key into the development projects back home, in order to further strengthen the state's cultural and economic integration.

Amosun, who spoke against the backdrop of ongoing infrastructural development in the state, gave the charge over the weekend at the first Yewa Descendants Union Day held in London, United Kingdom.

He stated that his administration has embarked on various projects, especially in the areas of infrastructure, agriculture, health, education and tourism, stressing the need for Ogun State indigenes in the Diaspora to bring their wealth of expertise to bear on the various development projects currently going on in the state.

During an interactive session with members of the union and indigenes, the governor addressed the concerns of the people, ranging from security, employment generation, health, tourism and the innovation in creating a one-stop shop for land allocation in the state.

"Ogun is one of the most secure states in Nigeria today. This is the product of our colossal investment in security," the governor declared, assuring that

government would always provide sites and services in already mapped out area before allocation was carried out so as to ease the burden of development.

On youth empowerment and employment generation, Amosun explained that his government had created

many job opportunities, surpassing the 10,000 jobs earlier promised.

Amosun congratulated the union for the Yewa Day initiative and enjoined members on the need to continue to be good ambassadors of the state.

He specifically tasked

members to come home and invest in agriculture, noting that "Yewa land has its own uniqueness; it is indeed the food basket of the state and entire region."

In the same vein, Oba Kehinde Olugbenle, the Olu of Ilaro and paramount ruler of Yewa-land, called on the

union members to return home and partner with the state government to develop their various communities.

Olugbenle expressed the hope that a similar Yewa Day initiative would be launched in the US and Canada by the indigenes resident in those

Lagos Assembly convenes emergency sitting

WALE AKINOLA

Lagos State House of Assembly will today hold an emergency sitting to review the state's 2013 budget appropriation it passed last year.

The House cut short its annual recess to attend to the pressing issue of the budget, which a source in the Assembly said Governor Babatunde Fashola wanted the House to urgently attend to.

A credible source in the Assembly told *Daily Newswatch* that some

members of the House who had traveled outside the country for their annual vacation, were ordered back to attend to the urgent budgetary issue.

The source, who said the state needed the upward budget review to meet the urgent developmental needs which were not captured in the 2013 budget passed in December last year, added that the projects could neither wait for the 2014 budget nor for the lawmakers to resume from their recess as it requires urgent attention.

Last year, the House passed

the 2013 budget after adopting the

Appropriation Committee report and taking the third reading of the Appropriation Bill.

The House approved a total budget sum of N499.105 billion, out of which N229.777.729 billion was meant for recurrent expenditure, while N269.376b went for capital expenditure.

The budget, as approved by the House, showed an increase of about N2 billion.

It increased the allocations to some MDAs, which it said had inadequate allocations in

the original presentation to meet up with their operations.

Some of the benefiting MDAs were Lagos State House of Assembly Service Commission (LAHASCOM); Lagos Internal Revenue Service; Lagos State Independent Electoral Commission and the Office of the Auditor General for Local Governments.

However, some months ago, the House also approved re-adjustment of the budget to attend to some sectors that needed to be upgraded, so that the government could perform optimally.

Flood: Anambra, transporters sign MoU

The Anambra State Government Monday signed a Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with some private transport companies to facilitate timely delivery of relief materials to flood victims in the state.

Executive Secretary of the state Emergency Management

Agency (SEMA), Dr. Justin Ijezie, who disclosed this in Onitsha, said the agency was actively collaborating with ministries of environment, information and local government affairs to ensure early flood response preparation.

It would be recalled that the Nigeria Meteorological Agency (NIMET) had advised states in the lowlands and riverine areas

of the country to take proactive measures to mitigate the effect of possible flood disaster this year.

Ijezie said that the agency had already distributed early warning billboards and handbills in the flood-prone areas of the state.

"Well as of now, we are prepared, but the preparation is an ongoing thing. So we

are prepared, we have got our trucks ready. We have got non-perishable relief materials. We have signed a MoU for the supply of things we cannot buy now because they are perishable. Then with transporters in case we need to evacuate people or take relief materials in quick successions to complement our vehicles and boats.