**REPORT OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES AND INSTITUTIONS INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH MDA’s ON TUESDAY 22nd AND WEDNESDAY 23rd OCTOBER, 2019 IN MEETING ROOM 144 AND CONFERENCE ROOM 028, HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES NEW BUILDING, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COMPLEX, ABUJA.**

**INTRODUCTION**

Sequel to the joint 2020 Budget Defence meeting of 15th, 16th and 17th October 2019, the Committee resolved to hold a Post 2020 Budget Defence/ interactive meeting with the Ministry and agencies under its jurisdiction on Tuesday 22nd and 23rd October 2019.

The interactive session intends to:

1. Give the Committee an understanding of the activities of the Ministry, Departments, and Agencies (MDA’s);
2. Review the performance of the agencies’ past three-year Budget in order to reposition the Colleges, Research Institutions, and the Agricultural universities in the nation’s agricultural sector and;
3. Give the Committee the opportunity to synergizeits Legislative agenda with the MDAs.

**DAY ONE:**

**COMMENCEMENT**

The meeting commenced at 10:50 a.m with a prayer said by the Chairman Hon. Munir Babba Dan’ Agundi who also presided.

A formal introduction of Committee Members and the Heads of Agencies followed.

**CHAIRMAN’S OPENING SPEECH**

The Chairman emphasized the passion of Mr. President’s Administration to focus on agriculture as an income earner for the country, employer of labour and, its capacity to feed the nation.

The Chairman stated that research institutes, universities and the colleges of agriculture ought to be at the forefront of driving the economic growth through agriculture and reiterated that research priority should be in crops, livestock, and fisheries in order to ensure that revenue is generation and a sustainable food security is attained for the nation.

He said that the Research Institutes, Agricultural Universities, and the Colleges should focus on entrepreneurial skill acquisition that would make their students self-reliance.

The Chairman informed the meeting of the Government’s commitment of over a hundred billion naira to the development of Palm Oil in Nigeria. He also lamented the inability of NIFOR to access its fund due to the leadership crisis in the institute which has also hampered research programs in the last two years. Nonetheless, he noted that the committee has resolved to resolve the crisis in the institute and other institutions engulfed in crisis as no country can progress without researches.

He stated that the legislature, especially the committee will work with the Executive to enact laws that would ensure the success of the agricultural sector.

The Chairman concluded by enumerating among others, the following as the committee’s agenda.

1. Ensuring and facilitating the accelerated passage of the reform bill on the agricultural sector.
2. Sponsoring intervention fund bills similar to TETFUND for the agricultural sector.
3. Providing linkages with foreign donors and local donor support for the sector.
4. Ensuring adequate funding of research by way of inclusion of the agricultural research system in all interventions of CBN, NDIC, PTDF, TETFUND, etc.
5. Develop a platform for conflict resolution in conjunction with ARCN as an antidote to litigations from the system.
6. Encourage uptake of develop technology by companies.

**SUBMISSIONS:**

**SENATOR SABI ABDULLAHI**

He thanked the Committee for inviting him to the meeting, he described the crisis in NIFOR as rather unfortunate. He also lamented the leadership crisis in some of the agricultural institutions which as hindered the efficiency and productivity of these colleges and institutions. He, however, noted the need to salvage the Agricultural Sector and also, pattern Agricultural Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN) after EMBRAPA in Brazil for optimum benefit.

Senator Sabi Abdullahi also cited the giant strides made by India in the agricultural sector and noted that the Nigerian economy cannot be diversified without the agricultural sector been an active participant.

He concluded by calling for the reform of ARCN through the amendment of its Act and also expressed happiness at the return of the agricultural universities to the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for efficiency goal achievement.

**AG. EXECUTIVE SECRETARY (ES), ARCN SUBMISSION**

The ES commended the Chairman for his presentation, he said the Council would key into the Committee’s agenda, He stated the need to curb the multiplicity of labour unions in the Ministries, resolve the problem many Governing Boards of colleges/ institutions without budgetary provisions and improve fundings/ its releases as at when due. He concluded by seeking for a synergy between the committee and all the agencies under the committee’s jurisdiction.

**VICE CHANCELLOR, FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE ABEOKUTA**

The Vice-Chancellor informed the meeting of the university’s mandate, he reiterated the need for research into solar energy in order to provide an adequate supply of electricity to power the activities of the universities. He enumerated the challenges facing the universities as follows:

1. Problems related to management.
2. Restriction in the number.
3. Funding obstacles; though the universities are better off now than when they were not with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.
4. Lack of essential infrastructure to cater to the number of students admitted.

He informed the meeting of his university’s desire to venture into cattle ranches in line with the Government’s policy.

**INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH & TRAINING (IAR&T)**

The Executive Director said the mandate of the institute was research into Soil management and its characteristics for improved and sustainable agriculture, and research into the genetic improvement of maize, cowpeas, etc.

She stated that the Institute conducts research into livestock adaptability to the South-West of the country. She further informed the meeting that the Institute had only been able to soil map twelve states of the Federation.

She enumerated the challenges of the institute as:

1. Staffing in specific and training disciplines.
2. Obsolete equipment which has continuously hampered the Institute capacity.
3. Poor infrastructures.

She submitted that due to the diverse nature of agriculture, it can be used as a veritable tool for empowerment.

**COCOA RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF NIGERIA (CRIN)**

The Executive Director briefed the meeting on the mandates of the institute, reiterated the challenges of Institute as:

1. Feasibility of farmers productivity;
2. Increase in cocoa production to increase the country’s earnings from cocoa;
3. Need to use tissue culture in the production of cocoa as it's done Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire.
4. Poor and untimely release of funds resulting in unimproved species;
5. Demand is greater than the supply;
6. Urgent need of a tissue culture laboratory by CRIN

He informed the meeting that the institute’s cocoa bread has gone public-private partnership (PPP). He, however, lamented the abandonment of previous efforts made to chart a road map for cocoa.

**NIGERIA INSTITUTE OF OCEANOGRAPHY AND MARINE RESEARCH, LAGOS**

The Executive Director briefed the meeting on the mandates and activities of the Institute, he said the institute was established in the Department of Fisheries in 1975. He stated that the institute has several outstations among which are Badore, Lagos, Buguma in River State.

He also informed the Committee of the Institute’s ownership of two vessels, best bar laboratory in West Africa and its sole certification of fishes imported or exported to and from the country. He reiterated that the Institute’s challenges revolve around funding.

**FEDERAL COLLEGES AGRICULTURES’ REPRESENTATIVE**

The Provost, Federal Veterinary Medical Laboratory College, Vom who spoke on behalf of the Colleges. He submitted that the colleges are bedeviled by poor funding, infrastructural decay and lack of enabling laws.

**MEMBERS CONTRIBUTION/OBSERVATION**

1. The Chairman advised the institutions and colleges to articulate their needs and challenges, be engaged professionally as their current statures speak less of them when compared to countries like Cote d’ Viore and Ghana who are leading exporters of cocoa.
2. The Committee noted that it would engage the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) on the need to improve funding to agencies.
3. The Committee raised the need for a road map for the development of Cocoa, Oil Palm and Rubber Production in Nigeria.
4. Members stated the need for agencies to go into PPP as well as synergize with the Committee so as to achieve the height reached by Vietnam with coconut as a sustainer of the country’s economy.
5. Members also advised the Colleges and Institutions to engage their students in order to become self-reliance.
6. The Deputy Minority Whip in his contribution, appeal for better crisis management in the institutes and colleges.
7. Members urged for better legislation in the area of provision of Agricultural Trustfund in which organizations associated with agro and allied matters would commit a percentage of their earnings to the development of the agricultural sector in the country.

**CHAIRMAN’S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman thanked the heads of agencies for attending the meeting, he urged them to interface with the Committee in order to move the agricultural sector to its pride of place as the major earner for the country.

He encouraged the agencies that have unresolved issues not to hesitate to articulate them and forward to the committee or see him in his office.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The motion of adjournment was moved by Hon. Gogo Bright and seconded by Hon. Amos Magaji. The meeting adjourned accordingly at 1.25 p.m.

**Hon. Munir Babba Dan’Agundi Olunike Adesina-Obube**

**Chairman Clerk**

**Day Two 23-10-2019**

**COMMENCEMENT**

The meeting commenced at 10:50 a.m. with a prayer said by the Chairman Hon. Munir Babba Dan’ Agundi and also presiding.

A formal introduction of Committee Members and the Heads of Agencies followed.

**CHAIRMAN’S OPENING REMARKS**

The Chairman read his address and informed meeting that research and technology cannot be overemphasized. He stated the intention of the Committee to adopt the content of the speech as a road map for the Committee in the 9th Assembly. He also stated the need for a provision in the Year 2020 Budget for the understudy of Brazil and India’s agricultural research system.

He highlighted the leadership crisis bedeviling some of the Colleges and Institutions; citing an instance of NIFOR whose activities have been greatly hampered.

**SUBMISSION**

**NIGERIA INSTITUTE OF OIL PALM RESEARCH (NIFOR), BENIN**

The Executive Director (ED) of NIFOR informed the meeting that the Institute has been in crisis as a result of the appointment of his predecessor whose letter of appointment was later withdrawn by the Ministry due to the abnormalities associated with it before his appointment on the 5th November 2018.

He stated that the activities of the Institute is been disrupted to date by the inaccessibility of the institute to its Capital and Overhead Cost from 2018 to date.

He lamented that the Institute’s researches have also been hindered by the crisis and matters of sensitive importance and guests were received outside the Institute’s premises. Though the institute had sought partnership with DUFIL, makers of Indomie to develop 13 hectares of oil palm.

**INSTITUTE OF ANIMAL RESEARCH**

The ED of the Institute in his brief of the mandate, achievements, and challenges of IAR, noted that the institute has the mandate to research sustainable agriculture in Nigeria.

He, however, lamented none funding of research and non-research projects, obsolete equipment and laboratory. He also decried the untimely release of funds which has continuously affected the productivity and research base of the Institute; this view was also corroborated by the ES of ARCN.

**NIGERIA CEREAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

The Executive Director (ED) said the Institute’s mandate was into the research of rice, beniseed, sugarcane, etc. He said that the Institute has been able to improve rice production through the production of seven different high yielding varieties. He also noted that value addition had been introduced to the mandate crops, for example, rice destoning.

The ED also emphasized on poor and untimely release of funds, decay in infrastructure and erratic power supply as the institute’s major challenges.

**ARRIVAL OF RIGHT HON. SPEAKER, HON. FEMI GBAJABIAMILA**

The Chairman welcomed the Hon. Speaker in the company of the Minority Leader, Hon. Ndudi Elumelu who joined the interactive session at 1:30 pm. He highlighted the challenges plaguing the sector, he intimated the Speaker of the crisis in NIFOR.

The Executive Secretary of Council addressed the Speaker, he commended him on the choice of the members of the committee. He highlighted the problems bedeviling the agricultural colleges and institutions and urged the Hon. Speaker to avail the Committee Members the opportunity to understudy some countries such as China, India, Brazil, Israel, etc. for comparative advantage.

The Chairman House Committee on Agricultural Services also addressed the meeting.

**HON. SPEAKER’S ADDRESS**

The Hon. Speaker in his address said that the Chairmen of the House Committees on Agriculture and Rural Development among others were carefully selected to lead the Committees because of their knowledge and commitment and compassion for the Agricultural Sector. He noted that the House acknowledges the diversification of the nation’s economy by the current Administration to Agriculture for national development.

He also said that efforts would be geared towards the reformation of the system for the timely release of funds to promote research in the sector as some researches are time-bound. He urged the agencies to educate the Parliament on what is practiced in other climes. He assured that the Year 2020 Budget would be passed before Christmas of 2019 in order to return to the Budget circle of January to December.

**NATIONAL ANIMAL PRODUCTION RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

The outgoing Executive Director in the company of the incoming Executive Director briefed the Committee on the mandates of the Institute, its ongoing projects, achievements, and Challenges. He elucidated the institute's pasture development programs.

Equally, he lamented the decay in the institute’s infrastructure, obsolete laboratory, erratic power supply, inadequate building for researchers, insufficient funding and the untimely release of funds.

**FEDERAL UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, MAKURDI**

The Vice-Chancellor informed the meeting of the mandates of the University, its achievements which includes a developed ‘acha’ machine by the Engineering department of the University for the processing of acha and crop storage, the University’s research that has been tested and used by IITA and its challenges which includes no access road to the university, lack of perimeter fencing and equipment and finance to engage students in practical agricultural entrepreneurial skills.

The Committee Chairman in response advised the Vice-Chancellor to take advantage of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture on the Fruit processing machines that are line idle at the ministry through a request to the Hon. Minister on the same. He also promised to see to the inclusion of the University in Rural road development under the Ministry.

Also, the Chairman in ascertaining his point yielded the floor to Professor Nasidi of the University of Abuja, who advised the universities to be self-reliance through the harness and maximization of the unused hectares of land in the universities.

The Chairman in conclusion, however, directed the universities to meet with the Ministry in respect of access road to university.

**MICHAEL OKPARA UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, NMUDIKE**

The Vice-Chancellor enumerated the university’s mandates, ongoing activities, achievements, and challenges. He stated that the university has been able to utilize about 30% of its land for palm oil plantation while the remaining 70% lacks access road among other constraints.

**NATIONAL STORED PRODUCT RESEARCH INSTITUTE, ILORIN**

The Ag. Executive Director, briefed the meeting on the institute mandates as it relates to post-harvest activities, ongoing projects, achievements, and challenges. She commended the Chairman for the agenda set in his speech. However, she reiterated the need to include Post Harvest in the working document of the Committee.

**FEDERAL COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICAL LABORATORY, JOS**

The Provost briefed of the meeting on the mandates, achievements, and challenges of the Colleges. He said the college is a unique college in that it caters to both human and animal services.

**AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL MANAGEMENT TRAINING INSTITUTE, ILORIN**

The representative of the Executive Director briefed the meeting on the mandates of the Institute as it relates to training, ongoing projects, achievements, and Challenges.

**CHAIRMAN’S CLOSING REMARKS**

The Chairman in his closing remarks noted that the Post-harvest raised by the ED of NSPRI would be included in the Committee’s agenda. He urged the agencies to always interface with the Committee in order to move the agricultural sector to its pride as a major earner for the country.

**ADJOURNMENT**

A motion of adjournment was moved by Hon. Adebayo Balogun and seconded by Hon. Amos Magaji Gwamna and the meeting adjourned accordingly at 3:35 p.m.

**RESOLUTIONS REACHED IN THE INTERACTIVE MEETING**

The meeting resolved as follows:

1. House consideration of early budgetary disbursement of fund to aid effective research.
2. Adoption of the Chairman’s Speech as its working document.
3. Review all Bills before the House that can enhance optimal performance in the Agricultural Sector.
4. Research programs to align with the National Agenda.
5. Set up an agricultural trust fund similar to TETFUND to cater for the Agricultural Research Institutions, Colleges, and Universities by way of legislation.
6. Agencies to synergize with the Committee for the development of the Sector.
7. Set up a sub-committee to collate all views and challenges in order to proffer solution to the main committee.
8. Consider a bi-annual Agric. Technology Show Day to showcase achievements in the agricultural sector.
9. Agencies to chart road maps needed to enhance their agency’s performance.

**Hon. Munir Babba Dan’Agundi Olunike Adesina-Obube**

**Chairman Clerk**

**Appendix**

**Day One: 22nd October, 2019**

**Attendance**

1. HON. MARTINS OKE
2. HON. NASIR SANI ZANGO DAURA
3. HON. GOGO BRIGHT TAMUNO
4. HON. OLUUSOLA STEVE FATOBA
5. HON. LAWAN SHETTIMA ALI
6. HON. AMED GWAMNA MAGAJI
7. HON. ABIOLA PETER MAKINDE
8. HON. PRINCE AKIM ADEYEMI
9. HON. SAM ONIUGBO
10. HON. YUSUF BUBA YAKUB
11. HON. ENGR. SOLOMON BULUN MAREN FNSE
12. HON. SHEHU AHMED
13. HON. ZAINAB GIMBA
14. HON. RIMANDE SHAWULU KWEWUM
15. HON. SHAABAN IBRAHIM SHARADA
16. HON. HAFIZ M.K IBRAHIM
17. HON. ABDULLAHI MAHMUD GAYA
18. HON. AMINU ASHIRU MANI
19. HON. ADEBAYO BALOGUN
20. HON. UJU KINGSLEY C.
21. HON. YUSUF AHMED TIJANI
22. HON. MIKE ETABA
23. HON. ENGR. SANI BALA
24. HON. OLUYEMI A. TAIWO
25. HON. ADEWUNMI ORIYOMI ONANUGA
26. HON. FRANCIS O. AGBO

**Day Two: 23th October, 2019**

**Attendance**

1. HON. MUNIR BABBA DAN’ AGUNDI
2. HON. AMED GWAMNA MAGAJI
3. HON. SHEHU AHMED
4. HON. JIMOH OJUGBELE
5. HON. NASIR SANI ZANGO DAURA
6. HON. ADEWUNMI ORIYOMI ONANUGA
7. HON. KABIRU ALHASSAN RURUM
8. HON. MARTINS OKE
9. HON. ABIOLA PETER MAKINDE
10. HON. ENGR. SOLOMON BULUN MAREN
11. HON. SAM ONIUGBO
12. HON. FRANCIS OTTAH AGBO
13. HON. OLUUSOLA STEVE FATOBA
14. HON. ABIANTE AWAJI-INOMBEK D.
15. HON. RIMANDE SHAWULU KWEWUM
16. HON. ZAKARIYA’AU M. GALADIMA
17. HON. GOGO BRIGHT TAMUNO
18. HON. SAIDU MUSA ABDULLAHI
19. HON. AJILESORO TAOFEEK ABIMBOLA
20. HON. AKEEM ADEYEMI
21. HON. ADEBAYO BALOGUN
22. HON. TYOUGH ROBERT A.
23. HON. ODEBUNMI OLUSEGUN
24. HON. ZAINAB GIMBA
25. HON. LAWAN SHETTIMA ALI