



NEPAD BUSINESS GROUP - NIGERIA

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The 1st NBN CASSAVA INVESTMENT FORUM (NCIF)

Cassava and the Nigeria Economy: Developing the Value Chains for Employment and Socio-Economic Development.

THURSDAY 07 NOVEMBER, 2013, IBETO HOTEL, GUDU DISTRICT, ABUJA, NIGERIA.

An event organized by the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria.

COMMUNIQUE



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After a whole day of intellectually rewarding brainstorming and shared learning, participants were unanimous in drawing the broad conclusion that it was high time the growing importance of Cassava, and its added value chains – particularly their role as sources of employment generation and also as a source of foreign exchange for the country, was acknowledged and mainstreamed into the national agricultural policy of Nigeria. The following were among the key recommendations made:

- a) Poverty reduction in Nigeria requires the collective efforts of well meaning organisations and government for better synergies on a broad scale.
- b) Cassava is recognised as an important wonder crop and a key catalyst for employment creation, among the teeming Nigerian youth and women for poverty reduction and socio-economic development.
- c) There is need to promote Inter-institutional linkages among research institutions in Nigeria, particularly those saddled with the task of boosting agricultural production to tap into critical resources for developing and strengthening capacities, in the production of improved varieties of cassava seedlings and machineries needed to boost the production of high quality cassava flour and other bye products from cassava.
- d) There is an urgent need to identify and build national-level human resource capacity among farmers, in cassava production and land management for planting of seedlings in order to boost production levels.
- e) To avoid duplication and as well take advantage of economies of scale, clear roles should be defined for each of the relevant stakeholders (producers and processors) with focus on the different aspects of research, marketing, production, and policy formulation issues that suit their individual mandates at planting, production and marketing levels.

- f) Awareness on the issues of sustainable gains of cassava and its added value chains should be made to percolate downwards to the grassroots level so that many more people become aware of its critical importance and economic gains as a source of livelihood for individuals, families, communities.
- g) Federal and State Governments should be at the forefront of nation-wide discussions, and eventual adoption of an appropriate policy formulation on cassava and its added value chain as a source of creating wealth for young entrepreneurs and women farmers, thereby eliminating social vices among the youths.
- h) The Price of HQCF should be fixed periodically (Quarterly or Bi-annual) using cassava root price as a factor for price stability.
- i) Federal Governments should make cassava equipments and machineries more affordable, and within easy reach of rural and small scale farmers by adopting the Chinese system of ‘family tools’ which is a system whereby every family, household including men, women and children are given farming tools in order to boost food production in the country. The system has recorded tremendous success within the Chinese society.
- j) Distribution of improved cassava varieties should be extended to more farmers using the agricultural extension services.
- k) Rural marketing of High Quality Cassava Flour (HQCF) as direct inclusion to bread, confectionery or food staples should be explored.
- l) Potential Investors should be trained on HQCF based new product development - Use of HQCF in feed formulation should be explored; other uses of HQCF should be explored further to aid food varieties.
- m) Processors are encouraged to establish their own farm as a second source during scarcity and resultant price hike.
- n) Alternative sources of energy such as use of Agricultural wastes – cashew shell; Palm kernel shell; saw-dust; etc should be explored to bring down the energy cost.
- o) Adequate Capacity Development and linkage to markets are also suggested ways of lowering cost of production in the cassava value chains.

- p) There is need to develop next generation of business oriented farmers.
- q) There is also the need to develop and improve access to cassava production supportive technologies (seed, fertilizer, credit, herbicide, mechanization) as well as a formal seed system to complement the informal sector.
- r) Options should be provided and promoted with respect to sustainable land management in the country.
- s) Efforts should be made to improve regional network of cassava Research and Development workers (R&D).
- t) Nigerian Agricultural equipment and machineries manufacturers must improve the finishing and aesthetics of their products to compete fairly in the global market.
- u) Government as a matter of necessity and urgency should support and provide necessary assistance to local fabricators, to produced quality machines, of quality comparable and even much better than the imported cassava processing machinery and equipment.
- v) The participants agreed that there was the need to form themselves into co-operative groups, in order to access the Bank of Agriculture credit loan facilities of up to one million naira for individual farmers, young entrepreneurs and women for cassava production and other cash crops.
- w) Participants also agreed that young entrepreneurs, women and youth should be accorded top priority in all areas of the cassava value added chain as they form the core of the Nigeria agricultural workforce.
- x) NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) as a coordinating body for the organized private Sector should interface with the relevant arms of Governments with respect to appropriate policies and steps to remove all the barriers to the development of the Cassava Sector in the country.
- y) NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) as a matter of necessity should convene another forum soon to follow up on the resolutions of the 1st NBGN Cassava Investment Forum and to particularly focus facilitation of stakeholders to invest in the cassava value chain.