

## NBGN PARTNERS LSETF ON 2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT WITH ITS GRADUATES' EMPLOYABILITY IMPROVEMENT & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (GEIDI)



NBGN EXCO WITH GEIDI GRADUATE

Alarmed by the high level of graduate unemployment in the country, NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) has initiated a training programme for youths tagged the NBGN Graduates' Employability Improvement & Development Initiative (GEIDI). This is also in furtherance of its objective of wealth creation for poverty alleviation. The immediate chairman of NBGN Chairman, Chief Chris Ezeh, while unveiling the maiden edition, explained that it was intended to equip Nigerian graduates with both technical and entrepreneurial skills "to address the observed mismatch in graduate training and those skills required in modern workplace for enhanced employability and self-reliability." NBGN had no choice but to partner with Government in assisting to find a solution to the scourge of youth unemployment and its associated vices. This NBGN GEIDI is a six-month programme being organized in conjunction with the Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centres (NOIC), Bank of Industry Limited (BOI), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN), among others. The maiden edition of the scheme which started

in the first week of September, 2014 with 50 trainees drawn from all over the federation ended in March, 2014 at NOIC Complex, Gbagada, Lagos. And the courses offered included Refrigeration & Air Conditioning, Computer hardware Maintenance, Hotel & Catering Management, Electrical Installation, Automotive Mechanics as well as Painting & House Decoration For the second edition of NBGN GEIDI scheduled to take off in July, 2017, the executive had secured Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF) and Fidelity Bank of Nigeria's assurances of making available suitable loan facilities to qualified graduates of the scheme to set up in their chosen trade and vocations while NOIC and SMEDAN would continue to provide the vocational training and entrepreneurial development skills respectively. The NEPAD boss charged other Business Membership Organizations (BMOs), the Organized Private Sector, Non-Governmental Organizations and Development groups to join hands with government in reducing youth unemployment "for socio-economic growth of our dear nation"

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Placing African countries, both individually and collectively on a path of sustainable growth and development

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NEPAD BUSINESS GROUP-NIGERIA

# NEWS LETTER



...reporting NBGN activities in styles

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## NBGN EXCO VISITED FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA



# NEPAD

**NIGERIA CEO PAID A COURTESY VISIT TO NBGN IN LAGOS**

NBGN GATHERED STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER FOR THE 3RD NIGERIA RICE INVESTMENT FORUM



Chairman, NEPAD Business Group-Nigeria, Chief Dr. Nike Akande being welcomed by Group Managing Director First Bank PLC, Dr Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan during the NBGN courtesy visit to First Bank Executives at First Bank Headquarters Marina, Lagos on 17/2/2016



## NBGN EXCO VISITED FIRST BANK OF NIGERIA

The Executive Committee of NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) paid a courtesy visit to First Bank, to congratulate Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan on his appointment as the Group Managing Director (GMD) on Wednesday, 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2016 at the bank's head office in Lagos. The high delegation from NBGN was led by its Chairman, Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON. Other members of the delegation are Chief Victor Oyolu, NBGN 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-Chairman, Chief (Mrs.) Eniola Fadayomi, MFR, NBGN 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-Chairman and Mr. Dosumu Oluwole, Acting Head, NBGN Secretariat.

Chief Akande used the occasion of the visit to congratulate Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan on his elevation to the post of the Group Managing Director of First Bank. She thereafter thanked the GMD for granting the EXCO's request for the visit despite the short notice. She stated that the visit will afford the group and the bank the opportunity to compare notes on areas of mutual benefits as the new board continues to further the mandates of NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) for promotion of businesses, wealth and job creation. She assured him of NBGN continuous support to maintain the number one position of First Bank in the Nigeria banking sector.

Speaking further, Chief Dr. Akande described NEPAD Business Group Nigeria as an organization set up by the Federal Government to further the noble objectives of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) via the Organized Private Sector. NEPAD is an economic initiative with the sole aim of wealth and jobs creation for poverty alleviation in the African Continent. NBGN was inaugurated on 01 July, 2004 by His Excellency, the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, GCFR, at the Presidential Villa with 45 foundation members who are active players in the nation's private sector. As expected, First Bank, a leader in the nation's banking sector was one of the worthy founding members. She appreciated the support NBGN has received from the bank since inception.

Dr. Adesola Kazeem Adeduntan, the Group Managing Director of First Bank in his response to the courtesy visit of the EXCO & management board of NBGN assured the team of the Bank's readiness to join the new management in its efforts to reposition the organization for effectiveness. He promised that, the Bank will become more active and supportive in the coming days towards NBGN programs and activities.



## DOSUMU APPOINTED AS NBGN'S EXECUTIVE SECRETARY/CEO

The Board of the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) has ratified the appointment of Mr. Dosumu Oluwole as the substantive Executive Secretary/CEO for the Group. Mr. Dosumu has been in the Acting capacity since 2013 at the exit of the last CEO. He joined NBGN in May, 2011 as the Administrative Manager.

Mr. Dosumu has over two decades working experience that cut across Administration, Hospitality and Membership Based Organizations/NGO in various supervisory and managerial roles. In this respect, Mr. Dosumu had worked successfully with large number of staff of different cadres, cultures and background. He is a graduate of Food Science and Technology from Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife and also holds Master of Science (M.Sc.) degree in Industrial Microbiology from University of Port Harcourt as well as MBA degree from University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria. He is a member of Nigeria Institute of Management (MNIM) Nigeria Institute of Food Science and Technology (MNIFST).



## A BRIEF ON A BOARD MEMBER

A member of the Board and a Principal Consultant to Lonadek Nigeria Limited, Dr. Ibilola Amao was recently selected as one of the 22 Young Women Entrepreneurs across the world as mentees for the Vital Voices 2017 Global Ambassador Program (GAP). Bank of America is partnering with Vital Voices on the initiatives. GAP connects women leaders (mentees) at a tipping

point in their professional business and leadership paths with established women executives (Global Ambassador or Mentors) for membership.

Vital Voices takes an innovative approach to mentoring in region around the world, offering in-person exchanges, business acumen and skills training, networking and personal development workshops. In this respect, Dr. Amao will be mentored by Michelle Moore, Head of Digital Banking, Bank of America, Charlotte, NC.

The Board and Management of NBGN as well as the secretariat congratulate Dr. Ibilola Amao on this well-deserved award. We are proud of her achievement and wish her more years of dedicated services to Nigeria, Africa and the world at large.

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## NBGN HELD ITS 3<sup>RD</sup> AGM: ELECTS CHIEF DR. NIKE AKANDE AS NEW CHAIRMAN



The NEPAD Business Group Nigeria held its 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Tuesday, 8th December, 2015 at the Diamond Suites, Eko Hotels & Suites; Victoria Island, Lagos. At the AGM, Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON, was elected the Chairman of the Board. She took over from Chief Chris Ezeh, MFR. Other elected officers are Chief Victor Oyolu, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman, Chief (Mrs.) Eniola Fadayomi, MFR, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairman.

In the same vein, all the Directors were re-elected. They included Mr. Bode Emmanuel (Chairman, Thorburn Investment Nigeria Ltd.), Mr. Goodie Ibru (Chairman, Ikeja Hotel Plc), HRH Erelu Abiola Dosumu (Chairman, Superpower Nigeria Ltd.), Chief Mrs. Stella Chinyelu Okoli, OON Chairman, Emzor Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd.), Mr. Nolan O'Neal (Chairman/ MD, Mobil Producing Nigeria Unlimited). Others Directors are Aliko Dangote, GCON, (Executive President, Dangote Group), Mr. Philip Oduoza (GMD/CEO, UBA Plc), Mr. Segun Agbaje (GMD/CEO, GTB Plc), Mr. Peter Amangbo (GMD/CEO, Zenith Bank Plc), Mr. Bisi Onasanya (GMD/CEO, First Bank Plc), Mallam Ibrahim Aliyu (Chairman, Urban Shelter Ltd.), Mr. Eluem Emeka Izeze (GMD, Guardian Newspapers Ltd.) Mr. Osagie Okunbor, CON (Chairman, Shell Companies in Nigeria & MD, SPDC), Mr. Rasheed Olaoluwa, OON (MD, Bank of Industry), Mr. Dharnesh Gordhon (MD/CEO, Nestle Nigeria Plc).

In her acceptance speech, Chief Dr. Nike Akande, promised to reposition the organization for efficiency with respect to actualization of mandates, value addition to members and their interests. She however solicited for the supports of all members to accomplish this task. She asserted that with the continued support of members, NBGN will achieve better its lofty objectives especially now that the present administration need the cooperation of the private sector to turn the nation's economic fortune around from obvious recession.

Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON, is a founding member and a Director, Board Member of the Group as well as a foundation member of the Nigerian Economic Summit Group (NESG) and Member of the African Business Roundtable (ABR). Among her numerous enviable achievements is the fact that, Chief Mrs. Akande is a Director, PZ Cussons, Foundation, Board Member, Bank Directors Association of Nigeria (BDAN), Chairman, Entrepreneurial Studies (AES) Excellence Club, the second Female President in the over one hundred and twenty years history of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI). Honorary Life Vice- President, National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), and President, Pan-African Organization for Women Recognition.

She was also at various times, a Director of the National Insurance Corporation of Nigeria (NICON) and Nigeria Industrial Development Bank (NIDB), now Bank of Industry (BOI). She was also a member of the Vision 2010 and 2020 of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and was an active member of the 2014 National Conference.

It is obvious that the organization will benefit immensely from her wealth of experience in the Organized Private Sector (OPS) and management of Membership Based Organizations (MBO).



**Chief Dr. Nike Akande**

Chief Dr. Nike Akande CON is a woman of many parts who has become a phenomenon and a key player in the nation's private sector. She is a two-time Minister of Industry and the 2<sup>nd</sup> female President of the Lagos Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) in its over 128 years of existence where she has propelled it to the forefront as the premier Chamber of commerce in the country. The Harvard trained accountant also has the honour of being the first female Chairman of the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN). She assumed the headship of NBGN on 8th December, 2015 at the organization's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Meeting.

The NBGN Chairman has made it clear that the main preoccupation of her tenure will be repositioning of NBGN for effectiveness in the discharge of benefits and values to members and the society at large, especially the business community.

In this interview with NBGN Media crew, she shared her vision and plans concerning the revitalization of NBGN to effectively play its role of mobilizing the organized private sector for the NEPAD's initiative for socio-economic growth.

## “NBGN WILL BE REPOSITIONED FOR EFFECTIVE DISCHARGE OF ITS MANDATE”

**Excerpts:**  
**Could you let us into the origin of NEPAD Business Group Nigeria?**

The New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) is a major Continental initiative aimed at the political and economic renewal of Africa. The key objectives of NEPAD are the promotion of sustainable growth and development, eradication of poverty, and ending the marginalization of Africa in this era of globalization. As an engine of growth and development in a market-driven economy, the private sector can make important contribution to the achievement of these objectives of NEPAD. The initiators of NEPAD recognized this and assigned the private sector to drive the initiative giving birth to NEPAD Business Group. The NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) was formed in 2004 in response to the need to galvanize the private sector to support and actively participate in the implementation of the programmes of NEPAD at both national and continental levels. In essence, NBGN is like a private arm of NEPAD and its main objectives are to be involved in activities and efforts that promote business and the organized private sector as a whole to create jobs, wealth and alleviate poverty for socio-economic advancement.

**It means NBGN has been in existence for over 12 years. How would you rate the organization with respect to success and achievement especially, its mandate and set objectives?**

Without sounding immodest, I strongly believed, NBGN has done remarkably well considering the short period of its existence and other factors it has to contend with. More importantly, NBGN is a new and novel concept in the anal of relationship between the public and private sectors. During the period, NBGN has made efforts to further the lofty objectives of the NEPAD initiative particularly in the private sector with respect to jobs and wealth creation.

The organization has made several interventions in different sectors of the economy since its inauguration in 2004. The interventions were basically promotional, sensitization with the overall objectives to further develop the target

sector in a specific area(s). Our interventions included the 1st and 2nd International Business fora, both in Abuja in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The 1st exposed the business opportunities in the Nigeria economy to the world for Direct Foreign Investments while the 2nd has the theme "SMEs as a Vehicle for Economic Transformation in Africa". The Public Private Partnership (PPP) Forum of 2009 looked at the implementations and challenges of PPP.

It is important to note that in the recent times, NBN is focusing more on the agricultural sector due to its huge potentials to create the needed jobs and wealth. In this respect, NBN has chosen cassava and rice as commodities of focus. You will agree with me that these two food crops are the most important and staples that cut across ethnic, religious and other socio-economic barriers.

Along this line, three editions of the Nigeria Rice Investment Forum have been staged in 2008, 2014 and 2016 respectively. The Nigeria Rice Investment Forum is all about conducive environment for the attainment of self-sufficiency and export in rice. In the same vein, the 1st NBN Cassava Investment Forum was held in 2013 and the impacts as well as the feedback have been tremendous.

NBN equally has an initiative that addresses Youth Unemployment and it is tagged NBN Graduates' Employability Improvement and Development Initiative (GEIDI). We believe unemployment among our teeming youths is a serious problem with dire socio-economic consequences.

**Can you throw more lights on the GEIDI of NBN?**

The NBN Graduates' Employability Improvement & Development Initiative (GEIDI) is another effort that furthers its lofty aims and objectives. GEIDI is an intervention from NBN to purposely partner with the government to reduce the scourge of unemployment and the associated negative vices particularly among the teeming young Nigeria graduates. NBN is worried by the high level of graduates' unemployment in the country. Year in year out thousands of graduates are being churned out of the nation's universities and polytechnics, all into the already oversaturated labour market.

It is essentially to equip the young Nigeria unemployed graduates with both vocational/technical and entrepreneurial skills to address the observed mismatch in graduate training in the country and those skills required in modern workplace.

The scheme has dual objectives of enhancing the employability of the trainees and as well to encourage self-reliability by becoming entrepreneurs. It is a 6 months training that comprises 4 months of vocational/technical skills acquisition and 2 months On-the-Job-Training (OJT) at relevant firms. The 2 months OJT affords participants opportunities of familiarization with modern technologies and practices at their chosen trades. The first edition ran between September, 2014 and March, 2015 with 50 beneficiaries selected across the country.

NBN partners on the 1st edition included the Nigeria Opportunities Industrialization Centres (NOIC), Small and Medium Development Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). NOIC provided the vocational/technical training while SMEDAN was responsible for entrepreneurial skill. Other partners are Honeywell Flour Mill Plc, John Holt Plc and Guardian Newspapers.

**The first edition of NBN GEIDI was concluded in March, 2015. Why has the organization not launched the second edition?**

We actually planned the 2nd edition for 2nd quarter of 2015. There were however some challenges that needed to be addressed. These challenges were encountered in the 1st edition and affect the full realization of the objectives of the initiative. The major challenge was the inability to facilitate grants or loans to participants to establish in their chosen trades. This particular challenge greatly rubbed on the program. We are also not unaware of some schemes that abandoned trainees after the programme. GEIDI was designed to be different from other training exercises. It was holistic as we believe training without equipping or supporting the beneficiaries with facilities to establish will leave them in worse state than before the training. We are however taking steps, especially adequate collaborations with relevant bodies, to address the observed challenges in the next edition that will hopefully kick off in the third quarter of 2017.

**With all these interventions and achievements, will you say all is well with the organization?**

Yes, we have done well. However, there is still a lot of ground to be covered and we will not rest on

The NEPAD CEO, in her own speech expressed sincere appreciation to the NBN Chairman and members for the privilege of paying the visit to NBN. She described the NBN Chairman, Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON, as a role model with a strong leadership style who has served the country well in different capacities. She equally appreciated the doggedness and passions Chief Dr. Akande always bring to her assignments. She stated the facts of creation of NEPAD as a vision and mission for socio-economic development of Africa and a policy framework to address the twin issues of under-development and marginalization of Africa in the competitive and globalizing world economic environment. NEPAD Nigeria has achieved a lot since its establishment in 2003 and she intends to consolidate upon these achievements. She later identified myriad of challenges confronting NEPAD Nigeria that are negatively affecting its impacts and visibility. According to her, the major constrain has always been inadequate funding and lack of capacity. The NEPAD CEO has however mapped out strategies to tackle the challenges. In this respect, the first task is to deal with the internal challenges by ensuring adequate staffing; building up the skills and capacity of staff and the deployment of appropriate tools and technology.

There is also the need to ensure better synergy with all relevant stakeholders and multilateral agencies in the public and private sectors as well as the development of partners and deepen the

partnerships that have been fostered. Therefore the visit to NBN is in furtherance of building the desired partnerships.

The NEPAD CEO used the opportunity to unfold a 4R document developed that will serve as a roadmap for the transformation of NEPAD Nigeria. The 4R stands for: **Reposition; Rebrand; Realign** and **Re-launch**. Equally, the NEPAD mandate has been translated into a work plan that would guide programme execution for 2017.

More importantly, the work plan will be made a document of engagements with the NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency (NPCA) in South Africa. The programmes of NEPAD Nigeria listed for support and collaboration of NBN included the following: International Electoral Peace Summit; NEPAD Trade Fair of Indigenous Products and Services; Chambers of Commerce Roundtable; National Peace Cup; and International Summit of First Ladies on Parenting.

At the end of the parley, the two organizations reaffirmed that NEPAD initiative is a veritable tool for achieving positive impact on the general well-being of the generality of our people and improvements in their quality of life. Furthermore, the two organizations resolved to work more closely in terms of effective collaborations and partnerships on programmes and projects. The next meeting in furtherance of the collaborative efforts will hold at NEPAD office, Abuja.



## “NEPAD NIGERIA CEO PAID A COURTESY VISIT TO NBGN IN LAGOS”



Hon. (Princess) Gloria Akobundu, the National Coordinator/CEO, NEPAD Nigeria paid a courtesy visit to the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) Secretariat, Victoria Island, Lagos on Friday 30 June, 2017. This was her first visit to NBGN since she was appointed last year. According to the NEPAD CEO, the visit was to share with NBGN members some of her vision in the repositioning of NEPAD Nigeria.

While welcoming the NEPAD CEO, the NBGN Chairman, Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON expressed the appreciation of the Group for the visit. She equally congratulated her on the appointment as the National Coordinator/CEO, NEPAD Nigeria, which she ascribed to the results of the CEO's exemplary character and leadership qualities. Speaking further, Chief Dr. Akande made a review of performance of NBGN with respect to activities and actualization of its mandate. According to her, NBGN, within the short period of its existence, has performed excellently in furthering the realization of the lofty aims and objectives of NEPAD. The group has been able to create necessary awareness about its programs and activities among Nigerians especially the Business Community and the Private Sector as a whole. It has been able to get Government support for businesses with respect to the enthroning of conducive business environment, enabling laws and policies.

Conferences, seminars, trainings and workshops have been organized in different sectors of our economy for socio-economic development, employment generation, wealth creation and poverty alleviation. The organization has equally drawn the support of Federal and State Governments through collaborations and partnerships to initiatives

that support the growth and development and promotion of businesses in the country. This has helped in no small way in the creation of conducive and enabling environment for businesses and the Private sector in the country

The NBGN Chairman equally mentioned that NBGN has lined up series of activities and interventions to further actualize its aims and objectives. These include; NBGN Graduates' Employability Improvement & Development Initiatives (GEIDI) which aims at equipping unemployed Nigerian graduates with vocational skill for employability and self-sustainability, the Nigeria Rice Investment Forum series; Capacity enhancement trainings for rural actors in the Nigeria Rice Value chain, training/workshop for SMEs in the commodities export sector, among several other initiatives.

The Chairman however believed that for NBGN to effectively discharge its mandate, it needs the support and collaboration of NEPAD Nigeria. Along this line, certain specific requests were presented to NEPAD Nigeria. These are: Carrying along of NBGN, as an active participant, in all NEPAD Nigeria programmes and activities both at the local and international levels; inclusion and active participation of NBGN members in the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM); facilitation of effective and active relationship between NBGN and NEPAD Planning and Coordinating Agency, South Africa as well as with other relevant arms and Agencies of government as may be required in our activities; facilitation of suitable buildings or land in Abuja and Lagos for NBGN as permanent offices. Rents and associated expenditures have always formed the major part of our budget since inception. It is therefore the intention of NBGN to have its own offices in Lagos and Abuja as this step will greatly reduce the organization operations cost.

our oars until the objectives of NEPAD are achieved for the socio-economic development of the African Continent. It is critical that NBGN remains effective in the discharge of its mandate and responsibilities to members, private sector and society at large. In this respect, NBGN clocked ten years in July, 2014 and we believed that was the best time to evaluate performance and review activities for efficiency and sustainability. The result revealed that the organization is at low ebb and not the one inaugurated in July, 2004.

The acceptance was high in 2004 and the dreams of founding members were great for the new organization to play a vital role pertaining mobilization of private sector for NEPAD's programmes and projects for socio-economic growth. At the moment, the organization experiences dwindling interests and participation from members and other stakeholders.

NBGN equally needs to be more active and engaging in the area of adding values and concrete benefits to members and their business concerns. This is the only way to sustain patronage and support of members.

**It means the organization is passing through low moment in terms of visibility and activities which you are definitely not comfortable with. This was a major concern you promised to address in your acceptance speech at the last AGM. How have you been going about this and what are your plans and strategies in this respect?**

I have been part of the organization right from inception as one of the foundation members. I am therefore aware of the challenges the organization is passing through and as well prepared to confront them. In this respect, upon assumption of leadership of the organization at the last AGM, I assured members of my determination and commitment to revive and reposition NBGN for effectiveness in the discharge of its mandates as it concerned value addition to members and their business concerns.

Concerning strategies, the most important step to me is consultations with members and stakeholders for ideas and support to reposition our dear organization. This has since started and courtesy visit has been paid to First Bank Limited, Nigeria. First Bank is one of the foundation members of NBGN and the organization has enjoyed continued support from First Bank. Another step taken is the reviewed of the relevant documents of NBGN with respect to mandate, vision & mission statements, activities

and programmes for effectiveness and efficiency. We equally compared our operations with similar organizations such as the NEPAD Business Foundation South Africa (NBF). A Committee was set up by the Board to do this. The reports and recommendations of the Committee have also been considered and adopted by the Board. All the recommended items are being put in place and in a short time, NBGN will be revitalized and reposition for effective discharge of its mandate for development as envisioned by the founding fathers.

Direct fallout from this is the resolution of NBGN to continue to improve and increase its interventions on different sectors of the economy. We will particularly be involved in activities that will directly impacts on the rural actors (farmers, processors, marketers and others) in the cassava and rice value chains. There is a training programme being conceived for these set of actors in selected States. The training aims at equipping the rural actors with modern technologies and best practices for improved yield and quality for improved income and standard of living. NBGN partners in this respect include Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Competitive Africa Rice Initiative (CARI) and selected State Agricultural Development Programs (ADP).

**What has been the response of members to the repositioning efforts?**

The response has been very favorable and encouraging. This actually gladdens my heart and encourages me the more. All the members agreed that the fortunes of the organization must be reversed and surpass the tempo at inauguration in 2004. **Ma, on a lighter note, how have you been able to cope with the rigours of providing effective leadership at LCCI and NBGN among several other responsibilities?**

I will give all the glory to the almighty God for the strength and the enablement. However, what has always work for me is my believe and philosophy that whatever worth doing is worth doing very well. I am somebody that knows the efficacy of hard work. I always put in my best to any assignment or cause I believe in. I will therefore not take any responsibility if not ready for it physically and emotionally. At the same time, I am a team player who works and carries other members along adequately. Therefore, members of my teams in all these organizations have been largely responsible for my successes and achievements. More importantly, the large and strong networks I have been able to build in the course of my engagements at both public and private sectors have been my strong asset. I maintain and keep my contacts and always fall back to them as the needs arise.

## NBGN GATHERED STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER FOR THE 3<sup>RD</sup> NIGERIA RICE INVESTMENT FORUM

NEPAD Business Group Nigeria (NBGN) held the third edition of the Nigeria Rice Investment Forum on 6-7, December, 2016 at the Ladi Kwali hall, Abuja Sheraton Hotel. Having staged, successfully the first edition of the forum between 24-25 November, 2008 and the second edition of the forum between 17-18 November, 2014 also in Abuja. The outcomes of the earlier editions of the forum have largely been part of the ongoing success and transformation in the sector. The forum theme and sub-theme were: **“2018 Self-Sufficiency in Rice Production: Opportunities, Challenges and the Road Ahead”, Stimulating Production with the right Policies, Practices and Technologies”** respectively.

While welcoming the delegates in an address presented on behalf of Chief Dr. Nike Akande, CON- Chairman of the NEPAD Business Group Nigeria by Mallam Ibrahim Aliyu, Chairman-Urban Shelter Ltd and a Director and founding member of NBGN, she emphasize that the third edition of the Rice Investment Forum was geared to build on the success of the previous editions especially on practical steps to achieve self sufficiency target in 2018 on rice production. The forum also set out to orientate the delegates and stakeholders on the crucial need for diversification of the economy, which enhanced rice production, could fill.

The forum which was well attended had the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), Chief Audu Ogbeh, CON whose keynote address on the theme of the forum was delivered by Mr. Obinna G. Opara, a Director in the Ministry. The Honorable Minister expressed delight that NEPAD Business Group Nigeria had brought key actors together to chart a way forward for rice production which he described as a critically important staple.

The opening session of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nigeria Rice Investment Forum also featured Goodwill Messages from the National Coordinator/CEO, NEPAD Nigeria, representatives of ECOWAS Commission, RIFAN President, and Chief (Mrs.) Eniola Fadayomi, MFR, NBGN Vice Chairman and Chairman, NBGN Agric Sector Group. Other dignitaries at the event included Hon.(Princess) Gloria Akobundu, National Coordinator/CEO, NEPAD, Nigeria, Chief (Mrs.) Eniola Fadayomi, MFR, NBGN Vice Chairman, Mr. Ernest Aube, representative of ECOWAS Commission, Mr. Philip Ikeazor, GMD, Keystone Bank Ltd., Mr. Emmanuel Ijewere, Chairman, Best Foods Global (Nigeria) Ltd., Dr. Manzo D. Maigari, Kaduna State Commissioner for Agriculture and Forestry, Mr. Iliyasu Awodi, representative of the President, Rice Farmers Association of Nigeria (RIFAN), Alhaji Aminu Goroyo, Mr. Sanni G. B. Okanlawon, Special Adviser to Lagos State Governor on Food Security, and Dr. Rotimi Fashola, GM Project, Elephant Group Plc.

At the forum, twenty three (23) organizations exhibited different varieties of Made in Nigeria rice and rice products to further prove the competitiveness of our own brands in addition to the exhibition of locally fabricated processing equipment in rice value chain.

The forum brought together a total of 365 delegates which included relevant stakeholders, development partners, relevant governments agencies and department to achieve its objectives of self sufficiency in 2018 while considering the opportunities, challenges and the right policies, practices and technologies that will stimulate rice production.

NBGN in recent times focused more on agriculture since it has identified the sector as one with potential to create jobs and wealth for economic development. The country is blessed

with good and favourable climate that require little or no improvement for maximum agricultural yields.

Rice is the most important food commodity and staple food of over half the world's population. Since the mid-1970s, rice consumption in Nigeria has risen tremendously, at about 10% per annum due to changing consumer preferences. Nigeria rice production, currently estimated at about three million tonnes of grains per year, does not meet the annual domestic demand of about five million tonnes. The supply gap is being met through rice imports which represent over 25% of all agricultural imports and more than 40% of domestic consumption. The imports are procured on the world market with Nigeria spending annually over US\$300 million on rice alone.

However, rice is cultivated in virtually all the agro-ecological zones in Nigeria, from the mangrove

and swampy ecologies of the River Niger Delta in the coastal areas to the dry zones of the Sahel in the North. Despite this, the area cultivated to rice still, appears small. In 2000, out of 25million hectares of land cultivated to various crops, only about 6.37% was cultivated for rice. Major Rice producing zones in Nigeria include: Kano, Niger, Benue, Yobe, Kaduna, Anambra, Ebonyi, Kwara, Edo, Taraba and Kebbi States.

On the positive note, Nigeria's rice has witnessed some remarkable developments in the last couple of years. Much still need to be done as domestic rice production has not increased sufficiently to meet the increased demand. Several opportunities exist for investors in the three components of Rice Industry: Production, Processing and Marketing to create wealth, employment and overall economic development of the country for which the 3<sup>rd</sup> Nigeria Rice Investment Forum set out to achieve.

