

COMMUNIQUE

In continuation of its Public Enlightenment Programme, a Sugar Sensitization Workshop for Stakeholders in the Southern Region of the country was organized by National Sugar Development Council, Abuja. The one day event was held on **Thursday 21st September, 2017 at Diamond Hall, Transcorp Hotels, No. 10 Murtala Muhammed Highway, Big Qua Town, Calabar, Cross River State.** The Theme of the workshop was “**Keeping the Implementation of NSMP on Track for Sugar Self-Sufficiency and Sub-Theme was Charting a New Course for BIP Implementation- the Perspective of the Players**”. The Workshop commenced at 10.45am with the National Anthem.

2. The Chairman of the Workshop was **Distinguished Senator (Dr.) Sam Egwu** Chairman, Senate Committee on Industry, who was represented by **Distinguished Senator Barnabas Gemade**, Member, Senate Committee on Industry, National Assembly Complex, Abuja, while the Special Guest of Honour was **Honourable Peter Akan Egba**, Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Commerce and Industry Calabar, Cross River State. The Keynote Address titled, “**Highlight of the Mid Term Review Workshop on the Implementation of the Nigerian Sugar Master Plan (NSMP)- Progress in the First Half(2013-2017) and Focus in the Second Half (2018-2023)**” was delivered by **Dr. Latif D. Busari**, Executive Secretary, National Sugar Development Council, Abuja while **Mr. Kolawole Hezekiah**, Director (Policy, Planning, Research & Statistics), National Sugar Development Council (NSDC) gave the welcome address.

3. Goodwill Messages were delivered by the following Dignitaries:

i. Honorable Commissioner, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources represented by **Gabirel Ofonu**, Director, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources Calabar, Cross River State;

ii. **Olushola Adepoju**, Chairman, Oyo State Sugarcane Processors Limited, Iseyin, Oyo State;

iii. **Toyin Bankole**, Managing Director/Chief Executive Officer, Zenith Agro-Ethanol Nigeria Limited Abuja;

iv. **Kenneth A. Ittah**, Chairman, National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture, Cross River State Chapter;

4. Participants at the Workshop were drawn from both the Private and Public Sectors in the Southern Region of the Country, notably in attendance were National Assembly Members, Academia, Sugarcane Farmers/Out-growers, Sugar Refinery Operators, Technocrats, Sugar Technologists, Sugar Marketers etc. Sugar Road Map Implementation Committee (SURMIC) Members, Representatives of Federal Government Parastatals etc.

5. Three (3) Papers were presented at the sensitization workshop as follows:

i. **Charting a New Course For BIP Implementation- The Perspective Of The Players** by:

- a. The Managing Director, BUA Sugar Refinery Lagos; **Ibrahim A. Yaro**;
 - b. The Group Managing Director, Dangote Sugar Refinery Lagos; **Engr. Sule Abdullahi**;
 - c. The General Manager, Sunti Golden Sugar Estate Limited; **Anlo du Pisani**
- ii. Sugarcane Farmers/Out-growers** by **Dr. Silas Agbana**, General Manager, Agric. Confluence Sugar Company, Ibaji, Kogi State;
 - iii. Sugarcane Seedlings Supply- the Role of Bio-Technology** by **Dr. Shola Odusanya**, Scientific Consultant, Bio Crops Biotech Company, Ltd, Abuja.

6. RESOLUTIONS

After a lively deliberation on the various papers presented by the resource persons; the following resolutions were reached:

- i. Stakeholders commended NSDC for organizing the Regional Sensitization Sugar Forum to sensitize the general public on the challenges and opportunities that abound in local sugar production and expressed the need for the establishment of more sugarcane to sugar industries to diversify the economy of the country as well as attain the deliverables specified in the NSMP.
- ii. Stakeholders applauded the Council for embarking on Regional Sugar Sensitization workshops; noting that the deliberate friendly policies including the provision of a level playing ground among investors, quarterly monitoring of on-going projects, and reviewing of progress reports as well as pushing for higher restrictions on importation of refined sugar would indeed yield some positive results which would eventually take the sugar sector to a greater height.
- iii. Stakeholders noted that the summary of BIP Performance Score Card (2013 – 2016) with DSR scoring 45.8%, BUA with 17% and GSR scoring 58% and average of 40.3% was not encouraging and they therefore, expressed the hope that all the emerging challenges that militated against smooth operations of BIP activities such as community restiveness, land acquisition and unresolved land issues, unwholesome demands by some state governments, issues of perennial flooding etc. would be addressed so that the deliverables specified in the NSMP for the second phase would be achieved.
- iv. Participants noted also that the attainment of the targets/deliverables of the NSMP in the second phase would depend on all stakeholders fulfilling their assigned roles in the implementation of the Plan. They advocated for strict compliance by all stakeholders.
- v. Participants noted that for BIP implementation to be successfully carried out by investors there would be the need for host communities to cease hostilities and provide a conducive environment to operators in the interest of the benefit of their communities, state and indeed the prosperity of our dear country.

vi. For Out-grower Scheme to be effectively managed in the second phase, participants advocated that resolving land disputes and early release of land to sugar companies and prompt payment of compensation by governments as well as establishment of independent Out-growers Department or Section in sugarcane estates that can handle all issues relating to out-grower sugarcane cultivation were stressed by participants.

vii. Participants noted that the implementation of Zero percent (0%) duty on machinery as a fiscal incentive provided for in the NSMP was not being faithfully implemented as often times the Nigerian Customs Service are unwilling to cooperate with investors and expressed the need for NSDC to intensify efforts to promote synergy between governmental agencies using the instrumentality of the Sugar Road Map Implementation Committee (SURMIC) so that the objective/implementation of the NSMP would not be stalled.

viii. Representative of the Cross River State Government, Honourable **Peter Akan Egba** assured Stakeholders of speedy partnership with NSDC in establishment of sugarcane plantation across seven locations in the state in order to ensure that farmers also reap the benefits from the available incentives as contained in the NSMP. They also urged the three major investors in the sector to extend their investments to Cross River State so as to encourage farmers key into Sugarcane production;

ix. Stakeholders expressed the need for private sector operators involved in irrigation and drainage projects for sugarcane production to involve Federal Ministry of Water Resources (FMWR) to enable the Ministry offer advice and inputs on resolving emerging challenges. Furthermore, investors could also access policy documents including publication by Nigerian Hydrological Services Agency; National Water Resources Control Master Plan, National Water Resources Policy and National Irrigation and Drainage Policy and Control, from the Department of PPRS (FMWR) to aid projects planning and execution;

x. Participants advocated for support to Bio-crops Biotech Company, Ltd, Abuja in the area of production of sugarcane invitro/plantlets and other seeds and seedlings so that availability of clean and pure seedling to stakeholders would be sustained;

xi. Stakeholders noted with dismay that currently no university in Nigeria has the requisite facility on sugarcane research and development. They therefore advocated for more collaboration between NSDC and sugarcane research institutes as well as other educational institutions to facilitate Research and Development(R&D) on the crop;

xii. Stakeholders advocated the need for Sugar Estates to support the training of local technical manpower and also encourage local research and development of sugar technology in Nigeria.

National Sugar Development Council (NSDC), Abuja

21st September, 2017

