

COMMUNIQUE

The National Sugar Development Council, Abuja in continuation with its Public Enlightenment Programme organized a Sugar Sensitization Workshop for Stakeholders in the Southern Region of the Country. The Workshop took place on Thursday, 6th December 2018 at Choice Gate Hotels and Suites, No.11, Nneka Street, off 1st Ugbor Road before Ugbor Police Station, GRA, Benin-City, Edo State. The theme of the one day event was ***“The Emerging Challenges in the Implementation of the NSMP Towards the Realization of National Self-Sufficiency in Sugar”***.

2. The Chairman of the occasion was Mr. Alexis Aligbe, Managing Director, Molindex Nigeria Limited who was represented by Comrade B.S. Kadiri, Permanent Secretary, Edo State Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Benin-City while the Special Guest of Honour was His Excellency the Executive Governor of Edo State, Godwin O. Obaseki who also declared the workshop open. The keynote Address titled: “Overview and Prospects for the second half of the NSMP 2018 – 2023: was delivered by the Executive Secretary Dr. Latif Busari while the welcome address was presented by Mr. Kolawole Hezekiah, Director Policy Planning Research and Statistics (PPRS).

3. Goodwill messages were delivered by:

- i. Barr. Emmanuel Usuh, Honourable Commissioner, Ministry of Wealth Creation, Employment and Cooperatives, Benin-City, Edo State.
- ii. Comrade B.S. Kadiri, Permanent Secretary Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Benin City, Edo State.

4. Participants at the Sugar Sensitization Workshop were drawn from both private and public sectors in the southern region of the country. In attendance were, Sugar Investors, Sugarcane Farmers, Academia, Sugar Out-growers, Technocrat etc.

5. Papers presented at the workshop were as follows:

- i. Creating Harmonious Relationship between Host Rural Communities and Sugar Estates for Increased Sugar Production-by Professor M.M. Akanbi Faculty of Law, University of Ilorin, Kwara State;
- ii. The Challenges and Prospects of Flood and Irrigation Management by Sugar Estate/Investors by Engineer Abdulwaheed Onigbanjo, Senior Consultant, Enplan Group Limited;

- iii. Large Scale Adoption of Improved Sugarcane Seedling by Sugar Estates/Investor for yield Increase per Hectare Bio-Technology Perspective by Dr. Sola Odusanya; Biocrops Biotech Company Limited.

6. After lively deliberations on the various papers presented by the Resource Persons, the following Resolutions were adopted:

- i. Stakeholders congratulated and commended NSDC for organizing the Sugar Sensitization Workshop in Benin-City, Edo State and for bringing all Stakeholders in the Southern Region together to look from end-to-end the critical challenges in the Sugar Sector in order to proffer solutions towards the realization of National self sufficiency in sugar;
- ii. Participants called on Government and Investors to come to Edo State the Heart-beat of the Nation to invest in sugar production;
- iii. Participants identified major challenges militating against smooth implementation of the NSMP to include amongst others:
 - Land tenure and acquisition challenge;
 - Violence in terms of communal crisis and insurgency, community agitations, youth restiveness etc;
 - Natural Disasters – flooding of sugar Estates;
 - Lack of Funds/Shortage of funds for Investment;
 - Economic Recession – Inadequate Forex /Naira devaluation;
 - Shortage of Manpower in the Sugar Industry;
- iv. Participants also identified Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a means of establishing a harmonious relationship between host community and sugar estates. They enjoined all Stakeholders to be engaged in capacity building to ensure that the CSR obligations are carried out regularly to achieve the overall objective of harmonious relationship;
- v. Participants also advocated for establishment of some Infrastructural facilities by Government as an entry strategy in order to bring confidence to the host community;
- vi. Stakeholders identified some annual measures to be taken to cope with and mitigate against the effects of sugar estates flooding to include; observation of previous and present flood heights and mapping of areas for future scenarios, statistical hydrological and hydraulic model analysis, etc.
- vii. Stakeholders also advocated for best practice irrigation management that would supply sufficient water for crop growth while maximizing the amount of excess water runoff. They therefore, called for drip and center pivot irrigation system as the best management technique for modern irrigation systems.

- viii. Stakeholders further noted, that the opportunities available to states like Edo State in the Nigeria Sugar Master Plan (NSMP) include the adoption of Biotechnology to produce clean seedlings and other biotechnology products such as bio-fertilizers, bio-pesticides etc by investing in micro and mini sugar production estates that could be funded by State Government at a relatively low costs to yield employment relevant products and services by engaging women who usually are not engaged in production activities.
- ix. Participants noted that most of the problems with the community can be solved when Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) studies is carried out at project inception. They further noted that through the social Impact Assessment which is a component of EIA, effective discussion and social dialogue will be facilitated between the company and the host community.
- x. Stakeholders also commended the collaboration between NSDC, Sugar Companies and the Nigeria Industrial Policy and Competiveness Advisory Council (NIPCAC) for the establishment of the Nigeria Sugar Institute that would provide the much needed technical skills and on-the-job training to Sugar Industry.

National Sugar Development Council, Abuja.

6th December, 2018