

**BRIEF ON THE ACTIVITIES OF YOBE STATE MINISTRY  
OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND TOURISM SUBMITTED  
TO THE VISITING PEER REVIEW TEAM FROM NIGERIA  
GOVERNOR'S FORUM SECRETARIAT, MONDAY, 21<sup>ST</sup>  
JUNE, 2010.**

**1. INTRODUCTION.**

This Ministry is created out of the Ministry of Finance in February, 1996, the main objectives of the Ministry is to exploit and harness all industrial, commercial trade and tourism potentials of the state with a view to improving the economic sector of the state as well as improving the living standard of the people.

Presently, the Ministry has the following Directorates namely:-

- a) Directorate of Industries;
- b) Directorate of Commerce;
- c) Directorate of Tourism;
- d) Directorate of Planning;
- e) Directorate of Finance and Supplies; and
- f) Directorate of Personnel

In addition to the state hotels board, the Ministry supervises the following boards and parastatals;-

- a) Yobe Investment Company;
- b) Yobe Flour and Feed Mills Ltd Potiskum;
- c) Nguru Oil Mills Ltd;
- d) Yobe Fertilizer Company Gujba;
- e) Small Scale Industries Credit Scheme;
- f) Polythene Bags and Woven Sacks Company;
- g) Dofarga Spring Water Company;

- h) Soda Ash Plant, Yusufari; and
- i) Sahel Aluminum Roofing Sheet Company Potiskum.

## **2. INVESTMENT POTENTIALS OF YOBE STATE**

Yobe state has two district vegetation belts, namely the sahel and savannah in the north and south respectively. The southern part of the state especially Gujba and Fika Local Governments are considered to have mild climatic conditions. The months of March and April are the hottest month of the year. Temperature ranges from 30oc – 40oc while annual rainfall range 500 millimeter to 1,000 millimeter. Rainy season start from June and lasts up to September in the north and May – October in the south. The period from November – February is generally dry and is characterized by hammatan. Yobe State, most recently re-coined "The Pride of the Sahel" is endowed with both agricultural and solid minerals so much that many are yet to be identified and utilized.

However, over the years these resources have been consumed traditionally for domestic purpose neglecting its industrial usage which industries in this country badly need and support the establishment of viable commercial ventures. The state is the largest producer of Gum-Arabic, often referred to as "Gold of the Desert" and also known for its livestock markets one of which located at Potiskum is the largest in west Africa. Other agro-based raw materials produce in the state in commercial quality includes:- Bennisseed, Maize, Groundnut, Millét, sorghum, wheat, rice, tomatoes, cotton, guna-seed, red-pepper, cassava, and cowpea (Beans).

In the same vain, the state is blessed with abundant deposits of solid mineral resources that can support the establishment of viable



industrial ventures in the state. The University of Maiduguri consultancy services unit confirmed the availability of some selected solid minerals in state that can support the establishment of some industrial ventures. Among these resources include potash and Gypsum. Generally, mineral deposits that are a bound in commercial quality in Yobe State are found in the northern and southern parts of the state. Thus, Gypsum is available in the southern parts of the state in Fika, Fune and Gulani local government areas while potash (trona) occurs extensively in northern parts of the state in Yusufari, Yunusari, Bade, Nguru and Machina local government areas.

### **POTASH**

Potash (Kanwa) as the name implies is the basic raw materials for the production of soda ash. Textually, potash is broadly classified into two, the compact dense potash variety and the loose powder type. The compact dense variety varies in colour from light grey to white, where-as the loose powder type is usually darkish. The **Unimaid** consult has reported a proven reserve of 88.3 million tons per annum in the state. Soda ash is known to be an ingredient for soap/detergent production, water treatment, pharmaceuticals and fertilizer etc.

### **Gypsum**

Gypsum is an ingredient in the manufactures of cement, plaster of paris (POP) (the pop is widely used in hospitals, dentals and orthopedics), building industry, chalk production for educational institutions, fertilizer etc. It is also cheaply use for installation etc. The raw materials is found in large deposits in Fika, Fune, Gulani and Gujba local government areas of the state. The Unimaid consult

reported that about 247 million tons and 141.4 million ton deposits of limestone and gypsum are available in Yobe State.

Therefore, investment opportunities in the state to say the least is tremendous for interested investors willing to establish industries such as cement, plaster of paris, chalks, soap/detergent and pharmaceuticals industries.

**Incentives provided to potential investors includes:-**

- i. Prepared land equipped with basic infrastructures;
- ii. Provision of free feasibility studies to potentials investors willing to go into partnership with the state
- iii. Assist potential investors in liaising with local governments and federal government agents where there are difficulties and
- iv. Provision of adequate security of investment.

**MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF THE MINISTRY FROM 2008 – 2010**

Basically, the main function of the Ministry among others is to provide a conducive environment i.e provision of infrastructures and other essential support services where commercial and industrial activities in the state can thrive. To this end, interested investors both local and foreign can be able to take advantage of all opportunities that avail in the state. Nevertheless because of the low investment culture of our people, the state is left with no other option at the moment than to set the phase, by venturing into the establishment of some companies. This, the state did not intend to retain them a day longer than necessary, but to privatize them (Companies).



Among those companies established are:-

**(i) The Sahel Aluminum Company Ltd:-**

As a result of infrastructural decay inherited by the administration. E.g dilapidated schools, hospital, houses and offices just to mentioned but a few. It become a matter of necessity for government to embark on massive construction programme cutting across all sectors. Hence, in order to ensure that the right quality and quantity of Aluminum which is very critical in all its projects, a company to produce the product was established at Potiskum. At present the company is being repositioned and adequate raw materials have been procured to ensure its sustain ability.

**(ii) Dofarga Spring Water Ltd:**

This is a natural spring water bottling company, located some 78km away from the state capital Damaturu. The company is so positioned to provided scientifically treated water, clean and hygiene for drinking in house holds, hospitals, schools and in all public functions. The company is being provided with modern production facilities in order to enable it serve its customers effectively and efficiently. The products of the company is doing very well in the market.

**(iii) Yobe Fertilizer Blending Plant:**

Yobe state is typically an agrarian state with over 80% of its population mainly engaged in farming related activities. Recognizing this challenge the state government established a fertilizer company at Gujba with a view to providing the farming populace with the required quantity and quality of fertilizer at an affordable price. To this end, the state has procured 40,000MT of raw materials at the

cost of **N3.8billion** to ensure sustainable production of the commodity to the state farmers and even beyond.

**(iv) Hydraform Block Industry:-**

The massive construction embarked upon by the administration called for immediate need for an un interrupted supply of qualitative building blocks at an affordable price if the state's rehabilitation programme is to succeed. Realizing these the state government procured 30 pieces each, of both mixer and block moulding machines at the total cost of **N380,000,000.00**. The machines have been a successful story in South Africa during its massive housing programme when it first got its independence. In fact, it has been of tremendous help to us also. The products from this machines are environment friendly, and very cheap, as it uses small amount of cement, mixed with ordinary soil obtain every where as against the scarce and expensive fine sand used by the conventional block industry. It has proved to be a money spinner and therefore envisage to general revenue to the state, create huge employment opportunity to our teaming youth and more than any thing else provide security i.e bullet proof.

At present the state is working towards putting in place an organization that will ensure effective and efficient management of the facility so that interested citizens may have access to its products and services.

**(v) Yobe Investment House:**

This is a project currently being constructed by the state government at the federal capital territory located near the Federal Ministry of Finance, Abuja. The project is intended to boost the state



government's revenue base by letting it out to interested persons. The project cost about **N1.4billion** and is expected to be completed by December, 2010.

**(vi) State Hotels Board**

The board was inherited from Borno State when Yobe state was established in 1991. The board is a parastatal under the supervision of the Ministry through the department of tourism. The hotel was initially conceived to be rest houses for mostly government officials as was the case during colonial era. However, with the pace of development the hotels witnessed various face lift upto the time the state was created.

From inception of the state in 1991 the hotels was last renovated in 1998. Consequently, the need to provide a befitting two (2) star hotel for the ever increasing tourists and visitors to the state informed the decision by this administration to completely renovate the state hotels which has a total 56 rooms, doubles and singles. The renovation work was awarded to Lake Chad Merchant Nigeria Limited in 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2009 at a total cost of **N126,413,641.50**. The renovation has provided for the complete renovation of the hotel, drilling of a new bore-hole, provision of 350KVA (Pekins) stand-by generator set, landscaping, expansion of banquet hall and restaurant. All these had placed the hotel at standard position comparable to hotels of its own status as per the National Tourism board standard.

The project is at over 90% completion. It is expected that completion and complete furnishing of the hotel will be effected before the end of July, 2010.

No doubt, the completion of the renovation work will attract more visitors and tourists and boost the internally generated revenue base in the state.

The state intends to commence the renovation work of the branches of the state hotels located at Nguru, Gashua, Geidan and Potiskum and in the next of fiscal year.

#### **(vii) Tourism**

Furtherance, to the desire of the state government to diversify its source of revenue, with a view to reducing its over dependence on the statutory allocation from the Federation accounts. The state government is poised towards the development of the tourism industry. At present, work on the 3-star hotel, located at the state capital Damaturu is about 80% completion. This is intended to tackle the problem of accommodation which has been identified as a catalyst in attracting investors as well as tourists to the state.

Culturally, our people are well known for durbar and culture, and durbar is one of the prominent features of Yobe's cultural heritage. Other prominent features of the state's cultural heritage includes:-

- (i) Bade Fishing and cultural festival;
- (ii) The Dagona Birds Sanctuary, where migratory birds from Europe come and nest;
- (iii) The Tulo-tulo sand dunes and Oasis;
- (iv) The Old Ngazargamo city;
- (v) The Nguru Wetlands which also attract migratory birds from Europe and America; and
- (vi) The Dufuna Canoe of about 8,000 years





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