

ZAMFARA STATE OF NIGERIA PEER REVIEW MISSION REPORT FOR THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS FORUM

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A. STATE PROFILE

Zamfara State was created on 1st October, 1996 by the late General Sani Abacha, Head of State and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The State got its name from "Zamfarawa; the traditional appellation by which the people of Anka, a town that had been the Headquarters of Zamfara Empire from ancient times.

Zamfara State is located at the North-West Region of Northern Nigeria. It covers a landscape area of 38,418 sq km. It is bordered by Sokoto in the North, Kebbi and Niger States to the West, Katsina to the East and Kaduna to the South. Zamfara has a population of 3,602,356 people according to the 2005 estimates.

The average rainfall in the area fluctuates between 36 and 80 mm in a year. There are 4 main rivers, ka, Bunsuru, Gagare and Zamfara, with several lakes, dangnibi, Bakura, Saru, Hobni and Jena. There are also 3 major dams, Bakolori, Gusau and Kaura Namods.

The people of the State are mostly farmers, and agriculture is the backbone of the State's economy, hence the appellation – "Farming is our pride".

Dry season is from November – April and the rainy season from May to October. The harmattan period is from November – February. The vegetation is a hybrid of Southern Sudan and Northern Guinea Savanna. It has 14 LGAs.

B. AGRICULTURE

The major food crops grown are Rice, Millet, Guinea Corn, Maize, Beans and Wheat while major cash crops are Groundnut, Cotton and Tobacco. Zamfara is the second largest producer of Groundnut and Tobacco in Nigeria, and the third largest producers of Cotton in the country.

Achievements

1. 100 nos new tractors and complimentary implements were purchased for loan to farmers, with the refurbishment of old ones.
2. 70,000 mts of assorted grains were purchased from farmers as a grain reserve strategy.
3. Provision of logistics to frontline Extension Workers e.g. Mobility and Payment of Monthly Project Allowances.
4. Strengthening collaboration with SG 2000, IAR/ABU and WARDA for inputs supply, technology transfer and supervision.
5. Introduction of Double Rice under the Bakolori Irrigation Project.

6. Establishment of Demonstration plots on NERICA Rice varieties at Talata Nafara, Bakura and Maradun.
7. Provision and distribution of 279,810 kg of improved seeds free of charge to about 30,000 target farmers.
8. Provision and distribution of 612,194 units of Agro-chemicals such as herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and seed-dressing chemicals to target farmers with 90,000 ha farms.
9. Provision and distribution of 29,182.8 metric tones of Assorted Fertilizers to target farmers.
10. Distributed 15 units each of Groundnut Extractors and Rice Per-boilers to ZACAREP Rice Farmers Group.
11. Trained 1,200 Extension Personnel on crop based technologies, and trained women groups on improved rice processing methods.
12. Distributed 1,400 water pumps to Dry Season Small Scale Farmers on loan basis.
13. Registered 40,000 target farmers, registered 130,000 ha farm lands, distributed 791,675 bags of fertilizers, distributed 320,064 units of chemicals and 319,140 kg of improved seeds.

C. WATER RESOURCES

Though with several rivers and dams, Bakolori is the largest in the country, provision of portable water supply is greatly inadequate in Zamfara State.

The State proposed 30 additional dams and 3 (one in each Senatorial Zone) is under construction. The Saba Dam is handled by China Zhong hoa Nigeria Limited at a cost of ₦273,892,071.00 and was completed in 2008. It has an impounding capacity of 3.8 million cubic meters and 750 ha length embankment. The height is 12m, and the width of the embankment is 6m, with a spillway width of 30m.

Achievements

1. Water levels within the vicinity of the dam increased tremendously due to recharge from the dams.
2. Fishing is boosted thereby improving the socio-economic and nutritional statuses of the people.
3. Irrigation activities were further boosted.
4. About 800 boreholes had been drilled in the State.

5. Provision of 10 eater tanks to ease water situation in Gusau.
6. Construction of 2 new 1 million gallon tanks at North of Sokoto bye pass and along Zaria Road, all in Gusau.

D. CHALLENGES

1. Power
2. Low Capital
3. Low manpower base
4. Very high illiteracy rate
5. Birds especially at the Bakolori dam site

E. BENCHMARKS

1. The Bakolori Dam Irrigation Project is the largest in the country. Double rice planting is done in a year, and yield has increased by 300%.
2. The Youth Agro-business Scheme, which is aimed at training and resettling 1000 youths annual in the various areas of agricultural production.
3. The repayment of loans through kind by farmers.
4. Development of ZACAREP.

F. RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

1. The increased tonnage from the farmers must be mopped through a well articulated marketing channel. The Commodity Boards of yester years can be re-introduced.
2. Development of Agro-processing Plants to reduce post-harvest looses and increased farmers income.
3. The recent "Lead" poisoning through obnoxious mining activities must be tackled seriously, already several hectarages of farmlands had been lost, and several active farmers had been demobilized either through death, or sickness associated from the local poisoning. A total 166 youths died in the affected areas of Bikkuyu.

G. CONCLUSION

Farming is really the pride of Zamfara, with more funding and training of high level manpower, Zamfara is likely to become the food basket of the North-West.