



NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

THE SECRETARIAT, ABUJA.

**GOODWILL MESSAGE FROM THE NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM
DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI ALIYU AKWE DOMA, OON,
(MADAUCHIN DOMA), EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF NASARAWA STATE
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 2009 NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL SHOW,
YELWA, KARU LOCAL GOVERNMENT, NASARAWA STATE ON
MONDAY, 12TH OCTOBER, 2009**

**THEME: GLOBAL FOOD CRISIS: INCENTIVES FOR
AGRICULTURAL GROWTH IN NIGERIA**

PROTOCOLS

It gives me great pleasure to welcome all of you to this epoch-making event, the 2009 edition of the National Agricultural Show. I particularly wish to welcome the President & Commander -in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, GCFR who took time out of his very busy schedule to grace this occasion. Welcome, Mr. President.

Prior to the discovery of oil in the country in the '50s, Agriculture was the mainstay of the Nigerian Economy. We remember with nostalgia the Groundnut pyramids of the North, the Cocoa of the West and the Palm oil of the East. Then came oil, its attendant boom and the abandonment of our farms for the lure of oil. Our youths thronged the cities in search of white-collar jobs. Today, we are the worse for it and we are paying the price of that very costly choice that we made.

In spite of this neglect, Agriculture continues to play a prominent role in the socio-economic development of the country. The sector provides employment to about 70% of the active labour force, contributes over 40% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and accounts for about 6% of the nation's foreign exchange earnings, second only to crude oil.



At the Governors' Forum, we are cognisant of this deficiency in orientation and policy, hence the myriad of 'Back to Farm', 'School to Land' and Commercial Agricultural Programmes initiated in the various States. From Adamawa to Nasarawa, from Benue to Kwara and from Abia to Cross River States, every one is heeding this clarion call, for a nation that abandons its land bids farewell to prosperity and posterity. We at the Nigeria Governors' Forum will neither bid farewell to prosperity nor posterity but will strive to nurture these values, because we believe that Agriculture should be second to no other sector and should be restored to its pride of place.

Agriculture is one of the pivots of Mr. President's 7-Point Agenda and institutional frameworks and incentives have been introduced to boost and enhance agriculture. A case in point is the N200 billion Agricultural Grant set aside under the Federal Government Commercial Agricultural Credit Scheme (CACS) to assist Agricultural Cooperatives, commercial and individual farmers. The Forum is working out a scheme that would ensure that the States benefit from the Grant. Also, the N10 billion Rice Development Intervention Fund of the Federal Government is commendable. The objective is to improve local rice production and standard for export and the States are keying into the Scheme. Worthy of mention also is the Federal Government's Micro-Finance Initiative which would go a long way in providing finance to farmers.

The Forum is not unmindful of the challenges confronting the Sector including infrastructural challenges, challenges of funding, Land acquisition (though the Federal Government is currently working on Land Reforms), Markets to facilitate the distribution of the agricultural produce (not losing sight of the dynamics of the Market). The States agree that the Agricultural Research and Development Agencies be properly funded and revitalised so they can develop Agricultural belts and also define climatic features for each State of the Federation. The River Basin Authorities should also be resuscitated and re-engineered for massive irrigation.



The Forum is suggesting that to get out of the food crisis and become a net provider of food in the medium term, the Federal Government should set aside at least 10, 000 hectares of land per Senatorial District for massive cultivation. The State Governments are also adopting a wholistic approach to the Agricultural Policy and looking at the entire value chain of **PRODUCTION, PROCESSING, MARKETING, RESEARCH AND INFORMATION DISEMINATION**. A guaranteed minimum price regime for farmers' produce should be put in place to ensure remunerative price to farmers, alleviate rural poverty and promote income re-distribution. Also, the Federal Government's desire to increase storage capacity under the strategic reserve from 300,000 metric tonnes to 1.5 million metric tonnes is noteworthy. To complement this effort, the States are putting in place **Community warehousing** to reduce post -harvest losses. The States have resolved that 10% of their budgets shall be allocated to Agriculture and they have similarly identified the need to put in place enabling laws to promote agriculture at all levels.

Mr. President, distinguished guests and fellow farmers, my colleagues in the Nigeria Governors' Forum join me in welcoming you to the show and wish you fruitful participation at this year's event.

Thank you and may Allah continue to shower His blessings on us all.

LONG LIVE NASARAWA STATE.
LONG LIVE THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA.

HIS EXCELLENCY, ALHAJI (DR) ALIYU AKWE DOMA, OON,
THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF NASARAWA STATE.



NIGERIA GOVERNORS' FORUM

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19th October, 2009.

His Excellency,
 The Executive Governor of Nasarawa State,
 Government House
 Lafia.
 Your Excellency,

Reminder for Forum's Outstanding Dues

Please, refer to our previous correspondences on the above subject matter. Please, find below a summary of the breakdown of your State's outstanding commitments to-date:

S/N	YEAR	OBLIGATION	AMOUNT PAYABLE
1	2009	ANNUAL DUES	N2,000,000
2		PERMANENT SECRETARIAT PROJECT	N70,000,000
		TOTAL	N72,000,000

We would appreciate Your Excellency's making the cheque for the amount stated above available at the next Forum's meeting scheduled for Sunday, 8th November, 2009, at the Bayelsa State Government House, Yenagoa.

Please accept assurances of our highest regard.

(Signature)
 A.B. Okauru, Esq
 Director General

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