**REPORT OF THE 19TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIAN ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMISTS (NAAE) HELD AT THE FEDERAL COLLEGE OF FORESTRY MECHANISATION, AFAKA-KADUNA, KADUNA STATE, NIGERIA.**

1. **INTRODUCTION:**

The Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economists held her 19th Annual Conference from Monday, 15th October, 2018 to Thursday, 18th October, 2018, at the Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Afaka-Kaduna, Kaduna State. The theme of the conference was ***“Diversification of the Nigerian Economy: Where lies Agriculture?”***. The Opening Ceremony of the conference, which was hosted by the Director General and Chief Executive Officer, Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, Dr Adeshola Adepoju, fnaae; was well attended by the Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasiru Ahmad El-Rufai (represented by Dr Manzo Daniel, the Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture and Forestry, Kaduna); the Honourable Minister for Environment, Mallam Jibrin Usman Ibrahim, represented by Mr David Adejoh Andrew, the Director of Forestry, Ministry of Environment. The Deans of Agricultural Faculties, Heads of Departments of Agricultural and Resource Economics of Universities in Nigeria, Members of the Academia, distinguished guests from Federal and Statea Agencies, as well as undergraduate and postgraduate Agricultural Economics students of Nigerian Universities, among others were also in attendance. The keynote address of the conference theme was presented by Professor James Otunola Olukosi of Landmark University, Omu-Aran, Kwara State.

1. **CONFERENCE COMMUNIQUE**

The conference which was attended by a total of 175 participants resolved as follows:

1. The Conference strongly commends the effort of the Federal Government of Nigeria on the implementation of the 2017 – 2020 Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP), which has diversification of the economy as its prime focus. The conference therefore, called upon the Federal Government to consolidate efforts to revolutionize and restore the pride agriculture had in the past, as a formidable revenue earner and precursor of industrial and economic development.

2. The Association recommends the need for efficient agricultural value chain development by the Federal Government, through provision of incentives to investors along the chain. In the same vein, government should intensify her programme on driving agricultural productivity through commercialization of agricultural production and value addition; thus, improving food security and complementing the Nigerian Agricultural Promotion Policy or the Green Alternative.

3. To forestall the scourge of desertification through overgrazing, the Livestock Departments should match stock rates with pasture production and monitor rotation of pastures. In the same vein, a veritable policy should be developed on deforestation and bush burning practices, control of indiscriminate logging, reforestation, and adoption of optimum hardwood/softwood species mix in forest establishment. This policy should be widely circulated and enforced.

4. In order to ensure sustained, inclusive agricultural growth and development, increase national productivity and achieve sustainable diversification of production, the conference suggests provision of enabling operating environment for medium, small and micro agricultural practitioners in terms of production incentives, provision of

intermediate, economically feasible, socially adaptable and technically compatible technologies to farmers. These are capable of eliciting participation of unemployed youth in the country.

5. Nigeria’s agricultural landscape is still grossly under-exploited, and this is impacting negatively on our national economic productivity. It is therefore, imperative for Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economists to improve on her advisory roles to Government towards optimal and profitable utilization of these resources in a sustainable way. This can be engendered by research funding to boost quality of members’ research activities as well as inclusion in policy formulation towards agricultural development.

6. There is no gainsaying the fact that Nigeria has global comparative advantage in agricultural production, especially for some specific crops such as cassava, yam, rice, tree crops among others. Promoting cultivation of these crops and value addition on them would therefore, guarantee food security, job creation as well as stimulate and sustain economic growth and development in the foreseeable future.

7. Given the increasing youth unemployment in Nigeria, Federal Government of Nigeria is urged to further engender conducive environment for profitable career in agricultural value chain for graduates of agriculture who are turned out every year from tertiary institutions.

8. Nigeria’s past agricultural policies’ implementation have suffered numerous challenges such as government instability, corruption, poor recognition of agriculture in various national budgets, weak institutions, among others. Therefore, the Association

joins all national and international governments and agencies, in calling the Nigerian government to effectively take up the challenge of curbing these recurrent problems militating against agricultural development.

9. The Association decorated the following renowned Agricultural Economists as Fellows of NAAE (fnaae), in order to appreciate their efforts and track record towards development of Agricultural Economics and the Association: 1) Prof. Abraham Oyediji Ogungbile 2) Prof. James Otunola Olukosi and, 3) Prof. Isiaka Mohammed.

10. Towards ensuring sustainability and improved productivity of agricultural production in the face of hazards of climate change, research into the development of new crop varieties as well as animal and fish species that can withstand adverse effects of global warming, should now be the prime focus of Universities and research institutes.

11. With respect to the effect of climate change on agricultural production in Nigeria, the conference recommended that the on-going Economic Recovery and Growth Plan of the Federal Government should intensify its focus on re-engineering of agricultural production, through devolution of appropriate technology to access water through irrigation, conserve soil moisture, and transport water more effectively, for improved agricultural productivity.

12. The Association approved the joint hosting of the 6th Conference of the African Association of Agricultural Economists to be held in Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja between 23rd and 26th of September, 2019 and subsequently awarded the

hosting of the 20th Annual Conference to the University of Uyo, which holds between 12th and 17th of October 2020.

13. The Nigerian Association of Agricultural Economists (NAAE) wishes to extend her appreciation to the Federal Government of Nigeria, Kaduna State Government, the Director General and Chief Executive Officer, Forestry Research Institute of Nigeria, the Provost, Federal College of Forestry Mechanisation, Afaka-Kaduna, the keynote speaker, other sponsors, academic fathers, Heads of Departments of Agricultural Economics in Nigerian Universities, distinguished members of the Association, members of the press, distinguished ladies and gentlemen; who have contributed in no small measure, towards the success of the conference.

In conclusion, the publication of the proceedings from the Conference was not ready at the last day of the Conference and it was agreed that it will be sent as soon as they are ready to a place closest to participant institutions, ministries or MDGs. However, please find attached my presentation at the conference, titled “***Effect of Public Expenditure on Agriculture Sector Growth in Nigeria***”.