

**PRESIDENT SOF, PROF SIDI OSHO AS GUEST LECTURER FOR BENSON IDAHOSA UNIVERSITY'S 12<sup>TH</sup> COVOCATION LECTURE ON 15<sup>TH</sup> JULY, 2016: "REVIVING AGRICULTURE: A PANACEA TO FALLING OIL PRICES IN NIGERIA"**



The Topic is very apt and timely, given the major challenges Nigeria is facing today that threatens to erode the gains that we have achieved as a country in the past decade.

**Promotion of Commercial Agriculture - Establishment of Integrated Farms**

The strategy will facilitate a transition from subsistence farming to small, medium and large scale commercial agriculture by helping reduce market failures that continue to limit smallholder participation in the market. Land Use Act needs to be modified for any meaningful commercial agriculture programme to succeed. Furthermore capital injection becomes an strategy for this to be put in place.

**The Supply and Appropriate Pricing of Agricultural Inputs -**

Irrigation; Seeds/Cuttings, Fertilizers; Livestock Breeds of Livestock/Fish are quite important factors. Their pricing should be in line with the needs of the farming sector and to a reasonable subsidy level. It must be stated that there is no country where agriculture is not

subsidised and hence that of Nigeria should not be different.

**Role of the Private Sector** – The government must create the enabling the private sector to invest in the Agricultural sector. It is on record that the proportion of agricultural production in Nigeria from the private sector is over 95% with the three tiers of governments providing the remaining. But this private sector needs to be further encouraged either through reduction in tax, use of some economic instruments, linkages and improved transportation systems. At the moment power is a major obstacle to agricultural development. All efforts must be put in place to solve this hydra headed problem if progress is to be achieved in agriculture.

**Research dissemination and Training in Agriculture with emphasis entrepreneurs**

**Research:** In Nigeria today, though some level of research is being done in agriculture, the impact has not really been felt. The outputs of research have not gotten to the farmers due poor linkages with the farm sector. The World Bank assisted agricultural development programme died a natural death immediately the World Bank completed its term in 1995. Today the ADP is a shadow of itself. A rejuvenation of this programme with proper sustainable modalities in place is required. Furthermore adequate funding of research in agriculture on various enterprises is very expedient. If the USA could spend a colossal sum of \$1.0 billion on research in grains alone, in one year, it behoves Nigeria to spend near that on agriculture generally given over 43% of active labour force in this sector.

**Training- Informal** training in this sector is very essential. Government and the organised private sector should institute

programmes that will empower the existing farmers on how to improve their current levels of production and productivity. The extension system should adopt community development approach to hasten the adoption of this strategy.

**Food Security**

In order to reduce unemployment **SOF** has signed an MOU with **International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA)** to promote Youth Agri-preneures. Our goal is to establish one integrated farm in states in Nigeria and train youths, women's group, farmers, etc on agriculture and later empower them with finance to set up their own farms (Osho, 2015).

IITA and SOF are activity involved in training of Young Graduates in Agric Enterprise business establishment. Over 1000 graduates are beneficiaries of this program.

**Formal Training-** This the normal training programme in Universities and Polytechnics. This training should be more practical with the creation of IGR opportunity for the student of agriculture as a work and initiative. An integrated Farming system must be created in schools of Agriculture.

Some other forms of tertiary institutions also take in students of Agriculture. There are three Universities of Agriculture in Nigeria today namely, University of Agriculture, Abeokuta; Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike in Abia State and the University of Agriculture, Makurdi, Benue State. Apart from these Universities, there are over 40 Universities having faculties of Agriculture.

Agricultural enterprises are the in thing worldwide and this should be combined with environmental issues. Furthermore, entrepreneurship and skills acquisition should find a place in

the synopsis of every Faculty of Agriculture.

**Linkages-** International linkages must be put in place so as rub minds with best types of institutions. Many of these are yearning for these linkages with willing Universities in the developing nations. This is the time to do this. It is a task that must be accomplished by this great University.

**Women in Agriculture** - Around the world, female farmers play an important role in agricultural productivity. The agricultural system in Sub-Saharan Africa that is predominantly small-scale farming system with more than 50% of the agricultural activity performed by women, producing about 60-70% of the food in this region. However, women in agriculture face many more challenges than their male counterparts, including barriers related to land ownership, access to technology and machinery, training, decision-making powers, and participation in value chains. As a result, female farmers are unable to reach their full potential. Removing the barriers faced by women farmers would boost agricultural output, strengthen women's abilities to feed themselves and their families, improve their economic situation, and further promote greater global food security.

**Women's access to credit** is another factor that reduces a woman's efficiency and productivity on her plot is lack of access to credit. Credit is important for securing fertilizer, improved varieties of seeds and other technology on farms. Most women farmers are not able to obtain credit without a male guarantor or without husband's assistance. The disparity between who farms and who receives inputs, credit etc. is due to institutional barriers and social constraints.

### **African Development Bank (AfDB) is Empowering Women in Agriculture**

The African Development Bank is involved in initiatives to empower women economically in agriculture. The Bank has further identified areas of partnerships in the region to achieve this important target. m economically. Their strategy is to:

- Empower women in the continent is not only a moral imperative, it is critical for the broader economic success of the continent.
- Promote the participation and productivity of women should have a direct impact on improved food security though increased productivity, improved quality of life of the rural communities supported by them through higher household incomes, and increasingly sustainable livelihoods through broader participation and access to regional and global value chains.
- Promoting agribusiness entrepreneurs along the value chain, creating products to target niche markets and expanding cooperative programmes.
- These themes will be targeted at four important crops: **cocoa, coffee, cotton and cassava**. These crops have been chosen because of their importance for food security or in being a primary generator of export revenues for African countries.
- Collectively, these four sub-sectors account for USD 43 billion in production value\* and USD 12 billion in export value\*\* across the focus countries.

- The Countries are **Côte d'Ivoire** which is the largest cocoa producer, generating one-third of the world's **cocoa**. **Ethiopia** is Africa's largest coffee producer and exported USD 771 million in **coffee** in 2013. **Burkina Faso** is Africa's largest cotton producer. **Nigeria** is the largest African (and global) cassava producer.

### **The Value Chain Approach**

The agricultural value chain offers an important lens for framing the interactions of the various players and sectors that intersect with agriculture. **These players include the producers, processors, traders and consumers.**

- **The benefit of the value chain approach** is that it helps institutions drive integration between the different sectoral players mentioned. In an increasingly competitive market, small farmers and upstream enterprises become co-dependent and success depends on better linkages between these operators in the value chain of each crop type.
- Improvements to production yield and processing, as well as increasing the value of products, will require improved coherency and flows (of produce, services and information) within these value chains. The outcome will be better environments for farmers and small enterprises within which to operate their businesses.
- **Impact of the value Chain** - will be achieved among the many small-scale farmers, processors and upstream enterprises. African countries are major producers of a number of commodities but are rarely involved in the higher value-add downstream activities,

reducing the income earned as well as the range of opportunities for export.

- **Value addition** remains one of the largest opportunities for Africa's agricultural sector. In addition to the increased revenue that could be earned by countries, local value addition will allow for local facilities to be improved which will prevent produce losses. Approximately 30–40 percent of agricultural produce is lost as a result of inefficient post-harvest storage facilities and processing methods.
- **Agricultural value addition** as a percentage of GDP in sub-Saharan Africa was 11.2 percent in 2010/13. Taking a systematic approach to developing agricultural value chains provides an opportunity to reduce agribusiness costs while generating employment in the wider economy.
- **To increase integration into global value chains and improve the export imbalance,** African countries need to increase their yields, build world-class industrial processing facilities and improve their links to global markets for processed products.
- **To increase yields,** the crop yields will need to increase through the expansion of relevant technologies (e.g., machinery) and access to inputs (e.g., fertiliser, pesticides and technical know-how).
- **Building world-class processing facilities** will require significant investment in basic operating inputs such as capital, electricity and water, as well as a supply chain of raw materials and

operational inputs (e.g., spare parts) to maintain and sustain processing facilities.

- **Expanding links to global markets** will require high-quality produce, good government institutions and favourable regulatory frameworks to ensure timely distribution.

**There will be integration into regional and global value chains** as well as opportunities for higher value capture.









