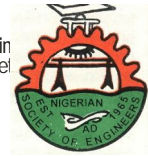


Nigerian Institution of Agricultural Engineers (A Division of Nigerian Society of Engineers)



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Our Ref: NEC/01/2015/16/15-14

Date: 14th October, 2015

Communiqué of the 36th Annual Conference & AGM (GOBARU 2015) of the Nigerian Institution of Engineers held at the State Secretariat, Katsina, Katsina State between 12th and 15th October, 2015.

Preamble

The Nigerian Institution of Agricultural engineers (NIAE), a division of the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) held its 36th Annual Conference and General Meeting tagged “GOBARAU 2015” at the Katsina State Secretariat from 12th–15th October, 2015. The conference theme was “**Agricultural Infrastructure as Engine for Economic Growth**” with Sub-themes cutting across all aspects of Agricultural Engineering profession including soil water and environmental engineering; farm power and machinery; and post harvest technology and food engineering. . The conference had six (6) main activities which include courtesy visits to eminent personalities, opening ceremony, plenary session, concurrent technical sessions, annual general meeting and excursion. The opening ceremony, which held on Tuesday 13th October 2015, was graced by the President of the Nigerian Society of Engineers, Engr. Ademola I. Olorunfemi, *FNSE, FNIAE, FNIM*, who was the Chairman of the occasion, with the Saradauna Katsina Alh. (Dr). Ibrahim Commasie, *GCON*, as the Special Guest of Honour and the Executive Governor of Katsina State, Hon. Alhaji (Dr) Aminu Bello Masari CFR represented by his Special Adviser on Agriculture Dr. A. Y Abdallaha; Katsina State Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources. Other important dignitaries present were the Vice Chancellor, Umar Musa Yar`adua University, Prof. Idris Funtua ably represented by his Deputy Vice Chancellor, the National President of All farmers Association of Nigerian, Arc. Kabir I. Faskari, and many others.

A total of one hundred and fifty (150) participants from across the nation participated in the opening ceremony, while Ninety-eight (98) participant officially registered for the three-day conference.

Observations

The conference participants noted and observed as follows:

1. That agricultural infrastructure goes beyond physical structures. It encompasses natural infrastructure (such as land and water), agricultural mechanization infrastructures, food production and processing infrastructures, service oriented infrastructure (in form of finance, marketing), policy infrastructures and human capital infrastructures.

2. That synergy between researchers and industries is very low, if not completely absent. The industries have issues that required research and, are looking forward to research centres and academic institutions to intervene, while several research outputs from such institutions are lying in the shelf with very low uptake by the industries. The two bodies seem to be waiting for each other at the detriment of the mutual benefits that could accrue to both.
3. That neglect of Agriculture has a direct bearing on the current mass unemployment, poverty and insecurity in the Nation.
4. That there is continuous inflow of agricultural equipment into the country, imported by both Federal and State Agencies and Private Organizations which are found to be of low quality, poor efficiency, non-uniformity and without standardization. Moreover, these machineries are either not certified or the agencies ignore the recommendation of National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM), and the consequences are inimical to effective utilization and management of the infrastructure.
5. While water resources availability is continuously threatened by climate change, the Nation's irrigation infrastructures are still in deplorable conditions leading to poor water management which is directly linked to poor yield and increased poverty at farm level.
6. That Agricultural Engineering curriculum in many higher Institutions in the country (universities, polytechnics, mono-technics, etc) has not adequately captured emerging issues like fishery technology, ICT, automation, entrepreneurship, and Bio-technology, thereby making graduates non-responsive and un-employable.
7. The level of post harvest losses in the country is still high. This decreases Farmers' profitability, dampens their moral, and threatens national food security.
8. The reluctance of governments at all levels to develop friendly policies on subsidy regimes as well as interest rates from financial institutions is negatively affecting pricing of produce and structures of markets.

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Recommendations

The Conference recommends the following:

1. There should be a conscious effort by government at all levels and the private sectors to continue to recognize and massively invest in all aspect of agricultural infrastructures especially human capital and policies, in order to provide national economic growth, to reduce poverty and combat social unrest.
2. The NIAE should take the lead in building a stronger synergy between academic/research institutions of learning and industries to promote Research for Development (R4D) through patenting and commercialization. Researchers/academic should be encouraged to spend part of their leaves in industries where they can address industries challenges.
3. Targeted human capital development to support the on-going agricultural value chain promotion for diverse commodities should be given priority by NIAE with the requisite partnership with other relevant professional bodies, regulators, and key operators. Also, the on-going intervention of Agricultural Equipment Hiring Enterprise (AEHE) domiciled in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) is very innovative and should be supported by NIAE and other similar professional bodies to promote nationwide adoption.
4. The National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) should be given adequate capacity empowerment to enable the Centre rise to the responsibility of testing and certifying all agricultural machineries imported into the country, as per its mandate. More so all agricultural equipment coming into the country must pass through NCAM testing and certification.
5. NIAE should lead in partnering with the ongoing World Bank supported project, Transforming Irrigation Management in Nigeria (TRIMING) which attempt to promote, Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) concept and approaches. By doing this, NIAE will advocate the internalization of the recent UN acclaimed Sustainable Development Goals in the Nation's Water Resources sub sector.
6. The NIAE should take the lead in the review of the curricula of the agricultural engineering/technology to accommodate emerging issues like fishery technology, ICT, automation, entrepreneurship, and Bio-technology and ensure compliance by all Agricultural

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Engineering Departments. This will go a long way to make Agricultural Engineering graduates relevant to the modern times.

7. Current intervention on curbing post-harvest losses should be channeled towards farm gates. The government should take deliberate steps towards eliminating middlemen monopoly.
8. The FGN must, as a matter of necessity, come up with pragmatic and realistic subsidy regimes for the agriculture sector targeting critical aspects of the value chains to make agribusiness competitive and profitable.

The NIAE commend the People and Government of Katsina State for providing enabling environment for hosting the Conference and sponsoring this conference.



Engr. Prof. B.A. Adewunmi, FNIAE, FNSE
National Chairman



Engr. Dr. J.O. Olaoye, FNIAE, MNSE
National Secretary

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