



Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry
and Food Security

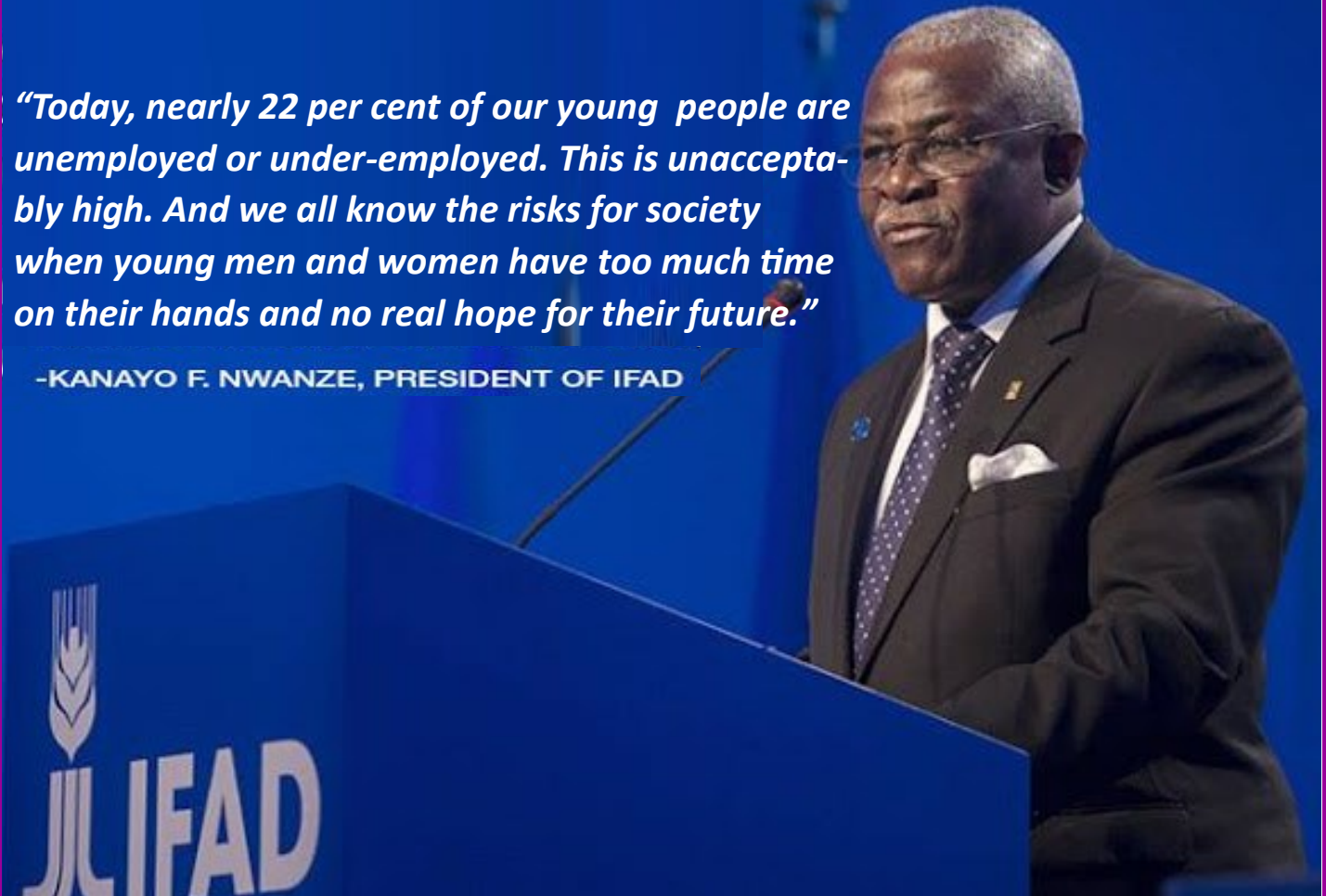
INSIDE DE FARM Newsletter

Volume 3 (2016)

IFAD PRESIDENT SPEAKS OUT ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

"Today, nearly 22 per cent of our young people are unemployed or under-employed. This is unacceptably high. And we all know the risks for society when young men and women have too much time on their hands and no real hope for their future."

-KANAYO F. NWANZE, PRESIDENT OF IFAD



Cassava:
Processing and Marketing in
Sierra Leone



Cassava is the second most important food crop in Sierra Leone after rice

Why your FSA?
Mammy Iye's experience with middle-man exploitation



Do not suffer the same as Mammy Iye. Do not allow any middleman's exploitation. Call on your FSA

Sylvanus A. Mondeh:
"My dream is to see the end of street begging by disabled in Kono"



Sylvanus Aiah Mondeh is one of the two youth entrepreneurs to represent the country at the 9th IFAD WCA Regional Forum

Young people are key to rural transformation and poverty reduction in West and Central Africa

The President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) , Dr. Kanayo F. Nwanze, has in a regional forum organized by IFAD and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria held from 14 to 18 March, in Abuja, said that young people are key to rural transformation and poverty reduction in the West and Central Africa.

Stay fixed as I take through his address at that most auspicious event:

“Excellencies, Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen, It is my very great pleasure to be with you today for this important discussion on investing in rural youth in West and Central Africa. I would like to extend a special thanks to [President Muhammadu Buhari] and/or [Chief Audu Ogbeh, the Federal Minister for Agriculture] for finding the time in [his] or [their] busy schedule[s] to be with us today.

The hopes and dreams for the future of this continent – our continent – rest in the hands of our young people. They are Africa’s greatest untapped resource. And it is our job, as development practitioners – to create outlets for their energy, their creativity and their initiative so that Africa’s young women and men can finally meet their potential.

IFAD and Africa

Africa has always been a focus of IFAD's work and continues to be so. Last year, the largest share of new IFAD financing went to sub-Saharan Africa. IFAD-supported projects have reached more than 250 million people in Africa, and the number is growing.

In West and Central Africa, IFAD currently supports 50 projects in 23 countries. Fifty eight per cent of these project participants are women. WCA projects reached around 20 million people during the IFAD period. Of IFAD’s 40 country offices, more than 25 per cent are in WCA, indicating our strong commitment to the region. I would like to thank those in the audience who are working for IFAD supported-projects – it is due to your hard work and commitment that we are able to make a difference in millions of lives.

Africa’s youth dividend

Ladies and Gentlemen, As you know, our continent is young -- if you measure a continent's youth by the age of its living population. Sixty per cent of our population today is younger than 25. So today, I would like to share with you some perspectives on how we can plant the seeds for Africa’s future by investing in Africa’s youth.

These young people have been called Africa’s “youth bulge”, though at IFAD we prefer to think of them as Africa’s demographic dividend. No other region in the history of the world can match Africa for unabated population growth. No other region has so much promise and potential.

This dividend should yield great things for Africa, provided we invest now – today – in creating the space and the conditions for our young people to take their energy and their creativity into the economic sphere. So that they can be innovative, and so that they can create jobs and even entire new industries. Silicon Valley, for example, was created by the hard work and imagination of young people. But without the investment in infrastructure, in economic activities and employment opportunities, there is an equally big risk that Africa’s demographic dividend will be squandered.

Youth unemployment in Africa

Today, nearly 22 per cent of our young people are unemployed or under-employed. This is unacceptably high. And we all know the risks for society when young men and women have too much time on their hands and no real hope for their future.

In sub-Saharan Africa, around 224 million young people will be seeking employment in the next decade. Of these, at least 60 per cent – or 134 million – will live in rural areas.

Even using the most optimistic projections for Africa’s economic growth, it is not realistic to expect urban areas and the non-farm sectors to absorb and employ an extra 134 million people in the next ten years. It is not realistic, and it is not desirable. In order for our continent to meet its enormous potential, we must develop the agricultural sector.



Youth participants and project focal point staff with IFAD Director for WCA

Africa's dependence on food imports

Imagine that sub-Saharan Africa imports US\$35 billion worth of food from all over the world. Every year! That Nigeria alone imports more than \$6 billion of agricultural products annually. This money that should be invested in producing food locally. This is money that should be creating employment and wealth in here in Africa.

Why are we creating jobs for people in other countries when we have more than 200 million young people, and so many are unemployed? This is both economically and morally wrong! We need the youth of today to be the farmers tomorrow, but for that to happen, we must transform our rural areas.

Rural Transformation

What do I mean by rural transformation? I mean development that is centered on people -- development that invests in them. I mean investing in change that is social as well as economic so that rural areas are socially viable and economically vibrant. I mean investing in change that is comprehensive and inclusive in its nature, and lasting in its impact.

The benefits of rural transformation reach far and wide. All of us stand to gain when there is a flow of goods, services and money between rural and urban areas. All of us benefit from healthy food, clean water and fresh air. By investing in rural transformation we can create a range of opportunities for young people in our rural areas so that they are not compelled to migrate to urban centres and big cities where they too often fall prey to divisive rhetoric and extremism.

In other words, we can create a world where young people have something to gain, instead of a world where they have nothing to lose. A world where young people take up the tools for production, not arms for destruction! We need to offer these young men and women opportunities to build their lives and realize their dreams in rural areas.

Africa must lead its own development

It can be done, and it must be done. But the change must start from within. As I have said many times before, for a seed to grow and take root it must be anchored in its own soil. This is an intrinsic process. So, too, is development. Africa's development must start in Africa. It must be led by Africans, for Africans. IFAD and others in development can offer support. We can invest and work as partners. But the starting point is Africa.

Changing the policy environment

Government has an important role to play, by introducing policies that encourage investment in the agro-industrial sector at every point along the value chain.

These policies must encourage inclusive and transparent partnerships, so that poor rural people are not left behind, exploited or excluded. In many countries, that means policies that support smallholder-led agriculture that offer incentives for investment in agriculture that reduce the risks for farmers and private sector partners alike.

These policies must encourage inclusive business models. They must create a conducive climate for entrepreneurs. And they must facilitate the ability of poor farmers to access finance and technology, and to have rights to water and land.

Africa exported food in the past

Building – or perhaps I should say re-building – a vibrant agri-business sector is key to building the foundation of a bright future for Africa and its citizens. The potential is certainly there. During the 1960s and 70s, many African countries were net exporters of major food and cash crops, not importers as they are today.

I remember so well the groundnut pyramids of Kano, the bales of cotton in Bornu, Kano and Sokoto, the rice fields of Nigeria and Cote d'Ivoire, and the expanses of oil palm in Ghana.

What happened to them?

About 20 per cent of national budgets at that time went to agriculture.

Just imagine!

Today, we consider it a victory when 10 per cent of budget is allocated to agriculture.

Over the past three decades, agricultural productivity in Africa has stagnated or declined. This is not good for the continent or for our young women and men. African farmers should be supplying food markets across the continent, but today trade within Africa is only about 11 per cent of total trade. And most smallholders only do business in their local markets.

IFAD PRESIDENT SPEAKS OUT ON YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

Why Africa needs agriculture

We need agriculture. We need it because humans have not yet been engineered to live without food. We need agriculture, because it provides employment for around 60 per cent of Africa's workforce, including 70 per cent of its rural population. And we need agriculture because it reduces poverty.

GDP growth generated by agriculture is at least 3 times more effective in reducing poverty than GDP growth in any other sector. And for sub-Saharan Africa, some estimates put it at 11 times higher.

Yes, it is true that today, oil and minerals generate untold riches for many African nations. But these riches have not translated into job creation, economic growth or social welfare and stability.

Oil money has not fed hungry people, ended poverty or developed rural areas. And as I have said before: you cannot eat oil – at least not crude oil.

It is time to reverse decades of neglect of African agriculture. It must be reversed because when you abandon agriculture you abandon your nation's ability to feed itself. And with the huge leaps in population projected for Africa over the next 35 years, there will be no shortage of demand for food.

To meet this demand, we need our young people to be the farmers and food processors of tomorrow, not just to feed themselves and their villages, but to grow the food to feed our cities.

Demand for food is rising

The good news is that prospects have never been brighter for African agriculture. Many of the fastest growing economies in the world are in Africa. The continent also has the world's fastest growing population and a high growth rate of urbanization, along with a rapidly expanding middle class.

Consumer spending is expected to reach US\$1 trillion -- and by some estimates US\$1.4 trillion -- by 2020. It is little wonder that demand for quality food is growing across the continent.

Demand for quality food and for value added products is growing across the continent. As a result, there are exciting new opportunities for the agro-industrial sector.

There are growing regional trade opportunities – Chad exports meat to Nigeria, and the same to Sudan. Benin exports vegetables to Ghana, Nigeria and Togo. Niger exports onions to all of West Africa.

So why aren't our young people flooding into agriculture? Why are they still leaving their family farms in search of work in the cities or abroad?

The problem largely is one of perception. Farming is considered old fashioned, and the hand-held hoe is seen as a symbol of life-long servitude. We need to change the perception of farming, so that growing the food that feeds the world is considered an attractive option to young people. This means affording dignity to all wage-generating work, whether tilling the fields, running the village store or heading a small business.

Project examples

It can be done. In Mexico, I met a group of young men who are making and marketing charcoal briquettes. They are already selling to local supermarkets, building their brand, developing a logo and expanding their business. The business has allowed these young men to stay in their community instead of migrating for work in Mexico City.

In Egypt, IFAD is supporting a project on land that was reclaimed from the desert. The project has helped some 200,000 women and men -- including 110,000 unemployed graduates who have turned to agriculture-- to improve their production and connect to the export market. Today they have contracts with some of the world's biggest companies including Heinz, and farm gate prices have risen by 33 per cent.

Here in Nigeria, in the Niger Delta, IFAD is supporting a project that has created more than 20,000 jobs for young women and men. These young farmers have become "agripreneurs". They are also role models in their community, contributing to wealth and stability.

When I visited the project, I was impressed by the energy and enthusiasm of the young women and men when they told me about their experiences in catfish and vegetable farming. These young farmers, many of them university graduates, had developed lucrative businesses. Their communities were more cohesive; nutrition had improved, and there was less violence in a region that has long been considered a "nogo" zone.

In the West and Central Africa region, IFAD also has a project in Mali that is designed to train young people, build their capacity to farm and establish businesses, and give them access to the financing they need to develop business opportunities. And similar projects are under way Cameroon and Togo. But it will take more than access to finance and training to fix the problem of youth unemployment in Africa.

Invest in Infrastructure

If we want young people to stay and work in rural areas, there needs to be considerable investment in infrastructure. This includes investment in processing plants, electricity, warehouses, roads and ports. Doing this can reduce post-harvest waste and improve access to markets.

Of course, there is a strong business argument to be made for investing in infrastructure. A farmer who must travel for five hours down a badly maintained dirt road to reach the nearest town of 10,000 people will be forced to sell at the farm gate – yet today, more than one third of the rural population lives five hours from the nearest market town. A farmer who has no access to safe storage facilities, has little incentive to grow more food.

But also, a young man or woman, who wants to start a family and build a life, has little incentive to stay in a village with no electricity, no school, no clinic and no access to financial services.

In fact, the whole system needs to be upgraded, starting with education so that young women and men enter the labour force with the skills their employers need.

And the rural manufacturing sector needs to be developed so that there are jobs for able and willing young people.

Let me be clear. These opportunities must be as accessible to young women as they are to men. Africa will not advance and take its rightful place as a global leader unless it moves beyond the out-dated mentality of past centuries, and offers our daughters the same rights and opportunities as our sons.

These are areas of improvement that we, at IFAD, contribute to either directly through the projects we support, or indirectly through our advocacy efforts.

Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to issue a challenge to Africa's young men and women. It is this: do not sit at home waiting for the government or your parents, uncles or aunts to find you work or pay your way. When you see an opportunity, take it.

I have seen time and time again what young people can achieve through their hard work and determination. I have confidence that if governments and development partners do their part by planting the seeds for the future, Africa's young people are ready to rejuvenate Africa's agricultural sector and help Africa take it.

The Farm History



History of Cassava Cultivation

Manihot esculenta (commonly called **cassava** ($/kə'sɑ:və/$), Brazilian arrow-root, manioc, tapioca), and yuca is a woody shrub native to South America of the spurge family, Euphorbiaceae. It is extensively cultivated as an annual crop in tropical and subtropical regions for its edible starchy tuberous root, a major source of carbohydrates. Though it is often called yuca in Spanish and in the United States, it differs from the yucca, an unrelated fruit-bearing shrub in the family Asparagaceae. Cassava, when dried to a powdery (or pearly) extract, is called *tapioca*; its fermented, flaky version is named garri. Cassava is the third largest source of food carbohydrates in the tropics, after rice and maize. Cassava is a major staple food in the developing world, providing a basic diet for over half a billion people. It is one of the most drought-tolerant crops, capable of growing on marginal soils. Nigeria is the world's largest producer of cassava, while Thailand is the largest exporter of dried cassava.

Cassava is classified as either sweet or bitter. Like other roots and tubers, both bitter and sweet varieties of cassava contain antinutritional factors and toxins, with the bitter varieties containing much larger amounts. They must be properly prepared before consumption, as improper preparation of cassava can leave enough residual cyanide to cause acute cyanide intoxication, goiters, and even ataxia or partial paralysis. The more toxic varieties of cassava are a fall-back resource (a "food security crop") in times of famine in some places. Farmers often prefer the bitter varieties because they deter pests, animals, and thieves.

Description

The cassava root is long and tapered, with a firm, homogeneous flesh encased in a detachable rind, about 1 mm thick, rough and brown on the outside.

Commercial varieties can be 5 to 10 cm (2.0 to 3.9 in) in diameter at the top, and around 15 to 30 cm (5.9 to 11.8 in) long. A woody vascular bundle runs along the root's axis. The flesh can be chalk-white or yellowish. Cassava roots are very rich in starch and contain significant amounts of calcium (50 mg/100g), phosphorus (40 mg/100g) and vitamin C (25 mg/100g). However, they are poor in protein and other nutrients. In contrast, cassava leaves are a good source of protein (rich in lysine) but deficient in the amino acid methionine and possibly tryptophan

Origin of Cassava Cultivation

Wild populations of *Mesculenta* sub-species *flabellifolia*, shown to be the progenitor of domesticated cassava, are centered in west-central Brazil, where it was likely first domesticated more than 10,000 years BC. Forms of the modern domesticated species can also be found growing in the wild in the south of Brazil. By 4,600 BC, manioc pollen appears in the Gulf of Mexico lowlands, at the San Andrés archaeological site. The oldest direct evidence of cassava cultivation comes from a 1,400-year-old Maya site, Joya de Cerén, in El Salvador. With its high food potential, it had become a staple food of the native populations of northern South America, southern Mesoamerica, and the Caribbean by the time of the Spanish conquest. Its cultivation was continued by the colonial Portuguese and Spanish.

Cassava was a staple food for pre-Columbian peoples in the Americas and is often portrayed in indigenous art. The Moche people often depicted yuca in their ceramics.

Mass production of Casabe bread became the first Cuban industry established by the Spanish. Ships departing to Europe from Cuban ports such as Havana, Santiago, Bayamo and Baracoa not only carried goods to Spain. The Spanish also needed to replenish their boats with dried meat, water, fruit and large amounts of casabe bread. Cuban weather was not suitable for wheat planting and casabe would not go stale as quickly as regular bread.

Cassava was introduced to Africa by Portuguese traders from Brazil in the 16th century. Maize and cassava are now important staple foods, replacing native African crops. Cassava is sometimes described as the 'bread of the tropics' but should not be confused with the tropical and equatorial bread tree (*Encephalartos*), the breadfruit (*Artocarpus altilis*) or the African breadfruit (*Treculia africana*).

Climate Change Education



21 Amazing facts about Climate Change & Global Warming

Global warming and climate change affect absolutely everyone and everything on this planet, but with so many models, theories, and predictions, it can get confusing to know who or what to believe about the environment anymore.

Here are 21 facts that we know about climate change and global warming and how the phenomena are literally changing the planet and how we live our day-to-day lives. Prepare to be amazed, shocked, and hopefully moved to help make the changes needed to slow down the alarming rate of global warming that has been set in motion since the Industrial Age.

Fact 1: First off, let's be [clear](#): In general, the greenhouse effect is a good thing. Without greenhouse gases, the temperature on Earth would be too cold to support life. With too much, it would heat up beyond survivable levels.

Fact 2: Approximately 600,000 deaths occurred worldwide as a result of weather-related natural disasters in the 1990s, where 95 percent of those deaths took place in developing countries.

Fact 3: 2014 was the world's hottest year on record, surpassing the previous record set in 2010, tied with 2005.

Fact 4: There is more carbon dioxide in the atmosphere today than at any point in the past 800,000 years, and the U.S. produces 25 percent of the carbon dioxide pollution from fossil-fuel burning.

Fact 5: The Montana Glacier National Park has only 25 glaciers left from the 150 that were there in the year 1910.

Fact 6: Global warming is associated with hotter temperatures, but it can also cause the opposite. "On one side, [the] Amazon Rainforest is turning into [a] desert and [the] Sahara is becoming greener and greener," said the Plant a Tree Today (PATT) Foundation of the UK and Thailand.

Fact 7: Melting ice caps have caused sea levels in the north to rise. For the first time in hundreds of years, ships can pass through the fabled Northwest Passage above North America.

Fact 8: Over 100 million people living in coastal regions will be displaced by just a one-yard rise in sea levels.

Fact 9: The golden toad was the first species to go extinct because of climate change and habitat loss.

Fact 10: Among climate scientists, 97 percent agree that human-caused climate change is happening here and now. The sooner we act to slow the rate of climate change, the lower the risk and cost for future generations.

Fact 11: Cows produce more methane than the oil industry does: 20 percent of U.S. methane gas emissions is produced by farmed cattle burps and farts.

Fact 12: Of the land in California, 99.84 percent is experiencing drought.

Fact 13: The world lost about 16 percent of all coral reefs in 1998, the second hottest year on record.

Fact 14: While the U.S. is trying to reduce their greenhouse gases, China plans to construct one coal-based electrical power station each week for the next 10 years.

Fact 15: Coal combustion creates 40 percent of electricity worldwide but also is responsible for "30 percent of total anthropogenic carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions worldwide, and 72 percent of CO2 emissions from global power generation," making renewable energy sources like wind or solar more cost-effective in the long run.

Fact 16: Many airlines are encouraging "green" aircraft landings by descending in a smooth, continuous fashion to reduce fuel vibrational noise and save on fuel.

Fact 17: Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about 30 percent.

Fact 18: In 1896, Swedish scientist Svante Arrhenius was the first to say that burning fossil fuels may eventually result in global warming.

Fact 19: Climate change costs the U.S. over \$100 billion each year.

Fact 20: Studies on global warming, however, are not all bad. Some scientists want to induce global warming on Mars to make it habitable for life and eventual colonization.

Fact 21: Thirty-seven percent of Americans believe that global warming is a hoax, and 64 percent don't believe that climate change will seriously affect their way of life.

"Approximately 600,000 deaths occurred worldwide as a result of weather-related natural disasters in the 1990s, where 95 percent of those deaths took place in developing countries."

Voice from the Farm



Prof. Patrick Monty Jones is the Minister of Agric., Forestry & Food Security

Massive Welcome for Prof. Monty Jones at Rokupr

By: Contact Tracer

The entry of the new Agriculture Minister in Rokupr received a red carpet welcome like the Lord Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. The people of Rokupr Town in the Kambia District came out with their musical instruments, drumming, singing and dancing to welcome the new Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, Prof. Patrick Monty Jones on Thursday, 18th February, 2016. The visit to Rokupr is part of the Minister's nationwide tour to assess the successes and challenges faced in the agriculture sector, and also address farmers, staff and other key stakeholders in the sector.

The Minister was placed on a hammock followed by a jubilant crowd through the main streets of the town unto the Rice Research Station where he addressed them. Prof. Jones spent thirteen years working at the Station before proceeding to work overseas. As one of one hundred most influential people in the world, the Agriculture Minister recognises himself as part of the people in Rokupr. The people are in turn confident that the Minister's leadership will bring back what they have missed during his absence at the Research Station.

Though he has been honoured with Chieftaincy titles in several parts of the world and with several awards and laurels, he is appreciative of the fact that for the first time he is being carried on an hammock.

Addressing the people, Prof. Monty Jones said he is impressed with the developments that have taken place in Rokupr Town and Research Station, adding that he is willing enough to solve the problems highlighted by the previous speakers. He informed his audience that President Koroma has the people at heart, which is why he always wants to make a difference.

"He is willing to boost agriculture production and increase productivity so our farmers have the capacity to be like others in developed nations," he said, and added that in the not too distant future, transformation will take place in the agriculture sector. "I will ensure that the Research Station gets its lost glory," the Minister assured.

The Agriculture Minister also had the opportunity to address his colleagues Scientists and staff at the Research Station on Friday. He informed them that research is an important sector in the development of the country because it brings about good technology that enhances economic growth. Sierra Leone, he said has everything it takes to serve as breadbasket of the Africa. "The country is suited for exporting rice to other countries," he said, and added that research plays a key role in all this.

Prof. Jones revealed that one of the mandates given to him by His Excellency the President is to increase production and productivity, which is a key message he is taking to farmers and other relevant stakeholders across the country.

"If we continue with subsistence farming, this country will never achieve food security," he said. He encouraged farmers to transform their potentials to providing enough food for the nation. Food, he said should be available, affordable, accessible and sustainable. He reiterated the fact the Commercial Agriculture must be part of them because it pays a lot. "We should add value to our produce and market them well," the Minister advised farmers, and pledged his Ministry's support to transform farming activities in the country.

Voice from the Farm



Sylvanus A. Mondeh Speaks of his Dreams for persons with disability

According to the World Health Organization, an estimated 15% of the world's population experience some form of disability or impairment. The proportion of disabled people is much higher in Sierra Leone, a West African country which had emerged from a decade-long civil war back in 2002 where the trademark of the rebel groups was to hack-off the limbs of victims

It is estimated that there are about 450,000 disabled people in Sierra Leone, although this number may be an under-representation. Common disability issues include blindness, deafness, war- wounded including amputees, and polio.

Sylvanus Aiah Mondeh finds himself among these number of Sierra Leoneans. Born and raised in the Eastern diamond-rich Kono District, he is doing all his best to enhance the status of his folks. After a college education in Freetown, the nation's capital, Sylvanus said, he deemed it necessary to return home to mobilize and work in the interest of his fellow persons with disability.

"The mission of the Polio Empowerment Project is to improve the lives of its members (fellow polio victims). Thereby minimizing the art of street begging among polio persons and persons with different abilities in Kono. While we cannot totally cry them down, because of the situation in which they find themselves, the project currently engages a total of twenty five members cutting across various skills including Soap-making, Gara tying and dying and blacksmithing," he said.

Sylvanus noted that illiteracy is the key factor behind street Begging. "Street begging is very humiliating. But since most polio persons lack education to have them gainfully employed, they resort to begging," he lamented.

"We therefore need to take the advocacy to another level. We are going to do this through engagement with various stakeholders, so as to put measures in place to get polio persons out of the street. It requires collective efforts to make this happen," he said.

On the area of sustainability, Sylvanus disclosed that capacity building is his organization key priority in ensuring dignity of persons with disabilities. "Our dream is to have a centre of excellence, where persons with disability will come and acquire skills that will take them out of the street. With support from some Humanitarian organizations, including IFAD we have been able to start and still struggling with a small centre we are having. But this is not enough. We are therefore soliciting further support to have as we desired it. One that will suit international standards," he requested.

It could be noted that, the RFCIP, one of the two IFAD funded projects in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Security, with its objective to eradicate rural poverty, identified and has since been providing funding in the form of partial grant and loan to this group.

With this financial support from the RFCIP Community Bank at Nimikoro, members of the Polio Empowerment Project in Kono are now actively engaged in the soap-making and Gara tying and dying trade. The profit here is of two folds. First, it is economically viable in the sense that they now produce and sell for themselves and share the profit among themselves. Second, the simple fact that they are providing services to the public that once framed them as 'unables' raises their status in society, which undoubtedly will reduce the stigma.

To the National Programme Coordination Unit (NPCU), with youth and gender at its core, such undertaking is key and therefore worth flagging for others to emulate their steps.

In view of the above, the NPCU finds it necessary to nominate and finally selected Sylvanus Aiah Mondeh as one of the two youth entrepreneurs to represent the country at the 9th Regional Implementation Forum for IFAD-Supported Project in West and Central Africa.

Our Staple Food



Cassava: PROCESSING AND MARKETING IN SIERRA LEONE

By: Taplima Muana

Cassava is the second most important food crop in Sierra Leone after rice and therefore constitutes a significant portion of the diet of the rural populations and every part of the country. Over the years, cassava-processing has been more of 'boil and eat', while marketing has been grossly under developed with wide price fluctuation within seasons and locations. The development of cassava value-chain could provide more regular and transparent demand for cassava.

However, efforts to develop cassava sector had always been geared towards fight against mosaic diseases to improve production, which is just one aspect of the value-chain while other aspects have received inadequate attention thus limiting intervention impacts.

As a food crop, cassava fits well into the farming systems of the smallholder farmers in Sierra Leone because it is available all year round, thus improving household food security. Compared to grains, cassava is more tolerant to low soil fertility and more resistant to drought, pests and diseases. Cassava is an important food crop in Sierra Leone especially during and after the devastating civil war of 1991 to 2002 and structural adjustments. It can as well become a cash crop that would generate income for a large number of households, thus contributing positively to poverty alleviation

However, Cassava is grown by smallholders in mixed cropping with many other crops, and of lately also in sole crop stands. Women play a central role in cassava production, processing and marketing, contributing about 70 percent of the total agricultural labour in the country.

They are almost entirely responsible for processing cassava that provides them with additional income-earning opportunities and enhances their ability to contribute to household food security.

As already stated, cassava-processing in Sierra Leone has, for a long time been more of 'boil and eat'. Few cassava processed products existed, which again was by traditional methods that are labour-intensive and full of drudgery, thus limiting productivity, which hence affects the value-chain system. Improved processing technology is a key factor to solve these problems associated with cassava-processing and ultimately encourage cassava enterprise.

Cassava marketing had been grossly under developed. Prices fluctuate widely within a season and between different markets locations, with market information not readily available, thus, making it difficult for farmers to take advantage of market opportunities. The potential to improve marketing and utilization, including industrial uses in livestock feed, ethanol, starch and bakery products, would provide more regular and transparent demand for cassava.

Efforts to develop cassava sector had for long, been geared towards fight against mosaic diseases to improve production, which is just one aspect of the value chain while other aspects; processing and marketing have received inadequate attention thus limiting intervention impacts.

“Compared to grains, cassava is more tolerant to low soil fertility and more resistant to drought, pests and diseases. Cassava is an important food crop in Sierra Leone.”

Our Photo Gallery

RFCIP Team (Apex Bank & NPCU) on Loan Clients verification exercise within the country



Sierra Leone Youth representative at the 9th IFAD WCA Regional Programme Forum at Abuja, Nigeria



Prof. Monty Jones at Turma Bum, being led by RCPRP Coordinator and Bonthe Agriculture Officer



INSIDE DE FARM

Ministry of Agriculture Forestry, and Food Security



Why Your FSA?

The rising sun finds Mammy Iye walking 8 kilometers to arrive at Lileima where her cassava could be grated. It is the only machine in the area. Upon arrival she could find a long line of women ahead of her. She would wait for several hours to have her cassava grated and walk home to process the cassava into gari. By the afternoon, she rushes to prepare food for the children. After having a bag of gari, traders come to purchase it from her in exchange for salt or “Lappa”. She ends up without income after all her struggle.



But do you know that Mammy Iye could have overcome it, had she known about the FSA? Do not suffer the same as Mammy Iye. Do not allow any middleman's exploitation. Call on your FSA/Village Bank, they can help change your situation and make agriculture better.

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