

The Explainer

A WEEKLY PUBLICATION OF THE NATIONAL ORIENTATION AGENCY (NOA)



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AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY: CHECKLIST OF FG'S POLICIES SO FAR

...Targets 31 Million MT Of Grains In 2024 To Enhance Food Security

By Simon Idoko

Since its advent on May 29, 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's administration has been working assiduously to put Nigeria on a strong economic footing. Having done away with the menace of oil subsidy, the new government proceeded to introduce new ways of generating revenue, putting machinery in place to diversify the nation's economy.

A key aspect of this administration's agenda is to boost agriculture and support farmers through enlightened policies aimed at promoting productivity and ensuring decent incomes, thereby enabling them to provide for their families and contribute to the nation's food security.

The administration strongly believes

that enhancing food security requires a significant increase in domestic food production, which should surpass the growth of our already large population, and simultaneously addressing challenges such as overworked soils, communal instability, and climate change. Moreover, the government envisions that a robust agricultural sector will create more investment opportunities for enterprising Nigerians, particularly the youths, to cash in on new, little explored and exploited, economic opportunities. To demonstrate his commitment to implementing these initiatives and boost local production in agriculture, President Tinubu declared a state of emergency on food security in July 2023, which redefined the priority areas of his administration, one of which is: "Boost Agriculture to Achieve Food Security".

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FEC Meeting: Highlights of March 11 FEC Meeting

Federal Executive Council on March 11, 2024 approved the award of contracts for the engagement of Messrs R2U Architects as consultants for the construction of NDLEA barracks in Enugu, Kano and Jigawa States.

1. Council approved Group Life Insurance for police personnel, property insurance for police buildings and barracks, aviation and marine insurance at a cost of N20.1 Billion.

The insurance will be provided by Messrs Total Security Insurance Brokers and Messrs Golan Heights Insurance Brokers, leading a consortium of close to 100 brokers, with Leadway Assurance and Anchor Insurance as lead underwriters.

2. Council approved the augmentation of contract for the dualisation of Obajana-Benin Road at the rate of N897.6 billion. Contracts for the four sections of the road were first awarded in 2012 to Messrs Mothercat Nigeria Limited, Messrs CGC Nigeria, Messrs Dantata Sawoe Construction and Messrs RCC Nigeria Limited at the rate of N122 billion.

3. Council approved construction of Isheri North - Ogun State road at the rate of N2.2 billion. Road will decongest Lagos-Shagamu Expressway.

Masthead

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DG's Speech at the Launch of NOA's App, The Mobiliser



Issa-Onilu

*Director General,
National Orientation
Agency (NOA).*



The Mobiliser app, in line with our core mandate, among others, is well positioned to get the youth acquainted with government policies

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to the launch of our new app, The Mobiliser, today.

The conception of this app is part and parcel of our commitments to the task of re-orientation and entrenching our national values by engaging the citizenry through various viable platforms.

The Mobiliser was specifically conceived to serve as the platform for engaging our youths. Bearing in mind that 72 per cent of our populace are youths who are vulnerable to rampaging social ills in the society, we have created this app to offer them valuable alternatives to the prevalent ills in the society.

The Mobiliser comprises various valuable and useful features.

Instead of getting engaged with various unprofitable activities on their phones and other digital devices, The Mobiliser, in line with our core mandate, among others, is well positioned to get the youth acquainted with government policies, programmes and activities that will add immeasurable values to their lives.

As it is well known, the agency's mandate, among others, includes inculcating morals and national values in the citizenry, particularly the youngsters who are the leaders and future of the country..

It is pertinent to state that the digital world has virtually penetrated the veins of our young population so much that to meaningfully engage them, one must be an active player in the digital space.

Hence, The Mobiliser app comes on board as a communication platform to bridge this gap.

The app, which is downloadable from the Google Play Store as well as iPhone Operating System (iOS), has as its features, the News Feed, 'Say Something, Quiz Competition (the Game), Entries and Report.

Accompanied by relevant pictures, the Newsfeed puts relevant and verifiable news items within the reach of Nigerians.

In clear terms, it will keep citizens updated with trending news, government policies and activities and other value-driven discussions, among others.

The 'Say Something' feature, on its part, provides citizens with the platform to engage in intelligence gathering and accordingly communicate same to the agency through this feature.

Given the rising security challenge confronting the country today, the involvement of all citizens with a view to putting the situation under control has become compelling.

Hence, we have opted to create this platform to encourage citizens to anonymously report any security threat in their environs to the agency through this feature.

Checklist of FG's Agricultural Policies

Continued from page 1



- One key objective of this agricultural agenda is to implement initiatives like the introduction of commodity boards, which will establish minimum prices for strategic crops such as cashew, cocoa, cassava, yam, among others, to ensure a minimum income for farmers.



- The Renewed Hope programme for Agriculture also places emphasis on irrigation and water catchment programmes, which are expected to boost food production and employment while mitigating the harmful effects of extreme weather cycles and climate change.



- The government is committed to providing farmers with access to soft loans through the Bank of Agriculture, specifically for farm-related investments.



- It also includes large-scale land clearing, the promotion of farm cooperatives, and rural infrastructure development.

To enhance full implementation of the agricultural vision, the President has directed the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Senator Abubakar Kyari, to enforce all the laid down policies on agriculture. Already, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has unveiled the Agricultural Extension Manual and Policy at the Sixth African-Wide Agricultural Extension Week held towards the end of 2023.

This manual and policy represent the first-ever harmonised agricultural extension manual and national agricultural extension policy in Nigeria. The policy which focuses on the effective dissemination and deployment of agricultural innovative ideas and technologies to end-users, using appropriate extension methods, is expected to benefit extension administrators, subject matter specialists, extension agents, and farmers across the agricultural value chains in Nigeria. It aims to provide a pragmatic, effective, and efficient



demand-driven, pluralistic, ICT-enabled, and market-oriented extension service, to all stakeholders, including youths, women, and individuals with special needs, with the aim of optimising resources and promoting sustainable agriculture and socio-economic development in the country.

The 2024 Agricultural Plan

The Federal Ministry of Agriculture in its food security plan sets the following targets:

Short term plan

- Producing 31,000,000 metric tons (MT) of grains in 2024 to address food inflation.
- Certification of available food security crops under the dry season farming initiatives for 2023/24 (already flagged off in Jigawa)
- Cultivation of 70,000 hectares of land for wheat production under the National Agricultural Growth Scheme and Agro-pocket scheme (NAGS-AP) projects (supported by the (AFDB)
- Other interventions include the development of pasture seeds, fodder, and foliage estates to gradually eliminate clashes between farmers and herders.

Presidential National Coordinator for Unlocking the Health Care Value Chain

President Bola Tinubu has approved the appointment of Dr. Abdu Mukhtar as the National Coordinator of the Presidential 'Unlocking Healthcare Value-Chain' Initiative, domiciled in the Federal Ministry of Health & Social Welfare.

This strategic approval seeks to unlock billions of dollars of new investments into the nation's healthcare-delivery system through a time-bound and cross-ministerial collaboration to restructure the ecosystem of Health Product Manufacturing, Health Logistics Services, Health Technology Services, Health Retail Services



(e-Commerce), Health Provider Facilitation, and Health Payor reform (Third Party Administrators & Insurers) in order to achieve the following:

- (1) Measurable increase in the domestic manufacturing of generic pharmaceuticals, vaccines, biologics, and devices.
- (2) Reduction of outbound medical tourism by enhancing service quality in Nigeria while catalyzing alternative health ecosystems in-country.
- (3) Measurable increase in quantity of quality jobs across the value chain through enhanced FDI and local capital mobilization.

FG's \$617.7m I-DICE Programme to Create 9.2m Jobs

With National Economic Council's endorsement of the inolementation of \$617.7 million Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (i-DICE) programme on Thursday, the country is set to witness the creation of 3.7 million direct jobs and 5.5 million indirect jobs.

I-DICE programme is an inherited programme of the last administration, conceived to promote investments in information and communication technology (ICT) and creative industries.

Federal Government's commitment to execution of this project is part and parcel of the efforts of President Bola Tinubu's administration to create sustainable jobs for the teeming youth population.

On October 23, 2023, Vice-President Kassim Shettima charged the steering committee to put machinery in place for effective implementation of the programme, noting that creating jobs for youth population would address the crisis of unemployment.

At the 140th NEC meeting held virtually on March 21, 2024, the Vice-President who presided over the meeting, told the council that the administration of President Tinubu was determined to leave a legacy of prosperity and



President Tinubu

opportunities for all Nigerians.

The project, which secured the backing of state governors, will be implemented across the 36 states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT).

The Vice-President therefore told state governors to nominate representatives from each geo-political zone of the country as well as focal persons who will spearhead the implementation in their respective states.

Highlights of the Project

*1,269,757 youths will be trained in ICT

skills with at least 25,000 of them coming from each state of the federation and the FCT.

*100,000 jobs will be created per state with additional 5,581,231 indirect jobs through i-DICE interventions across the country.

Funding

The programme will be sponsored by notable financial institutions such as African Development Bank (AfDB), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), among others.

Breakdown of the sponsorship is as follows: AfDB, \$170million; IsDB, \$70 million; AFD, \$116 million and Bank of Industry (BoI) on behalf of Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), \$45.50 million, Fund Manager (For Equity Fund only), \$8.70 million, and private investors, \$205 million.

President Tinubu Bars Govt Officials from Foreign Trips

Determined to reduce cost of governance, President Bola Tinubu has barred government officials from embarking on foreign trips at government expense for three months with effect from April 1, this year.

The move, according to the president's Chief of Staff, Mr. Femi Gbajabamila, is part of Federal Government's moves to stem the tide of escalating travel expenses from the national treasury.

Highlights of the Travel Ban

- Reduction of costs of governance in view of Nigeria's "current economic challenges and the need for

responsible fiscal management;"

- Reduction of government expenses in the face of living cost crises with attendant hardship on the citizenry.
- Government officials will only be permitted to travel abroad during the ban if deemed "absolutely necessary" and must secure presidential approval for at least two weeks ahead;
- The ban will propel officials of the federal government to "focus on their respective mandates for effective service delivery."



No Ransom for Kidnappers

President Bola Tinubu has disclosed his government's continuous support for security agencies to free pupils, and other Nigerians abducted by bandits recently.

The President, however, vowed that his government would not pay any ransom to the bandits

New Executive Orders to Boost Investments, Create Jobs, Business Opportunities in Oil and Gas Sector

With Executive Orders 40, 41 and 42 issued by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on March 6, 2024, the nation's oil and gas sector is set to witness a boost in the volume of investments accruable to the sector.

Issued as the fallout of engagements with other jurisdictions, these policies will facilitate quick delivery of oil and gas products to the market, enhance the capacity of operators, create jobs and additional business opportunities, boost skills of the workforce and simultaneously promote economic growth and activities of small and medium (SMEs) in the local settings.

For effectiveness, the Federal Government seeks to initiate amendments to extant laws with a view to introducing fiscal incentives for oil and gas projects, reducing contracting costs and timelines as well as promoting the cost of efficiency.

Order 40 gains

- Guarantees tax incentives, including exemptions
- Extends incentive to non-associated gas greenfield at both onshore and onshore locations
- Incentives available only to firms whose first gas production took place before 2019.

In the same vein, Order 41 takes cognizance of the drastic reduction in the volume of investments in the oil and gas sector. This order notes that whereas Nigeria possesses 38 per cent of the continent's hydrocarbon services, the country only accommodates 5 per cent of the entire Africa's oil and gas investments. Against this backdrop, the order seeks to prioritise local content and consequently address the challenge of capacity in the delivery of some services.

Order 41 gains

- Restrains the Nigeria Content



Development and Monitoring Board from actions to impede the flow of investments in the sector or the cost of competitiveness of oil and gas projects.

- Restrains NCDMB from approving the Nigerian content plan involving entities which have no capacity to perform required services.

Order 42 gains

- Pegs contract approval benchmark at \$10 million and restrains Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation Limited (NNPCL) or its subsidiaries from approving any contract value that is below \$10 million henceforth.
- On the other hand, this order mandates NNPCL and NNPC Upstream Investment Management Services (NUIMS), the investment arm of NNPCL, to ensure that every approval for both contracts and procurements, in accordance with production sharing contracts (PSC) or joint operating agreement (JOA), is issued within 15 days. These 15 days begin from the day application is submitted by the relevant party.

FG Set to Boost Mechanised Agriculture

In expression of Federal Government's commitment to boost mechanised farming, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security will receive 500 tractors assembled by the John Deere Group, Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Sen. Abubakar Kyari has disclosed.

The move, according to the ministry, will improve mechanised farming, increase production, and guarantee food and nutrition security.

A statement by Assistant Director, Information in the Ministry, Ezeaja Ikemefuna, said the initiative would boost farming activities and strengthen food and nutrition security in line with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's emergency declaration on food security.

According to the statement, the minister, while speaking during a chat with reporters in his office, disclosed that John Deere Group would deliver the first batch of the tractors to the country at the end of May while others will follow in September.

Ikemefuna said the minister further disclosed that the contractors would meet the set target for the delivery of 2,000 tractors annually in the next five years as contained in Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) it signed with the Ministry.



Information Minister Unveils NOA's New Mobiliser App in Kano

The Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, officially launched National Orientation Agency's Mobiliser App and The Explorer Newsletter at the Amani Event Center in Kano on Wednesday, 20 March 2024.

The Minister who applauded the Agency for continuously improving its methodologies for national engagement, urged Nigerians to fully take advantage of the new app, get engaged with the government and participate in its value renewal moves across the country.

He said the app specially targets the youth, whom he said constituted about 70 percent of the Nigerian population and have become parts of the universal digital revolution.

Also speaking at the event, Director-General of the National Orientation Agency, Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu, provided an in-depth overview of the Mobiliser App, highlighting its various features.

He encouraged everyone to download the app and explore its engaging functionalities.

One particular crucial feature of the app that he emphasised was the 'Say Something' tool, saying it was designed for intelligence gathering and anonymous reporting of crimes and other issues.

According to him, the app would play vital roles in combating crimes and insurgency across Nigeria.

Other notable features of the app highlighted by the Director-General at the event were the Newsfeed, meant to keep users updated on verified news and trending topics nationwide as well as the Quiz section, which offers educational games and questions with rewards such as recharge cards and various other prizes for those who answer the questions accurately.

Furthermore, Mallam Issa-Onilu spoke on another feature of the app, 'the Entries,' which allows citizens to engage NOA and other government agencies on issues of concern with calls for submissions of such issues

In clear terms, the Mobiliser stands as a comprehensive platform aimed at empowering the youths to voice their concerns, stay informed through news updates, engage in educational activities, and contribute to societal issues through reporting and participation.



Minister of Information and National Orientation, Alhaji Mohammed Idris, unveiling the app



Director-General, NOA, Mallam Lanre Issa-Onilu, speaking at the event



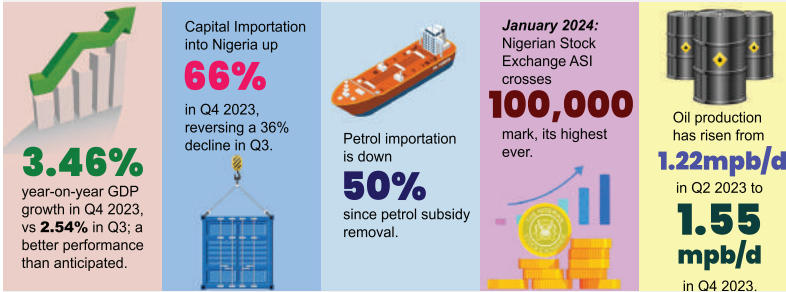
Hon. Minister, Alhaji Idris; DG, NOA, Mallam Issa-Onilu and DG, Nigerian Television Authority (NTA), Abdulhamid Dembos



R-L: Hon. Minister, Alhaji Idris; Special Adviser to the President on Information and Strategy, Mr. Bayo Onanuga; DG, NOA, Mallam Issa-Onilu and Managing Director, News Agency of Nigeria, Mr. Ali. M. Ali

Infograph

NIGERIA REAPING THE BENEFITS OF REFORM



Federal Ministry of Information and National Orientation

NIGERIA REAPING THE BENEFITS OF REFORM

The Nigerian economy grew by

3.46%

(year-on-year) in Q4 2023, compared with 2.54% in the preceding quarter; a better performance than anticipated.



In January 2024, the Nigerian Stock Exchange All Share Index (ASI) crossed the

100,000

points mark, its highest ever.

Petrol importation is down

50%

since petrol subsidy was removed in June 2023

Capital Importation into Nigeria was up

66%

in Q4 2023, compared with Q3 2023, reversing a 36% decline in the previous quarter



Oil production has grown steadily since Q2 2023, rising from

1.22M barrels per day to **1.55** million barrels per day in Q4 2023.



MOHAMMED IDRIS
HONOURABLE MINISTER
FEDERAL MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND NATIONAL ORIENTATION

Breakdown of January 2024 Revenue Sources



ECA Balance as of January 2024



January 2024 FAAC Revenue Distribution

Total Revenue: N1,149 trillion
Derivation Revenue (13% mineral revenue): N85,101 billion



Economic Stabilization Measures in January 2024

Total Transfers, Interventions, and Subsidies: **N639.926 billion**

Total Deductions for Collection: **N8.412 billion**

Savings: **N200.000 billion**



Bayo Onanuga

Special Adviser Information and Strategy



For rice, the target is 250,000 hectares involving 500,000 farmers with the expected output of 1 million metric tons of paddy rice

Update on Tinubu Administration's Efforts to Ramp up Food Supply in the Country

The Tinubu administration through the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security is in the final stages of releasing 42,000 metric tonnes of assorted food commodities to support the vulnerable population across the country.

The grains in seven locations of strategic reserve, are now being bagged for onward delivery to the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA). The need to bag the grains caused the delay as the bags were freshly ordered by government.

Nigerians will not need to pay for the grain bags, as they are free.

This will be complemented by the 60,000 metric tonnes of milled rice to be purchased by the Federal Government from the Mega Rice Millers.

Already, with the announcement of the impending releases of food commodities from the Strategic Reserve, there is a noticeable reduction in commodity prices across major grains markets in the country, Minister of Agriculture, Senator Abubakar Kyari said

The Federal Government is also ramping up food production by boosting Dry Season Farming under the National Agricultural Growth Scheme Agro-Pocket (NAGS-AP) Project .

The First Phase of the Dry Season Farming was launched in November, 2023.

It focuses on the cultivation of wheat across 15 wheat-producing states, covering 118,657 hectares and involving 107,429 farmers.

"The fields are green now and harvest will commence in a matter of weeks", Kyari said.

"There are fantastic reports of growth of wheat from Jigawa State, which



is now targeting harvest from about 50,000 hectares, 10,000 hectares more than initially allotted under the programme.

Phase 2 of the Dry Season Farming will commence soon, across all 36 states of Nigeria and FCT.

It will cover rice, maize, and cassava.

"For rice, the target is 250,000 hectares involving 500,000 farmers with the expected output of 1 million metric tons of paddy rice.

"For maize, we are cultivating 55,000 hectares with 110,000 farmers thereby adding 165,000 metric tons to national maize production while for cassava, we are doing 35,000 hectares with 70,000 farmers to produce 525,000 metric tons of cassava.

"The NAGS-AP Project offers a 50 per cent subsidy. However, the Federal Government is providing additional support for Phase 2, which will bring aggregate subsidy to about 93 per cent to farmers cultivating the crops.

"Also various governors are showing strong support, to further enhance the subsidy.

Additionally, solar-powered water pumps for irrigation, provided by the Federal Government, are being deployed to aid the upcoming phase of the programme.