



## VOICES FOR FOOD SECURITY (VFS) CAMPAIGN

The **Voices for Food Security (VFS)** Campaign is a collective effort by small-scale farmers and civil society organisations across Nigeria to campaign for strengthening of the Nigerian agriculture and food sector. Its main objectives are:

- To reinforce the institutional capacity of small-scale farmers' organisations in Nigeria to engage in policy processes
- To improve the quantity and quality of public investment to support small-scale farmers.
- To create an enabling environment for food security in Nigeria
- To increase women's representation and participation in decision-making at all levels of agricultural governance and production.

Cutting across each of these objectives and central to their realisation are two issues; the urgent need to enhance and raise the voice of small scale farmers in local and national discuss; and the utmost necessity of addressing the special needs of young farmers in order to ensure that agricultural labour process can be reproduced in a sustainable manner. However, it is also recognised that although gender is one of the core objectives of the campaign, addressing gender issue is also key to realising the other objectives of the campaign .

The campaign consortium is composed of: CBD-NGO Forum, Civil Society Coalition on Poverty Eradication (CISCOPE), Farm Infrastructures Foundation (FIF), Justice Development and Peace Commission (JDPC), National Association of Nigerian Traders (NANTS), Middle-Belt Small Scale Farmers Network

MIBSSFANET), and the Unified Movement of Small-Scale Farmers (UMSSF), and supported by Oxfam International and ActionAid Nigeria. Other organisations endorsing the campaign are: ActionAid PAP (Partnership Against Poverty) and Activista Partners, Trade Network Initiative (TNI), Women's Right Advancement and Protection Alternative (WRAPA), CCDP (COCIN Church Development Program), Country Women Association of Nigeria (COWAN), Project Agape (PROAGAPE), Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), Women in Agriculture Association (WIAA), Agriculture and Allied Employees Union of Nigeria (AAEUN), an affiliate of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), Strengthening the Livelihoods of Small-Scale Farmers in Nigeria (SLISSFAN), Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), International Centre for Soil Fertility and Agricultural Development (IFDC) and its small scale Agro-input dealers Associations.

### **Agriculture: key for growth and poverty reduction**

With a share of 42.07% (2008) of the total GDP, Agriculture is the largest contributor to the Nigerian economy, by far surpassing wholesale and trade (17.33) and the oil and gas sector (17.54). It is also the single largest contributor to the well being of the rural poor, sustaining about 86% of rural households in Nigeria. Further, there is an important gender dimension to agriculture as about 80% of the rural female population is engaged in agricultural activities.



### Contribution to GDP by sector (%)

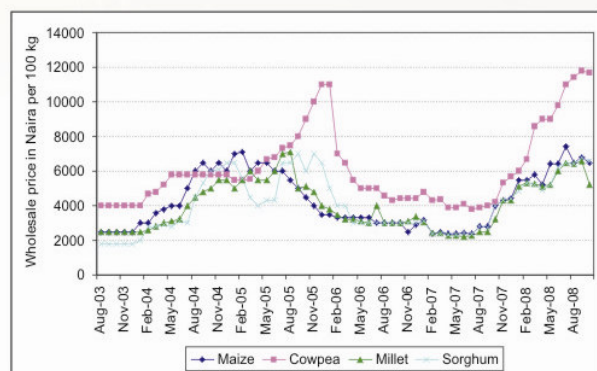
Sector	% in 2008 GDP
Wholesale and trade	17.33
Finance and insurance	3.79
Hotel and restaurants	0.46
Solid minerals	0.31
Crude Petroleum and natural gas	17.54
Agriculture	42.07
Building and construction	1.83
Manufacturing	4.13
Telecommunications and postal services	2.9
Others	9.63
Total	100

Source: <http://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng> (03-07-09); provisional data.

### Food security

Improvements in the performance of the agricultural sector are not only required from a poverty perspective but also to ensure national food security. In stark contrast to the 1960s, when agriculture provided the main source of employment, income and foreign exchange earnings for Nigeria, the advent of commercial oil exploration in the mid 1970s heralded an era of decay and decline for agricultural output. Since then Nigeria has not been able to achieve food self-sufficiency and food security and the country spends about US\$ 3 billion annually on the importation of food, despite the favourable agro-ecological climate and other resources.

In addition, as a consequence of high-poverty levels about 34% of the population (61 million) is suffering from malnutrition because they cannot attain sufficient calories even if they spend all their income on food. Recently, this has been exacerbated by the global food crisis that started towards the end of 2007, which has also resulted in rising food prices. At present food prices are still higher than pre-crisis levels. Rising global food prices also make the dependence on food imports increasingly costly.



Source: FEWSNET, Website: <http://www.fews.net/Pages/default.aspx> (03-07-09)  
Location: Kano.



### Lack of access to credit and fertilizer

The high level of dependency on food imports is caused by a combination of factors that characterize the total agricultural sector. The most important is the relatively large number of subsistence small-scale farmers, who are unable to increase their productivity as a consequence of lack of credit, a highly politicized fertilizer distribution system, and the activities of middlemen/trader cartels that monopolize access to the market.

In particular, women also face additional challenges with respect to access to land and land rights. In general women do not own traditional land, and have access to land only through their relationship with men as daughters, wives, or sisters. Given that 80% of women living in rural areas make their living from agriculture this is a major constraint, which undermines efforts to access other inputs.

### Small-scale farmers' priorities by state

	First	Second	Third
Kano	Credit	Fertilizer	Extension /Training
Katsina	Fertilizer	Credit	Farm Implements
Plateau	Fertilizer	Credit	Market linkages
Benue	Credit	Fertilizer	Agrochemicals
Nasarawa	Credit	Fertilizer	Farm Implements

Source: Oxfam, Farmers' support research, 2009

### Increasing public expenditure without participation

Public spending is the most direct instrument the Nigerian government can use to reduce poverty and promote food security. Nonetheless, budget allocation to agriculture over recent years has been only 3 - 4% per year, far below the figures that had been agreed in the 2003 Maputo Declaration in which national governments, including Nigeria commit to invest at least 10% of public expenditures annually in agriculture. However, in the wake of the global food crisis, the Nigerian government has shown renewed interest in the agriculture sector. This is also emphasised by the fact that under the new Government of President Umaru Yar'adua, Agriculture is one of the priority areas under the Seven Point Agenda.

### Agriculture share of Federal sectoral Budget provisions (2005-2007)

Year	2005		2006		2007	
	N' bn	% of total	N' bn	% of total	N' bn	% of total
Police	76.6	13.66	86.0	12.04	94.9	09.89
Agriculture	17.3	03.09	30.8	04.21	38.8	04.04
Defence	99.4	17.73	101.5	14.21	122.0	12.71
Education	98.1	17.50	166.6	23.32	189.2	19.71
Federal Capital	46.3	08.26	53.4	07.47	70.6	07.36
Health	70.9	12.56	106.9	14.96	123.5	12.87
Power and Steel	70.4	12.56	78.1	10.93	104.7	10.91
Works	81.6	14.56	91.1	12.75	216	22.51
Total	560.6	100	714.0	100	959.7	100

Source: Ministry of Finance- Hon. Minister of State's speech, 2007

Together with other stakeholders including International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the Federal government has set up several stimulus intervention facilities aimed at reinvigorating the agricultural sector. As a consequence, the level of public investment in agriculture in Nigeria has been rising steadily reaching 7% in 2008 budget and currently at 13% in the 2009 budget. Nevertheless both the 2008 and the 2009 budgets have suffered from implementation problems. In 2008 the budget was not fully implemented and percentage spent was under 80% of the budget figures. In 2009 the trend is even more worrisome, with the national assembly revealing that percentage spent midway into the budget is under 30%.

Unfortunately, the policy responses seem rather erratic and uncoordinated, which begs the question of to what extent they are really effective. Furthermore, several of the stimulus facilities have been designed in such a way that small-scale farmers, who need them most, cannot access them. Overall, there have been questions around the extent of transparency and participatory quotient in the development and disbursement of the packages.

#### Agriculture stimulus facilities, 2008-2009

Ministry/Division	Program	Amount
NACRDB	Small, medium and large farmers	N 34 billion
NACRDB	Loan to 389 rice farmers in the Federal Capital Territory	N 24.858 million
Federal Ministry of Agriculture	36 states and the FCT.	N 244 billion
Central Bank of Nigeria	Commercial agriculture credit facility for large-scale farmers across 36 states and the FCT. With small-scale farmers only being able to access 20% of the facility through their state governments.	N 200 billion
International Bank for Reconstruction and Development	5 pilot states over 3 years	USD 185 million
World Bank	Fadama III project in 36 states and the FCT	USD 250 million

Source: Various sources including CBN and WB websites and Newspaper reports of the announcement of these intervention facilities.

#### Recommendations

The present drive of the Nigerian government to stimulate agriculture, in combination with increasing attention for the sector at the international level provides excellent opportunities to combat rural poverty, improve the livelihoods of small scale farmers, particularly women, generate employment, increase agricultural productivity and reduce the dependence on food imports. Nonetheless, in order to achieve these, it is essential that small scale farmers' groups and civil society organisations are taken seriously and are able to actively participate in the policy processes as well as monitor their implementation.

#### Therefore the VFS consortium recommends as follows:

- The government must enact, popularise and implement a Right to Food Act;
- The government must develop and adopt a consolidated national food security policy;
- Government and/or commercial banks must guarantee access to affordable credit and fertilizer to small scale farmers, including women farmers;
- Farmer support and agriculture policies must give special attention to marginalized groups such as women, persons with disability, youth, displaced populations, widows, etc, who must be supported to secure land rights;
- The government should institutionalize ways and means for small-scale farmers and their associations to actively and directly engage in policy processes, including the design and disbursement of support facilities and allocation of agricultural budget;
- At least 60% of each of the intervention facilities at federal and state levels should go to small-scale farmers. Of this sum that should come to SSFs, a minimum of 60% of the facilities should go to small-scale agro producers while 40% should go to agro processors.



- Government should urgently set up a national agency for small-scale agriculture development to immediately undertake a national survey of small-scale agric; a needs and capacity assessment of small-scale agriculture; and design a national response strategy and development plan for small-scale agriculture that clearly addresses women's concerns.
- The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and water Resources should strengthen the Women in Agriculture Unit, to provide a national framework for addressing women's concerns through a variety of affirmative actions.
- Government must lead the way in investing in the provision of accessible extensions services to small-scale farmers across the country.
- Small-scale farmers organise into associations so as to engage strategically and constructively with government in order to benefit from programmes and initiatives of government aimed at improving their livelihoods.



**Partners:**

CBD-NGO Forum, CISCOPE, FIF, NANTS, JDPC, ActionAid PAP Partners, Activista

**Allies:**

AAEUM, MIBSSFANET, SLISSFAN Project Partners, TNI, WRAPA,

**Supported By:**

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ActionAid Nigeria (Partners Against Poverty and HungerFREE Campaign)

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