

FARMERS MANIFESTO/PETITION 2018

MANIFESTO OF NIGERIAN FARMERS ON THEIR CHALLENGES, NEEDS AND PRIORITIES.

1.0.BACKGROUND

Small Scale Farmers (SSFs) in Nigeria make up the greater number of the country's workforce population and produce over 80% of the food consumed in the country. The Nigerian agricultural sector is second largest contributor (about 24%) to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Nonetheless, these farmers appear to be the poorest constituency in Nigeria.

Small Scale Farmers have not been adequately supported over the years by successive administrations in Nigeria. Their voices are scarcely heard, neither are they adequately represented in policy-making process and in governance. This constituency has also been excluded and disempowered, while their concerns and interests are not taken into account or addressed.

Ironically, this is the same constituency that the politicians run to with different kind of promises campaigning for votes during elections even as the 2019 election approaches. Consequently, SSFs in Nigeria now rises to organize and link up with relevant national platforms with a view to enhancing their voice and increasing their capacity to influence policies in and out of the agricultural sector.

The foregoing has culminated in Nigerian farmers producing and giving themselves a **Manifesto** which articulates their needs and concerns into a comprehensive demand which political office seekers must commit to if they must secure their votes into power. This Farmers' MANIFESTO is a documentation on the specific needs of Nigerian farmers as a basis for a bargain between farmers and political office seekers, prior and after elections. This implies that farmers will expect politicians to commit to addressing the specific needs of the farming population during electioneering season which will encourage their vote, while farmers will MONITOR their fulfillment. By this, farmers are making a statement that they are no longer going to be used for election victory only to be dumped by politicians thereafter.

Therefore, this MANIFESTO is articulated to ensure that agricultural policies designed by the political class effectively target the beneficiaries (SSFs) and that farmers are empowered to hold public officers accountable.

In order to continue to produce more food for the nation, farmer's priority concerns must be addressed. Specifically, Small Scale Farmers want every Government to recognize them in setting agenda for growth and development. The opportunities are clear – global and domestic demand for food is on the increase and farming is becoming highly important to the economy in view of the dwindling oil prices. Farmers are ready too, with the potential to increase productivity and reduce reliance on imported produce. What is needed now is a Government that

understands agriculture and one that supports growth.

2.0.OUR COMMENDATION

The visible commitments and efforts of the present Government towards improving the agricultural sector through various innovative programs in the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP) is worthy of commendation. Farmers particularly appreciate the initial effort to stem the culture of policy inconsistency or summersault by accepting to continue implementation of some important programmes or interventions in the previous Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA).

However, it is noteworthy that the initial enthusiasm on the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) continuity has waned, as the implementation appears to be on hold with political interference. We believe that this could be re-energized and reorganized with the encouraging aspects thereof integrated into the Anchor Borrowers Scheme (ABS).

Similarly, while acknowledging the key role played by other government agencies such as the Nigeria Customs Service in protecting the domestic environment through border controls and effective regulation of food imports (particularly those with domestic production capacity), it is needful to intensify such import substitution efforts which has already resulted in some commodities such as rice and cassava receiving renewed investment interest from Nigerians and leading to their increase in productivity.

We equally commend the National Council of State for their vision in approving an additional support of 1 billion US Dollars to the agriculture sector in recognition of the role that the sector has played (and is still playing) in the nation's economy, and specifically, the fact that Nigeria's economic advancement and recovery from recession is directly linked majorly to the agricultural sector (among a few sectors). However, for the approved additional support to agriculture to be effective and impactful, government must consider continuous consultation and involvement of small scale farmers in decisions concerning its overall administration (utilization/application). While appreciating the risks and past failures usually associated with politicisation of the implementation of policy instruments in terms of financing, the disbursement of the funds should be need-based and not necessarily on geo-political formula or considerations.

We also commend the Federal Government's School Feeding Programme under the Social Investment Programme (SIP) as having the capacity to impact positively on farmers in terms of increase in productivity (given that local food is involved), compliment food and nutrition security for school children, and encourage enrolment of farmers' children in school, etc.

3.0.OUR OBSERVATIONS

This MANIFESTO is based on aggregated information, observations and feedback from various Farmers Organizations and Networks, as well as a study and consultation conducted by NANTS to identify the various thematic areas of government's commitments in selected agriculture policies. There was also a verse selection of thematic areas that seek to assist the farmers in determining priority areas, express concerns and identify critical needs (Key Policies, Programmes and Initiatives - KPPIs) that require resource investments to be directed; and these

processes were summarized through a validation exercise by representatives of the various concerned organizations and civil society Networks.

Farmers observe among others, that:

- i. The growth in GDP for the agriculture sector was 13% in 2015; 4.69% in 3rd quarter of 2016, 5.3% in 2017 and today's overall sector's GDP contribution is about 24%, making it one of the largest contributors to the economy, and therefore qualifies as a sector that must be given increased and adequate attention.
- ii. The incessant dwindling of the budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector¹ in the economy has continued with debilitating consequence on the funding of key projects and programs under the various government policies including the Agricultural Promotion Policy (APP). Allocation to the agricultural sector and farmers have over 5 years not exceeded 2 percent even with government's commitment to the Malabo Declaration of at least 10 percent, while appropriated budget line items and capital projects have not fully benefited small holder farmers. More so, some investments in agriculture are also sometimes opaque and difficult to monitor.
- iii. Nigeria's Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP 2017 - 2020) highlighted specific agriculture-related goals e.g., that Nigeria would be self-sufficient in tomato paste by 2017; rice by 2018; and wheat by 2020; and that Nigeria would be a net exporter of rice, cashew nuts, groundnuts, cassava and vegetable oil by 2020. However, it is lamentable that 2017 has passed and Nigeria is still a net importer of tomato and from all indications, the other targets appear unattainable. Investments and enabling environment that should have propelled the realization of such targets or the mobilization of the private sector is either poor or completely lacking.
- iv. There is persistent case of ineffective targeting of SSFs in agricultural policies and programs especially with regards to access to government facilities (intervention funds and credit) which finally end up in the hands of 'absentee', 'portfolio' or 'political' farmers. This incapacitates and shortchanges the real farmers that are producing over 80 per cent of food consumed and traded in the country.
- v. The practice of non-inclusive policy process has continued unabatedly. Many of the agricultural policies and programmes are initiated from the top with little or no involvement of target beneficiaries (SSFs) at design stage to ensure effective and early understanding of their needs. Such non-inclusion impedes buy-in and proper ownership for effective implementation.
- vi. In view of the fact that majority of farmers operate in the informal sector, many social safety nets and protections do not involve them. The budget process as well has become very irrelevant to the farmer because it does not appear to provide any direct impact on them.

¹ Annual budgetary allocation to the agricultural sector has not exceeded 2% in the past four years.

- vii. Farmers have constantly been using traditional systems and methods of farming and this is attributable to limited access to information, technology and knowledge on improved inputs, agronomic practices and access to markets.
- viii. The Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) which is one of the main agricultural programs of government that is directly and positively impacting on farmers appears to have come to a hold. This is attributed to the fact that it was riddled with implementation challenges such as (i) late delivery on inputs, (ii) distant redemption centers, (iii) poor quality of inputs, etc.
- ix. The Anchor Borrowers Scheme (ABS) is a good initiative directly targeted at farmers. However, it appears to be not only exposed to similar challenges as GESS, but also suffering scale issues, as its coverage is still very low. It is obvious that the capacity of the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to continue to anchor its implementation is limited.
- x. Farmers are yet to see proactive efforts of governments at all levels to find a lasting solution to the various conflicts including the herdsmen/farmers upheavals that have become a serious phenomenon in many states of the federation; and this has serious implications on food security in Nigeria.
- xi. With the current level of importation of goods and commodities that rural farmers in the country produce, the small scale farmers will continue to be impoverished, with reduced markets for their own products. The continued importation of large consignments of maize and crude palm oil (CPO), the production of which could be mobilized locally, is therefore not acceptable!

4.0.THE CURRENT CONCERNS, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS OF FARMERS

The current needs, concerns and challenges of smallholder farmers in Nigeria are herein categorized as follows: (a) On-farm Productivity stagnation, (b) Financial/Credit access, (c) production technology and adoption, (d) Market access and post-harvest losses, (f) policy realities and inconsistency, (g) lack of Farmer Voice capacity, (h) climate change and resilience, (i) poverty among farmers, and (j) Value chain bottlenecks. (k) Lack of title to their farm lands

- i. **On-farm Productivity**
The production and productivity of crop and livestock commodities are still below their potential. While rice has moved towards 4tons/ha, it is still largely 1.2 to 1.5tons/ha among most small scale farmers.
- ii. **Access to Finance for Farmers**
Finance, both from public and private sources remains a big issue of concern and challenge to farmers. There is no specific provision in the APP on innovative finance for SSFs besides the Anchor Borrowers Scheme. There is no emphasis on single digit credit provision and other incentives directed at SSFs. Private money-lending institutions (banks and micro finance institutions) are grossly ill-equipped to provide required funding for agriculture. There is no easy access to credit for farmers (single

digit, double digit floor). With regards to land titling, ascertaining the value of farms as a collateral, and monetizing them in business transactions have remained hectic.

iii. Agric Insurance

Lack of insurance coverage for farm operations is a huge challenge that results in farmers' loss of produce to some natural and human disasters (such as flood and destruction of farms by cattle herds). The foregoing is also attributable to poor education of farmers on the importance of insurance coverage.

iv. Farmers Exclusion from Budgetary Process

Farmers' voices are currently excluded from the process and benefits of the annual budgetary processes. While their voices are not part of the appropriation process, the allocative and release effect of the annual budget is rendered irrelevant to SSFs.

v. Production technology access and adoption

Farmers (SSFs) still carry out on-farm agricultural operations manually. The use of more efficient equipment and farm practices is still largely unavailable to the smallholder farmers of Nigeria due to high cost of services and scale of farm operations which does not lend itself to full mechanization. Consequently, farmers are trapped in poor production quantity and quality.

vi. Market access and post-harvest losses

Access to produce and financial markets are still critical challenges to farmers. The absence or inadequate provision of rural infrastructure leads to large produce (post-harvest) losses, and poor market prices at farm gate level. The nature and spread of market and rural infrastructure is inadequate to support the market needs of producers in rural locations in the country. This leads to large volume of post-harvest losses. Therefore farmer exploitations by middlemen continually dampen farm gate prices and trap them in post-season poverty.

vii. Macroeconomic Impact

The devaluation of the currency (Naira) appears to have increased the cost of farm operations due to high import content of the farming inputs. So, there are generally high costs in the business environment heavily affecting farmers; and these range from the high cost of credit to its unavailability, high cost of energy, high exchange rate, multiple taxation, etc. Coupled with the above is the exploitation of farmers by market players due to poor regulatory oversight of standard regulation and enforcement agencies to ensure remuneration.

viii. Policy Realities and Inconsistency

There is disconnect between policy implementation and the needs of small scale farmers. This means that farmers hardly understand and do not benefit from policy incentives. The level of coverage of intervention programs such as the Anchor Borrowers Scheme is too low to make significant impact on the smallholder community and their scale of operation, while the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme has potentials and should therefore be reconsidered.

ix. **Access to Land**

Access to land for agricultural intensification is still a challenge for farmers, especially female farmers because of the cost and access of opening land for expansion. The role and operation of State and Federal Governments in opening new farming lands have slowed down and this affects the access to land to farmers.

x. **Climate Change and Farmer resilience.**

The impact of climate change on the Nigerian smallholder farmer is real and has far reaching effects than being considered by the government. From loss of farmlands due to extreme temperatures, production season fluctuations as well as flood and desertification, farmers have been prone to issues of adaptation, which capacity they lack. Beyond this, the cost of weather information is beyond the ability of many SSFs.

xi. **Poverty**

Farmers are trapped in poverty due to the combined effects of poor policy implementation, poor markets and infrastructure provision for value addition, lack of credit as well as high cost of business environment which reduce their gross margins and therefore keep them within the poverty trap.

5.0.THE STATE AND DYNAMICS OF COMMODITY VALUE CHAIN

The key agricultural commodities with extensive farmer participation in Nigeria include roots and tubers (cassava, yam, potato and cocoyam); grains (rice, maize, soybeans millet and sorghum); livestock (cattle, sheep and goat); poultry, tree crops (oil palm, cocoa, coconut, orange, etc) and fruit and vegetables such as tomatoes, cabbage, carrot, cucumber, leafy vegetables (telferia or pumpkin, etc).

With respect to agriculture commodity value chain, SSFs observe as follows:

i. **Value chains underdevelopment:**

All the commodities have huge export potentials many of which are being informally exploited, however, the value chains of all the commodities are still largely undeveloped and rudimentary.

ii. **Weak infrastructure:**

This is a major factor militating against the development of the agricultural value chains and market, particularly the poor road, rail and water transportation networks as well as power (electricity) infrastructure, including those linking farm gates to the market.

iii. **Absence of CPZ**

The absence of or dysfunctional Commodity Processing Zones (CPZ) has affected commodity value chain and markets development.

iv. **Weak Extension Service**

The persistent weak or non-existent extension system has remained a weak link to productivity and value chain growth of all the commodities.

v. **High Cost of production inputs:**

Inputs are still a major cost concern for smallholder producers. Given the high import component, farm incomes and profitability are affected, even as use is constrained by availability, reliability and affordability. This affects the access and utilization of improved inputs and good agricultural practices in production.

vi. **Processing:**

The processing of agricultural commodities is faced with high cost of equipment and near absence of locally fabricated efficient small processing technologies. The national research and development institutions have not been patenting their technological research outputs for commercial production of prototypes. The gap between research and the users (farmers) are too wide.

vii. **Markets:**

Weak market linkages also persist; consequently, most commodities are still consumed directly in local forms without meaningful commercial value addition or large scale industrial use. The wholesale market is annotated and exploitative because the farmer is a price taker. The offtaker regime also presents a new challenge of price management in a contract system in an unstable macroeconomic and price environment. The farmer's inability to access direct organized markets is due, among many factors, to poor post-harvest infrastructure, non-connection to market information system, poor quality produce, retail market fragmentation and absence of time and location value infrastructure (storage/aggregation, transport logistics, etc).

viii. **Insecurity:**

This has become a major threat to the production, movement and utilization of produce through its value chain. Poor security has increased the cost of production (including the costs of human lives), which creates increasing discouragement for producers.

6.0.OUR DEMANDS

In the light of the above, we the Nigerian farmers demand as follows:

i. **Increase in Budgetary Allocation to Agriculture**

In view of the continuous nose-diving nature of budgetary allocations to the agricultural sector in the past few years, there should be visible efforts at increasing allocation to the agricultural sector in line with Nigeria's Maputo/Malabo commitments.

ii. **At least 60% of agric funds/facilities should be dedicated to SSFs**

Given the persistent poor access by many small scale farmers to the various funds for agricultural development (which end up in the hands of commercial/political farmers), we demand that sixty percent (60%) of the agriculture investments in budgets as well as in any intervention facility created by the Federal and State level Governments should be earmarked for SSFs and small scale agriculture. Importantly, rather than the usual processes that subject such funding to political romance between the Federal and State Governments, and/or Banks (where insider abuse and or huge access hurdles are inherent), the funds should be administered through credible and trusted farmers organizations and be directed at the following thematic priority areas: (i) inputs supply to farmers, (ii) extension services delivery revival, and (iii) small scale processing.

Pursuant to this, the capacity of the relevant farmers organizations should be strengthened to enable them effectively administer the funds to their members while government maintains constant monitoring on the process. More so, the receiving Banks should be selected through clearly set out criteria which includes track record of agriculture-credit (lending) administration, development orientation, alignment and relationship with small scale farmers.

iii. Create Policy/Programme Space for SSFs

The SSFs should be involved in policy dialogue and actively participate in decision making and implementation processes that affect their lives and livelihoods. In addition, the farmers must be given the opportunity to determine the direction of investments or influence the choice of targets and or priorities in order to guarantee dynamism, growth and development in the agricultural sector.

iv. SSFs should Benefit from all social-capital Schemes

Since social benefits such as National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS), Pension Scheme and others are not favoring farmers, government should formulate policy and design a plan that will guarantee social insurance coverage for SSFs and this should be publicized.

v. Establishment of Small Scale Agric Development Agency

We call for the establishment of a National Agency for Small Scale Agricultural Development by the government to immediately undertake a national survey of small scale agriculture, capacity assessment of small scale farmers and in turn design a national response strategy and development plan.

vi. Revitalizing the Agric Extension Service

Agricultural extension service delivery should be reformed to reduce the wide extension-farmer ratio and facilitate access to extension agent contact by farmers. The reform should involve restructuring the Agricultural Development Program (ADP), as well as training and increasing the number of extension agents in the country.

vii. Sustainability of Intervention Schemes (ABS, GESS)

The successes achieved in the Growth Enhancement Support Scheme (GESS) should

be noted and improved upon, with a view to ensuring that more farmers are registered and more inputs are made available to SSFs through the Scheme. It could also be integrated into the Anchor Borrowers Scheme to broaden its reach. The challenges common to intervention programmes could be removed by:

- a. The institutionalization of the schemes through a legislative process.
- b. The farmers' registration bottleneck (such as the demand of various forms of identity documents) should be streamlined and simplified.
- c. Time-bound inputs delivery at the beginning of the farming seasons.
- d. Redemption centers should be expanded to ensure they are in close proximity to the farmer communities.

In addition to the GESS, previous investments in agriculture such as the Nigeria Investment Risk Sharing and Lending Scheme (NIRSAL), the Anchor Borrowers Scheme, among others cannot be said to have been properly directed, and therefore have not fully achieved their objectives of creating expected impact on agriculture and the SSFs. Access to these facilities have been impaired by bureaucratic bottlenecks and policy hurdles including huge documentations requirement, favouritism that often seek to politicize such facilities. There is a need for independent monitoring and evaluation of these programmes (and indeed all other policies and programmes) to assess their outcomes and impact over the implementation period. This has therefore become imperative, and is so demanded.

viii. Guaranteed Access to Land by farmers

The Land Use Act needs be reviewed and amended to grant easy access to land for small scale farmers in general and women small scale farmers in particular. We suggest that the Act could be removed from the Constitution since it is a capital regulation. Similarly, the issue of land grabbing should be addressed and discouraged.

ix. Blue Print/Action Plan for the Support/Growth of SSFs

There must be a documented plan of action that will clearly indicate how improved and increased support to enable access to inputs, credits, extension services, climate change impact, adaptation and mitigation support, and market access for small scale farmers will be achieved. This plan of action must be designed and presented to farmers' representative by any incoming Government within 90 days in office.

x. Roadmap for Crises/Dispute Resolution: Cattle Ranching

The cases of deaths and displacements of small scale farmers recorded as a result of the communal/herdsmen crises in various communities across the country have affected livelihoods of several communities; therefore, a roadmap for preventing and in some cases ending such crises situations must be put in place and effectively implemented. As farmers, we believe that the Cattle Ranching Scheme is the best way to realize the potential of the livestock subsector for increased productivity, employment generation, increased value enhancement and income generation.

xi. Improvement in Rural Infrastructure

More rural infrastructure especially roads from farming communities to markets should be constructed to ease access to farm produce. Other farm infrastructure such as irrigation facilities on farms, clean water, basic health facilities etc. should be provided. The need for more investments on simple farm technologies is critical in order to encourage youth in agriculture, but also to increase productivity. In terms of tractorization for agriculture mechanization, sophisticated machinery should be de-emphasized given that it leads to destruction of the soil. Rather adaptable mechanization models should be patented and replicated by the National Council for Agricultural Mechanization (NCAM) and other fabricators as well as relevant research Institutes to produce technologies into patency for commercial multiplication. Government should mobilize the political will to move such technologies from shelf to be multiplied commercially to improve acquisition.

xii. Reduction on the Importation of Foreign Foods

The trend of continuously importing agricultural produce that farmers in the country have the capacity to produce is killing the domestic agricultural industry. Therefore, while we commend the present administration for the level of restrictions already applied, we demand that all importation of basic cereals, foods and crude palm oil (CPO) that can be produced in the country should stop. More so, all waivers and concessions on such commodities should be totally eliminated.

In addition, there is an urgent need for coordinated efforts among the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD), the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI) and the Federal Ministry of Finance (FMF) towards ensuring the effective management of policies and control in order to protect and encourage domestic investment and galvanize competition in the agriculture sector. This is without prejudice to various commitments by Nigeria at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the ECOWAS Trade Liberalization Scheme (ETLS) and the Common External Tariff (CET) as well as the upcoming Continental Free Trade Agreement (CFTA), but with the realization of the respective Trade Defense Measures accompanying these trade agreements.

xiii. Creation and functionality of One-Stop Input Centers

The the One-stop-shop initiative as a key component of the nations development strategy (vision 20:2020) should be revived as it provides the farmer a common place to have all agricultural needs (including inputs and extension advisory) on a spot. Private sector should be encouraged to rent such facilities and run them as business with effective regulatory monitoring from government and civil society organizations so that adulterated or sub-standard products and services are controlled or eliminated.

xiv. Staple Crops Processing Zones/Centers

In order to consolidate current efforts in value chain development, the Staple Crops Processing Zones should be revitalized and completed. This will enhance value addition and market access for farmers.

xv. Addressing the subject of Insecurity

Government is invited to consider (as a matter of urgency) the negative implications of the ongoing herdsmen-farmers conflicts which has decimated farming and productivity in the North Central (popularly known as the food basket of Nigeria), as well as the Boko Haram (insurgency) and the shrinking of lake chad in the North East which have also displaced farmers from their farming communities. These factors have grave consequences on food security, employment, livelihoods and overall development in Nigeria, especially given that the two affected zones are the major food producing and supply zones in Nigeria.

7.0. OWNERSHIP OF THE MANIFESTO

This MANIFESTO was collectively produced by and belongs to all farmers, especially small scale farmers in Nigeria, as well as farmers’ organizations and networks, and other farmer-interest stakeholders and groups in Nigeria.

As farmers, we have come to realize the political capacity and potentials we wield. For this reason, we have unanimously decided to continue to mobilize and educate our members and constituencies while strengthening the resolve to utilize our electoral powers positively and effectively by voting into power political office seekers who share our vision and are truly committed to our cause.

We shall be open to dialogue sessions and to continuously take stock of policies and articulate targets, set agenda for incumbent Governments and Political office seekers’ consideration on emerging issues and best agriculture investment policies, practices and project priorities that benefit farmers specifically and agriculture as a whole.

Important Note:

In view of the above, we unanimously declare that any political office seeker at any level, interested in asking for our votes and or support, may need to select and endorse some or all of the demands that he/she would implement when voted into power. Kindly note, we shall keep a copy of the endorsed document and use same as a monitoring instrument thereafter.

COMMITMENT AND ENDORSEMENT

I have read and properly understood these demands and hereby commit myself to implementing the following clauses on or before the end of three (3 years) in office if voted into power.

Clauses/demands that I am committed to implement are:

.....
.....

.....

Name:

Designation (Elective Office Sought for):

Signed:

ThisDay of20__

1. All Farmers Association of Nigeria – AFAN
2. Association of Small Scale Agroc Producers in Nigeria – ASSAPIN
3. Nigeria Association of Women Farmers – NAWF
4. Small Scale Women Farmers of Nigeria – SWOFON
5. Voices for Food Security Campaign – VFS
6. CADDP Non State Actors Secretariat – CNC
7. Federation of Commodity Associations of Nigeria – FECAN
8. National Association of Nigerian Traders – NANTS

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