

Imoke approves 50,000 hectares of land for palm oil farming



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Governor Liyel Imoke of Cross River State has confirmed the approval of 50,000 hectares of land belonging to three communities in Biase and Akamkpa Local Government Councils of the state to a Singaporean firm, Wilmer International Ltd, for palm oil farming.

Inaugurating the Calaro, Ibiae and Biase oil palm plantations, the governor said the foreign firm has global experience in modern oil palm plantation, processing and harvesting and that the company would partner PZ Cussons Ltd.

The plantations will have the capacity to employ over 20, 000 persons, which is equivalent to the work force of the Cross River State government, Imoke said.

He said the investment will transform the communities to the top oil producers of oil palm in the country.

The governor disclosed that the state intends to create an agricultural cluster unmatched by any other state in Nigeria and that its partnership with the private sector is its first resolve in a unique way and is rooted in a concept for economic growth and commercial agriculture.

He also explained that the state has established an outdoor scheme for local farmers to have access to financial assistance and agricultural inputs with the view of achieving long term sustainability.

Minister of Agriculture Mr. Akin Adesina said the venture, which is under the economic agenda of the Federal Government, is intended to change the fortune of agriculture and make it a worthwhile venture.

According to the minister who was represented by the Team Leader, Oil Palm Value Chain, Dr. Dickson Okolo, the Federal Government has made available N36 million to cover 250 hectares to wipe out deficit; provided 4 million nuts to nursery estates for planting next year; and that the state is getting 166,123,000 seedlings at N25 million to raise seedlings as well as support for the replacement of several wild grove plants in pilot areas.