

<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/about-us>**DAILY TRUST**<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/>

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

Like 1.2M

Follow @daily_trust

<https://www.oldmutual.com.ng/>[Home https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/](https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/) / [Eko Trust https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/topics/eko-trust](https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/topics/eko-trust)

ADVERTISEMENT

Femi Akinola, Lagos

By Bola Ojuola, Akure | Dec 9, 2015 9:55 AM

When Michelin, one of the world's leading tyre manufacturing companies left Nigeria in 2007, not a few people feared that many of the company's Nigerian workers would be thrown into the labour market. At the time, many Nigerians were employed by the company then known as Michelin Development Company Limited (MDCL) and owned 100 percent by Michelin Nigeria Limited.

Michelin Nigeria Limited had actually acquired majority shareholdings in Utagba-uno Rubber Estate Limited in 1961, Osse River Estate Limited in 1988 and Waterside Rubber Estate Limited in 1996.

But in 2006, when Michelin decided that it was going to leave Nigeria, SIFCA, an agric business group active in rubber, palm oil and sugar industries with large expertise in management of large plantations and production of goods, with headquarters in Cote d'Ivoire, had become majority shareholder in Rubber Estate Nigeria Limited (RENL). So, SIFCA became a majority shareholder in RENL, thereby changing ownership and management from Michelin.

Today, the Rubber Estate Nigeria Limited (RENL) still operates as a corporate entity. Although large percentage of the shares belongs to Nigerians, Michelin maintains about 20 percent, even to this day. The company has 2,300 permanent staff in its employ, with additional 1,500 contract staff. More than 92 per cent of the workers are Nigerians.

RENL has expanded its operation with more than 17,000 hectares of rubber plantation credited to its

name. Eko Trust was recently at the production site of the company in Araromi-Obu in Odigbo Local Government Area of Ondo State.

The Managing Director, Eric Hocepiéd, a 57-year-old Belgian who seemed to have blended so easily to the Nigerian society, noted that RENL which is the first in rubber plantation in the country, is part of SIFCA operating in four African countries. These countries, he said, are Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria.

According to Hocepiéd, the company produces 120 tons of rubber per day and about 30,000 tons annually. "For the year 2015, we have already met that target," he said.

He said the plantation started in 1965 and was managed by some people before Michelin took over. "I was with Michelin in 1992 as Project Manager in Edo State and was popularly known as 'Iron man'," he proudly told Eko Trust, adding that Nigeria had become 'home' to him.

Hocepiéd left the country to work abroad and came back four years ago to head RENL.

In Nigeria, he said the company operates in four different states including Ogun, Ondo, Edo and Delta States. Though the company's plantations are located in three of the state, the production factory is located in Ondo State. "We have 11,000 hectares, 9,000 producing and the rest mature," he said, adding that the company recently acquired more plantations; Odutola farm in Ogun State and Urhonigbe farm in Edo State.

Currently, he said, the company exports more than 90 percent of the rubber products while the rest are sold locally as raw materials for the manufacturing of shoes and other products.

Hocepiéd also said that Nigeria produces the best rubber in the world. "The soil is good, climate condition and rain, all these makes it the best yield in the world."

With a global production of about 10 million tons of rubber per year, Africa produces less than 5 percent with Asia leading the world chart and Ivory Coast leading the African chart, Hocepiéd believes the company in Nigeria can still expand. "We need more land to develop especially for the out growers."

These out growers are individual rubber farm owners. RENL, it was learnt, supervises more than 1,722 rubber out growers covering an area of 3,246 hectares of private plantation in Nigeria.

According to the Agriculture Manager of the company, Godwin Onumaegbu, there is a department in the company which assists people in the communities to plant rubber trees. He said the idea was to help the communities around the company to have at least two, three or four hectares or more of rubber farms for each person.

He added that the rubber business is a lucrative one which is fast taking over from oil. "The oil boom is dwindling and going down the drain which means government should redirect its attention to agriculture, in all facets, to save the country's economy," he stated.

He said as an industrial company which is into the business of tapping, processing and exporting of rubber, RENL also helps the communities by assisting the people to plant rubber trees at subsidized rates.

“In a few years time when most of the trees are matured, it will cater for the people of the community, thereby reducing crime. You need to empower people from the local government to state and federal, and most of these people especially youths need financial assistance and this is where the government can come in,” said Onumaegbu.

The Public Relations Manager of the company, Dayo Ikusika who is an indigene of the town and has been in the employment of RENL for twenty years, also told Eko Trust that the company maintains good relationship with the community.

Ikusika whose father served and retired in the RENL, said majority of the indigenes are farmers who were dealing in cocoa, but had now shifted to rubber planting. “They are getting along well with the company,” he said.

The Production Manager, Abel Anigala, said the end process from the raw materials is the production of dry crumb rubber acceptable to customers. “This dry crumb is what is exported according to customer’s specification and this is done through the company sales office in Lagos,” he said.

But Hocepied is bothered especially by what he sees in the villages. He believes government should concentrate and develop the villages.

“The cities are developing but not villages. People in the villages sleep between 6.00 and 7.00p.m. because there is no light, and the youth believe their lives could be better in the city, and that is why they flock into the city. If you don’t maintain the villages, you can’t develop, and this is now affecting the country.”

He added: “At RENL, we have tried to develop the community; we give scholarships, organise competitions and execute community projects. Some of the projects we have done included buildings constructions such as police station, town hall, health center, palace, sinking of boreholes, grading of community roads and civic centres, among others.

But Hocepied believes that the youth still need more encouragement, “We are doing our best but we must all develop together. We are ready to develop Nigeria but everybody must be carried along,” he said, adding that Nigeria needs to plan its future.

“The best way to plan your future is to plant a rubber tree. Rubber, unlike other crops, is not perishable,” he concluded.

Related

Mimiko urges rubber company to generate power
(<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/mimiko-urges-rubber-company-to-generate-power.html>)

Mimiko urges rubber company to generate power
(<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/mimiko-urges-rubber-company-to-generate-power-3.html>)

Kidnappers abduct matron, demand N35m
(<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/kidnappe...abduct-matron-demand-n35m.html>)

Download Daily Trust News App



(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.dailytrust.app&utm_source=dailytrust_site&utm_campaign=app_campaign&pcampaignid=MKT-Other-global-all-co-prtnr-py-PartBadge-Mar2515-1)

(<https://itunes.apple.com/lookup?id=1457009>)

Other-global-all-co-prtnr-py-

PartBadge- (https://itunes.a
Mar2515-1) trust/id1457009

Share this article

Join us on

Like 1.2M

Follow @daily_trust

Join our whatsapp group here for Breaking News, Exclusives , others (<https://chat.whatsapp.com/GJSPrn2M4kcBI4VMtffsBU>)

Advertisement

Advertisement

Advertisement

Advertisement

Advertisement

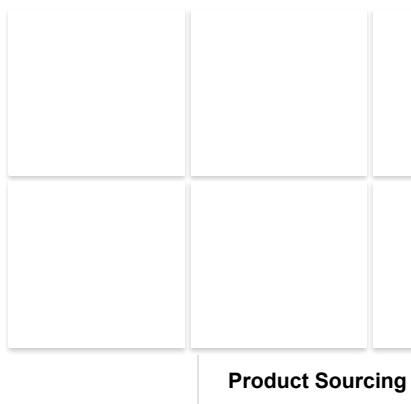
Advertisement

Advertisement

Advertisement

Top Posts

- Forget the pretence, APC will swim and sink on Tinubu (I) (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/forget-the-pretence-apc-will-swim-and-sink-on-tinubu-i.html>)
- Buhari suspends EFCC chair, Magu (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/breaking-buhari-suspends-magu.html>)
- Female NNPC staff ‘sexually abuse’ househelp in Kaduna (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/female-nnpc-staff-sexually-abuse-househelp-in-kaduna.html>)
- EFCC: Cops who would likely succeed Magu (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/efcc-cops-that-would-likely-succeed-magu.html>)
- Why we increased fuel price — FG (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/why-we-increased-fuel-price-fg.html>)
- 10 prominent politicians who died of COVID-19 (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/10-prominent-politicians-who-died-of-covid-19.html>)
- Emir Bayero returns Dan Agundi, Ciroma to Kano Emirate Council (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/emir-bayero-returns-dan-agundi-ciroma-to-kano-emirate-council.html>)
- COVID-19: FG lists fresh guidelines for reopening of schools (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/covid-19-fg-lists-fresh-guidelines-for-reopening-of-schools.html>)
- Magu's suspension: Mohammed Umar takes over as EFCC boss (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/mohammed-umar-takes-over-as-efcc-boss.html>)
- StarTimes reviews subscription prices, introduces new channels (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/startimes-reviews-subscription-prices-introduces-new-channels.html>)



Just In

The pandemic has accelerated demands for a more skilled work force (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/the-pandemic-has-accelerated-demands-for-a-more-skilled-work-force.html>)

Delta governor, wife recover from COVID-19 (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/delta-governor-wife-recover-from-covid-19.html>)

Daily

Week Day Specials

Saturday Specials

Sunday Specials

Exclusive

1998 - 2020 Media Trust Limited. All rights reserved. SBU.

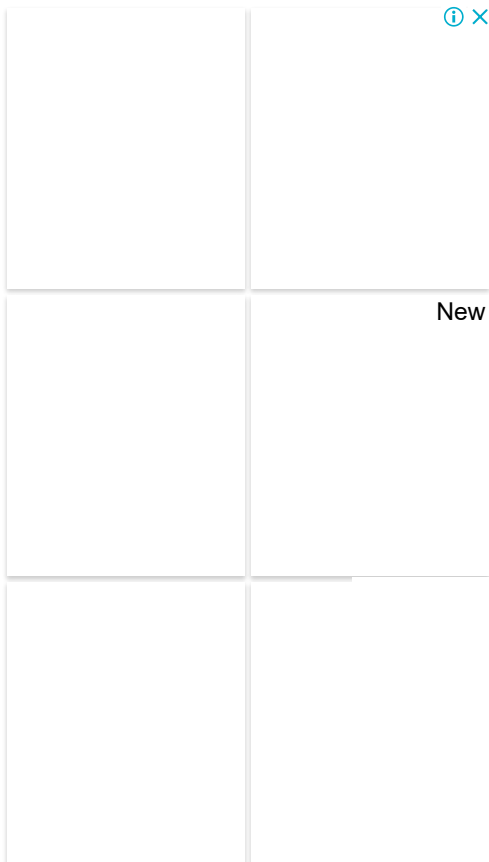
☺

Reps grill NDDC boss over extra-budgetary spending (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/reps-grill-nddc-boss-over-extra-budgetary-spending.html>)

Nigeria yet to implement OPEC oil cut agreement – FG (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/nigeria-yet-to-implement-opec-oil-cut-agreement-fg.html>)

Aisha Buhari seeks special funds to stop malnutrition (<https://www.dailytrust.com.ng/aisha-buhari-seeks-special-funds-to-stop-malnutrition.html>)

[See More \(https://dailytrust.com.ng/headlines\)](https://dailytrust.com.ng/headlines)



Product Sour
Eas!

Complain about a story or Report an error and/or correction: +2348189301900 (Whatsapp and SMS only) Email: dtonline@dailytrust.com

DISCLAIMER: Comments on this thread are that of the maker and they do not necessarily reflect the organizations stand or views on issues.

Sponsored

Remember Him? Take A Deep Breath Before You See What He Looks Like Now

Refinance Gold

Man Orders Pizza Every Day for 10 Years Until Employees Realize Something

Journalistate

Dog Breeds You Should Avoid Bringing Into Your Home At All Costs

Sizzify

The World's Worst Tattoo Fails: Try Not to Laugh

Dailyforest

Celebs Who Lost All Their Money And Can No Longer Afford Their Extravagant Lifestyles

Bedtimez

Woman Lives 40 Years With Her Husband, Then FBI Tells Her Who He Really Is

0 Comments Daily Trust Privacy Policy Login

Recommend Tweet Share Sort by Newest

Start the discussion...

LOG IN WITH

OR SIGN UP WITH DISQUS

Name

Be the first to comment.

Subscribe Add Disqus to your site