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## Rubber exploration can boost Nigeria's economy

Posted By: HAKEEM GBADAMOSI on: November 06, 2012 In: Community Mirror No Comments

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A private organisation, Rubber Estate Nigeria Limited has revealed that Nigeria's economy could receive an appreciable boost through maximum exploration of rubber plantation in the country. The Managing Director of the organisation, Eric Hocepied disclosed this during a tour of rubber plantations in Araromi Obu, Ondo State and Iludun in Ogun State; saying Nigerian economy could be improved upon with maximum rubber production.

Hocepied disclosed that stakeholders in the industry have concluded all arrangements to partner with a France-based financial institution, the Agence Francaise Development (AFD) for the development of the country's rubber sector to boost its economy.

He said the organisation will assist in organising out growers that would help in increasing the production in the country, saying Nigeria have capacity for production of 18 million hectares of rubber annually, out of which a paltry 13, 500 hectares are being cultivated presently. However, the management of the Rubber Estates Nigeria Limited which have rubber plantations in Ondo, Ede, Ogun and Delta states, said the involvement of out growers would facilitate a drastic improvement in the production capacity of the country.

According to Hocepied, the entire rubber producing countries in Africa only produced four per cent of the total world production, while Taiwan, with 27 per cent, is the largest rubber producer in the world. He pointed out that Ivory Coast is the largest producer of rubber in Africa as it produced 50 per cent of the total production, while Nigeria produced only 11 per cent.

He, however, explained that many of the rubber farms in the country were owned by the organisation with few of them being owned by local farmers around the plantations but said the organisation had commenced a programme known as out grower programme which is aimed at encouraging local farmers around its plantations, to engage in planting rubber trees. He disclosed that the programme had produced about 880 out growers, while 2300 hectares of land were planted from 2006 to 2011.

He said the involvement of AFD in the out grower programme would make finance available and also increase the participation of out growers from the present 15 per cent to the maximum level it could attain.

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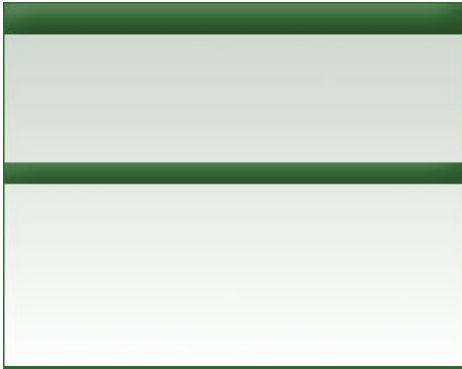
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