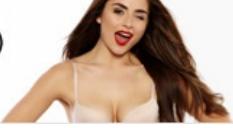




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Industrialisation: Edo Govt meets stakeholders over biochemical industry

By Dorothy Egbobamwonyi

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BENIN CITY - The Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hon. Abdul Orah has held a meeting with stakeholders and representatives of neighbouring communities at Uhunmwode Local Government Area where Ekha Biochemical Industries Limited would be sited.

At the meeting which recorded a huge attendance, the project, the proposed out grower scheme, employment opportunities and other salient issues that would be beneficial to the host communities formed the basis of the assemblage.

Addressing the various representatives at the meeting, the Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Hon. Abdul Orah who reiterated Comrade Adams Aliyu Oshiomhole administration commitment to bringing development to the nooks and crannies of the state said the 10,000 ha parcel of land allocated to Ekha Biochemical Industries Limited at Ehor Forest Reserve was for the purpose of developing a cassava based business project.

While stressing that it was going to be for the purpose of growing cassava and developing its value chain, he maintained that this was one of the flagship project Edo State is promoting under the Agricultural Transformation Agenda which has both the Federal Government, World Bank and International Finance Corporation (IFC) support.

The commissioner who emphasized that the purpose of the State Government is to boost the socio-economic environment thus bringing prosperity to majority of Edo people in all sectors of the economy especially through agriculture, noted that other communities who are interested in the out-growers will help source for more lands for the purpose as the cassava the company requires to run the factory will be enormous, while the ministry would always be on hand to monitor the process to know how many jobs are created and how it affected the people and the larger society positively.

Responding to the views canvassed by of the various representatives at the meeting, Hon. Orah gave them the assurance that the company cannot source for foreign labour where the local labour is available, adding that the state government had signed an agreement with investors that if by specific time the land they are allocated are not put into use, such would be revoked and allocated to another who is ready to utilize it for the benefit of Edo people as well as broaden the economic base of the state.



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He, however directed that a committee be constituted under the vice-chairman of Uhunmwode, Hon. Walter Osarenkhoe with two persons from each of the affected communities which he said must be submitted to the ministry by Monday, August 18, 2014 for further discussion.

Also speaking, the chairman of Biochemical Industries Limited, Dr. Sam Aiwekhoе hinged the development of any society on agricultural development giving example of Osun and Niger States who are only 25% poor owing to their agricultural success recorded over the years.

While describing Edo down to Kogi State as the best cassava land in the nation, Dr. Aiwekhoе assures that the various host communities stand to gain in the setting of the company in the area, he said a minimum of 30 tonnes per hectare was expected and assured them of better life when the industry becomes operational.

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