

**COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE 2-DAY
CONFERENCE OF THE WOMEN ENTERPRISE ALLIANCE ON
RETHINKING PARADIGM SHIFT IN AGRICULTURE &
INITIATIVES TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY ON THE 26TH
AND 27TH JULY 2022 AT LADI KWALI HALL, SHERATON
HOTEL, ABUJA- NIGERIA.**





PREAMBLE

The 4th WenA Conference took place at the Sheraton Hotel Abuja from Tuesday, 26th July to Wednesday, 27th July 2022 with the theme “Rethinking Paradigm Shift in Agriculture and Initiatives to Enhance Food Security”. The conference's objective is to foster sustainable growth and development within the agricultural sector through innovation and technology to develop the agricultural business value chain.

The conference was declared open by Her Excellency, Aisha Babangida, the founder of Women Enterprise Alliance (WenA). The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood Abubakar delivered the opening remark. His keynote address was centered on Agri-business in developing and emerging countries. He emphasized the need for an enabling environment for small-holder farmers and reiterated the government's commitment to ensuring food security and sustainability.

The Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman Hussein Adamu in the first-panel session offered educative perspectives on water and other resources efficiency in the Nigerian agricultural sector reiterating the absolute need for sustainable, climate-smart solutions in a fast-changing world.

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES

The key objectives of the conference were:

- To foster sustainable growth and development of Agri-SMEs through innovation and technology.
- Identify investment opportunities for the expansion and growth of agribusinesses.
- Agribusiness value chain development
- Create an enabling environment for access to market for agribusinesses.



KEYNOTES & PANEL DISCUSSIONS

The Conference also featured a presentation by Mr. Valor Iduh, the Senior Trade Adviser, Embassy of France who spoke about the trends and challenges in exporting goods from Nigeria. Key-note addresses were delivered by the MD/CEO of Bank of Industry, represented by Mr. King Jack, the Regional Manager, Bank of Industry, who spoke on Agricultural Finance and Risk Management, and Mr. Israel Kidron, the MD/CEO of ONIDA Agriculture and Aquaculture Solution who discussed on modernization of irrigation, the key to efficient water management for improved crop production in Nigeria.

The 2-day event featured workshop sessions on innovation in farming, agric publications, and organic farming certification.

The Conference was attended by over 300 participants, among whom are major stakeholders in the agricultural ecosystem. 4 papers were presented during the agric publication workshop. These include: "A global perspective on sustainable water and fisheries: transitioning beyond existing paradigm to an integrated, ecosystem approach by Prof. Rasheed Ojutiku, "Rethinking food security enhancement: the importance of sound management of resources" by Prof Abigail Jirgi, "Rethinking Paradigm shift in agriculture and initiatives to enhance food security (crop production perspective)" by Dr. Daniya Emmanuel and Rethinking Paradigm shift in Agriculture and Initiatives to Enhance Food Security: The Food Science and Technology Perspective by Dr. Mrs. Nonye Anumba.

There were four panel sessions, they include;

1. Sustainable Agriculture: Towards Food Security amidst Pandemic and Climate Change.
2. Irrigation and Water Management
3. Developing Finance: Tackling Funding for Agro-Tech SMEs for National Development
4. E-commerce Platforms for Food Crops.

OBSERVATIONS

The Conference observed as follows:

- Agricultural e-commerce allows for leveled playing ground for small and large holder farmers.
- Operating a marketplace that facilitates the exchange of products is necessary for agricultural sustainability.
- Innovations in Agriculture can help solve problems of crop seasonality by ensuring the availability of crops all year round hence ensuring food security.
- The paradigm shift in agriculture allows for the adoption of aeroponics, aquaponics, and hydroponics in urban areas
- There is no sufficient data on the various actors in the agricultural value chain (farmers, marketers, processors) to facilitate support from Development Finance Institutions, Donor Agencies, and Non-Governmental Organizations.
- Agricultural e-commerce has led to greater efficiency in agricultural extension, enhanced market access, and financial inclusion which are essential to help farmers overcome problems with post-harvest losses.
- Innovations in agriculture like greenhouse technology have led to better quality control, control of pests, less manual labour, and increased yields.
- Gender mainstreaming is key to ensuring food security through the development of gender-friendly technology with local content.
- Irrigation systems are critical to food security, as it ensures the production of food all year round hence ensuring food security.
- Efficiency and improved productivity in Agriculture will ensure increased income

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is a need for accelerated political will to drive the implementation of Agricultural related policies.
- The Government should invest in green-house technologies to enhance learning on agricultural innovations
- There is a need for renewed investments in Research and Development, in promoting food security and agricultural sustainability.

- There is a need for concerted efforts from agricultural stakeholders and the ecosystem to create a viable agriculture marketplace and e-commerce platform.
- Agricultural students in high institutions should be exposed to innovative agricultural practices – such as smart farming, hydroponics, aquaponics, aeroponics, etc.
- There is a need to bridge the gap between Development Finance Institutions and Small holder farmers to improve access to finance for scalability.
- The adoption of innovation in agriculture should be a function of geography, scalability, and sustainability.
- Government and stakeholders should invest in locally fabricated materials to enhance the scalability and acceptability of innovative technology in agriculture.
- There is a need for universities to provide practical training to students on modern technologies and agricultural best practices.
- There is a need for continuous interactions through e-platforms to allow for continuous learning and experience sharing.
- Adoption of Smart agricultural practices is essential for enhanced food security.
- There is a need for the development of efficient water harvesting technology to ensure food security.
- There is an urgent need to develop efficient agricultural precision technology for improved crop quality and profitability.
- Community-based seed and seedling production strategies should be embraced to improve the seed supply system for economic growth.
- There is a need to update the agricultural curriculum to include modern precision technology to make agriculture attractive to youths.
- Integrated farming should be embraced for agricultural sustainability.
- There is a need to ensure a community-based agroforestry system for carbon trading.
- There is a need for gender-segregated digital data for all value chains.
- Right-based management system is essential to allow for the sustainable management of water resources.
- It is essential for Agribusinesses to maximize the opportunity available locally and globally by leveraging technological platforms.
- There is a need to develop local market and market information systems.

- Government, and Non-Government Organizations should invest in creating a database of the various agricultural ecosystems.
- There is a need to adopt smart agricultural practices to improve resilience, increased productivity and mitigate climate change.
- There is a need to adjust the existing curriculum to include innovative agriculture.

CONCLUSION

WenA and the conference appeal to the government to foster agricultural development and innovation through increased investments in agricultural Research Centres, Extension Programs and to ensure food security.

APPRECIATION

- The conference appreciates the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Dr. Mohammed Mahmood Abubakar, the Honourable Minister of Water Resources, Engr. Suleiman Hussein Adamu, the Senior Special Adviser to the President on Agriculture, Dr. Andrew Kwasari, Mr. Lansana Woneh from the UN Women, Mr. Valor Iduh, Senior Trade Advisor, Embassy of France, the regional director of the Bank of Industries, Mr. Kings Jack, Mr. Israel Kidron, MD/CEO ONiDA Agriculture and Aquaculture Solutions, all stakeholders, and all participants (online and physical) for their contributions and continuous support to the initiative.
- The conference also appreciates our sponsors, ONE Campaign, ASFA Irrigation Nigeria Limited, JAPTINI Energy Limited, Price Pally Limited, and ONiDA Agriculture and Aquaculture Solutions.

Our Sponsors



WOMEN ENTERPRISE ALLIANCE

90, Aminu Kano Street

Wuse 2, Abuja

www.wena.org.ng

info@wena.org.ng

+234 (0) 908 771 1765

+234 (0) 703 109 3550