

COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE CROSS-BORDER WORKSHOP ON FOOD SECURITY AND CROSS-BORDER TRADE IN THE KANO-KATSINA-MARADI AREA ON THE NIGERIA –NIGER BOUNDARY,

HELD IN KATSINA, KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA 19 – 21 SEPTEMBER 2007

A workshop on the launching of the ECOWAS Kano-Katsina-Maradi Cross-border Initiatives Programme on Food Security and Cross-border Trade was held in Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria from the 19th to the 21st of September 2007. The workshop was hosted by the Katsina State Government and jointly organised by the Famine Early Warning System Network (FEWS NET/USAID) and the Sahel and West Africa Club / OECD in collaboration with the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation (NNJC), Niger Food Crises Unit, the National Boundary Commission of Nigeria and the Permanent Inter-state Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and financed by the Delegation of the European Commission to the Republic of Niger, UNDP Niger and UNDP Nigeria.

The conference was jointly declared open by H.E. the Governor of Katsina State Barr. Ibrahim Shema (represented by H.E. the Deputy Governor of Katsina State Barr. Sirajo Umar Damari) and H.E. Major General Godwin O. Abbe (rtd) Dss mni, Honourable Minister of Interior of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In attendance were officials from the Nigeria's Ministry of the Interior, Nigeria Immigration Service, Nigerian National Boundary Commission, as well as the Permanent Secretary of the National Border Commission of Niger, Colonel Maman Koraou (rtd), Nigerien officials from the Niger Consulate in Kano, the Food Crisis Unit, the National Food Security Stock Office, the Maradi Chamber of Commerce, Traders and other Officials. Also in attendance were Ambassador Aguibou Diarra, Director Mali Boundary Commission and Prof. Anthony Asiwaju, Consultant African Union Border Programme. Further, officials and representatives from the Kano State Ministry of Commerce, Kano Chamber of Commerce, Kano All Farmers Association, Dawanou Market Development Association as well as the Kano Manufacturers Association and the Director General of Katsina Chamber of Commerce, were in attendance.

At the Opening Ceremony the Governor of Katsina State promised to support the Cross-border Initiatives Programme as well as support the implementation of the decisions taken during the workshop. On his part the Nigerian Minister of the Interior reiterated Nigeria's support for all ECOWAS initiatives and programmes and generally African Integration. He pointed out that new Immigration formalities were being put in place to ease cross-border movement between Nigeria and her neighbours. He further promised to support the Kano-Katsina-Maradi Cross-border Initiatives Programme for its benefits to the two countries and their citizens. Mr. Issa Bikienga highlighted the willingness and efforts of regional institutions to support local cross-border activities that efficiently promote integration between peoples and countries of the West African region, the Secretary General of NNJC informed the workshop of the long standing history of warm relationship between Nigeria and Niger, and assured participants that his Commission is always on hand to assist towards success of the Kano-Katsina-Maradi Cross-Border Initiative.

The Conference participants broke into group sessions on the following subjects:

1. Improving information on food crop and livestock markets, Food security and nutritional cross-border information;
2. Improving the cross-border movement of goods;
3. Improving the cross-border movement of capital.

The groups extensively discussed on their terms of reference and provided reports that were presented to the plenary and thoroughly discussed. Based on this five majors areas of further activities where identified:

1. Establishment of a local Cross-border initiative forum under the auspices of the Nigeria-Niger Joint Commission for Cooperation to :
 - a. Improve market information systems
 - b. Enhance cross-border movement of cereals and livestock
 - c. Improve ways and means of capital transfer between the two countries
2. Encourage the use of modern banking and monetary transfer systems to reduce risks faced by traders and fasten transactions;
3. Improve procurement mechanism for the Food-security-Stock
4. Encourage national banks to open branches in border areas to facilitate transactions;
5. Establish joint border communication facilities, such as community radio networks for a wider dissemination of information on markets, prices, etc.

The conference extends its gratitude to the Federal Government of Nigeria, the Nigerien Government, Katsina State Government and all other collaborating and funding agencies for their support to the workshop.

Done, the 21st Day of September 2007 in Katsina, Katsina State, Nigeria
Issued by Collaborating Agencies and Participants