



FUTA NEWS

THE YOUTH MUST BE DRAWN INTO FARMING - UNDP CONSULTANT

The desired transformation in agriculture for national growth and development will be achieved if concrete steps are taken to enlighten and build the interest of the youth to discover the gains in the sector. This was the fulcrum of opinion at the 12th annual conference of the Children and Youth in Agriculture Programme (CYIAP) held at the Theodore Idibiye Francis auditorium of the Federal University of Technology Akure. The Guest Speaker, a former Commissioner for Agriculture in Ekiti State and a Consultant to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Mr. Babajide Arowosafe while speaking on the theme: 'Farm Children And The Agricultural Transformation In Nigeria' said that the farm child must have adequate incentive to enable him stay in the rural areas as it was expedient to create an enabling environment for the youth to operate. He called on the government to invest in the rural areas so as to attract the youths. He also said the government must provide business opportunities, agricultural processing facilities and encourage mechanized farming to achieve bumper harvest.

Speaking further Arowosafe encouraged citadels of learning to promote agriculture among the youths during their studentship as this will make them agripreneurs. He said "our citadels of learning should take the lead in the Agricultural Transformational Agenda to encourage the masses, especially the youth into farming. FUTA can take the lead in this direction to further boost its contribution to food production, employment and income generation".

Addressing the gathering, the Vice Chancellor, Professor Adebisi Daramola who was represented by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Development), Professor Tolulope Akinbogun said that it was obvious that total dependence on oil as the mainstay of the economy has hindered sustainable economic planning and development in Nigeria due to the volatility of oil price in the international market. He said it was thereby pertinent to redirect our attentions to unlimited opportunities in agriculture, adding that there are vast opportunities in agriculture ranging from crop cultivation, livestock and poultry farming, fisheries and agricultural extension services. His words, "attitudinal change is crucial to transformation in agriculture. Our youth and all of us should have positive attitude towards agriculture. Oil may dry soon, but

agriculture will never die. If our youth are engaged they will be more useful. Let's catch them young to make them profitable by providing infrastructure for them to work with. The cities are already saturated with job seekers from the rural areas".

In his opening remarks the Chairman of the Local Organizing Committee (LOC), Professor Olaniyi Okunlola said the interest of youth in agriculture was at its lowest ebb and that the current trend of rural to urban drift was affecting agriculture in Nigeria as the source of most food crops was the rural areas. Earlier in a welcome address, Chairman of CYIAP, Professor Torimiwo said the objective of the network was to revive the agricultural sector through research as reflective research was the catalyst of transformation. He said a total commitment to the Agricultural Transformational Agenda was crucial in order to attract the youth to return to agriculture.