

COMMUNIQUE

33RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION (NSA) HELD AT THE CITY KING HOTEL GUSAU, ZAMFARA STATE.

The 33rd Annual conference of the Nigerian Statistical Association (NSA) was held at City King Hotel and Towers, Gusau, Zamfara State from 12th to 14th August, 2009.

The objective was to bring together Statisticians and allied professionals from various parts of the country to engage in intellectual exchange among colleagues and also deliberate on the theme: Statistics and Implementation of the Seven-Point Agenda of the Federal Government.

Participants included members of the NSA from the academia, research institutions, governmental and non-governmental institutions as well as other users of statistics and statistical methodologies. A total of three hundred and seventy two (372) participants were registered. The conference was declared open by the Acting Executive Governor of Zamfara State, His Excellency, Alh.. Mukhtar Ahmad (Sardauna Anka) ably represented by the Secretary to the state government, Alh. Muh'd Bawa Gusau (Tafidan Zamfara). The welcome address was delivered by the NSA President, Mr. B. O. Amobi. The keynote address was given by Mallam Taminu Yakubu, the Chief Economic Adviser to the President.

Other eminent persons present at the opening ceremony of the conference include Alh. Aliyu Adamu (Dan Mallanim Tsafe), Hon. Commissioner, Budget and Economic Planning, the Hon. Commissioner of Finance, Zamfara State and the Zamfara State Commissioner of Police.

The conference featured five scientific sessions, invited papers and a keynote address. The invited papers presented were:

- (i) Statistics and Implementation of the Seven-Point Agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria: The Role of National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) by Dr. Vincent Akinyosoye, the Director General, NBS
- (ii) The Role of Planning, Research and Statistics Departments in the Implementation of the Seven-Point Agenda by Mr. A. A. Aremu
- (iii) Statistics as a Vehicle for Infrastructural Development in Nigeria by Prof. Akpan H. Ekpo, DG, West Africa Institute for Financial and Economic Management (WAIFEM).

A total of 48 contributed papers were presented during the remaining sessions. The theme of this year's conference is not only apt but also relevant to the current pursuit of the Federal Government. The current Federal Government Administration is quite determined to put back the economy of the country on the path of sustainable growth. It was against this background that the present administration of the Federal Republic of Nigeria unveiled the Seven-Point Agenda on the assumption of office. The agenda was to be the platform on which the administration would take off. Hence, any intellectual meeting targeted at addressing issues that will enhance the realization of the agenda is to be given topmost priority.

Observations

It was generally observed that there are inadequacies of reliable data in all sectors of the Nigeria economy.

Other observations highlighted with regard to "Statistics and Implementation of the Seven (7) point Agenda include but not limited to the following:

- Infrastructural Development (Power and Energy) in terms of Electricity Consumption provided by the Public Sector is not a good proxy for energy consumption in view of limited supply and higher unsatisfied demand.
- Lack of a well-developed concrete database on Niger Delta area with respect to the status and number of roads, water supply, educational facilities, academic attainment, number of children, school age, enrollment etc, to properly guide the government in the achievement of its mandate to the Ministry of Niger Delta,

- Inadequate financial injections into research and statistics activities of the Ministry, Department and Agencies (MDAs). In addition, in most of the MDAs, there are absence of functional research and statistics units and where they exist, they are either poorly funded or not funded at all. As a result, staff of these units are either rendered redundant or tactically decamped from the units to other units,
- The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) and other related agencies saddled with the responsibility of generating quality data do not make use of trained statisticians in addition to their field staff during national surveys,
- The prevalence of conflicting figures on data generated by different agencies on some sectoral issues, and
- Inadequate data on food insecurity in Nigeria to effectively identify the vulnerable group for possible interventions.

Recommendations

In line with the observations stated above, the following recommendations were made:

- The need to develop the capacity of the national statistical systems as a whole and integrate rural and agricultural statistics fully into the system,
- The creation of database for the Ministry of Niger Delta to tackle critical issues affecting their needs such as water supply, road networks, education, unemployment, etc
- There is need for adequate funding of Research and Statistics activities as this will assist in realizing the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015 and Vision 20:2020,
- There is urgent need for adequate data on food insecurity in Nigeria in order to effectively address the problems of the vulnerable groups
- Research and Statistics units of the various Ministry, Department and Agencies (MDAs) should be properly developed and their staff adequately trained and retrained for enhanced performance. In addition, the use of statisticians in the relevant institutions should be made more critical in surveys and data collection processes,

- For the purpose of data generation, the NBS compendium should be used by the various data generating agencies/institutions in order to solve the problem of data conflicts, and
- The need for the government to improve infrastructural facilities in order to attract foreign investors into the country, in particular the development of alternative source of energy such as solar, wind, uranium, coal, etc for sustainable growth in the pursuit of the MDGs and Vision 20:2020.

Appreciation

The moral and financial support of the Zamfara State government right from the planning stage up till the end of the conference is highly appreciated. We enjoyed the peaceful environment of the State. It is our prayer that the almighty God will continue to grant His Excellency, the Governor of Zamfara State, members of his cabinet and the entire members of his governing council, the needed wisdom to continue to provide good governance to the loving and peaceful people of Zamfara State.

Members

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