Obasanjo, Governors Highlight Gains of Zero Hunger initiative

Former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, said he was impressed with the impact the Nigeria Zero Hunger Forum (NZHF) was making especially in promoting healthy competition among states with a view to achieving food security.

The former President stated this made this conclusion on 7 November at the NZHF meeting in Ebonyi state on November 7, 2017. The Ebonyi meeting was the second NZHF assembly after Benue hosted a similar one in June. According to him “I see a healthy competition between states which is good,” the former President said as participating governors recounted progress made towards food security in their respective domains.

The governors said that in less than a year the Zero Hunger initiative was already having a positive impact on the food security of their states. According to them, the initiative through its peer advisory/review mechanism has brought a new vigor and zeal to the agricultural sector with more commitments by participating states. They also commended President Muhammadu Buhari for his strong support to the states’ agricultural programs.

For Governor Samuel Ortom of Benue State, there is now a realization of untapped agricultural opportunities that the state can explore to benefit its people, thanks to the NZHF. Describing the Zero Hunger Forum as a great initiative, Governor Ortom said the state keyed into the initiative with the conviction that it would help the state to maintain its pride as the food basket of the country.

“We have keyed into this program and believe that through NZHF, Nigeria will be helped,” he added. The governor explained that the recently passed anti-grazing bill was aimed at promoting peace between herdsmen and crop farmers with a view to achieving zero hunger by 2030. He further announced that the state would also facilitate peace between the people of Agila in Benue and Ngbo in Ebonyi to end the border crises and bring peace in that area, so farmers can go back to farming.

Governor David Umahi of Ebonyi state said the benefits of the Nigeria Zero Hunger initiative were priceless as participating states were learning from each other. “When we went to Benue, we learnt from them and today, Benue and other states are here to also learn from us,” he said. The Governor of Borno State, Alhaji Kashim Shettima, who was represented by his deputy, Alhaji Usman Mamman Durkwa, expressed gratitude to the NZHF for the support given to the state early this year to cushion the effects of insurgency.

Particularly mentioned were the “seeds of renaissance” from the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), AfricaRice, and ICRISAT, and the rice from Ebonyi to feed the internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Borno State. The President of the African Development Bank, Dr Akin Adesina who was represented by the Director (Agriculture), Dr Chiji Ojukwu, commended the implementation of the initiative and reiterated the Bank’s support to feeding Africa. He reminded stakeholders that Africa must take agriculture seriously and implement policies and programs that would engender inclusive growth.

The Director General of IITA, Dr Nteranya Sanginga, pledged the Institute’s commitment to supporting and working with states to achieve their food security goals. The Zero Hunger meeting in Ebonyi was attended by more than 500 persons including policymakers and development Read more.