

WELCOME ADDRESS PRESENTED BY PROFESSOR J. A. ADEDIRAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING, IBADAN, OBAFEMI AWOLowo UNIVERSITY, MOOR PLANTATION, IBADAN AT THE 29TH ANNUAL SOUTH-WEST RESEARCH EXTENSION FARMERS INPUT LINKAGE SYSTEMS (REFILS) WORKSHOP, HELD ON TUESDAY 24TH – 27TH APRIL, 2018.

The Executive Governor of Ekiti State – His Excellency, Dr. Ayodele Fayose

The Executive Governor of Oyo State and Chief Host of the Workshop - His Excellency, Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi

The Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture, Ekiti State

The Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture, Oyo State,

The Royal Father of today, Oba Abdul-Gafar Olasunkanmi Tijani, the Alawowo of Awowo Owu Kingdom

The Permanent Secretaries, States Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development here present

Executive Secretary, Agric. Research Council of Nigeria (ARCN)

Regional Director, FMA&RD in South Western Region

Deans of Faculties of Agriculture

Executive Directors of Agricultural Research Institutes,

Programme Managers of Agricultural Development Programmes,

The Awardees of today

National and State Project Coordinator, FADAMA

Keynote Speakers, Mr Faleke Olusegun and Dr Oyediji O. O.

Small and Large Scale Farmers' Associations

Distinguished Colleagues

Gentlemen of the Press

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am glad to welcome you all to the Institute of Agricultural Research and Training, Obafemi Awolowo University, Moor Plantation, Ibadan. It is my pleasure on behalf of the Vice Chancellor, OAU, Professor Eyitope Ogunbodede, who is the Chairman, IAR&T Governing Board to appreciate your presence in this occasion of the 31st Annual South West Zonal Research-Extension-Farmers-Input-Linkage Systems Workshop.

I am also delighted to welcome the Executive Governor of Ekiti State, His Excellency Dr. Ayodele Fayose to our Institute, a centre of excellence in Research for Development. Similarly, I heartily welcome the Chief Executive of the Pacesetter State, His Excellency, Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi to our Institute.

Your Excellences, I sincerely appreciate your enviable agricultural policy and its implementation for agricultural growth in your respective State. Definitely, a lot is still to be done towards moving agriculture forward in the States and Southwest in general since the demand for food is much higher than supply. Our population is skyrocketing daily. But, food production is still at low ebb because we rely mostly on the output of peasant farmers to feed the nation. The greater percentage of those engaged in farming is the small scale farmers. There is therefore urgent need to embark on new strategies that will increase output and give economic returns on agricultural activities so as to achieve sustainable food and fibre production.

Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, during this workshop participants will have the opportunity to know what had been happened in 2017 in South west agricultural production and its value chain. Let us make use of this time and feel free to discuss how we can move agricultural production forward in the zone. In the next three days, this meeting will devote its time on the following activities that were carried out in 2017:

1. Report of On–Farm Adaptive Research (OFAR) and Extension in the different ADPs.
2. Review of Calendar of Agricultural Activities for the zone
3. Input situation/marketing within the zone
4. Review and formulate appropriate extension messages for mass adoption from concluded trials
5. Discussions on research breakthroughs of the National Research Institutes
6. Presentation of farmers and agro-allied companies

I am concerned on the level of performance and achievement of most ADPs which are low because of insufficient funding by their State governments. Your Excellences, while in some zones of the country, the activities which form the frame work of Research-Extension-Farmers-Input-Linkage System have seriously dropped in content and context.

In spite of the paucity of fund experience in carrying out REFILS activities in this zone, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the SW REFILS team in ensuring that farming system of the South–West is continually being improved upon through generation of appropriate technologies and

dissemination of same to our farmers, using appropriate extension delivery methods. It is sincerely hoped that the SW REFILS will not relent its efforts to ensure that the REFILS linkages are strengthened always for the overall benefit of our farmers and other citizens of this country.

In no small way, I would like to appreciate the efforts of NARIs for working ceaselessly and tirelessly to ensure that new technologies are generated. The relevance of these technologies to the needs of the farmers have been copiously demonstrated in the high level of adoption of most of these technologies in the zone. However, research as clearly understood is dynamic and therefore new grounds must be broken continually to improve man's well-being. Therefore, our research efforts are tailored towards solving farmers' production problems.

Your Excellences, permit me to intimate you with the historical antecedents and statutory role of this great Institute. The Institute of Agricultural Research and Training (I. A. R. & T) came into being in 1969 by a Charter signed by the Military Governor of Western Region and the then Vice Chancellor of Obafemi Awolowo University. The Institute with its three Colleges of Agriculture was an offshoot of the Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources of the then Western Region of Nigeria.

The Institute of Agricultural Research and Training, Obafemi Awolowo University, Moor Plantation, Ibadan is a multi-commodity Research Institute with national mandate for maize, kenaf, jute as well as Land and Water Management. The Institute also has the mandate for large and small ruminant research and development of suitable farming systems in South-Western, Nigeria and also the mandate to coordinate Research-Extension-Farmers-Input-Linkage System (REFILS) in South-West zone.

Some of the newly generated technologies which have been developed and perfected by this Institute and other NARS in the last few years will be part of discussions in this meeting. These include:

Soil Based Technology, Crop Based Technology, Livestock Based Technology Industrial Crop Based Technology, Grain Legume Based Technology, Crop utilization Based Technology, and Farming Systems Technology.

Production constraints of farmers in the zone were identified through conduct of diagnostic survey. Consequently, proven technologies to combat the production challenges have been developed to remove such identified constraints from time to time using multi-disciplinary approach. Also, such technologies have been transferred to farmers in our various States in Monthly Technology Review Meetings (MTRM) through the ADPs. It is important to reiterate that to sustain the REFIL System, the funding situation of the ADPs has to improve.

Many thanks to the few Governors of the States who regularly fund REFILS activities and I appeal to those who are not doing so to start for the sake of agricultural development in this country. I thank the LGAs, ADPs, Resource Persons and most importantly our hard-working and resourceful Team Leaders for not relenting in their efforts to sustain REFILS.

Before I conclude this address, let me appreciate the contributions of ARMREC (FUNAAB), NGOs and FMA&RD and others stakeholders for participating in this year's Zonal REFILS Workshop. I also commend all members of the Local Organizing Committee under the leadership of South West Zonal Coordinator, Dr. (Mrs.) B.O. Lawal for their preparedness to make this workshop a success.

Your Excellences, the Executive Governor of Ekiti State, Dr. Ayodele Fayose and the Executive Governor of Oyo State, Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi, Distinguished Guests, Gentlemen of the Press, Ladies and Gentlemen, may I once again welcome you all to this year's SW REFILS Workshop. I wish you all fruitful deliberations.

Thank you for listening.

PROF. J. A. ADEDIRAN