



"SPEECH BY

BY

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THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF NASARAWA STATE

AT THE LAUNCHING OF PEPA YAM-NIGERIA FROM

NASARAWA STATE INTO THE UNITED KINGDOM

NIGERIA HOUSE, LONDON, SATURDAY, 11 JULY 2009"

PROTOCOLS:

It is with a sense of fulfilment and gratitude to God that I am in the United Kingdom today for this historic occasion of the formal launching of Pepa Yam from Nasarawa State of Nigeria.

2. Let me specially acknowledge the kind assistance and organisational arrangements put in place by our host, the Nigerian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, His Excellency, Dr. Dalhatu Sarki Tafida, OFR, for the success of this event.

3. The presence of the Federal Government delegation, as well as the dignified and diverse audience at this occasion, is as significant, as it is encouraging to me, in particular and the Government and people of Nasarawa State.

4. Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, you are no doubt aware of the commendable efforts of the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua, GCFR, in promoting agriculture. The emphasis on agriculture is borne out of the desire to diversify the national economy, promote food security and international trade.

5. We in Nasarawa State are encouraged and inspired by the current Federal Government agricultural policies. Equally noteworthy are the massive schemes, interventions and incentives geared towards the promotion of accelerated and focused mass

production of agricultural products for domestic and international markets.

6. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Nasarawa State of Nigeria has abundant varieties of agricultural products for international markets. One of such produce is yam. Others include Sesame, Rice and Cassava.

7. As you are all aware, we are gathered here today to formally launch an initiative of marketing yam from Nasarawa State to the United Kingdom, under the trade name, PEPA YAM – NIGERIA.

8. This happy development is coming after three successful export trials of the yam to the United Kingdom during which the product was well received in the market.

9. In order to ensure sustainability of this export drive, 400 farmers in Nasarawa State have been specially trained and have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the State Government for massive production of yams for international markets.

10. To maintain quality assurance, a modern Yam Conditioning and Export Processing Centre is under construction at Keffi, near Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria. Similarly, arrangements have been completed for sustainable collaboration with relevant export regulatory agencies, in Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

11. A Nasarawa State Produce Development and Marketing Company Ltd., has been established by law to market agricultural produce from the State, to local and international markets. Accordingly, the Company has since entered into a joint venture agreement with Best Produce International (UK) Ltd., to ensure steady supply and marketing of the yams in the United Kingdom.

12. Your Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, permit me to take liberty of this occasion to point out that Nasarawa State is endowed with abundant investment opportunities, not only in agriculture, but also in Solid Minerals, Tourism, and Real Estate Development.

13. We assure all investors of enabling environment including quick access to land titles, tax holidays and security of investments. I therefore wish to call on investors to explore the business opportunities that abound in Nasarawa State and indeed, Nigeria.

14. Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, let me conclude this address by once again expressing the gratitude of the Government and people of Nasarawa State to the Nigerian High Commissioner and the High Commission for facilitating this event.

15. In the same vein, I thank the Hon. Minister of Commerce and Industry of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Dr. Achike Udenwa; officials of the Nigeria Export Promotion Council as well as Best

Produce International (UK) Ltd., for partnering with us for the success of this export initiative. It is our hope that the export of PEPA YAM – NIGERIA into the United Kingdom will further strengthen the economic ties between the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the United Kingdom.

16. Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention.