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Climate change: NGO builds farming community's capacity

By Akinpelu Dada

Monday, 2 May 2011

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Some migrant farmers in Lagos State have benefited from a flagship initiative by a non-governmental organisation aimed at building their adaptive capacity to the effects of climate change.

The NGO, Local Initiatives for Environmental Sustainability, is providing a lifeline for members of the Ebonyi Farmers Association, Igbe community in Ikorodu, Lagos, who have been at the receiving end of the precarious weather situation.

The organisation is being supported by the United Nations Development Programme.

Under the project, LIFES plans to establish a community-based social network through the association, strengthen indigenous coping techniques and options for climate change and build local capacity for use of viable local adaptation techniques in the community.

The project commenced last Saturday with a sensitisation workshop where the range of practices, approaches and tools aimed at increasing the resilience and productivity of agricultural production systems to curb emissions were outlined.

Speaking on the theme of the workshop, "Impact of climate change on agriculture: The role of local farmers," the Executive Director, Bread of Life Development Foundation, Mr. Babatope Babalobi, pointed

out that while agriculture was highly exposed to climate change as farming activities directly depended on climatic conditions, agriculture too was contributing to the release of greenhouse gases that result in global warming to the atmosphere.

Babalobi, who spoke on the role of community farming in addressing climate change, underscored the need to engage the farming community in a debate and action on adaptation needs that underlined the fact that water was essential for broad based agricultural production and rural development in order to improve food security.

He said, "Generally, innovative and strategic investment, research and development, together with local, national and international cooperation should be promoted to improve agricultural water management by means of participatory irrigation management, water harvesting, water-saving/drought-resistant crop varieties, water storage, and dissemination of agricultural best practices."

Babalobi added that with the increasing erratic rainfall patterns, drought and desertification, farmers should access drought-resistant and short duration high-yielding crops, as well as those better suited to new weather conditions.



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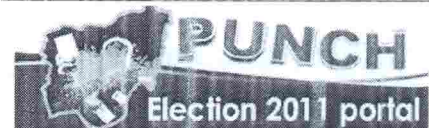
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Jonathan's race against time

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