

LMU HOLDS 4TH INAUGURAL LECTURE, ADVOCATES PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY AND INTEGRATION IN AGRIBUSINESS

Professor Olasunkanmi Bamiro has advocate production efficiency and integration as catalyst for successful agribusiness during his lecture titled **“Roadmap to Canaan: Production Efficiency and Integration in Agribusiness.”** The Professor of Production Economics, Olasunkanmi Bamiro, established that food security in Nigeria is attainable if the nation’s effort is geared towards increase in yield of all food crops through efficiency in agricultural production and adoption of vertical integration in all agribusiness enterprises.

“Effort has to be geared towards increase in yield of all food crops. The two roadmaps or routes to Canaan-food security discovered are efficiency in agricultural production and adoption of vertical integration in all agribusiness enterprises.

“Apart from food security that will be attained, vertical integration will solve the herdsmen and farmer clashes and mitigate against risks,” the inaugural lecturer revealed.

Professor Bamiro said that the perceived inefficiency in the use of resources was due to lack of technical knowhow of the users. In retrospect, Bamiro recounted the enormous success in agriculture Nigeria made as at her independence in 1960, noting that over 70 percent of the Nigerian populace practised agriculture and engaged in allied occupations as their means of livelihood. He added that Nigeria produced “the bulk of her food, and exported a sizable quantity of agricultural commodities such as cocoa, palm produce, rubber, groundnut, cotton, and hides and skins among others which accounted for 60 - 70 percent of the nation’s foreign exchange earnings, but this declined to 1.2 percent in 2005.

“Nigeria is richly blessed with huge natural and human resources! She is endowed with about 91.1 million hectares of land, the 2nd largest in Africa and the 32nd largest in the World. The nation is also richly endowed with about 1.3 million hectares of inland water bodies and a coastline that extends over at least 853 kilometres. Despite these enormous potentials, Nigeria – like a prodigal child still wallows in the wilderness of poverty, hunger and widespread food insecurity!” He added.

He noted with dismay that the exportation of our raw materials has not helped the economy but only further plunged the nation into despair. He said that our ability to engage the chain of production of these raw materials will help us to achieve the desired profitability, efficiency and productivity.

He also lamented the nation’s conscious neglect of agriculture for the oil boom of the 1970s and early 1980s which brought a new paradigm into the economic activities of the country. Foremost on the economic drift was the sharp increase in government’s revenue that provided the basis for increase in public spending towards the expansion of infrastructure, industrial sector’s productive capacity and human capital. He stated that

the consequence of the oil boom was the rural-urban migration as a result of wage differential and emergence of consumer-oriented lifestyles, which led to the withdrawal of a substantial labour force from the agricultural sector, and the relative neglect of the sector by the government in pursuit of cheap oil money, culminating in a decline of agricultural production.

According to Professor Bamiro, malnutrition affects one out of every three pre-school age children living in developing countries in confirmation of the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) estimation of over 2.5 million Nigerian children suffering from severe Acute Malnutrition, (SAM), warning that 20 percent of the number could die if urgent steps are not taken to address the issue. It was reported to be associated with more than half of all child mortality worldwide. Aside from the aforementioned, the implication of a major waste of resources and loss of productivity are common occurrences in developing countries. Children who are malnourished become less physically and intellectually productive as adults. This disturbing, yet preventable state of affair causes untold stress and has crippled manpower adequacy to the development process.

He averred that for Nigeria to arrive the land of Canaan fulfilled, four dimensions of food security which are, affordability, access, stability and health must be realised, as the interplay of all these variables determine whether an individual, household, state or nation is food secured or not. "Food security is therefore achieved when all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food which meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life."

Professor Bamiro further noted that the march to Canaan-food security by successive governments of Nigeria has remained a mirage resulting from either not knowing the way, or knowing the way but failing to conscientiously follow it, as this has made majority of Nigerians wearied by these failures to lead the country to a desired food haven.

"What then are the roadmaps to Canaan that I have conceptualized in the course of my academic career? The roadmap is marked by efficiency and Integration. Efficient farms make better use of existing resources to produce maximum output or incur the lowest cost, thus, achieving a food security objective. Integration on the other hand, is bringing together two or more parts into one," he said. He added that the combination of these factors would lead any nation into meaningful sustainability in terms of large-scale production and food security.

He therefore concluded that both the universities and Government have roles to play in the nation's successful march to Canaan-food security. He said the nation should return and sustain government policies of providing strategic public support for land development, increase of investment in agriculture, availability of credit facilities to farmers, and agricultural education of youths through scholarship. Also, financial institutions should be encouraged to lend farmers fund at low interest rates and full

adoption of vertical integration in both crop production and animal husbandry by making importation of agricultural equipment duty free.

Earlier, the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adeniyi Olayanju while welcoming the University community and the invited distinguished guests to the Inaugural Lecture, said “It is an essential feature of an academic institution and today’s lecture makes an important contribution on the role of the University within the wider community as a forum for public enlightenment especially as it relates to agricultural sustainability which is in line with the University’s vision of leading an agrarian revolution for Africa.”

He lauded the commitment of the visionary and Chancellor of the University, Dr David Oyedepo towards agriculture development and propagation among the youth through education and thereby salvaging the nation and Africa’s dignity from the stranglehold of mediocrity and hunger.

“Landmark University is unrelenting in demonstrating her viability and ability to change and induce change via research contributions to the sustainable development and improvement of society at specific platforms,” the Vice-Chancellor said.



Professor Olasunkanmi Bamiro delivering the 4th Inaugural Lecture titled, **“Roadmap to Canaan: Production Efficiency and Integration in Agribusiness.”**



The 4th Inaugural Lecturer (6th left) in a group photograph with Management of the University led by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Adeniyi Olayanju (Centre) and the distinguished guests at the events.