Dear Forum Members

Greetings from Bamenda, Cameroon.

The National Development Foundation (NDEF) is working to empower smallholder farmers to use ecological farming practices to reduce the vulnerability of their households to food, health and income insecurity while ensuring a sound environmental management.

Specifically on SDG2, we are working on a number of programmes aimed at helping rural poor people in villages of the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon to have zero hunger. We are developing a farmers’ agroforestry resource centre at our head office in Bamenda to demonstrate how a number of interrelated activities could be carried out on a small piece of land to boost food production and use land to its maximum capacity. Our work is helping to create a food secure and Zero Hunger world through the following programmes:

- Agroforestry Programme
- Plantain Multiplication Programme
- Cassava Programme
- Beekeeping Programme
- Moringa Programme
- Fish Rearing in containers and concrete tanks
- Poultry keeping
- Pig rearing
- Crop processing for value addition Programme

In the agroforestry programme, we target beneficiaries or clients who live in the poorest rural communities where the need for sustainable incomes and life opportunities are most urgent. We prefer to work with constituted groups of people such as farmers and structured development committees. We train farmers to establish tree nurseries from which they get improved trees seedlings for integration into their farms. We train them on modern tree propagation techniques (such as grafting, air-layering and rooting of cuttings) and effective nursery techniques. We also train them how to construct and use propagators. NDEF was technically supported here by the World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) Yaounde.
For the **Plantain Multiplication Programme**, we notice that plantains are traditionally propagated by extracting them from one field to another. This method lends itself to two weaknesses:

- Diseases and pests are spread easily in the process,
- Large quantities of specific varieties are not easy to acquire within short intervals.

To surmount these two major hurdles of **quality** and **quantity** of planting materials in the production of banana/plantains, we have been trained by IITA Cameroon and we now use their research results to rapidly produce large quantities of pest and disease-free suckers called plantlets just within six months or so with high yielding potentials. We train farmers to use the **in-vivo horticultural techniques** of propagation to avoid major loopholes inherent in the above two techniques.

For the **Cassava Programme**, we note that cassava is a major crop grown in the tropics and it grows even in poor soils with inadequate rainfall. The starchy roots of cassava are major source of food for many rural and urban people in Cameroon. The crop is produced all over the country and is widely consumed in many forms such as garri and water fufu.

We have been trained by IITA Cameroon and we now in turn train farmers to use rapid multiplication techniques developed to overcome the problem of low multiplication.
ratio in the vegetative propagation of cassava cuttings. This is beneficial for germplasm evaluation, germplasm distribution and seed multiplication.

For the **Beekeeping Programme**, we find that honey bees are near extinct from the ecosystem due to human errors. In most cases bees and their natural nests are burnt up by bushfires lighted by hunters and farmers or the bees are forced to flee to far off bushes. To reverse issues and domesticate the bees, we are training farmers to produce and install an initial bee hives so as to rekindle the beekeeping culture in their communities. Given that there is an interlinked relationship between honey bees, forests and man, food security, health care and ecosystem resilience are strongly rooted in the maintenance of biodiversity. As we grow woody perennials and food crops on farms, we take advantage to integrate honey bees into the agroforestry systems so as to enable local people engage in the stewardship of landscapes and associated bio-cultural diversity.

Honey bees play a major role in sustaining forests, forest-dependent livelihoods and the environment as they pollinate flowering plants leading to increased crop yields. Apart from honey as the main product associated with bees, apiculture generates much more than just honey: the maintenance of biodiversity and pollination of crops are perhaps the most valuable services provided by bees. Other honey bee products are beeswax, pollen and propolis, royal jelly and venom, and the use of bees in apitherapy (a form of medicine using bee products).
In the **Moringa Programme**, we note that Moringa contains a wide range of nutrients and properties that are relevant for a wide range of people: athletes, less active people, older people, children, men, women, those with special eating habits, those with a hectic lifestyle, pregnant women, people with diabetes – it is even great for animals!

Moringa leaf powder or seed powder can be added to just anything one eats. It boosts our immune system to fight diseases, keeping the body healthy. The benefits of Moringa are enormous. The plant is excellent in combating malnutrition. In this case, families are encouraged to plant and consume Moringa to sustain community health and boost human capital.

**- Fish Rearing in containers and concrete tanks**
Artisanal fish farming in ponds had long disappeared in the community when fish farmers began to face huge competition from imported fish and when the famous Bamenda Fish Pond was filled up and converted into the Bamenda Food Market. Nowadays, many poor villagers are unable to eat quality fish because of increasing cost of living and thus increasing prices of imported fish in the area. This leads to malnourished families as they do not have enough protein sources and other nutrients to guarantee balanced diets and good health for their families. This project aims to set up a facility to multiply fingerlings, train and empower poor farmers, especially women, to raise fish in containers at their backyards so as to make available fish to their households; thus increasing their means of livelihoods and enhancing their social and economic integration in the society.

To effectively realise the project, we have started up with concreted tanks which would be progressively completed for fish ponds. A water pumping system will be used whereby water will be pumped from a sunk well.
**Poultry Programme**

NDEF has decided not to give out fish to needy persons all the time, thus the Organisation has opted for the provision of sustainable solutions to the problems of marginalized persons. This programme is meant to conserve and raise both indigenous breeds of chickens and improved table birds to increase the livelihoods of farmers. Bamenda City is expanding and much arable land is being used up for the construction of houses leaving only fragile landscapes for subsistence farming. The population is growing at a geometric progression and needs much food to feed itself. Apart from the eggs and chickens being used for food, the derived manure would be used to enrich the soil fertility leading to increases in food production. Indigenous chickens play an important role in the livelihoods of most rural families. Apart from the food aspect of it, indigenous fowls and their eggs sell higher in the market as traditional doctors use only such eggs and fowls in their healing activities. For nutrition and medicinal reasons therefore, this project seeks to conserve indigenous chickens to avoid scarcity and near extinction.

**Pig Rearing Programme**

The Pig Rearing Programme is out to increase livelihoods and incomes of poor farmers within Bamenda. NDEF encourages the full involvement of women, men, youth and poor households to take control of their situations. Pigs are often left to roam freely in villages and slaughtered when the need arises as they play an important role in feeding the populations of towns and cities. This
programme aims to address the following three issues or opportunities. i) The consumption of pork products is growing fast, ii) Pigs multiply fast. iii) Pigs are highly adaptable and easy to rear. This programme is out to establish a pig house to rear pigs and train smallholder farmers to adopt pig keeping for improving family livelihoods and household incomes.

**Crop processing for value addition**

NDEF promotes social entrepreneurship among rural farmers so as to add value to their farm activities, increase the variety of farm products, increase farm incomes and improve family livelihoods. We approach social entrepreneurship from two standpoints: the managerial skills needed to start and run a profitable farm business and developing an ‘entrepreneurial spirit’.

We coach farmers to work in groups of common interests, cooperatives and unions to constitute social enterprises. We train them to use business concepts to run their farms as a business. In this way, they have to put in capital like human, time and financial with a view to earning profits. They would then be passionate about their farm business and would be willing to take calculated risks to make their farm business profitable and grow.

We train agricultural social entrepreneurs with new ways of utilizing their land and available resources to create new wealth and more opportunities in the rural sector, thereby preventing problems associated with massive emigration out of rural milieux.

We particularly promote the petty transformation of agricultural produce to increase value and the variety of agricultural products. Such transformation and processing is geared at absorbing the huge waste that is presently taking place in rural areas due to poor transportation services, bad farm to market roads and the absence of preservation and storage facilities. This need is further exacerbated by the perishable nature of most primary agricultural produce. Our technical support entails giving business advice, business training and in some cases (where the need is strong), we source and deliver a micro credit component to enable the petty enterprises to take off.

**Cassava Processing**

Here, we have been supported by FAO Cameroon through a project titled: *Organization of business meetings, support for the elaboration of business plans, training, coaching and monitoring of beneficiaries in the North West and South West Regions of Cameroon* (i.e. L’organisation des réunions d’affaires, l’appui à l’élaboration des plans d’affaires, les formations et le coaching et suivi des bénéficiaires dans les régions nord-ouest et sud-ouest du Cameroun). We have thus been training farmers in Mbengwi (North West
Region) and Mamfe (South West Region) to explore and develop the potentials offered by cassava and its derived products for the improvement of farmers’ livelihoods. They have been equipped with processing equipment including powered graters and presses. We are offering managerial and financial capacity building services to enable these farmers to run their social enterprises to maximise profits.

Honey Processing

To complete the beekeeping activities, we train farmers to process harvested raw honey into edible honey and derived products such as wax, rubbing oil and candles.

Moringa Processing

For now, we are planting and processing Moringa on a small scale into seeds and dry leaf powder. Future plans are to increase the range of products derived from the crop’s transformation.

2 Major Challenges

The success of our work is being challenged by two main problems.

1. The **absence of long-term partnerships and support** to ensure a stable, motivated and efficient staff and to scale up field activities. Once specific projects come to an end, it becomes difficult to maintain project staff with limited resources. As such, we hope to seek for resources to embark on sustainable and income generating projects for NDEF to boost our internal income base and cover core costs.

2. **Limited Outreach and accessibility difficulties.** Our second challenge is attributed to transport difficulties. The absence of a service vehicle has forced our staff to use public transport services, which hardly have any schedules as far as departure time is concerned. Our dependence on hired facilities is both expensive in terms of money, time and inconveniences. We wish we had a good pickup vehicle to comb the difficult rural roads to increase our outreach!
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