

**FG urges civil servants to embrace agriculture**

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The Federal Government of Nigeria has urged civil servants to embrace agriculture as a way to create extra wealth. The supervising Minister of Information Chief Edem Duke who spoke Wednesday at a sensitization workshop organised for staff of the ministry on engagement of agriculture activities, said agriculture was the available option for civil servants to augment their income and support social development programme of the government.

The minister emphasised the need for civil servants to enhance their knowledge and capacity in farming.

He said, “The vision of this government is to transfer knowledge and capacity to all of us to look beyond our comfort zone and the immediate activities that occupy our minds and time and see that there are new endeavours that we can get involved in that can change the fortunes of our lives and families.”

He also urged the workers to key into the Agriculture Transformation Agenda, which was anchored on modern agricultural techniques and the development of the value chains while commending the Federal Ministry of Agriculture for the synergy to build the capacity of the staff of his ministry in agriculture.

In her remarks, the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Information, Dr. Folashade Yemi-Esan, said the workshop was organized in keeping with the promise earlier made by the management to hold a series of workshop to sensitise staff on how to utilize the opportunities around them for economic empowerment.

She said agriculture remained the only productive venture that civil servants were allowed to engage in without compromising the Civil Service Rules.

She advised the staff to involve in agriculture in order to augment their monthly income and contribute to social and economic development of the nation.

Also speaking, Karima Babangida from the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, said under the Agriculture Transformation Agenda, twenty-five value chains had been developed in crops, livestock and aquaculture, which provided vast opportunities for Nigerians to engage in.

She said it was imperative for Nigeria to exit food importation and become self-sufficient in order to conserve foreign exchange that daily went into food importation.

She disclosed that of the 1.5 million metric tonnes of fish required in the country, only 750,000 could be produced locally, in addition to N1 billion that went into rice importation daily and the N625 billion sunk into wheat importation annually.

She said the administration was committed to reversing the trend by prioritizing agriculture for self-sufficiency and economic empowerment.

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