

NIGERIA: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

Nigeria is the largest country in Africa, with a total geographical area of 923,768 square kilometres and a population of about 140 million. The country is located between latitude 4°N to 14°N; and longitude 3°E to 15°E. It is bounded in the north by Niger Republic, in the West by Benin Republic and in the East by the Cameroun Republic. The Chad Republic is to the North-East and the Atlantic Ocean is to its South via the Gulf of Guinea. It thus lies wholly within the tropics along the Gulf of Guinea on the western coast of Africa.



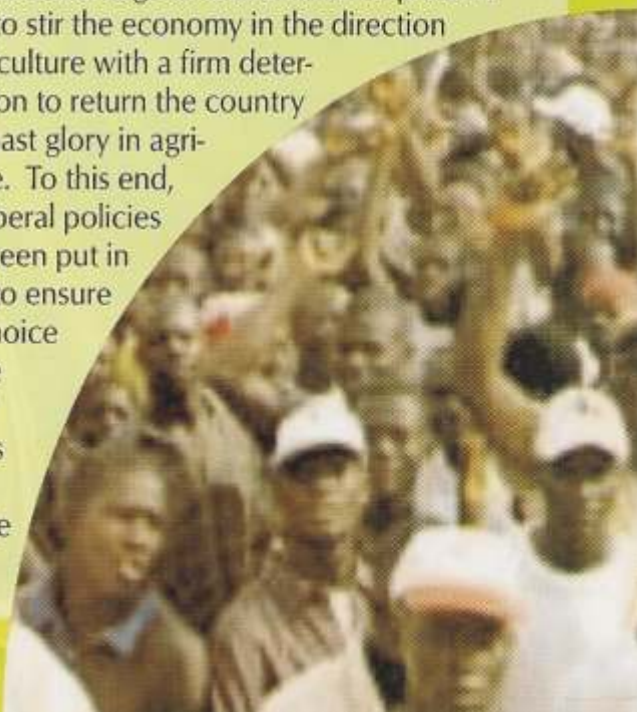
Abuja: Administrative Capital of Nigeria

At governmental level, Nigeria enjoys excellent relations with many countries of the world leading to good trading and other bilateral relationships. Being a member of many world organizations and playing noted roles in those organizations has shown Nigeria to be a country truly committed to the tenets of the comity of nations.

In terms of market, Nigeria constitutes a huge market for almost every product. Investors in agriculture and agro-allied industries will find a ready market for their products.

The country also boasts of abundance of both skilled and unskilled labour that are ready for deployment at comparatively low remunerations.

Prospective investors in the agricultural sector can take advantage of Government's present effort to stir the economy in the direction of agriculture with a firm determination to return the country to its past glory in agriculture. To this end, very liberal policies have been put in place to ensure that choice private sector players are attracted.



The Nigerian population is divided among 478 different ethnic groups, some numbering fewer than 10,000 people. Of the different ethnic groups, ten groups: Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba, Ibo, Kanuri, Tiv, Edo, Nupe, Ibibio and Ijaw account for nearly 80% of the total population. The lowest population densities are found in the northern regions of Nigeria, especially in the states Borno, Adamawa, Kebbi, Kwara, Taraba, Yobe and Zamfara States. Forty-seven per cent of the population is below the age of 15 years.

The Nigerian people are quite benign and are particularly kind to foreigners. The various cultures in the country emphasize mutual respect and warm relationship.

NIGERIA: AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

There are tremendous opportunities for investments in the agricultural sector of the Nigerian economy.

It is estimated that Nigeria has about 71.2 million hectares of available cultivatable agricultural land less than half of which is currently being utilised. Increasing rainfall from the semi-arid north to the tropical rain forested south allows great crop diversity, from short season cereals, sorghum, millet and wheat in the north to cassava, yams and rice in the wetter areas. In the drier regions cash crops include cotton, groundnuts and tobacco, while in the south cocoa, coffee rubber, oil palm, sugar and ginger are grown.

Smallholder and traditional farmers, who use rudimentary production techniques and the bush fallow system of cultivation, account for around 2/3 of Nigeria's total agricultural production. Subsistence food crops (mainly sorghum, maize, taro, yams, cassava, rice and millet) are grown in the central and western areas of Nigeria, and traded largely outside the cash economy. Cash crops (mainly palm kernels, cotton, cocoa, rubber and groundnuts) are grown in the mid-west and north of the country.

Recognizing the limited production capacity of the small-scale farmers and the need to step up production in order to meet up with the country's food and industrial requirements, governments at different levels are taking appropriate actions to encourage commercial agriculture in the country. The various governments in the country are interested in having the private sector take the lead in all business ventures. They are also well disposed to the concept of public-private-partnership.

With a vast water mass and grassland, Nigeria there are good opportunities for cultivating various species of fish as well as rearing of livestock. Nigeria's cash crops include Tobacco, Groundnuts, Cocoa beans, Rubber, Gum Arabic, Kola nuts, Beniseed, Cotton, Soyabean, Palm kernel and Cashew nuts.

Studies have shown that several arable and tree crops were suitable for large-scale production in different agro-ecological zones of Nigeria viz:



- * **Rain forest zone** is suitable for the production of Cocoa, Rubber, Kola, Oil palm, Robusta, Coffee, Plantains, Pineapple and Cassava;
- * **Derived savanna** is suitable for large-scale production of Cashew, citrus, Mango, upland Rice, Cassava and Maize;
- * **Southern savanna**, suitable for the Production of Sugarcane, Citrus, Cashew, Mango, Yam, Soya bean and Rice;
- * **Northern savanna**; suitable for the large-scale Production of Cotton, Cow pea, Maize, Sorghum, Millet, Sugarcane and Groundnuts;
- * **Sudan savanna**; suitable for large-scale production of Cow pea, Millet, Groundnut, Sorghum, Sugarcane and Wheat under irrigation;
- * **Montane Ecology**, i.e. the Mambila Plateau (also Obudu, Jos, Biu) suitable for large-scale production of Tea and Coffee.

