

ACBF Development Memoirs Series

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THE AFRICAN CAPACITY BUILDING FOUNDATION | FONDATION POUR LE RENFORCEMENT DES CAPACITES EN AFRIQUE

Addressing Africa's Youth Employment and Food Security Crisis: The Role of African Agriculture in Job Creation

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Former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria



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**THE ROLE OF AFRICAN
AGRICULTURE IN JOB
CREATION**

H E OLUSEGUN OBASANJO

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September 2015

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THE ACBF DEVELOPMENT MEMOIRS SERIES

The African Capacity Building Foundation's Development Memoirs Series is a key instrument in the Foundation's knowledge management strategy aimed at harnessing the know-how and learned experiences of eminent senior policymakers and development managers. Central to the Series is the understanding that knowledge management tools and practices can be effectively employed to leverage both local and externally generated knowledge to bridge the knowledge gap between sub-Saharan Africa and the developed world.

The Series is generated through contributions from the ACBF Senior Policymakers and Development Managers Knowledge Sharing Program (SPM-KSP). It provides professional insights, reflections, skills, processes and experiences in the management of specific policies and programs, and offer case studies on processes, practices and experiences associated with specific policies and programs that have made measurable impact on the continent's development experience. The individual voices captured via the SPM-KSP collectively contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of the Foundation's operations, identifying learning and knowledge-sharing opportunities, and providing practitioners with guideposts to best practices in policymaking and development program management.

The Development Memoirs Series reflects the Foundation's vision and quest to actively embrace a diversity of knowledge sources and knowledge including the ways gender, values and culture influence the generation, sharing and application of knowledge. The Series speaks to ACBF's vision that the creation, sharing and deployment of cutting edge knowledge in an increasingly complex, competitive and changing world is imperative to Africa's current development efforts and future prospects.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Despite the abundance of agricultural resources, sub-Saharan Africa remains the world's most food insecure region. In my view there are many critical factors responsible for food insecurity in this region. They include undeveloped land tenure systems, high bank loan rates, inadequate availability of agricultural special banks, poor access to market information and prices, an unreliable market for farm produce and inadequate road network, transport and storage infrastructures for farm produce. There is also a lack of capacity for cooperative and value addition to farm produce and poor capacity for and access to agricultural insurance services. In addition, poor capacity for labor and labor costing are also part of the problem.

Agriculture is one of the economic sectors that can employ millions of young people and reduce youth unemployment and enhance food security on the continent. The challenges facing adult farmers are huge but not as large as the challenges that young people encounter when trying to engage in agriculture as a profession. Nevertheless, there is hope, and opportunities abound for young people to be successful in agriculture. There are numerous actions that governments should take to address critical barriers to youth involvement in agriculture—a way of tackling both the massive youth unemployment and food insecurity in Africa. Among them the following are critical: Policymakers should ensure agriculture provides the lifestyle and status that young people desire and expect. This is in addition to addressing challenges faced by adult farmers including, for example, modernizing land tenure systems and providing conducive financing and interest rates for agriculture loans. Additional examples include providing good basic services such as schools, power, hospital, water and roads in rural and/or farming areas and promoting agribusiness

and value addition to agriculture produce. Policymakers should also promote and develop successful young farmers as role models for other youth. Government agricultural policies should be strategic and sustainable.

Strategic development policies should not change with every change of government (every 5 to 10 years): A good leader is one who learns from his/her predecessors, who continues building on good policies and practices and who uses lessons to improve national policies and programs. Nigeria and Ethiopia are two countries that have found a way around the issue of land reform by passing the Land Use Act under which all land is vested in the state governments, and that in turn is allocated it to individuals and corporate bodies for their projects. In Ethiopia for instance, the government has created a land bank that provides land for agricultural projects and helps farmers with soil tests and advice on which crops to grow.

To realize the potential of the agriculture sector, governments need to come up with sustainable long-term policies and ensure their consistency and continuity beyond any change of administration. Such support should be provided to citizens and young people who have shown high commitment, zeal and passion for agriculture as a profession, regardless of their background. If governments put such support measures in place, it would afford youth the possibility to unlock agriculture's huge potential to address food insecurity and the unemployment crisis in the region. And in fact, young people would not have the excuse of being unemployed.

H E Olusegun Obasanjo

Abeokuta, Ugun State, Nigeria

I. INTRODUCTION

This African Capacity Building Foundation's (ACBF's) 8th development memoir series features His Excellency Olusegun Obasanjo, the former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. In this series, President Obasanjo shares his memoirs, insights and experience on *Addressing Africa's Youth Employment and Food Security Crisis: The Role of African Agriculture in Job Creation*. This series also includes insights and experiences of two young role model farmers mentored through programs from the Obasanjo Farms Nigeria Ltd.

The ACBF, through its Knowledge Monitoring and Evaluation Department, is geared towards generating, sharing, disseminating and using knowledge for capacity building and development management. The ACBF knowledge and learning strategy seeks to achieve four major objectives, amongst others, to:

- Enhance the performance of internal project and program operations based on best-practice methodologies, strategies and instruments.
- Foster the sharing of best practices in capacity building and in the design and implementation of development policies and programs as well as in reform programs that are directed at strengthening the effectiveness of Africa's development process.
- Contribute to programs and mechanisms for extracting and sharing tacit knowledge around capacity building for the benefit of national and regional development.
- Enhance returns to, and the efficiency of, investments in capacity building.

One of the key instruments in the Foundation's knowledge management toolkit is the Senior Policymakers and Development Managers' Knowledge Sharing Program (SPM-KSP). SPM-KSP provides a platform by which successful development practitioners (serving or on retirement, sabbatical or leave of absence) who have made significant contributions to the development process in Africa or other developing regions and are willing to document and share their memoirs are targeted for extracting tacit knowledge for the benefit of future efforts towards African development. SPM-KSP specifically targets very senior policymakers and development managers, including visiting academics and eminent guests to the Foundation. Participating policymakers and development managers are selectively drawn nationally, regionally, continentally and globally from the public and private sectors; national, regional and continental institutions; international development agencies; civil society organizations; ACBF partner institutions; tertiary institutions of learning; research and specialized training institutes, among others.

ACBF extended an invitation to Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and founder of the Olusegun Obasanjo Foundation (OOF), to draw on his experience and share his insights guided by the theme: *Addressing Africa's Youth Employment and Food Security Crisis: The Role of African Agriculture in Job Creation*.

II. PROFILE OF THE CONTRIBUTOR

H E Chief Olusegun Obasanjo served as President of Nigeria from May 1999 to May 2007. Obasanjo's elected term in office was characterized by a commitment to the rule of law and economic and political reforms. He worked to rebuild institutions wrecked by decades of neglect, repression and mismanagement. This rebuilding exercise included the appointment of key, reform-

minded technocrats such as Finance Minister Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Education Minister Obiageli Ezekwesili—both internationally respected leaders in their fields. Selecting Charles Soludo to be Governor of the Central Bank paved the way for consolidation in the country's banking sector, transforming it into one of the most dynamic industries on the continent. In addition, Chief Obasanjo's liberalization of the telecommunications sector allowed Nigeria to become Africa's largest and fastest growing information, communication and technology market.

He created the country's first Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, which secured in excess of 275 convictions, including those of members of Nigeria's elite, recovering a total of \$5 billion in misappropriated assets. This was the first time in the country's history that public officials had been prosecuted for the misuse of state funds. On the backdrop of increases in oil prices on international markets, Obasanjo's government oversaw a doubling of Nigeria's annual average economic growth rate to 6 percent. Foreign reserves rose from \$3.7 billion in 1999 to \$45 billion in 2007. Sound economic stewardship helped the Obasanjo administration secure \$18 billion in debt relief from Western creditors and the Nigerian government used burgeoning state revenues to pay down a further \$12 billion in dues, leaving Nigeria almost debt free.

Following his retirement from the armed forces as a general in 1979, Obasanjo started a company called Obasanjo Farms Nigeria Ltd. in Ota, Ogun State. He is also a role model for the youth of Africa; he established the African Leadership Forum, which organizes workshops advocating African solutions to African problems through better leadership, state capacity building and the encouragement of private enterprise. The Presidential Library complex he has built in his home town of Abeokuta is the first of its kind in Africa—an enduring testament to his leadership and a model for the rest of the continent.

Outside Nigeria, he has been central to the regenerating and repositioning of the African Union. Together with former South African president Thabo Mbeki, he led the creation of the African Peer Review Mechanism, designed to engender and promote the ideals of democracy and good governance, and the New Partnership for Africa's Development.

After serving his country for eight years and restoring the respect for his continental peers within the international community, President Obasanjo stepped down in 2007. He has continued to play a role as Africa's ambassador-at-large.

In 2008 he was appointed Special Envoy for the Great Lakes region by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and he continues to be an integral actor in mediation efforts in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Obasanjo has also served as the African Union's Special Envoy for Togo's 2010 Presidential elections, as well as South Africa's presidential polls in 2009.

As the Special Envoy for Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), his role in diffusing the crisis that threatened civil war in Côte d'Ivoire during 2011 was vital. When democracy was once again threatened in Senegal during controversial presidential polls in March 2012, he promptly led the joint African Union and ECOWAS mission to resolve the standoff, paving the way for a smooth transition and pulling one of Africa's oldest democracies back from the brink.

Outside the political arena, Chief Obasanjo has been a catalyst in driving Africa's economic transformation. The region is now amongst the fastest growing in the world, rapidly becoming the destination of choice for international investors looking at emerging and frontier markets. Using his experience as a successful farmer and businessman in Nigeria, he is actively engaging the farming community to facilitate more investment into the continent. Obasanjo seeks to achieve this

vision through the Africa Investment Council, a platform of distinguished leaders working to provide advocacy, thought leadership, collaboration and best practices on sustainable investment into Africa. He is presently an advisor to New World Capital, an investment advisory firm providing interested parties with market access, investment advisory and co-investment opportunities across the continent.

President Obasanjo is also the founder of the Olusegun Obasanjo Foundation, a UK-based charity that has the mission of advancing “Human Security for All”. The Foundation has wide ranging initiatives, including Feeding Africa, Youth Empowerment, Education for Girls and a health initiative focused on non-communicable and waterborne diseases. As Africa assumes an increasingly central role in international policy and business, the continent will continue to have an unwavering advocate in Chief Obasanjo.

III. GUIDING ISSUES

With a profile spanning from military general, head of state, entrepreneur, distinguished elder statesman of Africa, as well as businessman and farmer, H E Obasanjo’s face-to-face knowledge-sharing interview with the Knowledge Monitoring and Evaluation Department of the African Capacity Building Foundation on February 4, 2015, at his residency in Abeokuta, Ugun State in Nigeria provided insights and thoughts into:

- The critical factors responsible for food insecurity in the African continent, especially the sub-Saharan region, despite an abundance of agricultural resources.
- Challenges facing small-scale and young farmers in Africa and how the African government can make agriculture attractive to young people and address youth

unemployment and the food security crisis.

- His personal experiences and understanding of the requirements of young people to engage in successful agriculture, the missing links, and inconsistency of government policies when government administrations change in Africa.
- The potential roles that youth can contribute to food security, the critical capacity gaps for young people in turning agriculture into a business (agribusiness), and the potential for agriculture to employ youth.
- His views and insights on what he considers the opportunities to modernize agriculture to address food insecurity and youth unemployment that is embedded in the current long-term developmental strategic plans (visions) of many African countries.

In what follows, H E Obasanjo shares his thoughts on the foregoing leading issues relating to *Addressing Africa’s Youth Employment and Food Security Crisis: The Role of African Agriculture in Job Creation*. Chief Obasanjo draws on his experiences and offers examples of successful and unsuccessful youth employment schemes on the continent and presents invaluable insights on what he envisions as critical steps central to Africa’s quest for food security and ensured youth employment.

IV. TRANSCRIPT OF KNOWLEDGE-SHARING INTERVIEW

ACBF: Your Excellency, thank you very much for accepting to participate in the African Capacity Building Foundation's Senior Policymaker Knowledge Sharing Program. The Program is one of the tools that ACBF uses to generate, share and disseminate knowledge on capacity building and development program management in Africa and globally. So, Mr President, given your distinguished achievements, challenges, triumphs as a military general, military head of state, as a successful farmer, entrepreneur and businessman, ACBF would like to draw on your experiences and share your insights on: Addressing Africa's Youth Employment and Food Security: The Role of African Agriculture in Job Creation.

We strongly believe that your insight will provide invaluable lessons to policymakers, governments, development partners and civil society organizations in the engagement of the youth in the agriculture value chain. We expect that you will share your experiences on the potential of agriculture to provide jobs to the youth, on the challenges faced by youths to participate in agriculture, on the role of youth in providing food security and on the required policy support to sustain and raise growth and new employment opportunities.

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Thank you very much for giving me this explanation and the background on what the whole project is all about. I totally agree that those among us who have had some experience in relevant areas in life should share it with the youth, the policymakers and even the policy executioners. We should make such experience and knowledge available.

And my own belief is that, to a large extent, what we need in Africa is available here on the continent. I wouldn't say all that we need is in Africa, but to a large extent what we need in Africa to make progress, to

develop—the experience, the knowledge, the factors—are all here to a large extent. The issue is knowing where to get them, how to get them, how to collate them, how to disseminate them and how to make use of them. And I believe that is what you are trying to do.

ACBF: Despite the abundance of agricultural resources, sub-Saharan Africa remains the world's most food insecure region. What in your view are the critical factors responsible for food insecurity in this region?

UNDERDEVELOPED LAND TENURE SYSTEM

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: There are many reasons and I would like to talk about some of them.

First of all, the basic thing you need in agriculture is land. Even if you want to do aquaculture, which is one form of agriculture, you still need land. Then, I believe that in many parts of Africa, our land tenure system is archaic. It needs to be modernized so that people who want to do agriculture can easily have access to land. That to me is the first basic or fundamental issue that we have to deal with—land availability and accessibility to those who genuinely want to farm.

Part of our land tenure system is such that when a person who owns land dies, the inheritance is divided among the inheritors, and the land is being fractionalized, being divided. For example, suppose that my grandfather was farming on a 10-hectare land; he dies leaving behind five inheritors. They will share the land equally, so instead of the 10 hectares which my grandfather had, my father would only receive two hectares. If my father leaves four people to inherit from him, they would divide my father's two hectares into four smaller portions of land. What I will have access to will be a half hectare. That is the traditional and cultural aspect of land accessibility. If I find that half hectare is not enough land, and I have no way of acquiring more, I will either sell the land or move away completely

from it. So, it is only by modernizing the land tenure system that we can easily make land available to prospective farmers.

NIGERIA LAND USE ACT, AN EXAMPLE OF MODERNIZING LAND TENURE SYSTEM

In Nigeria, we passed what we called the Land Use Act under which all land is held in trust by the state government for those who, within the state or from outside the state, want to invest; the goal of the Act was to make land available to them. Before then, you would go through interminable hassles to get a piece of land that would be reasonable for what I would call modern agriculture or serious agriculture on a medium commercial scale.

HIGH INTEREST RATES FOR AGRICULTURAL LOANS: SHOULD NOT BE HIGHER THAN A SINGLE DIGIT

The next thing is finance. Finance must be available. The countries that have developed agriculture commercially and made it worthwhile are those—when you look into their history—whose interest rate when borrowing for agriculture is between 2.5 percent and 4 percent. Such low interest rates make agricultural enterprises viable and successful.

UNAVAILABILITY OF BANKS FOCUSED ON AGRICULTURE

Depending on which area of agriculture you are going into, the gestation period is very long. I am into poultry, tree planting, arable farming. For instance, the minimum period for poultry is between two and three years. If you borrow from a commercial bank to finance this venture at current rates of say 20 percent per annum, don't forget this is a compound interest, your debt is doubled and you find it almost impossible to repay your loan.

If we are serious about agriculture, then we need to wake up to the fact that the interest rates that we apply are very unrealistic. If you give money to any farmer who goes into tree planting, for instance, the minimum

gestation period would be five to six years. If you put all the money into that by the time you are harvesting, your debt has tripled or quadrupled.

ACBF: So, Mr President, what you are saying is that there is a need for special banking and financing arrangement for farmers/agriculture?

THE NIGERIA AGRICULTURE CREDIT GUARANTEED SCHEME

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Definitely! We tried that here in Nigeria at one time when we established the Agriculture Credit Guaranteed Scheme, and decided that the interest rate for agricultural loan should be within the single-digit range; anything higher, you couldn't make it—except if you go into some illegal agricultural production, like growing cocaine.

ACBF: One of the biggest challenges experienced by Africa's smallholder farmers has been the lack of transparent and timely information about the market price of agricultural products. With the wide-scale adoption of ICTs such as mobile phones on the African continent, what, in your view, is the potential of mobile phones to transform value chains and market access? How can youth use ICTs to develop agricultural opportunities?

UNCERTAINTY OF MARKETS FOR FARM PRODUCE

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: If one has taken care of land and finance, one also has to take care of marketing. We have no real identifiable market for farm products. The people who benefit from the sweat of the farmers are the middlemen—the people who go to a farmer on his farm when he needs money and say “Ok, we advance you or we loan this amount”, and of course he needs the money to buy seeds, to buy fertilizer. If one does not have the money as and when it is required, then one will lose that planting season.

INADEQUATE ACCESS TO MARKET PRICE

So, the farmer needs to have the market and must have access to that market. He must also have knowledge of prices in one market or the other and be able to have what I call “certainty of market”. To solve that, some countries, particularly Ethiopia, have gone into commodity exchange, which is working. The process of modernisation should be in every sector.

UNDEVELOPED ROAD AND STORAGE INFRASTRUCTURES IN FARMING AREAS

To get one’s commodity or one’s produce to the market, one needs roads, one needs transportation, one needs storage; and depending on what it is, one’s storage would have to be relevant to what one is producing. For instance, if one is producing perishable goods, the storage has to be cold, the right temperature, the right pressure, and so on. Also, marketing does not only consist of having a buyer who can buy from the farmer or buy from the farm gate. One must be able to transport or whoever buys from his farm gate must have good means of transportation, which means roads from the farm to the storage, to the market place and to the processing plant, because it is also important that the farmer has value addition to enhance what he/she gets from his products.

LOW CAPACITY FOR COOPERATIVE AND FOR VALUE ADDITION TO FARM PRODUCE

For instance, in my poultry business, if all I do is only raise the chicken and sell my live chicken, I don’t maximise what I get from my products, and that was the way I started. But, if I can process and sell it whole, I increase the value addition; if I can cut it into parts and package it, then I get, again, added value. If I go beyond that and in fact make it into chicken noodles, I get even more. How do we do this? One single farmer may not be able to do it. We then talk of cooperatives; cooperatives not in terms of production, but cooperatives in terms of value addition. So, even when it comes to

marketing and value addition, we have to modernise our approach to doing business.

IGNORANCE OF INSURANCE FOR AGRICULTURE

In Africa, however, the banks want to make sure that they hedge against uncertainties: the hazards and the uncertainty of weather or certainty of pests, uncertainty of disease that affects either one’s farm or the livestock. So banks will give one a loan at a 20% interest rate, which is the same rate they would give a trader of imports goods who has to sell them within three months in order to pay back the loan.

We also have to get farmers to take care of bad situations. It doesn’t matter what one does, bad situations will occur. These could be drought, epidemic within one’s flock or livestock, or fire, whatever. So one needs insurance. And the rate of insurance must be modernised because it doesn’t matter how clever you are, how good you are in agriculture, at one time or the other, the unexpected will happen; and the best thing is to make sure that you take care of the unexpected through an insurance system.

UNFAVORABLE PRACTICES ON LABOR AND LABOR COSTING

Let me also talk about labour. In the traditional agriculture system, people don’t cost their labour. But one has to cost one’s labour—how much does it cost; even if one’s children or wives are working, they are giving service. The labour must be costed, and it must be included in the cost of production.

ACBF: You have outlined the challenges facing the adult farmer as it were. What hope is there then for the young farmer if things are this difficult for the adult? How can we lure or encourage young people to go into agriculture as a way of addressing the massive youth unemployment in Africa? In your experience what do you consider to be the critical barrier to youth’s involvement in Agriculture?

PROMOTE AND SUPPORT AGRIBUSINESS AND MODERNIZED AGRICULTURE

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Well, let me put it this way. I don't talk of agriculture today but of agribusiness. I think we must see agriculture as a business. I think that is very, very important. Agriculture as a business means that we approach it as we handle any other business.

I give you an example of one of my children. He came back from Europe where he had studied electronics at Cambridge University in England. I invited him to join my agribusiness but he declined and said, "Daddy, I have spent the last seven years studying electronics, I have a PhD in electronics and I have a teaching appointment in one of these Ivy League universities in America". But I persuaded him to try it for six months. Today ten years on, he still works on the farm. He teases me by saying, "Daddy you are a farmer, I am in agribusiness".

ACBF: It's argued that most of the youths move to urban areas for work because agriculture does not deliver the type of lifestyles and status that young people desire and expect. Agriculture is also considered the last option by most of the youths. How can agriculture be made attractive as a livelihood option for youths in Africa?

MAKE AGRIBUSINESS ATTRACTIVE

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: So, the question you are asking is "How do we make young men and young women of today have an interest [in agriculture]", and I have already given you an example. Young people won't do agriculture the way my father did agriculture, and in any case I am not doing agriculture the way my father did agriculture. I was born into agriculture, but I have gone into modernised agriculture. If we only encourage them to do agriculture the way my father did agriculture, you won't find anybody willing to do so.

So to attract young men and women into agriculture, we need to ask ourselves what they want in the city. They want bright lights and you have to give them bright light. What else do they want? They want schools for their children, and they must have schools for their children. What else do they want? They want employment that is giving them enough to feel fulfilled and satisfied.

They should be able to move from their settlement or where they are farming to the next village, the next bigger settlement and even to the capital city without any hassle. And one has to provide these things.

I think we have to make moving into agriculture appealing; we have to make it attractive; we have to make them feel, "yes, we have what the man in the capital city has in terms of welfare and wellbeing in life".

There must be health facilities, there must be water, there must be all the basic things, which will make them, feel okay, and say, "I am there, and I want to remain there".

ACBF: Given what you've said, what kind of initiative or intervention would you suggest to address the challenge faced by youth to participate in agriculture? What is the effectiveness of agricultural interventions on agriculture investment and incomes for young smallholder farmers in Africa?

PROMOTE AND DEVELOP ROLE MODELS OF YOUNG SUCCESSFUL FARMERS

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Maybe I have anticipated some of your questions a little bit. What does a young man or a young woman want? They want the good things in life. It doesn't matter where they are, it doesn't matter what they are doing. It is not that these young men and women are lazy. We also have to try to give them what I call, a role model. Who are their role models now: politicians, rappers? Can we make successful farmers their role model? Can they say, "Hey, look! Here is my sister; she is a successful farmer". Can we pick role models of successful farmers for young men and young women? It's important.

When I suggest a career in agriculture to young people, I use my son as an example and say, “Look! I have a son who has a PhD in electronics from Cambridge University”. And I have so many of them who have been mentored and now have their own farms. I believe the situation is similar to what we used to have in the past—apprenticeship. That’s how people grow, through apprenticeship, mentoring and learning on the job.

ACBF: *Sir, you talked about creating role models in agribusiness for young people, it seems to me that there are few of such role models; what can we do?*

TWO BENEFICIARIES FROM MY FARMS ARE MODELS OF YOUNG FARMERS

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: You see, talking to me without talking to my son and this chap that I say is in Ibadan, doesn’t really make impact, but if that man comes and tells you, say, “Yes, I went through this and did this and then I did this”, then it makes a world of difference. Or my son says, “Yes, my father stopped me from going, but what I have been doing, I enjoy doing”. So that’s why I said that you should talk to these two, if you are still around. Talk to them, say “Look how were you motivated, what did you do, what did you learn, what would you do differently today?” And then you can take that one as a model.

See for example, Mr Akinoso is very successful. He has a big farm, a big hatchery, and all that. Actually, the house in which he lives is very close, I think, to that of the present Governor of Oyo state. So that’s also a model. A farmer whom I brought up is now living as the neighbour of the Governor of Oyo State (chuckles).

[See Annex 1 for one-on-one interviews with Dr Seun Obasanjo and Mr Akinoso—young farmer role models].

ACBF: *If a young man comes to you and says, “Sir, I want to be a farmer”, what advice would you give him? And Sir, for the purpose of, maybe, a young African who doesn’t have the benefit of meeting you to seek advice from you to put him through, maybe you may want to outline some of these things you talked about, how you would put them through? What exactly would they need to look for? How do they go about getting the land, in the first place?*

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: The first thing I will say to anyone asking me such questions is, “Where is your land? You can’t be a farmer in the air”. That is the first question I would ask him. And if he says “I haven’t got land”, I would then say you are not ready to be a farmer. Moreover in terms of land, it depends on what one wants to grow. One can get a portion of family land, lease a piece of land or buy the land. For a young farmer, leasing is better.

You remember when we started this interview I said the first factor was land. You cannot do agribusiness without land. Where is your land? That would be the beginning. And that is why I said the land tenure system should be modernised, should be made accessible to those who genuinely want to farm without encumbrance. You don’t ask a young man who wants to have two, three hectares of land to go to four families to put the three hectares of land together. He’ll be frustrated.

If he has land, the next thing is what is that land ideal for? First of all, in terms of location, and secondly, in terms of the quality of the land—the soil; you do soil analysis. Even the so-called traditional farmers are no fools; over the years they know when to plant, how to plant, what would yield. Of course, they have dwindling yield and that’s why they have shifting cultivation.

The young men here, if they came to me that would be my first question: “Where is your land?” And I would put them through the process of how to acquire land, what type of crop or produce you want to grow.

But it cannot be haphazard; it has to be deliberate.

ACBF: *So what would you say are the critical capacity young people are missing into turning agriculture into agribusiness? What are the opportunities and possibilities for meeting these critical needs?*

INADEQUATE AND IRREVERENT NATIONAL AGRICULTURE POLICY AND SCHEMES, PLUS GOVERNANCE CAPACITIES: THERE MUST BE POLICY CONSISTENCY AND CONTINUITY

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: I think policy—government policy, community policy. As I said giving the example of my son, you can't just say to a young man who has gone to school, even secondary school level, let alone first degree, "Hey! Go and farm". No. You have to give him the wherewithal to want to farm and to be able to farm successfully. You have to start from the encouragement; it starts from role modelling as I have mentioned earlier.

I think it is always difficult in most countries—government inconsistency in policy. I have seen it here. When I was in government as a military head of state, I started something we called Operation Feed the Nation. The idea was to encourage everybody to understand what agribusiness is, and to participate in it. We said, "Look, even if it is only at the back of your house, have something—poultry, vegetable, fruit trees"—and it was catching on. Some of the people who are professors of agriculture today were encouraged by that.

But the government that came after then said, "No, no, no, talking of operation is military mentality; we don't want it." So they then said no to Operation Feed the Nation and started Green Revolution. At the end of the day, they had no revolution, they had no green.

There must be policy consistency and continuity. It doesn't matter what it takes, "operation", "green revolution"; whatever

it takes. The input that you need for a successful agribusiness is continuity.

ACBF: *Many of the current African governments have what we call Vision 2030, Vision 2040. Do you see opportunities for policy continuity in addressing food insecurity and youth unemployment across these long-term strategies and programs?*

CHANGING ONE REGIME TO ANOTHER SHOULD NOT NECESSARILY MEAN CHANGING POLICIES

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: I think that if policies are consistent and if they continue, opportunities to address the two problems will be there. I think it is nice to have a bit of a long-term plan or long-term program. But if you are in 2015 and you have "Operation 2030", that's 15 years away. That could be the life of three governments. Unless you can have that consistency, that we don't always have, a government comes, it will try to paint itself as if it's rediscovering, and that what it is doing nobody has done it before. And I laugh. The truth is that, whatever you are doing, others have attempted to do it before. If it did not work, ask yourself why it did not work and try to take off from there.

LEADERSHIP CHALLENGES

You see, one of the things that was done in this part of the world was the so-called Agricultural Settlement. It was done in the Western Region of Nigeria immediately after independence or before independence, and it was done in the eastern part of Nigeria, too. I was talking to one of those who handled its implementation in the western regional part and he said it was modelled after the Kibbutz in Israel. But what he did not understand was that the Kibbutz worked because the Jews that came from all over the world were forced into that place. So there, they started farm settlements, almost in the way of the Kibbutz in Israel. And the people who were living in mud houses were taken from their villages and put in brick and block houses. The people

who didn't have electricity in their villages could have electricity for the first time in their lives, have running water, and they were paid a salary; so they were not farmers, they were civil servants. So the agricultural settlement scheme failed.

Now, the civil servant I talked to, who was, at that time the head of civil service, said that when the government, the political head, came up with this idea, they said to them that the conditions here were different from the conditions in Israel. But political decisions were taken at the expense of technical observations.

ACBF: *The debate on youth and agriculture has often assumed that simply encouraging young people to farm will solve the triple problem of unemployment, hunger and food insecurity. So given these kinds of challenges you just mentioned, do you see any potential for youth to work in agriculture and enhance the food security in the region? As a role model for the youth in Africa, what are the potential roles of youths in enhancing food security?*

THERE IS A BIG POTENTIAL FOR YOUTH TO WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY IN THE REGION

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Of course, yes. Yes, it is possible, but you will not have it on a platter of gold. How do you create genuine interest? How do you find the people who will really want to dirty their hands? We have to give them encouragement; there's nobody who has succeeded in life who has not been given a ladder to climb up. Some people would be motivated others would be inspired.

ACBF: *Your Excellency, in the past few years, you have launched the Olusegun Obasanjo Foundation (OOF) to address food security and youth unemployment. From our discussion, I see in this an opportunity for your foundation. Can the foundation arrange for some of these young role models to talk to school children or students in tertiary*

institutions on the benefits of agribusiness? Could you kindly share with ACBF some of the critical achievements and lessons that you deem pertinent for similar endeavours across the continent?

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: I think that is important, what we are doing is giving youth exposure: let them see, let them learn, let them understand, let them know what are the important elements that must be there.

I think what we need to look at is youth empowerment (I won't call it employment or anything else). To empower the youth you have to give them the tools for them to understand wealth creation, and wealth creation is about turning raw material or your knowledge into wealth. I think that is the most important thing now for Nigeria and for Africa as a whole, and if the different foundations out there can do the same it would be beneficial to our future, because it is from these youths that we would get jobs created and investment made in the economy.

ACBF: *What would you ascribe your success in agribusiness to?*

PASSION AND MADNESS

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: First, passion. I don't believe that you can succeed without it, not many people succeed without passion; passion drives you. I took somebody to my farm—two of my poultry farms—and after he had gone round he said, "Only two things can make a man do what you are doing". And what are they I asked him? He replied, "Passion and madness". I said to him, I have them both; passion and madness, I say I have them both, and I believe you need them both to succeed.

ACBF: *What would be your recommendation to governments, development partners such as ACBF, private sector in African countries to*

promote agriculture as a business, to encourage youth participation? What would you suggest for African leaders as the best approach to improve youth involvement in agriculture? What agricultural policies would aid the realization of this goal?

CLEAR AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE NATIONAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: Like I have said, there must be clear, unambiguous and sustainable agricultural national policies and strategies. Policy that makes all those factors that I have mentioned available—modernized land tenure system, loans at low interest rates, support marketing of farm produce, put in place an insurance scheme, encourage value addition, provide basic infrastructure and encourage role models among successful farmers—and those who are genuinely interested in agriculture can access them without hindrance and encumbrance. If a man today says, “look, I want to cultivate rice, I need 500 hectares of land”. Where can he get it? The Land Use Act that we made here is for him to get it. There are two ways. Go to a community and say this ... get the community to either lease or buy the land or whatever it is; or go to a government and say this is what I want and this is my plan and government gets the land and gives to you/him. In Ethiopia they have what they call land bank. They have all the land that is available and have even done soil tests. So, if say it's maize you want to plant, they tell you this area is good for it. So I think that consistency and continuity of policy is important.

There is nothing that is as detrimental to a farmer as not knowing what will happen because farmers are not fools. If the price of maize is right and it consistently continues to be right, they will continue to grow maize, they will continue to expand their production, their children will go to school, they would be happy, their welfare would be taken care of. Let the price of maize go down for two years consistently, then they are no longer interested in maize and they would start growing something else.

Now, I will give you an illustration on that. Here in the Western Region of Nigeria, in the early 1960s, the government wanted to encourage poultry development, and the best type of maize for poultry, particularly for eggs, is yellow maize. But we never grew yellow maize in this part of the country because we use maize to produce something like custard, which is snow white. So, they encouraged farmers to grow yellow maize; they distributed yellow maize. By the time the yellow maize was ready, no poultry farmer would buy because the poultry had not been developed. So the people, who were producing this custard bought yellow maize and their custard became yellow rather than snow white and nobody would buy their custard. So the following year, the farmers could not sell the yellow maize.

So there must also be forward planning. The farmer wants to be able to say if I plant 10 hectares of land and my yield is roughly this, and the market price is roughly this, I will get this; that must be there.

V. CONCLUSION

H E Olusegun Obasanjo: I have appreciated the opportunity extended to me to share my insights and experience on African youth unemployment and food insecurity/crisis, and the role of agriculture in job creation. This is one of the areas that I hold dearly. I am totally in agreement with the objectives of the ACBF's senior policymaker knowledge sharing program. That those of us who have had some experience in life, in relevant areas, should share it with the youth, the policymakers, and even the policy executioners. We should make such experience and knowledge available.

And, my own belief is that, to a large extent, what we need in Africa is available here in Africa. I wouldn't say all that we need in Africa but to a large extent what we need in Africa to make progress, to develop—the experience, the knowledge, the factors, are all here to a large extent. The question is to

know where to get them, how to get them, how to collate them, how to disseminate them, and how to make use of them and I believe that is what this program is trying to do.

ANNEX 1: ONE-ON-ONE INTERVIEWS WITH YOUNG FARMER ROLE MODELS

DR SEUN OBASANJO

ACBF: Can you tell us a little about yourself?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: I am Seun Obasanjo. You've met my dad, President Olusegun Obasanjo, who is the former president of Nigeria. I'm 37 years old, and I've been in the agribusiness for about 10 years. After completing my doctorate degree in electronics engineering in England, I came back to Nigeria and went straight into this family farming business. I am the director of Obasanjo Farms Nigeria Ltd.

ACBF: How has it been so far? When did it start; were you ever involved in agriculture before? What was your motivation?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: I am an electronic engineer by background and hold a PhD in electronics engineering as well. I have no background in agriculture. To date, agribusiness has been very interesting; it's been a learning process; luckily I have the support of the family and the family business to learn from but it's been very challenging and very interesting at the same time.

I did not have plans to come back to Nigeria to talk of agriculture. My plans were to continue into research—academia. So I wasn't planning to come to Nigeria, not to talk of agriculture. It was my dad who convinced me to join the business, but after the first six months on the project, I started learning and enjoying the business.

ACBF: Do you have any regrets not pursuing your academic career?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: No I don't have any regrets because at the end of the day what

we are doing is developing Nigeria, we are developing Africa, and my own opinion now, after these years, is that if we don't do it, nobody else is going to do it for us. So, it's something that has to be done. It's not going to be easy or normally, it would not be an interesting profession, but it has to be done; Africa has to develop and the biggest contributor to GDP in Nigeria is agriculture and it's the largest employer as well.

ACBF: From your experience, can a young person live comfortably off his proceeds on agribusiness? What kind of challenges and lessons should one expect on the way?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: Yes, I think, from my experience, there are a few challenges for a young person coming into the business, but if you get your business model correctly, it is one of those businesses that regardless of what is happening in the economy—recession or depression—people are still going to need agriculture, and food stuff because it is one of the basic needs. I have friends that are in the business on a smaller scale and are self-sufficient and making a living out of it.

One of the most important things for me is that there should be a form of value addition. So we have to move away from the older days where one just provided foodstuff and then one sold it. So there has to be some value addition, some kind of processing, and packaging of an agricultural product, which makes it more acceptable at higher standards. And then that's where one gets a premium for the products that have been produced.

One major challenge would be access to capital. You need money, of course, for this business. A lot of people do not have access to that kind of capital, needless to say the youth do not. The banks are not really able to support as well; the interest rates are quite high so you find out that a lot of people that borrow money from the banks at 20% and above end up paying all their profits and interest and everything to the

bank. So, I think that is the biggest challenge.

ACBF: So, what would you do, if you had the opportunity to be in government and you were saddled with the responsibility of fashioning out a programme that would attract young people in view of these challenges? What would you be advising, perhaps, the government?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: I would advise the policymakers that in order to attract young people, they have to create what, maybe I would call an Agricultural Zone. So the government acquires the land and provides some of the basic infrastructure for this zone, which is one of the things that is not very easy for young people to start doing. So if you/young person goes into the bush and has to start clearing the bush, getting the power, getting the road network to the farm place, getting water etc., you know, you are talking of a lot of investment. So if there is an area where the government can provide that investment—a large area—may be 20,000 or 30,000 hectares and then the government says, look, all you need to do is come with a limited seed capital and take this portion of land and start cultivating whatever product you want to cultivate. And even, maybe provide the farmer with some of the capital at a very low interest rate, and even possibly providing farm inputs like fertilizer, or vaccines or any kind of things the product or animals would need, as well as guarantying the purchase or the sales of those products. Then agriculture would become an exciting career path.

ACBF: You've been in the business for about 10 years now. Do you know any place—either in Nigeria or Europe where such intervention has taken place?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: No, I don't. I know there are some businesses that use what they call "out growers", but the out growers that I know of, are usually the locals that are already producing in that area on a small scale. So maybe the businesses then set up,

maybe a big processing plant, and are buying from all the out growers, and maybe they are producing some of their own needs as well. But I don't know of any schemes that have been set up for agriculture, exactly like that.

ACBF: One may say that you are lucky because you have a father, who is involved in agriculture, and therefore, he served as a mentor to you; are you also mentoring any young people?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: Yes. A lot of my friends come to me because I am in the business. So I am like a model to them and they ask questions on agriculture, they have some needs and requirements, or just want to have contact. So I am very open; information is key as well, so I try and share as much information as possible with them. I try and encourage them on the way to go; I also try to warn them on the pitfalls that they should lookout for, and one of the major ones is agriculture. It is not one of those things that you can do remotely. You cannot sit in the office or sit in the city and have your farm and expect everything to be working efficiently and effectively; you have to be there yourself—24/7—if possible you have to sleep on the farm and that is the way the business will grow. So those are the kinds of advice I give people.

ACBF: Is there any forum where young people like you in agribusiness can participate or are participating in policymaking, decision making at high level influencing the government's policies on agriculture? And or are you consulted when they are making decisions on agricultural policies?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: There are different associations of farmers in Nigeria. For example, we have the Poultry Association of Nigeria which all the poultry farmers are part of. And now that you've mentioned it, it might be very interesting to set up a young poultry farmers or a young farmers association because that is the best way to

give your views. So if one person is talking, it's not very loud, but if you have an association of people in the same business then you can pass the message across.

ACBF: One of the biggest challenges experienced by Africa's smallholder farmers has been lack of transparent and timely information about the market price of agricultural products. With the wide-scale adoption of ICTs such as mobile phones on the African continent, what, in your view, is the potential of mobile phones to transform value chains and market access? How can youth use ICTs to develop agricultural opportunities? And given your experience, how are you using ICT to reach out to the market, and how is it benefitting your market?

How do you think young farmers can use ICT in an attempt to improve their production or businesses?

Dr Seun Obasanjo: We live in an information age now, so [there are] a lot ways [to do this], from the beginning; from determining what type of business you want to go into, what type of farming you want to get into, I would expect most people to have researched what is lacking or what is a profitable choice; to buying their equipment, getting the land, looking at marketing to things like advertising, letting people know where your farm is, letting people know where your business is, letting people know the kind of product you are producing, how it is different from what the competition is doing. You know, now information is readily available and you can easily get better value for your product as well, just by communicating with the people that need to buy.

In our business, we've been able to set up our website. We get a lot of enquires from the website. So this is a market that was previously unavailable to us. Because of the scale of our business we do a lot of large customers and wholesale business as well because we are bigger than some of the smaller ones as well. But I believe you can put your information out there through

Facebook, Twitter and or Instagram. Even if you don't want to have a website, Facebook is easier. The key really in business is to be able to build a connection to your customers, to the people who you are selling to, and that is actually the key to your business. It's not just the product, but you want to sell them experience, and the product.

MR SAMSON AKINOSO

ACBF: Good morning Mr Samson Akinoso. Thank you for accepting our invitation. Could you introduce yourself, and tell us how you started your career in agriculture?

Mr Samson Akinoso: I am Samson Akinoso. I have a Higher National Diploma in Agriculture Science from the Lagos State College of Science and Technology, now known as Lagos State Polytechnic. Apart from that I have a background in agriculture. I was born into a farming family and it was from there that I got the inspiration to go into farming. Luckily for me I got employed as farm manager by the then Temperance Enterprises, which later changed to Obasanjo Farms Ltd. There was this zeal in me; I counted myself lucky to be working in a company belonging to a former head of state of Nigeria.

ACBF: You have a background in agriculture education and as you said you also come from a farming family. Are these necessary requirements for a young man who wants to go into agribusiness? Did they motivate you to get into farming business? Moreover there is a problem facing African nations in terms of youth unemployment. There is this huge army of young people who are waiting for white collar jobs that are not available and it seems that farming is the other option open to them. Would it be a disadvantage to them if they didn't have the kind of background you have, if they wanted to go into farming?

Mr Samson Akinoso: I think the zeal and passion comes from there. I was born in a

village where the primary occupation was cultivation of maize, cassava, citrus, and cocoa. We also did a bit of poultry farming as well as kept some sheep and goats. So when I got into higher institution, it was like learning the theory of what I already knew. So, it helps a lot if you have the background, the kind of which I enjoyed, that gave me the passion and zeal for farming.

For young people with no background like mine, it won't be a disadvantage to them as long as they have the passion for agriculture. You don't need to be a medical doctor to own a hospital. The person who owns Virgin Atlantic is not a pilot. So it's not compulsory that one must have my kind of background. What matters is to see farming as a way of life, and then you have the passion for it, then you go into it. But most youths don't want to go into it because you have to live the life of a village person to go into farming. It's not a job meant for lazy people. If you have to feed your birds at say, 6 a.m., it must be done at 6 a.m., no excuses.

In addition, it takes six months before you start getting eggs from your birds. If you plant cocoa, it takes some six, seven years before you start harvesting. So, it's not a business that you start today and want to see the money rolling in tomorrow. If you don't have the passion and the patience, you cannot go into farming.

ACBF: President Obasanjo is said to be a role model for the youth in Africa. What was your experience of working with President Obasanjo in the agribusiness? Moreover, you received some mentoring from Chief Obasanjo. Are you also mentoring some people? Could you mention two or three things on Obasanjo Farms that helped you to grow to where you are now?

Mr Samson Akinoso: Working with him was like attending another institution all together. All the things we needed to learn and function, we had them on the farm. We had a library, we had a hall where we received lectures, we had the recreation

unit, we had a bar, we had the restaurant, we had a football pitch and he allowed social activities.

In terms of mentorships, at any given time I have 3 to 4 students doing industrial attachment on my farms. In terms of benefits, I got from H E. Chief Obasanjo that leadership was number one and the motivation was number two. The third one was the general environment. I count myself lucky that I worked with Obasanjo Farms where I was exposed to training, both locally and abroad. This helped to build me up professionally. In 1984, he sent me to the then Czechoslovakia to learn about turkey breeding and the application of artificial insemination in turkey. I also went to Belgium to learn about the maintenance and handling of incubators. Then I thought I was serving him, but today I realise I was serving myself all along.

ACBF: From your experience, how easy would you say it was to obtain funding for your farm when you eventually left Obasanjo Farms Ltd?

Mr Samson Akinoso: Getting the funds was easy for me, but it may not be the same for others. I had a banker friend who guided me. He encouraged me to open an account as the first step towards obtaining a bank loan. After I had operated the account for six months, he said my turnover was good. He also encouraged me to write a business plan and sign a five-year leasehold agreement with my landlord to enable me to access the loan. I also got an uncle who had a property in Lagos to guarantee the loan. They call it Third Party Guarantee. That was how I started.

ACBF: From your experience I can say you got lucky in two ways; first because of your background, two, and you had a banker friend who put you through; there are young people, who may be interested in farming. What advice would you give them? How do they go about it given that they may not have your kind of background, they may not

have a banker friend to put them through, they may not have an uncle who would also put up his property as collateral?

Mr Samson Akinoso: The bank loan facilities have always been there, but I was only nonchalant about banking and the facilities; even today, the banking facilities are there. The enlightenment today is even better than what I experienced. Today, an average secondary school or university student has a bank account. The facilities are better than what it was during my time, so, they have the same opportunity I had. So, it's not as if they are at a disadvantage.

ACBF: In your business, do you use the mobile phone to assist in your marketing, or how helpful is the advancement in technology to your business?

Mr Samson Akinoso: I use technology only to the extent that I receive orders for my produce from my customers. I don't have the time to stay on the computer or to be on the phone endlessly.

ACBF: In other words, you see government policy at work here; empowering someone like you to start off. Would you say today that we have government policies in place that can encourage young people to go into farming?

Mr Samson Akinoso: We have government policies that still encourage people to go into farming. I was attached to Coker Farm Settlement in Ifo Local Government of Ogun State, and there were six of us; five of us ran away because, as I said, their background would not permit them to function properly. They were still looking for white collar jobs when I sold the first set of birds given to me.

ACBF: In effect, what you are saying is that with the opportunities available in the agricultural business sector, our young people have no excuse being unemployed? Given the huge number of young people and then the huge issue of food insecurity in

Africa and in Nigeria; what would you tell the policymakers, what should they do to attract young people to agriculture?

Mr Samson Akinoso: Yes, young people in the region have no excuse being unemployed. They should try the agriculture business. My advice to policymakers and government in Africa, in order to address food insecurity and attract youth into agriculture, first, they should build more farm settlements. What I mean by that is acquiring a large parcel of land and then divide it into camps and put little cottage houses there and put graduates there, and say "come you have two acres to yourself". Give them the seedlings, give them the fertilizer, and be sure you are going to take the produce from them. If they want to grow tomatoes, the government buys from them. The worry for most farmers is: If I plant maize who will buy, and if we all harvest at the same time, won't there be a glut? Therefore, government has to buy all the produce from farmers to ensure sustainability.

Then, in terms of loans, they could relax the conditions a little; maybe ask the parents of the young man or his religious leader or traditional ruler to stand surety for him.

ACBF: In the interview we had with President Obasanjo, he said 12 of his former employees, such as you, are now on their own and are doing well. Are you in touch with these people and do you know what they are doing? Did these people have the same background as you such as coming from a farming family or reading agricultural science?

Mr Samson Akinoso: Yes, there are about 12 of us; we talk on the phone or we meet during association gatherings, but we don't visit each other's farms. They have similar backgrounds to mine, especially the kind of training we were all exposed to at Obasanjo Farms.

ACBF: What inspired you to start your own business; how did you start, and did you have your own land? Where are you now? Do you have any regret for choosing agriculture as carrier path? And how has agribusiness transformed your life and social economic status to date?

Mr Samson Akinoso: I did not have land. But I had some colleagues who were not good examples for me, and I told myself that they would dampen my enthusiasm and would drag me down. I was 30 years old then, so I decided to leave with the conviction that with the knowledge I had gained working for Obasanjo Farms, I will make money if I worked for myself.

I started with about 1,200 laying birds in 1989. This was a period when the Federal Government of Nigeria started a scheme they called National Directorate of Employment (NDE); and they were giving out loans to young school leavers. And then we were given either N12,000 or N13,500. For those in crops, it was a little bit lower, I think about N11,000. The condition was “bring your certificate and take the loan”. So I took the risk to have those birds and see what I could do with them. They gave us

land and attached us to some existing farm settlements. They gave us little land and a little poultry house, which was part of the loan given to us. When they built the house they deducted it from the money; they gave us the chicken, deducted it from the money; so they gave us the remainder, and then they were supervising us.

I have no regrets. Today I have about 200,000 layers and breeder birds. Additionally I own a palm oil tree farm. My lifestyle has remained one of a farmer. But I have all the comfort you find in big cities. I have had steady and good income, a beautiful modern house in a superior neighbourhood and modern cars for my family and I. The land now belongs to me. I bought the land bit by bit over time, and now I have accumulated more than 15 hectares of productive land. I started with rented land, and an existing farm, something I learned from President Obasanjo. Owing to my steady income from the farm, all of my four children are currently studying in the UK, all funded from the farm. The disadvantage is that I am not sure if any of them will follow in my footsteps.

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ACBF is Africa's premier institution in Capacity Building. Established in February 1991, ACBF is the outcome of collaboration between African governments and the international donor community. The major sponsoring agencies of the Foundation are the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund became a member of ACBF in 2002. The African Union is an Honorary Member.

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