

Visit to the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on Monday 10TH AUGUST 2009

Your Excellency Sir,

First of all, we sincerely thank Your Excellency for giving us part of your time for this visit. This is a show of your commitment to the development of international business relationship between Nigeria and the rest of the world.

Bilateral Chambers of Commerce are supposed to be one of the strong business links between the two countries they represent but this can only be achieved with the assistance and commitment of the Ambassadors and the Government they represent.

At this point, I will like to commend the efforts of the Nigerian Ambassador to Sweden, His Excellency, Dr Godknows Igali and the Swedish Ambassador to Nigeria, His Excellency, Mr Per Lindgarde for their commitment to the growth of good business relationship between Nigeria and Sweden. They have both been wonderful. We should also thank the Swedish Trade Council for its role in the building of good business between the two countries.

From my observation, the Ministry of Commerce and Foreign Affairs are trying their best in the promotion of business between Nigeria and other countries.

We wish to recall that in May 2009, our Chamber was part of the delegation to Sweden during Your Excellency's visit to Sweden

When Your Excellency left for Denmark and Finland, we, on our own, visited some companies and had Seminars with some Swedish Government Agencies some of whom are-

Swedfund which is responsible for financing Swedish Companies doing business outside Sweden

Swedish Open Trade Gate, which handles the information for imports into Sweden

Swedesurvey – This is the Swedish overseas Agency of the National Land Survey and they have some projects that are being pursued in Nigeria

We visited the Federation of Swedish Farmers and Swedish Cooperative Centre where presentations were made to us and we also paid a one-day visit to the University of Agriculture in Uppsala.

It was discovered during the visit that there is the need for us to create an extensive working relationship between the two countries especially in the Agricultural Sector. Swedish weather is not favorable to Agriculture but they still have fresh agricultural produce all year round. This means that there is something we have to do or learn about to save our oranges, tomatoes and onions, half of which get rotten before they get to the market from the Farms.

Sweden has a population of about 9million people and an Inland Water area of 4million hectares with a total Land area of 41million hectares out of which Arable land is

3million, Forest takes 23million.and the rest 15million is of mountains etc. Swedish Agricultural Export is about 4.5billion Euro while the Import is about 8billion Euro. We do not see why Nigeria should not have a good slice of these billions of Euro Import/Export business if we develop a more benefiting relationship in Agricultural technical know-how. This can be achieved but not limited to, during the exchange of visits and ideas,

Swedish Cooperative Centre is represented in 20 countries all over the world with 9 in Africa and Nigeria is not among! Our Chamber is poised to get a Centre opened here in the very near future.

We should not look at foreign visits as Jamborees but another way of positively exposing the country. Apart from the business gains, Trade visits will go a long way to counter some of the negative foreign press reports about us as delegates will meet people and relevant information about their countries will be exchanged. Your Excellency's last Nordic Economic Tour has started the rebranding of Nigeria and we must not stop there. We must keep the tempo on.

Chambers of Commerce should be used as the foot soldiers that will do the grassroots rebranding. Individual and business contacts should be encouraged to help in disseminating good news about Nigeria to the outside world. Some foreign Media do not say anything about Nigeria until we have riots or disorders. They do not see anything good about us even when we host Important Government Summits involving other African Countries. We must do something about this to be able to invite more foreign Investors into our dear country. Our NTA, AIT and other media Houses should be supported to have wider international coverage to broadcast more objective news about Nigeria. Emphasis must always be made on the issue of security of life and property. It is a very important factor. We can not fight negative reports by staying within our country alone. Where is our own CNN or BBC and if we have, how acceptable are they to the rest of the world? This is an area our Federal Ministry of Information must be supported to seriously look into. We, in the Chamber, believe that as the giant of Africa, if the Nigerian President should sneeze, the whole of Africa should shiver! To achieve this, we must spread out in all ways and use all genuine communication tactics to spread – Nigeria, Good People, Great Nation.

To also encourage more Investments into Nigeria, we are hereby soliciting that the double Taxation Agreement we have with Sweden should be made to work as soon as possible. Some notable Swedish companies in Nigeria are Saab, L.M.Ericsson, Tetra Pak, Atlas Copco and Gulf Agencies. They all have good businesses in Nigeria otherwise they would have left. We should make them comfortable so that they can invite other Swedish companies to join them here.

Nigerian-Swedish Chamber of Commerce is committed to the promotion of trade between Nigeria and Sweden and we are now planning an Agricultural trip to Sweden for Week 40 (September 27th -October 4th) if we get Government and Corporate Sponsors.

A visit will be made to the University of Agriculture in Uppsala which is very good in Agricultural Research. During our visit in May, one of those that presented papers to us happens to be an African. When she got there to study some years back, she was told that cassava was very toxic and as such not good for human consumption. She was very surprised to hear this as cassava was one of her favourite meals back home. She decided to use cassava as her major research project. It is now a thing of joy that her research has confirmed that if prepared in the correct way, cassava is as good as any other good carbohydrate meal. Today, the lady is a Phd holder in International Health and a Research Associate at the University.

Your Excellency, I must reiterate the fact that for the efforts you have been putting in, to have good harvest in the area of developing good business relationship with Sweden, our Embassy's Commercial Section in Stockholm must be given enough support through our Ambassador and the Swedish Trade Council must be convinced that Nigeria is big enough to have a full fledged office located in within our territory. With the growing population of over 140million people, Nigeria is a huge market for business not only with Sweden or The European Union but with the whole wide world! Sweden now holds Presidency of the European Union and we should use the opportunity to our best advantage.

I have to thank our Ambassador to Sweden, His Excellency, Dr Godknows Igali for trying to revive the idle Economic, Science and Technical Agreement we have with Sweden.

Your Excellency, in summary, what we need now is for the Government to give full support to our Chamber so that we can continue to build on the foundation you laid during your visit of May 2009. The task that must be done is to develop more beneficial business relationship between Nigeria and Sweden and do our own part in the rebranding of Nigeria - the land of Honey.

On behalf of the Nigerian-Swedish Chamber of Commerce I sincerely thank Your Excellency for granting this our August visit that is actually in August and wish you all the best in the governance of our dear country.

Long Live The Federal Republic of Nigeria

Chief Olayinka Ogunmekan
0803 301 5009
0805 300 5009
God bless you and all yours

Trade between Nigeria and Sweden flourished in 1970s and 80s but decline in the last decade for many economic and social reasons. The focus of the Chamber is to continue to

monitor and guide the bilateral trade between Nigeria and Sweden for the benefit of the two countries.

Kindly note that the NSCC is a non-profit, non-political, non-religious and non-governmental organization, fully committed to the promotion of positive collaboration between Nigeria and Sweden in the development of business, industrial, economic, cultural and social interests through the pursuit of our aims and objectives. These include, but are not limited to, five main points:

§ To provide a forum representative of Nigerian and Swedish interests, whereby development and improvement of Commerce, industry and Agriculture between the two countries can be encouraged and protected.

§ To act as a think tank on the economic investment and other related trends in Nigeria and Sweden.

§ To advise members of the Chamber on opportunities and problems, legislative or otherwise, arising from the pursuit of trade between the Federal republic of Nigeria and Sweden;

§ To maintain a close liaison with all relevant Government authorities, departments and representative bodies with the aim of protecting and/or representing member's interest on matters of current importance and

To provide market consultants through up-to-date surveys of market conditions