

THE GREEN REVOLUTION IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA: A NEW RENAISSANCE for the AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

Introduction

At the express request of H.E. the President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, Management & Economics Consulting, Inc. (MAECI) a USA Company, has assisted the authorities in undertaking a comprehensive and far reaching feasibility study for the diversification of the economy towards the non-oil sectors with emphasis on agriculture, livestock, Small and Medium Size Enterprises, Small and Medium Size Industries. This request is in support of the new “National Economic Development Plan” which was adopted in November 2007 at the Second National Economic “Horizon 2020” Conference. **This visionary National Economic Development Plan by H.E. the President (whose passion has always been and remain the well being of his population), outlines the strategies and reforms necessary for Equatorial Guinea to take advantage of its unique opportunity to use its non-renewable oil wealth to, foster the well being of its population and future generations through the following summarized main goals:**

- reduce poverty through improved health, education and skills development;
- foster environmentally friendly economic diversification including tourism, and sustained broad-based growth;
- develop agriculture, fishery and livestock, as the cornerstones of this diversification and lasting economic development;
- build supporting infrastructure including information and communication technologies as well as the availability of potable water.

Implementing the Program.

In order to launch sustainable agriculture in this country which 80% of the total land is covered by forest, it was necessary to adopt a new ecological deforestation which respects the environment and preserves the thin fertile layer of the soil. The following step were followed:

- Clearing is performed in the most ecologic manner in order to preserve the top fertile layer of the soil which has been constituted for centuries. This is the most innovative technique in the agricultural field.

- Hand cutting of the grasses and small bush is first performed. Chain saws are used to cut down the trees. The bigger trunk of the trees are treated chemically to transform it into fertilizer after five to six months. This avoid the use of heavy tractors to remove the stumps and destroy the basic equilibrium of the soil structure. Small bulldozers are used to carefully remove the small stumps with great care taken to not plough into the topsoil. Labour force is drawn from the villages surrounding the sites, which provide income to the population, stabilize the youth in the village and reduce an/or eliminate rural exodus. Those workers clear by hand the small debris to prepare the land for agriculture.
- Before even starting the deforestation, soil samples were taken and analyzed in laboratories, to determine the type and characteristics of soils, and the type and quantities of supplemental fertilizers and nutrients to be used depending on the speculation (corn, potato, cabbage, green beans, tomato, Plantain, yam, Yucca or cassava, soybean, Papaya, citrus, carrot, eggplant, groundnut, watermelon, green pepper, etc); to name but a few.
- Fertilizers and insecticides needed, were selected on ecological basis, and were used in accordance with the more adapted technique of protecting the environment. The final goal being to make Equatorial Guinea, the first world country to embrace the bio-agriculture.
- Also with the soil preparation for planting, care was taken during tillage to preserve the soil and prevent soil erosion.
- All seeds used are imported principally from USA; no GMO seeds is used for any crop or vegetable.

Based on the results achieved so far, within the span of less than 18 months, (see few pictures below), the initial conclusion is that Equatorial Guinea can produced all the basic crops and can achieve Food Self sufficiency in a relatively short term. All the crops planted are growing very well and are adaptable to the environment. Plant health is very good, and plant development is progressing very rapidly. This farming system has already produced more than 500 Tones of corn and the country is already installing the industrial structure for the production of animal feeds to launch poultry pigs and livestock development.

The vegetables are growing very well. We have planted different varieties of Potato, Green Bean, Tomato, Watermelon, Cantaloupe, Pepper, Eggplant, and Cabbage, Carrot, Corn, Soybean, Papaya, Yam, etc. Additional vegetables and spices were brought from Cameroun and are also growing very well and could

become part of the line of crops to be produced in the country and not imported. It is expected to add nutritional education component to ongoing program, in order to diversify the consumption habits of the population. Others cultivars such as citrus, are being introduced; apiculture and livestock are also being developed and in a non distant future, “small and medium size enterprises” and “small and medium size industries” would be part of this promising agriculture landscaping. The success of this initiative instructed by the President of the Republic, Head of State, reflects his Economic and Social Development Vision embodied in all the President's economic and social development speeches, namely, that: "Equatorial Guinea is capable of achieving self sufficiency in food production and even attain food export; what is needed, are determination, investment and appropriate policy and adapted technologies".

With the success achieved so far, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, has, for the first time in the economic and social development history of the country, launched a more comprehensive agricultural development program covering all the Provinces of the country. In line with the recommendations of the recommendations of "Second National Economic Development Program, Horizon 2020" held in Bata Equatorial Guinea in November 2007, this unique Agricultural Program named the "Green Revolution of Equatorial Guinea" under the direct supervision of the Minister of State, in charge of Agriculture and Forestry, is to use the agricultural technique described above, to achieve food self-sufficiency within 2/3 years and reduce and/or eliminate food imports; stabilize population and particularly youth in the rural areas and reduce rural exodus; create more stable and sustainable jobs; improve the living conditions of the population; increase the income level of the rural population; create a more sustainable basis for the small and medium term industries and enterprises. It is a daunting challenge for the country, but it is the dream of the Authorities and of the whole population; a dream they expect to become reality.

One expert from the Ministry of Agriculture and Forest expressed the general feeling as follows: “we are very pleased with the start of this important program, and we feel that we have the ability to provide Equatorial Guinea with its very own sustainable food source”.

Conclusions: Economic, Financial and Social Impacts

The agriculture sector's development has taken a new dimension and is considered as one of the main pillars for a more stable and sustainable economic and social development of the country.

It is clear that agricultural production will not be profitable on the basis of the production alone and must be complemented by the derivative "small and medium term enterprises" and "small and medium term industries".

The program will, first of all, benefit the national economy:

- Reduction of the imports of food and food derivatives; saving in foreign reserves, (estimated at 100-150 millions Euros/year);

- Availability and increase in consumption of healthy food and food derivatives;

- Creation of substitute to traditional food products;

- Contribution to the reduction of inflation; stabilization of the rural population especially the youth, via the reduction of rural exodus;

- Creation of jobs; an increase in the incomes of the rural population through vulgarization;

- From the inception of the project, qualified equato-guineans coming from the National agriculture school would be used extensively and others sent abroad for training to take over from foreign experts/managers in the very short term.

- Improvement of the living conditions of the Equatorial Guinean population at large; and last but not least, the reduction in the level of poverty.

- The Program will also offer new economic opportunities to the rural population, especially women, thus, contributing to their stabilization, to peace and to prosperity.

- It would contribute to the improvement of the Balance of Payments, via the increase in exports; the reduction of imports of food and food derivatives, the increase and savings in foreign monetary reserves.

More importantly, it would significantly contribute to the National Economic Diversification Policy, one of the main pillars of the wise and comprehensive National Economic Development Policy, set up by H. E. the President of the Republic, as framed in the Conclusions of the Second National Economic Conference of November 2007.



Corn Field Mongomo EG.



Eggplants and Green Pepper
Mongomo EG



Tomatoes and Cabbage Mongomo EG



Tomatoes-cabbage Mongomo EG



Cabbage Field Mongomo EG



Cabbage Field Mongomo EG



Cabbage Field Mongomo EG



Corn Field Mongomo EG