

Gov. Ben Ayade's Agro-Industrial Revolution Is Actualizing With Credibility

By Beatrice Akpala

Cross River State is truly on the threshold of both political, social and industrial revolution by the mere courtesy of Governor Ben Ayade's bold audacity to dream.

This initiative to dream and actualize financially guzzling industrial estates crystallized in the setting up of the Ayade Industrial Park in Calabar which is today a cluster of the state-owned industrial concerns, among which is the Cross River State-owned Noddles Factory calavita and Ksimie and also with the State-owned Chicken Factory, Calachika located at the outskirts of the city of Calabar. Governor Ben Ayade has taken care of the two critical segments of the Cross River State population, the growing children/youths as well as the older segment of the people. The two-state owned industrial enterprises were recently visited by His Excellency, the Digital Governor of Cross River State, Senator Prof. Ben Ayade, alongside some members of the State Executive Council as well as other critical stakeholders on inspection visits to the two industries. The aim of the visit was to fully undertake the test run of the facilities and their production capacities and the pre-production works of the core concessionaire.

The executive Governor expressed great pleasure and pride at the coming to fruition of the two industrial concerns and particularly for being able to secure the services of a core concessionaire who has displayed much capacity in commencing full scale production. He expressed the hope that having invested so much energy, time and finances into the 2 projects, their production lines will continue to steam with their finished products and be readily made available to the people with a well thought out chain of product distribution. He called on the entire people of Cross River State and indeed, every Nigerian to key into the vision by staying in touch with their patronage.

Governor Ben Ayade disclosed that Cross River State Government carried out a lot of painstaking feasibility studies before setting up the industries noting that their viability has never been in doubt. He equally observed that the Kisimie Noddles and the Calavita products are well packaged and wholly produced from natural ingredients in Cross River State and totally devoid of chemical additions. All over the state, he noted, are farms producing the natural spices such as tatashe, pepper, garlic and tomatoes, all of which are properly blended to suit the nutritional needs of children and adults alike who may be willing to fix quick meals. He added that the fish flavour comes from fishes in the Calabar River and the palatability of the products will appeal to everyone. He told newsmen during a question-and-answer session that the Cross River State Government had in the recent past, passed on several communications to the Federal Government with a view to keying the

products into the School Feed Programme but unfortunately, it has not had anything positive in that direction from the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, under which auspices the School Feed Programme is domiciled.

He further disclosed also that the State Government is awaiting Certification by the National Agency for Food & Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) before commissioning the project and pushing the products into the Nigerian market. NAFDAC, he noted, had already done its own assessment of the facilities at the factory and forwarded its report to the State Government but the State government is still carrying out its own final checking before inviting NAFDAC for its own final assessment and eventual Certification. He nonetheless expressed the hope that the factory's product will hit the Nigerian market before the Christmas period. He cleared the air once and for all that the factories are 100% owned by the Cross River State Government but had only concessioned them to a concessionaire for operational purpose. Unarguably, Senator (Prof) Ben Ayade the Digital Governor of Cross River State, has etched his name in the golden books of Agro-industrial revolution in Nigeria and on the African Continent. A couple of days ago, he was among Nigeria's most distinguished honourees who were bestowed with National Honours by the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari. At that very auspicious event, he got the Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON) award. On the 21st of October, 2022 he was again honoured by the President at the National Public Service Award for his giant strides in making Cross River State the industrial hub of Africa. Governor Ben Ayade was honoured with another Nigerian Award for Excellence in Public Service for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), a true reflection of his agro industrial revolution in Cross River State.

Remarkably, getting these two prestigious awards within a span of one month is a sublime proof of Governor Ben Ayade's industrialization efforts and giant strides in the Agro-Allied subsector of the Cross River State economy. That, among many other achievements, is a proud legacy that would ensure that lasting memories are left of the Ayade era in Cross River State long after he has left the stage. Congratulations Your Excellency for making Cross River State proud as the Best Governor for Industrialization, Job Creation and SMEs.

