



Promoting innovative approaches for MSMEs Development in the Niger Delta

Proceedings of the
2013 Niger Delta Development Forum
Held on the 26 and 27 November 2013 in
Benin City, Edo State

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Organized by



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Abuja, December 2013

Sam Daibo

Executive Director, PIND Foundation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND) in partnership with Government of Edo state, Mercy Corps in Nigeria; Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI); International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD); Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN); DFID-funded Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE); United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO); USAID-funded Maximizing Agricultural MARKETS II Project, Chevron Corporation and Niger Delta Partnership Initiatives (NDPI) organized a two-day Niger Delta Development Forum with the theme: ***“Promoting Innovative approaches for MSMEs Development in the Niger Delta”*** from the 26th and 27th November, 2013 in Benin City, Edo State. The forum brought together multi-stakeholder audiences and development actors both within and outside the region to discuss, learn and share ideas and experiences of models and approaches needed to promote for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in the Niger Delta.

The overarching objective of the Forum was to provide a platform for Government, private sector, business membership organizations (BMOs), bilateral and multilateral organizations to discuss, debate and proffer practical/tailored solutions that will re-position the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Niger Delta on the path of economic growth and competitiveness. The forum had in attendance 285 participants comprising 219 male and 66 female participants from Non-Governmental Organizations, commercial and micro-finance banks, business membership organizations, think tanks, universities and private sector.

During the two-day forum, discussions focused on access to finance, access to markets and business linkages, enabling business environment and business support services. Technical papers were presented on these topics, and these were followed by panel sessions that provided an opportunity for participants to engage in in-depth discussions where questions were raised on critical factors that affect MSMEs development in the Niger Delta.

The key note address was presented by Alhaji Bature Umar Masari, Director General of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN). His presentation provided a broad overview on the current status of MSMEs, their potential and contributions to employment creation and income generation as well as challenges they face, such as erratic power supply, weak access to information, low business skills, unfriendly policy environment, poor road infrastructure, weak business linkages and difficulty in accessing finance from lending institutions. This was followed by technical paper presentations at the plenary session and discussions at the panel sessions where participants had more time to engage in in-depth discussions on the papers presented at the plenary.

Speakers at the forum emphasized access to finance and business support must be assured for enterprises, large and small. Government is not a market actor but they are supposed to provide an enabling environment for businesses to start up and grow, and also promote policies and incentives that can create access to existing and new markets, both domestic and international. Business Membership Organizations must be seen as promoting or protecting their own interest but must see the need and urgency in positioning themselves as advocates for change in the market place. There was a consensus that the common problems facing MSMEs can be addressed sustainably if market actors work together.

The forum also provided business linkage opportunities for organizations and MSMEs through the exhibition of their products and services. 13 small businesses and organizations participated and each had a stand to showcase their goods and services. Some of the enterprises and organizations that participated in the exhibition included:

- PIND’s ATED project
- NDLink

- Diamond Bank Plc
- Africare Nigeria
- Edo State Cooperative Farmers Agency
- Technology Incubation Centre, Federal Ministry of Science and Technology, Benin City Zonal Office
- Ikoko Concepts (Fashion and Clothing Marketing business)
- Christian Jones Associates Nigeria Limited, Benin City, Edo State



NDLink exhibition stand at the forum

In conclusion, some of the recommendations from the Forum included the following:

- There is a need to address access to finance by exploring non-traditional sources of finance such as venture capital and leasing.
- Market actors need to engage in policy dialogue with relevant institution, agencies and officials that have the power and authority to promote policy that will reduce the current double digit interest rates often charged by lending institutions to entrepreneurs whenever they seek financial loans.
- Entrepreneurs need to have better understanding of markets and consumer requirements with respect to pricing, volume, quality standards, negotiating and contracting.
- Farmers need to start thinking like a business and taking responsibility for understanding and solving their problems, not waiting for someone else to solve their problems for them. These will require improving their financial literacy, negotiating, contracting, pricing and marketing skills.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Niger Delta Development Forum (NDDF) is an the annual outreach event of PIND where government officials, civil society representatives, academics, the private sector and other interested observers come together to engage in an open and interactive dialogue on key poverty and development issues. With broad participation and emphasis on multi-stakeholder partnerships, the forum offers a unique opportunity for sharing good practices and engaging a wide range of development actors in constructive policy dialogue.



Photo 1: Cross section of participants

The second edition of the NDDF was a result of the networking opportunities the 2012 edition provided. There was an increase in the number of partners who were interested to collaborate in planning and organizing the forum. In addition, this increased partnership was also due to a shared interest by these organizations to support MSMEs based on their experience working with various business associations in the Niger Delta region. The partners increased from five in 2012 to ten in 2013 and the new partners are United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Mercy Corps Nigeria, Niger Delta Partnership Initiatives (NDPI) and Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI). There was also an increase in the number of participants from 190 to 285.

On the 25th of November, two media chats were held before the forum. The essence of the media chats was to reinforce the key messages for the forum and highlight opportunities and systemic constraints to growth and competitiveness of the MSMEs in the Niger Delta.

In addition, the media chats also helped to raise public awareness about the forum and mobilize target audiences that are within and outside Edo state to participate in the forum. The first was an appearance on a live show on Independent Television, Benin City, while the second chat was a press conference that had journalists from both print and electronic media organizations in attendance. Some of the electronic media organizations present were: Bronze FM, Benin City, Silver Bird TV, Independent TV and NTA Benin. The print media organizations present were: The Nation, Reformer, Business Day, Punch, Guardian and the Pointer Newspapers. This report presents a summary of the proceedings, presentations, discussions, questions and recommendations at the Forum.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Several studies commissioned and consultative meetings held with a broad range of stakeholders by PIND revealed that several constraints prevent MSMEs from reaching their full potential: poor market access; poor information flow; poor access to credit and inadequate capital; high interest rates; discriminatory legislation, inconsistencies in government policies, poor regulatory and enforcement framework; multiple taxes and levies; poor access to land; weak business linkages between small and large firms and between farmers and processors; poor infrastructure; poor access to appropriate processing technology and inadequate energy and infrastructure amongst others.

It was against this back drop that PIND and her partners organized the 2013 Niger Delta Development Forum (NDDF) with specific focus on advocating for systemic changes resulting in improved efficiency and productivity; and creating a better business environment for the MSMEs in the Niger Delta. The event was held on the 26th & 27th November in Benin City and had in attendance 285 participants comprising 219 males and 66 females.

The two-day forum brought together delegates from Government, private sector, business membership organizations (BMOs), bilateral and multilateral organizations to discuss, debate and proffer tailored solutions that will re-position the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the Niger Delta on the path of economic growth and competitiveness.

The forum targeted a diverse stakeholder audience with varied interests ranging from those who want to learn new ideas about their work, including others who want to contribute towards strengthening MSMEs in the Niger Delta, but don't have the experience or understanding of the models and approaches needed to promote equitable economic growth. Also in attendance were government ministries, departments and agencies interested in establishing an enabling business environment for MSMEs. During the two-day event, entrepreneurs and support/service providers listened to each other to identify real systemic constraints and jointly identified potential interventions that can address these constraints in the Niger Delta.

Prominent among the audience were business men and women ranging from petty traders to farmers to large processors, who are working hard day-in-day-out, producing goods and services for the market, despite the difficult business environment in which they operate.

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE FORUM

In line with the goal and theme for the year, the forum was designed to accomplish the following objectives:

- Influence decisions and support of funding/financial institutions to increase access to finance/credit for MSMEs operators.
- Increase public dialogue and engagement among policy makers, financial institutions, Business Membership Organizations and business regulatory agencies to support MSMEs.
- Influence resource allocation and investments within private and public institutions to support MSMEs.
- Influence policy makers to promote policies, programs and enforce appropriate regulatory framework that are based on evidence.
- Increase partnership, shared learning and ability to jointly undertake collective action by MSMEs actors.

4.0 METHODOLOGY FOR THE FORUM

The forum had both plenary and panel sessions. At the plenary sessions, lead technical papers were presented on each of the 4 broad topics by subject matter practitioners drawn from within and outside the Niger Delta. The plenary sessions were followed by panel sessions and over the two-day period, 5 papers were presented and 9 moderated panel sessions with each focusing on specific sub-topics were held. The composition of the panel discussants were drawn from various organizations including trade associations and entrepreneurs with knowledge and practical experience about the topics and practical issues underpinning MSMEs growth in the Niger Delta region. At the end of each paper presentation, there was a question and answer session, where the audience had the opportunity to ask questions based on the information presented.

In order to achieve the forum's objectives, discussions centered on four broad topics and nine sub-topics as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Topics discussed and presenters

S. No	Speaker	Topic
1.	Background Paper 1a: Access to finance for	Paul Eluhaiwe, Director for Development

S. No	Speaker	Topic
	Agricultural Enterprises and MSMEs	Finance at the Central Bank of Nigeria Head Quarters
2.	Background Paper 1b: Access to finance Agricultural Enterprises	Farouk Kurawa Agricultural Finance Specialist MARKETS II
3.	Background Paper 2: Enabling Environment for Business development	Mr. Bayo Akindeinde, Program Manager Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE), Abuja DFID Funded Program.
4.	Background Paper 3: Access to Markets and Business Linkages	Uzo Nduka CEO at Domino Information Company Limited.
5.	Background Paper 4: Business Support Services in the Niger Delta	Bill Grant, Global Practice Leader Agriculture, Agribusiness and Food Security, DAI, USA

5.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF PROCEEDINGS

5.1 Welcome address

Professor Julius O. Ihonvbere (OON), the Secretary to Edo State Government represented by Mr. Abdu Oroh Commissioner for Agriculture and Natural Resources, Edo state delivered the welcome address. In his speech he reassured the audience of Edo State government's support to continue working and providing the appropriate support for MSMEs in the state.

5.2 Keynote address

The keynote speech was presented by Dr. Friday Okpara on behalf of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) Director General Alhaji Bature Umar Masari. According to Alhaji Masari, *"MSMEs play a pivotal role through several pathways that goes beyond job creation. They are growth-supporting sector that not only contribute significantly to improve living standards, but also bring substantial local capital formation and are responsible for driving innovation and competition in developing economies"*. He further added that MSMEs account for over 90% of the total business enterprises in Nigeria and about 85% of total employment. Alhaji Masari however noted that despite the enormous benefits MSMEs offer, attaining their optimal performance are continually constrained by what he described as both internal and external factors. Among the internal constraints are:

- Poor entrepreneurial capacity of operators in successfully running MSMEs.
- Family ties/interferences are major constraints in running personnel recruitment/placements, discipline, etc. Poor record keeping especially accounting books makes evaluation either by the business owner or potential investors difficult.

Some of the external constraints enumerated by Alhaji Masari included:

- Poor state of infrastructure: MSMEs need steady power supply, water, roads, markets, etc for



Photo 2: Dr. Friday Okpara presenting the keynote address

effectiveness.

- Poor access to appropriate and affordable workspace.
- Inability to access affordable finance: Access to finance is a major constraint hindering MSMEs' growth. Most financial institutions tend to address the financial needs of large enterprises leaving MSMEs unattended to.
- Dearth of business information/data bank: Most MSMEs operate with little or no business information or data. This does not allow them to make informed decisions necessary for optimal performance.

The keynote speaker concluded his address with the following submissions. MSMEs are more likely to be able to play an important role in economic development if the following policies and programs are in place:

- There should be a deliberate linkage between the private and public sector organizations for efficient partnership to drive innovation within the MSME sector.
- Effective collaboration among the stakeholders through public-private-partnership model
- Stable policies targeted at MSMEs that provide sustained support and guidance and encourage investment in the sector
- Stable financial development, effective and secure financial systems and targeted lending
- Good/strong institutions at all levels of government supporting and promoting MSMEs. This will ensure corruption and regulatory burdens are minimized and rule of law, land and property rights, creditors' rights etc. are overcome accordingly.
- Good infrastructure and facilities that encourage MSMEs to pool their information and resources together

5.3 Opening address

PIND's Executive Director Mr. Sam Daibo started his address by informing the audience that the 2013 NDDF is a part of PIND's work in stimulating policy debate and creating opportunities to support development in the region. According to him he said *"We at PIND believe strongly in the power of partnership; that is why we are linking up with partners from the public and private sectors to bring together multi-stakeholder audiences and development actors both within and outside the Niger Delta region"*. Mr. Daibo briefly informed the audience about PIND's past efforts which laid the foundation for the forum when he said: *"In the last two years at PIND, we have commissioned a number of studies and held consultative meetings with a broad range of stakeholders on opportunities for economic growth in the Niger Delta, and systemic constraints preventing sustainable/equitable economic growth"*.

He further added that PIND and her partners decided to organize the 2013 NDDF because they believe that the only way to address the major constraints and common problems facing MSMEs and economic development is by working together.

He therefore concluded his remarks by challenging participants to engage in constructive discussions and debates that will proffer recommendations that will result in:

- Improved strategic decisions of financial institutions to fund and support MSMEs
- Improved advisory services, information hub and capacity building support



Photo 3: Mr. Sam Daibo PIND Executive Director delivering an opening address

- Increased public dialogue and engagement among policy makers, financial institutions, BMOs and business regulatory agencies on MSMEs
- Resource allocation and investments for MSMEs development leveraged and increased
- Increased partnerships, shared learning and collective action among MSMEs operators
- Increased business linkages between producers and end-markets
- Increased evidence and research-based policies and programs supported, enforced and promoted by policy makers

6.0 TECHNICAL PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED AT THE FORUM

Background papers were presented to kick-start the technical sessions, which helped to lay the foundation for the panel sessions discussions during the two days. Highlights from the technical papers presented are as follows:

6.1.0 Background Paper 1a: Access to finance for Agricultural Enterprises and MSMEs

Presenter: Paul Eluhaiwe, Director for Development Finance at the Central Bank of Nigeria Abuja.

Highlight



Photo 4: Mr. Paul Eluhaiwe of CBN delivering his paper

Mr. Eluhaiwe started his presentation with a statistical data that show how MSMEs have contributed to economic development in Nigeria. According to him, MSME operators have contributed 75% of the total employment, 10% of the country's gross domestic product and 3% to the export market. The distribution of MSMEs in the Niger Delta is presented as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of MSMEs by states in the Niger Delta

Number of MSMEs by States	
Abia	407,428
Akwa-Ibom	447,589
Bayelsa	420,233
Cross Rivers	472,291
Delta	486,023
Edo	491,220
Imo	408,761
Ondo	490,761
Rivers	585,241
Total MSMEs = 4, 209,547.00	

Source: National Bureau of Statistics/ SMEDAN 2010

Some of the common challenges faced by MSMEs were identified to include poor credit worthiness of MSMEs, disincentivizing policies, poor technology uptake and low capacity utilization by MSMEs. His paper referenced a study which reveals that 39.7 per cent adult Nigerians are financially excluded (EFInA, 2012) and the need to bring financial services to the doorsteps in the Niger Delta Region is imperative and urgent. Mr. Eluhaiwe discussed the 8 key real sector interventions by the CBN and the rationale for these interventions. According to him, the interventions were necessitated by:

- The inability of some sectors of the economy to actively compete for needed credit through the interplay of market forces
- Access to finance has been a major challenge to manufacturers, farmers and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- Loans to the agricultural sector accounts for only 2.5% of total lending even though the sector account for over 42% of the country's GDP in 2012.
- Intervention is a strategic tool to improve access and bargaining power of key segments of the real sector in securing financial services.

Details of some of these interventions can be found in his paper which can be accessed on PIND's website.

6.1.1 Background Paper 2: Access to finance Agricultural Enterprises

Presenter: Farouk Kurawa Agricultural Finance Specialist
USAID funded MARKETS II Project Abuja.

Highlight

Kurawa's paper focused on the challenges of lending to agricultural value chain entrepreneurs. He shared experiences and good models from a World Bank survey of



Photo 5: Mr. Farouk delivering his paper

15 financial institutions, of which five were from African and Asian countries, (Nair, 2008) that have been used by financial institutions to support agricultural finance in other countries. According to Kurawa, some of the financial institutions that made small loans to small holder farmers accepted joint liability by groups of between 5 and 20 individual and to individual members of the group or to the group collectively. Others delegated credit risk assessment to third parties – either individuals with local knowledge or field officers of partner organizations, such as a commodity buyer. Other financial institutions used simplified cash flow analysis, revenue streams and household costs. Some institutions required evidence of land ownership, without requiring mortgage or any other form of collateral.

6.2 PANEL SESSION: MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED ON ACCESS TO AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL FINANCE ENTERPRISES

The Access to Finance session had three panel sessions and the factors that were identified as hindrances to accessing credit in the three sessions were common and similar.

From the discussions, the key constraints identified as factors impeding access to finance by MSMEs and agricultural and rural enterprises were:

Lack of adequate knowledge about agricultural sector

Financial institutions don't understand the agricultural sector, so they tend to shy away from financing agricultural investments. In addition, lending institutions consider the agricultural sector as highly risky due to several uncertainties such as unpredictable weather conditions, price fluctuations and natural disasters. These risks prevent banks from investing their money in agribusiness.

High interest rates

The issue of high interest rates was also discussed extensively as a major impediment to agribusiness lending. MSMEs operator say that interest rates are high and it prevents them from borrowing; with low profit margins, commercial rates are not viable. On the other hand, lenders emphasized that their cost of funds is high. Finding a middle point which is mutually acceptable is urgently required.

Loan collateral

There were discussions on collateral requirements of lending institutions which are difficult to meet by MSME operators in order to secure their lending. Closely linked to this is that fact that MSMEs appears not to know the difference between loans and capital and this ignorance becomes manifest when they approach the wrong financial institution to seek for funding support.

Low awareness about CBN's programs

It was mentioned that information about CBN's Entrepreneurship development programs was not accessible to MSME operators and it is therefore difficult for operators to access services provided by CBN via this program.



Photo 6: A participant asking a question in a panel session

6.3.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Capacity building:

There is a need to educate the lenders to better understand the agribusiness sector in order for them to be able to serve the sector effectively. In addition, training MSME operators on financial literacy by market development facilitators is one solution that can improve their understanding of how to approach lenders and secure credit facilities for their business. This is an intervention USAID MARKETS II project has commenced in the Federal Capital Territory and extending this program to MSME operators in the Niger Delta will be very valuable.

Policy dialogue with lending institutions

With regards to collateral requirements by lending institutions, it was suggested that there is a need to engage lending institutions to consider other forms of collateral. The examples mentioned in the background paper on challenges of lending to agricultural and rural finance was referenced as good models to adopt. It was also mentioned that lending institutions need a better of understanding of agribusiness to enable them to serve farmers better.



Photo 7: A female participant commenting during the panel session

Access to information

Business Membership Organizations need to educate their members on the different sources of credit that are available, institutions they need to approach when seeking for credit to fund start-up businesses, and the difference between loan and capital.

Micro Finance Banks need to seek information on how they could access the 220 billion Naira agriculture fund by engaging with the Central Bank of Nigeria to consider them as beneficiaries to access this fund in order to support MSMEs and farmers in the Niger Delta.

With regard to access to services from CBN'S Entrepreneurship development programs, participants were made to be aware of the existence of six centers in the country and farmers and micro entrepreneurs need to identify and seek for information from these centers.

6.3 PANEL SESSION: MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED ON OPPORTUNITIES IN NON TRADITIONAL SOURCES OF FINANCE – VENTURE CAPITAL EQUITY, LEASING

Discussions centered on the history and evolution of venture capital (VC) in Nigeria which dates back to 1987 with the promulgation of No.89 1993 Act that validated the creation of the National Risk Fund PLC established in 1987 and it was Nigeria's first venture capital company. The Federal Government of Nigeria, through the Raw Materials Research Development Council (RMRDC) and other shareholding members like banks and manufacturing companies, established the National Risk Fund.

Noteworthy of that era is the role of Development financial institutions (DFIs) in emergence of VCs in Nigeria. They played a major part in creating the human knowledge and learning base from which the earliest VCs drew from. At that time, there were 2 prominent VCs: National Risk Fund PLC and Venture and Trust Company. The era between 1997 and 2002 saw another Venture Capital directed policy: the Small and Medium-Scale Industries Equity Investment Scheme (SMEIS). It was a voluntary initiative that required Nigerian banks to set aside ten (10) per cent

of their profit after tax (PAT) for investment and promotion of small and medium enterprises. Within this period, the country experienced several privatization of government owned firms across Financial Services, Oil and Gas, and FCMGs. Also, there was the liberalization of the Telecommunications sector. These changes in ownership required long term risk capital, which only Venture Capital firms could provide.

From 2003 to date, the VC sector became a recognizable part of the Nigerian financial sector, with a constant search for opportunities across the entire business environment. The nation is enjoying continual democratic governance, and increased entrepreneurial opportunity identification. The panelists confirmed that dynamic private equity and a venture capital industry are important components of a robust financial system. They enable innovation and foster the development of new industries that commercialize innovation, science and technology.

Most Nigerian entrepreneurs do not understand private equity as a source of financing for starting and growing their businesses. It was revealed that in Nigeria, there are about 10 indigenous private equity fund managers and another 16 international fund managers actively looking to invest in Nigeria. According to the panelists, few entrepreneurs in the Niger Delta and Nigeria at large are aware of this non-traditional source of finance. Currently there is only one VC Company in the Niger Delta with an operational base established in November 2013 in Port Harcourt, and not many MSMEs are even aware of its existence or financing opportunities it can offer.

Barbara James, Chief Executive Officer of Henshaw Capital Venture and former Managing Director of African Venture Capital Association who was on the panel shared her experience on how not to approach developing venture capital, said: *“the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) venture capital scheme (Small and Medium Enterprises Equity Investment Scheme (SMEEIS) allocated N42 billion and invested N28 billion into equity SMSs from 10% of banks profits between 1999 and 2009. However, the scheme was largely a failure, because it addressed and engaged only the five key inputs to a robust venture capital market. It only provided for investors in venture capital – the banks. The scheme did nothing to address the four other stakeholders namely the quality of fund managers, the understanding of entrepreneurs, the enabling policy environment set by the policy makers, the expertise of service providers and the exclusion of other investor groups (pension funds, insurance funds, high net worth individuals etc)”*

The panel concluded that there is an urgent need to explore opportunities in other non-traditional sources of finance such as venture capital and leasing in the Niger Delta region.

6.3.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Enabling policy

Relevant policy makers at the executive, judicial and legislative arms at federal and state levels need to understand private equity and venture capital to avoid developing policies that conflicts well-intentioned policy interventions. Based on this understanding appropriate policy to develop a robust venture capital industry should be promoted.

Sensitization and awareness

A starting point for exploring opportunities in private equity, venture capital and leasing will be to begin with awareness raising and training for entrepreneurs on venture capital and leasing. This training will focus on the nature of and opportunities in venture capital and their role in terms of what is required of MSMEs.

6.4 Background Paper 3: Enabling Environment for Business development

Presenter: Bayo Akindeinde, Program Manager Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE), Abuja DFID Funded Program.

Highlight

Mr. Akindeinde's paper centered on seven key questions: how do we define Business Environment? How easy is it to do Business in Nigeria? Is it easier in the Niger Delta? How can we improve the business environment for MSMEs in the Niger Delta? What can individual MSMEs do? What can they do as a collective? Which is more effective?

He started his presentation by emphasizing that the laws, policies, and regulations that shape a country's business environment are the outcome of negotiations between the public and private sectors.

He went further to define the different components that make up a business environment and these include the following:

1. Legislative & regulatory framework
2. Consumer protection, Intellectual Property Rights,
3. Consistency of Government policy
4. Access to affordable finance
5. Access to Justice (e.g. contract enforcement)
6. Infrastructure (e.g. power, water, Transport)

Like the previous papers, Akindeinde also highlighted some of the constraints to Nigerian businesses but emphasized **Corruption** & high **transportation** cost as critical according to him, over 1/3rd of managers said that these were serious problems. Bribes and production lost while in transit are also high in Nigeria. Manufacturing firms reported paying an average of 3.2 percent of sales in bribes and that losses during transit are equal to 2.4 percent of sales.

Despite the gloomy business environment Nigerian MSMEs operate in, Akindeinde however shared his views about what individual MSME can do to ameliorate their current situation. Foremost amongst this is proper preparation & planning to prevent poor performance. Others include active participation in a sector or broad based Business Member Organisation in order to engage in dialogue with government to address business environment issues of concern.

The paper was able to identify reasons why BMOs have failed to perform the role of advocates for change and these include:

- BMOs rarely conduct robust research, meaning that they do not understand the issues in sufficient depth and fail to formulate credible policy proposals;
- BMOs tend to present government with shopping lists, or make vague demands for funding or "government support", which does little to address key business environment constraints facing members;

- BMOs often lack credibility with government, or are seen as unrepresentative as a result of selfish interest of some members.

Akindeinde concluded his paper with a 5-step advocacy guide that can assist trade associations to become effective advocate for change in the following bullet points.

1. **Identify** issues of concern to members
2. **Prioritise** issues & seek member re-validation
3. **Conduct in-depth research_& analysis** as evidence for dialogue
4. **Prepare a realistic & achievable_strategy** and work plan with clear objectives
5. **Implement with discipline & focus_** targeting decision makers and the media



Photo 8: Participants listening attentively at the plenary session



6.5 PANEL SESSION MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED ON ENABLING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

High operating cost and difficult business environment

MSMEs are not fulfilling their potential in part because of the difficult business environment. High production and operational costs on electricity, transport, etc make the cost of doing business very high, reducing MSME competitiveness in the market place.

MSMEs have a right to an enabling business environment. It was agreed during this panel that the issue is not a question of anyone doing MSME operators a favor but that they have a right to demand for an enabling business environment. Government is not a market actor, all agreed, but it is their provide an enabling environment for businesses to start and grow. Government can do this by ensuring that there is the right infrastructure and regulatory framework in place. The example of energy was constantly referred to during the panel discussions. Electricity is often erratic or unavailable in Nigeria, so many companies have relocated to Ghana to continue their business activities.

Poor infrastructure Poor road infrastructure, especially with secondary and tertiary roads in the villages, have often resulted in perishable food items not being evacuated from the farms or areas of production to the market place leading to loss of farm produce.

Lack of market information

Lack of market information is militating against the effective and efficient performance by MSMEs operators. It was mentioned that in the past, there was a program on radio through which prices of various commodities within a given state are announced. These enabled operators know what price they will be offered if they produce in a given location and the information also included announcement of particular days certain markets were open in some of the locations.

6.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Formulation of right policy mix

Government need to formulate the right policies that can facilitate easy access to finance and strengthen institutions that are supposed to provide electricity, construct and or maintain access roads and also lower the cost of that will support the growth MSMEs sector in Nigeria. The right policy mix can incentivize innovation and upgrading by MSME operators.

Trade association Capacity strengthening

MSMEs through their associations will require having the right capacities and skills to enable them advocate for changes that will reposition their businesses. They will need to be well functioning to be able to advocate for that change.

Effective business advisory services

Government needs to have in place programs that build capacities of MSME operators in order for them to be able to compete in the marketplace. Some of these can be in the form of effective and functioning business advisory services similar to the agricultural extension services so the MSMEs can begin to fulfill their potential.

6.6 Background Paper 4: Access to Markets and Business Linkages

Presenter: Uzo Nduka Managing Director Domino Information Company Limited.

Highlight

This presentation highlighted the options through which businesses can be done with MSMEs and benefits derivable from doing business with MSMEs. These he itemized as follows:

Uzo's paper categorized the challenges in forming business linkages and creating access to markets into three distinct areas: operational, reputation and relationship management, and systemic challenges.

Operational challenges

- Internal commitment of government and big businesses
- Access to Reliable Market Information
- Measuring Impacts

Reputation and relationship management

- Managing expectations with respect to purchase agreements
- Reducing dependency on one client

Systemic

- Building knowledge and skills
- Improving access to finance
- Strengthening regulatory and public policy environments
- Providing infrastructure

Uzo concluded his presentation by recommending that business support services through business membership associations can put in place an MSME Information Management and Communication system to provide open source information about how to buy from, sell to and distribute through MSMEs and the system will also provide information using available technologies on: Pricing, demand, training and skills, finance, policies, competition.

6.6.1 PANEL SESSION: MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED ON ACCESS TO MARKETS AND BUSINESS LINKAGES

It was apparent from the panelists that the issue is not whether there is demand for the product, but whether a proper alignment can occur between the buyers and the sellers. Some specific cases in point related to the sale of cassava by farmers to large buyers. Both Thai Farms and Nigeria Starch Mills are prepared to purchase large quantities of cassava (3,000 tons each) if the conditions are right: prices, volumes, timing for aggregation, quality, and respect of contract. While the large industrial markets know and understand specifically what they are looking for, the farmers do not understand the requirements, which is at the root of many of the challenges.

From the discussion, it was apparent that given the small size of many of the producers, with low productivity and low individually available volumes of product, they would prefer to sell a smaller quantity at a higher unit price, rather than a large quantity at one time for a lower unit price (but higher overall revenue). They are able to do this much more effectively with the local garri makers, who want to purchase in smaller quantities and can sell a finished good (like garri) to the end consumer for a higher unit price than an industrial producer can, as they are just an intermediate level producer.

Major Challenges that fundamentally affect the small farmer's access to markets

Productivity

The low levels of productivity by most small farmers impede their ability to access bigger and steadier markets. Most expansion of production in Nigeria has come from opening up new land rather than increasing productivity (greater yield per unit of input). With low levels of productivity, farmers are operating on tighter margins and more risk averse. They are not able to offer competitive prices and don't have the volumes needed to meet large buyer demands.



Photo 9: A panel discussants on Access to markets and business linkages

Low business skills

Farmers' don't know how to calculate their profits and losses, which makes it very difficult for them to know what prices to negotiate. This tends to keep them in the spot markets, even when they have agreed to a price with a large buyer. Thus many farmers take opportunistic, rather than strategic, decisions.

Weak access to information

There is still an important disconnect between the farmers and their markets.

- There is no transparent information on price formation, where farmers understand how the mills derive the prices that are being offered to farmers, whether prices offered are realistic, and know the range of prices being offered across the region;
- Limited understanding of the quality factors that can add to (or subtract from) the value of the product farmers have to sell. A case in point is the level of starch content in cassava;
- Limited understanding of the fundamental contract specifications and why their respect is critical to a good business relationship – such as volumes (farmers have difficulty knowing what a ton is since they don't have scales), delivery schedules (why aggregation is critical to the processors), and payment mechanisms.

Poor infrastructure

Poor infrastructure is a major handicap to small farmers to reach the local markets. With bad roads, transport costs are higher, as are likelihood of delays in getting the product to the market and damage to the product. Higher transport costs are subtracted from the price to the farmer, hurting his incentives, rather than added to the price to the consumer, especially if the consumer has alternative sources of supply. Delays in getting product to market can often mean missing the market altogether. Additionally, poor infrastructure for electricity supply adds significantly to the costs of post-harvest handling and processing, further reducing the competitiveness of Nigerian producers and processors.

Policy environment

Numerous policy issues affect the ability of producers to tie into new markets. At the local level, road tax policies increase the price of transport and add to delivery time. At the state level, state governments' investment decisions based on incomplete information/analysis often distort markets.

6.6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy/Value Chain coordination

There is a strong role for government to play in understanding and resolving the challenges facing the successful linkages between actors in the value chains. On the infrastructure side, closer understanding of the points of blockage on the road corridors and addressing them in a coordinated manner (as is happening in conjunction with USAID). Policy makers as a whole, however, need more strategic thinking on how to grow the sectors in a sustainable manner, as well, to improve the coordination between the actors.

Farmers need to start thinking like a business

There was a strong statement from many of the emerging entrepreneurs that the farmers need to start thinking like businesses and taking responsibility for understanding and solving their problems, not waiting for someone else to solve them for them. When farmers truly understand their core business and recognize their problems will they be able to reach out to access the services that they need. A key business concept is responding to market demands, so farmers need to start producing what the markets want, rather than what the farmer wants to produce.

Accessing differentiated services

It was clear that there is a great need for farmers to start using additional services if they are to successfully link up with higher value and/or higher volume markets. Many of these services are currently available, but there must be recognition by the farmers that they need to access the solutions that the services can provide, and be willing to pay for them.

In order to access differentiated services, farmers need:

- Information on the requirements of the market: quality (standards); pricing and price discovery; order sizes (volume) and timing.
- Technical skills to upgrade their internal operations and to meet the market's quality standards;
- Mastery the agricultural production skills which will increase their productivity and the quality of their supply;
- Access to the technology and inputs services required to increase their productivity; and
- Access to the business skills to improve their negotiating and contracting (pricing) skills.

Strengthening the role of cooperatives to service members

Small farmers cannot be expected to learn and know everything. Cooperatives/farmers associations can improve the access to services for the members, aggregation of product and contracting to improve access to markets. But cooperatives must be careful to continue to promote innovation amongst their members and stimulate upgrading, rather than to try to bring everyone down to the lowest common denominator.

6.7 Background Paper 5: Business Support Services in the Niger Delta

Presenter: Bill Grant, Global Practice Leader Agriculture, Agribusiness and Food Security, DAI, USA.

Highlight

Discussions on business support services centered on both opportunities and challenges faced by MSMEs either as service providers or service consumers. Since MSMEs have a constant need for services to respond to ever changing market environments, any long term, sustainable supply of solutions will require the creation of a sustainable market. Creating a market for business support services, so that they can be readily available to the small firms that need them, when they need them, and at a price they are willing to pay, needs to be assessed from both the demand for services and the supply of services.

The background presentation concentrated on the importance of the **demand** for services and solutions to real problems by the MSMEs. The major challenge is for the MSMEs to understand that they have a problem (acknowledge the problem and the weakness), understand the benefits that can be derived from a solution, and are willing to pay for the solution. With an identified need for a solution, the **supply** by service providers then must be able to respond to that demand and present a service offer back to the MSME that reflects their specific conditions (problem, purchasing power, timing, etc.). There can be an important role for the service providers to educate the MSMEs on the problems they are facing and the need for the solution they are offering, in order to stimulate the demand by the MSMEs. But it is only when there is an active demand for, and supply of, services by the market actors, that the MSMEs will be able to address the challenges of their changing business environment.

6.7.1 PANEL SESSION: MAIN ISSUES DISCUSSED ON BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES

The panel discussions concluded that it is important for MSMEs to understand that they need business support services, so that they will seek out and use them. Even if the services are available, if firms don't understand the problems they need to resolve, then they won't seek the solutions.

Furthermore those essential areas of business that MSMEs need to pay attention to if they want to upgrade their business capacity and skills included:

- Product/commodity design
- Low production cost
- Good business administration
- How to get the right material/quality inputs
- They need to comply with the requirements of the markets
- How to communicate
- How to access markets
- How to find customers
- Financial services to run the business

Key questions discussed during the panel discussion included:

- How do MSMEs access these services?
- How do MSMEs identify the problems they have and the need for a solution?
- Where do they find/identify the services they need and the service provider?
- How do firms adapt to change as their businesses grow?

On the part of service providers, provision of services is constrained by:

- Their limited information about market opportunities for business services
- Some service providers are deficient in terms of technical and/or business skills and which therefore limits their capacity to solve MSME problems
- The weakness in knowledge and understanding the operations of the service consumers hinders their ability to develop attractive offer to service consumers.
- Other constraints that were discussed included:
 - Inability to develop tailored service products to address specific business problems
 - Distortions within the business environment have been identified to act as barriers to service providers' activities.

On the other hand, service consumers (entrepreneurs) noted that:

- MSME operators lack an in-depth awareness about problems they face or even the right solutions that are needed to make them competitive.
- MSME operators generally do not have a good understanding of how to value the business constraints they have and this weakness has been seen to affect their willingness to pay for services that could improve their business performance.

Beyond the constraints, service consumers' face as outlined above, it was agreed that for MSMEs to improve their productivity and competitiveness, they require the following support services:

- Mentoring,
- End-market analysis focusing on consumer (from the market side and not from the production side)
- Good knowledge of who their competitors are
- Business linkages and cooperation

The panelists affirmed that these services are available but MSME operators generally have an attitude of not wanting to pay for such.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

At the end of all the plenary and panel sessions deliberations, the general challenges that are common to virtually all the entrepreneurs which hinder their optimal performances include poor infrastructures, erratic power supply, lack of access to credit, high lending rates, stringent collateral requirements, lack of access to markets, weak business linkages, increasing agitations and conflicts that disrupts market systems, poor information access and dissemination.

The forum confirmed that MSMEs and agricultural enterprises constitute veritable economic activities in the region offering sources of income and employment. Despite efforts by government institutions,

donor agencies, multinationals, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), associations/cooperatives and individuals, operations of MSMEs in the region have remained burdened with numerous challenges. Participants left the forum with high expectations and a desire to work together for solutions that will address some of the challenges discussed at the forum.

The forum generated useful discussions, debates and networking opportunity for organizations, individual and MSME owners. The forum also laid foundation for new partnerships, shared learning and collective action among MSME operators and support for promoting evidence and research-based policies by policy-makers in the coming months.

Some policy makers present were informed with real constraints faced by MSMEs in their day-to-day operations and they resolved to promote policies, programs and enforce appropriate regulatory framework that will be based on evidence.

Entrepreneurs, financial institutions and business regulatory agencies were encouraged to engage in more public dialogues and engagements that will help in addressing challenges of access to information, access to markets and enabling business environment for businesses to thrive.

It is important to note that intervention programs put in place to ameliorate MSMEs/agricultural enterprises financial challenges by government through CBN, such as the agricultural finance; micro finance; MSE finance; infrastructure finance and capacity building programs are not well known, difficult for banks to use and rarely accessed by MSME operators.

There is a consensus that addressing the major constraints and common problems facing MSMEs and economic development requires all stakeholders to work together. A business environment in which large multi-national corporations *and* MSMEs can thrive is the product of a symbiotic relationship between all relevant stakeholders – public sector agencies, business membership organizations, large corporations, multi- and bi-lateral organizations, financial institutions and MSMEs themselves.

Sustainably meeting the MSMEs' continuous needs for finance and business services must occur within a market environment. MSMEs need appropriate finance and business services, but must be willing to define the services they want, understand the value of those services, and be willing to pay for them; otherwise they will not be sustainable. Government must promote policies and incentives that can create access to existing and new markets both domestic and international. Business Membership Organizations must focus on promoting or protecting their members' interests, and must position themselves as advocates for change in the market place.

For this to occur there must be sustainable peace in the region as MSMEs will not thrive in an environment characterized by conflict and tension. It is therefore our collective responsibility and benefit to ensure that the current fragile peace in the region is sustained by working together. It is hoped that new knowledge acquired from this people-centered debates will be utilized by all stakeholders for the actualization of a more vibrant and competitive MSMEs in the region.

Participants recommended that appropriate steps need to be taken to address the following actions:

- There is a need to address access to finance by exploring non-traditional sources of finance such as venture capital finance and leasing.

- Market actors need to engage in policy dialogue with relevant institution, agencies and officials who have the power and authority to promote policy that will reduce the current double digit interest rates often charged by lending institutions to entrepreneurs whenever they seek financial loans.
- Entrepreneurs need to have better understanding of markets and consumer requirements with respect to pricing, volume, quality standards, negotiating and contracting. They need to strengthen their skills in these areas.
- Farmers need to start thinking like a business and taking responsibility for understanding and solving their problems, not waiting for someone else to solve their problems for them. These will require improving their financial literacy, negotiating, contracting, pricing and marketing skills.

APPENDIX 1
Program of Events

Tuesday, November 26, 2013	
DAY 1	
8.00-9.00 am	<i>Delegates arrival and Registration</i>
9.00-9.15 am	PLENARY SESSION Moderator: Dr. Dara Akala, Programs Director PIND Foundation Welcome address delivered by Mr. Sam Daibo Executive Director PIND Foundation
9.15-9.25 am	Opening address from the Chief Host: Professor Julius O. Ihonvbere (OON), Secretary to State Government, Edo State.
9.25-9.35 am	Good will messages from representatives of Partner organizations
9.35-10.00 am	Keynote Address Promoting new approaches for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises delivered by Alhaji Bature Umar Masari Director General, Small & Medium Enterprises Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)
10.00-10.20 am	Tea Break and Tour of Exhibition Stands
10.20-10.30 am	Short film presentation Review of 2013 objectives and Agenda
10.30-11.00 am	Background Paper 1: Access to Finance for MSMEs delivered by Paul Eluhaiwe, Director of Development Finance, Central Bank of Nigeria HQ, Abuja and Farouk Kurawa Agricultural Finance Specialist MARKETS II
11.00-11.30 am	Background Paper 2: Enabling Environment for Business development delivered by Mr. Bayo Akindeinde, Program Manager Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE), Abuja DFID Funded Program.
11.30 -1.30 pm	CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS Session 1a: Access to finance – Challenges of lending to Agricultural and Rural Finance. Moderator: Farouk Kurawa Agricultural Finance Specialist MARKETS II Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justina Bairekpedi, MD/CEO Wetlands Microfinance Bank, Warri, Delta State • Irene Ibekuze, National Program Coordinator, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) • Mrs. Josephine Financial Secretary, United Ufoma Fish Farmers Association, Warri, Delta State • Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, Founder/CEO Farmshoppe, Lagos
	Session 1b: Access to finance – Challenges of lending to MSMEs Moderator: Emeka Ile, Director Business Development, MARKETS II Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chima Nnadozie, Head MSME Propositions, Diamond Bank, Lagos • Godwin Ehigiamusoe Managing Director, LAPO Microfinance Bank, Benin City Edo State • Prince Peter Iyare, Manufacturers Association of Nigeria Edo State Branch • Lady Taiye Nohuwa National Association of Women Entrepreneurs, Benin Branch
	Session 2: Enabling Environment – Role of Government as facilitators and enablers of business development Moderator: Honorable Daniel Akhilele Special Adviser to Edo State Governor on Small & Medium Enterprises Panelists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Friday Okpara Director Public Private Partnership, Small and Medium Enterprises

	<p>Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Christopher Onosode, Advisory: Consulting Government & Public Services, Price Water house Coopers Limited, Abuja • Adedeji Michael Adeniyi, Head Department of Planning, Budget, Research & Statistics, Akure North LGA, Ondo State • Patience Eke, Treasurer Oredo LGA Farmers Cooperative Union, affiliate of Edo State Cooperative Farmers Agency, Benin City, Edo State
1.30 -1.50 pm	<p>Plenary Feedback from breakout sessions by rapporteurs and close of morning plenary session</p>
<i>1.50-2.50 pm</i>	Lunch Break
2.50 – 3.05 pm	<p>Plenary Launch of ND Link by Sam Daibo Executive Director PIND Foundation</p>
3.05 - 5.05 pm	<p>CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS</p> <p>Session 3: Access to finance – Opportunities in Non traditional sources of finance – Equity, Leasing, Transfers, Grants etc.</p> <p>Moderator: Emeka Ile, Director Business Development, MARKETS II</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbara James, Founder, Henshaw Capital Partners Limited, Lagos • Andrew Efurhievwe Executive Secretary, Equipment Leasing Association of Nigeria Limited, Lagos • Alex Sharta, President, Warri Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture <p>Session 4: Enabling Environment – Voice and Accountability: Associations as advocates for Change</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Bayo Akindeinde, Program Manager Enhancing Nigerian Advocacy for a Better Business Environment (ENABLE), Abuja DFID Funded Program</p> <p>Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omowunmi Gbadamosi, Country Director Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), Lagos • Fidelis Ekom Media Consultant, Abuja • Emmanuel Odigie, Chairman Edo State All Farmers Association of Nigeria (AFAN) • Joseph Osazuwa, Wordful Cooperative Farms Benin City, Edo State
5.05 - 5.25 pm	<p>PLENARY SESSION Feedback from breakout sessions by rapporteurs and close of afternoon plenary session Announcements Closing by moderator: Dr. Dara Akala, Programs Director PIND Foundation</p>
5.30- 6.00pm	Social Networking Event
Wednesday November 27, 2013	
DAY 2	
<i>8.30-9.00 am</i>	<i>Registration</i>
9.00-9.15 am	<p>PLENARY SESSION Moderator: Bose Eitokpah, Strategic Program Manager PIND Foundation.</p> <p>Short film presentation Launch of 2014 PIND Advocacy Calendar Campaign by Nate Haken, Senior Advisor, Funds for Peace, USA</p>
9.15- 9.30 am	Recap of day 1 proceedings by rapporteurs
9.30-10.00 am	Background Paper 3: Access to Markets and Business Linkages delivered by Uzo Nduka CEO at Domino Information Company Limited.
10.00-10.30 am	Background Paper 4: Business Support Services delivered by Bill Grant, Global Practice Leader

	Agriculture, Agribusiness and Food Security, DAI, USA
10.30-10.45 am	Tea Break
10.45-12.45 pm	<p>CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS</p> <p>Session 5: Access to Markets and Business Linkages – Markets for Agricultural commodities and Market Information Services for Small Businesses Moderator: Bill Grant, Global Practice Leader, DAI, USA Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roland Oroh, Program Manager Agribusiness & Trade Portfolio, USAID Nigeria • Chike Nwagwu Managing Director/CEO NOVUS Agro, Lagos • Amayo Nosa, President Edo State Cooperative Farmers Agency • Cynthia Mosunmola Umoru, Founder/CEO Farmshoppe, Lagos <p>Session 6: Business Support Services – Support Services for the underserved population (Youth, Women & People living with disabilities) in entrepreneurship development</p> <p>Moderator: Jesse Ojobor, Rural Entrepreneurship Development and Human Security Unit UNIDO HQ, Vienna, Austria Panelist</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theophilus Agada Mercy Corps, Nigeria • Oje Ivagba Program Manager, Leap Africa, Lagos • Godwin Ehigiamusoe Managing Director LAPO Microfinance Bank, Benin City • Dr. Julie Momah Centre Manager/Deputy Director Technology Incubation Centre, Benin, National Board for Technology Incubation • Iquo Okon Ama, President Dynamic Ladies Association, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State.
12.45- 1.00 pm	<p>Plenary Feedback from breakout sessions by rapporteurs and close of morning plenary session</p>
1.00-2.00 pm	Lunch Break
2.00-4.00 pm	<p>CONCURRENT PANEL SESSIONS</p> <p>Session 7: Access to Markets and Business Linkages – How can small business entrepreneurs penetrate corporate markets</p> <p>Moderator: Precious Agbunno, Market Development Officer, PIND Foundation Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Esimaje Brikinn Chevron Nigeria Limited • Terry Lacey, DFID-Market Development Project, Warri, Delta State • Peace Nwareama Acting Center Manager, SME-Development Network, Port Harcourt • Dr. Chukwuma Ezedinma, Regional Office for Nigeria & West Africa, UNIDO • Toki Mabogunje, Business Consultant Toki Mabogunje & Co, Lagos <p>Session 8: Business Support Services – Role of Technology in production and processing for MSMEs</p> <p>Moderator: Nancy Gilbert, Manager Appropriate Technology Enabled Development Program Panelists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engr. Victor Olomo CEO Process Concepts and Technologies Limited, Ibadan • Dr. Owolarafe Oseni Head Department of Agricultural and Environmental Engineering, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife • Chief Damian Nwachukwu, Umuagwo Palm Oil Processing Cluster, Imo State.
4.00-5.30 pm	<p>PLENARY SESSION Feedback from breakout sessions by rapporteurs and close of afternoon plenary session Vote of thanks by Dennis Flemming, Executive Director Niger Delta Partnership Initiative, USA Closing by moderator: Bose Eitokpah, Strategic Program Manager PIND Foundation.</p>