

Adamu, in Zurich, charts path to Nigeria's growth

TO the Nasarawa State Governor, Abdullahi Adamu, Nigeria will become an economic giant if its subsequent governments can ensure policy stability and continuity.

Adamu, who spoke at a business and investment symposium in Zurich, Switzerland, added that once this is done, the economy would blossom as the ingenuity of Nigerians is unleashed and the country will be the better for it.

The symposium entitled Nigeria - The Way Forward, was organised at the weekend by The Nigerian Awareness Group (NAG) of Switzerland, in association with the Nigeria Embassy and Nigerian Union of Switzerland. It was part of the NAG's efforts to raise awareness in Switzerland about Nigerian economy.

In his presentation entitled: The Challenges of Nigeria's Economic Development in the 21st Century: Baking the National Cake, Adamu described policy instability as the bane of Nigeria's economy.

He added that various governments, in the past, had had laudable policy programmes that would have helped develop the economy and improve the lives of Nigerians, only for such programmes to be jettisoned by succeeding governments. "The results have been stunted growth and economic uncertainty. Ironically, the fault has not been in the programmes but in policy instability that appears to have been accepted as a normal way of doing things in the country," the governor added.

He admitted that grievous mistakes had been made in the past which the country was still paying for, but the good news is that the dream has only been delayed but "not lost". Indeed, he noted the fact that the turnaround of the Nigerian economy is now fruitful.

However, all this would be possible, according to Governor Adamu, only if current efforts of the Obasanjo administration to reform Nigeria's economy through the introduction of the National Economic Empowerment Development Strategies (NEEDS) are sustained and vigorously pursued.

"NEEDS represents a new beginning for us," said Adamu. "But it is not a magic wand. Its success and that of other developmental policies of the administration rests on all Nigerians at home and in the Diaspora."

He added that "the reform programme offers us unique opportunities to become captains of numerous ships, barges and canoes in the waters of our economy."

Adamu said Nigerians must place less emphasis on "sharing of the cake" - euphemism for wealth sharing - and more on baking more cakes.

"We must bake and bake more national cakes. When everyone has access to the national cake, no one would fight for a mere slice of it."

He said baking of more national cakes would be helped by policy stability and an admission by succeeding governments that public officers who have worked on and contributed to good economic policies still have a role to play to sustain those policies and make them work.

They should not be regarded as "expired men and women of yesterday," neither their involvement be regarded as a recycling of old hands by Nigerians, Adamu said.

"I am not suggesting that anyone is indispensable, for indeed, the graveyard is full of indispensables," said Adamu.

"But most nations have father figures whose views are regularly sought on critical national issues. We too can begin now to build a corps of respected former public office holders to whom the nation can turn in delicate moments of pressing socio-political problems.

"I advocate a new national culture of respecting the past and the past stewards of our country at every level," the governor stressed.
