



## Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) Nigeria Country Office



### Strengthening Nigeria's plantain value chain to curtail post harvest losses



Banana and plantain are two crops that remain important sources of food energy and minerals for many households in Nigeria. With 60 percent of the world's production, it has been estimated that over 100 million Africans derive their food energy requirement from banana and plantain which is a rich source of iron, potassium and carotene and may be dominantly processed into different products for food and snacks.

However, annual consumption per capita in Nigeria remains low at 8.5kg, compared to countries such as Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, where per capita consumption is 220kg. Although Nigeria ranks first in the production of plantain in Africa and fifth in the world, post harvest losses remain very high at about 60 percent of the production. Small-scale farmers are the main producers of plantain/banana mainly for domestic consumption and regional markets. In Nigeria, the fruits are mostly eaten fresh due to lack of post harvest technologies that could extend the shelf life and increase product value.

FAO is supporting government to increase production of plantain and banana and build capacity for value addition at cottage level.

The programme has trained over 200 women and men on "Post Harvest Technologies for processing and packaging plantain and banana products for local markets." The training provided more than 20 different recipes for the production of various banana and plantain products including: flour, chips, starch, alcoholic beverage, bread, cake, roasted plantain (*boli*) *dodo*

*ikire* pounded plantain, fried plantain (*dodo*) and plantain flakes. Other recipes taught were on post harvest products made from banana that included flour, chips, biscuits, banana ice cream, banana jam/jelly, banana milk shake, banana fruit salad, banana bread and banana cake. The training also addressed issues of food safety and hygiene which very important both for household and safety of food in the market.

Giving testimony at the end of one of the training programmes, Mrs. Nnenna Uche, Director Technical Services at the Abia ADP, the government's extension agency, said: "Most of our farmers initially called our plantlets flowers when we distributed. But today, one of them has begun producing plantain *Chum Chum* (a snack) instead of throwing away his overripe plantain. We now want to start training other farmers on plantain processing." Donatus Owan, President, Cross River State plantain and banana farmers Association says; "with the knowledge received from the training, we are now trying to add value to our plantain processing through cooperatives".

One of the common products in the markets around the country is chips made largely from drying of both unripe and ripe bananas and plantains. Once dried, it is milled into flour. As snacks, the fruit, mostly plantain, is cut into slices and fried in vegetable oil, simmered and packaged in cellophane and taken to the market.

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A technical cooperation project implemented in Abia, Cross River, Delta and Oyo States.



In Ughelli North Local Government Area of Delta State lives Moses Idise (46) who benefited from the FAO training on processing and actually bought the oven/dryer used for the training and has since ventured into the production of sausage rolls, *Chin Chin* and Banana drink. He said he has been producing 90 pieces of each product daily and on Sundays he produces sausage rolls, the most patronized of the products, in two runs favoured mostly by church goers. His wife is his chief marketer.

He said the banana drink is mostly favoured by patients suffering from high blood pressure, because they claim it helps in regulating their blood pressure. He said producing the drink had helped him reduce the loss of his overripe banana, which he hitherto destroys.

Idise said with the training on packaging also provided by the FAO project, he has turned his attention to getting NAFDAC's approval for his products so as to expand his outreach. Idise

became a plantain farmer after benefitting from the first FAO



training on Planting techniques and today he realizes 70 percent of his income from plantain, even though his 5 hectare farm initially started with aquaculture and poultry before it diversified into plantain and banana production. In addition he has also added pepper and tomatoes and fruits (guava, pear and mango) to his list of ventures.

He said that as a result of his success in Plantain production, he had committed 2.5 hectares of the farm to it planting 3,000 suckers in 2012 and an additional 9,000 in 2013. He has so far sold plantain bunches in two harvest cycles in 2012 and has harvested his first cycle in November 2013.

Idise said that FAO supplied him with an initial 78 suckers which he multiplied to 3,000 and with subsequent multiplications he has sold 12,000 suckers to other farmers in his cooperative group and others at N150 per sucker. He belongs to the Ughelli North Plantain and Banana farmers Association, which was registered this year with the State.

Chinusum Charlies (35) is the Chairman of the 15-member Ukwuani Plantain and Banana farmers Association in Delta State and he has been a Plantain farmer for the past seven years. He has a 20-hectare piece of land on which he planted 2,500 suckers on 15 hectares in 2012 and 2013. He has produced over 1,000 suckers which he sold at N100 apiece to members of his group and others.

Charlie, who also participated in the FAO training on banana and plantain processing, said he began making plantain drink, barely two days of his return home and he has so far produced 20 75cl bottles which he has sold out at N200 a bottle. The elderly, he said, were his most committed patrons because they said the drink was medicinal. He explained that he had produced a second run of 300 bottles with steady

sales. Charles said he was yet to look for markets outside his community and that the training on packaging had given him new ideas on proper packaging, labeling and branding. He said that he had already begun processing the registration of his drink with NAFDAC, which he says is the only challenge he faces if he is to market his drinks across the State and beyond.



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