

Report

Advocacy Policy Dialogue on Standard Weights and Measures along Rice and Cassava Value Chain in VCDP States of Ogun, Anambra and Ebonyi States (3rd-10th of July 2018)

1.0 Background

The Value Chain Development Program (VCDP) recognizes the need to adopt the use of quality norms, grades and standards in the marketing of rice and cassava products because of the great challenges being experienced in this sector which borders on trust. To a large extent VCDP has promoted the use of standard weights and measures by farmers, small scale processors and marketers in the last three years of the program. The use of this system has been across the participating States with modest achievement. However, a lot is still left to be done to ensure that a greater population of the beneficiaries adopts the use of weight and measures to transact their businesses. In Nigeria, less than 10% of traders and farmers adopt the culture of weights and measures. Some of the things being measured and weighed by traders and farmers include meat, grains (rice, beans, and wheat), tubers and roots (cassava, yam, and potatoes), etc. The common measurement tools in Nigerian markets include; cups, mudu, bottles, weighing scale, etc. The implications of these kinds of measurements are:

- i. The traders/farmers are short-changed
- ii. The final consumers(buyers) are short-changed

Therefore, there is the need for a decisive effort at providing equitable standard of measurement that is nationally acceptable and approved by agencies responsible. There is also the need for traders/farmers to adopt such standards for measurement. Building on the success of these initiatives, the program wishes to expand the outreach and deepen the successes so far recorded across the VCDP States starting with three (3) of the States (Ogun, Anambra and Ebonyi States).

2.0. Objective of the Program

The program has as its major objectives to build trust for fair and honest business transaction among producers, processors and traders through advocacy and to promote the adoption of the use of standard weights and measures in all their business transactions.

3.0. Participation

The meeting brought together participants from different ministries, Departments and Agencies including the Commissioners for commerce and industry from the States, State programme coordinator for VCDP project in Ogun, Anambra and Ebonyi States, representative of the ministry of Agriculture, representative of the minister of health, representative of the commissioner for women affairs, National Export Promotion Council, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, Nigeria Incentive-Based Risk Sharing System for Agricultural Lending (NIRSAL) and Bank of Industry, Consultants and Media, etc.

4.0. Advocacy on the use of Standard Weights and Measures in the Targeted States

The first day started with advocacy visits to the State Ministries of Agriculture in Commerce in the three States.

4.1. Welcome Address from the States

I. Ogun State VCDP State Program Coordinator

Mr Samuel Odeogun, State Coordinator VCDP, welcomed all participants of the meeting. He further appreciated the commissioner for holding the policy dialogue along rice and cassava value chains. He explained the goal of the IFAD project being implemented in six states with an outlook to increase the income/livelihoods of farmers. He explained the need to implement standard weights and measures in the markets to be used to sell food items as opposed to the norm of the current usage of ‘cigarette cups’ ‘congo’ and the like. He encouraged stakeholder discussions amongst the stakeholders present and wished participants fruitful deliberations.

II. Ebonyi State Program Coordinator

IFAD/VCDP is trying to promote marketing especially in the rice and cassava value chains. He stated that the objective of the program was to introduce standard weights and measures and also to try to stop the use of bushels in our rice mills. VCDP is also trying to ensure fairness with everybody in the use of standard weights and measures. In other countries, there are standard weights and measures and Nigerian citizens are resisting it. We want to call on the government of Ebonyi State to introduce and enforce the standard weights and measures. He thanked everybody and wished all a successful deliberation.

III. Anambra State Program Coordinator

The State Program Coordinator (SPC) stated as an introduction that the advocacy is on standard weights and measures. He said he never knew that there were laws backing weights and measures in the country and the workshop has opened his eyes to a lot of things.

4.2. Opening Remark by the National Program Coordinator

Mr Kennedy Esinuno who represented the National coordinator of IFAD VCDP project in his remarks, reiterated the goal of the IFAD VCDP project. He mentioned that market women are not aware of the use of standards, weights and measures therefore this advocacy programme will spur the usage of weights in the markets to be used in selling farm products.

4.3 Goodwill Messages

I. Commissioner for Commerce and Industries, Otunba Bimbo Ashiru

Otunba Bimbo Ashiru implored the VCDP to involve all stakeholders including market women, ‘iya oloja’, and heads of markets. This will enable the use of the weights and measures to be taken into effect. He also solicited for collaborations between private sector companies and Non-Governmental Organizations to donate weights at a subsidized rates as part of the organizations’ cooperate social responsibility.

II. Commissioner for Health represented by Dr Saeed Akinbowale

The representative of the commissioner for health, Dr Saeed Akinbowale indicated in his remarks the importance of productivity as coined from the goal of the project. However, health and productivity is intertwined therefore it is worthy of note that health is wealth. He also mentioned in his remarks

the need for farmers to see the need to be cautious with their health as they will need to be healthy to be able to produce more.

III. Representative of the Commissioner for Health-Ogun State

Dr Saeed Sobowale indicated the need for farmers to take into consideration their hygiene when producing rice and cassava farm produce from their farms. He also encouraged producers to pay attention to their personal health for production to be maintained.

IV. Commissioner for Commerce and Industry Ebonyi State

The Commissioner for Commerce and Industry in his message/address mentioned that a lot of efforts have been made in this direction. It is good if this program will be able to solve the problem of short-changing between buyers and sellers.

V. The Commissioner for Agriculture Ebonyi State

The Commissioner for Agriculture in his remark said that it is worrisome that at this age and time, we are still struggling on measuring what we buy. We are trying to protect the short-changing of our consumers. He commended the efforts of the state program coordinators and all those involved in this fight. The primary objective of the government is to protect its citizenry. He promised that his ministry will work in conjunction with the ministry of commerce and industry to embark on the advocacy for standard weights and measures. He stated that they cannot afford to be buying food on wraps. He also promised that the ministry will also fight to stop adulterated measurements in Ebonyi State. He also pleaded with VCDP to help them acquire uniform standard weights and measures. He also assured that his ministry will sponsor a law to penalize any marketer who tampers or defaults with standard measurements. He continued by saying that until there is a law, people will still take us for granted. The ministry of Agriculture will also help to fight against unguided measurements in our markets.

VI. Ministry of Women Affairs Ebonyi State

The representative from the ministry of Women Affairs advised that in the sensitization workshop, we should also try to make the citizens/participants understand why they should not use irregular measurements or use false measurements. In enlightenment, traders should be made to understand that the kingdom of God is within us, therefore they need to understand that they are serving God even in their trade.

VII. The Commissioner of Agriculture-Anambra State

The Commissioner welcomed participants on behalf of the State Governor. He stated that agriculture in Anambra State is really agro-business focused and this shows that commodity exchange activity is key. He said that the project should not be narrowed down to only value chain but there should be a step down. Farmers' and Traders' associations should be carried along and this will help standardize our production. The governor is agro-friendly and so keen on seeing how they can put more money in the hands of the farmers. In Anambra, you can be a farmer, a linkage provider and also a processor. He thanked the value chain primarily for spear-heading the activity and they should always think outside the box on issues that will bring sustainability to agriculture. He said the governor makes sure that capital funds have been paid and he believes that the idea of standardizing commodities is in the

right direction. It will help them as a State when evaluation is being done. It is high time everybody begins to think measurements even in the provision of inputs (seeds and fertilizers). The Ministry supports this and this will get to the governor. If we are able to agree and put down a standard, it will surely go across the States. This should also trickle down to the Federal Associations and Ministries. He thinks this is a good step in the right direction, promised that a **desk officer** will also be set up to work with the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce to work in this direction. The concept of measurements should also be there. He said it is good news for Anambra State and prayed that at the end of the session, people will have a standard weights and measures.

VIII. The Commissioner of Trade and Commerce (Represented)-Anambra State

The representative on behalf of the Commissioner said that the program is a welcome development because if all the things sold in the markets are measured, people will have trust. He promised that the Ministry will make sure that what they have in the market corresponds with what is being done by VCDP. He encouraged VCDP to diversify advocacy to other States of the Federation.

IX. The Coordinator, Standard Organization of Nigeria (SON), Anambra State

The Coordinator in her speech stated that the discussion is critical to the nation and it is high time we started thinking about measurements. She made reference to the legislation establishing the SON, saying that the consultant should add to the Act laws on primary, secondary and tertiary measurements. She noted that the National Metrology Institute was provided to look at the scientific and industrial metrology; promising that SON will offer calibration services, and further stating that the calibration status of any scale needs to be ascertained before it can be used. The essence of the calibration is to eliminate errors. The frequency of calibration should therefore be considered and standardization is very critical especially for the international market acceptability. She gave a case scenario of Liberia who would not buy anything from Nigeria because of irregularities in weights and measures. Therefore, we must make sure that whatever product that is moving out of Anambra State must meet international standard. SON also does harmonization of standards. For us to compete internationally there must be standardization. All weighing scales must be calibrated. In conclusion, the Commissioner said he will want to meet with all the stakeholders to run with the initiative.

X. The State Chairman, All Farmers Association of Nigerian (AFAN)-Anambra State

The chairman reaffirmed the need for farmers' sensitization, saying that measurements should start from the farmers. He thanked the Commissioner and also the leadership of VCDP for introducing the initiative at this point in time.

XI. The State Coordinators of NANTS

The State Coordinators of NANTS present at each State were keen in putting the subject on the table of their discussions at their Executive Committee levels, especially having seen the implications on their sales and livelihoods as well. Their opinion is the need to have a national summit on the subject to drive a nation-wide recognition and acceptability of weights and measures across board. They expressed appreciations to the VCDP for pulling the subject from shelves for proper enforcement.

5.0. Speech by VCDP Consultant, Barr Ken Ukaoha

In his speech in Ogun State, he mentioned that the subject: standards, weights and measures has to deal with a national highlight. He commended the commissioner for speaking on the subject. He further explained the tricycle involved between production, distribution and the consumer. In this tripod, either the producer who doesn't take cognisance of measure, standards and quality or the seller who doesn't take these in to consideration are eventually being short-changed. He explained that there are laws that govern measurements in Nigeria: weights and measures cap W3 2004 act, the pre-shipment act, weights and measured decree of 1992 and weights and measures fees. He also mentioned that the department of weights and measures in the ministry of industry, trade and investment has been empowered to enforce these laws. He also mentioned that fines and levies can be paid by persons who default these laws.

In Ebonyi State, the Consultant said that the nation needs people that understand and have passion for the issues being discussed. He thanked the Commissioner of Agriculture for making things easier for him. He stated that a false measurement is an abomination before God. Because of this issue, the government enacted a law but the problem is in implementation. The law specifies penalty for offender of the Act. In terms of collaboration, he said there should be collaboration between the Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Agriculture. He concluded by saying that quality comes with measures.

Also in Anambra State, the Consultant stated that Anambra State is the first that started computerization and that in many states, business orientation is missing. The use of weights and measures has been very important and there are four existing laws under weights and measures, unfortunately, the only effort that has been made within the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment is just the one on DPR. The core of the law was set up for agriculture and also for export purposes. Since agriculture is not taken as a business, there seems to be no proper standards for weights and measures in Nigeria and that is the reason for the advocacy. This is also the reason why trade and farmers associations have been invited for the workshop. Also the media are not left out because they have a lot of job to do also in spreading the information. This subject of standard weights and measures is key and monumental to growth especially in Anambra State. He confessed that his eyes were made open after the workshop. The bushel used in measuring 25kg bag of rice weighed 5.1kg itself. Automatically the net content of the bag of rice is less than 25kg. The consumers are short-changed. He gave an instance that in Ebonyi State where 3 different of supposed 25kg bags were weighed, the results were 20kg, 23kg and 27kg respectively. Every buyer buys it in the name of 25kg. The implication is that Anambra is getting well known in rice production. We do not know where these commodities will get to. All we are asking is a standard weights and measures across the country to stop the short-changing of either the buyer or seller. This is an era of measurement, the world is moving and we should help the people move as well. He also commended the State governor and the State in general. He said the government has to take up the role of mobilization and sensitization. The media also has a role a role to play in creating awareness, traders and farmers have to galvanize their commitments and make efforts towards making the initiative a success.

6.0 Commitments

1. The Commissioner of Trade and Commerce in Ebonyi State promised to work with the Ministry of Environment to war against the non-use of standard weights and measures

2. Also in Ebonyi State, the Commissioner stated that a law will be sponsored against anyone who sells items/commodities with illegal or false weights and measures.
3. The Commissioner of Agriculture in Anambra State committed to setting up a desk officer will be put in the ministry to follow up on the issue of standard weights and measures and also said that the Ministry is in full support of the initiative
4. SON committed to offering calibration services and harmonization of standards
5. The Honourable Commissioner of Agriculture in Anambra State also committed to meeting with all stakeholders in the State to run with the initiative.
6. IFAD/VCDP has committed to do a counterpart funding for farmers that are interested in purchasing weighing scales. 70% of the cost for the weighing scales will be paid by IFAD/VCDP while 30% will be paid by the farmer.

7.0 Workshop and Demonstration

The second days of the advocacy visit gathered farmers along rice and cassava value chains. The focus of the event was to educate farmers on the use of weights and measures as well as the benefits that accrue to the usage of these weights.

7.1. Presentation 1: The Rules and Regulations and Enforcement of the use of Weights and Measures

In this presentation, the Lead Consultant noted that weights and measures are all about getting the value of your money in what is purchased. He stated that there is a triangular relationship between the producer, seller and the buyer; and explained that weights and measures are backed with a range of rules designed to help customers understand how much they are buying and to ensure they receive the exact amount/quantity of goods they are entitled to and also ensuring that such goods are equivalent to the money paid in value terms. He also mentioned that the desire to have accurate and effective service delivery informed the decision of the federal government to create/include issues of weights and measures in one of its Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) known as Weights and Measures Division. The Department is also empowered by 4 laws and regulations, namely;

- i. Weights and Measures **Act CAP W3LFN, 2004** (Formally weights & Measures Act CAP 467LFN 1999);
- ii. Pre-Shipment Inspection of Export Act CAP P25 LFN, 2004;
- iii. Weights and Measures Standardization of Indigenous Measures Regulations, 1992; and
- iv. The Weights and Measures Fees Regulations.

In conclusion, the Presenter opined that if one neglects or fails to implement, the long arm of the law may be unleashed, as ignorant of the law is never an excuse.



**Weights and
Measures presentati**

7.2. Presentation 2: The Use of Weights and Measures

The Presenter started by giving an overview of what standard weights and measures is all about. She said that weights and measures imply buying and selling goods in particular quantity. Measurements are undertaken to ensure fairness, transparency and equity in trading, allow for uniformity in weights and measures, provide protection to the value chain actors, consumers and the public in general, provide accurate measure of what was produced and proposed for sale by producers, processors and markets and also to avoid confusion given the numerous measurement units. The presenter also showed participants the different types of weighing scales, saying that it is good to use the right scale for the right products or commodities. She concluded by saying that the importance of weights and measures cannot be overemphasized in that weights and measures in any business transaction attracts more sales, builds trust between the seller and the buyer, brings more money in the pockets of the sellers, ensures value of money and also boost the economy in general.



the use of weights
and measures.pdf

7.3. Presentation 3: The Importance of Product Quality

There was also an overview of product quality as a measure of excellence or a state of a product or commodity being free from defects, deficiencies, debris, harmful substances, etc. The presenter went further to explain the importance of product quality and how it can be achieved. Some of the importance of product quality included; value addition to the produce, attraction of more sales, a marketing strategy and boosting of the economy. Achieving and maintaining product quality involves keeping a clean environment in terms of clean water, clean surroundings and general hygiene during processing, packaging, transportation and storage of products. There should also be staff training on the importance of product quality and hygiene.



The importance of
product quality.pdf

In conclusion, the Lead Consultant stated that there are a lot of benefits in using standard weights and measures in that it reduces bargain, too much talking and reduces loss on the side of the buyer, the seller and also the producer.

7.4. Demonstration on Standard Weights and measures

The lead consultant and the National program coordinator showed the participants weighing scales that were available for demonstration. The bags of rice were placed on the weighing scales to show how they can be used.

Also different types of weighing scales and bags of rice and garri with different measurements were exhibited in Ebonyi State. When these bags were weighed on the scale, it was discovered by participants that the bags of rice which were supposed to be 25kg as written on the bags weighed less than 25kg (19kg, 19.6kg, etc.). At the end of the exhibition, participants who were majorly traders and farmers saw the need for standard weights and measures. Some of the farmers' and traders' leaders

committed to buying scales and adopting the use of standard weights and measures so that nobody in the business triangle will be short-changed.

The bushel which is the normal measurement for a 25kg bag of rice in Anambra State was brought. Farmers were made to understand that in measuring the 25kg; the net measurement should be used, that is, weighing the empty bushel first before pouring rice in it. In the demonstration, it was found out that the bushel weighed 5.1kg which contributed to the total 25kg. In this case, the buyers were short-changed with about 5.1kg of rice, that is to say, the net content of the bag of rice is less than 25kg. The consumers are short-changed.

8.0. Testimonies, Observations, Comments and Concerns

- i. The eyes of the farmers and traders present at the workshop in the states were opened to see what they are losing from.
- ii. The participants in the workshops were enthusiastic on the adoption of the use of standard weights and measures that some of the farmer organizations indicated interest in buying scales for their business.
- iii. It was observed after weighing supposed 25kg bags of rice, none of the bags weighed up to 25kg. The same was also observed with the bags of garri provided for exhibition. The use of bushel to measure 25kg of rice which in actual sense is less than 25kg when the net content is taken into consideration.
- iv. The eyes of the farmers and traders present at the workshop in the states were opened to see what they are losing from.
- v. The participants in the workshops were enthusiastic on the adoption of the use of standard weights and measures that some of the farmer organizations indicated interest in buying scales for their business. For instance, Udoka Rice Association in Anambra State spoke out loudly in favour of weights and measures and committed to provide 30% counterpart funding in order to procure more electronic scales from the assistance of VCDP office.
- vi. A rice producer validated the use of weighing scales. He testified that at one point, he was to make sales for the rice he had produced and the bags were not measured with the right weights. On a second opinion, he therefore decided to measure them with scales, only to discover that each bag of rice was higher by 3kg. This would have incurred a loss of N270, 000 as he was to distribute about 900bags of rice.
- vii. Many farmers also endorsed the use of weighing scale and pledged to use same at their farms.
- viii. Many farmers/producers signified their intention and preparedness to collaboration with VCDP to sensitize other farmers on the issue of weights and measures.
- ix. Some stakeholders noted that advocacy should start with the farmers as the first point of production. Some concerns were however raised as to:
 - a. the issue of price setting/determination juxtaposed with the issue of standard weights and measures.
 - b. What happens when there is scarcity, for example in rice?
 - c. How would the advocacy spread across the entire country so that the standard weights and measures would be operational in a uniform way across the country.
- x. Some participants wanted to know what happens to the producer in the case of adjustment of the scale. In response, they were informed that it is a criminal offence to

set/adjust the scale to suit their own gauge and measurement as that is the sole responsibility of government Ministry in charge thereof – FMITI

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations and way forward

The Abakiliki Rice Farmers' Association leader made a commitment to the use of standard weights and measures in their business. Also the Cassava Association promised that if they can get the scale for measurements, they will be using it. In conclusion, the use of standard weights and measures can never be over-emphasized; therefore the farmers and traders in the workshop attested to this and promised that they will try as much as possible to adopt the use of standard weights and measures in their businesses. Some of the recommendations made at the end of the training included;

1. The advocacy should be extended to other states of the federation, and this could be worked out by the VCDP at the national level facilitating strong collaboration/joint efforts with the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI) and NANTS. Such commodity advocacy forum could be kick-started with a stakeholder's workshop in Abuja.
2. There should be a step down training by leaders of farmers' and traders' organizations to their members at the local levels. In addition, NGOs within the relevant states could be involved in the campaigns for the facilitate of adoption of weights and measures.
3. Rewards and sanctions could be considered as the major ways by which the issue of standard weights and measures can be adopted at the producers and traders.
4. Religious leaders should be integrated as part of the stakeholders in the advocacy for weights and measures.
5. VCDP should further provide a clear strategy for implementation of weights and measures and possibly draw up a proper coordination mechanism.
6. States may consider the extant laws guiding the implementation of weights and measures in Nigeria and seek ways of domesticating them for effective implementation in liaison with the FMITI.
7. FMITI and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development should work towards extending the subject of weights and measures beyond the traditional 6 VCDP States and the 2 value chains (cassava and rice).
8. Beyond the subject of weights and measures, value addition should be promoted among farmers so they are encouraged to package their goods, improve the quality thereof, so as to attract more sales and even get export attraction.