

ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION:

Union Dicon Plc and Delta State Partners on Cassava Cultivation

*** Company To Set Up Processing Plant***

As Delta state seeks to diversify its economy, Governor Ifeanyi Okowa has disclosed that the agricultural sector would engender growth, stimulate the economy and create employment for the people of the state.

Speaking when he received on a courtesy call, the management team of Union Dicon Salt Plc and GEA Group (www.gea.com), led by **Mr. Chuka Mordi**, MD of Union Dicon Salt Plc, and Dr. Anthony Osunde and **Alvaro Martinez** (Head of Europe, Middle East, & Africa) on Wednesday (31/8/16) in Asaba, Senator Okowa said the nation needed to diversify its economy from oil dependence so as to drive inclusive and sustainable economic growth, create jobs for the youths, and put an end to the current economic challenges faced by the nation.

"We are happy that you are investing in the state, this your 10,000 hectares of cassava production will generate jobs and economic activities in the communities. This is in line with our SMART agenda, as we believe that we should not just produce cash crops but also process it to get added value. This will stimulate growth, and the small scale farm holders in the areas will benefit from this your project", the Governor said.

"We are interested in growing the agriculture sector in terms of growing wealth for our people, our over dependence on oil has had its challenges, and we need to return to agriculture and agro-business to stimulate the economy and enable an inclusive and sustainable growth for our people", the governor added.

Governor Okowa reassured the investors of the provision of an enabling environment for their investments in the state and commended Union Dicon Plc, and its partners for their investment in the project

"I believe this Bio-Ethanol and industrial starch processing facility project will transform Delta State into an industrial hub for Africa and stimulate economic growth. We are happy to partner with you in this value added cassava production project"

The Managing Director of Union Dicon Salt Plc, Mr. Chuka Mordi said that they were in the state to inspect the take-off of their cassava farming, bio-ethanol and industrial starch processing project, adding that they have acquired over 10,000 hectares of land for the project.

He explained that the processing plant would produce 18,000 tonnes of industrial starch per annum, and 22,000 litres of bio-ethanol per day when fully operational.