

**SPECIAL ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY MOHAMMED
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JIGAWA STATE, NIGERIA, AT THE WORLD SESAME
CONVENTION, ISTANBUL, TURKEY.**

The organizers of this convention exhibitor, attendees, Ladies and Gentlemen...

Let me first thank the good people behind this event for giving me the opportunity to give a short talk on the role of my state in the sesame export trade from Nigeria and what we are doing to improve production and export.

Jigawa state produces about 75% of the sesame crop in Nigeria but this is a little known fact since most of it is sent to the largest grain market in West Africa, the Dawanau market situated in neighbouring Kano state from where exporters buy in bulk for export.

This situation which we are beginning to change gives us very little leverage over quality control and most of the quality issues experienced by buyers occur with middle men and aggregators outside the state and not in the field.

In the 4 years since I became Governor of the state we have taken steps to domesticate post-harvest handling and aggregation of

sesame so that we can ensure compliance with buyers' specifications and create a better and higher value product that meets expectations.

We have started by registering over 22,000 sesame farmers who are getting support in the form of extension services, better seeds and farm inputs to improve their yield and ensure consistency in quality and germ plasm.

Some of these farmers are increasingly being signed on by exporters as dedicated out-growers who are paid an agreed forward price for their sesame after deducting any advances given for input purchase.

One of these companies WACOT limited is presently working with over 6,000 farmers cultivating about 12,000 hectares on an outgrower basis, and they have set up a cleaning operation in a government owned prototype factory and warehouse complex from where they clean and export. This not only improve quality but increase both yield and productions.

This is an option that can be exploited by big time exporters like Olam, and my Government will provide all local support and facilitation to actualize this.

The state government has empowered a powerful consumer protection agency to ensure that quality is maintained from cultivation to harvest and packaging so we are sure of all sesame that leaves Jigawa but cannot speak to contamination and blending at the main aggregation market.

To further address this, the government has established an inland Agricultural export terminal within the state to enable exporters aggregate Jigawa sesame, clean to specification and load into containers for direct forwarding to the ports in Lagos.

In fact some Turkish exporters are specifying Turkish made cleaning equipment which have been set up within the terminal to clean to their precise specifications and export directly to Turkish ports.

This arrangement will surely serve to re-establish confidence in Nigerian sesame and improve the present levels of export as well as give local farmers a better value for their crop as wild seasonal price swings will stabilize as speculative buying is reduced.

It is also creating local jobs in post-harvest activity, cleaning and export logistics.

I hope to engage directly with sesame buyers before the convention is over so I can further explain the other incentives my

government is putting in place and the additional assurances of quality compliance to boost their confidence.

Of course I'm also here to listen to suggestions from buyers and end users on how we can further improve the situation, and I can assure you that having vast commodity trading experience myself we will be transmitting on the same frequency.

Thank you very much for your time and I wish everyone here a wonderful and productive convention.