

## Public Sector-Driven Cooperatives (PSDC)

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For rural cooperatives and producer organizations to thrive as sustainable business enterprises they need progressive political environment, private sector drive and ICT deployment.

### a) Enabling political environment

In northern Nigeria region over 50 million cooperative members are in existence comprising farmers (major), artisans and thrift primary cooperatives. They have excellent organizational structure from community wards (primary cooperative); cooperative union at local government and cooperative federation at the state levels respectively. It is the organized cooperative structures that excite politicians to hijack and manipulate cooperatives for political accomplishment. The approach to achieving this selfish agenda is always through ad hoc development programmes that proclaim targeting beneficiaries in cooperative grouping. Gradually the approach officially destabilizes ethical process of cooperative formation destroys group project initiatives and completely eroded transparency in financial management and control within the cooperative system. The overall impact on cooperative movement in the region is that the cooperatives became public sector driven with unsustainable public sector programmes that usually terminates after first disbursement of projected financial and material benefits.

One of the feasible options towards eliminating cooperative over dependence on public sector is regular organizational capacity building at community level for effective re-orientation, empowerment and attitudinal change to move with time. The ministry of commerce and cooperatives is the official institution vested with the responsibility of enhancing cooperative organizational efficiency through training.

### b) Private sector drive

The genesis of cooperative movement in northern Nigeria Kano state in particular stemmed from commercial production of groundnut for export to England organized, managed and controlled by government controlled groundnuts board. Several units of shelled groundnut pyramids were fantastic landmarks expressing appreciative cooperative labour of the past (1950-70) in Kano state.



*Famous groundnut pyramids of Kano – Nigeria in the 60s ready for export to England by sea. Each pyramid is 1000MT (10,000 bags).*

As groundnut export approached expiry period the cooperative movement fully supported by government and in collaboration with a UK based cooperative alliance established Kano Cooperative consumer shop very closed to the groundnut pyramid site. This is the epitome symbol of private sector power on local cooperative movement in Kano

state. However, with globalization and paradigm shift to new agriculture that today virtually aggravates food insecurity on the once food secure groundnut cooperatives, a new private sector based drive is imperative to revitalize the enterprising cooperatives. Along this thinking in Kano state we float Kano Agricultural Trade Centre (KATRACEN) Company Ltd with major shareholders comprising commodity associations, private agribusiness companies and individual entrepreneurs. KATRACEN basically provides services in the input output farmers' business arena that covers inputs distribution; commodity trading, organic agriculture development, processing, non-oil export and ICT deployment in agriculture. Kano Cooperative Federation (KCF) is a shareholder in the company and rents out office accommodation from the its building complex to KATRACEN.



*Kano Cooperative Shop – Nigeria  
Remnant of best cooperative days*

### **c) ICT deployment by farmers cooperatives**

ICT now becomes an indispensable way of life the world over. But it is very difficult to imagine that farmers' cooperatives in Kano state are yet to deploy mobile technology for efficient day to day management of their occupation. Computer literacy and application in agriculture is dismal among the cooperatives on the backdrop that over 30,000 groups exists each with a range of 20-150 membership roll. It is however a good market opportunity for the cooperatives only if they get organized to produce what market needs. This suggests that within globalization and new agriculture contexts trade promotion services are required to enhance these cooperatives agribusiness sustainability. Kano Cooperative Federation (KCF) must ensure to adequately relate with e-agriculture, m-agriculture, e-farming and many more upcoming tools specifically designed for improved cooperative farming system.

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