

ITF TO ESTABLISH AN ISTC IN GOMBE STATE

As part of efforts to open access for more Nigerians to acquire technical and vocational skills for employability and entrepreneurship, the industrial Training Fund (ITF) is set to establish an Industrial Skills Training Center (ISTC) in Gombe State.

When established, the centre will bring the total of the Fund's ISTCs nationwide to six.

The Director-General / CE of the ITF, Sir Joseph N. Ari, who gave this indication during the flag off of the National Industrial Skills Development Programme (NISDP) in Gombe State appealed to the State Government to build the structures for the ISTC on the land owned by the Fund in Gombe while the ITF will furnish and equip the proposed Centre with the enabling tools and hardware for vocational skills training.

Ari explained that the NISDP was conceived to instill in the youth, which he said constitutes over 60 percent of the nation's population, requisite technical skills so as to escalate economic recovery and growth.

He said that since inception, the NISDP has trained and equipped over 100,000 Nigerians in over 30 trades and crafts noting that up to 90 percent of the beneficiaries have sustainable livelihoods either as paid workers, or as entrepreneurs.

The DG said that under this phase, the Programme will equip 300 youth aged between 18-35 years in each state of the Federation including the FCT, with skills in welding and fabrication, tailoring and fashion design, and plumbing and pipe fitting, adding that at the end of the 3-month period, the beneficiaries will be empowered with start-up packs to start their businesses.

The three trade areas, he said, were selected based on their projected value addition on the beneficiaries and the potentialities to provide the trainees with sustainable livelihood upon graduation.

Also speaking, the Governor of Gombe State, Alhaji Ibrahim Dankwambo thanked the ITF DG for partnering with the state government to empower the youths in

the state with skills and starter packs to start up their own business. The Governor, who was represented by his Deputy, Hon. Charles Illiya, enjoined the trainees to put in their best as they were privileged to have been selected and warned them not to conceive the idea of selling their starter packs.

He noted that Nigeria was facing a serious case of unemployment because most graduates today were seeking white collar jobs and it was in recognition of this fact that the Gombe State Government was concentrating on youth empowerment, adding that "the richest man in Nigeria and Africa as a whole, was not a civil servant, but rather a businessman and entrepreneur" he said.

He therefore urged the participants to get the best out of the NISDP training in order for them to start up their own businesses and grow the Nigerian economy.

The Honorable Commissioner of the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Gombe State, Mal. Farouk Yarma, also thanked the ITF for the partnership.

He disclosed that the State Government was sponsoring an additional 200 youth for the Programme and paying each of trainees an additional N5,000 monthly stipends.

Also present at the official flag off of the 2017 NISDP in Gombe were Mal. Aminu Mohammed, a retired Director of the Fund, representatives of the Bank of Industry (BoI), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN) and members of the Organized Private Sector (OPS).