

ITF Collaborates Rivers State For Youth Empowerment, Lauds Eze Otuwarikpo

The Industrial Training Fund, (ITF) has stated that it was going to partner the Ekpeye traditional institution in Rivers State to train and empower youths in the state with skills for employability and entrepreneurship under the National Industrial Skills Development Programme (NISDP).

The Director General/Chief Executive of the Fund, Sir Joseph Ari made this known during a courtesy visit to the Ihuaba palace of the Regent, Eze Ekpeye Logbo In-Council, HRM Eze Felix Enene Otuwarikpo, the Eze Igbu Upata III of Upata Kingdom in Ahoada.

Ari who is in Rivers State on a familiarization tour of the ITF facilities and operations within the South-South Region, said the Fund has embarked on aggressive empowerment of youths nationwide with skills in various trade areas in line with its mandate and along the policy goals of the Federal Government on job and wealth creation.

"The ITF was established to promote and encourage the acquisition of skills in industry and commerce in Nigeria with a view to generating a pool of indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of the nation's economy," he explained.

Sir Ari who was inducted into the Upata Traditional Council and coronated as the Owuze Upata 1 (the benefactor of the Upata people), expressed delight and promised that the Fund will assist to equip the Ahoada Industrial Training Centre with modern technical equipment. He also disclosed that the Fund will make available one of its mobile training vans for use at Edeoha Town in order to effectively tackle the challenges of unemployment.

He described Eze Otuwarikpo, who was a former staff of the Fund as a personality with great pedigree and urged the people to always support the

Regent to move Ekpeye forward. He noted that the monarch served the ITF meritoriously.

"He is a rare gift to us and is a personality with great pedigree. He is visionary, steadfast and a progressive minded person with uncommon passion for service. Our love for him has brought us here and our decision is to collaborate with the people of Upata Kingdom and Ekpeye in general. We plan to assist the course of transformation that is going on in the land."

On his part, the Executive Chairman of Ahoada East Council, Barr. Benjamin Eke thanked the Director-General of ITF for the visit and appealed that the ITF should extend their empowerment initiatives to the Area Council.

Eke said the resolve of his administration was to build new structures and expand the Ahoada Industrial Training Centre to cater for those who renounced cultism and others who may want to go into vocational training.

In appreciation, the Eze Igbu Upata III, HRH, Dr. Felix Otuwarikpo disclosed that Ekpeye was peaceful and ready for investment, stating that since he ascended the throne, his focus had been on human capital development and the "intention is to aggressively improve the human capital index of my people."

The Eze who also is the Chairman of Ahoada East Council of Traditional Rulers and Chiefs, pointed out that the impact of the efforts of the ITF to train the youths was already being felt and added that the Ekpeye people would partner the ITF and other development partners to give Ekpeye people the desired future.

While soliciting for more support from the ITF, Eze Otuwarikpo expressed happiness and described the visit as a reunion of family members. "The ITF is my family, the organisation prepared me well, and I will always be indebted to this special family. My intention is to have a good harvest of our cordial relationship for the general good." He said.