

ITF unveils 2nd phase of reviewed vision

The Industrial Training Fund (ITF) has concluded arrangements to commence the implementation of the second phase of its plan, which is christened: ITF Reviewed Vision: Strategies for Mandate Actualization.

ITF's Head of Public Affairs, Mrs. Suleiyol Fred Chagu, who made this known in a statement on Tuesday, explained that 2nd phase of the plan was part of continued efforts to improve its service delivery and facilitate the actualization of its mandate.

The first phase of the plan, which was implemented between 2016 and early 2020 among others equipped over 500,000 Nigerians with skills, over 70 percent of which are gainfully employed or successful entrepreneurs, she said.

Director-General of the Fund, Sir Joseph Ari, while unveiling the Plan during an engagement with top Management of the Fund on Monday, said the plan that was "100% homegrown," was targeted at rectifying the pitfalls that were observed in the implementation of the first phase, while also seeking to build on the achievements of the first phase and support the initiatives of the Federal Government especially in the Agricultural sector.

Ari disclosed that the plan, which implementation will commence immediately and terminate in 2024, will focus on nine key areas of the Fund's activities namely: Direct Training Services, Revenue Generation and Sustainable Funding, Resource Utilization, Special Intervention Programmes, Human Capital Development, Students' Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), Research and Development, Automation of Business Processes and other Programmes/Services.

Under the Direct Training Services, which is the core mandate of the Fund, the DG said the ITF would focus on Curriculum Development, E-Learning, Consultancy Services, Standardization and Certification, Re-engineering Business Development Support (BDS) Services for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Technical and Vocational Skills Programmes, Certification of Apprentices, Technicians and Craftsmen as well as Performance and Productivity Improvement Training, while training programmes will be developed for the Maritime and Oil and Gas sectors that were hitherto not given priority attention by the Fund.

In response to the COVID-19, Ari said that the Fund will develop and implement selected training programmes at no cost to the organisations just as all ITF facilities across the country will be fumigated while face masks and hand sanitizers will be procured for all staff among other COVID-19 interventions.

To ensure that requisite infrastructure is in place for the expected rise in activities, the DG said “the ITF has concluded arrangements for the procurement of three additional mobile training units and will establish vocational wings in our Area Offices in Awka, Maiduguri, Port Harcourt, Akure, Gusau and Minna, which will train Nigerians in needed trades in their locale”, adding that “efforts will also be stepped up towards repositioning the Centre for Excellence in Jos for effective service delivery. In this regard, we will accelerate processes to acquire the Jossy Royal Hotel, which acquisition has already been approved by the Federal Executive Council.”

In order to drive the Federal Government’s efforts to develop the agricultural value chain for job and wealth creation and ensure food security, the DG said the ITF will identify arable lands owned by the ITF to establish demonstration farms, which will be used for the training of extension workers and youths nationwide.

He said in view of the funding challenges that have emerged as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fund will explore creative and sustainable funding options including approaching multilateral Agencies like the International Labour Organisation (ILO), World Bank, African Development Bank as well as other donor organizations that support some of the activities conducted by our organization.

Other aspects of the plan, he said, included the realignment of SIWES objectives to prepare students for the world of work, a review of the ITF corporate image and its re-branding, as well as the completion of capital projects across the federation amongst others.

He urged the staff to embrace the plan and work assiduously towards its actualization. “We have talked enough, now is the time for action especially in view of the challenges that Nigeria, like the rest of the world is facing right now. I, therefore, call on all staff to put all hands-on deck towards the actualization of the plan”, he said.

It would be recalled that upon assumption to office, management of the ITF in September 2016, implemented the first phase of its Reviewed Vision: Strategies for Mandate Actualisation, a plan, which yielded tremendous success in the capacity development of Nigerians as well as the commissioning of several projects across the Federation amongst others.