CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA TAKES CAMPAIGN ON ITS DEVELOPMENT FINANCE ACTIVITIES TO STATE GOVERNMENTS.

In an on-going programme to sensitize State Governments on the development finance initiatives of the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Development Finance Department undertook visits to Lagos and Ondo States in the week of 23rd to 27th June, 2008. During the visits, the Department made presentations to the State Governors and the Executive Councils of the states on the Agricultural Credit Guarantee Scheme and its products, Agricultural Credit Support Scheme, Micro Credit Fund, Microfinance Policy, Entrepreneurship Development Centres, NYSC Venture Prize Competition, and the need for the setting aside of 1% of the budgets of the states for microfinance development.

The visits to Lagos state took place on Monday, 23rd June, 2008 (with the 42-member State Executive Council, including the Governor, Mr. Babatunde R. Fashola) and Friday, 27th, June 2008 (with members of the State Assembly). The state government which expressed the desire to support its indigenes to move above the poverty line following the presentation, disclosed that it had put in place, an enabling Micro Credit Act to achieve the objective. A total of ^1.3 billion was being committed to the micro credit programme of the government in the year 2008. Also, a 5-member Action Committee headed by the Deputy Governor was constituted during the visit to the Executive Council to work with the CBN officials to ensure the efficient implementation of micro credit programmes in the state.

The Ondo state visit took place on Wednesday, 25th June, 2008. The Executive Governor of the State, Chief Olusegun Agagu and all members of the state’s Executive Council were in attendance. The State Government disclosed that it had a micro credit agency that could support the implementation of the Bank’s programmes. The major components of the agency were the agricultural development trust fund, entrepreneurship development training programme, as well as resettlement, palliative and public officers loan schemes. The Government promised to access the Micro Credit Fund in favor of its indigenes.

Also, in earlier visits to Ebonyi and Enugu States, the Governors had set up state-based arrangements/committees to work out the modalities for the participation of the states in microfinance programmes, as a follow up to the presentations made to their Executive Councils.