

## **Decentralise Ecological Problems Control, Mimiko Tells FG**

The Ondo State Governor, Dr Olusegun Mimiko on Tuesday attributed lack of funds at the States level and the over-centralisation of such at the federal level as part of the factors hampering ecological problems, prevention and control in Nigeria. He promptly called on the Federal Government to immediately evolve urgent proactive intervention measures that would address the lopsided situation forthwith.

Mimiko, who was a former Minister of Housing and Urban Development who made this observation in Akure while delivering his goodwill message to the National Committee on Ecological Problems Stakeholders Forum in the South West Zone which held in Ondo State while lamenting that the meagre resources at the disposal of States cannot cope with the gamut of ecological problems harped on the need to develop clear and objective eligibility criteria for accessing ecological fund to monitor compliance.

In the alternative, Mimiko canvassed the sharing of the ecological fund while leaving some for direct intervention in cases of ecological emergencies.

The Governor equally disclosed to the gathering which included the Minister of Environment and Chairman, National Committee on Ecological Problems (NCEP) Mr John Odey of the critical ecological problems in the State which he noted required the urgent attention of the Federal Government and asked for help “to assist in pushing our case to the concerned Federal Agencies”.

“In view of the global climatic change, the littoral nature as well as other geographical characteristics of Ondo State, ecological problems mount on daily basis. But within the limit of our resource, we have done aggressive tree planting of 540,000 in 2010 and one million would be planted in 2011, re-afforestation of forest reserves, all-year round channelization of river courses as well as coastal embarkment in the riverine areas.

“We also have a responsive Emergency Management Agency that releases needed relief materials to victims of ecological disaster. We are also training our young graduates in renewable energy called Tech Alive programme and they have built perhaps what we can call the biggest solar inverter built locally in Nigeria at the new Neighbourhood Market at Isinkan in the State capital” Mimiko asserted.

To the Governor, the dwindling financial resources at the disposal of his State in the face of mounting ecological problems had made it imperative for a proactive intervention of the Federal Ministry of Environment through the Ecological Fund Office. Saying it would be sad to wait for a major disaster to occur before this was done.

Also speaking at the event, Odey assured that “efforts are on-going to arrive at suitable ratio for Federal- State joint funding of ecological projects which require immediate attention, but are too capital intensive for one tier of government to handle”

He charged the local, States and federal governments to strive to genuinely work towards saving our environment and making it conducive for economic activities of our people, majority of who live in the rural areas where they produce the bulk of arable crops which we all consume.

The Minister however, assured that the federal government would not be limited to direct grants to State as witnessed recently saying: “efforts are on-going to arrive at suitable ration for Federal-State joint funding of ecological projects which require immediate attention but are too capital intensive for one-tier of government to handle.”

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