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Nigeria launches $500 million agribusiness investment fund to transform Niger Delta into agricultural growth hub

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New commercially managed fund aims to accelerate private investment, strengthen agricultural value chains and drive economic diversification beyond oil

In a strategic move to diversify Africa's largest economy beyond hydrocarbons, the Nigerian government and the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) have unveiled a $500 million Niger Delta Agricultural Development Investment Fund, a financing platform designed to catalyse private-sector investment across the region's agricultural value chain.

The announcement, made during the Niger Delta Agricultural Development and Investment Summit in Abuja, signals a significant policy shift toward leveraging agriculture as a long-term engine of economic growth, employment generation and regional development. The initiative is expected to mobilise both domestic and international capital into high-potential sectors including aquaculture, palm oil, cassava, cocoa, rice, horticulture, livestock and marine resources.

Positioned as a commercially managed investment vehicle rather than a conventional public funding programme, the fund seeks to bridge financing gaps across the agricultural ecosystem while creating scalable agribusiness opportunities throughout Nigeria's nine Niger Delta states.

According to NDDC Managing Director Samuel Ogbuku, the initiative marks a pivotal step in repositioning the resource-rich Niger Delta from an economy historically dependent on crude oil revenues to one driven by sustainable agricultural investments. He noted that professional fund management and private-sector participation will be central to ensuring long-term commercial viability and measurable development outcomes.

The commission expects the fund to stimulate investments across farming, processing, storage, logistics and value addition, while creating employment opportunities and enhancing rural incomes. Ogbuku also emphasised that hosting the investment summit in Abuja was intended to facilitate engagement with institutional investors, financial institutions and international development partners.

Nigeria's Vice President Kashim Shettima, who chaired the summit, described agriculture as a cornerstone of the country's economic transformation agenda, stressing that food security remains inseparable from national security and sustainable development.

He said the newly launched investment platform is structured to generate commercial returns while supporting strategic investments across multiple agricultural value chains. The fund is also expected to attract participation from multilateral development institutions including the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and private investment groups.

The initiative builds upon the Federal Government's broader agricultural reforms following the declaration of a national emergency on food security in 2023. Since then, Nigeria has expanded mechanisation programmes, strengthened farmer support schemes and increased access to agricultural finance as part of efforts to improve domestic food production and reduce inflationary pressures on essential commodities.

Beyond financing agriculture, the NDDC highlighted ongoing investments in regional infrastructure designed to improve market connectivity and facilitate agribusiness expansion. Among the flagship projects nearing completion is a 1.2-kilometre bridge expected to enhance transportation and logistics within the Niger Delta.

The launch of the investment fund reflects growing recognition across Africa that sustainable agriculture can serve as a catalyst for economic diversification, particularly in resource-dependent economies facing increasing pressure to reduce reliance on fossil fuels. By combining public policy support with commercially driven capital, Nigeria aims to position the Niger Delta as a competitive destination for agribusiness investment while strengthening food security and promoting inclusive economic growth.