

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE NATIONAL SEMINAR ON
VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK:
A TOOL FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING REFORM
HELD on 1st – 2nd November, 2004 at NBTE Secretariat, Kaduna**

The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), the regulator body responsible for implementing policies and monitoring effectiveness of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria, organised a two-day seminar in collaboration with the British Council to explore the possibility of introducing a National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF) in Nigeria. The seminar took place at the NBTE Secretariat in Kaduna, Nigeria on the 1st and 2nd November, 2004.

The major aim of the seminar was to provide a forum for stakeholders in the TVET sector to contribute in developing appropriate methodologies for assessing, monitoring and evaluating skills in technical and vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and qualifications for work and proof of a person's ability to do specific jobs. NVQs can be gained by people doing normal work and provide recognition for the skills and experience they have gained, thereby allowing people to acquire new knowledge and skills throughout their working lives.

This seminar was organised in recognition of the fact that a workable, nationally-accepted and appropriate NVQF can only be developed through wide consideration with relevant stakeholders in Nigeria in order to chart a road map to implementation.

The objectives of the seminar include:-

- i. evaluating workplace training and assessment as operated in other countries such as UK, New Zealand, Malaysia, and so on, and its relevance to Nigeria.
- ii. providing a forum for stakeholders in TVET to dialogue on the need for the introduction of workplace assessment and training in Nigeria.
- iii. analysing challenges likely to be encountered and the strategies necessary for implementing the system
- iv. identifying the roles to be played by various governmental and non-governmental organisations especially industries, in the operations of the system.
- v. facilitating mutual learning between Nigeria and the UK, and exploring opportunities and prospects for adopting an NVQF for Nigeria.

Participants were drawn from the public and private sectors including, British Council, NVQ consultants from UK, Federal Ministries especially Education, Science and Technology, Labour and Productivity, as well as parastatals such as ITF, NBTE, PTDF, NMB, NNPC, ETF, PTI, NATE, NAPTECON, GTC and Colleges of Technology, professional/regulatory bodies, polytechnics, industries and so on.

The forum provided participants with the opportunity to share experiences and exchange ideas as part of the learning process and reviewed experiences on the methodology of introducing an appropriate and workable framework for Nigeria.

Participants noted the huge and unregulated informal TVET sector that requires regulation, assessment and certification.

Participants noted the dearth of skilled manpower in the nation's workforce.

On the NVQF, participants recognised the imperatives to develop a framework for NVQs that will:-

- i. provide coherent structure for vocational qualifications based on employment-led standards of competence
- ii. increase industry ownership of the traineeship with enhanced stakeholders input to major decisions
- iii. provide a national framework within which the training system operate
- iv. provide a policy framework for flexible curricula based on National Occupation Standards (NOS) dictated by industry.
- v. Determine the levels of award.

Participants recognised the following advantages of the development of NVQs:-

- i. provision of evidence that the trainee can do the job
- ii. increased productivity and reduced accidents at the workplace
- iii. trainees do not have to go to formal school
- iv. trainee completes the training at a pace that suits each individual
- v. highly flexible, one can choose to do a full NVQ or take desired units
- vi. reduced rate of staff turnover.

Participants appreciated that the development of workable and appropriate NQF will serve as a vehicle for attracting foreign investment. Foreign multinational corporations readily invest in countries where trained and competent manpower for their industrial needs exist.

On skilled manpower development, participants unanimously agreed that the introduction of NVQF in Nigeria is long overdue.

After due consideration on the issues listed above, the following resolution were reached:-

RESOLUTIONS

1. There must be strong political will for the NVQF to succeed and government must develop the necessary legislative instruments to protect the project. Such legislation must address the low societal esteem accorded craftsmen, technicians and technologists.
2. Globalisation demands high level competencies necessitating the NVQs be developed to address national inadequacies and produce a workforce that is internationally acceptable. Here is, therefore, the need to benchmark with similar systems in other countries where it is working.
3. The dynamic nature of the labour market dictates that any NVQF for Nigeria must be designed with appropriate interview mechanisms.
4. Adequate Success Factor indicators must be put in place to ensure the viability of the framework.
5. Industries and organisations which have already implemented some aspects of NVQF in their systems in the country should be encouraged to assist by sharing of ideas and information to reduce pitfalls in the introduction of the new framework.

6. The federal government should set up a regulatory body (e.g. National Vocational Training Council – NVTC) comprising representatives of industries, government agencies, ministries, professional and regulatory bodies.

The function of the proposed NVTC should include:-

- i. Establishing National Occupational Standards, (NOSS),
 - ii. Supervising the establishment and function of all public and private training institutions.
 - iii. Evaluating existing and future skills and identifying vocational and industrial training needs;
 - iv. Establishing appropriate quality assurance system (for internal and external verifiers);
 - v. Setting conditions for accreditation of assessment/training centres; and
 - vi. Establishing competency levels for the NVQ system in the country which will be comparable to similar standards internally.
1. Participants agreed that the forum was not representative enough to come out with generally accepted guidelines for the development and introduction of NVQF in Nigeria. It was agreed that a workshop with more stakeholders be organised with emphasis on achieving a workable action plan for the development of NVQs for Nigeria.
 2. Laws establishing the proposed NVTC should adequately address other existing conflicting laws that may be contained in the acts of other government agencies with related mandate.
 3. The energy sector must be revamped for higher output and efficiency. The inadequacy of electricity supply is an impediment to the growth of the informal and industrial sectors where majority of the target groups for NVQF exist.
 4. Participants agreed on the need for skills audit of the nation's workforce. This will determine the present and the future skill needs of the nation.
 5. There is need for cooperative funding of NVQ by the stakeholders that is, government and the industries. Individual beneficiaries are also to contribute towards their training, supervision, assessment and certification.
 6. The informal sector, which is the major target, should be enlightened on the benefits of NVQF. The enlightenment should involve non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in addition to government agencies. The informal sectors should be organised into groups through their trade associations for effective mobilisation and enlightenment.
 7. As a first step, due recognition must be given to artisans and craftsmen to encourage them to participate and get involved in the NVQF. There should be continuous capacity building through retraining for trainers as well as assessors.
 8. It was agreed that proper professional recognition be accorded NVQ trainees and beneficiaries. There should be no barrier to professional or career advancement and it must be ensured that employees have skills to deal with new technologies and work practices.

9. The organised private sector (OPS) should be involved in all stages of NVQF development. The government should be ready to motivate and encourage the sector. It will be necessary to organise joint study tours involving the private sector, relevant working committees of the legislature and relevant government agencies. The PTDF, ETF should be called upon to assist in the sponsorship of such trips.
10. There is need for patience and planning for the NVQF to succeed. No quick fixes should be expected. The NVQF should be designed to stand the test of time.

This communiqué was presented and adopted by participants of the seminar on the 2nd of November, 2004.

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Chairman

DR S N MUMAH
Rapporteur General