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**Website**: https://info@ajol.org,
**Email**: agricultural.extension.nigeria@gmail.com; editorinchief@aesonnigeria.org

# Communiqué of the Thirty-First Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria (AESON)

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## Preamble

The Thirty-First Annual Conference of the Agricultural Extension Society of Nigeria(AESON), tagged **"AESON–UMUDIKE 2026"**, was held from the 12th to the 15th April 2026 at the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture. The conference brought together over 320 participants, including academics, scientists, policymakers, extension professionals, farmers, development partners, NGOs, entrepreneurs, students, and private-sector stakeholders, who participated both in person and virtually.

Among the dignitaries and institutions represented were the Federal Department of Agricultural Extension (FDAE), research institutes, universities, development agencies, and farmer organisations.

The conference theme, **"Strengthening the Agricultural Extension Innovation Systems for Greater Development Impacts,"** provided an opportunity for stakeholders to critically examine the current state of agricultural extension systems in Nigeria, identify emerging challenges, and propose practical strategies for enhancing agricultural productivity, sustainability, food security, and rural development.

Following extensive deliberations, paper presentations, panel discussions, and technical sessions, the conference noted as follows:

1. The relevance of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and SDG 13 (Climate Action), in promoting resilient food systems, energy access, climate adaptation, and agricultural innovation;
2. Nigeria's commitment under the African Union's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and the National Agricultural Technology and Innovation Policy (NATIP), aimed at increasing agricultural productivity and reducing post-harvest losses; and
3. The critical role of the Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) in reaching millions of farmers annually despite challenges posed by inadequate funding and poor rural infrastructure.

The Conference appealed to:

1. The Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and State Ministries of Agriculture to increase funding for agricultural extension services, digital extension tools, and capacity building programmes;
2. Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs), research institutes, and extension agencies to intensify the dissemination of improved and climate-resilient technologies while strengthening farmer-extension agent ratios;
3. Universities, research institutions, and extension agencies to collaborate in developing affordable precision agriculture technologies such as drones, soil sensors, and mobile-based advisory systems suited to Nigeria's diverse agro-ecological zones;
4. Private sector organisations and agri-tech firms to invest in extension-linked agricultural value chains through public-private partnerships involving cold storage systems, irrigation facilities, renewable energy technologies, and processing infrastructure;
5. National and State planning bodies to mainstream agricultural extension innovation systems into development planning and budgeting frameworks; and
6. AESON and allied professional bodies to establish mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and reporting on the implementation of conference resolutions and SDG-aligned extension initiatives.

The conference resolved to:

1. Reinforce Agricultural Development Programmes (ADPs) as major institutional channels for disseminating agricultural innovations and extension services to farmers across Nigeria;
2. Promote climate-smart agricultural practices and the adoption of resilient crop varieties to mitigate the effects of climate change;
3. Encourage the deployment and adoption of precision agriculture technologies for efficient resource utilisation, increased productivity, and sustainable agricultural development, especially in drought-prone and water-scarce areas; and
4. Strengthen collaboration among universities, research institutes, extension agencies, development partners, and the private sector in advancing extension innovation systems.

**Signed**

**Prof. Meludu, Nkiru T.**
AESON President