



## Gov't buys D300M worth groundnuts in 2 months

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Yahya Nyangado, the monitoring officer of the National Food Security, Processing and Marketing Corporation (NFSPMC), formerly Gambia Groundnut Corporation (GGC), has reaffirmed the commitment of government and the corporation to ensuring this year's trade season is a success.

He claimed that within two months of the ongoing trade season, the GGC has spent over D300 million in buying groundnuts.

Nyangado, who was speaking to The Point in an interview after he and other officials of GGC returned from a countrywide tour of assessing the ongoing trade season, said: "The welfare of farmers remains a priority for the corporation and the government. This is clearly demonstrated in the good prices of tonnes of groundnuts that the government continues to offer to farmers.

"As of now, the trade season is not going on as expected like last year. Last year we had enough groundnuts. However, this year's production of groundnuts will not be like the previous year. This could be attributed to farmers not having enough fertilizers. The fertilizers last year were very expensive. In fact, the government has to spend a lot of money in order to subsidise the prices.

"When the current administration came, they bought about seven tonnes of groundnuts. Last year alone, they had over 40,000 tonnes. The intention of the current administration was to have over 40,000 tonnes of groundnuts. However, it would be difficult to have that. We might have over 10 tonnes of groundnuts."

The current administration, he said further, has over the years increased the prices of groundnuts with the objectives of ensuring that farmers have good prices. "I have been in the system over the years. The previous administration would always increase two to three dalasis. However, the current administration increased the price from 23 dalasis to 28 dalasis. This year also, they increased the price from 28 dalasis to 38 dalasis. This is indeed a good price taking into account the economic challenges confronting the world. At the moment, the government is buying a tonne of groundnuts at D35,000," he posited.

"We are into the second month of the 2022/2023 trade season and the government spends over 300 million dalasis. In fact, last week alone, the corporation gave 'seccos' about 150 million dalasis. Again, still now there are seccos that are requesting to have money because their cash is finished."

Nyangado acknowledged that there was credit buying in some seccos across the country. However, he was quick to add that all those seccos have now been given money. "An amount of 1.5 million dalasis has been taken to Kundam in the Tumana District of URR and 2 million dalasis has been taken to Dingeri. There was also credit buying at the Kulari secco, but the corporation has also taken a huge amount of money in that secco," he said.

The GGC Monitoring and Evaluation Officer urged Gambian farmers to be selling their groundnuts to GGC. "In fact, during our recent tour, we have interacted with some middle men that are involved in groundnut buying. They confirmed to us that they are not even taking groundnuts they buy to Senegal, but instead they are selling it to GGC. We encourage that and we are urging others to also sell their groundnuts to the government."

Selling the groundnuts to Senegal or middle men, he said, will have a negative impact in the country. "If they sell the groundnuts to GGC, the proceeds that the corporation have will in turn return to them in the form of buying fertilizers for them among other commodities," he said.

The price of a gallon of oil, he added, went up to about D2400. "However, because GGC had enough groundnuts last year and they had enough dollars, they decided to import the oil and sell it at D1,600," he stated. "I can tell you that GGC is trying to bring in the country other commodities like rice and sugar. These are all geared towards ensuring that the challenges that Gambians are encountering become things of the past. Therefore, it is better to sell their groundnuts to GGC so that they can in turn benefit from it."

He emphasised: "If you buy rice in The Gambia and you want to import it to Senegal, the Senegalese normally confiscate it. But if you see they are allowing groundnuts to enter through their border, it is because they know it's in their own interest. Therefore, it should be our responsibility to also exercise the same patriotism and sell our groundnuts to GGC."