

PIND, Serendib, collaborates with Delta State on the Mangrove restoration project.

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Tunji Idowu, the Executive Director of the Foundation for Partnership Initiatives in the Niger Delta (PIND), has congratulated the Delta state government for taking the lead in the restoration of mangrove forest, seagrass protection, and preservation of the ecosystem for conservation and environmental sustainability in the Niger Delta region. He stated that the project aligns with PIND's goal of improving the lives and livelihoods of Niger Deltans and further strengthens the existing collaboration PIND has with the Delta State government on the one hand and newly established with Serendib Capital on the other.

Speaking at the partnership MoU signing meeting between the Delta state government and Serendib Capital at the Government House, Asaba, on Wednesday, February 28, 2024, Idowu, who was represented by Effiong Essien, PIND's Programs Director, pointed out that PIND agreed to support Serendib and the Delta State Government because of its track record in improving lives and livelihoods. It can leverage that experience to help enhance Serendib's engagement with local communities, farmers, businesses, and other market actors.

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According to him, in over a decade, PIND's programs and activities have led to peace and poverty reduction, with *"over one million farmers and businesses having benefited, leading to increased incomes and productivity of \$176m; facilitation of 77,000 new jobs being created across various sectors; providing access to clean energy (electricity) to 40 communities and 3,500 businesses and households; training over 11,000 peace actors and having tackled over 1000 conflicts. All of these have been made possible by investing over \$110M of its funds while leveraging over \$150m additional investments by other partners."*

In his address at the event, the Delta State Governor, Rt. Hon. Sheriff Oborevwori commended all stakeholders for their commitment to ensuring and shaping a more sustainable environment for the present and future generations of the state, adding that, with the Memorandum of Understanding, *"... we are committed to building a much more beneficial partnership that will boost economic growth and enhance the potential of our people."*

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The Managing Director of Serendib Capital Limited, Mr. Rafat Rizvi, thanked the Delta State Government, stating that the project would restore the ecosystem from the damage it has experienced and, over a long-term partnership, boost economic activities through *"education, jobs, and prosperity for the longer term, particularly for the younger people."*

On this initiative, among many activities, PIND will be facilitating the establishment of community-based resource management committees to monitor and protect mangrove areas in the Niger Delta states, raise awareness and undertake advocacy about the importance of mangrove ecosystems and their benefits to local livelihoods and the environment, and facilitate the mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), especially for youths, women, and people living with disabilities (PWD).

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