

**CITATION ON DR. MOHAMMED LAWAN FOR THE NIGERIAN
NATIONAL MERIT AWARD 1ST OCTOBER, 1983**

DR. MOHAMMED LAWAN, C.O.N., M.B.E, LL.D (ABU) was born in Gongolong, near Maiduguri. He was educated in Borno Provincial and Middle Schools and in Katsina Higher College and became one of the first graduates of the School of Agriculture, Samaru, Zaria in 1939.

2. As an Agricultural Technical Assistant and later Assistant Agricultural Officer, the highest post attainable by an African at that time, he organized the cultivation and supply of fresh vegetables in Borno for the British and American air forces enroute to the Middle East. Towards the end of the war, he was producing 30 tons of lettuce, cabbages, carrots etc. a week for the airmen.
3. Experience gained from study tours to Sudan, Egypt, Iraq and Palestine enabled him to develop the cultivation of irrigated crops and fruit trees in Borno Province. His schemes were reproduced in other provinces of the former Northern Region with similar climatic conditions. This is a note-worthy contribution with great innovative and practical impact.
4. As Provincial Agricultural Officer for Borno in the 1950s he initiated three major agricultural projects that were the precursors of the River Basin Authorities. First, was the development of fruit and vegetable crops in Borno. A nutritional expert had in 1952 discovered that the diet of the people in Borno lacked certain essential vitamins.

As a consequence and to remedy the deficiency, Dr. Mohammed Lawan organized the cultivation of mango, guava, lime and other citrus fruits which improved the health condition of the population. He set up nurseries for fruit trees and perfected the technique of vegetative production of high quality varieties by budding and grafting. Cuttings of superior varieties of mango and citrus were imported from India and Middle East and foundation stock established for further multiplication throughout the country. He also organized the training of young farmers who practiced the new method of farming. Three nurserymen from each province were trained and sent back home to carry on the good work.

5. Dr. Mohammed Lawan also introduced mixed farming in Borno province and his first convert was the late Emir of Fika, Alhaji Mohammed Ibn Idris. Not only did the farmers increase the acreage under cultivation by the use of bullocks, they also used the farm-yard manure to fertilize and improve the soil.
6. His third major achievement was the introduction of irrigation schemes in Borno. Having toured the Sahel areas of Borno on horse-back, he was appalled by the plight of farmers. On his recommendation, pumps were introduced to irrigate the fertile

plains of the river Yobe and Lake Chad thereby increasing cultivation many-fold. In 1954 and 1962 major irrigation projects covering thousands of acres were commenced in these basins.

7. Dr. Mohammed Lawan rose to the post of permanent Secretary for the ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the first African to do so. He influenced the decision to conduct feasibility studies under the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAOS) and United States Aid for International Development (USAID) for irrigation into the Sokoto-Rima, Kano-Hadeja and Lake Chad Basins for the cultivation of wheat, rice, maize cotton etc. in furtherance of his earlier experiments. River Basin Development Authorities have since been set up in various parts of the country to implement these objectives.
8. In 1971, the Chad Basin Development Authority was set up with Dr. Mohammed Lawan as Chairman, a most appropriate choice. Dr. Mohammed Lawan has remained a practicing and innovative farmer since his retirement in 1968.
9. It is in recognition of his outstanding, creative and innovative contributions in the field of Agriculture that the Board of Trustees of the Nigerian National Merits Award is proud to select Dr. Mohammed Lawan as one of the recipients for the award in 1983.

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NIGERIAN NATIONAL MERIT AWARD

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