



Legislative Digest

A PUBLICATION OF CISLAC



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VOL. 11 No. 5, JUNE 2017



Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), Executive Director of CISLAC (middle) flanked to his left by Salaudeen Hashim, Program Officer (Human Rights & Security) and Kolawole Banwo, Snr. Program Officer (Extractive and Environment), CISLAC; and to his right by Jaye Gaskia, National Coordinator, Protest To Power Movement, and Okeke Anya, Snr. Program Officer (ECOWAS & AU) during a press conference to address issues on 'the agitation for separation and ultimatum for citizens to leave some parts of the country' in Abuja.

Photo: Onyekachi Eke | CISLAC

Good Governance and Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria

By Abubakar Jimoh

With Nigeria's rich ethno-religious and linguistic diversity, good governance remains essential to ensure minority rights, equality and peaceful coexistence for all citizens to survive and thrive.

While governance is referred to as a process by which decisions are

made and implemented or not implemented—in case of bad governance, good governance is the main driving force behind a healthy, secured and prosperous nation.

Given this backdrop, governance cannot be described as good without some fundamental features like participatory, consensus building, transparency, accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equity,

inclusiveness, and rule of law.

Participatory

As credible and sustainable governance depends largely on effective citizens' participation and on what it delivers, the quality of governance diminishes if citizens are ignorant about plans,

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Maternal Health Funding:
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Loots Recovery: Osinbajo Urges
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Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) is a non-governmental, non-profit, advocacy, information sharing, research, and capacity building organisation. Its mission is to strengthen the link between civil society and the legislature through advocacy and capacity building for civil society groups and policy makers on legislative processes and governance issues.

CISLAC was integrated as a corporate body (CAC/IT/NO22738) with the Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on the 28th December 2006. Prior to this incorporation, however, CISLAC had actively been engaged in legislative advocacy work since 2005. The organisation is also compliant with the Anti-Money Laundering Act 2007. The Organisation reports to SCUML, any transaction that is above One thousand dollars, detailing the payee, purpose and the other KYC (Know Your Customer) requirements. This is done on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the volume of transactions and to ensure appropriate compliance with anti-money laundering laws. Also, CISLAC is registered organisation under the National Planning Commission.

As indicated above, the organisation emerged from the need to address the gaps in legislative advocacy work of civil society and government access to civil society groups. CISLAC's engagement with Federal Ministries, National and State Assemblies, Local Government Administrations, private sector interests, and non-government organisations, has opened a window through which the public and policy officials can interact and collaborate.

CISLAC through its engagement of the governance processes in Nigeria has facilitated the enactment of several primary legislations such as the Fiscal Responsibility Act, Public Procurement Act, and Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative Act which promotes transparency and accountability in governance as well as the domestication of international conventions at the Federal and state levels in Nigeria. CISLAC also supported the passage of the Freedom of Information Act. Other pieces of legislations such the National Tobacco Control Bill, National Health Bill, Disability Bill, Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill, Violence and Persons Prohibition Bill, Whistleblower Protection Bill, Prison Reform Bill, etc. are also supported by CISLAC.

As a renowned CSO in Legislative advocacy in the region, CISLAC has on several occasions shared its experience on best practises for legislative advocacy on invitation from its international partners such as the World Bank Parliamentary Forum and the United Nations Millennium Campaign in African countries such as Kenya and Zimbabwe. Similarly, Ghana, Kenya, and Democratic Republic of Congo have also requested support from CISLAC for replication of their work in Legislative advocacy. In many West African countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Cameroon, Niger, Togo and Benin Republic, CISLAC has carried out experience sharing and advocacy exercises on the Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative processes through supporting the passage of extractive industry initiative laws in these countries. CISLAC has also undertaken capacity building for legislators, CSOs and Media on policy engagements in the above countries.

CISLAC's sub-granting experience includes grants to national organisations. With skilled, committed, experienced and proactive leadership and employees, particularly in the areas of coalition building, tenacious advocacy, community mobilization and the clout needed to engage lawmakers at all levels, the organization proven capacity to attract international solidarity, engage policy makers and mobilize local civil society groups and communities into action.

GOAL

"To make legislature accessible and responsive to all".

VISION

"A Nigeria in which citizens are participating in governance; the government is safeguarding the rights and welfare of the people; and non-state actors are providing space for citizens to demand accountability".

MISSION

"To increase the legislature and CSOs' impact in the legislative process".

ADVOCACY VISITS

CISLAC has successfully engaged key members of the National Assembly in order to wield their influence in ensuring that civil society positions are accommodated. In 2006, for instance, CISLAC targeted key players and created public awareness on draft legislation and questionable provisions incorporated by the National Assembly. Such efforts improved the levels of discipline, transparency, and accountability in the management and openness of fiscal responsibility, public procurement, and the nation's extractive Industry sector in Nigeria.

Through such efforts, CISLAC has empowered communities mostly affected by the extractive industry sector, improved the levels of information dissemination, and ensure due process and transparency in the payments made by extractive industry companies to the Federal Government and its agencies. It has also educated State and Federal legislators, their advisory staff, CSOs, the media, and key stakeholders on their oversight roles in legislation and has reviewed their commitment in implementation.

PUBLICATION OF MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS

CISLAC has strengthened civil society intervention by the publication of a monthly newsletter Legislative Digest and Tobacco Control Update which have been in circulation for both public and legislative consumption since October 2006 and June 2013 respectively. It has been a central medium of accountability, as it monitors the performance of Legislators, and a channel for advocacy on critical issues that need legislation. Also, CISLAC has a wide range of publications such as Textbooks and Policy Briefs.

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20. International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
21. African Capacity Building Foundation
22. Australian Government
23. North East Regional Initiative (NERI)

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This is the policy-making organ of the organisation. It approves the budget of the organisation, provides contacts for operational funds and supports the operation of the secretariat.

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The Secretariat is vested with the day-to-day running of the organization. It implements the decisions of the Board of Trustees. It is headed by an Executive Director who oversees the day-to-day running of the organisation while a Senior Program Officer oversees programmes implementation along with other programme staff.

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|-------------------------------------|--|
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|----------------|-------------------|
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|----------------|-------------------|

Still on Youth Agitations and Peaceful Co-existence

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) and Protest to Power (P2P) Movement express concern and urge for caution on the on-going agitations by some groups calling for separation from Nigeria and also on those issuing ultimatum to Nigerian citizens to leave some parts of the country.

Section 2(1) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) clearly states that "Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state..." Furthermore, the Constitution provided in section 41(1) that "every citizen of Nigeria is entitled to move freely throughout Nigeria and to reside in any part thereof, and no citizen of Nigeria shall be expelled from Nigeria or refused entry thereby or exit thereof..."

Furthermore, relevant international charters, including the UN and African Charters on Human Rights recognise the Right to Self Determination of peoples.

Although the Constitution guarantees Freedom of Expression, however; related experiences both within Nigeria and across the continent have revealed that freedom of expression, if not exercised with caution, occasionally gives room to dangerous speech, which can incite violence and lead to a breach of peace.

Nevertheless neither the Nigerian constitution nor the relevant international charters envisages or encourages the use of force or the resort to violence as a means of realising these rights.

We understand the Constitutional role of the media as the fourth estate of the realm to inform, educate and enlighten citizens on various national and international issues. In this way, they shape public opinion and set agenda for government and their role in this on-going discourse cannot be over emphasized.

While we understand the complexity, dynamism and sensitivity associated with ethno-cultural and religious issues and relations in the country, continuing on the negative side of combative and mutually antagonistic ethnic and religious rhetoric can only breed divisive and dehumanising violent tendencies, which, if left

unchecked, can escalate and degenerate into a catastrophic national disintegration.

The history of political corruption and governance in Nigeria is replete with episodes that range from the condemnable to the most absurd. Yet the struggle against corruption and the quest for good governance has been constant, though historically chequered. Our young people have been abandoned without quality of life, no jobs, they can't afford quality education and entire poor political system that allows incompetent leaders to govern us. Therefore the political class are only interested in looting and misusing the energy of our young people for unproductive issues.

We call on any groups agitating for division and separation from Nigeria to tread carefully and discontinue unguarded call for provocative agitations utilising increasingly divisive rhetoric or verbal attacks that may further intensify the present tension-soaked moment, and engender the outbreak of violence.

We equally call on any groups who are opposed to separatist and or self-determination agitations to also desist from using language and taking action capable of provoking violence or violent retributions.

We call on interest groups across the various divide to shun speeches and statements that are inciting, threatening, divisive and inflammatory; and also capable of jeopardizing the peace, security and general well-being of the entire citizenry.

We demand strict adherence to and respect for the fundamental human rights of every Nigerian citizen to reside and legally conduct business or commercial activities anywhere in the country.

We urge relevant authorities to ensure that the fundamental rights of citizens are protected and public order is maintained; and the media to display high level of nationalism and patriotism and ensure that their reportage place a premium on unity, peace and security of the nation and its citizens.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Auwal Ibrahim Musa
(Rafsanjani)

Editor-in-Chief

Abubakar Jimoh
Editor

Chioma Kanu

Abimbola S. Okoilu-Miró



A Publication of Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)

Website: www.cislacnigeria.net

Email: cislac@cislacnigeria.net

CONTACT ADDRESS:

Flat 3, No. 16 P.O.W. Mafemi Crescent
Off Solomon Lar Way
Behind Chida Hotel
Near Daily Trust Newspapers Office
Utako District, Abuja - Nigeria
Tel: 234-08033844646

REGIONAL OFFICE: KANO

3rd Floor, NISTF Building
No. 1A, Social Insurance Road
Behind Trade Fair Complex
Zaria Road, Kano
P.O. Box 10210
Kano State

REGIONAL OFFICE: ADAMAWA

Government Lodge Area
Off Main Drive
Dougerei Layout
Jimeta, Yola
Adamawa State

REGIONAL OFFICE: YOBE

Maiduguri Road,
Adjacent Federal Polytechnic
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Damaturu,
Yobe state

Good Governance and Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria

Continued from page 1

programmes and policies of the governments.

Involving citizens in governance process helps ordinary citizens to assess their own needs and participate in and monitor governments' plans and programmes.

It is evident across the globe that citizens' participation can help governments to be more accountable and responsive, improve the people's perception of governmental performance and democratic dividend the citizens receive from the governments.

Effective citizens' participation is guaranteed when they understand and want to exercise their rights to participate in local political issues as legally protected under Section 14 of the 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria, which states: "(1) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice. (2)(a) sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from whom government

“
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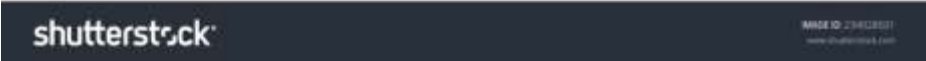
through this Constitution derives all its powers and authority... (c) the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.”

The citizens' civil and political rights include freedom of expression and access to information, which are at the basis of political participation as guaranteed and highlighted under relevant provisions of Freedom of Information Act, 2011, which provides for citizens' access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent

with the public interest; and African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which mandates all African countries including Nigeria to uphold the supremacy of their constitutions and promote participatory democracy by encouraging culture of popular participation and protect fundamental people's rights.

Apart from this, through their local institutions, governments can facilitate the citizens' participation to ensure they feel confident and know where and how to participate.

In this case, strengthening one-to-one and one-to-many constructive communications between individual legislators and their constituents are important elements of participatory governance; as direct communication between them helps legislators to make appropriate decisions about legislation and public policy issues, and provide enabling platform for the expression of public views and opinions. Solidified linkages between the two promote peace and stability in a democratic system. These linkages in the analysis of Nikhil Dutta et al are a two-way phenomenon—top-down and bottom-up communications. That is, legislators represent the people's



Source: Shutterstock



Source: Clipart Panda

interests, while simultaneously providing feedback and information to their constituents on the political processes.

E-governance has been adopted in most parts of the world to transform citizen service, provide access to information to empower citizens, enable their participation in government and enhance citizen's economic and social opportunities. The features of E-Governance highlighted by Crowley M, a researcher at Center for Public Policy & Administration University of Utah, includes the ability for citizens to leave feedback to various government offices; a subscription based list serve or e-Newsletter that keeps citizens and other agencies informed; Online discussion forums or chat rooms to discuss policy issues; e-Meetings for cross

agency/cross governmental participation; Online citizen surveys or polls for specific issues with published results; Online citizen satisfaction surveys with published results; Online decision-making - e-petitions, e-referenda; Online performance measures with published results.

Consequently, E-Governance has become an enabling involving the use of Information Technology in improving transparency, providing information speedily to all citizens, improving administration efficiency and improving public services such as transportation, power, health, water, security and municipal services. Local governments in this case, can take responsibility in developing integrated rural-based, citizen-centric, information-driven, user-friendly, easily-accessible, and

dynamic e-governance system.

When citizens feel that their views are represented in government and their representatives bear constituents' interests in mind, they are encouraged to participate in governance process. Through this process, citizens' participation in governance will improve accountability and the ability of local authorities to solve problems, creates more inclusive and cohesive communities, and increases the number and quality of initiatives made by communities.

Efficient and Effective Service Delivery

A peaceful and productive society is achieved through effective and efficient service delivery by the state's institutions. Good governance in this case, according to GIZ means "effective and efficient structures which provide optimal support to citizens in leading a safe and productive life in line with their desires and opportunities".

We cannot say good governance is in place in presence of continued diversion of resources reduces the level of resources and investments

“
A peaceful and productive society is achieved through effective and efficient service delivery by the state's institutions.
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Source: Elbiz Systems

available for the public health system. Resources are reportedly drained from health budget through embezzlement, fraud and corruption reduce the funding available for salaries, health services and maintenance, contributing to lower staff motivation, quality of care and declining service availability and use.

As observes by the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), corruption impedes effective and efficient public health care service delivery, and this practically symbolises: unethical attitudes of the health workers towards helpless patients, discouraging attendance at public health care facilities; scarcity of drugs even when they are provided

by governments but patients are directed to private hospital or stores to purchase such at expensive sums; poor access to health care facilities, intensifying the already increasing maternal and child mortality rate, especially in the grassroots; poor monitoring and evaluation of the health facilities by relevant authorities, giving chances to degrading treatments and unethical attitudes by some health workers; delayed release of health budget as appropriated, backpedalling timely interventions and provision of adequate, accessible and affordable health care services; poor implementation of health budget even when released.

We cannot think of good governance in the presence of endemic mismanagement of

educational funds. This triggered a lamentation by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) that corruption has weakened the sector, leading to low efficiency, wastage and misappropriation of resources, low quality service delivery. The Commission classified the ills into different levels of occurrence such as policy, Ministry/state and local government, schools and administrative levels. Corrupt practices in the education sector are extensively endangering the country's social, economic and political future.

Of course, good governance cannot be arguably in place with the unquantifiable and unforgivable inefficient and poor service delivery by our nation's security services, with their continued and unchecked sabotage of the nation's socio-economic development and well-being of the citizens through institutionalised human rights abuses and systemic bribery, which gives chance to hopelessness, insecurity and degrading treatments of the less privileged; sexual assault, extra-judicial killings and shooting of citizens for refusing to bribe; high-level embezzlement and diversion of

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Resources are reportedly drained from health budget through embezzlement, fraud and corruption reduce the funding available for salaries, health services and maintenance, contributing to lower staff motivation, quality of care and declining service availability and use.
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security personnel entitlements into private pockets, limiting resources, efforts and motivation to effectively secure lives and property of the citizens; and the porous nation's borders, which paves ways for influx illegal immigrants, illegal importation of weapons of various kinds that further endanger lives of the citizens.

Transparency and Accountability

Having a transparent and accountable system helps the governments in adapting to social and technological changes, stay close and respond to citizens demands. Through transparent system, a legislature provides more information and expands citizen participation in a deliberate and meaningful way that makes it more effective in delivering democratic dividend to the electorate. Every citizen regardless of his or her social, political, economic, education and ethno-religion background should have access to public information, which should be made available by the concerned public institution.

Transparency and accountability are increasingly recognized for their crucial role in making legislative and policy information more accessible to citizens, strengthening the capacity of citizens to participate in



Source: Truelancer

legislative and policy processes to advocate for greater access to government, improved accountability, and increased collaborative dialogue on issues bothering public reform.

How can we talk of transparency and accountability in governance when budget processes or information are not public accessible for citizens' participation scrutiny, contributions, monitoring and evaluation in most states across the country? We cannot talk of transparency and accountability when federal allocation and Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) are diverted and used for

unknown purposes. We cannot talk about transparency and accountability in presence of secrecy and lop-sidedness in tax collection, administration and utilisation, breeding illegal and multiple taxation.

Lack of accountability could be practically buttressed where maternal delivery services are practically carried out based on unaddressed 'queue-and-swamp' system in the health facilities; when unavailable but avertable drugs and other essential commodities, and poor access to health care facilities intensify the increasingly maternal and child mortality rate, especially in the grassroots.

Equity and Inclusiveness

Women constitute over 50 percent of the world's population; perform two-third of the world's work, yet receive one-tenth of the world's income; represent a staggering 70 percent of the world's one billion poorest people.

In the analysis of the Executive

Every citizen regardless of his or her social, political, economic, education and ethno-religion background should have access to public information, which should be made available by the concerned public institution.



Source: Spider Center

Director, Centre LSD, Otiye Igbuzor, in developing countries, women own less than two percent of all land. At least 60 million girls are missing due to female infanticide or sex selective abortion and an estimated 5,000 women murdered each year in “honour” killings. He observes unequal distribution of food and health care including 93 million children who are not enrolled in school are girls.

In eight Northern States, over 80% of women are unable to read (compared with 54% for men), as reported by UK Department for International Development (DFID) in 2012; owing to some traceable

factors such as lack of funds, existing traditional and religious inclination, non-provision of educational facilities by government, poor funding of the educational sector, weak educational policies, early marriage, early childbirth, poor sanitation and ignorance.

Nigeria has the highest population in African continent with 38 percent of its women lacking formal education as against 25 percent for men and only four percent of women have higher education against the seven percent of their male counterpart.

Consequently, in Nigeria,

majority of girls and women face real-time poverty, gross inequality, molestation and injustice, denying them effort to acquire meaningful skills and contribute positively towards the nation's development. Series of discrimination and atrocities against women include poor education, poor nutrition, violence and brutalization, vulnerability and low pay employment.

Since democratic rule in 1999, women are under-represented in all key political decision making bodies in Nigeria. During the 2007 elections, women constituted about 11% of all candidates with only one woman contesting for the office of the President; 33.9% for governorship positions; 13.5% for Senate, 15.6% for House of Representatives, and 15.8% for Houses of Assembly. Following the elections, women occupied only about 7.5 percent of key leadership positions in Nigeria.

During the 2007 general elections, the late President Umar Musa Yar'Adua's administration promised 30 percent of political appointment to women, a year after the elections, only 11 percent was allocated to women.

Official records released by the Independence National Electoral Commission (INEC) shows that a total of 809 women emerged as candidates for the 2011 elections on the platforms of various political parties. This represents a 17% increase over 692 women who emerged as candidates during the 2007 elections. But when the results was released, women's representation at national level regressed slightly from 7.5% in 2007 to 7.1% in 2011. In the 2015 elections, the number further decreased to 7 in Senate (6.4 percent) and 19 in House of Representatives (5.2 percent).

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Source: Pinterest

During President Goodluck Jonathan's administration, women occupied 33 percent of cabinet positions. This was later decreased to 19 percent in President Muhammadu Buhari's administration.

In Nigeria, every 10 minutes one woman dies from conditions associated with childbirth; and only 39% births take place with assistance of medically trained personnel, coupled with the scarcity of skilled attendants, absence of personnel among other factors impede the effectiveness of health services in the country.

Nigeria records one of the lowest rates of female entrepreneurship in sub-Saharan Africa; with majority of women concentrating in casual, low-skilled, low paid informal sector employment.

Women are important in our society; and every woman has a role to play. Without meaning to sound like a broken record, I will like to remind us that women owing to their nurturing nature make good managers.

More importantly, a healthy society doesn't automatically emerge and stand firm without the balance of that pivotal role played by women. Indeed, from behavioral to health education, it is a woman who

teaches how to behave, how to speak and how to deal with different classes of people. Consequently, women remain fundamentals of a good society and essential contributors in the nation's building.

Similarly, it is often said that the basic unit of society is a family; one cannot overemphasize the importance of women in the family. As women make a family, a family makes a home and homes make a society. Thus, there would be no society without the contribution of women.

Although women have great responsibilities in upbringing of a healthy, solid society, but records the lowest rates of political participation in the country. She plays roles as a mother, a sister, a daughter, a wife.

While imposition of tax remains a vital instrument for the promotion of resource re-allocation, social equity through wealth distribution, women marginalisation in tax processes and responsibilities of government towards its citizens has hitherto constituted public and policy debates, but with little effort to address the emergent plights of women under unwary tax regime.

With increasing incidence of taxation in the contemporary tax

reforms, Nigerian women are worst hit by the socio-economic burden of the various gender-insensitive tax policies.

It would be recalled that in September 2015, Nigeria joined the rest of the world at United Nations' High Level Plenary Summit for the adoption of Structural Development Goals (SDGs) with 17 goals and 169 targets as part of the global efforts to build a comprehensive development plan in order to complete the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goal (MDGs).

Adopting the SDGs, at country level with Goal 1 and 5 promising to: end poverty and hunger in all its forms everywhere; and achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, respectfully, Nigeria is committed to address poverty and ensure equal opportunity for women in all socio-economic and political ramifications. However, the existing gender-biased tax regime remains a major impediment that if not strictly addressed may backpedal or obstruct the country's success in the implementation of SDGs.

Also, the imbalanced Value Added Tax (VAT) system is another endemic challenge to the women's earning and well-being. The VAT

Amendment Act 2007 removed the 5 percent fixed rate and gave the Minister of Finance Power to determine the VAT rate. Exercising the authority, the Minister of Finance raised the rate to 10 percent, but later repealed its decision with the rate returned to the initial 5 percent. Nigerian women are known to purchase more goods and services that promote health, education and nutrition compared to men.

In 2004, the Nigeria Living Standards Survey report by the National Bureau of Statistics showed that over 50% of the expenditure by female headed households was on non-food items which as likely to attract VAT. This in the observations of GTZ creates the potential for women to bear a larger burden of VAT, especially if the VAT system does not provide for exemptions, reduce rates or zero-rating.

Good governance cannot be in place when women are marginalised in all ramifications with a high percentage of girls out of schools. Appreciable efforts must be made by governments at all levels to recognise girls and women as equal players in the game of life whilst empowering, up-skilling and investing in them for a better world.

Full-fledged implementation of 35% Affirmative Action for Women by governments at all levels is paramount to encourage full participation of women as leaders and decision-makers in households, communities, and in the public and private spheres.

A good governance system improves access to education and eliminating gender gaps in education, proper individual orientation, mass public awareness and sensitization on the provisions of the Rights of Women.

Youth constitute 70% of

Nigeria's population. The Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBC) in its latest report confirmed a consistent pattern of worsening unemployment in the country. The present danger of high level of idleness among young persons are already manifest in the high level of strife and crimes in virtually across the country. This informed an editorial published by ThisDay Newspaper on February 27th, 2017 warning that: "Unless the relevant authorities do something critical and urgent about the astronomical rise in unemployment levels, particularly among the youths, Nigeria may be sitting on a time bomb waiting to explode. Figures available paint a dire situation of millions of Nigerian youths roaming the streets looking for work but finding none. The situation is compounded by the economic recession that has necessitated the sacking, by many private enterprises, of their staff in the name of rationalisation".

Rule of Law

In every governance system, the guiding principles of rule of law must be upheld and respected since it's the foundation of good governance. In Nigeria with a contrary experience, the basic principles are violated through carelessness and recklessness conducts.

As former Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Aminu Tambuwal puts it, "the principle of rule of law is, like other attributes of liberal democracy such as accountability, transparency, and human rights promotion and protection, essential element of democracy without which the process, dynamics and success of a democratic system is likely to be endangered, some would say, bereft



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of its inherent value and sanctity.”

According to him, without the rule of law democracy is impracticable as arbitrariness is likely to hold sway and torpedo the process of realizing good governance. “The rule of law encompasses all it takes to uphold, promote and safeguard the supremacy of law over any proclivities of institutions, groups or individuals. It is a term which is essentially instrumental to the nurturing of a virile democratic culture and democratic consolidation,” he added.

In order to uphold the principles of rule of law, an effective judicial system must be guaranteed to promote equality and fairness in legal processes. The judiciary has a great role to play in the efforts to save the nation from imminent collapse under the weight of unbridled corruption. Without doubt, judges symbolize the judicial powers of the state; they stand out as the central figures in the judicial system and the administration of justice.

Good governance is not attained through intentional creation of backlog of cases to pave ways for demanding bribes to fast-track a case; endless abuse of offices and distortion of judicial processes; judges who are on politicians' pay roll, even when such is against judicial code of ethics; high-ranking



judicial officers who serve as couriers of bribe.

Consensus building and responsiveness

Adopting strategies for consensus building in Nigeria through such holistic techniques as bringing diverse groups of stakeholders together to engage in shared learning and decision making on legislative and policy issues has become imperative to enhance collaboration, peaceful co-existence and encourage public participation in governance.

Consensus cannot be built on a failure to separate party politics from state, which in the observations of Commonwealth Network is extremely damaging, “making important public

institutions such as the military, judiciary, election commission and state media hostage to the incumbent”.

It is important that governments provide for credible and independent institutions and adequate political space for an effective opposition and diverse groups. At the same time opposition parties must respect the rule of law and engage in a meaningful and constructive manner in the political process.

Consensus building process must be sincere and transparent to restore confidence in and represent interest of oppositions or diverse groups. Through this process, outcomes of dialogues or meeting will be acceptable and respected by all parties.

In order to uphold the principle of good governance, governments must be aware of what the citizens want and citizens must as well be aware of what governments are doing. Governments must be responsive and responsible towards citizens' demands and expectations by maintaining integrity, transparency, and accountability. In Nigerian context, to be responsive and responsible, government have the primary responsibility to effectively relate and interact with the citizens.

“
Good governance is not attained through intentional creation of backlog of cases to pave ways for demanding bribes to fast-track a case; endless abuse of offices and distortion of judicial processes; judges who are on politicians' pay roll, even when such is against judicial code of ethics; high-ranking judicial officers who serve as couriers of bribe.
 ”

Participants in a group photo after a Bi-Monthly Meeting of the National Civil Society Consultative Forum on Peace and Security organised by CISLAC in Abuja. Photo: Onyekachi Eke | CISLAC



Participants in a group photo after 'Legislative and Media Dialogue on Maternal and Child' organised by CISLAC in Katsina state.

Participants in a group photo after 'Executive and Media Roundtable on Maternal and Child' organised by CISLAC in Jigawa/Katsina state.



DECLARATION OF ACTION AFTER A ONE-DAY MEDIA TRAINING ON BUDGET TRACKING AND INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM ORGANISED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC) WITH SUPPORT FROM MAC ARTHUR FOUNDATION HELD AT ROYAL HOTEL DUTSE, JIGAWA STATE ON 29TH JUNE, 2017

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) with support from MacArthur Foundation organized One-day Media Training on Budget Tracking and Investigative Journalism. The Training aimed at enhancing the capacity of Jigawa State's media on investigative journalism and effective monitoring and reporting of maternal health budget in the state. The meeting drew over 20 participants from various media outfits in the state. After exhaustive deliberation on various thematic issues, we the participants:

Recognised that appropriate tracking and monitoring of maternal and child health budget is achieved through fact-finding, evidence-based data collection and analysis as well as enhanced curiosity for de-normalised and well-focused investigative reportage to raise public and policy consciousness.

Also recognised that persistent tracking, monitoring and reporting of budget processes will result in increased transparency in the budget process; healthy and reproductive society; increased capacity for improved health service delivery and accountability; increased accountability for specific promises made by governments; and better alignment of budget with the plans.

Further recognised that investigative journalism can be effectively deployed to expose abuses, unethical attitudes, secrecies, and poor utilisation of maternal and child health budget at all levels.

Expressed concern over delayed assent to the 2017 Appropriation Bill that hampers efforts at providing adequate, accessible and affordable

maternal and child healthcare services in Jigawa state

Also expressed concern over reluctant by the media to effectively engage budget processes; excessive and unresponsive bureaucracy; lack of legal and policy frameworks to guide implementation of maternal and child health budget

Noted that creating sense of ownership through community orientation and re-orientation programmes will help in promoting accessibility to maternal and child health services and complement the state's effort at providing adequate, accessible and affordable maternal health services.

Also noted that appropriate understanding and use of Freedom of Information Act will help to effectively interrogate and report maternal and child health related issues.

Affirmed existing rules and regulations, ethical standards and legislation guiding investigative journalism and shall embrace such in fact-findings and reporting on maternal health.

Committed to imbibe and deploy high level professionalism, technical skills, knowledge and resources in investigative journalism into maternal and child health issues in the state.

Also committed to persistent research for accurate and verifiable data collection to support fact-findings and constructive reportage on maternal and child health

Will prioritize the use of Freedom of Information Act to de-normalise reportage into maternal and child health issues in the state.

Senate Moves to Amend Constitution

The Nigerian Senate President Bukola Saraki has said the Upper Chamber would soon amend the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, promising that efforts will be redoubled to fast-track the process.

Saraki made this known in Lagos when declaring open the 11th Annual Business Law Conference of the Nigerian Bar Association Section on Business Law (NBA-SBL), with the theme: "Law and the changing face of legal practice."

He Said: "We hope to finalise the Constitution review. This is an area the budget has been holding us back. Now that the budget has been passed, our main priority when we resume is constitutional review. The report is ready."

Saraki also urged Nigerians to demand accountability from the government, adding that the private sector can even drive the government. He said that Nigeria cannot achieve its full potential if government does not engage technocrats in driving the development process.

"I believe there is a misconception by

the private sector. We all believe that the responsibility is for those of us in government. That is true. But I believe that you can drive your government. You can make your government do what is necessary to create the right business

environment.

"This is a great country with great potential. But the reason why we'll never achieve our potential is that there is a mismatch. This mismatch is that the calibre and capacity of those in government cannot match those in the private sector," he said.

Senate urges implementation of the 2014 Confab Report

The Senate has urged the Federal Government to consider implementation of the 2014 National Conference's report to address the current tension across the country.

This was sequel to a motion entitled "The Need for National Unity and Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria," sponsored by 107 senators.

Leading debate on the motion, Adamu Aliero, who was a member of the conference, said the report of the body was the best route to resolving the issues affecting the country.

"We have to live together and the corporate existence of this country cannot be negotiated. Nigeria must remain one indivisible and indissoluble entity. I agree that there are problems; there are challenges and those challenges should be addressed," Mr. Aliero, who chaired the Conference Committee on Public Finance and Revenue, said.

"And that was why in 2014 the then president, Goodluck Jonathan, decided to convoke what was called a National Conference and it was a conference where all the ethnic nationalities, states and geopolitical zones were represented."

"All the issues affecting the unity and stability of this country were thoroughly discussed under the leadership of Justice Idris Kutigi (retired) and co-chaired by Bolaji Akinyemi. A lot of recommendations were made to address these challenges.

"I will recommend that the Senate should ask for those recommendations to be tabled before the National Assembly because a lot of recommendations on all the agitations in all the geopolitical zones were addressed. I don't know why we are not asking for those recommendations to be brought to us. They should be implemented where necessary."

NASS to Seek Special Dollar Exchange Rate for Pilgrims

The National Assembly has moved to seek special dollar exchange rate for both Christian and Muslim pilgrims, a member of the House of Representatives,

This disclosure was made by the Chairman, House of Representatives Special Committee on Nigerian-Saudi Arabian on Hajj, Hon. Balarabe Salame in Sokoto, recently.

He spoke at the maiden edition of the Stewardship Forum organised for both the state and national lawmakers by the state Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ) in collaboration with the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the state.

The lawmaker said: "The gesture is to lessen the sufferings of prospective pilgrims and to enable more Nigerians to perform pilgrimage to in Saudi Arabia and Israel. The Federal Government gave an exchange rate of N360 to a dollar this year and this is on the high side. This is why the 2017 Hajj fare for Muslim pilgrims soared to N1.52million per prospective pilgrim."

Reps uncovers N90b 'bogus insertion' in ministry's budget

The House of Representatives has said it exposed a "bogus insertion" of N90 billion in the 2017 budgetary proposal presented by President Muhammadu Buhari.

This was made known by its spokesperson, Abdulrazak Namdas in Abuja that the questionable sum was discovered in the estimates of the Ministry of Works, Power and Housing.

He further clarified the cut in the allocations for both the Second Niger Bridge and the Lagos-Ibadan expressway in the Appropriation Bill

which is at the heart of the altercation between the minister, Babatunde Raji Fashola and the National Assembly.

Mr. Namdas said it was time for the minister to be reminded that it was the duty of the National Assembly to ensure fairness in the distribution of the nation's resources.

"We need to remind Mr. Fashola that the National Assembly is a national institution made up of members from all geo-political zones. They represent all tendencies, interests and ethnic nationalities," he added.

Reps issue OAU ultimatum over violation of Procurement Act

The House of Representatives has expressed its displeasure at the management of the Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife for allegedly violating the Public Procurement Act.

Members of the House Committee on procurement visited the institution to ascertain the level of compliance with the Procurement Act 2017 and to inspect some of their capital Projects.

The Committee headed by Hon.

Oluwole Oke said it was unfortunate that the management could not produce all the necessary documents required of them in spite of prior notice.

Oke said the Committee was ready to restore sanity in procuring environment and ordered that all the necessary documents be made available before the committee on the 6th of July for review.

Ogun Road Projects will be Completed Before 2019

The Ogun State House of Assembly's Committee on Works and Infrastructure has said that the ongoing road construction projects across the state had helped in enhancing the state's economy.

The Committee led by Honourable Olayiwola Ojodu, said this during the committee's assessment visit to the road sites in Ogun West and Ogun East Senatorial Districts where it inspected

Imeko/Afon- Ilara-Ijoun -Eggua -Oja Odan-Ilase road in Yewa axis and Ilishan -Ago-Iwoye and Ijebu-Ode roads in Ogun East.

Ojodu, in a release by the Assembly's Head of Information, Mr Jamiu Lawal, expressed satisfaction with the development.

He explained that the present administration prioritised the provision of good roads to attract more local and

foreign investors, with a view to making it the nation's investors' destination of choice. Ojodu, in company of other committee members, assured that all ongoing projects would be completed before the expiration of the present administration. He charged contractors handling the projects to ensure compliance to safety measures to avert construction hazards.

Edo Assembly Confirms 18 Commissioner Nominees

The Edo State House of Assembly has confirmed 18 nominees as commissioners in the state.

The confirmation followed the 18-man forwarded sent to the House for consideration and confirmation by Governor Godwin Obaseki June 20.

The confirmation of the nominees followed the recommendation of the House Committee on Rules, Business

and Government House.

Presenting the report, the chairman of the committee and Majority Leader, Foly Ogedengbe, said the nominees were educationally qualified to be appointed as commissioners in the state.

The House consequently adopted the report of the committee and confirmed the nominees as commissioners.

Lagos Assembly Charges Nigerians on Love, Unity, Vigilance

The Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly, Mudashiru Obasa, has called on Nigerians not to relent in sharing love, charging them to be united and vigilant at all times in order to assist the state government in the fight against crime.

Obasa gave the caution in his Sallah message in a statement signed by his Chief Press Secretary (CPS), Mr Musbau Razak.

The speaker, while urging Nigerians to continue to work for the unity and peaceful co-existence, charged them to be vigilant at all times and cooperate with the government at all levels to fight crimes in the society.

According to Obasa, Ramadan teaches love and unity, urging Nigerians not to relent in sharing the love and unity as Muslim faithful had done during the fasting period.

"We should continue to spread love and peaceful co-existence. This is the essence of Ramadan which we must not neglect. "The issue of security is a collective task involving the governed and the government. So, we must be vigilant at all times. We must be able to provide information on any questionable individual or group in our communities to security agents. This assists government in nipping crime in the bud," he cautioned.

Ondo Assembly Passes N170bn as 2017 Budget

The Ondo state House of Assembly has passed the state's 2017 Appropriation Bill totalling N170 billion into law.

The passage of the budget followed the submission of the report of the House Committee on Appropriation.

The State Governor, Rotimi Akeredolu had earlier transmitted a budget proposal of N169 billion to the assembly.

The lawmakers however jerked up

the budget with a billion naira due to the demands from Ministries, Department and Agencies of government. The Chairman of the Appropriation Committee, Sunday Olajide said the budget was jerked up to execute some capital projects in some ministries

Speaker of the Assembly, David Oyelogun said the lawmakers would monitor the performance of the budget to ensure full implementation.

Rivers Assembly Plans New Environmental Law

The Chairman, Rivers State House Committee on Environment, Hon. Christian Ahiakwo has said the House was preparing a policy framework that would be presented to the State House of Assembly as a bill for enactment into law.

Ahiakwo disclosed this during a Summit organised by the House Committee on Environment in collaboration with the State Ministry of Environment and Rivers State Waste Management Agency (RIWAMA) in Port Harcourt.

He also explained that the summit themed: "Our Environment, Our Heritage; Environmental Sustainability in Rivers State, A Right For All", also aimed at addressing environmental devastation of Rivers State, oil and gas pipeline vandalism in Niger Delta.

The lawmaker further explained that the summit would also address the issue of the multinational corporations and the politics of environmental sustainability in Nigeria, the application of environmental laws to the pollution of the Niger Delta, and adapting a working curriculum on environmental safety and sustainable development in Rivers State owned schools.

In his goodwill message, the Speaker of the Assembly, Rt. Hon. Ikunyi-Owaji Ibani had called on participants to direct attention to a multi-dimensional approach to the remediation, preservation and sustenance of environment through safe economic and industrial practices, provision of treatment plants for industrial effluents, legislation and enforcement of appropriate legal instruments and the maintenance of a green environment.

Maternal Health Funding: Stakeholders Urge Public-Private Partnership

By Abubakar Jimoh

The Deputy Clerk, Katsina State House of Assembly, Mallam Yusuf Jibril Abdullahi has said the legislature was a key institution with significant constitutional power to address funding gaps in maternal health through its appropriation process and oversight activities.

He also lauded the existing open-door policy operated by the Assembly, serving as an enabling channel to strengthen effective legislature and media working relations in the state.

Abdullahi made this disclosure at a One-day Legislative and Media Dialogue on Maternal Health organized by Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) with support from Mac Arthur Foundation in Katsina state.

He said while health sector development remained a major priority of the state, the ongoing dwindling revenue to the state from the Federation Account hampered adequate budgetary allocation to the sector, urging intensified media awareness and sensitization on the importance of harnessing Internally Generated Revenue to bridge funding gaps in maternal health.

“Loopholes in the collection and administration of Internally Generated Revenue hinder efforts by the state to effectively harmonise revenue to boost budgetary allocation to key sectors including health care,” Abdullahi added.

Also, the Chairman, Katsina State Civil Society Forum, Comrade Usman Muhammad, attributed high maternal death rate to poverty, HIV/AIDS, general hygiene, accessibility gaps, inadequate infrastructural facilities and health care services.

He however, bemoaned identified



lapses in budgetary defence by the line ministries as major impediments to adequate budgetary allocation to health sector in the state.

Muhammad demanded creation of a legislative system to harmonise and integrate maternal and child health issues in submissions by various legislative Committees during the appropriation process.

Dr. Murwan Imam Muhammadu representing Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria (HERFON) Katsina state Chapter, Inadequate investigative journalism and reportage on maternal and child health related issues in the state.

He demanded appropriate legislative-executive synergy to fast-track the harmonization of Primary Health Care under one roof to promote coordinated, accessible and affordable health care at grassroots level.

At the end of the Dialogue, participants recommended innovative funding strategies through public-private partnership to bridge existing funding gap and sustain adequate budgetary allocation to health sector;

encouraged women inclusiveness and participation in the legislature to effectively champion and address issues affecting maternal health;

They also recommended enhanced legislative priority for women empowerment schemes in collaboration with the line ministries to promote self-sufficient women and alleviate poverty; proactive media to embrace high level professionalism and skills in the analysis and reporting of maternal and child health related issues to raise legislative and policy consciousness on maternal health; and persistent investigative journalism and massive public and policy awareness on maternal and child health.

The Dialogue which aimed at bringing Katsina State's legislature and the media under one roof to brainstorm on necessary legislative action to address current maternal health funding challenges in the state for effective, efficient and affordable maternal and child healthcare delivery had in attendance over 20 participants representing State House of Assembly and the Media.

Loots Recovery: Osinbanjo urges global support

By Lukman Adefolahan

In recognition of the complexity and challenges of Illicit Financial Flows and Asset Recovery, Nigerian Vice President also the Acting President, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo has observed the need to fully harness potential of the existing anti-graft institutional and policy frameworks as transformative instruments for economic growth and poverty reduction in Nigeria.

Osinbajo made this disclosure at a two-day International Conference on 'Promoting International Cooperation to Combat Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs) and Enhancing Asset Recovery to Foster Sustainable Development', organised by Presidential Advisory Committee Against Corruption (PACAC) in partnership with Government the Kingdom of Norway, MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Initiative for West Africa and Ford Foundation in Abuja.

He emphasised the need for global community to support the efforts of developing countries including Nigeria at recovering stolen funds and assets.

"Proceeds from political corruption have not attracted the same outrage like those from narcotics and human trafficking. It took years for some people to agree that when somebody looted public treasury its more criminal than crime against humanity and more dangerous than trafficking in drugs.

"It is a good thing that we are all gathered here with donor agencies and development partners who agree that not only are these stolen assets criminalize but that they are repatriated. It is our responsibility to ensure these monies are repatriated. We must make it a national call, a call for other developing countries to have the same outrage for drugs and terrorist financing for illicit financial flows," he urged.



Source: Oxfam

Also, Mr. Akeke Muna, a leading Cameroonian Lawyer also the Chair of International Anti-Corruption Council stressed that beyond consenting to international agreements on IFF, developing countries must demonstrate the necessary political will towards the implementation.

At the end of the Conference, participants noted that transition and developing economies are most susceptible to Illicit Financial Flows and called on countries to extend scrutiny to all spheres of the chain to curb such flows. Participants further called on countries to combat and penalize corruption in all its forms including the sanctioning and prosecution of financial institutions who violate anti-corruption laws as well as their employees.

They observed that a large proportion of the proceeds of corruption, including those emanating from transnational bribery and other forms of illicit flows, are yet to be returned to the requesting States which are the prior legitimate owners.

Participants affirmed that international tax evasion is a significant element of illicit financial flows, including substantial sums of

money lost through transfer mispricing by multinational companies and hence, underscored the need for collective effort to strengthen international cooperation and mutual assistance in addressing the challenges of transfer mispricing and trade mispricing.

They urged creation of global standards in anti-money laundering require financial institutions to subject accounts held by certain persons to greater scrutiny and monitoring, including senior government officials, leaders of political parties, executives at state-owned enterprises and others with access to large amount of state assets and the power to direct them.

They called for enhanced inter-agency cooperation at national, regional and global levels to trace and recover illicit funds and assets and repatriate same to countries of origin.

Participants further advised countries to ensure that procedures for international cooperation allow for the seizure and/or restraint of assets for a time period sufficient to preserve those assets in full, pending confiscation proceedings in another State, to ensure that there are adequate mechanisms in place to manage and preserve the value and condition of assets.

Tobacco Control and the Emerging Development in Nigeria

By Austin Erameh

The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the highest policy/decision making body of the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Assembly is usually attended by Health Ministers and top representatives from the Health Ministry of member countries.

While the issues up for discussions at the Assembly have in the past focused majorly on health related matters with a cross-cutting agenda, the Assembly up until the 2017 meeting in Geneva had never had discussions focused on the issue of Tobacco Control.

With a global scale up on the advocacy for more stringent tobacco control measures and the accompanying evasive response mechanisms being mustered by the Tobacco Industry, it is indeed heart-warming to note the renewed commitment of global players in the health sector to take on the challenge of ensuring that millions of individuals who are at risk of the harmful effects of tobacco consumption are adequately protected by the provision of relevant legislations, policies and support mechanisms that both discourage people from taking on the habit of smoking and assist smokers in quitting tobacco use.

Tobacco Control: Renewed Efforts in Nigeria

As the most populous country on the African continent and a major player in the global South where Big Tobacco is currently dominant, Nigeria has both a moral burden as well as continental responsibility in ensuring that it is at the forefront of Tobacco Control in the region.

Although the country was arguably slow in coming on board the global advocacy for tobacco control,



the country has in the last two years made deliberate steps at correcting this impression.

In 2015 the country signed into law the National Tobacco Control (NTC) Act with a further step to commence developing regulations that will guide implementation of the Act. The country has through the Act also set up the Tobacco Control Unit (TCU) situated within the Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) Division of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH). This in effect is aimed at ensuring that the very critical role of TC is duly given the rightful place within the context of NCDs in the overall strategy and interventions of the FMoH.

As Tobacco Control related issues continue to gain centre stage in world economic discourse, there has been calls for accompanying responses by Nigeria to ensure that its voice and position are adequately represented and heard in the global advocacy for increased taxation for generating and ploughing back resources to address wider public health challenges

Commendable Progress

Despite the challenges experienced in-country there has been recent commendable strides recorded through such pronouncements made by the government during the 2015 World

No Tobacco Day as: the ban on sale of cigarettes in single sticks; prohibition of sale of cigarettes to persons below 18 years of age; prohibition of Tobacco Advertising Promotions and Sponsorship of any kind; ban of e-cigarettes (sale or offer of sale); and prohibition of smoking in certain facilities that include schools, child care and health facilities, amusement parks.

Scaling-up Efforts

While the government has hitherto strengthened collaboration with other non-state actors to ensure full implementation of the Tobacco Control Act in accordance with the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), in-depth conversations on the issue of tobacco taxation and Graphic Health Warnings (GHWs) are imperative to successfully combat tobacco use in Nigeria.

Pros and Cons

Varying contending arguments have been put forward as to the most viable and proactive ways for the country to ensure that tobacco control is constantly mainstreamed into overall public health discourse at all times. There are currently huge opportunities within the framework of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which

the country can also harness. However, the country still grapples with a number of institutional and programmatic gaps which must be addressed.

The issue of tobacco control remains the mandate and prerogative of the government. While development partners and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) such as the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) have been outstanding in their advocacy role in ensuring that tobacco control is at the centre stage of public health discourse which has contributed immensely to the entire process, the government through its Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH) must identify its place with accompanying strides that signal political will, commitment and a definitive stance of dictating the pace and policy thrust to all actors in the area of tobacco control in the country.

The country's sheer size and its population make the issue of capacity a re-occurring issue for engagement. State and Non-State Actors require adequate capacity to engage in tobacco control especially in the face of the ever evolving dynamism of the Tobacco Industry in getting smarter.

The FMoH requires urgent capacity development and strengthening of the TCU for effective engagement of the issues, and on the flip side CSOs also need to realize the innate call to duty, and become more aggressive in their quest for capacity to engage in tobacco control seeing it as life-saving.

All actors must also see the



opportunities offered within the framework of the SDGs in the area of promoting tobacco control in the country and be more deliberate in investing in their institutional/national capacity to engage in tobacco control.

The need for all actors to initiate conversations around internal resource mobilization for tobacco control remains paramount with immediate effect. While the entire funding currently invested in tobacco control in the continent is purely from a singular source creating a seeming uncertainty in the national TC environment, the country boasts of a robust and vibrant economy with numerous strings of opportunities which can be exploited for generating in-country funding for tobacco control.

Funding has largely been fingered as the major cause of the seeming lacklustre posture of a number of actors in the area of

tobacco control in-country. Pundits hold as tenable, positions that suggest that capacities when duly developed by both state and Non-state Actors will naturally generate adequate funding for carrying out tobacco control work within the context of Non Communicable Diseases.

It is noteworthy that the issue of developing in-country/regional capacity for global advocacy in tobacco control and indeed NCDs is important. This stems from the realization of the dreary and uninspiring representation of the entire African continent at the Drafting Rooms during the just concluded World Health Assembly.

As observed, the Drafting Rooms during the Assembly are the level where critical regional specific issues are put forward and debated for inclusion into global health programmes to be championed and implemented by the World Health Organization and indeed in-country partners.

Hence there is need for Nigeria and other African countries to develop and put into adequate use, global advocacy skills that will enable them participate effectively at such meetings and translate commitments into promoting national and continental health agenda that will benefit citizens.

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The need for all actors to initiate conversations around internal resource mobilization for tobacco control remains paramount with immediate effect.
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Still a Long Way to go for Reps

By Musa Abdullahi Krishi

The 8th House began on a very shaky and turbulent note owing to the leadership crisis that enmeshed the Green Chamber following the emergence of Yakubu Dogara as Speaker in a keenly contested election on June 9, 2015.

Dogara, who represents Bogoro/Dass/Tafawa Balewa Federal Constituency of Bauchi State was not the choice candidate of his All Progressives Congress (APC), but he defeated the party's candidate, Femi Gbajabiamila, with eight votes, scoring 182, to the latter's 174 votes.

Gbajabiamila was thereafter nominated by APC as House Leader, but Dogara and his men initially foot-dragged only to yield to pressure on July 28, about two months after their inauguration. Soon after that, the House went on to carry out its activities peacefully, with Dogara fully in charge.

Later that year, in October, Dogara announced the leadership of the 96 standing committees of the House in which he rewarded most of his loyalists, especially those in the opposition Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with committees considered to be "juicy."

Although the development created some ripples among the lawmakers, the House was able to navigate through that and went on to perform its legislative assignment.

Within its first three months, the House came up with a legislative agenda, which it intended to achieve in four years. Major items on the agenda included needs assessment; focus on internal operations/ processes; e-parliament, e-voting, digitisation, archiving; focus on National Assembly communications and review of the national budgetary process.

Others were focus on national economy and development; focus on priority legislation; review of the laws of the federation; focus on anti-corruption; constitution reform process; harmonisation of the national identity management system;



reduction of cost of governance, as well as improved legislative-executive relations.

While the House was able to achieve some items on the legislative agenda, it appears a number of them have been proving difficult to attain. For instance, while the lawmakers have worked on many bills within the period, they are yet to stimulate the economy via legislation.

In the area of improved legislative-executive relations, the House has been doing its best to maintain good relationship with the executive as can be seen from the good understanding the lawmakers have with the presidency. Dogara and other leaders of the House are frequently seen in the Presidential Villa meeting with the president or the vice president on national issues.

Also, the House has given priority to legislation and review of obsolete laws and as at today, over 159 bills have been passed within the last two years, while the constitution amendment process is still on.

On December 10, 2015, the House passed a total of 130 bills for first reading in less than 30 minutes, the first time the House did so since the return of democracy in 1999. Another 100 bills were read for the first time on June 8, 2016.

The House also held sectoral debates with key ministers such as

those of finance as well as trade and investment, among others with a view to knowing the direction of the country's economy. But there is no report on that yet.

In the area of anti-corruption, it can be argued that the House is still lagging behind because the two bills President Muhammadu Buhari presented to the lawmakers on anti-corruption since last year have not been debated.

The two bills are titled: 'Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill and the 'Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Bill.'

Although the House recently made its budget public jointly with the Senate, it is glaring that a lot needs to be done in the area of reducing the cost of governance.

For example, despite that resolve, the lawmakers opted for exotic cars, Peugeot 508 at the cost of N3.6 billion. The amount has since been reviewed upward due to the rise in exchange rate.

In fact, the lawmakers budgeted N35 million amidst protest by some members-on the special session for the celebration of their second year anniversary alone, which is to be held inside the House chamber. A large chunk of the money would go to media advertisements and live coverage.

While the lawmakers were able to conclude work on the National

Assembly Budget Office (NABRO), same cannot be said of the e-parliament and e-voting, which the House said would soon kick-off. Again, there are a lot of silent agitations going on among the lawmakers on the so-called internal communications as some often complain that they do not know details of their pay and other entitlements.

All said, in the last two years, a total of 1055 bills were introduced on the floor of the House out of which 159 were passed, while over 500 are still undergoing different processes. 33 of the bills were either withdrawn or rejected by the House, according to the House Deputy Whip, Pally Iriase.

The most important bills passed by the House were the 2015 supplementary budget, last December, the 2016 and 2017 budgets.

Another important bill passed by the House was that on the establishment of the North East Development Commission (NEDC), sponsored by Speaker Dogara.

One major bill considered by the House was the one that proposed 30 years as minimum age requirement for the office of president, governor and senate and 25 years for members of the House.

The bill, sponsored by Rep Tony Nwulu, says Sections 65, 106, 131 and 177 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) are to be further amended to pave way to reduce the age bracket.

Some of the bills the House worked on in the last two years include: A Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, 2004, a Bill for an Act to Facilitate Electronic Transactions in Nigeria and for Other Related Matters, a Bill for an

Act to Establish the Chartered Institute of Public Management of Nigeria, a Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, a Bill for an Act to Establish the Police Procurement Fund and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Oaths Act, Cap. 01 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004.

Others were Corporate Manslaughter Bill, 2015; Medical and Dental Practitioners Amendment Bill, 2015; Peoples Bank of Nigeria Act (repeal) Bill, 2015; National Eye Centre Amendment Bill, 2015; Inland Fisheries Act Amendment Bill, 2015; Public Partnership Regulatory Commission Bill, 2015 and Casino Taxation Amendment Bill, 2015.

There were also bills such as the Fisheries Society of Nigeria Bill, 2016; Traffic Warden Service Bill, 2016; FCT College of Nursing and Midwifery Bill, 2016; Chartered Institute of Facilities Management of Nigeria Bill, 2016; Chartered Institute of Auctioneers of Nigeria Bill, 2016; Nigeria Sports Bill, 2016 and Good Citizens Bill, 2016.

In the area of motions, some of them had to do with the constituents of the individual lawmakers, while few others dealt with serious national issues, dwelling mostly on investigations.

One motion that attracted the attention of observers during the period was the one sponsored by Speaker Dogara on the rehabilitation, reconstruction and resettlement of the displayed persons in the North East.

Dogara went on to sponsor bills such as Hire Purchase Bill; Subsidiary Legislation Bill; Federal Competition Bill; Data Protection Bill; Public Disclosure Bill; the Northeast

Development Commission Bill; Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission Bill and Budget Process Bill.

In what appeared to be a North versus South East affair, majority of the lawmakers rejected a bill to establish the South East Development Commission.

A major controversy that characterised the House in the last two years was that of the 2016 budget where the suspended former chairman of the Appropriation Committee, Rep Abdulmumin Jibrin (APC, Kano), made several allegations of corruption against Dogara; his deputy, Yussuf Suleiman Lasun; Chief Whip, Alhassan Ado Doguwa and Minority Leader, Leo Ogor.

Jibrin later expanded his allegations to include all the 360 members of the House, including himself. He ended up paying dearly for it as he was suspended for 181 legislative days by the House on September 28, last year.

Since Jibrin's suspension, the House appears to be peaceful with Dogara consolidating on his firm grip on every member of the House. But are there no dissenting voices? Of course there are.

A number of the lawmakers were of the view that Jibrin's allegations were swept under the carpet because Dogara was involved. The Jibrin saga, no doubt, tainted further the already battered image of the legislators.

Some of the lawmakers, including a few considered to be Dogara's allies, are not happy with the style of leadership of the speaker as it is said that he does not allow them to have access to him most of the time in his office, but a lawmaker close to the speaker said that was not true.

This development, it was gathered, led to a situation where lawmakers line up to see the speaker during plenary while he is presiding over proceedings of the House.

In the last two years, the lawmakers have set for themselves 11.am as their sitting time, but most of the time, they began sitting at least by 11:20.am, while in some other cases, they started from 11:30.am.

Now that the lawmakers have two years to go, with the last year being an election year, it remains to be seen what they will achieve before their tenure expires.

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In the area of improved legislative executive relations, the House has been doing its best to maintain good relationship with the executive as can be seen from the good understanding the lawmakers have with the presidency.
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Cont. from back page

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| 12 | SB. 144 | A Bill For An Act To Repeal The National Directorate Of Employment Act CAP N28 LFN 2004, And To Establish The National Youth Employment And Development Agency For The Promotion, Coordination And The Employment Of Youths Throughout Nigeria And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Bassey Albert Akpan |
| 13 | SB. 414 | A Bill For An Act To Make Provisions For Mandatory Haemoglobin-Genotype Testing And For Other Connected Matters Thereto | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Ogembe Ahmed |
| 14 | SB. 47 | A Bill For An Act To Give Effect In Accordance With Sections 34(1) Of The 1999 Constitution (As Amended) To Provide For The Prevention And Punishment Of Persons And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Biodun Olujimi |
| 15 | SB. 115 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The Federal Capital Territory Act CAP F6 LFN And For Other Related Matters Connected Therewith | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. David Umaru |
| 16 | SB. 111 | A Bill For An Act To Make Provision For The Regulation And Co-Ordination Of Non-Governmental Organization Of Nigeria And Other Matters Connected Therewith | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Duro Faseyi |
| 17 | SB. 39 | A Bill For An Act To Make Provision For The Maintenance Of Public Safety And Order Through Discouraging Membership Of Criminal Gang And The Suppression Of Criminal Activities And For Other Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Jibrin Barau |
| 18 | SB. 310 | A Bill For An Act To Promote The Protection Of Personal Information Processed By Public And Private Bodies; To Introduce Information Protection Principles So As To Establish Minimum Requirements For The Processing Of Personal Information And Other Matters Connected Thereto | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Stella Oduah |
| 19 | SB. 338 | A Bill For An Act To Regulate The Manufacture, Importation, Distribution And Quality Control Of Fertilizer In Nigeria And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Abdullahi Adamu and 4 others |
| 20 | HB. 1062 | Institute Of Chartered Accountants Of Nigeria (Amendment) Bill | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Linus Okorie |
| 21 | HB. 1063 | National Commission For Colleges Of Agriculture Bill | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Linus Okorie |
| 22 | HB. 1064 | Companies And Allied Matters Act (Repeal And Re-Enactment) Bill | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Gyang Istifanus & Hon. Linus Okorie |
| 23 | HB. 1065 | Payment system management bill | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Chukwudi Jones Onyereri |
| 24 | HB. 1066 | Foreign Exchange (Monitoring And Miscellaneous Provision) Act (Repeal And Re-Enactment) Bill | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Chukwudi Jones Onyereri |
| 25 | HB. 1067 | Federal University Of Education, Nsugbe (Establishment Bill) | 2017 | First reading | Hon. Tony Nwoye |
| 26 | HB. 928 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Chartered Institute Of Directors Of Nigeria To Serve As A Regulatory Body For Persons Serving As Directors In Both Public And Private Sectors, To Determine The Standards Of Knowledge And Skills To Be Attained By Persons Seeking To Become Directors, To Make Provisions For Continuous Training And Development Of Directors, To Ensure Professionalism And Promote Corporate Governance Values In Directors And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Garba Ibrahim Mohammed |
| 27 | HBs. 477, 878, 1053 | A Bill For An Act To Provide For The Governance And Institutional Framework For The Petroleum Industry And To Establish A Fiscal Framework That Encourages Further Investments In The Petroleum Industry Whilst Increasing Accrueable Revenues To The Federal Government Of Nigeria And For Othe Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | (Senate) Hon. Pally Iriase and 11 others, Hon. Victor O. Nwokolo, Hon. Iranola Akinjal Joseph, and Hon. Agbedi Fredrick |

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| 28 | HB. 879 | A bill for an act to provide for a framework relating to petroleum producing host community's participation, cost and benefit sharing among the government, petroleum exploration companies and petroleum host communities and for related matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Victor Nwokolo, Hon. Iranola A. Joseph, Hon. Agbedi Fredrick |
| 29 | HBs. 336, 877 | A Bill And Memorandum On Legal And Regulatory Authorities For The Nigerian Petroleum Industry, To Establish Guidelines For The Operations Of The Upstream And Downstream Sectors And To Provide For The Establishment Of The Legal And Regulatory Framework And Authorities As Well As Guidelines For The Operation Of The Upstream And Downstream Sectors Of The Nigerian Petroleum Industry And For Connected Purpose | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Daniel Reyenieju and 11 others, Hon. Victor O. nwokolo, Hon. Iranola A. Joseph and Hon. Agbedi Fredrick |
| 30 | HBs. 509 and 907 | A Bill For An Act To Provide For Project Continuity By Successive Government At All Levels To Make Provision For A New Government To Complete The Projects And Policies Initiated By Its Predecessor Before Embarking On New Ones To Discourage Abandonment Of Projects And Policies Initiated By Its Predecessor Before Embarking On New Ones To Discourage Abandonment Of Projects Throughout The Country And To Provide For The Continuity Of Government Projects To Provide For The Establishment Of Government Infrastructural Projects Both At States And Federal Levels To Ensure Stability And Continuity In Economic Development To Meet International Best Practices And For Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Lovette Idisi, Hon. Enitan Dolapo Badru |
| 31 | SB. 227 | A bill for an act to amend the national lottery act 2005 to make provisions for effective operation of lottery in Nigeria and for other related matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Obinna Ogba |
| 32 | SB. 424 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Chartered Institute Of Directors Of Nigeria To Serve As A Regulatory Body For Persons Serving As Directors In Both Public And Private Sectors, To Determine The Standards Of Knowledge And Skills To Be Attained By Persons Seeking To Become Directors, To Make Provisions For Continuous Training And Development Of Directors, To Ensure Professionalism And Promote Corporate Governance Values In Directors And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Ike Ekweremadu |
| 33 | SB. 308 | A bill for an act to establish a correction, reformation, and reintegration centre to provide support services for prisons in the area of reformation, reintegration and youthful offender programming and for related matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Gershom Bassey |
| 34 | HB. 381 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Federal University Of Petroleum Resources, Effurun And For Other Related Matters Connected Thereto | 2017 | Third reading | Hon. Monguno Tahir Mohammed |
| 35 | HB. 702 | A bill for an act to provide for the establishment of the national institute for cancer research and treatment and for connected purposes | 2017 | Third reading | Hon. Monguno Tahir Mohammed |
| 36 | HB. 1056 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The Maritime Operations Co - Ordinating Board Act, Cap. M4, Laws Of The Federation Of Nigeria, 2004 Reconstituting The Maritime Operations Co-Ordinating Board For Effective Control Of All Maritime Operations In Nigeria's Territorial Waters And The Exclusive Economic Zone, Create The Maritime Security Fund, Establish Anti-Piracy Offences And For Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Abiante Awaji-Inombek Dagomie |
| 37 | HB. 644 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Nigerian Communications Satellite Corporation Empowered To Engage In, Purchase And Otherwise Acquire Or Take Over The Assets, Business, Associated And Or Relating To The Satellite Communications Industry And For Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta |
| 38 | HB. 985 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The National Emergency Management (Establishment, Etc) Act, Cap. N34, Laws Of The Federation Of Nigeria, 2004 To Include Local Governemtn Chairmen In The State Committee And For Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Joseph Edionwele |

BILLS UPDATE (JUNE, 2017)

Compiled by CISLAC

| S/N | BILL NO | BILL NAME | YEAR | STAGE | SPONSOR |
|-----|----------------|---|------|----------------|---|
| 1. | HB. 637 | A Bill For An Act To Establish A Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Delta State And To Make Comprehensive Provisions For Its Due Management And Administration And Or Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Daniel Reyenieju |
| 2 | HB. 975 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Federal Capital Territory Area Council Service Commission To Provide A Legal Framework For The Regulation Of The Employment And Working Conditions Of Area Council Staff With A View Of Professionalizing The FCT Area Council Service And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Uzoma Nkem Abonta, Hon. Samuel Ikon |
| 3 | HB. 910 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Sustainable Development Fund Charged With The Responsibility For Imposing, Operating, And Managing The Fund For The Attainment Of Sustainable Development Goals In Nigeria And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Abdullahi Umar Faruk |
| 4 | HB. 956 | A Bill For An Act To Make Provision For Entrenchment In Nigerians, A Civic Responsibility Behavioural Pattern, Promotion Of Constitutional Knowledge And Rights, As Well As Ensure Orderliness, Equity, Fairness And Justice In The Distribution Of Service And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Abubakar Amuda Kannike G. |
| 5 | HBs. 345 & 373 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The Examination Malpractices Act, Cap. E. 15, Laws Of The Federation Of Nigeria 2004 To Vest Further Jurisdiction In Other Courts To Try Offences Committed Under The Act, And To Review The Same And Equal Punishment And Penalty Regime Provided In The Act, And Also To Confer The States And The Fct High Courts With Jurisdiction To Entertain Cases Of Violation Of The Act And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Ayuba Muhammed Bello and Hon. Aminu Suleiman |
| 6 | HB. 915 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The South -East Development Commission Charged With The Responsibility, Among Other Things, To Receive And Manage Fund From Allocation Of The Federation Account For The Development, Reconstruction, And Rehabilitation Of Roads, Houses, And Other Infrastructure, As Well As Tackle The Menace Of Poverty, Ecological Problems And Any Other Related Environmental Or Developmental Challenges In The South East States And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred and 42 others |
| 7 | HB. 1032 | A Bill For An Act To Establish The Nigeria Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Delta State And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa |
| 8 | HB. 838 | A Bill For An Act To Regulate The Profession Of Agriculture And To Make Provisions For The Establishment, Functions And Administrative Of Nigerian Institute Of Agriculturist And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno - Monguno and 1 other |
| 9 | HB. 916 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The National Centre For Agricultural Mechanization Act, Cap. N13, Laws Of The Federation Of Nigeria, 2004 To Provide For Effective And Efficient Repairs And Maintenance Of Agricultural Equipment And For Other Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Sergius Oseasochie Ogun |
| 10 | HB. 983 | A bill for an act to facilitate the development of Nigeria's capital market by enabling the conversion and re-registration of the Nigerian stock exchange from a company limited by guarantee to a public company limited by shares and for other related matters | 2017 | Second reading | Hon. Yusuf Ayo Tajudeen |
| 11 | SB. 64 | A Bill For An Act To Amend The Central Bank Of Nigeria (CBN) Act, CAP C4 LFN, 2007 To Ensure Transparency And Accountability In The Operations Of The Bank And Subject Its Intervention Advances To The Approval Of The National Assembly And For Related Matters | 2017 | Second reading | Sen. Rose Oko |

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