

CISLAC urges Collective Response to the Plights of IDPs

Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has carried out assessment of IDP situations in various parts of the country in the past one year and is working towards organizing a national summit on Internally Displaced Persons.

CISLAC assessment notes the following:

1. In recent times, the recurring nature of numerous internal conflicts and natural disasters have rendered thousands homeless without means of livelihood to suffer a lot of depravity and other forms of hardship including loss of income from inability to work in places where they are relocated as Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) across the country.
2. The vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant women and the aged are persistently kept under trees and in uncompleted houses and left uncared for; as against the African Union Internally Displaced Persons Convention, which sets out the obligation of member states (including Nigeria) to protect and assist IDPs in meeting their basic needs.
3. Presently, Nigeria lacks accurate, exact or reliable records of internally displaced persons across the country, and thus backpedalling effective inclusion of IDPs related issues in the national developmental planning.
4. The Nigeria Government set up a Technical Working Group (TWG) on a National Policy on Internally Displaced Persons. The work of the TWG has since been concluded in 2013 and validation done yet the same government is yet to have a National Policy on IDPs to tackle the ever increasing rate and problems of incidence of IDPs
5. Despite the growing nature of various ministries and agencies saddled with the responsibilities to cater for IDPs have failed in their mandates as a result of inability to build up an accurate data and policy guidelines of internally displaced persons.
6. Some state governments are reluctant to resettle the displaced persons in the affected communities or provide the requisite security that would enable them to safely return to their homes hence issues of durable solutions are not factored in IDPs management.
7. Civil society and many charitable organisations have in several occasions raised alarm about the slow response and neglect by government as well as the abject poverty and human suffering in the numerous IDPs Camps across the Federation.
8. Inadequate consultation prior to intervention by relevant agencies working on IDPs with the existing traditional institutions in the affected areas on the required manner intervention and selection of significant philanthropists to assist in humanitarian support.

CISLAC recommends as follows:

1. Workable efforts by the government to put in place effective National Policy on IDPs without further delay; and timely development of database system on IDPs and generate up-to-date data for use in national planning for IDPs.
2. Appreciative efforts by relevant stakeholders including government, civil society and the media through establishment of effective early warning systems and proactive measures to reduce disaster risks and prevent and resolve conflicts in any form to mitigate the causes of displacement across the Federation.
3. Streamlining IDPs related issues in thematic focus of various civil society organisations to achieve well-informed policy makers, community and individuals on IDPs and tireless interrogation of the mandates of related established Ministries and Agencies for positive change.
4. Effective implementation of the existing four-year Strategic Implementation Plan of Action developed by the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCRMI) to reposition and professionalize the commission to effectively address IDPs problems in the country.
5. Prompt review of the existing mandates of NCRMI by the National Assembly to reflect new challenges and trends in forced displacement management such as the creation of a Humanitarian Trust Fund Raising Unit to address funding problems.
6. Rapid provision of sufficient means of livelihood in terms of food supplies and medicine (giving consideration to the ongoing Ebola virus outbreak) to mitigate the plights of displaced persons, especially women, children and the elderly.
7. Institute adequate plans for employment generation, skills acquisition in different trades, agricultural schemes, small scale enterprises as well as education and reintegration programmes for displaced persons; and provision of micro-finance soft loans to set up new businesses or petty trades to achieve successful reintegration and finding durable solutions.
8. Concerted efforts by government, civil society and the media to conduct and encourage participations in programmes and projects aimed at ensuring peaceful coexistence among individuals and local communities across the country to avert persistent humanitarian disasters.

Signed:

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