PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC/ERA-FoEN urges Concerted Efforts for the Passage of NTCB

As the world marks 2014 ‘World No Tobacco Day’ and rallies against the global loss of about 6 million lives annually to tobacco use, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) and Environmental Right Action- Friend of Earth Nigeria (ERA-FoEN) observed that:

1. While Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS) report remains a major essential benchmark in Nigeria towards tobacco regulation, in 2012, the report revealed that in Nigeria 29.3% of adults (6.4 million adults) were exposed to tobacco smoke when visiting restaurants; and 51.4% of adults believed smoking causes stroke.

2. Delay in passage of National Tobacco Control Bill by the National Assembly has threatened efforts of tobacco control stakeholders to save Nigerians from dreadful effects of tobacco use.

3. In 2010, the World Health Report indicated that a 50% increase in tobacco excise taxes would generate a little more than US$ 1.4 billion in additional funds in 22 low-income countries; and if allocated to health, government health spending could increase by 50%.

4. Various indications by National Coalition on Tobacco Control revealed that Nigeria has the opportunity to focus on preventions, stop imitations, and further decrease prevalence rates.

5. World Health Organisation (WHO), Campaign for Tobacco Free-Kids (CTFK) has worked tirelessly in collaboration with relevant stakeholders to reduce the nation’s burden of diseases and deaths caused by tobacco use, and protect both present and future generation from devastating health, social, environmental and economic consequences of tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco use.

6. Nigeria’s attempts at passing a comprehensive National Tobacco Control Bill into law has been faced with series of challenges such as intense lobbying, enticement schemes and donation of dreadful facilities among other things by tobacco industries.

7. In spite of the global alarms on the dangers of tobacco use, tobacco industries have continued to strengthen lobbies in form of donations and scholarship schemes with the state governments and tertiary institutions respectively, mainly to lure them for political and social advantages.

8. Apart from the States’ governments, tobacco companies have continued to lure tobacco cultivating farmers with series of enticements to sustain and increase their support in tobacco cultivations.

9. Instead of moral support, proper up-binging, good education and respect for Child Rights, hundreds of under-aged pupils are enslaved by parents or guardians to work on
tobacco farms across the country, primarily to fulfill high demands by tobacco industries as against AU Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights which promotes right to live and personal integrity; Section 33 and 35 of 1999 Constitution of Federal Republic of Nigeria which promotes rights to live and personal liberty respectively; and 2003 International Labour Organisation (ILO) Conventions on Child Rights.

CISLAC/ERA-FoEN recommended as follows:

1. Prompt effort by National Assembly to fast-track the passage of comprehensive National Tobacco Control Bill in accordance with WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).
2. Intensified and continuous awareness among policy sponsors and policy champions of tobacco control in Nigeria including inter-ministerial committee; and continuous pressure by the National Coalition on Tobacco Control to fast-track the passage of comprehensive National Tobacco Control Bill in accordance with Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).
3. Increased excise taxes by government on tobacco as cost-effective measure towards tobacco control.
4. Continuous sensitization and advocacy by the National Coalition on Tobacco Control on the dangers associating with tobacco control use.
5. Concerted efforts by well-meaning Nigerians to canvass against acceptance of dreadful donations and enticements by their State governments from tobacco industries.
6. Appreciative efforts by all levels of government to domesticate AU Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and enforce constitutional fundamental human rights including WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to re-install human rights and integrity and abort child labour.
7. Massive sensitization awareness by National Coalition on Tobacco Control to educate and enlighten tobacco cultivating farmers on the dangers and health implications of tobacco cultivation.
8. Effective infrastructural support and funding by all levels of government for agricultural diversification and extension as alternatives to tobacco cultivation.
9. Raising awareness on the duties and responsibilities of the appropriate regulator(s) of tobacco control product; and aggressive advocacy through implementation of strong graphic warning label to stop young people initiation into tobacco use and motivate smokers to quit.

Signed:

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