PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC DECRIES THE SLOW PACE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF OIL AND GAS SECTOR REFORMS

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) decry the slow pace of implementation of the Federal Government’s Short and Medium Term Priorities to grow Nigeria’s Oil & Gas Industry 2015–2019, fancifully labelled the “7 Big Wins”.

We recall that in October 2016, the document was released by the Ministry of Petroleum Resources and launched by the President with much fanfare and media hype. Then we had commended the Federal Government but cautioned to ensure that it does not become another beautiful document that would not be implemented.

CISLAC observes that already there are indications of a lag in implementation. For instance, under the first Big Win, Policy and Regulation, the section on Fiscal Reform Policy proposes to collaborate with National Assembly to conclude and pass the Petroleum Industry Reform Bill and Petroleum Fiscal Reform Bill by December 2016. We are at the end of the first quarter of 2017 and there are still appear to be no clear paths to the passage of any legislation.

We also note that under the section on National Oil Policy, there is the commitment to develop policies and applicable legislation to underpin reforms by the near term end of 2016. Again, this is obviously past the time without perceptible or tangible outcomes.

We recall that CISLAC was at the forefront of advocating that this administration provide for Nigerians, a clear direction for reforms in the sector with which her performance can be measured by 2019. Consequently, the release of the document was applauded as it was comprehensive with priorities, implementation strategies and key performance indicators with timelines. It is therefore disheartening that not much has been done beyond the presidential launch.

CISLAC notes that much of what is needed to meet these specific commitments does not require funds and so the absence of a budget for 2017 cannot be an excuse for the non-implementation of the reforms enunciated in the document. The process of drafting a Petroleum Industry Legislation which has been in the works for over 10 years should not take so long and does not require so much funding. The passage of the law was indeed a campaign promise of this government before the 2015 elections and is therefore, not anything new.

We are worried that in spite of government’s acknowledgement of the huge resources lost by the uncertainty in the sector due to non-passage of the PIGB, there is still foot-dragging on this matter. This is in spite of the fact that the NASS has provided leadership and inspiration by processing a Bill which has gone through a public hearing.

CISLAC therefore calls on the Executive arm through the Ministry of Petroleum Resources to expedite the process of implementing the 7 Big Wins so that results can be achieved within the prescribed timelines.

The reform proposal must not be allowed to end up as another beautiful document not worth more than its flamboyant and colourful packaging. If change will indeed begin with the
government, it should be demonstrated by her doing things differently and this should include implementing policies she has made for herself.

CISLAC is committed to continuing to work with all Nigerians to demand accountability from this government to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance in the extractive sector, so that revenues from natural resources will translate into improved welfare for our citizens.

Signed:
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