PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC URGES PRIORITIZATION AND REVISITING THE PASSAGE OF THE PIGB

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre urges the National Assembly and the Executive to revisit and prioritize the passage of the PIGB into law.

We recall that the National Assembly had passed the PIGB and sent it to the president for Assent. However, while the legislature was on recess, the president withheld his assent to the Bill raising some issues he was said to be uncomfortable with.

CISLAC recollects that the progress recorded so far in getting a law to regulate the oil and gas sector and deepen the reforms proposed by this administration has been a result of the initiative, proactiveness, doggedness and resilience of the two chambers of the NASS, which is quite commendable.

It is common knowledge that the PIGB being considered originated as a private member Bill. It is also on record that both Chambers had set up a Joint Committee on the PIB to fast-track the passage of the PIGB and other components of the PIB. The result is the successful passage of the PIGB. We however note that in spite of all the efforts that went into the Bill and the opportunities provided during the Public hearing, the president has raised some observations which made him withhold his assent.

CISLAC notes that the president has returned up to 15 Bills to the NASS for review before assent. We note with delight that upon resumption on October 9, 2018, the NASS had commenced action on several of the returned Bills. The request for virement and funding for the INEC, as well as, the Electoral Act amendment, are worthy of note.

As we call on the NASS to also re-visit and prioritize the passage of the PIGB by addressing the genuine concerns of the president and re-sending it to him for assent as soon as possible, we also call on the President, through relevant channels to be proactive and liaise with the relevant Committees of the NASS, through constructive dialogue, to ensure that a Bill that will adequately address the challenges in the sector, serve the interest of Nigerians and receive presidential assent is passed.

This is not only because the Bill is a baby of the NASS which should not be allowed to die, but because of the damage its non-passage continues to cause in the sector upon which the nation’s economy is most dependent and it feeds perfectly into the president’s avowed commitment to stamping out corruption in critical sectors of our national life and his aspiration to mobilize sufficient revenues to fund development, diversify the economy and implement his administration’s Economic Recovery and Growth Plan. This will distinguish this government from all previous ones which only paid lip service to the promotion of transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

The million being lost in revenues and investments and other positive multiplier effects accruable from the sector can be avoided though the passage and assent to the PIGB and all other components of the PIB. This is in the light of subsistent budget deficit, rising debt profile, wide infrastructural gaps and bleak future revenue profile from the sector.

CISLAC also calls on the executive to engage with the NASS to expedite action on the outstanding components addressing fiscal frameworks, host and impacted communities and sector administration issues. This is so that they can become law before the elections in 2019.
CISLAC and all well-meaning stakeholders are optimistic that this session of the NASS will conclude what they have started and contribute to supporting the executive so that this government can fulfil its promise to the Nigerian people as it relates to the passage of the PIB.

We call on all stakeholders not to relent until this become a reality and we are committed to sustaining the advocacy as our contribution to bequeathing to generations to come, a nation where resources from natural resources benefit all Nigerians.

Signed:

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