PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC DEMANDS JUDICIOUS UTILIZATION OF LEGISLATIVE TIME UPON NASS RESUMPTION

As members of the National Assembly resume from Christmas and New Year vacations on Wednesday for legislative activities, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) observed that:

1. In Nigeria, apart from various disregard experienced at the National Assembly, year 2014 witnessed series of socio-political unrests greeted by subsequent economic dilapidations attributed to high cost of cost of governance, fall in price of crude in the international markets, and the proposed several austerity to augment the nation’s revenue.
2. Members of National Assembly are left with little time to effectively fulfill their electoral mandates, considering the upcoming general elections to seriously pay attention and address some critical pending issues affecting the citizens and nation at large.
3. As at December 2014, 2015 Appropriation Bill was presented before the two Chambers by Minister of Finance, Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala; while in response, the Chambers promised to embark on critical scrutiny of the Bill and take informed and appropriate decision on resumption.
4. All attempts to get Petroleum Industrial Bill (PIB) passed have waned considerably coupled with collective shifted attention towards upcoming elections, neglecting the negative consequences such neglect will pose to growth and significant progress of the oil and gas sector.
5. Many other important Bills including the Comprehensive National Tobacco Bill, which suffered a setback under the Sixth National Assembly remains at the corridor of both Chambers awaiting passage despite the horrific health damage many Nigerians have suffered from tobacco smoking.
6. A meeting with the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and stakeholders slated to discuss current burning issues on 2015 general elections and to proffer necessary solutions was recently postponed by the House of Representatives Committee on Electoral Matters owing to alleged ill-health of the INEC chairman, Prof Attahiru Jega.

Recommendations

CISLAC therefore calls on the National Assembly to:

1. Judiciously utilize the legislative time with maximum level of objectivity and avoidance of unwarranted debates that can jeopardize Nigeria’s democracy to achieve meaningful socio-economic and political development in the country.
2. Timely scrutinize deliberate and consider 2015 Appropriation to cater for the nation’s financial needs for effective growth and development; and ensure the Bill reflects Nigeria commitment to international agreement to key sectors such as education and agriculture.

3. Promptly pass the long waiting Petroleum Industrial to curb endless corrupt practices, promote transparency and accountability, and enhance significant growth and progress in the nation’s oil and gas sector.

4. Fast-track the passage of the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Bill in accordance with Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) to save Nigerians from avoidable deaths and diseases associating with tobacco use; and other pending Bills before the National Assembly.

5. Immediately reschedule the postponed meeting with INEC and stakeholders to brainstorm and address important issues affecting 2015 general elections with appreciative efforts to implement recommendations for the maximum benefit of the citizen and nation at large.

6. Adopt and uphold proper codes of conduct of patriotic parliamentarians through democratic process that allows for public participation; and never relent in their spirited efforts to achieve meaningful democracy in the country.

Signed

_Auwal Ibrahim Musa Rafsanjani_
Executive Director of CISLAC