COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF A ONE DAY CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON PUBLIC HEARING IN THE STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY ORGANIZED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MAC ARTHUR FOUNDATION, HELD AT CHIMCHERRY HOTEL, KADUNA ON THE 21ST OF MAY 2015.

PREAMBLE:
Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) organized a One Day Civil Society Capacity Building Workshop on Public Hearing in the State House of Assembly. The meeting aimed at enhancing the capacity of Civil Society groups in Kaduna State with required practical skills and experience to independently engage policy and legislative process, especially on issues relating to Public Hearing in the State House of Assembly. The meeting drew about 20 participants from various Civil Society Organizations. The meeting featured Mallam Nura Maaji and Chioma Blessing Kanu as the lead presenters and other discussants. After exhaustive deliberations on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBSERVATION

1. Civil society groups are invited by the state house of assembly to participate in Public Hearing process but sometimes their inputs are not considered.
2. Public Hearing is organized by the legislature to galvanize expert opinion on legislation and to gather sufficient information on proposed piece of legislation.
3. Certain key stakeholders in the incoming administration in Kaduna state have previously shown support for civil society and are likely to create enabling environment for CSOs to engage legislative issues.
4. Lack of express passage into law by the State House of Assembly of Acts already passed at the national assembly; same Acts undergo legislative processes as though state originated and may still not be passed into law.
5. The non-compliant attitude of some House of Assembly clerks deprives civil society groups from following through with legislative processes at the House of Assembly.
6. Absence of Civil Society Desk Officer at the State House of Assembly to coordinate legislative activities and galvanizes citizens’ input into the legislative processes.
7. Financial constraint remains an impeding factor threatening tracking and monitoring effort by civil society groups throughout legislative process.
8. The media involvement in legislative processes is very low and could hasten legislative processes if strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants recommended the following:

1. Sustained and continuous advocacy to ensure enabling environment for civil society inputs to be utilized at public hearings and other legislative processes.
2. Evidence based research and harmonization of civil society positions are essential to the legislative processes.
3. Sustaining evidence based advocacy and maintaining communication with the in-coming administration is necessary for enabling environment for civil society groups to gain in-road to legislative processes.
4. Reviving civil society groups to build partnership and synergy in order to harmonize efforts for advocacy on the legislature for domestication of national laws.
5. Continuous follow-up with the clerks of the assembly is necessary to make certain that inputs are intact and taken into consideration in the final stages of the legislative processes.
6. Building partnership to mobilize resources and expertise for public hearing is essential to sustaining civil society inputs into the legislature.
7. Civil society desk officer in the state house of assembly needs to be instituted by the new administration to sustain and strengthen civil society engagement with the legislature.
8. Effective utilization and training of legislative reporters is important for the passage of pieces of legislation at the state assemblies.

CONCLUSION:

The participants expressed appreciation to CISLAC for embarking on the training and MacArthur Foundation for providing the support for the training organized to enhance the capacity of civil society groups in Kaduna state with required skills to engage policy and legislative processes. Participants further wished CISLAC could facilitate providing support for the Kaduna CSOs wishing to engage Public Hearing to enable them make inputs into the legislative processes.

Signed:
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