CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC)

PRESS RELEASE

Cost of Governance: CISLAC Challenges Legislators on National Dialogue

Following the recent one day dialogue session on cost of governance in Nigeria organised by the CISLAC, we have observed as followed:

1. The issues raised in a paper presented by Mrs. Obi Ezekwesili at the Dialogue have generated several debates both at national and international levels that grossly misunderstood by some members of the National Assembly.
2. There has been general consensus that the cost of governance in Nigeria is one of the highest in the world, constituting a major challenge socio-economic development and well-being of the citizens.
3. Prior to the one day Dialogue, in recent times, Cost of Governance and jumbo payment to legislators have dominated national political discourses including the media such as *Daily Independent of Wednesday, March 13th, 2013*, which bemoaned wasteful spending and improper utilisation of resources by government; *Bussinessday of 11 March 2013*, which revealed how the Legislator spent N5.2bn per Bill in two years; *Punch of August 14, 2013*, containing several critic s on the same issue.
4. Recalled, several attempts have been made towards the reduction of Cost of Governance in the country such as CBN Governor, Mallam Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, who has recently showed concerns over the 70% of the nation’s revenue being expended on recurrent expenditure in country, as reported by *THISDAY of 18 December, 2012*; and the 25% deduction by Nigerian lawmakers from Nigerian National Budget, as reported by *The Guardian of May 20, 2012*.
5. Also, among other famous opinions advocating against high cost of governance in the Nigeria is that of Nuhu Ribadu, who had suggested drastic reduction in expenses associated with all tiers of government and needless for a full time National Assembly, as reported by *BussinessNews of November 7, 2012*.
6. Recurrent expenditure has continued to outstrip capital votes in Nigeria; and development would remain a mirage if recurrent expenditures continue to surpass capital budgetary allocations.
7. Despite the public outcries, federal government has showed inadequate commitment towards poverty eradication, educational and infrastructural development, healthcare delivery in the country.
8. Whopping payments to political appointees such as president, ministers, lawmakers, Special Assistance, have become a burden to the country in a critical era of socio-
economic challengers including rising poverty, dilapidated healthcare delivery, bastardised educational sector, among other problems demanding urgent attentions.

We therefore recommend that:

1. Rather than embarking on unconstructive rejoinders, the legislators should collaborate with Civil Society and initiate a national dialogue to present before Nigerians the facts and figures stating the total sums expend by the National Assembly from the nation’s budget since 1999 to date.

2. To encourage transparency and accountability, National Assembly should avoid making its deductions from national appropriation, a matter of secrecy.

3. Committed efforts should be made by legislators to ensure accountability and transparency in the nation’s economic and financial affairs.

4. In order to avert wasteful spending and economic mismanagement, there is need for continuous dialogues and discussions on Cost of Governance.

5. The ongoing unconstructive arguments are detrimental to the national democratic development and should not be allowed to permeate the nation’s political landscape.

6. There is need for judicious utilization of national resources to deliver and enhance welfare of the citizens which is primary purpose of governance, rather than wasteful spending and financial mismanagement.

7. CISLAC as an organisation working on constructive advocacy and legislative engagement would be glad to collaborate with the National Assembly to promote transparency and accountability and reduce Cost of Governance in the country.

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