PRESS RELEASE

CISLAC commends FG on new tobacco tax regime

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) commends the much awaited development in the nation’s tax regime with the recently approved amendment by President Muhammadu Buhari to the excise duty rates with tobacco constituting a major priority.

While we applaud the giant stride by the Federal Government, we are not unaware that the development will not only discourage consumption of dreaded tobacco products but also mitigate the devastating impacts—health, social and economic of tobacco use on the citizens and its growing burdens on limited and already overstretched public resources.

We are delighted that the development is not only in line with the Government’s commitment to safe and secure life of every Nigeria but also the overarching recommendations made at the end of two-day workshop of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Tobacco Taxation in Nigeria organized by the Federal Ministry of Health in collaboration with CISLAC under aegis of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) project in Keffi, Nasarawa state from the 23rd – 24th of November 2017.

We recall and commend critical submissions from exhaustive brainstorming sessions among policy makers and tobacco taxation experts fully present at the Workshop including Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH), Federal Ministry of Finance, Federal Ministry of budget and Planning, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment (FMITI), Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the Media, International Development Partners, and the University of Cape Town, South Africa, that brought the holistic recommendations to the limelight.

We find it worthy of a note that the upward review of excise duty rates for tobacco is in consonant with various provisions and recommendations by the World Health Organisation (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), an evidence-based treaty that reaffirms the right of all people to the highest standard of health.

We are convinced that the development will enhance the Government’s fiscal revenues, reduce the health hazards associated with tobacco-related diseases, and grossly sustain recorded gains on tobacco control in the country.

Considering other outstanding recommendations that are as well paramount to the implementation of the National Tobacco Control Act 2015, we reiterate the need to fast track the process to ratify protocol to Eliminate illicit trade in Tobacco Product and adopt a tracking system in order to enhance revenue collection efficiency by preventing leakages and smuggling of tobacco products.

We demand immediate operationalization of the Tobacco Control Fund in line with Section 8 of the National Tobacco Control Act 2015 in order to fulfil the objectives of the NYC Act,
aid the activities of the Tobacco Control Unit (TCU) and National Tobacco Control Committee (NATOCC).

Signed:

**Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**
Executive Director, CISLAC