PREAMBLE

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre, CISLAC, having observed the disturbing trends, events and occurrences in our dear nation; noting the responses from government, groups and different stakeholders in the Nigerian Project; worried that politics, ethno-religious sentiments and grandstanding rather that reason, restraint and desire for the common good has characterised and greatly influenced the utterances, actions and activities of various individuals, groups and organizations; concerned that the situation could escalate and degenerate into anarchy and jeopardise the lives and property of innocent citizens and our collective aspiration for a peaceful and just society and mindful of the ultimate effect of this on out national unity as we approach the elections in 2019, have found it necessary to make the following statement:

A. INCREASINGLY THREATS TO NATION’S PEACE AND SECURITY

Although conflicts between farmers and pastoralists are not new phenomena as these goes back to the earliest written records and myth symbolised in many cultures, in many parts of the world. Over the years, there has been a progressive deterioration in the symbiotic relationship between farmers and the pastoralists, and conflict have become routine events in Nigeria. However, in the last few years, the nature of the conflicts shifted from the natural resource/conflicts over access to resources to a political and religious - like, targeting at genocide.

HERDSMEN-FARMERS’ CONFLICTS

Key observations:

1. In Nigeria, major introduced policies to solve the problems of farmers and pastoralists have hitherto failed.

2. Non-implementations of Panels and commissions of inquiries on conflicts between pastoralists and sedentary communities.

3. The responsibility of government in protecting the lives and properties of farming groups in some places and pastoral group in other places has completely been neglected.

4. The collapse of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms to challenge negative attitude and atrocities further pave a way for the duo to take law into their hands.

5. Kidnappings, cattle rusting and arm banditry has been traced to pastoralists that lost livelihood through conflicts.

Key Recommendations:
1. There is the need for policy makers to shift paradigm from conflict resolution to conflict prevention strategy. Conflicts could be prevented through collective understanding and acceptance of causes of conflict with inclusion of all resource users in the process. This could follow by establishment of rules over natural resource use and enforcing them, collective acceptance of such rules and continuous negotiation on divergent demands.

2. Collective understanding and acceptance of causes of conflict with inclusion of all resource users in the process, collective acceptance of such rules and continuous negotiation on divergent demands.

3. Providing legal assistance to conflicting parties and educating the parties on channels of challenging injustice including courts, police, army, vigilantee groups, traditional leaders and even the pastoral and farmers associations.

4. Overcome widespread marginalisation of both farmers in some societies and pastoralists in other places in policy making and implementations.

5. Livelihood support to conflict affected households.

6. Creating alternative income generating activities to pastoralists through identifying investment opportunities for pastoral group, followed by creation of access to credit, government intervention and training in order to enable pastoral people pursue the investment opportunities.

7. We call on the Executive, led by the president to be proactive, prompt and decisive in dealing with the pastoralists-farmer crisis engulfing the nation before it escalates to jeopardise our national unity, peace and security. They should initiate a consultative process with the state governments, to develop a long term policy that will address the concerns of all parties involved. They should be focused and not be overwhelmed by the distractions that the 2019 elections will present.

**RISING KIDNAPPING**

**Key observations:**

1. We are worried over the increasingly kidnapping for ransom in the country where some victims are made to pay whopping sums to secure their releases while others are killed in the process.

2. We are not unaware that the continued feeling of insecure has passed a threat to both national and international investment opportunities. It is even more terrifying that the security agencies appear helpless in addressing the situation and curbing this menace.

3. Revelations from Evans, the arrested kidnapper, showed that complicity and collusion by some elements within the security establishment, contributes to the seeming invincibility of these criminal groups. The security agencies must be proactive and deploy intelligence to check this criminality to an end the impunity.
4. We are shocked at the resurgence of insurgency in the North East with deaths being recorded daily, villages raided and security formations attacked. This is in spite of repeated assurances that the war against the terrorists is over.

Recommendation:

As any group that retains the capacity of unleashing deaths and terror on our compatriots deserves greater attention and should attract more than media statements, we call on the military to employ all the resources at its disposal to put an end to this daily harassment of fellow Nigerians.

POLITICAL ECONOMY OF NIGERIA SECURITY

CISLAC has noted with concern that a political economy may have developed around the security challenges in Nigeria, with the effect that certain elements may be deriving financial benefits from the prevailing state of insecurity, especially from the resources budgeted for the provision of effective internal security.

ISSUES AFFECTING STATE AND COMMUNITY POLICING

Key observations:

1. The urgent need to establish a State and community policing system is triggered by some factors which include the glaring deficiency in police-civilian ratio. In Nigeria, there are 370,000 police officers and a police-to-civilian ratio of 1 to 400.

2. It is grossly inadequate for 370,000 police officers to police about 170million population. This highly negates the United Nations recommendations of 222 policemen per 100, 000 citizens.

Recommendations:

1. Because of the deficiency in police manpower, the basic essence of State and community policing is to complement the efforts of the Federal Police. The advantages of State and community policing cannot be over-emphasized. One, the community is policed by its members who are very familiar with the environment.

2. Second, members of the State and community police know the character of members of the community to their fingertips. This will go a long way and make it very easy for the identification of people with questionable character in the States/communities.

ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR POLICE

Key observation:

The Police need urgent reform and transformation. It is indeed true that out of its N31.6billion allocation in the 2017 budget, only less N10billion has so far been
released to the Nigeria Police, then it can be said that the nation is not yet ready for effective policing. This is grossly affecting welfare, psyche and morale of personnel.

**Recommendation:**

If Nigeria Police is to serve and protect with integrity, then it must be properly and adequately funded. Police stations and barracks across the country are in need of rehabilitation, while the welfare of Nigeria Police personnel needs to be prioritized.

**INSURGENCY IN THE NORTH-EAST**

The word, “terrorism” or “insurgent”, never existed in Nigeria’s lexicon until it came knocking at our door steps. However, the Nigerian state has made tremendous gains in taming the deadly sect in the country.

With the recent conflict outbreaks of conflict between herdsmen and farmers, Boko Haram remains the least active threat in terms of number of attacks in recent past. This is an aspect of commendation to security actors with particular reference to the Nigeria Armed Forces.

All efforts applied into achieving this must be adopted to respond to the carnage currently flagged by the herdsmen-farmers across the country.

**B. ANTI-CORRUPTION, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN ASSET RECOVERY**

**Key observations:**

1. We decry the persistently shocking levels of corruption in Nigeria. Since 1960, Nigeria lost an estimated 400 billion USD to unimaginable levels of corruption and embezzlement, mostly stemming from gas and oil revenues. The natural resource ‘curse’ will add to other vast leakages in public spending and revenue collection, which will cost around 37% of GDP by 2030 if rampant graft is not addressed.

2. Nigerians are perplexed by nearly daily occurrence of corruption scandals of seemingly detached political establishment hiding behind impunity and absurd privileges. Conservative estimates indicate that 70% of the nation’s revenue is used to maintain less than 20% of the Nigerian population that are public servants and politicians.

3. It is astonishing to note that Nigeria as one of the richest oil producers in the world cannot lift more than 61% of its citizens out of abject poverty. While around 116 million of Nigerians live one less than 1.25 USD a day, in 2016 Nigeria recorded 23 billionaires with collective wealth reaching almost 78 billion USD and 43 000 individuals owning assets worth at least 1 million
USD. Not all, but too many of these millionaires are public servants who enjoy proceeds of corruption with impunity and even perverted pride.

4. We are worried over the Government’s failure in delivering on anti-corruption commitments made to Nigerians and the international community.

5. We acknowledge achieving important milestones such as the drafting of the first-ever National Anti-Corruption Strategy in 2017. However, nothing or little has been done to put the strategy in the motion. The strategy has not been disclosed to the public, no implementation plan approved and no concrete steps taken. Strategy valid only on the paper will not make any difference.

6. One of the rare successes has been the signing of the Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Bill into Law. This legal provision has sent an important signal to the international partners and has made tangible difference in the exchange of information between Nigerian anti-corruption authorities and their international partners.

7. The Government of Nigeria pocketed an agreement with the Government of Switzerland in December 2017 during Washington summit on asset recovery that 321 million USD will be returned to Nigeria. However, further 5 billion USD of Nigerian assets are frozen in foreign jurisdictions. This volume of finances would be sufficient to run the projected 2018 budget for almost three months as this figure amounts to 20% of projected Nigerian governmental expenditures in 2018.

8. The stalemate of the Proceeds of Crime Bill, which seeks to regulate the management of recovered assets as well as the rivalry amongst the anti-corruption authorities does not convince the Nigerian public and international partners that recovered assets will not be ‘re-looted’ yet again.

9. It is disappointing to witness that so many corruption cases are not prosecuted till the end and VIP convicts are rarely sentenced on anti-corruption charges. A report by the EFCC claims that in 2016/17, 286 cases were brought to conviction, which would signal a remarkable improvement to 53 convicted cases in 2012 out of 353 court proceedings. However, this nominal improvement disguises the fact that Politically Exposed Persons have been too often acquitted on dubious grounds. Various studies and anecdotal evidence suggest that the justice system is not impartial and not immune to corruption. Some former state governors who have cases to answer have brazenly come back to political reckoning. Judicial officers and judges are not able or willing to apply conviction- and non-conviction based forfeiture of corrupt proceeds.

10. We are concerned to state that while many brave individuals in the anti-corruption agencies charge the corruption empire, the empire strikes back. Anti-corruption agents and civil society activists do not enjoy necessary level of protection and unanimous political support. As a result,
rhetoric, political and even physical attacks threaten the life-and-death fight against corruption in Nigeria.

**Recommendations:**

1. We urge the Government and security agencies to render the highest level of protection and unconditional political and state support to anti-corruption agencies and civil society activists.

2. Whistle-blowers need robust legal provision and assurances from the highest political level that their life is protected and their actions glorified while exposing corruption.

3. International commitments stipulated during the Anti-corruption summit in London in 2016 and anchored in Open Government Partnership must be fulfilled if international community is to be convinced about the seriousness of the this Government to fight corruption.

4. Anti-corruption legal framework must be strengthened through the adoption of the Proceeds of Crime Act and standing laws must be applied to grand corruption as well as petty bribery.

5. Adequate funding and protection to address persistent attacks on anti-corruption operatives.

6. Prompt inauguration of National Procurement Council to curb continued systemic corruption in the nation’s procurement process.

7. Constructive support by the National Assembly in the fight against corruption through the passage of relevant anti-corruption laws such as would promote non conviction based asset recovery methods, protect whistle blowers effectively and empower and resource anti-corruption agencies adequately.

C. STATE OF ECONOMY AND THE LINGERING FUEL SCARCITY SCAM

**Key observations:**

1. We are worried by the on-going endless fuel scarcity rocking the nation and crippling economic activities triggered by lack of sufficient reserve, low clearance speed of petrol at the ports, diversion of products.

2. We are bothered that the reported improvement in the economy is still largely reflected in government figures and statistics. The high level of unemployment at 18.8% generally and 33.10% for youths, backlog of unpaid salaries, epileptic power supply and recently the crisis hardship created by the non-availability of petroleum products are sad reminders of a poorly managed economy.
3. The poor level of budget implementation of the 2017 budget is lamentable. Apart for the delay in the passage of budgets, an implementation level of less than 20% calls for serious concerns. It is bad enough that capital allocations are usually inadequate and frivolous and wasteful provisions are made poor disbursement and utilization only create economic uncertainties and negatively impacts on the welfare of citizens.

4. As at this day, the 2018 budget is not close to being passed and the month of April is being projected for its passage. For a pre-election year, this is a recipe for economic crisis and avenue for corruption and approved spending which could be diverted for political, party or selfish uses by the various MDAs. This must be avoided. This administration promised Nigerian a zero-budget system to promote efficiency, cost-effectiveness and project delivery. This has remained a mirage.

5. We note that Nigeria continues to lose millions of naira due to the absence of a defined legal framework to manage our oil and gas sector. While the welcome the passage of the PIGB by both chambers of the National Assembly, we are mindful of the fact that other relevant and indeed more strategic components of the renowned PIB remains elusive, The Fiscal Framework and the Host Community components are inevitable or the necessary changes and reforms badly needed in the sector. They must therefore be addressed for passage while the momentum in the process to secure presidential assent to the PIGB is sustained.

Recommendations

1. Immediate and holistic action by relevant authority to address discrepancy in the issue of pricing including landing cost and cost of petroleum product.

2. Instituting appropriate mechanism to allow participation of private sector in the importation of petroleum product.

3. We must overhaul our budget making process to make it more open, transparent and result-oriented. The adoption of open budget, open data and open contracting, as committed to in our Open Government Partnership Action Plan must fully take effect as a matter of urgency.

4. We call on the Federal Government to device constructive means and come up with policies that would turn around the economy and make it create opportunities for citizens and enhance their welfare. Recent events surrounding enslavement, dehumanising treatment and subsequent repatriation of Nigerians who sought better lives outside the shores of our land due to the failure of successive administrations should be a wake-up call for this government to place the interest of citizens, especially the youths, in the management of the economy.

5. We call on them to treat the 2018 budget with a sense of urgency. They should scrutinize it vigorously to eliminate all frivolous and wasteful
allocations in it and expedite the process of passage to allow for implementation to commence as soon as possible.

6. They should follow through with the confirmation of all outstanding executive appointments by carrying out constructive and objective scrutiny of appointees without prejudice and political sentiments or selfish interest. This is to ensure that institutions are able to function optimally.

7. We call on them to work with the states Houses of Assembly to ensure a timely conclusion of the constitutional review process to guarantee good governance, local government autonomy and gender equity and social inclusion.

8. They should ensure effective oversight of the MDAs to avoid wastages, leakages, abuse of office and misuse of public funds for any purposes other than serving the interest of Nigerians.

D. 2019 AND THE GROSS VIOLATION OF ELECTORAL PROCESS

Key observations:

1. We are worried by the gross violation of the provisions of Electoral Act arising from improper use of the released electoral time table by politicians and political parties that engage in premature campaign activities as against provisions of Electoral Act.

2. We are not unaware of the persistent violation of various regulations guiding political party financing that has hitherto undermined free, fair and credibility in the electoral process.

3. We are concerned by the dwindling internal democracy across political parties. We not unaware that all forms of electoral malfaisance are committed including undermining selection of candidates within the political parties, vote buying; electoral violence amongst others.

4. While we understand that candidate selection is a vital activity to the existence of any political party, we are disturbed by the spate of party members endorsing candidates outside laid down party constitution resulting in undemocratic processes.

Recommendations:

CISLAC recommends as follows:

1. Imposition of appropriate sanction against perpetrators of electoral violence and electoral fraud to sustain sanity and sanctity while promoting credibility in the nation’s electoral process.

2. Increased citizens’ concern and awareness on the procedure on the selection of candidates by political parties, as the political party structure remains today the only means of engaging in elective position in the country.
3. Strict compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act as Amended in the 2017 in regulating financing activities of political parties.

4. Prompt creation of Interparty Advisory Council across all political parties to promote proper compliance to the provisions of the Electoral Act, dealing with the electoral time released by INEC.

5. Strengthen relevant machineries by INEC with holistic mechanisms to ensure candidates’ imposition, parallel congresses, and undemocratic conduct in political parties are nipped in the bud.

6. Appropriate sanction by INEC against erring political party or politician flouting existing legal provisions campaigning outside electoral time table.

E. RISING POVERTY LEVEL, DILAPIDATED HEALTHCARE SECTOR, AND DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

Key observations:

1. We are worried over the delayed implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national and sub-national levels about three years after the world convened in the United States of America to adopt the 17 Goals.

2. While the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs currently lacks budgetary allocation for implementation of the SDGs, we are concerned by lack of costed strategic plan of action for implementation at national and state levels.

3. While the development of a country is measured by its health indices, the 2017 World Health Statistics places Nigeria’s Maternal Mortality Ratio at 814/100,000 LB with under-5 mortality rate, 108.8/1000LB; and neonatal mortality rate 34.3/1000LB (WHO).

4. We are disturbed that more than three year after the passage of the National Health Act and the provision therewith of 1% of consolidated revenue to fund basic health care package for Nigerians, Nigeria continues to lose women and children from childbirth, malnutrition or immunization related issues.

5. We are not unaware of the inadequate budgetary allocation, delay in release and poor utilisation of the existing funding for the health sector, despite the 2007 Abuja Declaration requiring each member state to allocate at least 15% of her total budget to health. We are aware that most countries that were signatories to this declaration across Africa have already keyed into this provision and exceeding the 15%.

6. We find it worrisome that Nigeria is yet to reach as little as 7% of over 2.1million Nigerian under-5 severely acute malnourished with the immediate
need for the procurement of ready-to-se-therapeutic food by the government for their survival.

**Recommendations:**

CISLAC recommends as follows:

1. Increased policy focus on the implementation of SDGs at national and state levels through the development of an all-encompassing strategic focus that will include sub-national interventions which will be harmonized and budgeted for implementation.

2. Holistic implementation of the SDGs to address the nation’s developmental challenges such as poverty, hunger, poor healthcare system and education, inequalities, instability, injustice, weak institutions, and corruption.

3. Fulfilment of various commitments by the government including the 15% budgetary allocation to the health sector to promote adequate, accessible and affordable healthcare system.

4. Harnessing local potential for adequate and sustainable resource mobilisation for financing health sector to mitigate the impacts of dwindling donor resources.

5. The lingering violence against women in the country has been a major concern that brought to the limelight, much awaited implementation legislation like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP), awaiting passage Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill, as well as the Child’s Right Act.

6. Appropriate action by the National Assembly to expedite the process for the passage of the Fiscal framework and Host Communities component of the PIB while sustaining the momentum to secure presidential assent to the PIGB already passed. We also call on the National Assembly to expedite the speedy passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill which has been at the Assembly for too long.

7. Prompt implementation of the VAPP Act to mitigate persistent violence against women; immediate adoption and implantation of Child’s Right Act to protect and secure lives the children.

8. Strategic provision adequate budgetary allocation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and increase allocation to the health sector while ensuring strict implementation of the National health Act.

**F. ADOPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE IDPS POLICY**

We note with concern that the progress rate of the clean-up of Ogoni Clean-up is painfully slow. The environmental situation in Ogoni is issues of health and livelihoods affecting real people whose lives and future are threatened. We reject the reduction of life-threatening issues such as this to politics and call on the federal government to expedite action on both the emergency measures and actual clean up.
**Recommendation:**

They should expedite the process of adopting a comprehensive policy on Internal Displacements to ensure that the rights, safety and welfare of IDPs are adequately protected in line with global best practices.

**Conclusion**

All citizens have equal stake in the Nigerian nation and are entitled to live peacefully and benefit maximally from her government and resources. It is fatal to allow selfish individuals and groups through their actions, utterances and activities, to plunge the nation into chaos and anarchy. We must therefore rise above ethnic, religious and sectional interests and sentiments and put the interest of all Nigerians above every other. We call on leaders at all levels to act as statesmen, avoid the use of inciting language, provocative pronouncements and vindictive gestures to promote unity, healing and soothing which our nation needs desperately. As we sympathise with all who have lost loved ones and relations, pray for the repose of the souls of those killed, we call on our elected officials to provide focused, purposeful, firm and result-oriented leadership.

There is also very importantly trend towards the abandonment of governance in the country. The very reason and purpose of government is the welfare of citizens and protection of life and property. When the political leaders sacrifice these basic fundamental of its being and move over to the realm of politicking, the citizens’ welfare suffer. Social and economic wellbeing of the people are jeopardised and security of life and property are put to risk.

Signed:

**Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**

Executive Director, CISLAC
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Key observations:

3. We are worried by the on-going endless fuel scarcity rocking the nation and crippling economic activities triggered by lack of sufficient reserve, low clearance speed of petrol at the ports, diversion of products.

4. We are bothered that the reported improvement in the economy is still largely reflected in government figures and statistics. The high level of unemployment at 18.8% generally and 33.10% for youths, backlog of unpaid salaries, epileptic power supply and recently the crisis hardship created by the non-availability of petroleum products are sad reminders of a poorly managed economy.

8. The poor level of budget implementation of the 2017 budget is lamentable. Apart for the delay in the passage of budgets, an implementation level of less than 20% calls for serious concerns. It is bad enough that capital allocations are usually inadequate and frivolous and wasteful provisions are made poor disbursement and utilization only create economic uncertainties and negatively impacts on the welfare of citizens.

9. As at this day, the 2018 budget is not close to being passed and the month of April is being projected for its passage. For a pre-election year, this is a recipe for economic crisis and avenue for corruption and au approved spending which could be diverted for political, party or selfish uses by the various MDAs. This must be avoided. This administration promised Nigerian a zero-budget system to promote efficiency, cost-effectiveness and project delivery. This has remained a mirage.

10. We note that Nigeria continues to lose millions of naira due to the absence of a defined legal framework to manage our oil and gas sector. While the welcome the passage of the PIGB by both chambers of the National Assembly, we are mindful of the fact that other relevant and indeed more strategic components of the renowned PIB remains elusive, The Fiscal Framework and the Host Community components are inevitable or the necessary changes and reforms badly needed in the sector. They must therefore be addressed for passage while the momentum in the process to secure presidential assent to the PIGB is sustained.

Recommendations
9. Immediate and holistic action by relevant authority to address discrepancy in the issue of pricing including landing cost and cost of petroleum product.

10. Instituting appropriate mechanism to allow participation of private sector in the importation of petroleum product.

11. We must overhaul our budget making process to make it more open, transparent and result-oriented. The adoption of open budget, open data and open contracting, as committed to in our Open Government Partnership Action Plan must fully take effect as a matter of urgency.

12. We call on the Federal Government to device constructive means and come up with policies that would turn around the economy and make it create opportunities for citizens and enhance their welfare. Recent events surrounding enslavement, dehumanising treatment and subsequent repatriation of Nigerians who sought better lives outside the shores of our land due to the failure of successive administrations should be a wake-up call for this government to place the interest of citizens, especially the youths, in the management of the economy.

13. We call on them to treat the 2018 budget with a sense of urgency. They should scrutinize it vigorously to eliminate all frivolous and wasteful allocations in it and expedite the process of passage to allow for implementation to commence as soon as possible.

14. They should follow through with the confirmation of all outstanding executive appointments by carrying out constructive and objective scrutiny of appointees without prejudice and political sentiments or selfish interest. This is to ensure that institutions are able to function optimally.

15. We call on them to work with the states Houses of Assembly to ensure a timely conclusion of the constitutional review process to guarantee good governance, local government autonomy and gender equity and social inclusion.

16. They should ensure effective oversight of the MDAs to avoid wastages, leakages, abuse of office and misuse of public funds for any purposes other than serving the interest of Nigerians.

J. 2019 AND THE GROSS VIOLATION OF ELECTORAL PROCESS

Key observations:

5. We are worried by the gross violation of the provisions of Electoral Act arising from improper use of the released electoral time table by politicians and political parties that engage in premature campaign activities as against provisions of Electoral Act.

6. We are not unaware of the persistent violation of various regulations guiding political party financing that has hitherto undermined free, fair and credibility in the electoral process.

7. We are concerned by the dwindling internal democracy across political parties. We not unaware that all forms of electoral malfeasance are committed including undermining
selection of candidates within the political parties, vote buying; electoral violence amongst others.

8. While we understand that candidate selection is a vital activity to the existence of any political party, we are disturbed by the spate of party members endorsing candidates outside laid down party constitution resulting in undemocratic processes.

Recommendations:

CISLAC recommends as follows:

7. Imposition of appropriate sanction against perpetrators of electoral violence and electoral fraud to sustain sanity and sanctity while promoting credibility in the nation’s electoral process.

8. Increased citizens’ concern and awareness on the procedure on the selection of candidates by political parties, as the political party structure remains today the only means of engaging in elective position in the country.

9. Strict compliance with the provisions of the Electoral Act as Amended in the 2017 in regulating financing activities of political parties.

10. Prompt creation of Interparty Advisory Council across all political parties to promote proper compliance to the provisions of the Electoral Act, dealing with the electoral time released by INEC.

11. Strengthen relevant machineries by INEC with holistic mechanisms to ensure candidates’ imposition, parallel congresses, and undemocratic conduct in political parties are nipped in the bud.

12. Appropriate sanction by INEC against erring political party or politician flouting existing legal provisions campaigning outside electoral time table.

K. RISING POVERTY LEVEL, DILAPIDATED HEALTHCARE SECTOR, AND DELAYED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

Key observations:

7. We are worried over the delayed implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at national and sub-national levels about three years after the world convened in the United States of America to adopt the 17 Goals.

8. While the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President on SDGs currently lacks budgetary allocation for implementation of the SDGs, we are concerned by lack of costed strategic plan of action for implementation at national and state levels.

9. While the development of a country is measured by its health indices, the 2017 World Health Statistics places Nigeria’s Maternal Mortality Ratio at 814/100,000 LB with under-5 mortality rate, 108.8/1000LB; and neonatal mortality rate 34.3/1000LB (WHO).
10. We are disturbed that more than three year after the passage of the National Health Act and the provision therewith of 1% of consolidated revenue to fund basic health care package for Nigerians, Nigeria continues to lose women and children from childbirth, malnutrition or immunization related issues.

11. We are not unaware of the inadequate budgetary allocation, delay in release and poor utilisation of the existing funding for the health sector, despite the 2007 Abuja Declaration requiring each member state to allocate at least 15% of her total budget to health. We are aware that most countries that were signatories to this declaration across Africa have already keyed into this provision and exceeding the 15%.

12. We find it worrisome that Nigeria is yet to reach as little as 7% of over 2.1million Nigerian under-5 severely acute malnourished with the immediate need for the procurement of ready-to-se-therapeutic food by the government for their survival.

Recommendations:

CISLAC recommends as follows:

9. Increased policy focus on the implementation of SDGs at national and state levels through the development of an all-encompassing strategic focus that will include sub-national interventions which will be harmonized and budgeted for implementation.

10. Holistic implementation of the SDGs to address the nation’s developmental challenges such as poverty, hunger, poor healthcare system and education, inequalities, instability, injustice, weak institutions, and corruption.

11. Fulfilment of various commitments by the government including the 15% budgetary allocation to the health sector to promote adequate, accessible and affordable healthcare system.

12. Harnessing local potential for adequate and sustainable resource mobilisation for financing health sector to mitigate the impacts of dwindling donor resources.

13. The lingering violence against women in the country has been a major concern that brought to the limelight, much awaited implementation legislation like the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act (VAPP), awaiting passage Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill, as well as the Child’s Right Act.

14. Appropriate action by the National Assembly to expedite the process for the passage of the Fiscal framework and Host Communities component of the PIB while sustaining the momentum to secure presidential assent to the PIGB already passed. We also call on the National Assembly to expedite the speedy passage of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill which has been at the Assembly for too long.

15. Prompt implementation of the VAPP Act to mitigate persistent violence against women; immediate adoption and implantation of Child’s Right Act to protect and secure lives the children.
16. Strategic provision adequate budgetary allocation for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and increase allocation to the health sector while ensuring strict implementation of the National health Act.

L. ADOPTION OF COMPREHENSIVE IDPS POLICY

We note with concern that the progress rate of the clean-up of Ogoni Clean-up is painfully slow. The environmental situation in Ogoni is issues of health and livelihoods affecting real people whose lives and future are threatened. We reject the reduction of life-threatening issues such as this to politics and call on the federal government to expedite action on both the emergency measures and actual clean up.

Recommendation:

They should expedite the process of adopting a comprehensive policy on Internal Displacements to ensure that the rights, safety and welfare of IDPs are adequately protected in line with global best practices.

Conclusion

All citizens have equal stake in the Nigerian nation and are entitled to live peacefully and benefit maximally from her government and resources. It is fatal to allow selfish individuals and groups through their actions, utterances and activities, to plunge the nation into chaos and anarchy. We must therefore rise above ethnic, religious and sectional interests and sentiments and put the interest of all Nigerians above every other. We call on leaders at all levels to act as statesmen, avoid the use of inciting language, provocative pronouncements and vindictive gestures to promote unity, healing and soothing which our nation needs desperately. As we sympathise with all who have lost loved ones and relations, pray for the repose of the souls of those killed, we call on our elected officials to provide focused, purposeful, firm and result-oriented leadership.

There is also very importantly trend towards the abandonment of governance in the country. The very reason and purpose of government is the welfare of citizens and protection of life and property. When the political leaders sacrifice these basic fundamental of its being and move over to the realm of politicking, the citizens’ welfare suffer. Social and economic wellbeing of the people are jeopardised and security of life and property are put to risk.

Signed:

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