COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END ONE DAY CAPACITY BUILDING FOR COMMUNITY OBSERVERS ON EARLY WARNING AND EARLY RESPONSE, ORGANISED BY CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC)/TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL IN NIGERIA (TI-NIGERIA) WITH SUPPORT FROM OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION AFRICA (OSF-AFRICA) HELD AT VISA KARENA HOTEL, RIVERS STATE ON 5TH SEPTEMBER, 2023.

PREAMBLE:

CISLAC/TI-Nigeria with support from Open Society Foundation Africa (OSF-Africa) organised one-day Capacity Building for Community Observers on Early Warning and Early Response. The Workshop aimed at building the capacity of community observers in Rivers state for more collaboration, communication, coordination and collective support for early warning and conflict prediction mechanisms, which are central in conflict prevention. It had a technical session with presentation titled: “Building Resilience in Communities through Effective Early Warning System” by Mr. Paper Marvis. It was attended by over 20 participants including Community Observers and Civil Society groups. After brainstorming exhaustively on various thematic issues, the following observations and recommendations were made:

OBERVATIONS:

1. Unattended land dispute coupled with continuous struggles for scarce resources at individual/community levels constitutes major conflict indicators, hence the need to institutionalise a proactive system and structure for well-coordinated response.

2. Inadequate resource allocation to response institutions or networks hinders capacity and response efficiency to reported conflict signals.

3. Information or data inaccurate on reported conflict signals at individual/community levels backpedals existing response effort by various institutions.

4. Social inequality/injustice, collapse in governance, ineffective communication, civil disobedience and anti-social behaviour are identified conflict indicators at all levels.
5. Accurate information provision to wrong channel results in leakages exposing reporting individual/community to reprisal attacks constituting a major barrier to the efficient workability of response system.

6. The growing but unattended problems of multiple/illegal taxes and undocumented levies imposed on the informal private sector across Local Government Areas in Rivers state are foremost conflict signals.

7. Unwillingness by either party to accept terms of settlement escalates a potential conflict.

Recommendations:

1. Adequate resource allocation to the response institutions to enhance their early response capacity to Community reporting on Early signals.

2. Formation of a well-informed and formidable community network with coordinating body to complement intelligence gathering process for accurate information provision on Early Warning signals.

3. Understanding Early signals through proactive monitoring and reporting of conflict indicators from latent, perceived, felt, manifesting and aftermath stages of conflict.

4. Detecting conflict signals from individuals’ body language, wrong positioning, unusual behavioural changes, slowed productivity and anxiety.

5. De-escalating conflict through adequate capacity development at individual levels to actively listen to conflicting parties, build confidence, composure, re-assurance, preparedness and recovery measure.

6. Institutionalising proactive and more sustainable measures at policy levels to address challenges of illegal/multiple taxes/levies imposed on informal sector in Rivers state to prevent potential conflict.

7. Continuous capacity building for community stakeholders to identify and address evolving trends in conflict signals.
NEXT STEP:

- Civil Right Council in Khana Local Government will step down leaning from the capacity building to the youth leaders to help the community identify conflict signal; and conduct quarterly documentation and dissemination to raise public consciousness.

- Relief International Africa will create all-inclusive platform/App to facilitate reporting of early signals for appropriate response by relevant authorities.

- Citizen Voice Initiative in will de-escalate conflict by institutionalising monitoring mechanism through social platforms in Bodo/Gokana.

- Centre for Basic Right Protection and Accountability Campaigns will leverage its existing robust working relationship with response institutions to support reporting process of identified signals.

- Ibaa Community in Emohua Local Government will step down training to women groups in the community to form a formidable support for Early signal reporting

- Rumuekpe community will cascade learning from the meeting to the youths within the community; and form a forum to identify and report signals to CISLAC.

- Olegh Centre for Community Development will cascade learning from the meeting to members.

Signed:

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

2. **Dr. Ebere Patience W.**  
   Ibaa Community

3. **Sebastian Kpacap**
Citizens Voice Initiative