

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF NIGERIA POPULATION CONVERSATION SEMINAR ORGANISED BY POPULATION MATTERS IN PARTNERSHIP WITH CIVIL SOCIETY LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY CENTRE (CISLAC)/TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL IN NIGERIA (TI-NIGERIA) HELD AT HAWTHORN SUITES, GARKI ABUJA ON 13TH FEBRUARY, 2024.**

**PREAMBLE:**

Population Matters in Partnership with CISLAC/TI-Nigeria held a **Nigeria Population Conversation Seminar**. The Seminar aimed at amplifying national voices and local actions via evidence-based advocacy towards sustainable population in Nigeria. There was a Welcome **Remark** from the Executive Director of CISLAC/TI-Nigeria, Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani) and the **Opening Remark, Population Matters & Overview of Population Conversation** by Head of Campaigns and Communications, Population Matters, Alistair Currie. There were **Goodwill Messages** from Members, Advisory Board, Population Matters and Director of Forestry, Forestry Commission & CRS Focal Point on Climate Programs Dr. Mrs Edu Effiom; Chairman National Population Commission represented by Mrs. Margaret Edison; Director of Population Management and Development, Special Adviser to the Honourable Minister of National Budget and Economic Planning, Mrs Abisola Kola-Daisi; and Dr. Yakubu Muhammad representing the Minister for Environment. The Seminar was attended by well-meaning Civil Society, Media, Traditional Rulers, Community Leaders, Community Based Organisations, Faith-based Organisations, Enumerators from the six geo-political zones, Ministries, Departments and Agency. There was a presentation on **Overview of the Project & Report Presentation** by Abimbola Junaid, Partnerships, Advocacy & Voice Manager, Population; and Abubakar Jimoh, Program Lead, Population Conversation, CISLAC/TI-Nigeria. The Seminar had a **group session with participants divided into four (4) groups to identify, document and present the Strength, Weakness, Opportunities, Threats and Next Step of the Nigeria Population Conversation and findings of the launched report**. After brainstorming exhaustively on various thematic sessions, the following observations and recommendations were made:

**OBSERVATIONS:**

1. While population affects every facet of societal development, discussion around population remains uncommon in Nigeria; and this puts Nigeria's population which is projected to reach 400 million by 2050, doubling the current estimate, at a demographic nightmare.
2. With the current low awareness on consequences of population at citizenry and policy levels as well as the unattended impact on national planning, Nigeria has not efficiently harnessed its population to achieve development goals.
3. Lack of population planning has been identified as a main contributory factor to multiplier effects of youth unemployment, insecurity, inaccessible healthcare services, food insecurity, education inequality and other challenges that undermine socio-economic development of Nigeria.

4. While Nigeria is recognised among the top five countries in the world with the highest under-five mortality rates, the growing socio-economic, demographic and environmental factors threaten the survival of under-five in the country.
5. The growing unemployment rate, which stands at about 53.40% as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics in 2022, exposes Nigeria to more social crimes perpetrated by youths.
6. Overconsumption of the global north through untamed human activities exposes the ecosystem to massive pollution threatening human survival with Nigeria largely impacted.

#### **RESOLUTION/ RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We the participants recommended as follows:

1. Immediate formation of the Nigeria Population Matters Platform as a sustainable platform to sustain inclusive conversation on population, and cascade awareness at all levels and to shape policy direction for well-informed and proactive population planning.
2. Embracing the idea of smaller families to boycott ravaging poverty, youth unemployment, child mortality and other socio-economic upheavals in Nigeria.
3. Deliberate policy and legislative engagements leveraging the fact-findings from the Citizens' Perception Survey report to provoke targeted national population planning.
4. Immediate consideration for translation of fact-findings from the Citizen's Perception Survey report into local languages for wider dissemination at sub-national and local government levels.
5. Integrating active adolescent and youth engagement as a critical stakeholder in population conversation, community sensitisation and awareness for improved population literacy at citizens' levels.
6. Decrease population growth by discouraging girl child marriage, supporting education and empowerment of the girl child, embracing ethical planned parenthood.
7. Strengthening collaboration among National Population Commission, education sector, Civil Society, traditional institutions, Faith-based organizations to amplify awareness and sensitisation on population planning and sustainable development.
8. Adopting intensive climate-friendly agriculture practices, infrastructure, with continuous awareness and advocacy at all levels.
9. Increased investment in further research and development to keep abreast of the direct impact of population on Nigeria's environment and society at large.

Signed:

**Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**

Executive Director, CISLAC

**Abimbola Junaid**

Partnerships, Advocacy & Voice Manager, Population Matters