

## **CISLAC Calls for Increased Budget Allocation for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in the 2024 supplementary budget and the 2025 budget to Promote Inclusivity in Nigeria's Governance Processes.**

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) calls on the Nigerian government to prioritize the needs of persons with disabilities (PWDs) by significantly increasing the budget allocation for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) to foster a more inclusive governance process in Nigeria. This crucial step is necessary to address the serious socio-economic challenges faced by PWDs and ensure their full participation in Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape. This is considering the limited funds allocated to cater for the needs of the PWDs.

Democracy as the systems of governance requires that every member of the society be treated as equitably and with utmost priority in order to fully thrive as a functioning member of the society. Socio-economic and political inclusion of the PWDs in the Nigerian governance system is not only paramount but it is necessary for good governance to prevail in Nigeria. Inclusivity in governance through active participation of every member of the society ensures that each member of the society is contributing towards the development of his/her society. Persons with disability are not an exception in this regard because of the fundamental rights and the various national, regional and international conventions on the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs) such as the United Nations convention of the rights of people with disabilities (PWDs).

While we commend the efforts being put forth by the federal government and the National Assembly members to address the challenges being faced by PWDs in Nigeria, it is our contention that more needs to be done in order to adequately cater for their daily needs. One key area that the government should give a priority to especially with the current economic realities is the increase in the budgetary allocation of the PWDs. Despite the passage of the 2024 appropriation bill, we urge the government to increase the budget of the PWDs drawing from the contingency funds allocated in case of unforeseen circumstances.

Despite the enactment of the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act in 2018, which aims to protect the rights of PWDs and promote their integration into society, implementation has been hampered by inadequate funding. The current budget allocations are grossly insufficient to meet the needs of over 30 million Nigerians living with disabilities, leaving many without access to essential services such as education, health care service delivery, employment opportunities and accessible infrastructure.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria continue to face significant barriers that hinder their full participation in society so as to help them exploit their gifts, talents and abilities in order to effectively contribute towards the development of the country. Some of the serious challenges faced by the PWDs includes limited access to education where many children and adults with disabilities are deprived of quality education due to inadequate and inaccessible facilities, lack of proper skills acquisition programs tailored to cater for their needs, lack of trained and qualified teachers, and discriminatory

practices in the society which results in high illiteracy rates among PWDs that limits their potentials and employment and deprive them of employment opportunities.

Another serious challenge being faced by persons living with disabilities (PWDs) revolves around unemployment and underemployment of the PWDs, where they experience higher unemployment rates compared to their non-disabled counterparts, and in the current economic realities in the country it is pivotal for the government to ensure that increasing the budget allocation of the PWDs will greatly impact on their lives which will then contributes to national development. We are living at a time when even the people who are able that are employed often find themselves in low-paying and insecure jobs, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and social exclusion.

Inaccessible health care service delivery is another major issue that is hindering the effective participation of persons living with disabilities which has a great consequences on their overall health because many healthcare facilities in Nigeria are not equipped with the necessary technologies to cater for the specific needs of PWDs and this lack of accessibility to health infrastructures and facilities for specialized care exacerbates health disparities and reduces life expectancy among PWDs. This contributes to the growing sentiment and bias of social exclusion and discrimination of the PWDs who frequently face stigmatization and serious discrimination in various aspects of life, including public spaces, workplaces, and within their communities. This marginalization impedes their ability to participate fully in civic activities and contribute to national development and we call on the government to address these challenges.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

CISLAC urges the Nigerian government to demonstrate a genuine commitment to the rights and well-being of PWDs by increasing the budget allocation for disability-inclusive programs and we also call on the government to ensure that persons living with disabilities are not discriminated against because despite the existence of the Disability discrimination Act 2018, there is still a serious discrimination of the PWDs.

- Increase in the budgetary allocation for the education of persons with disabilities because no nation rises above the level of its education and in this regard, no nation rises above the education of its most vulnerable members of the society. Therefore, investment in special education programs such as vocational trainings, inclusive schools, workplaces, businesses and skills acquisition trainings, workshops and seminars to equip PWDs with the skills needed for gainful employment.
- Increase in the budget allocation for PWDs to cater for adequate health care facilities/ services are paramount because of the serious health challenges being faced by persons living with disabilities which is making it more difficult for them to have better health, adding to the already existing physical challenges they are dealing with, the provision of accessible healthcare facilities/services, including rehabilitation centre's, assistive devices, and specialized medical care for PWDs and other forms of technologies that will aid them in accessing adequate health care services is critical and government should give the issue utmost priority, so that PWDs can have better health in order to go by their daily activities to earn a

living which brings us to the issue of employment and economic empowerment through the implementation of legislations and policies that promote employment opportunities for PWDs, support for entrepreneurship, and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws in the workplace.

- Lastly, we call on the federal government of Nigeria to increase the budgetary allocation for building infrastructures that is accessible to the persons living with disabilities and to also enforce the already existing laws that punishes/sanctions violators of such important provisions, because development of public infrastructure that is accessible to all people regardless of abilities is significant these includes; government buildings, private buildings, bus stops, banks, car parks, parks, hotels, hospitals and all public building infrastructure, transportations, and information and communication technologies.

CISLAC reaffirms its commitment to advocating for the rights of PWDs and calls on all stakeholders, including the government, private sector, civil society, media, youth and women groups and organizations to join hands in promoting an inclusive society where every Nigerian, regardless of their abilities, can thrive and contribute to national development.

Yours Sincerely,



**Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani)**

Executive Director of CISLAC/TI-Nigeria

