



Nigeria Network of Non-Governmental Organisations

(No.7977 Established in October 1992)

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Hon. Ohiozojeh Peter Akpatason
Chairman, Civil Societies and Development Partners Committee
National Assembly Complex, Three Arms Zone
Abuja, Nigeria.

26th July 2016

We write on behalf of over 2,000 civil society organisations within our membership consisting of various local, national civil society organisations, social movements, constituencies, platforms, major groups and other stakeholders from different parts of the country to respectfully call upon you to continue standing with the civil society sector.

As our country faces developmental crisis of different proportions, one sector that has continued to beam hope to the common man is the civil society sector. Whether the issue is health, education, environment, unemployment, climate change, poverty, social protection, human rights, democracy, good governance, gender, national security or foreign policy—civil society actors are working hard to support government in these areas where it needs help.

These actors must have confidence that if they continue to support government, they can do so within an enabling environment.

As you well know, 3 Bills are presently at the National Assembly (one at the Senate and Two at the House of Representatives) seeking to regulate our sector. For years, federal lawmakers have made several attempts to pass laws for our sector forgetting that we have 7 existing legal frameworks guiding our work. (Find an explanation of this in a copy of the attached letter which we sent to Hon. Umar Buba Jubril).

Our sector understands the importance of transparency and accountability to its legitimacy and since 2013 we have been engaging with regulators to strengthen implementation of the laws guiding our work. The lack of understanding and knowledge about our sector means that the activities of civil society actors – governments most effective partners in development—will continue to be threatened by Bills that do not take into cognizance the history, trend and realities of the good work that they continue to do on a daily basis to bridge the development gap in our country.

We recognize and commend your longtime commitment to standing with our sector. As one of us you assured us of your continued support to protecting civic space at an engagement with our sector in February 2016. We were very encouraged by your strong statement of support for civil society on the floor of the House.

We are gratified by the announcement that the NGO Regulatory Commission Bill (HB585) has been passed to your Committee for legislative input, we stand ready to work with you in providing a technical analysis of the Bill and to provide our sectors response to the Bill at a public hearing.



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We plan to actively participate in activities that your Committee considers useful to aiding your work on this Bill. We continue to have faith in your long-held support for our sector. Now is the time for a strong demonstration of your support with the following suggested actions:

- 1) Commitment: Reaffirm your strong endorsement of our sector by ensuring that a public hearing is held with a view to support your Committee in deciding whether the Bill needs to be unaltered, amended, rewritten or to even block it.
- 2) Leadership: Take leadership by working with our sector in improving on the 7 legal frameworks guiding our work as a sector through detailed technical review with a view to making necessary legislative amendments.

Your help will ensure that the National Assembly enacts strong, comprehensive civil society friendly legislation that enables and gives our sector a functional operational environment.

Thank you for the steps that you have already taken and we look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss how together we can continue to move the country in the right direction.

Be assured of our commitment to the success of your Committee as we stand ready to follow your lead.

Sincerely yours,

Oyebisi Babatunde Oluseyi

Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs

Trustees: Mr. Olufemi Lijadu (Chairman), Late Prof Olikoye Ransome-Kuti (Founding Chairman), Mr. Oyebisi Babatunde Oluseyi (Secretary), Mr. Ajose Adeogun,, Dr Bamanga Tukur, Chief S.B. Awoniyi, Mr. Allison Ayida, Prof Pat Utomi, Dr. Tilley Gyado, Mrs. Bunmi Femi Pearse, Chief Rasheed Gbadamosi, Mr. A. P. Leventis, Otunba Dele Ajayi Smith, Ms Shade Bembatoum Young, Dr. Yemi Ogunbiyi, Mrs. Kaine George.
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