



The First Police- Citizen Dialogue

September 22, 2022

Abuja, Nigeria

Dialogue Report

Organised in partnership with:



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Introduction

The Nigeria Network of NGOs (NNNGO) in partnership with the Citizens Engagement Thematic Working Group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) with funding support from Heinrich Böll Foundation held the first police-citizen dialogue on September 22, 2022, in Abuja. This dialogue provided key stakeholders from multiple contexts and practitioners to come together, sharing their thoughts and experiences on the focus of the dialogue while providing a space for joint reflection and in-depth discussion between the police and civil society around shared themes of democratic policing, shrinking civic space, citizens' engagement, human rights, and the protection of civil and political rights. The dialogue has proven to be fruitful and has been established as a model for effective police citizens' engagement, serving as a blueprint and guide as to how to implement future and similar dialogues at the sub-national level.

In the second Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan, President Buhari committed to a "Police Citizens Dialogue" with the aim of capturing citizens' feedback on improving policing and police-citizens relationship in Nigeria with actionable steps for resolution and feedback to those involved. The increased call by citizens on police brutality and ongoing efforts of government and the police in addressing this growing concern including ongoing improvements in citizens-police engagement highlights the need to convene a group of stakeholders to advance efforts in building an inclusive police-citizens engagement platform that can enhance the protection of civil and political rights in Nigeria.

This first police-citizen dialogue aimed to provide a platform for engagement between the police and organised civil society from the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and beyond. The dialogue hosted the Police Service (PSC), the National Human Right Commission (NHRC), and the National Orientation Agency (NOA) among others. The dialogue addressed issues around police brutality, citizens' engagement, and security. It was organised in form of a town hall meeting to ensure citizens' participation and come up with solutions and recommendations to the challenges discussed at the dialogue.

The objective of the dialogue was to contribute to and allow a wider debate relating to protecting civil and political rights, that civil society stakeholders have the knowledge and tools to effectively advocate for the protection of civic rights and to explore new ways to advance Nigeria's democratic consolidation in relation to social justice and gender equality, and to create a space for actors working within the fields of human rights to learn from each other, share experiences and create contacts for future dialogues. In addition, the dialogue aims to identify common and diverging voices on challenges and develop recommendations for an effective police-citizens dialogue process. The dialogue has been favourably received, and the feedback has been encouraging. Information on the outcomes will be published on the NNNGO, NOA, and OGP websites.

This report aims to capture the main findings, challenges, applied lessons, and recommendations from discussions at the dialogue. Starting with a summary of presentations by speakers on the main theme of the dialogue to allow for related points of view on the theme as well as contributions from plenary and background policy briefs that were written for the dialogue. Participants in the dialogue agree with the broad thrust of the arguments made in this report, but they should not be taken to agree with every word or recommendation.

Note on the limitations of language

We recognise the inadequacies of language used at the dialogue to meaningfully convey terms relating to civil and political rights. The term police brutality a new lexicon in the field of rights in Nigeria was used majorly throughout the dialogue by participants, having several meanings and contexts based on protests, harassment, fundamental freedoms such as expression, assembly and association, privacy, discrimination, procedural fairness etc. There

remain substantial gaps regarding definitions relating to human right terms and understanding among civil society and citizens, we recognise that using broad and everyday language can homogenise and hide the depth of issues. In this report, we have attempted to systematically tease out information on experiences of participants so that we can understand and address issues based on the focus of the dialogue around civil and political rights, policing and civic space.

Opening Remarks

The opening remarks session of the dialogue brought together government and civil society actors to stage. The speakers remark addressed topics ranging from how dialogues build trust, police reforms, citizens engagement and civic space.

Starting with the National Coordinator, Open Government Partnership, **Dr Gloria Hammed**, highlighted the importance of the dialogue, “I want to welcome all to this very important session today, there is no better time for this dialogue to take place. We all know the saying that Nigeria is too well known for security issues, and this is the best time for us to come together”.

“I want to commend our security persons for the amazing work they are doing, and I charge you to please continue to do your work within the law”.

Dr. Garba Abari, Director General, National Orientation Agency, “I am very pleased to welcome you here for this very important citizens’ engagement dialogue on one of the most top issues that dominate our national life”.

“The whole idea of OGP is to enhance prosperity and accountability, especially what began with the police reform. I would like to associate ourselves once again with the event of today and to provide solutions to the issues that might have surrounded the engagement and at the same time go into collaboration and partnership so that the days that have been invested will continue enjoyed by our citizens”.

Jochen Luckscheiter, Director, Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, “On behalf of the Foundation, I would like to welcome you to this citizens dialogue”.

“We believe that interventions must be people-centered for the advancement of development and we also recognise that information grants assist to Citizens in ensuring their protection and knowledge of their rights. As much as Nigeria is committed to its job of keeping us safe and protected in difficult circumstances, police brutality continues to be part of Nigeria’s reality and part of the challenges or lack of ability of the Nigerian Civic space”.

“To freely express their opinions. The police act that was signed into law in 2020 has brought about some reforms and the general idea is to provide a police service that is based on the principles of accountability, transparency, and protection of the rights of Nigerians”.

“However, with every piece of legislation, the implementation of such reforms required first that citizens know of their rights, how they are protected and how they can hold police accountable when necessary. It also requires open channels of communication such as gatherings like this discuss our stakeholders’ issues of contention and form common synergy”.

“Today is such an opportunity and I would like to congratulate NNNGO and the Open Government Partnership for organising this event. I would also like to thank all stakeholders present in the room today, from the human rights commission and Ministries who have agreed to participate in this event today. As we approach the official election season, political

temperatures are rising. All are likely to rise, even more, making lines of communication such as this one even more important. I would like to wish everyone a fruitful discussion here today and thank you very much”.

Oyebisi, B. Oluseyi, Executive Director, Nigeria Network of NGOs, “Today I am so pleased to see the representative of the police on the high table as this shows their commitment towards this development. I do hope we will be frank, open, and honest and be civil in ensuring that we can get to the root of the conversation. We have done research in terms of civic space and citizens and civil and political right as it is on your table. We have also documented some progress and challenges and documented some things that we need to take forward and we all have to put our collective effort in being able to shape out the way forward as civil society, as government, as private sector, and as citizens, we can go altogether to have a country that we can call our home”.

Keynote

Prince Clem Agba

Minister of State Budget and National Planning and Co-Chair Steering Committee of the OGP

“Let me thank the Citizens Engagement Thematic Working Group of the Open Government Partnership led by the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Nigeria Network of NGOs and members of the Working Group for putting together this dialogue through the principle of co-creation and to acknowledge the support of Heinrich Boll Stiftung”.

“Nigeria is one of the Countries subjected to the resolution of 48/134 of the United Nations General Assembly which enjoins all members states to ensure promotion, protection, and enforcement of human rights through an independent National establishment, that will serve as an extra-judiciary mechanism for the respect and pleasure of human rights. This is also in line with the Nigerian Constitution, which stipulates the fundamental rights of Nigerian Citizens which include the right to life, dignity of persons, the right to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association and the right to freedom of movement”.

“In the second Open Government Partnership (OGP) Action Plan, President Buhari is committed to a “Police - Citizens Dialogue” with the aim of capturing citizens’ feedback on improving policing and police-citizens relationship in Nigeria with actionable steps for resolution and feedback to those involved”.

“Activity 7 under commitment 13 of the citizens’ engagement thematic area of the OGP’s National Action Plan II (NAP) involves holding a quarterly zonal ‘Citizen-Police Dialogue’ with Police Service Commission (PSC), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), National Orientation Agency (NOA) and their Non-State Actors partners. Its expected output is a compilation of complaints, feedback, and recommendation from citizens, non-state actor groups, and the police on improving policing and police citizens relationship in Nigeria”.

“This commitment has received the admiration and attention of the international community. Today we are gathered at a police-citizen dialogue, an event which would afford participants the opportunity to listen to each other on topics and themes of concern including discussions on how they leverage common interests in addressing civic space issues and enhancing citizens-police engagement”.

“With the collaboration of the government and other civil society partners, the NAP II was revised to include the government response to covid-19 and the EndSARS protest. The

revision also includes: passing the Bill for an Act to Repeal the Police Service Commission Act and the enactment of the Police Service Commission Bill, 2020; the quarterly zonal 'citizen- police dialogue to be held between the Police Service Commission (PSC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and non-state partners; Joint visitation by the PSC and CSO to ascertain the condition of the station, adherence to the standard operating procedure (SOP) and conditions of suspects held in the stations”.

“To make the police more accountable and receive complaints from the citizens about their interactions with policemen, the Nigeria Police Force established a Complaint Response Unit (CRU) in November 2015. It serves as a medium for citizens to state their grievances and get them resolved as they are expected to report unprofessional conduct/actions of police officers and make reports regarding other citizens”.

“The Open Government Partnership Nigeria will continue to ensure citizen’s participation in government plans, to protect their fundamental rights”.

“I hereby urge the police to make further efforts disseminate action plans on how to give maximum protections to Nigerians”.

Actions on ending police brutality: Insights from the Police Service Commission

Mr. Rommy Mom

Comm V, Police Service Commission

Across the world, the security sector is a mechanism established by the State for protecting people’s rights, establishing, and maintaining order and guaranteeing stability and security. This sector has the police as an important actor. To play their role, the police have certain powers, namely the power to arrest and detain and the power to use force. It is precisely this monopoly on the use of force and the power to detain and arrest that the police is unique and sensitive to the protection of individuals' freedom from infringement by governments, social organizations, and private individuals, and in ensuring citizen’s ability to participate in the civil and political life of the society and state without discrimination or repression.

Using police brutality as an anchor for conversations to discuss control mechanisms required to ensure that the powers of the police are consistently used in public interest, this session discussed the practical steps that need to be taken to change the dynamics of police oversight and how government, civil society, and citizens can work together to find solutions. Steering the conversation was Mr. Rommy Mom, a civil rights activist, President of Lawyers Alert and Comm V, Police Service Commission, who picked up on very tough, yet strategic points that led to dynamic discussions around police accountability, oversight, and integrity.

“We have been talking about discipline in the police and police brutality for so long that we expect that the progress they would have made will be much higher than we have at hand. For me it is also a call for worry. It is very difficult to know why we do not allow the service of professional police in the economy, and I will tell you two or three reasons”.

“Number 1 is that we have invested a lot of resources in terms of reforming. We also are forced to learn on what has happened in the past, whether in the initial protest to the ENDSARS and till date. The most critical aspect of it is that we have a police service commission. The police service commission is a constitutional border with an exclusive right of discipline as regard the police”.

“The question is why we are yet to have the kind of disciplined police that we supposed to have, I think the answer is very clear, there is something wrong with the Police Service Commission. I thank the event host for giving us the opportunity to talk about the Police Service Commission”.

“The Police Service Commission is a civilian body that oversees the police and we need police that are accountable, that is why it is a civilian led body that oversight the ministry. The police service commission includes the following: the media, the private sector, human right bodies, the police themselves, and the judiciary”.

“The police service commission is a representative of the 6 geopolitical zones in Nigeria and this is not something that is accidental, it is deliberate to give the kind of representation we need across all these zones so that the Nigeria police can be accountable to all of us. The police commission has critical mandates, one is the appointment and recruitment of police officer to the country, another is production, also discipline, to dismiss and honour them. There is nothing that motivates indiscipline more than lack of sanctions”.

“So, ENDSARS was not a mistake, we created it and unleashed it as a people. We have police officers in 774 local government and but the person overseeing them is in Abuja which does not make sense. We are blindfolded with training the police and all, but no resources are made available. In the end, I think for me an effective policing system will give us an effective policing commission”.

Panel Session

Ending police brutality: matters arising, recommendations and follow-up plan

In an interactive panel session on ending police brutality, recommendations, and follow-up plans, CSP Femi Adedeji representing the Inspector General of Police, Gad Peters, Executive Director at CLEEN Foundation, Executive Secretary, National Human Rights Commission represented by Mr. Abdulrahman Yakubu argued that the police are opening up the space for citizens to report cases of rights infringements by the police, need for more engagement between citizens and the police to build trust and enhance democratic policing, rejuvenate the citizens-police-military dialogue process within the National Human Rights Commission’s work, use of technology in enforcing rights and in the security of lives and properties. They agreed that to ensure that the class of rights along civil and political rights is respected there is the need to find a balance between the role of the police in serving the State, serving the public and independent professional judgment of the police when responding to situations, while noting that the ultimate role of the State and its institutions is to serve the public interest. The track of discussions and participant conversations that followed provided much food for

thought on how to address issues of policing, civic space, civil and political rights across the country.

For participants, the role of the police as a strong arm of the State reflects their authority to enforce laws and policies defined by State institutions. In several thread of conversations participants cited instances across the country where State representatives have tried to influence the police to serve their interests rather than the public interest. Whereas policing should be regarded as a service to the public since they are carrying out their role for and on behalf of people with the requirement for the police to be responsive to the security and protection of rights of individuals as defined by the Constitution and other laws and policies of the State.

Key representative comments from panellists and participants during the session are as follows*¹:

“..... the police seems to be policing the state more than they should be policing the people, so you have the politicians, those in the government, one person carrying about 20 policemen, we are already told that we have about 300,000 policemen and if one person in power is moving around with 20 policemen I think we can imagine what happens to the people and it appears as if the police is defending the state against the people”.

“....., when we are talking about the citizens, you police should remember that they are the ones who pay your salary, and they should be treated with respect and also when you approach them, they should have the mindset of you giving solution to the problem. An example you gave about someone not having a license, that kind of situation cannot be resolved at that spot, there has to be a way you can properly follow up to ensure that this person has carried out this civil requirement”.

“..... Increasing citizens police engagement and demanding for accountability, transparency and ensuring security for everybody. It is about ensuring that the system works for everybody, not only for few persons because as it is now if there is a total breakdown of law or order we are all going to be victims of casualties directly or indirectly and so we need to keep on constantly demanding that the system provide that support for the police and when the system has provided the support for the police and oversight agency, we must demand that they are able to account for what is given to them and ensure they are working for the economy people and if they think that there are too many policemen following an individual, what are we doing to demand that such policeman get back to the station and work for all of us?”

“Brutality is one part of the story, and I look at the statistic to see if we are facing the reality from the beginning. The police brutality is not true, we have challenges here and there. We have so many reports from every unit reporting police brutality, but we told them they can always go to the police unit to notify us and to deal with it”.

“We have different office of the police that can deal with each level of police officers. When we talk about police brutality, it may be two or three police officers we are talking about but then they generalize it by putting it on all the police by saying police brutality”.

Speaking on ability to claim political rights which include natural justice (procedural fairness) in law, such as the rights of the accused, including the right to a fair trial; due process; the right to seek redress or a legal remedy a panellist noted:

“I would like to start by saying the federal government responded very promptly to the ENDSARS protest and ensuring that all the state of the federation set up a judicial panel to

* We have anonymised all comments and submissions. Comments have not been edited.

listen to complains of the citizens and also to give the police officers that has been alleged to have violated human right of the people and also to say their own side of the story”.

“It was not all the 36 states that set up the panel but about 24-26 states set it up and make enquiries including the one set up by the National Human Right Commission which covers the whole country and also the state that set up the panel have concluded their sittings and have submitted their report to their various state governors that set them up”.

The Office of the vice president of Nigeria is coordinating the report to be sure that it covers all the nation and whereby the state government will do what is expected of them to in terms of providing redress which may be in form of compensation, award of damages which is one aspect of it. Another aspect of it is to take appropriate action against police officers who may have been found to have violated the right of the citizens”.

“But the panel in the course of its work has awarded close to the sum of 500 million and of course this money cannot bring the lives that are lost by this violation or those that has been incapacitated in one way or the other but what that shows is the responsibility of the state actor to ensure that where there is violation, the citizens will have a course to certain redress and damages and also to ascertain their feelings to know that they have government that listen. Finally, what the commission desire to do is that by the time it submit its own report it will work with the vice president’s office to coordinate and harmonize all the report submitted by various state panel and continue to push that government implement as soon as possible”.

Responding to how citizens and the police can engage for effective right, respecting police within the context of 2020 police act- an important element of civil rights around life, safety and freedom from repression, we heard that:

“The citizens and the police are always engaged and police have this mechanism to interact with the citizens at different levels, we have stakeholders at various level we have police relation officer committee and then we have the divisional level, we have people from the community engaging the police also at the state level, local government level and even at the national level and over the years the police have the stakeholders dialogue in Abuja and some other zones talking about policing, security and law enforcement”.

“The issue of right protection has nothing to do with the items on those occurrences lately, but what we know is that if you read through the constitution very well, it talks about the function of executives, judiciary, and the parliament both at federal and at the state level and talks about good governance. So, all the levels of governance have the responsibility to protect the right of the people, so, the federal government has the responsibility, the state government also has that responsibility and of course the local government has that responsibility, but we know the challenges as regards the local government and the state government but specifically the state and federal government has the responsibility to protect the right of their citizens. Then on what is the commission doing to be able to create a synergy between the federal and the state government. What we do is we continue to engage the state government through so many mechanisms. One is capacity building, dialogue, meetings and also monitoring their activities and submitting reports to the state government on the need for them to continue to improve on the protection of the right of the people”.

A participant noted “Well I think we have seen more than enough on social media probably I think at the end of this gathering we can go online, we are going to see complain on some part of the country about impunity by someone in uniform. Most often we get a follow-up report that the CP of that particular team has instructed someone to investigate that matter and we usually get feedback.....and I think it's an effort we all need to encourage.... And so the use of technology has come to say and I think because the police have been using that lately”.

“We have to be more engaging and proactive in ensuring that the right thing is done we need to pinpoint precisely to the police authority as an institution under the body that these are areas where there are gaps and these are areas in which we need your intervention and if those intervention are not happening we need to go back over and over again show to follow up either with the human right commission or the police service commission or the ministry of human affairs or any other recognised body that have that mandate to apply that little pressure to make them do the needful i think that that kind of engagement will help all of us”.

One trend that is coming in the infringement of the civil rights of citizens is that of privacy-young people are seen to be harassed by the police requesting to search citizen’s phones and laptops. Speaking on rights to privacy, the police representative said:

“Police authorities themselves have insisted that you cannot search people’s phones on the street if you are not sure that the person has committed an offense. Never forget that the law says that a police officer can arrest you if he reasonably suspect that you have committed a crime or you are going to commit a crime it is also in the book that a police man can arrest you or seek to arrest you if he thinks you have committed a crime, about to commit a crime or you are going to commit a crime, I am not justifying the abuse of those power and the oppression behaviour of our people but a lot of times, we recover 100 of vehicles every year even thousands stolen vehicles and the owners get them back, we get people to jail every year not by magic but through some of this small processes and we also created room for people to report when you feel dissatisfy with a particular police service and that is why we have all these lies that people say I have been arrested illegally or I have been detained illegally and you can find the address of course we have the human right commission we also have the police service commission, we even have the court, people sue the police all the time so the channel of communication of getting address is open and the police still go ahead to do its job”.

Speaking on inclusive policing and in ways that ensure citizens are not discriminated or left behind based on their disability, a participant noted: “my concern is for the deaf citizens, is their interpreter at the police stations, many deaf people have been mistreated due to communication gap and I think that is important to flag”.

Virtual: Zoom Engagements

“Please, let the Police Authority officially release the authentic lines to call over the whole states.”

“Rapid Feedback /complaints response phone lines and social media handles should be shared here please.”

“...I think complaint mechanism should be narrowed down to neighbourhood level. Confidence building, or reposing trust in the police will depend a lot on how the police is ready to communicate and give feedback to citizens.”

“Police in Aba in Abia State and other states in the southeast operate with machet and there have been cases where citizens have been macheted. We witnessed the dismissal of erring police officers caught on camera and trending on social media. Citizens put their lives in the line of fire to get those videos. Do we need to get erring officers on camera and on social media before the leadership of the police would act?”

“We understand the plight of the Nigeria Police. The Police put more effort to bridge the confidence gap between the Police and citizens to motivate more citizens to advocate that the government pays more attention to the welfare and operation needs of the police. We can't do without the police”.

“My concern is for the Deaf citizens. Are there Interpreters at the police stations? Many deaf people have been mistreated due to communication gap.”

“A rich friend of mine last year procured 6 armed mobile policemen who stayed with him for a few weeks, full-time, with feeding and lodging. How come rich private individuals still have access to procuring the services of the police while there is a shortage of policemen for the general public and despite successive IGs trying to stop this practice?”

“Talking about the entry requirement for the Nigerian Police, the current entry qualification of the Nigerian Police, I think, is quite okay, but emphasis should be placed on the character of the person. I have seen BA, B.Sc., and Ph.D. degree holders with shameful character.”

“I think police officers shouldn’t be videoed without their consent.”

Concluding Comments

Participants were generally supportive of the need for continuous engagement between the police, civil society, and citizens. Although some challenges were raised, these related to ensuring dialogues happen more at the sub-national level where issues of infringements on civil and political rights are happening daily.

The need for adequate oversight of the police through proper funding, opportunities for citizens to voice concern, adequate police training, equipment that is adequate for police functions, complaints procedures, both for making complaints to the police directly and to independent bodies was a cross-cutting theme across the dialogue. Participants wanted the protection of the rights of both citizens and police based on a reliable mechanism for capturing statistics on police performance, related both to effectiveness in dealing with crime and public order, as well as to their integrity and public confidence.

Citizens’ role and responsibility in creating an orderly society was also a key theme. Participants are keen to see citizens willingly respecting the laws in ways that create an environment for effective policing. Greater awareness of the rights of citizens and provisions of the Police Act 2020 was also felt to be important. Working with community groups, sub-national civil society networks, police community relations committee structures, traditional and religious nonprofits through collaborative partnerships were seen to be key to this.

Funding for the police was also commonly mentioned, particularly being able to address the police per capita gap along with ensuring access to technology, skills and trainings that can enhance policing functions. Drawing on the expertise of specialist organisations and those best placed to work with disadvantaged communities were thought to be fundamental to a policing system that leaves no one behind, for example in policing persons with disabilities.

Three political context factors will play a decisive role in influencing the outcomes of the Police-Citizen Dialogue:

1. Implement community policing strategies in ways that support civic space and citizen engagement including scrutiny and oversight involving feedback to the police future activities and prevent future wrongdoings in order to improve respect for civil and political rights.
2. Engage with other State structures to achieve a right respecting policing system. Other State structures such as the legislative and judiciary need to support the drive for effective democratic policing.

3. All levels of government have the responsibility to protect the right of the citizens. The Federal, State and Local government must continue to work to protect the right of the people.

Recommendations and Next Steps

The following are a selection of important recommendations made by participants and they are areas of work that builds on existing plans and commitments of government:

Effective accountability for the rights of citizens involves many different actors across different layers of institutions within democracy. These includes government representatives, legislature, judiciary civil society. Independent oversight bodies such as the National Human Rights Commission, Police Service Commission and the police themselves. Participants therefore call on these stakeholders to:

- Commit to putting forward a joint plan of action that promotes the full realisation of the civil and political rights of Nigerians. They must also commit to communicating the rights and roles of citizens through nationally targeted campaigns and awareness.
- The Inspector General must include in its policing plan or operational strategies actions and activities that reinforce public trust in the functions of the police, this may include information about the complaint's procedure placed on the police website, social media handles and other publicity materials. Prominent display of information on the complaint's procedure in all police premises, particularly in custody areas.
- Increase investment in the disciplining and promotion of the police by ensuring that the work of oversight institutions such as the Police Service Commission and National Human Rights Commission can be carried out effectively in ways that improve perception and trust in the redress system. Such investment will also ensure that the international legal framework for seeking redress when rights are violated works efficiently through prompt and impartial investigations.
- Commit through the Open Government Partnership, to a properly planned quarterly citizens-police dialogue giving community members an opportunity to voice their concerns or offer their explanation of a situation around their civil and political rights. Efforts should be made to build relationships with the youth by increasing opportunities for police-community interaction on social media. Develop a system for reporting back to citizens on actions taken to address identified challenges.
- The Inspector General should train and retrain all arms bearing officers on the basic principles of the use of force and firearms and must continue to enforce the principle that superior officers must be held responsible "if they know, or should have known" that their subordinates "are resorting, or have resorted, to the unlawful use of force and firearms, and they did not take all measures in their power to prevent, suppress or report such use"

Participants expect the government- executive, legislature and judiciary, civil society, and citizens to carefully consider points raised from the dialogue as it works to protect the rights of citizens.

We recognise the importance of developing and implementing a citizens-police dialogue plan that commands broad public support, with objectives that can be met while addressing the concerns raised by participants and maximising the benefits of an effective policing system across the Nigerian society.

The strength of feelings of participants on some of the topics raised are recognised. It is important that the feedback gathered from this dialogue will inform our overall approach to improving the rights of people.

Decisions made as a result of the outcomes of this dialogue should be published while keeping views expressed by participants in mind for future development and review of operational strategies to build community trust and protect rights.

NNNGO worked closely with other government departments to plan and host the dialogue, both NOA, OGP Nigeria and NNNGO will publish the dialogue report on their organisational websites.

In preparation for the start of the 3rd National Action Plan, suggestions made by the participants and issues raised will be considered as part of the steps to implement the civic space element of the plan. We will explore ways in which we can build upon dialogue activities, as we recognise that there is strong public interest around issues raised during the dialogue.

NNNGO will continue to raise awareness of the Police Act 2020.

Conclusion

This report has only been possible thanks to the participation, effort, sharpness of thought and honesty of a diverse group of experts, government reformers, civil society advocates and interested people who took time to engage in discussions around the themes of the dialogue.

Building on the outcomes of the dialogue is the work of years, not months. The issues raised during the dialogue and captured in this report are not exhaustive, nor could they be. This is a first step in starting a carefully curated police-citizens dialogue, how recommendations are taken on board and progressed to implementation, how the dialogue is improved upon and how implementation of recommendations is communicated to citizens will determine the real value of this and other dialogues.

Protecting the civil and political rights of citizens is not simple and it requires understanding and collaboration. As civil society organisations work to ensure the rights of citizens are respected balancing collaboration with confrontation will be key in building out a system of public oversight for the State and its institutions to respect the rights of the people.

Annex

1. Concept Note: Police Citizens Dialogue at <http://bitly.ws/xKPq>
2. Discussion paper on police citizens dialogue at <http://bitly.ws/xKPL>
3. Policing and Civic space at <http://bitly.ws/xKQa>
4. Evaluation report at <https://bit.ly/3VWeLoa>