



INDEPENDENT SERVICE DELIVERY MONITORING GROUP

(Centre for Transparency Advocacy)

COMMUNIQUÉ AFTER A CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON THE MIDTERM REPORT OF THE NIGERIA GOVERNMENT ORGANISED BY THE INDEPENDENT SERVICE DELIVERY MONITORING GROUP IN ABUJA ON MONDAY, JULY 8, 2013.

The **Independent Service Delivery Monitoring Group** convened a **Civil Society Forum on the Midterm report of the Nigerian Government** in Abuja on Monday July 8, 2013.

Background

In the past few weeks, the Nigerian public has been inundated with claims of 'unusual' achievements by the administration of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan using the ongoing platform of the **Ministerial Midterm Report** packaged by the administration through the Ministry of Information.

The Midterm Report by Ministers is following on the heels of President Jonathan's presentation of his two-year scorecard on May 29, 2013. While presenting his two-year scorecard, the President challenged Nigerians to develop a 'marking scheme' by which his achievements and scorecard can be judged. However, since that challenge was made, Civil Society was yet to pick the gauntlet thereby allowing the administration and its agents the free reign to rile Nigerians through the media with wide, one sided and unsubstantiated claims of performance.

It was against this background that the **Independent Service Delivery Monitoring Group** thought it necessary to organise this forum to provide a platform for civil society organisations spread across Nigeria to engage and dispassionately assess the claims of achievements of the administration using government's own benchmarks.

Participation and Presentations

There were panel discussions on four ministerial reports followed by general discussion, and questions and answers.

Panellists and participants were drawn from civil society organisations spread across Nigeria. The Participants at the forum included:

1. Dr Nasir Isah Fagge - ASUU President
2. Dr Chima Amadi - Executive Director, ISDMG
3. Adeola Soetan-Project Executive, Feed Nigeria Initiative among others.

4. Dr. Sofiri Joab-Peterside - Executive Director, Centre for Advanced Social Science
5. Lanre Arogundade - Executive Director, International Press Centre
6. Jaye Gaskia - Convener, United Action for Democracy (former country Director, Action Aid)
7. Barr. Mahmud Abdulmumin - President, Public Interest Lawyers League
8. Hajiya Zainab Abdullahi Mohammed - National Coordinator, Transition Monitoring Group
9. Kyauta Iliya Giwa - Coordinator, Community Action for Popular Participation
10. Ben Adoga - News Editor, Pilot Newspapers
11. Ezenwa Nwagwu - Former Vice President! Transparency in Nigeria
12. Oluajo Babatunde - National Secretary- Zero Corruption Coalition
13. Abdulrazaque Barkindo - Publisher, The Road Newspapers
14. Prof. Emeka Ezeonu - Lecturer NAU, Awka.
15. Okechukwu Nwanguma - coordinator, Network on Police Reform in Nigeria
16. Faith Nwadishi - National Coordinator, Publish What You Pay and Member, NEITI Board
17. Adeola Soetan - Project Executive, Feed Nigeria Initiative among others.

Panellists led critical discussions on reports by four Ministries: Education, Health, Transportation (aviation, road, water and rail transport) and Agriculture, in the first instance, to see if the achievements listed in their reports correspond with the objective realities on ground.

Participants contributed through free and robust debates, comments and questions to the panel reviews and generally examined the activities of the administration during the period under review to ascertain if they meet the yearnings and aspirations of the Nigerian people.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

1. Participants welcomed in principle, the idea of a midterm report, but doubted the sincerity of the Jonathan administration in coming up with its own midterm report.
2. The remark by President Jonathan that he should be judged on a marking scheme highlights the deficiency of the midterm report. Transformation is embedded in development; it is a visible thing; there would therefore, be no need for any assessment to

determine whether the government has performed or succeeded in its transformation agenda.

3. Participants observed that the regime has been in office for more than four years beginning from the late President Yar'Adua administration of which Goodluck Jonathan was an integral part, first as Vice President and later, Acting President, before the last 2 years when he became substantive President following the demise of President Yaradua.

4. Participants also noted that the regime has been a continuous one rather than a break from the past 12 years that the PDP has been in the saddle.

5. Participants noted that virtually all the economic policies being pursued by the Jonathan administration are a recycling of the same old World Bank and IMF dictated policies founded on a neo liberal philosophical and economic paradigm which previous administrations including Obasanjo had implemented, but which had not worked for Nigeria.

6. Participants also observed that the figures bandied by the various ministries in their midterm reports as indicators of progress did not provide baseline information and data, as well as failed to reveal whether the projects which various ministries claimed to have completed were initiated within the two years since Jonathan has been on the saddle or prior to it.

7. Participants observed that the midterm report did not show any correlation between the amount of money spent and the impact on the lives of citizens in relation to the claims of economic growth.

8. The midterm report presents a picture of lack of coordination between and among the various sectors. It presented no sense that sectoral targets feed into an overall socio-economic picture and goal, and nothing to indicate that the sectors are interlinked and that progress or lack of it in any one sector affects progress in other sectors.

EDUCATION SECTOR

9. With particular regard to the education sector, participants noted that contrary to the claimed achievements in the midterm report, there has been a near total neglect of the education sector reflected in poor annual budgetary allocations to the sector. Allocation to the healthcare sector as a percentage of the annual national budget has continued to decline while capital votes have been consistently below 25 percent of healthcare annual budget.

10. It was observed that government has failed in its responsibility to provide quality education for Nigerians in line with Section 18 of the 1999 Constitution which mandates the state to ensure equal and adequate educational opportunities for all and to strive to eradicate illiteracy.

11. Participants noted that in seeking to justify the recent ridiculously low cut off marks for admission into federal government colleges (unity schools), which in some states in the North, was put at as low as 2, the ministry of education premised this ridiculous decision on what it called 'collective intelligence of all students' while also saying that 'the students do not necessarily have a low mental capacity to grasp concepts'. The Minister of Education however, went further to admit the real causes of poor performance among students when the Minister said 'perhaps, we should note that a major reason why the students score so low in examinations is that the state of education in Northern Nigeria is poor, a serious lack of competent teaching staff, corruption in the management of education, lack of adequate educational plan; poor implementation of educational goals; and demographic problems. Yet each successive state government has done little more than nod in agreement to the identified issues.'

12. Participants however observed that while poor state of education in parts of the North may represent the extreme, the reality is that education in all parts of Nigeria is in total state of decay.

13. Participants noted that government has abandoned its responsibility for ensuring adequate and quality education to private merchants whose primary motive is profit. The effect is that, using Lagos as an example, private schools currently account for 57 percent of all enrolments in Lagos as reported by the DFID in its Lagos Private Schools Census 2010 – 2011. **Abandoning education to private merchants is not the way out of the rot in Nigeria's educational system, rather** the way forward is to prioritize education and see it as an investment in the nation's human capital without which its much avowed developmental aspirations cannot be attained.

14. Participants also noted the trend towards abandoning the funding of education and educational development to interventionist agencies. They cautioned that interventionist agencies remain largely interventionist and are not a substitute for the duty of governments at all levels to fund and commit the needed resources to education.

15. Participants asserted that while interventionist agencies like Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) has done a **yeoman's** job in its effort at stabilizing education at the tertiary level, government at all levels must be alive to their fundamental duties of investing in the education of Nigerians.

16. Participants further observed that the administration's midterm report listed achievements by interventionist agencies such as Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and TETFUND as part of its scorecard. While some of the interventionist agencies have done quite a lot towards revitalizing education, the continued abandonment of the primary duty of funding education by government at the various levels have not made the impact of these agencies felt as it should have been.

17. Using TETFUND as an example, participants observed that properly focusing interventionist agencies rather than abandoning its primary duty to fund education by government at the state and federal levels can help such agencies make more impact in the efforts at stabilizing education and ultimately improving standards.

18. Recalling that TETFUND was the product of sustained agitation by ASUU for improved funding of education through the collection of an Education Tax, participants noted that the historic 1992 strike by ASUU culminated in the establishment of an Education Tax Fund to be administered by a Management Team set up by the General Babangida military junta.

19. Participants observed that between 1992 and 1999, nothing much could be ascribed to this agency. But by 1999 the Obasanjo administration revamped the fund at the prompting of ASUU. Between 1999 and 2007 this agency was merely handing out palliatives to beneficiary institutions which cut across all levels of education in the country. The structural and institutional framework of the agency was a major setback to its effectiveness and this led to calls for its scrapping. However, by 2007 and with a new government, a new Management Team headed by Prof. Mahmud Yakubu was appointed to refocus the Fund.

20. The law establishing the Fund was amended which mandated it to restrict interventions to only Tertiary institutions. This move restored the original concept of ETF as initiated and negotiated by ASUU and FGN in 1992. Between 2007 and now, the refocusing has enabled the fund to be consolidated for impact in the following areas-

- Allocations to beneficiaries increased manifold. Prior to 2007, the highest amount ever allocated to any University in normal intervention was N58.5m. By 2012, however, each University received N595m in normal intervention. The allocations to the Polytechnics and Colleges of Education also increased astronomically.
- In addition to increased normal allocation, the Special High Impact projects were also introduced under which select tertiary institutions on the equality of geo-political zones were given special allocations of N3b per university and N1b per Polytechnic and College of Education (based on the 2.1.1 sharing formula enshrined in the Act). Each year, 6 universities, 3 Polytechnics and 3 colleges of education benefitted (i.e. One university and a Polytechnic or College of Education per zone) benefitted. This is a continuous intervention which is meant to continue until all institutions benefit in the long run.
- Until 2008, the highest amount ever allocated for postgraduate staff training by ETF was a one-off N1.75m (one million seven hundred and fifty thousand Naira), an amount that was significantly inadequate. The refocusing of TETFUND made it possible for this sum to be increased substantially to about N80 million resulting in over 6,000 lecturers benefitting. This is the highest number of lecturers from Federal and State tertiary institutions sponsored for PG studies within a 4-year period since Nigeria's independence in 1960. This is in addition to over 7,000 lecturers who have benefitted from Conference Attendance (CA) initiative introduced in 2009.
- The fund also initiated a National Research Fund for the education sector with a seed grant of N3b approved and earmarked to support research for national development in critical sectors such as power, security etc. This is in addition to the Book Development Fund introduced to support the revitalization of Journals (beginning with those of professional/scholarly associations). So far, over 100 journals have benefitted from the sum of only N5m each out of a N2b seed grant. In

addition to journals, the seed grant of N2b is also used to support the publication of tertiary levels textbooks, including outstanding PhD theses submitted to the universities.

21. While conceding that TETFUND has done a good job in its effort at stabilizing education at the tertiary level, participants observed that the same cannot be said of other levels of education. Participants therefore, called on the government to be alive to its fundamental duties of investing in the education of Nigerians and not abandon the funding of education and educational development to interventionist agencies, reiterating that interventionist agencies remain largely interventionist and are not a substitute for the duty of governments at all levels to fund and commit the needed resources to education.

22. Participants noted that children of most public servants and privileged Nigerians are either in private schools or attending school outside the country thereby leading to capital flight.

23. Participants noted that the NUC, rather than focus on and take seriously its statutory duties of oversight and ensuring quality delivery in university education through the full implementation of national minimum standards, has rather preoccupied itself with wasteful and spurious activities such as organizing irrelevant conferences and usurping the powers and functions of university senate in many respects. Participants also noted that the struggles of ASUU over the years have bordered on the duties that the NUC ought to play under the law establishing it but which it has failed to perform.

24. Government's decision to establish 12 new universities across geopolitical zones when it has failed to adequately fund existing ones is a mere political maneuver that will not enhance access to education but has the dangerous effect of promoting disunity. Our youths will be restricted to their immediate environments and prevented from moving out of their states of origin or birth to mix up and interact with their peers in other parts of the country.

25. Government has over the years demonstrated lack of honour to abide by and fulfill agreements reached with ASUU on most of the issues plaguing the educational system. This is a clear testimony to its lack of commitment to improving the state of education. No country achieves development without placing high premium on education.

HEALTH SECTOR

26. Participants noted, with respect to the health sector, that government's claims of achievement in this sector are not supported by verifiable evidence on the ground.

27. Contrary to government's claimed achievements in the healthcare sector, Nigeria has been consistently ranked within the category of low human development index in all UNDP Human Development Index reports. Other recent reports have also ranked Nigeria as the worse place to be born, one of the worse places to be a mother as well as one of the countries in the 'serious' category- the one but last category in the Global Hunger Index. All these combined or taken in isolation, make it difficult for Nigeria to achieve the levels of improvements in the healthcare sector as it claimed in the midterm report.

28. The high levels of joblessness, insecurity, hunger, homelessness, poverty, lack of access to portable drinking water- all jointly and individually impede access by the majority of the population to quality and affordable healthcare and general wellbeing. This is not to talk about the lack of availability of quality healthcare facilities.

29. Participants noted that the transformation agenda vision- to save one million lives by 2015 was launched in 2012 as Nigeria government's contribution towards saving 6 million lives of mothers and children globally by 2015. Participants however observed that the Global Health Index with a score of 15.7 ranked Nigeria 40 out of 79 countries with a score higher than 5 thereby contradicting the federal government's claimed achievements in the key performance indicators for the healthcare sector.

30. With regard to the 4 pillars enunciated in the National Strategic Health Development Programme with focus on expanding access to basic services in the areas of maternal, neonatal and child health, Nigeria has consistently ranked low among low Human Development Index (HDI) category of countries from 2010 to 2013. Life expectancy has also continued to lower from 51.9 in 2011 to 41.4 in 2013.

31. The most significant indicator of the decline in the state of healthcare over the years, and particularly, in recent times, is the fact that state dignitaries, as well as other privileged personalities including high profile business persons, continue to seek medical treatment outside the country for all manner of ailments from the most common to the most complex. The Nigeria Medical Association has stated that the country loses over 600 billion naira annually to what it calls 'medical tourism'.

TRANSPORT SECTOR

32. Participants observed that transportation is one of the many keys to economic and industrial development.

33. Participants further noted government's acceptance in the midterm report that the growth of the transport sector has been marginal. Between 2010 and 2012, there was a mere marginal 0.8% percent growth of the sector from 6.71% in 2010 to 6.79% in 2012.

34. In terms of contribution to GDP growth, transport accounted for 2.67% in 2010 and 2.66% in 2012. Thus in 2012, the contribution to GDP declined by 0.1% in 2012.

35. With regard to railway, participants observed that the achievements of the sector outlined in the midterm report do not show any strategic investment beyond the rehabilitation of dilapidated rail tracks the management of which is in the hands of the politically controlled and inefficient Nigerian Railways Corporation. Whilst the report highlights rehabilitation of rail tracks and wagons as achievements, it makes no reference to the passenger capacity utilization within the sector and how many passenger seats the rehabilitation of wagons has created.

36. Participants noted that while the current cosmetic make-overs of the airports are laudable, such cosmetic reform does not address the capacity utilization weaknesses of the aviation industry. Only the Murtala Mohammed International Airport operates beyond design capacity; scarce public funds are expended on airports with little passenger capacity. There is no consideration for the development of manpower within the industry. The Nigerian College of Aviation Technology (NCAT) in Zaria still remains the manpower training centre for the aviation industry. Viewed against the near dilapidated state of that college, it is not hard to see why manpower remains the challenge of the industry.

37. Participants also raised questions of transparency and accountability over the manner contracts for the redesigns of airports were awarded, and noted that many critics of the government have alleged that contracts were awarded without recourse to due process as stipulated by Section 16 (1) (c) of the Public Procurement Act, 2007 which provides that "subject to any exemption allowed by the Act, all public procurement shall be conducted by open competitive bidding; in a manner which is transparent, timely, equitable for ensuring accountability and conformity with this Act and regulations deriving therefrom".

38. The poor aesthetic designs of some of the airports, particularly the Abuja airport, give fillips to the criticisms that the manner in which the redesign contracts were awarded was all but competitive and transparent. The new look Abuja airport isn't close to what a modern world class airport should be. And it is even worse that only recently reports of incessant power cuts at the Abuja and Uyo airports were reported in the media. The power cut incident in Uyo was even more ludicrous. The media reported that the airport staff responsible for ensuring that the alternative source of power that light up the airport left after the close of work with the keys to the airport's generator house.

39. Participants noted that there is clear evidence that the transport environment has not provided enough returns to investments considering the declining contributions to GDP growth. Participants also noted that the policy framework has not been effective and efficient and there have been no real improvements in the sector as the government claims.

40. The dismal performance in this sector is evidenced by the poor state of infrastructure, low budgetary allocation, low investment, poor performance, poor maintenance culture, corruption and waste, lack of due process and accountability, no growth and blame trading between the federal and various state governments on major road repairs.

AGRICULTURE

41. With regard to the Agriculture sector, participants noted that the performance of the regime in review has not been satisfactory to this vital segment and the resultant effect is the persistent rise in market prices of foods.

42. Participants observed that the midterm report presentation was not a sober reflection of the true state of Agriculture and food security in Nigeria and the Minister of

Agriculture's extravagant romance with questionable statistics, like many of his predecessors in office, might have beclouded his rational appraisal of the gravity of the challenges faced by farmers and other stakeholders in the sector.

43. While noting some achievements recorded in the sector in the period under review, participants observed that much more could have been achieved if the implementation processes of these policies and programmes were decentralized and be more inclusive to include farmers' organizations in the local council areas and states of the federation.

44. Participants noted that before the nation arrives at the envisioned commercial, large scale mechanized agriculture, the small scale farmers that presently constitute over ninety percent of Agricultural workforce and contribute over eighty percent to domestic food production should be the central focus of the transformation agenda.

CONCLUSION

45. Participants commended the transport ministry for sending representatives to defend their report, and particularly noted the commitment by the ministry representatives to henceforth open a website for the ministry where members of the public can access information from and about the ministry's activities.

46. Participants noted and condemned the failure of other ministries to send delegates and interpreted this as a confirmation that they could not defend and substantiate their touted achievements as reported in their sectoral reports.

47. Participants were unanimous in their conclusion that taking overall, the performance of the current administration in the four sectors so far assessed during the forum was far below average, unsatisfactory and did not meet the aspirations of Nigeria. The claims were not supported by the realities on the ground.

Transformation is embedded in development. It is visible. Therefore, was no need, in the first place, for an assessment, to determine whether or not the Jonathan government has performed or succeeded in its transformation agenda.

Signed: For Communiqué Drafting Committee

Okechukwu Nwanguma

National Coordinator

Network for Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN)

Oluajo Babatunde

National Secretary

Zero Corruption Coalition

