

COMMUNIQUE ADOPTED AT THE END OF A ONE DAY CITIZENS AWARENESS CREATION FORUM ON FEDERAL GOVT'S PRIVATE SECTOR POLICIES ORGANISED BY NIGER DELTA BUDGET MONITORING GROUP (NDEBUMOG) WITH SUPPORT FROM OXFAM IN NIGERIA AT UMNEAK HOTEL, UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE ON FRIDAY 28TH JANUARY 2022.

BACKGROUND:

In line with NDEBUMOG's mission of mobilizing and empowering community members, especially, women and other marginalized groups for demanding accountability from public office holders, a One-day Citizens Awareness Creation Forum on Federal Government's Private Sector Policies was organized by the Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group (NDEBUMOG) on Friday, 28th January 2022. The Forum was organized with support from Oxfam in Nigeria as part of the Power of Voices (PVP) Fair for All (F4A) program. The event took place at Umneak Hotel, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The event aimed at exposing participants to government's private sector policies and programmes, including, understanding how these policies can contribute to sustainable livelihood, economic opportunities to citizens, especially, women through extractive value chain. Participants at this event were drawn from private sector players, community stakeholders, youths, women groups, as well as selected affiliates of Niger Delta Budget Monitoring Group. Facilitation methodology at the event was blended through paper presentations by resource persons, plenary interventions, discussions, comments, questions, and responses from facilitators.

Among presentations and activities at the forum were:

- ✓ Influencing module through alliance building.
- ✓ Introduction to public budget and fiscal mechanics through evolving envelopes for private sector value chains.
- ✓ Catalogue of FGN's private sector policies and related connectors of some policies to extractive value chains for economic empowerment of the citizens.
- ✓ Participatory discussion on private sector policies and opportunities that empowers Nigeria's public, especially, women.
- ✓ Inauguration of some shadow budget groups.
- ✓ Introduction of participants to Petroleum Industry Act's 30% Campaign for empowerment of women, an advocacy program by NDEBUMOG.

OBSERVATIONS/CONCERNS/RECOMMENDATIONS:

Following deliberations on issues raised, participants observed as follows:

- There are no proper “needs” assessment in conceptualization, formulation, and execution of budget by the government. Budgetary processes are done to the exclusion of citizens, including women. Therefore, the to make budgetary and fiscal processes was emphasized.
- There are lots of unrealistic and unnecessary items captured in government budget at the detriment of essential needs of the masses. This contributes to the over bloating of the budget, which government often resort to borrowing to finance over bloated budgets.
- Private sector policies and social investment programmes geared towards poverty alleviation and massive job creation seems supercilious and hardly impacts positively on lives of common masses, especially, women.
- Some social investment programmes and policies by the Federal Government are laudable. However, there is need for proper sensitization of citizens and adequate monitoring in the implementation processes of these policies, particularly, empowerment programmes. This is to equip citizens, especially, women, with information that will enable them to key into opportunities provided through these programmes.
- The needed growth in agricultural production and non-oil sectors cannot be achieved because of insecurity, which is compounded by unemployment across the country.
- For change to take place, women should be encouraged to participate in economic activities through policy incentives and legal framework, such as the Petroleum Industry Act. CSOs should also begin to embark on awareness programmes around government policies and programmes to enable citizens, especially, women key into the opportunities for economic growth.
- The 30% campaign in the implementation of the Petroleum Industry Act, being promoted by NDEBUMOG should be adopted by host communities, including, Nigerians, generally.
- No country can develop with aggravated level of insecurity such as Nigeria. Therefore, government needs to tackle the menace for national stability and economic growth.

CONCLUSION

Participants commended NDEBUMOG and Oxfam for the forum, saying, it was an eye opener.

They requested a forum like this, should be held frequently.

Adopted in Uyo on Friday, 28th January 2022, with signatures below by members of the communique drafting committee on behalf of participants.

Signed:

Ekaette Joseph Udondata – (Abak Shadow Group)

Ike-Woko Confidence – (Rumuobiokani Community)

UnyimeUduak Nathan – (Essien Udim Shadow Group)