



KOGI NGO NETWORK (KONGONET)

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3RD QUARTER 2021 PRESS-BRIEFING BY KOGI NGOs NETWORK (KONGONET) ON 4TH OCTOBER, 2021.

Gentlemen of the Press;

Welcome to our STATE OF KOGI quarterly Press briefing by KONGONET.

Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) is a coalition of Civil Society Networks championing the promotion of participatory democracy, good governance/best practices, accountable governance and network coordination in Kogi State through advocacy and policy influencing for the well-being of Kogites.

Highlight of events within the quarter

- The Kogi State government has formally appointed and inaugurated Kogi State Youth Development Commission Board and kick-started activities.
- Kogi State government finally yielded to the demand of Civil Society Group on HIV/AIDS in Kogi State by appointing Executive Secretary to oversee Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA).
- Nine (9) months after the conduct of Kogi State council elections, Kogi State citizens are yet to sight the council's election results break down. This is undemocratic.
- It is however commendable that the state government acted swiftly to relieve a member of Kogi State Independent Electrical Commission (KGSIEC) appointment on a verified allegation by the state assembly for misconduct within the reporting quarter.
- Kogi State, specifically the state capital is still neck-deep in social amenities challenges, e.g., Road network, water supply, Street lights etc.
- The worrisome and persistent increase in the prices of food commodities across the state leaves lots of questions unanswered in regards to the capacity of relevant government MDAs to act and respond sufficiently to issues of pressing need of Kogites.
- There is still a lack of periodic interaction with the State Government with citizens to discuss matters of state importance. Civil Society looks forward for this to be addressed.
- The consistent push by Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) and several other organizations for Kogi State Government to Sign-On to Open Government Partnership (OGP) has not yielded results.

- The Kogi State Law on Disability Rights Office has not been put to use, as the state government is yet to appoint and inaugurate a board to oversee and implement the law.
- The appointment of Executive Secretary (ES) to operationalize the Kogi State Health Insurance Agency (KGSIA) is a good move to create access to health care services, however the need to appoint and inaugurate a substantive board and adequately fund the agency is important.
- KONGONET observed with dismay the ongoing auctioning of state-owned properties without wider consultation with stakeholders.
- KONGONET observed with dismay a sharp rise in crimes and criminalities across the state within the reporting period.

Health Issues:

Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN), reported slight improvement and restructuring of Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA) as a new Executive Secretary was appointed within the quarter. The said appointment has led to few engagements between the agency and the leadership of Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN) within the reporting quarter. CiSHAN has been able to procure and distributed HIV rapid test kits among her members to sustain the community-based intervention in regards to testing and referral. Network of People Living With HIV/AIDs in Nigeria (NEPWHAN) and Initiative for Health and Social Development (IHSD) still remain the only CSOs presently implementing community level interventions in the State with support from Centre for Integrated Health Program (CIHP).

Agricultural Intervention Issues:

The Analysis of the 2021 Agriculture Budget by the Budget Committee Group (BCG) with support from PIBCID/ActionAid Nigeria shows a decline in the allocated funds to the Agricultural sector. More worrisome is the observed consistent denial of funds to women in Agriculture, even though it is captured in the state budget every year. Small Scale Women Farmer Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON) Kogi State branch held a press –conference to issue a statement over the 2021 Kogi State budget and the located funds to the agricultural sector. SWOFON Kogi State opined that “In Kogi State year 2021 budget, Agriculture sector yet again got the least allocation compared to other major sectors that drives the social-economic development of the State such as Education, Health; Agriculture received the least at 6.58% compare to 28.89% for Education, 31.14% for Health”

SWOFON Kogi State concluded that if Agriculture is to serve as a means of diversifying the economy of Kogi State as promised in the new direction blueprint of the Government of the State, then allocations to the sector is grossly inadequate.

The presentation by Kogi State Budget Committee Group (BCG) at the recently concluded key stakeholders consultative meeting towards 2022 budget cycle shows that Kogi state budget for the agricultural sector 2021 budget cycle was inadequate and needed to be reviewed upward. The group also recommended that there is an urgent need for the state to focus resources to achieve greater value for money; saying there may be need for

rationalization and streamlining of mandates of Kogi State ministry of agriculture so that resources does not get wasted in just paying salaries and overheads alone with little capital allocation to carry out the much-needed programmes.

In Kogi State rains are gradually subsiding, yet no tangible investment or releases made to the ministry to support farmers and farming activities. Quarter 1 and 2 Kogi State budget expenditure index shows less than 5% releases to Kogi State Ministry of Agriculture, this is very poor.

Education Sector:

Within the reporting period, the Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA) lamented over the continuous reduction in the quality of basic education across the state once again. The coalition through her state coordinator said the state had neglected the welfare of primary school teachers as evidenced in the non-payment of full salaries to basic education teachers across local government areas of the state and non-maintenance of basic school infrastructures. The coalition called on the state and local government to immediately resolve the above challenges and save the future of Kogi State children.

Social Welfare Issues:

Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) Kogi State within the reporting quarter made a huge progress in civil resolution of domestic violence, women abuse and child custody cases across the state and as well conducted school sensitization activities across Igalamela, Idah, Lokoja and Okene LGAs of Kogi State.

The Association for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (AONN) urgently calls on the Hon. Commissioner of Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to partner with the coalition towards resolution of female trafficking issues in the State has not yielded results.

Recommendations:

- The Kogi State government should quickly cash into Youth Development Commission platform and empower youths across the state to curtail the high youth unemployment situation of the state.
- Kogi State government should quickly appoint and inaugurate board for the Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA) and ensure it is constituted based on the dictates of the enabling laws of the agency.
- We call on the Kogi State assembly to compel the Kogi State Independent Electoral Commission (KGSIEC) to make public the December, 12th 2020 council's election results break down. While commending the state assembly for investigating the indictment of a member of KGSIEC and making necessary recommendation to the State Executive.
- The state of our social amenities needs overhauling, while commending the state government for her stride in regards to the ongoing overhead bridge at Ganaja junction, the hospital upgrades and the new modern science secondary school at Adankolo. We call on the state government to equally give the needed attention to internal road network, water supply, Street lights etc.
- We recommend that the state government should swiftly put in place a committee to unravel the misery behind the astronomical increment on agricultural/consumer goods

across the state and proffer immediate, mid-term and long-term solutions to them. Again, the need for a concise, participatory youth and women in agriculture policy to harness the numerical value of these groups in improving the state food security and alleviating the daunting poverty in our communities cannot be over emphasized.

- The State Government should stick to its commitment establishing communication medium with the Civil Society Networks in the state to ensure holistic development.
- We recommend that the state government should Sign-On to Open Government Partnership (OGP) to create avenue for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and citizens of Kogi State interact and document developmental strides of the government based on her social contract with citizen.
- The Kogi State Government should immediately appoint and inaugurate the board of Kogi State Disability Rights Office and gazette same to ensure effective implementation.
- The Kogi State Government should appoint and inaugurate the board of Kogi State Health Insurance Agency (KGSIA) and provide the required counterpart funding to cover for vulnerable groups in Kogi State same as other state of the federation.
- The ongoing auctioning of state-owned properties is not acceptable in the light of the non-procurement of new ones.
- While congratulating the newly deployed Commissioner of Police to Kogi State, we call on the honourable commissioner to take charge of things and ensure the recent upsurge of kidnapping and other criminalities across the state is dealt with decisively.

In conclusion:

Kogi NGOs Network (KONGONET) will consistently support laudable initiatives of government to ameliorate the suffering of Kogites and ensure the state upholds the tenets of democracy and fair play in her administration of our collective resources. On behalf of Kogi State Civil Society Groups, we appreciate the Kogi state government for appointing and inaugurating the Kogi State Youth Development Commission, we hereby call on the state government to do same to Kogi State Disability Rights Office and Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Bill.

God Bless Kogi State.

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Long live the people of Kogi State. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Thank you.