



KOGI NGOs NETWORK

{ K O N G O N E T }

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4TH QUARTER 2022 PRESS-BRIEFING BY KOGI NGOs NETWORK (KONGONET) ON 5TH JANUARY, 2023.

Gentlemen of the Press;

Happy New Year and welcome to 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, transparent governance and network coordination in Kogi State through advocacy and policy influencing for the well-being of Kogites.

Highlight of events within the quarter

- Kogi State Government received His Excellency, President Muhammadu Buhari for the launch of several legacy project of His Excellency Gov. Yahaya Bello's Administration across the state.
- The Kogi State Police Command organized a security stakeholder meeting towards a peaceful general election in Kogi State.
- 2022 flood has sacked people from their houses and destroyed invaluable properties including crops and farmlands thereby subjecting men and women, school boys and girls to untold hardship.
- Kogi State Government and Obajana Cement Company rift, the need for cooler heads to continually prevail.
- Kogi State Civil Society on HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN) commemorated World AIDS Day in collaboration with Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA) and other stakeholders. Kogi State Government promised to fund KOSACA activities.
- Over a year plus, the Kogi State radio (FM 94.1) is in a perpetual dormancy state despite several appeal to the state government to purchase the required transmitter for the only state-owned radio in Kogi State Capital.
- After the 2022 flood, damages caused to the Kogi State Greater Lokoja water project is yet to be rectified. We call on the Hon. Commissioner of water resource to act fast and ensure citizens get access to water supply.
- The twin disaster of an attack on security personnels leading to two deaths on Agbaja road and bomb explosion at the gate of the Ohinoyi of Ebiraland leading to the loss of three lives are the major secure low within the quarter under review.

- The Kogi State Open Government Partnership (OGP) is yet to kick start properly as expected despite the sensitization workshop organized by the national secretariate of OGP for state and the efforts of Non- State Actors (NSA) at drafting state action plan. The lack of periodic interaction with the State Government with citizens to discuss matters of state importance still persist.
- The National Senior Citizens Centre (NSCC) disbursed one -off grant of N20,000 each to over seventy (70) older persons and supported seven (7) older persons local craft with the cumulative sum of N750,000 in Kogi State.
- KONGONET participated in the Conference of Northern CSO Network meeting culminating in the issuance of a statement calling on the investigation of National Social Investment Programs of the Federal Government.

Health Issues:

Civil Society for HIV/AIDS in Nigeria (CiSHAN), carried out rally and roundtable stakeholders' discussion and Awards. This was the first of its kind and it is expected to improve inter stakeholder's relationship. These activities were implemented in collaboration with KOSACA, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF), Centre for Integrated Health Program (CIHP) and other partners. The network also reported significant improvement as a result of the effective restructuring of Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA). Though, issues bordering on funds availability for CSOs activities on HIV/AIDS sensitization across the state remains a big concern to the network.

Agricultural Intervention Issues:

The Analysis of the 2023 Agriculture Budget draft 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 and members of the state civil society Budget Committee Group (BCG) held a press –briefing within the quarter to issue a statement over the 2023 Kogi State budget and decried the paltry sum allocated to the agricultural sector. SWOFON Kogi State opined that “In Kogi State year 2023 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 and Health; Agriculture received the least at 5.30%.”

Kogi Budget Committee Group (BCG) called on the state Government to review existing policies and framework on Agriculture to facilitate increased funding and prompt release of budgetary allocations to the sector. BCG also commended the state government for the allocation of N600 million to Extension Services and provision for post-harvest losses reduction intervention in the 2023 budget estimate.

SWOFON Kogi State and Budget Committee Group (BCG) 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 and fund releases to the sector are too 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 yet a huge progress in civil resolution of domestic violence, women abuse and child custody cases across the state. The group also partnered with Osaseyi Foundation and reproduced simplified copies of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition (VAPP) Law and Child Rights Law in Kogi state and distributed same across selected school in the State.

FIDA Partnered with a host of Civil Society Organizations and government institutions in Kogi state including KONGONET, NHRC, RECEF, NAWOJ, INGRA, CPI, NCWS, Young Women in Politics and the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to commemorate the 16 Days Activism Against Gender Based Violence.

The Association for Orphans and Vulnerable Children in Nigeria (AONN) within the reported period assessed the 2022 flood impact on vulnerable children and women and provided food and non-food support. The network was able to partner with several organizations to bring succour to vulnerable people within the flood disaster period in Kogi state. AONN Participated in vulnerable children assessment tools development and the national GBV reporting platform training within the quarter. The network calls for more partnership towards addressing post-flood effects on affected vulnerable persons across the state.

The efforts of Nigerian Leagues of Women Voters (NILOWV) within the quarter at sensitizing and mobilizing market women to collect their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) is well acknowledged.

Security Issues:

As the apex Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Network in the state, our interest is to ensure that the wellbeing, lives and property of our citizens are protected at all times and we pursue this with vigour. The business of securing lives and property of citizens is the business of all, though legally coordinated by the Nigeria Police Force (NPF).

In the light of the above, KONGONET wishes to appreciate the proactive step taken by the Commissioner of Police Kogi State Command CP. Akeem Yusuf for convening a security dialogue session to address security issues related to the forthcoming general elections in Kogi State. We equally commiserate with the Commissioner of Police for the death of two (2) gallant police personnel who lost their lives in the line of duty protecting Kogites along Agbaja Road in Lokoja -Kogi State.

The security situation in Kogi State as the general elections draw nearer needed to be reviewed. The recent bomb explosion in Okene while the entire state was in the mood of celebration to receive the Grand Commander Federal Republic of Nigeria is a matter of serious security threat and a concern as Kogi State is never on the radar of Suicide bombing for any reason.

Recommendations:

- We recommend a continuous engagement with stakeholders by the Nigeria Police Force as the general elections draw nearer and that the police command investigate the attack on her personnel and the suicide bombing incident in Okene Area of Kogi State.
- We recommend immediate rehabilitation and support to 2022 flood victims who lost their sources of Livelihoods, houses and properties including crops and farmlands to reduce the hardship on them (Post -Flood Intervention). We equally call on the State Government to act on the 2022 KONGONET flood impact assessment report and recommendations made available to the State Government through the Secretary to the Government of Kogi State on 12th October, 2022.
- That Kogi State Government continues and exhaust all the legal options available in regards to the Obajana Cement Company ownership tussle and ensure that cooler heads prevail.
- That the Kogi State Government release required funding to support the activities of Kogi State Agency for the Control of Aids (KOSACA) as promised.
- That the Kogi State government purchase the required transmitter for the only state-owned radio in Kogi State Capital and revived the radio station for effective information dissemination as the general elections draw nearer.
- That the Kogi State Greater Lokoja water project be attended to and ensure citizens get access to quality water supply.
- That the Kogi State Open Government Partnership (OGP) be made actively operational as expected and periodic interaction by the State Government with citizens to discuss matters of state importance be institutionalized.

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 congratulate His Excellency, the Executive Governor of Kogi State Gov. Yahaya Bello for the launch of several legacy projects across the state.

God Bless Kogi State.

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