

**COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF ONE-DAY STAKEHOLDERS'
TOWNHALL MEETING ON FUEL SUBSIDY REMOVAL AND HOW TO MAKE
KOGI STATE PALLIATIVES CITIZEN-FOCUSED ORGANIZED BY KOGI NGOS
NETWORK (KONGONET) HELD ON THURSDAY 24TH AUGUST 2023 AT NEW AGE
HALL, LOKOJA.**

BACKGROUND

The Announcement of Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) subsidy removal by the Nigerian Government on the 29th May 2023 has brought about a plethora of challenges both economical and social. The One-Day Meeting was held to develop a charter of demand for stakeholders to engage the State Government in the process of palliative distribution and to cushion the effects of the subsidy removal.

The meeting had in attendance representatives from the organized private sector, religious bodies, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Government representatives, Pensioners, Legislative arm of Government, Persons with Disabilities, Youth leaders, Women Groups, Farmers Organizations, Organized Labour, and the Media.

There were paper presentations on fuel subsidy removal and how to cushion the effects at subnational levels, Successes and Challenges of fuel subsidy removal, Plenary Discussions, Panel Discussion on effects of fuel subsidy removal on vulnerable groups, Question and Answer sessions and Communique development.

OBSERVATIONS

The meeting made the following observations:

- That despite the challenges and the attendant disruptions that the fuel subsidy has caused, all stakeholders were in support of the removal.
- That the palliative measures put in place by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Administration is a step in the right direction, however there is room for improvement.
- The absence of a formal engagement platform on the State Palliative administration is disturbing and an indication of the communication challenge between citizens and the State Government.
- The dearth of infrastructure in Kogi State, especially at the community level, is a major concern for citizens.
- The poor mass transport system in Kogi State has left the citizens at the mercy of private sector implementers who have placed high prices on citizens.
- The constant high cost of food and inflation in the State has made the cost of living very high, despite the abundant opportunities in the state.
- Poor healthcare coverage in the state is an inhibiting factor in the provision of universal health for all.

- The poor implementation of the Disability Law in the State has made it difficult for Persons with Disability (PWD) to enjoy the benefits of the law.
- NG-Cares, a World Bank sponsored project, provides conditional support to vulnerable groups, stakeholders believe it can be a possible platform to leverage on.
- Salary and welfare of workers and Pensioners (private and public) is important however, this must be in consideration to the welfare of the informal sector.
- The cost of production for small scale business is on the high side

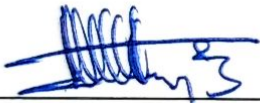
RECOMMENDATIONS:

At the end of the meeting, participants agreed and made the following recommendations:

- That there is an urgent need for the Kogi State Government to set up all-inclusive committee, made up of representatives from all stakeholders in the State to fashion a road map for implementation of a holistic Palliative administration.
- The Ministry of Information and Communication should immediately set up a modality for periodic information sharing on government activities.
- The State Government should scale up the NG-CARES to more beneficiaries.
- The State Government should as a matter of urgency ensure effective implementation of the Disability Law to provide a platform for inclusion in the state palliative measures.
- A key strategy for palliative administration should involve the development of Rural Infrastructures, especially roads, housing and Primary Health Care (PHC). We call on the government to immediately set in motion mechanisms for improving Rural Infrastructures.
- The State and Local governments must as a matter of urgency put in place a viable and accessible mass transportation system that includes marine, road, and rail options/alternatives, while partnering with the private sector.
- Salary increases and other welfare packages for workers and Pensioners should be done with consideration on the attendant effect it has on the economy.
- There is a need for the government to check the incessant increase in the cost of food in the state through a functional Market Board. Resuscitation of the Kogi State Consumers Shops should be considered.
- Government should subsidize agricultural inputs for farmers to boost food production across the state.
- The Social Register of vulnerable persons should be updated to reflect the reality on ground, and should be adopted by the State in palliative administration.
- Government should provide grants to vulnerable citizens (especially women) to alleviate their suffering at the community level.
- State government should provide palliatives for small scale business to cushion the effects of the removal of fuel subsidy.

ORGANISATIONS IN ATTENDANCE

- KONGONET Members
- Kogi State House of Assembly
- Network Against Child Trafficking Abuse and Labour (NACTAL)
- Ministry of Finance, Budget and Economic Planning.
- Traditional Rulers
- Kogi State Shippers Association
- Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)
- Jammaatul Nasril Islam (JNI)
- Nigeria Union of Pensioners
- Kogi Chambers of Commerce Industry Mines Agriculture (KOCCIMA)
- International Federation of Women Lawyer (FIDA)
- Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ)
- Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD)
- Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC)
- Conscience for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution (CHRCR)
- National Council of Women Society (NCWS)
- Small-scale Women Farmers Organization in Nigeria (SWOFON)
- The Media Houses



Amb. Idris Ozovehe Muraina
Chairperson,
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