

# **Our Impact**

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## **2016**









PLAC's legislative strengthening programme is focused on ensuring that the capacity of the legislative arm of government to represent Nigerian citizens is improved. PLAC further works to promote citizens' participation in legislative activities and policymaking in general by creating awareness and disseminating relevant information on Nigeria's democracy to citizens and advocacy groups. In 2016, PLAC, via DFID support, carried out a number of activities aimed at promoting these objectives in the key areas appearing below.



### Constitution Review

PLAC played an instrumental role in the commencement of the Constitution Review exercise of the 8th National Assembly. PLAC assisted the House Committee on Constitution Review in its review of the Constitution (4th Alteration) Bills to achieve critical reforms for the benefit of Nigerians. The following activities were organised by PLAC in furtherance of this:





## CSOs Engagement

- o **CSO's Roundtable on Constitution Review held on 29th February 2016: This was one of the early engagements on the subject. The meeting themed "Constitutional Reform in the 8th Assembly:** Developing a Roadmap for CSO Engagement with the Process" brought civil society groups together to discuss ways of effectively engaging the 8th National Assembly's Constitution Review process. The meeting discussed outstanding reform issues from the 7th Assembly Constitution Review exercise and new issues that could feed into the work of the Constitution Review Committees of the 8th Assembly. At the end of the meeting the CSOs present expressed their willingness to still engage the Constitution Review process despite the failure of the amendments in the 7th Assembly after a Presidential veto by then President, Goodluck Jonathan. Some of the issues on the constitution reform agenda bordered on electoral reforms and political participation, independence of state legislatures, autonomy for local governments, women and youth inclusion, and budget reforms.
- o **Experts Meeting to Develop an Advocacy Road Map for CSOs on Engaging the Constitution and Electoral Reform Process on Monday, 23rd May 2016:** the meeting involved a small panel of election experts and civil society leaders to discuss and recommend how CSOs can better engage the Constitution and Electoral Reform Process. The outcome from this meeting, which included guidelines and ideas for CSOs on engaging the process, fed into a subsequent CSO advocacy workshop on the same topic.





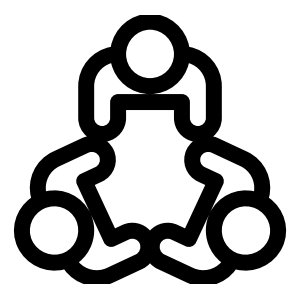
- o **CSO Workshop on Engaging the Constitution Amendment Process held on Tuesday, 28th June 2016 in Abuja:** The overall objective of the workshop was to enhance CSOs capacity in building a structured approach for sustained advocacy around the Constitution and Electoral Law Amendment Process of the 8th Assembly. Other objectives were to: identify key stakeholders and decision-makers around the Constitution Amendment Bill and their relative influence at the Federal, State and Local Government levels; develop effective advocacy messages; develop an implementation plan for advocacy. It was recommended and agreed that CSOs policy proposals should include an implementation plan; that groups should establish a feedback mechanism to ensure that those affected by the reform understand it and that its enforcement is consistent; that messaging and demand from CSOs should be consistent and be based on facts and not emotions; that advocacy should be expanded to include citizens at the Local Government level; and finally, that groups should always present the most convincing argument possible to the government so that specific actions that would improve the situation would be taken.

## Committee Working Sessions: Senate & House of Representatives

- o **Working Session /Retreat of the House of Representatives Special Ad- hoc Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution held on 14th March 2016 in Abuja:** The purpose of the meeting was to discuss strategies on the planned Constitution amendment exercise of the 8th National Assembly following the failure of the Constitution 4th Alteration Bill to obtain assent from former President Goodluck Jonathan; to conclude work on the 4th Alteration Bill started by the 7th Assembly; and to process all other proposals for further alteration of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, as may be necessary on behalf of the House of Representatives, or as referred to it by the House.
- o **Retreat of the Senate Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution held at the Eko Hotel and Suites, Victoria Island, Lagos from Thursday, 16th – Sunday, 19th June 2016:** This activity was to enable Senate committee members (mostly first time legislators) and their technical experts to revisit amendments in the 4th Constitution Alteration Bill, which was passed by the 7th National Assembly, but failed to receive presidential assent. The Speakers from the 36 State Houses of Assembly were specifically invited to participate at the retreat; to help build support on the bills and to facilitate a fast track of the review process through the State Legislatures. This would be the first time that the Federal and State Legislatures will sit together at a retreat to deliberate on the 4th Alteration Bill. At the end of the retreat a commitment was made to complete the review process timeously, and probably deliver an amended constitution by 2017.
- o **Retreat of House Committee on Constitution Review from 20th to 23rd October 2016 in Lagos:** The retreat was convened for a sub-committee of the main committee as part of ongoing efforts to revisit the Constitution 4th Alteration Bill, 2016 and pass amendments timeously. The meeting also provided a platform for Members to review recommendations of Technical Experts.



- o **Election Summit on “Legislating for Electoral Reform” held by the Senate Committee on INEC on 6th June 2016:** PLAC organised the summit in conjunction with the Senate Committee on INEC to provide a platform for stakeholders to deliberate and agree on needed electoral reforms following from the recent experiences of the 2015 General Elections. The Retreat had in attendance critical stakeholders from different parts of the country and sectors of the society; the INEC Chairman and his National Commissioners, the Judiciary, Executive, Civil Society Organisations, the Police, Military, Road Safety, NYSC and the media. The outcome of the meeting included a decision to revisit certain portions of the Electoral Act that needed revision, particularly, to allow the deployment of the Smart Card Reader (SCR) and technology in the process. It was also posited that the Act should be amended to address the challenge posed by the recent experience of death of a candidate for an election before the announcement of the result. Others included the need for an Electoral Offences Tribunal/ Commission to promote electoral accountability.
- o **Expert Meeting on Electoral Reform held at the Chelsea Hotel Abuja on 17th & 18th October 2016-** to review Senate Committee on INEC Electoral Act Amendment Bills
- o **CSO Roundtable on Electoral Reforms held in Abuja on 30th November 2016.** The meeting had the theme “Outlining a CSO Position on Electoral Reform Ahead of the 2019 Elections.” Discussions focused on Legal Gaps in Electoral Adjudication, Promoting Credible & Sustainable Electoral Institutions and Processes and a plenary discussion on Outlining CSO Position on Electoral Reform. Collated views and positions fed into the work of CERC, who had issued a public call for proposals on amendment to the Electoral Act.
- o **Support to the Ministerial Committee on Constitution and Electoral Reform Committee (CERC): October – December 2016.** This committee was set up by the Executive arm to look into constitution and electoral reform issues with the aim of drafting an executive bill to be sent to the National Assembly for consideration.

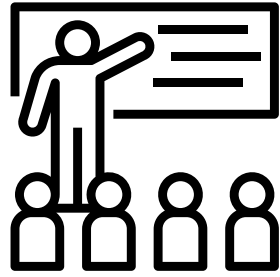


### Roundtables & Interactive Sessions

- o **Interactive Session on One- Year Review of the 8th House of Representatives Legislative Agenda held in Abuja on 11th August 2016:** PLAC in collaboration with the House of Representatives organized an interactive session between the leadership of the House and CSOs titled to discuss the milestones achieved by the House since its inauguration in June 2015.

- o **Meeting of CSOs – Tracking Reform Bills: ‘The Role of Civil Society’ held in Abuja on Thursday 22nd September 2016:** The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the status of reform bills before the National Assembly and discuss strategies for CSO engagement with the bills process. The major outcome of this was increased awareness of reform Bills and also of an NGO Regulation Bill before NASS which sought to provide strict regulations of the activities of NGOs in Nigeria. Following the meeting, some civil society organisations began engagement and advocacy with constituents at the grassroots with a view of discouraging passage of the bill.
- o **Legislative Performance Scorecard – Assessing Legislative Performance held at Ibeto Hotels, Gudu, Abuja on Friday 23rd September 2016:** This involved a presentation and discussion of the Legislative Performance scorecard with CSOs partners for their input and recommendations.
- o **Roundtable Conference between the House of Representatives’ Committee on Civil Societies and Development Partners & Civil Society (CSO) held on 2nd December 2016:** This Roundtable Conference, themed “Bridging the Gap Between Elected Representatives & their Constituencies”, was convened to bring together various civil society organisations, community based organisations (CBO’s) and constituency staff to recommend ways elected representatives can effectively engage their constituents to keep them abreast of their activities and efforts in delivering the dividends of democracy to them.
- o **Legislative and Media Roundtable held on 16th December 2016 in Abuja:** This Legislative and Media Round Table was themed “Media Focus on Pro-Poor Issues in the Legislature”. The Senate Committee on Poverty Alleviation and the Senate Committee on Media and Public Affairs were brought together with the NASS press corps at this roundtable to give account of their activities since the inception of the 8th Assembly and to also bridge the gap between them and the public by providing a forum for members of the media (NASS press corps) to discuss legislative efforts and focus on pro-poor issues by the 8th National Assembly.
- o **Interactive session between the Senate Committee on Diaspora & NGOs and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on Nigeria’s budgeting system with a focus on 2016 budget performance and 2017 budget held on Wednesday, 2nd November 2016 at National Assembly Complex:** Prior to this time, the Committee had recommended to the Senate through a motion that CSOs participate in the Budget, and the Senate agreed to this. The resolution was implemented via this session, which allowed select CSO’s participate in the Senate’s appropriations process as observers at the stage of Ministries, Departments and Agencies defense of budget proposals. Participating groups offered useful suggestions in the consideration of budget proposals for the 2017 budget.





## Capacity Building For National Assembly Committees And Staff

Capacity Building for National Assembly Staff is an integral part of PLAC programming. In the year under review, the following capacity building activities were organised:

- o **Stakeholder Consultation/Interactive Session between CSO's, the Senate Committee on Diaspora and Non-governmental Organisations and the House of Representatives Committee on Civil Society and Development Partners:**

This session, which held on 8th February 2016, was aimed at creating awareness of the Committees' work by introducing their mandate and scope of operation to CSO's, and also to provide an opportunity for the Committee to gather the inputs of CSO's on issues related to their activities. The key outcomes from the meeting included the creation of a committee that consisted of 5 CSO representatives to work with the Committee on internalising Legislative/CSO's engagement and partnership on some of the issues discussed at the meeting, which includes policies on CSOs and the Diaspora. Over 55 CSO groups attended the meeting. Other participants included committee members and the media. Prior to this time, the Senate (unlike the House of Representatives) did not have a committee in charge of NGO matters. This was therefore the first time the newly created committee was interfacing with CSOs.

- o **Retreat for the Table Duties and Bills Departments of the National Assembly:**

PLAC organised a retreat for the Table Duties and Bills Departments of the National Assembly. The retreat took place from February 26 – 28, 2016 in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. The aim was to build the capacities of the staff, as well as improve the working relationship and cooperation of both departments. This capacity building session was important as the Table Duties department

plays an important role in the preparation of the Votes and Proceedings, Order Papers and Notice Papers, which guides the proceedings of the National Assembly, while the Bills department play a role in monitoring Bills progression and harmonising bills passed by both chambers, and ensuring that amendments made on the floor are reflected in the final document. A key achievement from this meeting was the decision to scrutinise bills before a Bill is presented on the floor of the Chambers and at all times before the final passage of the bill.

- o **Workshop on Enhancing Citizen Focused Legislative Reporting for National Assembly Press Corps:**

PLAC organised a workshop on "Enhancing Citizen Focused Legislative Reporting for the National Assembly Press Corps". This workshop held on 31st March 2016 in Abuja. The workshop was aimed at discussing ways of improving media reporting and broadcast of relevant information related to legislative proceedings for the benefit of the public so as to enable citizens make informed decisions and opinions on issues emanating from the National Assembly. Discussions focused on topics such as: Media Influence on Public Policy & Law making; Ensuring Public Interest Content in Legislative Reporting; Utilising the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Act to Promote Legislative Transparency and Accountability; and Investigative Reporting of Legislative Activities.

- o **Retreat of the House of Representatives Committee on Inter-Parliamentary Relations at Le Meridien Ibom Resort, Uyo, Akwa Ibom State on Thursday, 9th – Sunday, 12th June, 2016:**

The purpose of the retreat was to among other things; strengthen the capacity of the members and staff of the committee to effectively carry out effective oversight; and to enhance relations between the Committee and State Legislators on Constitution amendment. The retreat had involved the Conference of Speakers of State Legislatures to enhance synergy and partnership between them and the Committee, particularly in view of the Constitution Review exercise by the 8th National Assembly.

- o **Review of the 8th Senate Legislative Agenda- Focus on Core Legislative Process and Practices; the National Economy and Sustainable Development held on Friday June 24, 2016 at the Transcorp Metropolitan Hotel, Calabar:**

The aim of the retreat was to assess the performance of the Committees one year after the inauguration of the 8th Assembly, and the use of work plans for tracking progress and detecting lapses. The retreat reviewed work plans of all the committees by the Clerks present at the retreat.





- o **Excel Training for Clerks of the House of Representatives held at the National Assembly Computer Centre between Wednesday 10th – Thursday 11th August 2016:** In preparation for the 2017 budget, the Clerks of the House of Representatives were trained on Microsoft excel to hone their skills on the use of the application.
- o **House of Representatives Clerks of Committees Retreat held at the Le Meridien Ibom Golf Resort and Hotels, Uyo, Akwa Ibom held on Thursday 24th August and Saturday 27th August 2016:** Similar to the review activity held for Senate Clerks in June 2016, the Clerks of Committees of the House of Representatives met at a retreat to do a one year review of their work and committee processes.
- o **Strategic Retreat Session for House of Representatives Committee on Public Petitions held on Wednesday, 24th August to Saturday, 27th August 2016 at Uyo, Akwa Ibom State:** The purpose of the retreat was to discuss ways of strengthening the capacity of the Committee to ensure efficient delivery of their mandate in line with the Legislative Agenda of the 8th House of Representatives. The committee resolved, among others to; put in place an effective communication strategy that connects the Committee to the public; engage the services of consultants and experts to enhance the work of the Committee and enhance efficiency and effectiveness; improve collaboration and synergy between the Committee and the Public Complaints Commission (PCC); urge the Commission to develop a Needs Assessment for the consideration of the Petitions Committee in a bid to address the challenges of the Commission.
- o **Retreat of the House of Representatives Bills Office Department Capacity Building Workshop on Bills Drafting held at the Ibeto Hotel, Gudu, Abuja on Tuesday 23rd August 2016:** The goal of the workshop was to enhance participants understanding of the business requirements of the legislature, appraise the work of the Bills Office/Department, and to develop an effective approach to legislative drafting. Discussions focused on Bill analysis, Bill digest and standard format of numbering and gazetting of Bills.
- o **Workshop for Assistant Clerks of Committees of House of Representatives on Effective Committee Report and Minutes Writing Thursday 29th & Friday 30th Sept 2016:** This capacity building workshop was targeted at Assistant Clerks of the House of Representatives with the theme: “Effective Committee Report and Minute Writing.” Assistant Clerks are an important part of committees’ secretariats, often



deputising and supporting the Clerks in their work. The workshop was also strategic as they are often the next in line to become Committee Clerks and the building of their capacity to take on this role is imperative.

- o **Retreat of the House of Representatives Ad-Hoc Committee on Standardisation of Manuals and Templates held between 24th and 28th November 2016 in Lagos:** PLAC organised a retreat for Members of the House Ad-hoc Committee on Standardisation of Manuals and Templates. The purpose of the retreat was to among other things develop manuals and templates that would be directed towards improving the procedures of committee activities. The manuals were subsequently adapted for use by the House of Representatives.
- o **Meeting/Workshop on Understanding Use of Best Practice Guide-Oversight:** PLAC organised a meeting with Clerks of the Senate on 12th December 2016 to discuss the use and operationalisation of the best practice guide on conduct of oversight developed by PLAC and improve the Clerks' skills to better support of their committee oversight functions.

#### **Other Capacity Building Activities:**

- o Capacity Building Program for the Staff of the House of Representatives at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja on 28, 29 & 31 October, 2016;
- o Capacity Building for House Committee on Rules and Business on Advanced Legislative and Computer Skills from 10th - 12th November 2-16 at the Global Distance Learning and Ibetoto Hotels;
- o Capacity Building Program for Staff of the Office of the Senate Director of Committees on November 25th – 26th, 2016 at Global Distance Learning Centre, Central Area, Abuja;
- o Meeting with Head of Departments of the House of Representatives on 29th November 2016 at Ibetoto Hotels Abuja. - to review the work done by PLAC with the Committees of the House of Representatives, and agree on a plan of activities for the coming year;
- o Capacity Building Program for Staff of the Office of the Director of Committees held between November 25th – 26th 2016;
- o Capacity Building Program for the Bills Office of the National Assembly held on December 19, 2016.



## **TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET AND RESEARCH OFFICE (NABRO)**

PLAC began extensive work with the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) in the under review. The following activities were carried out as part of this support:

- o Strategic Session for the House of Representatives Committee on Legislative Budget and Research on the Quick Passage of the NABRO Bill: PLAC in collaboration with the House Committee on Legislative Budget and Research organised a strategic retreat at Ajuji Greenwich Hotel, Abuja on 18th March 2016. The meeting afforded the Committee to discuss advocacy plans with CSOs and creation of awareness around the work of the Committee and NABRO in the 8th Assembly.
- o Workshop on Appropriation Bill Analysis, Scrutiny and Project Tracking: PLAC organised a two-day strategic retreat working Session/ Retreat for members of the National Assembly Budget and Research Office on 14th and 15th March 2016. The purpose of the meeting was to equip members of NABRO with requisite skills that would enable them conduct proper analysis and scrutiny of Appropriation Bills in Nigeria and strengthen their capacity as a formidable think tank on Appropriation or budget issues.
- o Strategic Session on Economic Analysis of Legislations: PLAC in collaboration with NABRO organised a retreat on “Economic Analysis of Legislations” between 27th to 30th October 2016 at Calabar, Cross River State. The purpose of the retreat was twofold. Firstly, the retreat was intended to build the capacity of NABRO Staff to critically appraise the anticipated 2017 budget. Secondly, the forum was used to canvass support and identify strategies for the quick assent of the NABRO Bill, which was passed in the Senate on 20th October 2016.





## THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON DIASPORA & NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS (NGOs)

IN COLLABORATION WITH  
POLICY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY CENTRE (PLAC)

WELCOMES YOU:

### INTERACTIVE SESSION ON NIGERIA'S BUDGETING SYSTEM WITH FOCUS ON 2016 BUDGET PERFORMANCE & 2017 BUDGET

**Date:** Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2016  
**Time:** 2:00pm prompt  
**Venue:** Senate Conference Room 0.22, New Senate Building, National Assembly Complex

SPECIAL GUEST OF HONOUR  
HIS EXCELLENCY, SEN. (DR.)  
BUKOLA SARAKI, CON  
PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE

SIGNED: SEN. ROSE OKO  
CHAIRMAN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON DIASPORA & NGOs

SUPPORTED BY:



PLAC  
POLICY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY CENTRE



#### PLAC Billstrack:

PLAC operates a Bills Tracking website [www.placbillstrack.org](http://www.placbillstrack.org) that provides updates and analysis on Bills that have been presented to both chambers of the National Assembly. A majority of the Bills that have been presented by the 8th Assembly can be downloaded from this site.

#### Some Bills Analysed in the year

- 1) Nigerian Ports Authority Bill, 2016
- 2) Nigerian Railway Bill, 2015
- 3) Nigerian Postal Commission Bill
- 4) National Roads Fund Bill
- 5) National Inland Waterways Bill
- 6) Foreign Exchange Bill
- 7) National Transport Commission Bill
- 8) Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill
- 9) Non-governmental Organisation Regulatory Bill
- 10) Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission Bill
- 11) Digital Rights and Freedoms Bill
- 12) Telecommunications Services Tax Bill
- 14) Development Planning and Project Continuity Bill
- 15) Existing Vacancies in the Federal Civil Service Bill
- 16) National Grazing Routes and Reserves Bill
- 17) Petroleum Industry Governance Bill
- 18) Industrial Revolution Plan Bill
- 19) Caller Location Information Bill
- 20) Free Trade Zones Bill
- 21) Social Safety Net Service Bill
- 22) National Child Protection & Monitoring Bill

\*Bills are analysed based on their prioritisation by the National Assembly and popularity of the subject matter among citizens.









- o **Observation of the Bayelsa State Gubernatorial Supplementary Election:** Following its observation of the Bayelsa Governorship election that held on 5th December 2015, Situation Room continued its observation with the supplementary elections that held on the 9th of January 2016. Situation Room observed the election through its trained local CSOs in Bayelsa State and also set up a Communication Room in its Abuja Secretariat to receive field reports from the State for comprehensive analysis.
- o **Communication Room for the Observation of the Rivers Legislative Re-run Election:** Situation Room observed the Rivers Re-run Election on 19 March, 2016 and 10th December 2016, through its partners, Stakeholders for Democracy in Nigeria (SDN) in Port Harcourt and also set up a Communication Room in its Abuja Secretariat.
- o **Observation of FCT Area Council Elections: Saturday, 9th April 2016.** This was one of the elections observed by the Situation Room in the year. The elections were to elect councillors into FCT Area Councils.
- o **Observation of Edo State Governorship Election:** Situation Room observed the governorship election in Edo both the first scheduled election between 7th September 2016 and 9th September 2016 and the rescheduled election between 26th September 2016 to 29th September 2016.

In preparation for its observation, Situation Room trained Domestic Election Observers at the Protea Hotel, Benin City, Edo State on 23rd & 24th June 2016. These trainings are usually held before any Governorship Election to equip the CSOs at the State level with skills needed to observe, report and what to look out for in following election and how to report election day events. In addition, Situation Room in collaboration with CLEEN Foundation carried out a security threat assessment ahead of Edo State governorship election.

Prior to the first scheduled election, Situation Room organised a Dialogue Session with the Edo State INEC REC, Mr. Sam Olumekun and the Nigeria Police on 26th July 2016. At this meeting, Mrs. Amina Zakari, INEC National Commissioner made clarifications on inconclusive elections. Following discussions, the meeting recommended that there was a need for the system to hold people accountable for electoral infractions to check the growing trend of impunity and need for CSOs to engage more with politicians, candidates and security agents with the same level of investment that has brought INEC to where it is today.

As part of its efforts on the Edo governorship election, Situation Room convened a strategy meeting on the rescheduled Election on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2016 with INEC and the Police to review the State of affairs regarding elections in Nigeria, especially ahead of the new date for Edo Governorship election.

- o **Observation of Ondo State Governorship Election:** Situation Room set up a Communication Room in Akure between 21st November 2016 and 27th November 2016 to observe the Ondo State Governorship Election. In the run up to the election, Situation Room trained domestic election observers in Akure, Ondo State on Saturday, 24th September 2016.

Furthermore, Situation Room organised a dialogue session with the Ondo State INEC REC in Abuja, Mr. Segun Agbaje on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2016. The dialogue session provided the opportunity to interact with the Ondo State REC ahead of the Ondo State Governorship election in order to enable civil society groups preparing to observe the election to interact with the REC and also find out the level of preparation of INEC in the State for the conduct of the election. Situation Room was actively encouraged by INEC to be at the collation centre to observe the progress INEC insists it would make in the collation process after the Edo State Election.

### Strategy Meetings

Situation Room in efforts to drive electoral reform and learn from the lessons of conducted elections, organised series of strategy meetings to review the conduct of off-cycle governorship elections.

The first of such meetings was held on 9th February 2016 to review the 2015 Kogi and Bayelsa States Governorship elections and to deliberate on useful lessons from the recently conducted elections.

The second strategy meeting was held on 24 May 2016 to articulate an early engagement strategy with critical election stakeholders such as INEC, Security agencies ahead of the governorship elections scheduled to hold in 2016.



With the conclusion of the Edo State Governorship election, there was an important need for civil society groups, election observers as well as the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and other stakeholders in the electoral process to share their experiences and lessons learnt from the elections and to carry out a post-election review to see what positive lessons could be taken or replicated in the Ondo State Governorship election scheduled for November 2016. This meeting held on 12 October 2016.

#### **Situation Room General Meeting and Retreat:**

This meeting held in Uyo, Akwa Ibom from 16th February 2016 to 19th February 2016. The purpose of the general meeting was to review and re-strategise to engage with the post general election phase. It was also an important opportunity for partners to share experiences on the several socio-political developments in the zones. Situation Room at this retreat elected a new steering committee as the tenure of its steering committee ended in February 2016.

#### **North West Geo-Political Meeting**

Situation Room held a zonal meeting in Kaduna State on 16 March 2016 with CSOs working in the North-West zone of Nigeria. The meeting was an opportunity for robust interactions, experience sharing and peer collaboration amongst CSOs working in the various zones as well as foster meaningful participation to engage the electoral process. It also afforded an opportunity for CSOs to identify common issues of concern within their zones and articulate a common approach that would help build national consensus, concerted effort and coherence on national issues.

#### **Situation Room Stakeholder's Forum on Elections:**

This edition which held on 5th April 2016 had in attendance the Attorney-General of the Federation, Alhaji Abubakar Malami (SAN), the House Committee Chair on Electoral and Political Party Matters, Hajia Aisha Dukku, the INEC Chairman and National Commissioners. The panel sessions focused on Legislative Response to the Identified Gaps and Challenges of the 2015 General Elections, Technology Gaps, Communication and New Direction for Elections in Nigeria, Time Frame and Strategies for Immediate Electoral Reform and Mitigating Electoral Violence and Security. One of the major outcomes from this meeting was a commitment by the Minister of Justice to prioritise electoral reforms; and he did thus by constituting the Constitutional and Electoral Reform Committee (CERC) to review and propose revisions to the Constitution and Electoral Act.





## Situation Room Dialogue Session on Expanding the Frontiers of Citizens Participation In Nigeria:

Situation Room held this dialogue session on 29th June 2016 with the Director- General of National Orientation Agency, Dr. Garba Abari as the agency in charge of enlightenment of the general public on Government policies and activities in Nigeria amongst others. Based on recommendations from reports by various election observers- International and Domestic- on the 2015 general elections disclosing low-level awareness of voting issues, processes and procedure, Situation Room held this Dialogue Session to support efforts to increase voter education in Nigeria and discuss and agree on strategies to adopt to support INEC to deliver on voter education.

## Observation of Ghana's General Election:

A team of 10 people comprising of Situation Room and PLAC staff travelled to Ghana from 2nd December 2016 to 9th December 2016 to observe the Ghana general election scheduled for Wednesday, 7th December 2016. The team received accreditation through the ECOWAS mission accredited by the Electoral Commission in Ghana. While in Ghana, the team visited some of the CSO groups working on elections in Ghana and also observed the election on election day. This mission presented an opportunity to experience first hand, Ghana's electoral processes and learn useful governance practices.

## National Stakeholders Forum:

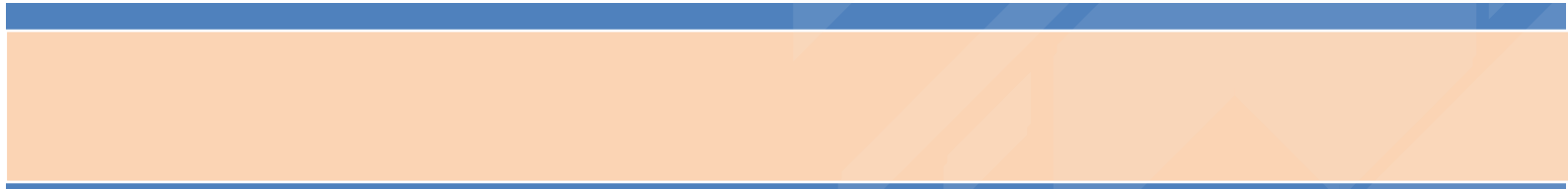
Situation Room convened its Bi-Annual Stakeholders Forum involving Election Stakeholders on 19th December 2016. This edition of the forum was a follow-up of the earlier meeting in April 2016, to evaluate the efforts made by the Executive, Legislature and INEC to improve the electoral environment in Nigeria. The forum provided the platform to review all the elections conducted in 2016 and issues arising therefrom; the progress of the CERC and the Legislature and also the opportunity for further advocacy on electoral reform. As a result of the advocacy for electoral reforms following the review of the Rivers State rerun election, the Senate Committee Chairman on INEC in the National Assembly, Sen. Abubakar Kyari made a personal commitment to intensify the push for the passage of the Bill establishing the Electoral Offences Commission. Another major outcome of the meeting was the quarterly structured meeting with INEC to give feedback to CSOs on the progress of INEC. A consensus among stakeholders at the meeting was that there should be early consolidation and passage of amendments to the Electoral Act before the 2019 general elections.

## Communication and Awareness

Situation Room utilised several electronic messaging focused on communicating information on mechanisms and strategies geared towards reporting from citizens to enable it carry out an effective observation of elections. The mediums used for the adverts were TV, Radio Jingles and Newspapers. Situation Room also collaborated with Channels TV and EiE Nigeria to air live debates for the Edo and Ondo States Governorship elections. The Situation Room Secretariat continued to use its Social media tools: Facebook, twitter, website, to effectively disseminate awareness and information materials on governance issues including information around the elections before, during and after the Election Day. Situation Room also maximised the use of twitter and facebook in discussing the implication of the Electoral Act Amendment signed into law before the election 2015.







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# 2016 in Pictures







# PLAC

POLICY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY CENTRE

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