

# ADVANCING INCLUSION THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ACTION

A PRIMER FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



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POLICY AND LEGAL ADVOCACY CENTRE



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**A PRIMER FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Published by



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## ADVANCING INCLUSION THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ACTION: A PRIMER FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

### PREAMBLE

This Primer highlights practical ways Members of the Nigerian National Assembly and legislative staff can take action to address exclusion of women and other marginalised groups in Nigeria. It is informed by the impacts of exclusion on these groups as documented to date, and the need to address the challenges of achieving national development in the context of exclusion.

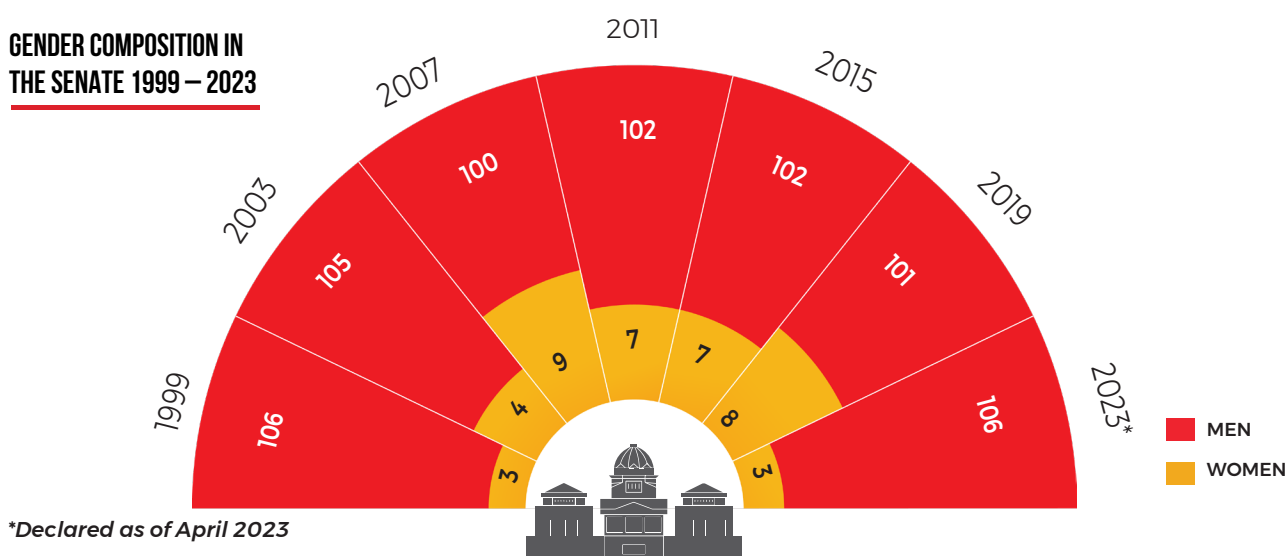
### INTRODUCTION

Inclusive societies promise more sustainable human development outcomes. When societies determine that all their members must be enabled to participate in all areas of life on a full and equal basis, they pave the way for resilience, sustainability and peace. That is one of the reasons why countries around the world pledged to “leave no one behind” when adopting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Inclusion-sensitive societies achieve higher rate of progress because every member of the society understands that they have a contribution to make, their contribution is valued, and that no one should be left behind. Inclusiveness is thus a key precondition for building and sustaining peace, harmony and societal cohesion.

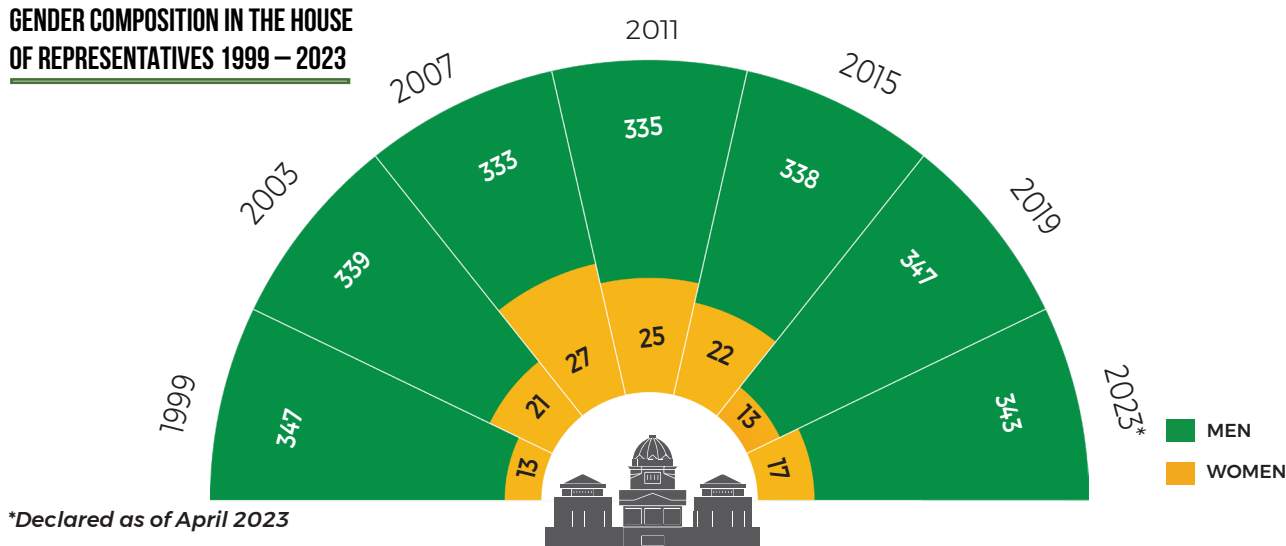
In Nigeria, however, women, youths and People with Disability (PWDs) are deprived of inclusion, especially

in political governance. While half of Nigeria’s population are women, only 4 percent were elected in the 2019 election. In that election, 62 women were elected out of the 2,970 women candidates that participated. In the 2023 election, only 9 percent of the candidates (1,524 out of 15,336) were women. Of the 92 women who contested for the Senate in the 2023 elections, just three won, while out of the 286 who contested for seats in the House of Representatives, only 17 were declared winners. Nigeria also has a dismal record of youth and PWDs representation. Youth candidacy records decline from 34 percent in the 2019 election to 28 percent in the 2023 elections. Young female candidates were even fewer on the list of candidates – only 11 percent of youth candidates were female. Among the young candidates, 7 individuals representing 0.2 percent were PWDs.

### GENDER COMPOSITION IN THE SENATE 1999 – 2023



### GENDER COMPOSITION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 1999 – 2023



While legislators and other political leaders all over the world are increasingly taking action to remedy the effects of exclusion, Nigerian legislators have not made much progress, as challenges facing women and other marginalised groups remain formidable. Lack of access to state institutions, violence, abuse and stigma in many cases continue to be entrenched. At the same time, however, there have been some occasions where Nigerian legislators and political leadership have shown courage in attempting to address exclusion.

Following about nine years of tenacious advocacy by disability rights groups and activists, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, into law on 23 January 2019. Nigeria also ratified the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities) and its Optional Protocol in 2007 and 2010, respectively. Similarly, on 31 May 2018, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Age Reduction Constitution Alteration bill into law.

Within the National Assembly, in 2008, the leadership of the House of Representatives established for the first time, the House Committee on Women Affairs. The Committee hosted the first Women in Parliament Summit in Abuja in July 2009 with a call for more slots for women in the House of Representatives and the Senate during elections.

To achieve the goal of creating inclusive and progressive society, support for existing inclusion legislation in Nigeria is imperative. This requires promoting the implementation of the legislations and strengthening the institutional framework for inclusion.

### **NASS Standing Committees with specific mandate on marginalised groups**

#### **Senate**

- Women Affairs and Social Development
- Youths and Sports Development
- Judiciary, Human Rights and Legal Matters

#### **House of Representatives**

- Disabilities
- Human Rights
- Internally Displaced Persons and Refugees
- Women Affairs and Social Development
- Women in Parliament
- Youth Development

The National Assembly has a responsibility to respond to exclusion with a sensitivity lens. This is vital for justice, public order and the rule of law, as well as national development and wider well-being of the public. Every legislator has an obligation to serve marginalised groups they represent by addressing equality and inclusion as part of their work. Policies and budgets that benefit from the contributions of women, youths, PWDs and other marginalised groups will lead to better informed decisions, more just outcomes,

and greater progress. The role of the National Assembly in legislating and scrutinising governments' policies and budgets is key to curtailing deepening inequality. As a legislator, you can make real change to the quality of life, dignity, respect and rights of your marginalised constituents and compatriots. You can support, form or lead coalitions to effect real change – sometimes quite rapid change – to protect and ensure human rights and inclusion of marginalised groups.

## **The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals**

In September 2015, 193 Member States of the UN unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda and its [SDGs](#)<sup>1</sup> as the global framework for efforts to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice and tackle climate change by 2030. The SDGs “seek to realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. They are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental.” All SDGs link to the common goal of achieving just, peaceful and inclusive societies.

Central to this agenda is the pledge that “no one will be left behind”. Achieving these goals will only be possible if every individual and groups are included. Agenda 2030 explicitly recognizes the role of **parliaments in supporting the implementation of the SDGs, “through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments”**. Parliaments and legislators are responsible for protecting the rights of all citizens. Through your representation, legislative and oversight functions, you play a crucial role in shaping legal and policy frameworks, and public opinion. As representatives of the people, you and your colleagues are national human rights actors.

*The principle that no one will be left behind is reflected specifically in SDG 16 (Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels). This is particularly relevant to individuals and groups who have been left behind by legislation, policies and programmes, both through discriminatory laws and policies and by omission due to a lack of knowledge of or concern for their specific needs.*

## **WHY NASS MEMBERS SHOULD TAKE URGENT ACTION TO ADDRESS EXCLUSION**

When some individuals are socially, economically and politically excluded, they are denied the possibility to develop their full potential and to make meaningful contributions to the society. Legislators in many countries have taken

action to address the roots of exclusion and there have been many successes in recent years. For example, African countries like Senegal, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Sudan, Mozambique, and Burkina Faso have adopted legislative

<sup>1</sup> Source: A/RES/70/1, para. 45: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>



mechanisms and instruments through constitutional amendments, electoral codes, and even party quotas to address political exclusion of women. Indeed, Rwanda holds the world record with 61.25 percent women representation in parliament which was achieved through consistent campaigns. Senegal has also witnessed an increase in women's

political participation following the passage of a gender parity law in 2010, where women representation increased from 22.7 percent to 41.8 percent in the National Assembly and from 16 percent to 47 percent in local legislature in the 2014 local election.

**Additional arguments for legislative action against exclusion and inequality are outlined below.**

1. Equality and inclusion of all members of the society are a matter of human rights and democratic principles - including political equality, public participation, transparency, public service, deliberation, and fair and just decision-making - which the public counts on the National Assembly to embody and promote.
2. The inclusion of experiences, perspectives, talents and skills of the women and other marginalised groups ensures better informed decisions, fairer outcomes, and evolution of 'group think' and traditional ways of doing things.
3. Legislators have the opportunity and power to address equality and inclusion as part of their everyday work - this will enable the public to see themselves as represented among those making decisions that affect their lives, and the parliament is likely to be considered more legitimate.
4. The National Assembly can lead by example and ensure diversity of views and inclusion when responding to challenges and demonstrate a high capacity to collaborate across party lines while addressing issues of equality and inclusion.

# ENTRY POINTS FOR MAINSTREAMING INCLUSION

Legislators can use various strategies to create openings or advance the human rights and inclusion of women and other marginalised groups. Four entry points, which are elements of incremental but critical change, are discussed below.

## 1 Gender mainstreaming and inclusive representation

Gender mainstreaming was at the heart of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women. It is an indispensable strategy in working towards gender equality. The UN Economic and Social Council defined “gender mainstreaming” in 1997 as: the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality.<sup>2</sup> Gender mainstreaming remains a powerful tool by which to mainstream the needs of marginalised people in legislation and policies. In parliaments, gender mainstreaming applies equally to:

- I. the outputs of parliamentary work (legislation, representation and oversight) and,

- II. changing the parliamentary culture and ways of working.

Gender mainstreaming helps a parliament become an SDG16 institution – inclusive in representing all people, effective in advancing the SDGs and accountable to all. Legislators should ensure that all gender mainstreaming principles and processes, whether existing or proposed, are inclusive of women.

Note that there is no single model for legislative work for gender mainstreaming. In some parliaments it is done by committees in charge of a specialised subject like budget/appropriations or finance. In others, a specialised committee on gender or women affairs performs the task while coordinating effort with the budget committees. A specialised parliamentary body on women or gender issues such as the Women Affairs Committees in NASS can then promote gender-mainstreaming efforts by other committees.

<sup>2</sup> Source: A/52/3, Chapter IV, Generic Mandates (ECOSOC 1997/2).

# GENDER MAINSTREAMING



*Gender mainstreaming within the legislative branch is the Internal transformation of the institution (“how work is done”), of its results (“what is legislated” and “what content the legislation has”) and of its links (“who it has a dialogue with”, “who it controls”, “to whom is it accountable”).*

**Source:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). (2013). *Parliaments and Gender Equality: Gender mainstreaming in legislatures*.

## 2 Protection against discrimination

The principle of non-discrimination and equal treatment before the law is enshrined in the International Bill of Human Rights which includes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, (ICESCR) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

This is also entrenched in Section 42 of the Nigerian Constitution which expressly prohibits discrimination of a particular community or on the basis of ethnic group, place of origin, sex, religion or political opinion. The adoption or the revision of anti-discrimination laws presents a unique opportunity to mainstream the rights of women and other marginalised groups and to strengthen protection of their human rights.

Article 29 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN CRPD) states the rights of persons with disabilities (PWDs) to participate in political and public life without discrimination and on an equal basis with others. Countries are obligated to provide free and fair environments for all persons, including those with disabilities, and ensure that they enjoy political participation without discrimination. Nigeria, on its part, successfully adopted the Nigerian Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act, 2018, which seeks to ensure the full integration of persons with disabilities into the society and protect their civil and socio-economic rights.

### 3 Protection against violence

Reforms aiming at strengthening the rule of law and the justice sector are at the core of sustainable development and long-term peace and stability, and to upholding human rights. Reform of the justice, security or law enforcement sectors aimed at strengthening the rule of law can also be a starting point for protecting the rights of marginalised people. **Resolution 275 of the African Commission of Human and Peoples' Rights (2014)** is a landmark text on the topic. Among other recommendations, it strongly urges States to end all acts of violence and abuse, whether committed by state or non-state actors. This includes by enacting and effectively applying appropriate laws prohibiting and punishing all forms of violence, including those targeting persons on the basis of their gender identity, ensuring proper investigation and diligent prosecution of perpetrators, and establishing judicial procedures responsive to the needs of victims.

### 4 Gender-inclusive peace and security

There is now an increased global understanding and attention on the disproportionate and unique impact of conflict on women and girls, as well as their role as peacebuilders and the need for their full and equal participation in peace and security processes as an imperative to lasting and socially accepted peace. Twenty years since the adoption of the landmark **Resolution 1325** by the UN Security

Council, there is growing recognition that gender identity adds layers of vulnerability for those people living in any peace-making and development context. In conflict and crisis situations, exploitation and humiliation of women is common and happens at the hands of both conflict actors and civilians. It is perpetuated by the culture of impunity around such abuse. By scrutinising the actions of law enforcement and security actors and by shaping the legal frameworks that regulate them, legislators have the power to ensure that the specific security needs and challenges of women are being heard and met. By speaking up and advocating for the accountability of law enforcement and security actors, and by engaging constituents, legislators can help end the culture of impunity and tacit acceptance of abuse.

## THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF A GENDER SENSITIVE PARLIAMENT

### 1

#### **Equality of participation within Parliament:**

Dimension 1 asks how a diverse group of parliamentarians might be elected to parliament and how, once present, they are enabled to become effective participants across parliament's core activities: representation and interest articulation, legislative scrutiny, and executive accountability. It also addresses the composition of parliament and participation of women in the leadership and various committees.

### 2

**Parliamentary infrastructure:** Dimension 2 looks at the way in which parliament facilitates the work of Members and whether this benefits a particular type of parliamentarian – explicitly or implicitly. It covers everything from the buildings and furniture of parliament to the official rules and working practices that underpin the array of Members' parliamentary activities.

### 3

#### **Parliamentary Culture:**

Dimension 3 acknowledges that the official, written-down rules never tell the whole story about how institutions function on the ground – this is what might be thought of as the 'normal way of doing things.' It is, admittedly, frequently hard to pin down informal institutional norms, practices and culture. That said parliamentary culture is not fixed but an evolving phenomenon, subject to change.

### 4

#### **Gender Equality Policy/Women's Substantive Representation:**

Dimension 4 subjects the political work of parliament to gendered analysis. These would include legislation, policy, scrutiny and interest representation. It asks whether parliaments acknowledge the perspectives and address the needs and interests of women. Have women's experiences been taken into account? Are the gendered differentiated outcomes to women's disadvantage? Do they aim for gender equality between women and men? In so doing, such analysis will frequently be analysing a parliament's work in holding a government to account for its gender sensitivity



**Source:** The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) Gender Sensitising Parliamentary Guidelines, 2020. Available at: <https://www.cpahq.org/media/s20jllws/cwp-gender-sensitizing-guidelines.pdf>

*The guidelines provide a blueprint for Commonwealth parliaments interested in undertaking a Gender Sensitive Parliament (GSP) review of their institutions with the objective of making their parliaments more representative and inclusive. The Interparliamentary Union (IPU) defines a Gender Sensitive Parliament as a place that responds to the needs and interests of women in its structures, operations, methods, and work, a workplace that removes barriers to women's full participation and offers 'a positive example or model to society at large'.*

# WHAT NASS MEMBERS CAN DO

## ***Changing Legislative Culture and Ways of Working***

### ***Commit to inclusion sensitive action***

- Adopt institutional measures that protect women, youths, PWDs and IDPs.
- Adopt a firm commitment to inclusion and equality in all communications and other legislative outputs.
- Ensure that the coverage of legislative proceedings take account of inclusion with regard to content, language, accessibility and presentation
- Develop a culture of inclusivity for persons with disabilities, which can encourage persons with disabilities to run for elected office. Adopt a framework to monitor Nigeria's commitments to disability inclusion at government level.
- Develop an evidence-based gender-sensitive curriculum for gender awareness training seminars for all members and staff, and for induction of new members
- Give women, youth, and PWD legislators equal access to 'the floor' to showcase their contribution to national development.
- Ensure the adoption of and application of women quotas.
- Promote the inclusion of women in key legislative committees and caucuses as appropriate.
- Support male champions in the legislature, of equal women's political participation and representation, of the rights and interests of women and girls, and of the inclusion and human rights of marginalised people.
- Ensure that career progression opportunities in the legislative bureaucracy are in reality, equally open to women and men and to all marginalised groups.
- Act as role models by taking a respectful, cooperative and collaborative approach to politics. Set aside partisanship, self-interest and competition, and denounce any incidences of harassment, bullying and violence against women legislators and legislative staff.

### ***Exchange Lessons and Good Practices with other Legislative Assemblies***

Consider the opportunities that can be taken to exchange lessons and good practices on inclusion sensitive legislative actions with regional and international legislatures. Also share lessons learned with State Assemblies.

### ***Monitor and evaluate the inclusion sensitivity of the National Assembly***

Consider using the attached Checklist to assess:

- The actions taken to ensure a inclusion sensitive legislative actions;
- The impact of those actions; and,
- Arising challenges in implementation and how were they addressed.

# WHAT NASS MEMBERS CAN DO

## ***Improving Legislative Outputs (Legislation, Representation and Oversight)***

Parliaments or legislatures often have varying functions, resources and capacity in different jurisdictions but in most cases, they have three basic roles – lawmaking, oversight and representation. Recommendations on what the National Assembly can do is examined through these three major functions.

## LEGISLATE

- Ensure that inclusive legislation is prioritised in the Legislative Agenda of the National Assembly with clear action points and timelines for achievement.
- Ensure that laws, policies, and budgets passed take into full consideration the needs and interests of women and other marginalised people.
- Ensure that policies and budgets have been developed based on disaggregated data.
- Introduce or support amendments to legislations, budgets, social protection policies – or introduce new legislation – that seek to rectify any identified sources of discrimination against women and other marginalised groups.
- Work towards producing legislations that use gender-sensitive or gender-neutral language to avoid exclusion.
- Reflect on whether any bill that was intended to advance rights of women, PWDs or young people is being left off the legislative agenda or delayed.
- Consider any measures that could be taken to ensure the bill is not lost or forgotten, such as lobbying for this legislation to remain on the legislative agenda.
- Encourage legislators and legislative staff to use gender analysis across all policy areas, including by instituting new processes or improving existing ones, to ensure access to sex disaggregated data.
- Formalise relationships with gender and inclusion experts across a range of policy areas to inform law making.
- Get a comprehensive analysis of impact of specific legislations or policies on women and other marginalised groups in your constituency or district by reaching out to:
  - Relevant focal points of government ministries, departments or agencies;
  - Bodies that represent different civil society groups, such as NGO networks, community-based organisations, faith-based



organisations, and international organisations working in the locality;

- Experts on issues affecting

women and other marginalised groups, including academics, health professionals and journalists.

## SCRUTINISE/OVERSIGHT

- Track policy implementation and budget expenditures for their impact on inclusion and equality of women and other marginalised people.
- Oversee that government's legislation, policies and budgets have specifically responded to the needs of women and other marginalised groups, by asking questions about:
  - The involvement of representatives of marginalised groups in the making of government's legislation, policymaking and budgeting;
  - The involvement of marginalised groups in the implementation of government's policies;
  - Whether government policy implementation is targeted to meet the needs of both women and men.
  - Continuous monitoring and evaluation of legislation, budgets, and programmes.
- Use gender budgeting tools to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact of government policies on women and girls, specifically by studying any budget cuts and advocating against cuts to programmes or initiatives meant to support women and gender equality.
- Examine government's infrastructure plan via a gender and disability-sensitive lens.
- Demand government reports on the gender composition of government agencies to inform strategies for working toward equal access and opportunity for women and men and to promote increased female recruitment, retention, and advancement in public institutions.
- Scrutinise legally mandated annual reports by relevant agencies to inform NASS and the public about the achievements, performance of government agencies on inclusion mainstreaming.
- Utilise the Public Accounts Committee to scrutinise audited government programmes targeted at marginalised groups to enforce accountability of officials in charge.
- Utilise investigative or special hearings to examine the positive and negative aspects of inclusion policies.
- Ensure that relevant committees consider issues relating women and other marginalised groups by:



- Ensuring civil society organisations with specialised expertise on gender, youth, PWDs and IDPs, as well as relevant academics are invited to give evidence at public and investigative hearings;
- Advocating for hearings or consultative meetings that are solely dedicated to policy implications for women and other marginalised people;
- Making gender, youth, and PWD specific recommendations in committee reports and other legislative outputs.
- Utilisation of inclusion and gender experts for committee work.
- Highlight the NASS Public Petitions mechanism as the legislature's way of addressing issues of discrimination and inequality in public institutions.

## REPRESENT

- Prioritise women, youth and PWD involvement in the National Assembly.
- Showcase – through special debates, commemorations, recognition or other forms of legislative events – the contribution of women, youth and PWD legislators and staff to legislative activities.
- Channel marginalised constituents' voices into policy making by organising town halls, disseminating text message exchanges, or conducting community surveys and sending the results to the relevant authorities.
- Guarantee women, youth and PWDs a place to speak in public hearings.
- Support the adoption of declarations or statements that promote political participation of women, youths, and PWDs.
- Adopt methods of disseminating parliamentary activities that are disability-sensitive e.g., use of sign language interpreters, accessible websites, etc.
- Ensure that the procedure for accessing legislative information on NASS interventions on inclusion are simple, fast and free or low-cost.
- Strengthen stakeholder partnerships:
  - Work with civil society to ensure the participation of socially marginalised and vulnerable groups in legislative consultations or deliberations.
  - Engage with key constituencies including ministers and other legislators, women, youth, religious leaders, business leaders, industry experts, academics and other civil society representatives,

# ANNEX

## A CHECKLIST FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

This Checklist accompanies the Primer for the National Assembly on Advancing Inclusion through Legislative Action. It is offered as a complementary guide for use by legislators and legislative staff on inclusion sensitive options for legislators and a strategy to ensure inclusion sensitive parliamentary business. The Checklist provides a guide to legislators on practical ways they can take action to address the needs of women and other marginalised groups. The Checklist covers five key areas:

### 1 INSTITUTIONAL

This looks overall at institutional culture (organisation, leadership, methods) which is a key aspect of legislative response to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations and work. It ensures that NASS operations and resources are used effectively towards promoting inclusive actions.

### 2 LAWMAKING

By introducing, debating and amending legislation, the National Assembly (NASS) has the opportunity to create an enabling framework for implementing and monitoring progress towards advancing inclusion. NASS should consider the impact of exclusion on women and other marginalised groups and adopt gender mainstreaming and an inclusion sensitive approach to law-making.

### 3 OVERSIGHT & SCRUTINY

The National Assembly is the primary institution for holding governments to account for the implementation of policy and determining the extent of compliance with constitutional, statutory and legislative directives. This is important for informing further legislative intervention and evaluating the impact of programmes on target groups such as marginalised persons. NASS has the opportunity and power to ensure that the government responds to exclusion of women and other marginalised groups, and that the response meets international obligations to the goal of elimination of equality and discrimination, and all forms of violence against women and other marginalised groups.

## 4 REPRESENTATION

Legislators often represent diverse and sometimes competing interests that may be defined by ethnicity, religion, political identification, age, gender, or other characteristics. Effective representation implies articulating and balancing the needs and interests of these groups. In ensuring that the voices of women and other marginalised groups are raised in all public

deliberations, legislators should consider targeted consultations with women and other marginalised groups in their constituencies and communicating their concerns as widely as possible.

## 5 EVALUATION & LESSON LEARNING

NASS should constantly reflect on the inclusion sensitivity approaches and make changes where appropriate.

### 1. INSTITUTIONAL

#### a. Legislative Organisation & Leadership

- ✓ Is there gender balance in NASS composition?
- ✓ Does NASS have a stand-alone inclusion or gender policy/strategy?
- ✓ Is there a Legislative Agenda that comprehensively addresses inclusion?
- ✓ Does the Agenda indicate a mechanism for communicating action plans to legislators, legislative staff, and the media?
- ✓ Are any special measures instituted by law to ensure or facilitate the presence of legislators from marginalised groups? (for example, reserved seats, quotas, affirmative action, etc.)
- ✓ Do NASS rules and procedures i.e., Standing Orders, explicitly contain any provisions regarding the participation of legislators from marginalised groups?
- ✓ Are there mechanisms to promote membership and leadership of women legislators in committees, especially committees dealing with 'hard' issues such as defence, intelligence, foreign policy, etc.
- ✓ Does the National Assembly have sufficient in-house expertise across all policy areas relating to gender, youth, and PWDs? If not, how will it recruit and fund additional expertise?

## **b. Institutional Conduct and Culture**

- ✓ Does NASS provide funds to support women legislators' visits to other parliaments to exchange international gender best practice?
- ✓ Has there been a review of existing codes of conduct and ethics for legislators and legislative staff to make them more inclusion sensitive?
- ✓ Have National Assembly leaders restated the importance of legislative codes of conduct, stressed their applicability to the highest level, and specifically noted that unparliamentary behaviour includes sexual harassment, bullying and violence against women?
- ✓ Are all legislators allowed to speak in debates, raising points of order, moving motions, introducing bills, asking questions, and moving legislative amendments, irrespective of their gender, age or disability status?
- ✓ Are measures taken to ensure NASS premises are accessible for persons with disabilities (PWDs).
- ✓ Is there a mechanism for training legislative staff, including NASS information desk officers, Sergeant-at-Arms and other security personnel, on harassment, bullying and violence against women and other marginalised groups?

## **2. LEGISLATION**

### **a. Inclusion sensitive inquiries & evidence gathering**

- ✓ Where committees are established to undertake inquiries or hearings, do their membership and leadership include and represent marginalised groups?
- ✓ Do legislative rules need to be reviewed to ensure all legislative committees adopt a gender and inclusion sensitive approach?
- ✓ Do committees' resources need to be increased – with additional personnel including gender, youth and disability experts, and other material resources – to enable committees to adopt a gender and inclusion sensitive approach to their work?
- ✓ Has gender and inclusion sensitive legislative stakeholder mapping been conducted and used for inquiries, hearings or other legislative work?

**b. Gender and inclusion  
sensitive analysis of  
laws & budgets**

- ✓ Do committees carry out post-legislative scrutiny to measure impact of laws dealing with marginalised persons?
- ✓ Are gender sensitive recommendations being made by the committee included either in formal reports or other committee outputs?
- ✓ Do legislative bills use gender sensitive or gender-neutral language?
- ✓ During public hearings, are the inputs of the following person sought?
  - Relevant focal points in line ministries responsible for women, youth, and PWDs' affairs;
  - Civil society organizations, non-governmental organizations, and international non-governmental organizations, representing women, youth and PWDs;
  - Academics and experts on issues relating to women, youths and PWDs.
- ✓ Are committees responsible for women, youths and persons with disabilities responsible for taking the lead on budgeting for inclusion sensitive policies or actions, or scrutinising those of the government?
- ✓ Have gender budgeting tools been used to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance and impact of public expenditure on women, girls, men and boys?
- ✓ Have policies, laws and programmes considered the key targets or beneficiaries?
- ✓ Have different groups of women, youths and PWDs been considered in policy making?
- ✓ Are the policies, programme or legislation's resources and benefits reaching equally intended beneficiaries?
- ✓ Are the means of distribution of the resources/benefits equally accessible to all members of the society?

**c. Programmed legislation.**

- ✓ Was there legislation relating to inclusion that was programmed or expected in the preceding legislative session?
- ✓ Were there bills or measures that were focused on women, PWDs or youths only?
- ✓ Are there implications of any potential delays in the passage of such legislation? If so, what are they?
- ✓ What legislation on inclusion remains a priority in the next legislative session?
- ✓ Are measures being taken to ensure that such legislation is not deprioritised?

**3. SCRUTINY & OVERSIGHT**

- ✓ Which committees or legislative bodies are responsible for taking the lead in carrying out oversight of the government's gender sensitive actions?
- ✓ Do they have sufficient expertise or resources to undertake their oversight functions?
- ✓ Do the relevant committees have access to comprehensive, sex, age and disability disaggregated data in the areas under their oversight mandate?
- ✓ Is a monitoring processes established to analyse government and legislative responses to gender sensitive recommendations made by the committee?
- ✓ Where gender discrimination and inequality are revealed by any committee, have any of the actions listed below been undertaken:
  - Speaking with or summoning the head of the agency, ministry or officials responsible?
  - Raising the matter on the floor of the Chamber or through other appropriate legislative action e.g., motion or resolutions?
  - Taking the issue up with the specific committee tasked with responsibility for the subject e.g., women affairs, youths, disabilities?
  - Raising the issue with the media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and/or political parties?

## 4. REPRESENTATION

### a. Consultation & communication with marginalised constituents

- ✓ Are the voices of women, youths and PWDs heard in the National Assembly?
- ✓ Have town halls or community surveys been organized with women, youths, and PWDs constituents?
- ✓ Have specific concerns relating women, youths and PWDs been raised with the following:
  - The relevant Minister in charge of Women, Youths and PWDs affairs;
  - The leadership of the National Assembly;
- ✓ Has the National Assembly put in place an external communications strategy, including dedicated website pages to showcase how it is responding the specific needs of women, youths and PWDs?

### b. Participation in electoral politics

- ✓ Have gender equality and inclusion sensitive impact assessments been undertaken? For instance:
  - What consideration has been given to the impact of voter registration exercise on the participation rates of women, youths and PWDs?
  - What consideration has been given to the impact of political party primaries on the participation rates of women, youths and PWDs?
  - What consideration has been given to the impact of insecurity on the participation rates of women, youths and PWDs?

## 5. EVALUATION & LESSON LEARNING

- ✓ Have legislators and legislative staff, or the relevant legislative committees been invited to do self- assessments or administer in-house surveys on inclusivity?
- ✓ Has the National Assembly considered the following questions:
  - What actions were taken to ensure a gender and inclusion-sensitive legislative action?
  - What impact did the actions have?
  - What challenges arose in implementing any changes, and how were they addressed?

- ✓ What gender and inclusion sensitive changes have been made to legislative procedures or outputs in the previous legislative sessions and which ones can be maintained?
- ✓ What opportunities can be taken to share lessons on gender and inclusion sensitive legislative responses with other legislatures at the state, regional or international levels?
- ✓ How will those lessons be shared with legislators and legislative staff?







## About PLAC

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) is a non-governmental organization committed to strengthening democratic governance and citizens' participation in Nigeria. PLAC works to enhance citizens' engagement with state institutions, and to promote transparency and accountability in policy and decision-making process.

The main focus of PLAC's intervention in the democratic governance process is on building the capacity of the legislature and reforming the electoral process. Since its establishment, PLAC has grown into a leading institution with capacity to deliver cutting-edge research, policy analysis and advocacy. PLAC receives funding support from donors and other philanthropic sources.

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