



Caritas **NIGERIA**

Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria

Registered Name: Catholic Caritas Foundation of Nigeria
Member of Caritas Internationalis

HEAD OFFICE:
Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria
Plot 459 Cadastral Zone B2
Durumi 1, P.O. Box 11253,
Garki, Abuja, Nigeria

BENIN OFFICE:
30 Airport Road,
PDPC Benin
Provincial Office
Complex, Edo State.

DELTA OFFICE:
No. 7 George Odiaka
street, off Okpanam rd,
off Madonna Intl Schl,
Beside NTA Asaba,
Delta State.

WARRI OFFICE:
4 Niger road, Shell
quarters Ogunu,
Warri Delta State.

ENUGU OFFICE:
No 37 Valley
Crescent,
Independent
Layout, Enugu.

OGOJA OFFICE:
No. 3 Stadium
Road, Ogoja,
Cross River State.

OWERRI OFFICE:
Plot 113, House
Area B, New Owerri,
Imo State.

ADAMAWA OFFICE:
State low cost, beside
Sarduauna memorial
Schl. Iokuwa,
Mubi North LGA,
Adamawa State.

CROSS RIVER OFFICE:
2 Stadium road
Igoli, Ogoja,
Cross River State.

ABIA OFFICE:
No. 39 Winners
Road Ehimmiri,
Umuahia, Abia.

CONTACT INFO
Phone: +234 817 346 9975,
08033813992
Email: info@ccfn.org
www.caritasnigeria.org
Twitter: @CCFNigeria
www.facebook.com/Caritas
Nigeria

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

11th October, 2022.

A Statement on the National Water Resources Bill, issued by the Executive Director of Caritas Nigeria and the Justice Development & Peace Commission (JDPC), in Abuja.

The recent re-introduction of the National Water Resources Bill was poorly received by citizens and interest groups, given its apparent exclusion and non-consideration of states and citizens. The bill, which was first introduced in 2020, grants the Federal Government direct control over surface and ground waters, and further mandates individuals to obtain a license before they can access water – a natural resource received freely from God to meet man's needs. Caritas Nigeria, therefore, is rattled by the implications of this legislation, which has far-reaching effects on the citizenry and violates the Catholic Church's principle of the Common Good.

Although the National Water Resources Bill guarantees citizens the right to use water, it guards against private ownership of water and if signed into law, would lead to further centralization of power and the nation's resources, thereby countering ongoing efforts towards devolution of powers. Moreover, Section 2(1) of the Bill, which reads, "All surface water and ground water, wherever it occurs, is a resource common to all people," has been interpreted as assigning terrestrial water bodies and sources under the control and supervision of the federal government.

Similarly, Section 13 of the Bill, states thus: "In implementing the principles under subsection (2) of this section, the institutions established under this Act shall promote integrated water resources management and the coordinated management of land and water resources, surface water and groundwater resources, river basins and adjacent marine and coastal environment and upstream and downstream interests." This, therefore, questions the principles of subsidiarity and inclusion; which states that a higher level of government or organization should not perform any function or duty that can be handled more effectively at a lower level, while, inclusion emphasizes equal access to opportunities and resources for everyone especially, for those who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

Considering the unarguably significant role that water plays in preventing health risks and ultimately promoting community health, Caritas Nigeria has, over the years, conscientiously provided improved,

Trustees: Most Rev. Dr. Felix Alaba Job, Most Rev. Dr. Ignatius Kaigama, Most Rev. Dr. Alfred Adewale Martin
Most Rev. Lucius Ugorji, Most Rev. Matthew Man-Oso Ndagoso, Most Rev. Donatus Ogun

Directors: Most Rev. Alfred Adewale Martin (Chairman), Most Rev. Callistus Onaga, Most Rev. Hyacinth Egbebo, Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi (Secretary General CSN),
Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Uchechukwu Obodoechina (Executive Director/Board Secretary), Dr. Mrs. Ann Osakwe, Barr. Agbonhese, Dr. Emmanuel Umoh, Dr. Magaji Magaji, Dr. John Ayuba, Dr. Mrs. Beatrice. Akanji.


equal and equitable access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services for all citizens for public and household purposes. Worthy of mention is our productive partnership with individuals, communities and development partners, who selflessly ensure that people, including disadvantaged demographics, have unfettered, sustainable access to water by providing alternative sources of water like hand-pump and solar-powered boreholes. We, therefore, urge the Federal Government to retract this legislation and prioritize public health by promoting every means possible for achieving quality water and sanitation services, including private ownership and unrestricted use of water.

While we urge the Federal Government to retract the Bill, we hereby issue the following **recommendations**:

- There is an urgent need for a comprehensive and holistic consultation with citizen groups across the board and states, to ensure that every concerned section of the populace is offered the opportunity to express their concerns about the Bill.
- The Federal Government through the National Assembly should concern itself with pressing issues of poverty and hunger, unemployment and insecurity that ravage the country rather than promoting contentious and ill-motivated legislation.
- The principle of Federalism should be respected and the rights of States and Local Governments to jurisdictions as it relates to domestic water use and protection must be protected by the Federal Government.
- All Senators and House of Representatives members should rise and protect the rights of citizens, and amplify their freedom to control ancestral resources such as land and water.
- The Church calls on all law-abiding citizens to remain peaceful and seek lawful means to redress the above vexing piece of legislation.
- Citizen groups and civil societies should synergize and strategically collaborate to ensure that all that can be done is done to ensure that the obnoxious Bill does not see the light of the day.

We commit unequivocally, to partnering with interest groups and state actors to ensure that citizens exercise their legitimate rights and continually enjoy the necessities of life.

God bless Nigeria!


Rev. Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina (Ph. D.),
Executive Secretary/CEO, Caritas Nigeria.
National Director, JDPC.

