

Brief Report on the 2024 Stakeholders Policy Briefing in Akwa Ibom State

Date of Event: August 15, 2024

Location: Catholic Pastoral Centre, No. 5 Dominic Utuk Street, Akwa Ibom State

Organized by: Africa Faith and Justice Network

Total Participants: 111 (55 women, 25 men, 35 Youth)



On August 15, 2024, a significant stakeholders' policy briefing was held at the Catholic Pastoral Centre in Akwa Ibom State. This event brought together key stakeholders from various sectors to discuss pressing issues related to domestic servitude, child marriage, and child labour. The meeting served as a platform for dialogue, collaboration, and the formulation of actionable

policies to address these critical concerns.

The event commenced with an opening prayer led by Fr. Donatus Udoette, the representative of the Bishop of Uyo Diocese. Following this, Rev. Sr. Bernadette Eyewan Okure SHCJ, the National Coordinator of the Africa Faith and Justice Network Nigeria, delivered a warm welcome address, setting a positive tone for the proceedings, thereafter Rev. Sr. Stella Usen HHCJ, the state coordinator who spearheaded the event, also welcomed the participants, highlighting the collaborative spirit of the gathering. Rev. Fr. Aniedi Okure OP, then introduced the event and its objectives, emphasizing the importance of collective action in addressing the issues at hand.

The briefing attracted a diverse group of participants, including: Former Chief Justice of Akwa Ibom State Hon. Justice Idonesit Ntem Isua Rtd. Five Paramount Rulers, Representatives from Akwa Ibom State Government, National Association of Nigerian Students, Ministry of Information, NAP TIP (National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Women and Social Welfare, FIDA (International Federation of Women Lawyers), Nigerian Police Force, Akwa Ibom State Broadcasting Commission, Catholic Women Organisation, Catholic Youth Organisation, Civil Society Of Nigeria, Akwa Ibom State Special Group, Men of Order, NCWR Etc.

The event featured two keynote speakers: Hon. Justice Ntem Isua (Rtd.) - Delivered insights on the legal frameworks surrounding domestic servitude and child protection. Mrs. Mekan Ukpong - A representative from the Ministry of Women Affairs, who addressed the social implications of child labour and domestic servitude.



Following the keynote speech, a panel of discussants was convened to delve deeper into the pressing issues. The panel included: Bar. Amaka Lodigwe, Amb. Peace Edem, Mrs. Uduak Umoh, Mrs Ukpabio Efanga, HRM Edidem Elder (Dr) Edet Akpan Inyang. The panellists engaged in a robust discussion, highlighting the urgent need for legislative measures to combat domestic servitude, child marriage, and child labour. During the discussions, the

traditional rulers emphasized the necessity for the House of Assembly to enact laws that would require any individual wishing to take a child out of the community to first seek approval from the local chief. This measure aims to enhance child protection and ensure community oversight.

The traditional rulers also expressed their commitment to further discuss these issues in their next meeting, extending an invitation to AFJN Akwa Ibom Team to come and speak to the general house.

The stakeholders' policy briefing on August 15, 2024, successfully brought together a diverse group of participants to address critical issues affecting children and families in Akwa Ibom State. The collaborative efforts and recommendations made during the event hold the potential to foster meaningful change and improve the protection of vulnerable populations. Continued dialogue and action are essential to ensure the implementation of the proposed measures and to create a safer environment for all children.



