



# AFRICA FAITH AND JUSTICE NETWORK NIGERIA

## POLICY BRIEFING REPORT

### Ending Child Early & Forced Marriage and Domestic Servitude

**Venue:** Pastoral Centre, Catholic Diocese of Awka, Anambra State

**Date:** 16th December 2025

**Organized by:** Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN)

## 1. Background and Purpose of the Policy Briefing

The Africa Faith and Justice Network (AFJN) organized a one-day Policy Briefing on **Ending Child Early and Forced Marriage and Domestic Servitude** as part of its strategic advocacy and stakeholder engagement efforts. The briefing aimed to deepen awareness, strengthen multi-sectoral collaboration, promote policy dialogue, and secure concrete commitments toward the protection of children in Anambra State.

The event also served as a platform to introduce and formally **adopt the AFJN Community Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Community Monitoring System (CMS)** as community-led mechanisms for preventing child early marriage and domestic servitude.

## 2. Attendance and Participation

The policy briefing recorded a total of **78 participants (50 females and 28 males)** drawn from diverse sectors, including:

- Government Ministries and Agencies
- Law Enforcement Agencies
- Traditional Ruler Councils
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Legal Practitioners
- Human Right Commissions
- NAPTIP
- international Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Anambra State.
- Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)
- Student groups
- Child Protection Networks
- AFJN State Coordinators

This diverse representation ensured inclusive dialogue and strengthened ownership of child protection responsibilities across sectors.

## 3. Programme Overview

### Arrival and Registration

Participants arrived and registered between **9:30 am – 10:45 am**, followed by opening prayers at **10:00 am prompt**, invoking divine guidance for the success of the engagement.

### Welcome and Opening Remarks

The event was officially opened by **Dr. Barr. Amaka Ilodigwe**, who welcomed participants and emphasized the urgency of collective action to protect children from harmful practices.

### Introductions

Participants introduced themselves by name, organization, designation, and shared expectations for the briefing, setting a participatory tone for the engagement.

## 4. Presentation on AFJN Mission and Vision



**Rev. Sr. Theresa Anyabuike** presented the history, mission, and vision of AFJN, highlighting the Network's faith-based commitment to social justice, child protection, advocacy, and community-driven solutions to child exploitation, early marriage, and domestic servitude.

## 5. Goodwill Messages

Goodwill messages were delivered by representatives of:

- Ministry of Gender Affairs
- Ministry of Health
- Traditional Ruler Council
- Nigeria Police Force
- Zonal Command, NAPTIP
- State Coordinator, Child Protection Network
- International Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Anambra State

Speakers reaffirmed their commitment to collaboration, law enforcement, survivor protection, and policy support.

## 6. Technical Presentations



### First Technical Session

**Barr. Amara Muojeke** delivered a presentation on *Child Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude*, examining root causes, socio-cultural drivers, and the long-term consequences for children, families, and communities.

### Second Technical Session



**His Worship, Barr. Mrs. Uju Peace Okeke** presented on *Legal Implications of Child Marriage and Domestic Servitude*, outlining relevant national and state laws, penalties, and the legal responsibilities of families, communities, and institutions.

## 7. Panel Discussion and Stakeholder Contributions



A six-member panel led an interactive discussion, drawing from sectoral perspectives:

1. **NAPTIP** highlighted the background and prevalence of domestic servitude and child marriage in Anambra State.
2. **Child Protection Network** shared field experiences, challenges including weak political will, poor law enforcement response, inadequate funding, lack of shelters for survivors, and weak reporting mechanisms.
3. **Human Rights Representative** emphasized children's rights and state obligations.
4. **Ministry of Health** addressed health consequences of early marriage and domestic servitude.
5. **CSO Representative** underscored the role of civil society in advocacy, awareness, collaboration, and dialogue.
6. **Ministry of Justice** reiterated legal frameworks and enforcement gaps.

## 8. Key Highlights from Discussions

- Urgent need for **community engagement and ownership**
- Establishment of **child protection shelters**
- Dedicated funding for child protection and case response

- Strong networking and collaboration among stakeholders
- Adoption of **Community Monitoring Systems**
- Tracking and documentation of child movement

## 9. Recommendations from Participants

Participants proposed the following **practical and actionable recommendations**:



1. Intensified community engagement through advocacy, dialogue, and awareness creation
2. Economic empowerment and alternative opportunities for vulnerable children
3. Enforcement of MoU and CMS by traditional rulers
4. Dedicated funding for case response and survivor support
5. Integration of child protection into government budgeting processes
6. Responsible parenting, birth spacing, and skills development for children

## 10. Adoption of AFJN Community MoU and CMS

The adoption process was led by traditional rulers and representatives from:

- Ministry of Justice
- Child Protection Network
- FIDA
- NAPTIP
- Civil Society Organizations
- Ministry of Gender

Participants formally endorsed the **Community MoU and Community Monitoring System (CMS)** through a signed commitment document affirming collective responsibility for child protection.

## 11. Action Plans and Next Steps

The action-planning session was anchored by **Mr. Peter Ewah**, AFJN State Lead Ebonyi, outlining the following next steps:

1. Creation of a multi-stakeholder WhatsApp coordination platform
2. Organization of annual virtual (Zoom) follow-up meetings
3. Registration with the Child Protection Network, Anambra State Chapter
4. Continued community engagement and monitoring activities

## 12. Conclusion and Closing Activities



The policy briefing concluded with:

- Group photographs
- Participants signing a **Pledge Against Child Early Marriage and Domestic Servitude**
- Closing prayer using a special **Prayer Card for Children**, reaffirming moral and faith-based commitment to child protection

The event was officially moderated by **Barr. Mrs. Nnenna Anozie**.

## 13. Conclusion

The AFJN Policy Briefing marked a significant milestone in strengthening child protection advocacy in Anambra State. The high level of participation, adoption of the Community MoU and CMS, and concrete action plans demonstrate strong political, community, and institutional commitment to ending child early and forced marriage and domestic servitude.

AFJN remains committed to sustaining these partnerships and ensuring that every child grows up safe, educated, and free from exploitation

### Pictures





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