

THE PRE - OGP GLOBAL SUMMIT NATIONAL DIALOGUE REPORT



Acting Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria, Amy Galigan giving her remark at ANEEJ Pre-OGP Global Summit National Dialogue in Abuja. With her is the Special Adviser to the President on Social Investment, Mrs. Maryam Uwais

Introduction

The Africa Network for Environment and Economic Justice, ANEEJ organised a pre-OGP Global Summit National Dialogue on Tuesday May 14, 2019 at Rockview Hotel, Abuja. The event offered opportunity for stakeholders in Nigeria to review the implementation of the first OGP National Action Plan (NAP), discuss critical areas of interest during the summit and the implementation of the Conditional Cash Transfer programme (where recovered \$322.5m Abacha loot is being spent) and explore further avenue for peer learning on how to improve the SIP implementation in Nigeria.

The event was attended by 48 participants drawn from Canadian High Commission to Nigeria, Office of the Vice President led by Mrs. Maryam Uwais – SA to the President on Social Investment, Representatives of Federal Ministry of Justice, National Social Safety-Net Coordinating Office (NASSCO), National Cash Transfer Office (NCTO), Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI), TUGAR, OGP Steering Committee members, Anti-Corruption in Nigeria (ACORN) and Transparency and Accountability in the Management of Returned Assets (MANTRA) project partners, members of anti-corruption working group of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Nigeria, World Bank, DFID, UNDP and CSOs including journalists.

Welcome

In his opening address, ANEEJ Executive Director Rev. David Ugolor welcomed all participants to the National Dialogue ahead of the Open Government Partnership, OGP Global Summit, scheduled for Ottawa, Canada, May 29 – 31, 2019.

While noting that the event came up as part of ANEEJ MANTRA project implementation which is designed to address issues of corruption within the broader objectives of the Anti-Corruption in Nigeria (ACORN) programme of UK Aid, Ugolor provided update on CSOs monitoring of the disbursement of \$322.5m recovered loot and mentioned some of the result achieved with the MANTRA project which was possible through the excellent cooperation from the relevant government agencies including Office of the Vice President-host of the National Social Investment Office, NCTO, NASSCO, Federal Ministry of Justice, among several others.

Ugolor made reference to the assessment report on the implementation of OGP which ANEEJ released earlier and urged government to show more commitment to the process by providing consistent leadership at the global, national and state levels. He informed participants that at the OGP Global Summit, ANEEJ and MacArthur Foundation will be hosting a side event focused on ***Asset Recovery in OGP: Peer-Learning on Recovery, Return, and Utilisation – Lessons from the Field***. He noted that it was another opportunity to showcase the MANTRA model which is currently gaining traction around the world and used the opportunity to invite all delegates from Nigeria to the side event. Ugolor concluded his welcome address by expressing gratitude to all participants for honouring ANEEJ invitation.

Remarks and Good Will Messages

The Special Adviser to the President on Social Investment, Mrs. Maryam Uwais expressed delight at the cooperation her office received from the MANTRA protect team and commended the multi-stakeholder approach adopted by relevant MDAs and CSOs that have so far yielded result. Maryam Uwais acknowledged that Nigeria has high poverty indices and the only way to address it is to put heads together and work towards helping everybody involved. Maryam Uwais noted that CSOs do have a responsibility to ensure that the poor receive the money as the conditional cash transfer programme is targeted at reducing their poverty level and welcomed ANEEJ useful suggestions which she said is being used to improve the programme. She acknowledged that the programme does have some challenges which are currently being addressed and sued for further collaboration while thanking ANEEJ and others who are working to ensure transparency in the entire process.

Sonia Warner, DFID's ACORN Programme SRO commended the good working relationship between CSOs and Government, noting that the OGP Summit taking place in Ottawa will allow for knowledge sharing around asset recovery and anti-corruption issues. Sonia recognised that the monitoring process represent a very important mile stone for Nigeria and there has been a strong partnership in the process. It shows that it is possible to increase transparency and accountability in the management

of recovered asset. The MANTRA model is an important model to be shared and expressed gratitude to those who made it possible.

The Pioneer OGP National Coordinator in Nigeria and former Special Adviser to the Presidency on Justice Sector Reforms – Juliet Ibekaku-Nwagwu in her goodwill message, commended ANEEJ on its work on monitoring the disbursement of the Abacha loot, under the MANTRA project and called for wider coverage of the country's social security programme, especially the Federal Government's national cash transfer initiative. She informed participants that efforts are ongoing to repatriate another tranche of \$500 million looted funds from US, Germany and France. Ibekaku-Nwagwu mentioned that beyond the repatriations, it is to make sure that the funds get to Nigerians.

The Acting Head of Canadian High Commission to Nigeria, Amy Galigan expressed delight to be part of the event and acknowledged ANEEJ's contribution to the OGP process in Nigeria. She spoke about the Ottawa OGP summit and priorities, adding that the opportunity should be used to meet with others from different countries to share experience. Amy mentioned that the OGP is not all about National Action Plans but what is the impact of the process on the people who implement it and concluded by welcoming those travelling to Canada in advance.



Some of the guests making their remarks and goodwill messages

NEITI's Director of Communication, Dr. Orji O Orji first acknowledged the guests present and recalled that earlier in the year there was a similar gathering to launch ANEEJ's report on the implementation of OGP and GFAR in Nigeria. Dr. Orji commended the office of Vice President for the way they have managed the cash transfer programme. Dr. Orji informed participants that NEITI will be leading Nigeria's delegation to the OGP Global Summit in Canada and that a lot has been done regarding the implementation of OGP in Nigeria. According to Dr. Orji, Nigeria came out the best Anglophone African country with the highest EITI global standard and that NEITI is currently reviewing her strategic plan to

conclude the process of opening the beneficial ownership register which will be ready by first quarter, 2020.

The World Bank Representative – Fanen Ade, said that, ending poverty and increasing shared prosperity is what the World Bank is about. He expressed willingness of the World Bank to be part of discussions and forums by ANEEJ on asset recovery and anti-corruption matters.

Group photograph with guests

The Executive Director of ANEEJ Rev David Ugolor called for a group photograph with guests.



From left: Orji O. Orji, Director of Communication, NEITI; Sonia Warner, SRO ACORN Programme, DFID; The Acting Head of Canadian High Commission to Nigeria, Amy Galigan; David Ugolor, ANEEJ ED, Mr. Aperia Iorwa, National Coordinator, NASSCO; Juliet Ibekaku-Nwagwu, Pioneer National Coordinator, OGP; Maryam Uwais, SA to President on Social Investment; Dr. Tope Sinkaiye, Coordinator of the National Cash Transfer Programme

Summary of ANEEJ Monitoring Report

The report was presented by ANEEJ Deputy Executive Director, Leo Atakpu who mentioned that the monitoring exercise took place in 11 States, namely in Anambra, Bauchi, Benue, Cross River, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Kwara, Nasarawa, and Niger, across five geo political zones in Nigeria. The South West was excluded because as at the time of monitoring, payment was yet to be made to beneficiaries in the zone. The exercise comprised;

- Systems assessment
- Tracing and verification of data at all levels
- Spot checks on enrollees
- A two weeks monitoring exercise, which covered 30,778 beneficiaries (households)

Atakpu informed participants that through the course of the MANTRA Project, ANEEJ had engaged MDA's responsible for disbursement, through meetings, visits and advocacy, to get their input, buy-in and support for the MANTRA Initiative.

According to Atakpu, findings show that a total of 974,478,000 million naira was released from the Abacha loot to the beneficiaries for payment in the August September Payment round as at the time of the monitoring exercise. The funds disbursed from the Abacha loot comprise 80% of the funds paid at the August September payment cycle. Data retrieved from the NCTO report that 33 million dollars

(3, 786, 063,783 billion naira) was released for 6 months from the Abacha loot and converted at an exchange rate of 305.45 Naira to a dollar. Bank charges of 28,560 naira was deducted.

Atakpu equally mentioned that enrollees reported receiving at least the base amount of 5000 naira as 78.8% of respondents reported receiving at least the base amount of 5000 naira and that the report further revealed that the findings on grievances mechanism shows that 96.4% of beneficiaries surveyed were satisfied with the process. Atakpu, however, noted that grievances in the programme appears underreported as the Local Government Area level team reported delays in the feedback timeline from National Cash Transfer Office and The State Cash Transfer Office on grievances reported. In concluding his presentation, Atakpu shared the following recommendations, from the report on the MANTRA Project:

- There is need to improve timely release of information to enrollees on their eligibility to receive funds as beneficiaries.
- Disbursements should be made electronically
- Beneficiaries should not be kept till late hours at disbursement sites
- There should be strategic communication of programme data to the public, to improve credibility and public trust in the programme
- Data received from national level agencies should be updated with date stamps for verifiability.
- Marking of beneficiary households should be discontinued
- NCTO should communicate changes in state and national level data in a timely manner
- Timely information should be provided to enrollees who have been taken off the beneficiary list

Feedback on the presentation

1. There is need for picture evidence of monitoring exercise, to improve credibility and public buy-in.
2. The MANTRA Project is evidence of improved synergy between the Civil Society and Government
3. The MANTRA monitoring exercise showed superlative performance on the path of government which may not be entirely true.
4. There is need to promote awareness on the MANTRA report. He advised that this would be achieved through strategic communication and conversations by experts on the role of social protection in alleviating poverty in Nigeria.
5. There were questions on how beneficiaries were selected and whether 5,000 could make any impact in the lives of beneficiaries

Response to questions and feedback

Maryam Uwais mentioned in her response that facilitators are embedded in all communities under the Social Safety Net and Cash Transfer Programmes to conduct training of beneficiaries on managing the funds disbursed to them on saving, inculcating best business practices in their trades.

These cash transfer facilitators as well as staffs of the Ministry of Planning in all states are trained to effectively carry out their tasks. Local governments are also trained to build capacity of enumerators to effectively conduct their task

Maryam Uwais then explained how the Proxy Means Test Formula worked, noting that it was an inclusive process that allowed communities identify persons who deserve support as beneficiaries.

The Coordinator, National Cash Transfer Office, Dr. Tope Sinkaiye also briefed participants on how beneficiaries used the funds received while noting that the entire process, from the point of enrolment to payment, is electronic. She said that the monies disbursed were used for enhancing economic activities and driving community infrastructure development. Specific uses include:

- Driving cooperative initiatives
- Digging wells for water
- Providing education for children
- Developing Palm and Garri factories

Panel Discussion Session – OGP Global Summit and Opportunities for Nigeria

Panellists

- ANEEJ Executive Director, Rev. David Ugolor
- Representative of NASSCO National Coordinator, Gyanggyang T. Yimare
- Executive of BUDGIT, Tolutope Agundaye

The panel session was moderated by Dr. Otive Igbuzor, the Executive Director, African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD). In his introductory remark, Dr. Otive emphasised the importance of reforming governance, so government could better serve Citizens. He spoke on the importance of co-creation, and how a multi-stakeholder approach helped drive the OGP process, with Civil Society and Government working as equal partners.

He said that a recent review of the OGP process, revealed the need to directly engage citizens; involve the legislature; advocate for open legislature; prevent the OGP from becoming a parallel organisation through co-creation; focus on key areas like, inclusion, women's right, and service delivery.

Dr. Otive informed participants that progress had been recorded in some of the focus areas of the OGP, while little progress was recorded in other areas. Areas such as asset recovery enjoyed progress, while areas on justice and governance were progressing slowly.

The panellist highlighted a number of issues which have been summarised below;

- Innovations should be developed and deployed to ease implementation of OGP initiatives (an example is the adoption of non-conviction based forfeiture in the process of asset recovery)

- There is need to uphold conditionality – asking what can be done to ensure judicious and transparent use of recovered assets
- There is need to strengthen the co-creation spirit, for sustainability. OGP provides an example of co-creation. MANTRA builds on this, and works to sensitize the masses on the role of co-creation in engendering transparency and accountability in the process of recovering looted assets
- Nigeria has improved in the area of openness in budgetary matters but a lot still needs to be done in making the budgetary process more inclusive and citizens should be mobilized to participate in the budget process
- Timeliness in passage of budgets also requires improvement
- The second OGP National Action Plan will allow Nigeria review successes and challenges that arose in the implementation of the first National Action Plan, with a view to proffering solutions
- The platform of forthcoming OGP National Summit should be used to advocate for better collaboration amongst MDA's.
- President Buhari need to exhibit strong commitment to drive OGP by speaking about it at public fora
- The budget process should employ a bottom-up approach, for improved inclusiveness
- The opportunity provided by the OGP global summit should be used to from other implementing countries and as well share Nigeria's experience

Key Outcome

A key outcome of the event was the understanding by participants to take collective action in getting the federal government especially the president to give strong political support to the OGP process and speak about OGP at public fora.

The second National Action Plan (NAP) should reflect all issues in the first NAP that are yet to be completed to ensure that such issues are taken to logical conclusion

The synergy between CSOs and government that has resulted in improved transparency in the use of looted funds should be sustained.



Dr. Tope Sinkaiye, NCTO clarification @ the event. Flanked by Dr. Otiye Iguzor, Leo Atakpu and Ralph Ndigwe



Cross section of participants @ the event