**ADVOCACY POINTS FOR SISTERS-ABUJA NIGERIA**

**November 24, 2016**

**PREAMBLE**

We are Catholic Reverend Sisters from all over Nigeria deeply moved about some issues in the governance of our Country. As Catholic Reverend Sisters, we work at the grassroots, with the disadvantaged population in this Country. We have seen and have experienced firsthand, the sufferings and poverty of the people. We come here today to bring their voices, to the public and to our law makers.

 These are some of the issues that we are concerned about. First, we are extremely alarmed and deeply distressed at the increase of the abuse of women and children on a daily basis in Nigeria today. We have experienced this on a daily bases with the people we serve in our schools, hospitals and other areas of our ministry. The depressing truth is that most of the perpetrators go scot free due to our weak legal system and inadequacy of the law enforcement agent.

**VIOLENCE - CHILD RIGHT ACT**

We therefore demand as a matter of urgency the quick domestication of the Child Right Act.

* We call on government to compel all the states that have not yet adopted and domesticated the 2003 Child Right Act and implement same. We also call on the law makers to engage more on legislative and judicial activism to ensure the proper implementation of the law.
* We further demand that Violence Against Persons Act be nationally enforced.
* Children and women sexual abuse has reached an epidemic in our country.
* We call on all the 36 states to make the 2015 Violence Against Persons Act a national law and not just for the FCT.
* We demand that the government take steps to rehabilitate the victims.
* It is a fact that most sexual abuse go unreported because of the culture of silence, a culture that very often blames the victim rather than the perpetrator

 There is so much violence in this country and perpetrators go unpunished.

* We condemn the burning of the seven year old for stealing garri and call on the government to bring those responsible to justice
* We call on the government to enforce the laws of violence by holding the perpetrators accountable to the full extent of the law.

**A CULTURE WASTE**

* In this time of hunger and extreme poverty among the masses, we demand that government cut down on excessive allowance for law makers
* We demand the reduction in the cost of government and ask that government be prudent in the expenditure of public funds
* There is excessive wastage in government, including unnecessary allowances. We ask the government to cut down on the allowances and use the money for the basic essentials including payment of salaries, building roads, providing good health care, investment in sustainable agriculture and security in the country to ensure stability.
* The government should publish information that allows the public access to their law makers. It is an injustice to the public and indeed an embarrassment that those that they represent cannot reach them.

**AGRICULTURE**

The apparent food shortage in Nigeria is due to lack of support for small scale farmers and the infrastructure for food distribution. We acknowledge the government policy on agriculture as a priority. We notice however that this is not reflected in practical terms.

Therefore, we strongly request that the Nigeria Government take practical steps to invest more in agriculture.

Hunger and extreme poverty in our land is a violation of Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2.

We are deeply concerned about the long term damage of appropriating the rights of food production for Nigerian citizens to trans-national corporations.

A country that depends on outside source to feed its citizens sets itself up for disaster and the control of its population by the corporate world.

* GMO is not the solution to food shortage. If the government wants to improve agriculture, the government should empower local farmers to plant the food we need.
* We implore our policy makers to learn from the experience of Burkina Faso and many other countries that have rejected Genetically Modified Foods (GMO) and their false gospel of agriculture development.
* The government should stop giving out our land to foreign corporation.

 There is an inherent risk of industrial mono-cropping. It impacts the culture and ethics of our people, and diminishes the positive contributions of small scale farmers.

It fundamentally and negatively impacts God’s creation and destroys the ecosystem.

Industrial mono-cropping contributes to environmental degradation and destroys the verity of plants and vegetables God created.

 We call our government to look into the issues we have raised and give the urgent attention they deserve.

We enjoin all Nigerians to join us and pray for our country Nigeria. And we commend our country to Our Mother Mary Queen and Patroness of Nigeria.