

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 3RD EDITION OF THE FIXING NIGERIA CONFERENCE, TAGGED “SUSTAINABLE & EFFICIENT DEMOCRACY: ISSUES ON ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE” HELD ON THE 1ST OF OCTOBER, 2020 AT THE SHEHU MUSA Y’ARADUA CENTRE

INTRODUCTION:

The 3rd edition of the Fixing Nigeria Conference by the Ernest and Ibrahim Foundation held on the 1st of October, 2020 to mark the Independence Day celebration with the theme: “**SUSTAINABLE & EFFICIENT DEMOCRACY: ISSUES ON ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY IN GOVERNANCE**” held at the Shehu Musa Yaradua Centre Abuja.

OVERVIEW:

The one-day conference had the presence of over 300 participants from across the nation and appreciated the attendance, participation and invaluable contributions of participants, particularly the well renowned speakers amongst which were, The Chief Judge of the FCT Hon Justice Ishaq Bello, Dr Ike Neliaku, Senator Dino Melaye, Mr Shola Olapade, Mr Soji Oyawoye, Dr Sam Amadi, Mr Hamzat Lawal, and panellists Josie Itoyah, Emeka Diru, Amb. Sunday Okereke, Ndi Kato, Saadatu Hamu Aliyu, Senator Iroegbu, Solomon Adodo, Idris Akinbajo, Ibrahim Farouk, Hon. Nicholas Ossai, Alwan Hassan, Ahmed Musa Sagir, Hon. Kolade Victor Akinjo, Barr Ishmael Bello.

An opening remark by Mr Shola Olapade, followed by a paper by Mr Soji Oyawoye on the topic “**SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, CORE VALUES FOR EFFICIENT LEADERSHIP**”. This was followed by 3 plenary discussions: Media and CSO Roundtable; Legislative Roundtable; and the Policy Roundtable. Also, the floor was open to allow for questions from participants.

FORMAL OPENING:

Mr Shola Olapade, in his opening paper, said the purpose of accountability and transparency is to create common wealth and vision for the people.

- He highlighted 3 points of note: “Purpose, Process and Participation” and went into details on how all three Points are great in addressing the issue of transparency and accountability in governance.
- Where purpose is not known, abuse is inevitable. He called for the review of our processes in electing leaders and active participation by being courageous, taking ownership, being responsible, having expectations from our leaders and continuous enlightenment of how the system works.

- Conferences in themselves do not transform societies/nations but provides a platform for robust interactions and discussions that lead to the incubation and cross-fertilization of ideas from which citizenry can draw policies, ideas, concepts and direction from.

Recommendations:

- That we become part of the legislative process.
- That we should put our money where our mouth is. Sponsor / donate towards the cost of running for office as it provides moral justification to demand for accountability.
- Subject political aspirants to rigorous but honest/unbiased debates right from nomination and not wishes of a privileged few.
- Familiarize yourselves with candidate's manifestos to know their vision/plans. This serves as a benchmark against which to measure their performance.
- Call for the review of electoral process so that votes can count.

The first lecture by Mr Soji Oyawoye on the topic "SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY: TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY, CORE VALUES FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP"

Highlights:

- Transparency and Accountability are self-driven values and not leadership values
- Leadership is earned and not elected
- We are a product of 3 things:
 - o Hereditary
 - o Environment and
 - o Role models.

We can't change our hereditary, but we can change our environment and role models.

- The most important title is the Citizen, and that true accountability starts with our decisions and choices, and we must take responsibility for who vote into office.

Recommendations:

- Re-define who you are, determine where you want to go and identify the right role models
- Nigeria is where you are and not just a geographical space. To change the story, we must change the script.
- True accountability and transparency begin with you

FIRST PLENARY: MEDIA AND CSO ROUNDTABLE

The first plenary started with a short presentation by DR IKE NELIAKU who highlighted:

- That the Civil Society Organisations and Media are very important component of an effective government.
- Lifewire of humanity is interest
- CSO sets the agenda and raises issues for the media to build on, whilst the media puts things out to make informed decisions.
- The CSO/Media must always monitor and check the government at all times.

Recommendations:

- We must change our trajectory in 3 ways
 - o Rethink leadership
 - o Rethink Nationhood
 - o Rethink Citizenship
- Establish a hall of shame for all leaders who have failed

Panel Discussions:

The panellists further discussed how much more the media and CSO can further mount pressure in holding the government accountable. To moderate the panel discussions was Josie Itoyah and discussants include, Ndi Kato, Musa Ahmed Sagir, Solomon Adodo, Idris Akinbajo and Senator Iroegbu.

The floor was opened for participants to ask questions.

SECOND PLENARY: LEGISLATIVE ROUNDTABLE

The second plenary moderated by Amb. Sunday Okereke looked at the oversight functions of the National Assembly and legislators, and also what the NASS do to improve accountability and transparency. To discuss these issues were, Senator Dino Melaye, Dr Simon Karu, Saadatu Hamu Aliyu, Hon. (Dr) Nicholas Ossai, Ibrahim Farouk, Hamzat Lawal, Hon. Kolade Victor Akinjo, and Hon. Rimamnde Shawulu Kwewum.

Recommendations:

- Government to create a platform to groom the youth
- Continuous Citizen engagement with the National Assembly
- The use of data to ask the right questions
- Identify legislators that we can hold accountable to deliver our recommendations
- Reboot Nigeria – focus on the fight against corruption
- Media to audit NASS members and publish their performance

THIRD PLENARY: POLICY ROUNDTABLE

The third plenary began with a speech by the Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Ishaq Bello who stressed the need to give the youth the chance and space to build and grow their mental capacity. This was followed by a paper by Dr Sam Amadi on

SUSTAINABLE AND EFFICIENT DEMOCRACY – “Strategies that Promote Accountability and Transparency in Governance”.

The third panel discussions centred on Policy, how they are formed, benefits, and the transparency of the process. The panel was moderated by Emeka Diru and discussants included the Chief Judge, Hon. Justice Ishaq Bello, Dr Sam Amadi, Senator Dino Melaye, Barr Ishmael Bello, Shola Olapade, Soji Oyawoye, Alwan Hassan

Recommendations:

- Work towards a system that can only reward production and value addition
- In selecting leaders, citizens must closely examine those they chose to represent them