

LAWYERS ALERT AND PARTNERS SEEK TO STRENGTHEN LAWS ON THE VULNERABLE POPULATION THROUGH THE ONGOING CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Lawyers Alert, a human rights organization has been working on issues of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and other vulnerable populations over the years. Findings and Statistics from surveys and our online SRHR monitoring tool have revealed how states have been reluctant to domesticate and enforce progressive SRHR laws passed by the National assembly. Indeed, the position remains that laws passed by the federal legislature on matters that fall outside the Exclusive Legislative List of the Constitution do not automatically become applicable and enforceable in the states.

Given the preceding, Lawyers Alert seeks to use the opportunity of the ongoing constitutional review project of the National Assembly to push for the national applicability of the various widely-acclaimed progressive SRHR laws already passed or that may be passed in the future. To this end, the organization has held meetings with its partners towards collating inputs for engaging at the Zonal Public Hearing for the proposed alteration to the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 by the relevant committee of the National Assembly.

Such laws as Violence Against Persons (Prohibition) (VAPP), Act; The administration of the Criminal Justice, Act: and the HIV/Aids (Anti-Discrimination), Act that seeks to protect the vulnerable and the minority need to be replicated and rendered enforceable in all parts of the country. This attempt is an ongoing move by Lawyers Alert and its partners to strengthen the SRHR regime in Nigeria and to also enhance efforts on same over the years. The organization strives to use this constitutional alteration as an opportunity to bring about uniformity of laws in the country.

The zonal public hearing of the Senate Committee on the review of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria will hold on the 26th and 27th of May, 2021. Lawyers Alert in collaboration with its partners will be present at the public hearing in all 12 zones designated throughout the states and shall present memoranda in this regard.