



REPORT OF MEETING ON PARTNERING WITH THE GU & PDSS ON GBV & SRHR IN NIGERIA

Date: 10th of September, 2020
Time: 09.00 am – 02:30pm
Location: Force Gender (FCIID), Area 10, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria.
Host: Force Gender (FCIID)/Lawyers Alert

- **Overview/Meeting Objectives**

The meeting had the following objectives;

1. To understand the challenges of the GU&PDSS (Resources & Technically).
2. To Develop a road map on addressing these challenges.
3. To enhance participant skills in understanding their roles and best ways to address issues of SRHR and GBV in a Human Rights and Satisfactory manner.
4. Modus for monitoring, documentation, working together.

- **Agenda Item #1:** Arrival and Registration of participants

All participants present at the meeting were duly registered. Representatives from the Police Duty Solicitor Scheme of the Legal Aid Council in the FCT, the Gender Unit of the Nigeria Police Force in the FCT and Staff of Lawyers Alert were in attendance.

- **Agenda Item #2 & #3: Opening Prayer / Introduction and Expectations**

The meeting began with an opening prayer by a volunteer. The Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of the GU in the FCIID, welcomed all participants, gave a brief overview of why we are here and what the meeting seeks to achieve. All Participants present introduced themselves and gave their expectations.

- **Agenda Item #4:** Welcome Address and Setting the Agenda

The Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of the GU on behalf of the Deputy Inspector General of the Police Intelligent unit and the Police Gender Coordinator gave the welcome remark. He thanked all participants for their availability. While setting the agenda, he explained to all participants the reason for the meeting and why we were gathered. The need for us to work together and collaborate cannot be overemphasized. He further explained that the meeting was principally to understand our areas of work , challenges we encounter and how best to provide services to survivors of violence especially women and girls. He urged all participants to actively participate in the meeting and wish us a fruitful deliberation towards a robust relationship with the PDSS and LA.

- **Agenda Item #5 : Goodwill Messages**

This session was taken by the Director Police Duty Solicitor Scheme (PDSS) of Legal Aid Council who spoke on behalf of the Director General of the Council. A brief back of the the PDSS was given and explained the importance of a partnership with the GU towards providing services to survivors of violence. He concluded by saying that the PDSS is desirous of a better working relationship with the GU and Lawyers Alert towards providing the necessary support to women suffering GBV. He welcomed everyone once again, appreciated the GU and LA for this initiative and and encouraged all to make contributions towards achieving the meetings objectives.

- **Agenda Item #6 : Keynote Remarks/ Objectives**

This session was handled by the Director Legal of Lawyers Alert. All participants once again were appreciated for their availability at the meeting. A brief background of Lawyers Alert was given, its mandate, area of work and target group was extensively discussed. He explained that the President of LA, though unavoidably absent supports the initiative and would love to have a relationship with the GU and PDSS. The Police Gender Coordinator was appreciated for the support received from the inception of the project till date and the Director, PDSS for his continuous support to the project. The speaker explained LA area of work on monitoring and documentation of violations using a web-based tool for evidence-based advocacy for laws and policy reforms, alongside the provision of free legal services to the survivors of violence. The speaker explained in clear terms what brought about this initiative and what this intervention seeks to achieve. It was explained that the intervention was aimed at strengthening the GU and PDSS who are state actors so as to better service women who visits police stations to lay compliants on issues of GBV. Another outcome of this intervention is that women groups would be aware of the existence of the GU and PDSS in

police stations. The speaker concluded by summarizing the meeting objectives and wished all a fruitful meeting.

- **Agenda Item #7 : Tea Break**

All participants had a break for tea.

- **Agenda Item #8 : Understanding Gender- Based Violence (GBV) and our roles in addressing issues of GBV**

This Session was handled by Lawyers Alert. A pre-assessment questionnaire was circulated to assess participants knowledge of GBV. The facilitator explained what GBV means, its types, who are most at risk and ways of providing assistance of survivors of GBV in a human rights compliant manner. It was explained that GBV from the United Nations Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights for the Elimination of all forms of discrimination among women as “ a form of discrimination that seriously inhibits womens’ ability to enjoy rights and freedom on the basis of equality with men”. GBV in summary is anything done to put a woman at a position of not been able to enjoy some rights as provided by law equally with men. These position looks more on women than men given that women are most vulnerable than men. E.g. of GBV include; Rape, Sexual Abuse, Sexual Exploitation, FGM, etc. This session ended with questions and answers for clarity on grey areas.

- **Agenda Item #9 : Present and ongoing challenges in delivery of their mandate**

This session was handled by the GU and PDSS, as each organisation took turns to identify challenges they face in delivering their mandates. Below are some of the challenges stated:

- 1.Obtaining sustainable Evidence
- 2.Inadequate synergy between the Police /stakeholders
- 3.Lack/Inadequate Funding
- 4.Lack of shelter for survivors
- 5.Inadequate Professionalism
- 6.Discrimination and Stigmatization
- 7.Partiality
- 8.Survivors Stigmatization
- 9.Inadequate sensitization of members of the public/survivors of violence(SGBV)

10. Religious Influence/Societal Norms and Practices
11. Silence Culture.
12. Exclusion of Religious Bodies in active Stakeholders meeting.
13. Intimidation.
14. Poverty.
15. Family Influence(Societal/School).
16. Environmental Factor.
17. Rigor of Judicial Processes.
18. Political Interference.
19. Unwillingness of Survivors of Violence.
20. Media.

• **Agenda Item #10 : Roadmap to reserving the challenges above**

All participants suggested possible ways to mitigate the challenges identified above. Below are some of the suggestions made towards reversing the challenges;

1. **Awareness creation/Sensitization on (SGBV):** Enlightenment of individuals on SGBV and its dynamics. Sensitization can be done through Radio Jingles, Television programs, Billboards, Social media in the three major languages in Nigeria(Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo).
2. **Professionalism/Non Discrimination(Police & other Security Agencies):** The following is required;
 - I. Capacity building :Training and Re-training of police officers.
 - II. Development of Standard Operating procedure on handling SGBV Cases.
 - III. Active partnership with relevant stakeholders.
3. **Non-Stigmatization of Survivors of SGBV:** Enlightenment of the society and service providers to avoid blaming/shaming survivors of violence.
4. **Synergy between Police and other stakeholders:** This can be done through the following
 - I. Constitute Active Stakeholders with the fight against Sexual Gender Base Violence(SGBV).
 - II. Collaborations and Reburst Delibrations.
 - III. Create charts/directories for participants.
 - IV. Referrals/Networking.
5. **Inadequate Funding:** This can be done through the following;
 - I. Advocacy visits to relevant Institutions/National Assembly for the Gender Budget.
 - II. CSO's/NGO Advocacy visits to INGOs and donor bodies for Funding
 - III. Creation of Budget Line for Gender unit of the Police.

- IV. Advocacy to Hospitals for free Medical Attention for survivors of SGBV(eg .Rape)
6. **Political Interference:** This can be reversed using the below;
 - I. Strong Advocacy by CSO's/NGO Against Unhealthy Interference.
 - II. Strong Publicity on cases to avoid interference.
7. **Media:**
 - I. Sensitize the media through the relevant NGO's Platforms.
 - II. Train/Sensitize Journalist and the media on Sexual Gender Base Violence(SGBV).
 - III. Seek Partnerships via advocacy visits to various media houses..
8. **Lack of shelters for survivors of SGBV:** This can be remedied by the following;
 - I. Advocacy visits to relevant INGO's for providing shelters.
 - II. Networking with relevant CS groups or NGOs who provide such services.
 - III. Advocacy visits to the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development to discuss creation of shelters.
9. **Religious Influence:** This can be reversed using the following mediums;
 - I. Sensitization programs for Religious Leaders/bodies on dangers of not seeking justice for Victims of SGBV.
 - II. Individual Sensitization in various Worship/Religious Centres.
 - III. Advocacy visits to religious/ traditional bodies
 - IV. Engage the above bodies in meetings
 - V. Creating a synergy between them and the police.

Agenda Item #11:Review/Development of Women Satisfactory Index

This session was facilitated by Lawyers Alert. A sample tool was circulated which is principally to gauge women's satisfaction upon reporting complaints and all through the process of investigation and dispensing of justice. All participants made inputs and corrections to the document. A harmonized copy will be circulated by the LA team. It was suggested that the LA meet with the management of the Nigeria Police Force with the tool, given that this meeting may be unable to give the go ahead for usage of the tool. For clarity, the aim of the tool was given which is to provide feedback as to how well cases were handled and necessary adjustments to be done where necessary. This was followed by a question and answer session, after which next steps were discussed.

- **Agenda Item #12 :** Next steps and way forward

The GU and PDSS appreciated LA for this timely intervention and looked forward to a lasting working relationship. It was suggested that the GU, PDSS and LA work closely at the national level and explore the possibility of a WhatsApp platform for swift communication. Another next step is the meeting with women groups to share their experiences on GBV towards better servicing them. It was also suggested that other security agencies be invited for similar meetings in the future and there is a need for us to also bring religious leaders to forums like this. Participants emphasized the need for trainings and re-trainings on GBV for the GU and PDSS.

- **Agenda Item #13: Vote of thanks.**

The Deputy Inspector General of Police of Gender Unit gave the vote of thanks. He appreciated Lawyers Alert & PDSS for the meeting and initiative given the upsurge on issues of GBV which accompanied the COVID-19 pandemic and its attendant lockdown. The speaker stated that there is a need for urgent attention and actions towards addressing issues of SGBV in the society and this meeting is timely. In conclusion, the DIG stated that there is a need to increase the awareness of the officers and sharpen their skills to bring perpetrators to justice. He thanked everyone for coming and hope more interaction/meetings will be held on these issues towards advancing the rights of survivors of violence.

- **Agenda Item #14: Lunch/Close**

All participants had lunch and departed to their various destinations.