

ADVOCACY VISIT TO THE BENUE STATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY ON THE 23RD DAY OF AUGUST, 2018

The Head Office of Lawyers Alert in Makurdi, Benue State paid an advocacy visit to the Benue State Emergency Management Agency on the 23rd of August 2018. The 3-Person delegation was led by Mr. Lazarus M. Ahangba the Programs Manager, alongside Jerome Uneje Programs Officer and Linus Mbakaan the Administrative Officer.



Lawyers Alert Advocacy Visit to the Benue State Emergency Management Agency (BSEMA) took place on the 23rd day of August, 2018 at 10:00 am. The group was led by Mr Lazarus M. Ahangba, the Head Office Programs Manager. The group was received by the Executive Secretary of the Agency, *Mr Emmanuel Shior* and his team. Mr Lazarus Ahangba set the meeting in motion by introducing his team members and Lawyers Alert including its vision and mission. He went ahead to highlight the Organization' history, major achievements and current activities. He also spoke on the purpose of the visit which is to explore areas of mutual interest and partnership between the two Organizations. Furthermore, he said LA identifies BSEMA as a core stakeholder since it is saddled with the responsibility of managing Emergencies in the State. This responsibility, therefore, places them in direct contact with victims of disasters made up of mostly women and other vulnerable groups.



Since women and vulnerable groups happen to be LA' core target groups, BSEMA then becomes a Key Stakeholder and State Actor to collaborate with towards meeting the needs of women and other vulnerable groups. He went ahead to intimate the Agency of LA' intention to visit some of the Internally Displaced Persons' Camps with the view towards building their capacity on Sexual and Reproductive Health Right (SRHR) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV). In addition, Jerome Uneje mentioned the monitoring and documentation of rights violations LA carries out. She also mentioned the availability of the web-based tool developed by LA in 2016 which captures and analyses SRHR violations. She concluded by intimating the Agency of the intention of LA to also monitor and document SRHR violations in the camps. She further talked about LA' pro bono services and asked the Agency to take advantage of the same by sending in cases of violations.



The Executive Secretary, in his response, was quite pleased with the visit and thanked LA for it. He was appreciative of the gesture and assured LA of the Agency support and Cooperation. He gave LA the go-ahead with its intended intervention in the camps on the condition that she shares her finding with the Agency before publishing. This has become necessary because some groups will visit the camps and publish damning reports without consulting the Agency. He also wanted to know if LA' pro bono services include development workers whose rights are abused in the course of their services. He concluded by saying that he is a feminist and any intervention regarding women and their rights is highly acceptable to him. The meeting ended with a group photograph.



In conclusion, the meeting with Benue State Emergency Management Agency was fruitful, timely and most appropriate. It has opened up a channel of opportunities especially for women and other vulnerable groups focus intervention. We look forward to more of such interface with key State Actors in the State.