

ITEM 6 – UPR NIGERIA

NGO - BY CONECTAS DIREITOS HUMANOS/CONECTAS HUMAN RIGHTS

June 10th

Thank you Mr. President,

Conectas, working in partnership with SERAC – Social and Economic Rights Action Center, NGO based in Lagos, welcomes the report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review of Nigeria.

We strongly support the myriad recommendations of the working group, and agree that Nigeria, despite some progress in the last few years, still has a significant way to go to meet its international commitments in protecting and promoting human rights.

We remain concerned that the Government of Nigeria did not institute a broad-based and participative human rights framework that guarantees the fundamental rights of its citizens. Despite the government claims, in paragraph 6 of the report, that "the question is . . . not one of will, but [rather] of growing capacity," we believe it has failed in implementing many reforms that do not require significant financial resources or additional capacity.

For example, as reflected in recommendations paragraph 103-1 and 103-8, Nigeria has yet to ratify the optional protocols to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights and to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Moreover, at least five reports are overdue to international human rights monitoring bodies and Nigeria has not extended a standing invitation to the UN Special Procedures.

Distinguished Delegates,

We also commend the recommendations related to Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, as the one on health and women's rights, paragraphs 16, 18, 19, 27 and 28. We regret, however, that there was no recommendations related to the right to housing. Nigeria has failed to agree to a visit from the Special Rapporteur on Adequate Housing and the evictions in the country are often discriminatorily applied based on indigene status, and have caused widespread suffering, including loss of housing, livelihoods, social cohesion, and, in a few cases, life.

We regret that in its national report, the GoN devoted less than half a page to challenges and constraints faced by the country in improving the human rights situation on the ground. To take just one example, the government indicated that "the relative overcrowding in the Nigerian prison system is due to the large number of inmates awaiting trial," and that, consequently, the government is constructing several new prisons (paragraph 18). Unfortunately, the government's response does not address the root problem of the tremendous delays within the judiciary, which have led to the overcrowding and frustrated the swift execution of justice.

Finally, we urge the GoN to accept all the recommendations made during the UPR working group, stressing that, under international law, a country's domestic regime is no excuse for failure to implement its international obligations.

Thank you, Mr. President.