

REPORT OF A TWO DAY STAKEHOLDERS' INTERACTIVE FORUM ON MITIGATING VIOLENCE IN THE ZONE SIX ZONAL COMMAND OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE ORGANIZED BY COMMUNITY POLICING PARTNERS FOR JUSTICE, SECURITY AND DEMOCRATIC REFORMS –COMPPART IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KONRAD-ADENAUER-STIFTUNG.

Date: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> March, 2014

Venue: Entry Points Hotel and Suits, Atiku Abubakar Way Uyo, Akwa Ibom State

Time: 9 am each day.

Background:

The Police are state officials charged with the responsibility for law enforcement and order maintenance in society. To discharge these responsibilities, the police are empowered to use force, indeed violence. National constitutions and statutes, international conventions and rules; police departmental orders and professional ethics regulate the use of force or violence by the police and other security agencies. But despite these provisions, the police in Nigeria use force and violence beyond the limits permissible by law thus making the citizens to develop a psyche that adore and glorifies violence to the detriment of democratization.

Historically and universally, the police have been charged with numerous and diverse functions, as a result there are divergent views on the nature and significance of different police roles.

Consensus –functionalist perspective in social theory portrays state laws as products and expression of consensus among the disparate classes and social groups in society over norms governing their social, political and economic institutions. According to this perspective, the police being law enforcers are responsible for the enforcement of laws that promotes common interest of these different class and groups. For example, in democratic societies John Alderson, advocates that the police should:

“Contribute towards liberty, equality and fraternity... help reconcile freedom with security and to uphold the rule of law... facilitate human dignity through upholding and protecting human rights and pursuits of happiness... provide leadership and participation in dispelling criminogenic social conditions... contribute towards the creation or reinforcement of trust in communities...strengthen the security of persons and property and the feeling of security and persons...investigate, detect and activate the prosecution of offences, within the rule of law... facilitate the free passage and movement on highways and roads and on streets and avenues open to public passage....curb public disorders ... deal with major and minor crises and to help and advice those in distress where necessary activating other agencies”

Above is an idealist vision of police roles, which is characteristic of the consensus functionalist perspective of state and law as supra class, mediating and integrating forces for harmonious existence in society.

However this, the police in Nigeria is yet unable to enjoy the much needed cooperation and partnership it may desire in a democracy since the return to civil rule in 1999. Although they are the closest arm of law enforcement in Nigeria, their contact situation with the civil populace and or the community they are supposed to serve is always involuntary as it always happened during police enforcement of law or laws that have been breached by members of the public. This contact situation does not guaranteed an atmosphere that is devoid of egregious brutality that always was the characters of policing during the “jackboot” days of the military.

To this end, the resultant effect has continued to be finger pointing and buck-passing between the security forces and the civil populace thereby endangering in the process the needed trust and confidence associated with democratic policing.

It was in the light of the above that Community Policing Partners for Justice, Security and Democratic Reforms conceived the idea of bringing together stakeholders that are capable of influencing the security apparatuses for the better to sit and chat a common way forward on how best to mitigate different forms of violence within the society which can be controlled but has not been possible due lack of partnership between the Civil Populace and the different law enforcement and security agencies in Nigeria.

The project which was supported by the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung has participants drawn from states that make up the zone six Police zonal commands of the Nigeria Police with Headquarters at Calabar Cross River State- a focal state of the partner organization. The states are Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Rivers and Ebonyi states of Nigeria.

Participants to the interactive forum were drawn from among the following agencies within the four states of the zone. They are the Police, the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps, the Nigerian Immigration Service, the Nigerian Army, the Nigerian Navy, Traditional Rulers, National Youth Council of Nigeria, National Council for Women Society, Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria, National Union of Road Transport Workers, State Legislators, the Nigerian Supreme Council of Islamic Affairs, the Christian Association of Nigeria, Ati-Annang, Civil Society and Non-governmental Organizations and the media.

To ensure early participations of stakeholders outside of Akwa Ibom State, participants from the three other states were provided with accommodation at the event venue. In addition they were provided with dinner, breakfast as well as group tea and lunch breaks which were provided generally to accommodate other stakeholders within the host states that were not quartered in the hotel. Additionally transport re-imbursement were provided.

The event was facilitated the Executive Director of Community Policing Partners for Justice, Security and Democratic Reforms under the Chairmanship of Apostle Attah Bassey a one-time Director of Security and Intelligence of MAMSER which is now known as National Orientation Agency. Professor Etanibi Alemika of the Department of Political Science University of Jos serves as the Resource person for the two day programme. A total of fifty five participants selected from the aforementioned stakeholders within the four states were invited and expected. Two rapporteurs were engaged to ensure that all the comments, questions and contributions during the entire programmes were adequately recorded. The duo of Miss Chioma Onuegbu who is the Akwa Ibom State Correspondence of COMPASS Newspaper and Mr. Esin Esin Coordinator of Newsreel Akwa Ibom State Broadcasting Corporation AKBC Radio Service served as the Rapporteurs.

A communiqué committee was formed from among the participants and members of the committee were drawn from The Police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps, Federation of Muslim Women Association, Civil Liberties Organization and the Nigeria Bar Association. The chairperson of the committee was Barr. Clifford Thomas who is also the Akwa Ibom State Chairperson of the Civil Liberty Organization CLO.

The Assistant Inspector General of Police Zone six zonal commands was represented in the programme by the Assistant Commissioner of Police in charge of Criminal Investigation Department in the person of ACP Maye Wakili while the Commissioner of Police Akwa Ibom State –the host state was represented by the Police Public Relation Officer (PPRO) in the person of DSP. Etim Dickson. The Nigerian Army was ably represented by the Commanding Officer in-charge of Operation Thunder in the person of Major A. Usman while the Nigerian Navy was represented by Lt. A. Musa of NNS Jubilee Ikot Abasi. Other security organizations present during the event were the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corp from the States command that make up the zone as well as the Nigerian Immigration Services

At the end of the two day event, a Communiqué was drawn as a total reflection of the discussions and way forward during the programme.

## CHALLENGES

The programme could be termed to be successful but was not without challenges. The major challenge faced during the programme was in the preparatory stage during which the national fuel crisis looms this seriously affects the coordination of participants to the programme as fuel was sold at the cost of N200 (two hundred naira) per litre.

Another challenge face was influx of persons from the host states beyond the estimated and expected number of participants from the states. This was due to action and or inactions of some persons who called to confirm their participation but that they would be represented due to one engagement and or the other but they later showed up after their representatives might have already been accredited however this did not in any way affect the expected outcomes of the entire project largely due the capacity of the organizing organization Community Policing Partners for Justice, Security and Democratic

Reforms in handling project like this within its over ten years of its existence since establishment in 2002.

## LESSON LEARNT

One major lesson learnt during the program was that participants were very free to discuss the challenges on ground which was how to mitigate violence without fear so long as there is an assurance that nobody would be quoted by any media group and or agency. This was due to the assurance given to them during the address by the Executive Director of Community Policing Partners for Justice, Security and Democratic Reforms that all the persons in the house were all stakeholders and that nobody would be quoted by any media person. In his speech the ED of COMPPART admonished the stakeholders to allow their discussions to be free, robust and unhindered. The lesson drawn here was that people at-times are afraid to talk in a public place due the presence of members of the Press and in this case since they were assured that the media would only public the outcomes of the programme which was the Communiqué nobody was afraid to bare out his or her mind including members of the security forces.

## PROPOSALS EMANATING FROM THE PROJECT.

As contained in the communiqué that emanated from the programme the following were the proposals that came out of the project.

Participants demand for a continuity of the interactive Forum in a manner that it would be organized in a less elitist venue.

They also advocate for Organizers of the event to continue in working with State Legislators to that an enabling legislators to provide legislators at the state level for the implementation of community based policing.

They also called for establishment of a network at the community level to be known and called as Joint Action Committee on Safety JACOS. Etc. (please see the attach communiqué)

## ATTACHMENTS

1. Communiqué Issued at the end of the programme
2. Rapporteurs Report on the two day programmes
3. Newspaper Reports on the Programmes
4. Financial Report and Receipts to Back up
5. Presentations by Resource Persons and
6. Welcome Address by Executive Director of COMPPART.
7. Presentation by the Chairman on the Occasion
8. Group Photograph