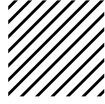


HOW CITIZENS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PUBLIC HEARING



TOOLKIT

MAY 2021



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WHAT IS A PUBLIC HEARING?

A public hearing is an open gathering of lawmakers, citizens, respective stakeholders, and government officials to discuss, debate and make proposals for a proposed law in the Legislature. It provides an opportunity to obtain public input on crucial legislative policy or proposed legislation that affects a wide range of citizens, such as a constitution review or the annual budget. It allows a group of citizens to communicate their interests to Legislators. A public hearing requires an open and mutually respectful dialogue between legislators, government officials, stakeholders and the citizens.



HOW TO ENGAGE THE CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT PROCESS



Pay attention to the issues that will be discussed at the public hearing.



Submit memorandum to the Committee.



Call the number displayed on the advert should there be an issue.



Organize meetings with people to collate views on the issues for the public hearing.



Mobilize friends to attend the public hearing.



Discuss the issues for the public hearing using different platforms.



Attend the Zonal public hearing and follow through with the process.



Pay attention to ensure that beyond the zonal hearing, the positions submitted are taken into consideration.



Know your elected representatives and reach out to them on the issues raised. You can get the contact details of your representative by visiting the National Assembly website www.nass.gov.ng or www.shineyoureye.org.



WHAT DOES CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN SUCH A PUBLIC HEARING MEAN?

In simple terms, the Constitution is the mother of all laws from which every other law of the country draws life. It is so important that no other law or policy can contradict the provisions of the Constitution. The Constitution is an embodiment of fundamental regulations and principles that establish the government in a nation and the governance structure. It defines the powers of government, citizens' fundamental rights, and rules for a nation's peaceful co-existence and stability. The Constitution defines the present and the future of a country. It is essential that, as citizens, we play a crucial role in determining the Constitution's provisions.



CAN CITIZENS MAKE INPUTS DURING A BILL PROCESS?

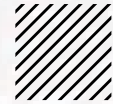
Yes! Citizens have the constitutional and legal right to make input during a Bill process, particularly at the public hearing, which is why the Zonal public hearing on the review of the Constitution is critical.

HOW CAN CITIZENS MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH PUBLIC HEARING?

Citizens can participate and make a tremendous difference during and after the public hearing. First, during the public hearing, a memorandum can be submitted highlighting the issues that need urgent attention and sections to be deleted. The Committee will allow oral presentation for those who indicate interest. Interested individuals, groups and organizations can send their Memorandum electronically.



WHAT ARE THE WAYS CITIZENS CAN PARTICIPATE IN A PUBLIC HEARING?



- Look for information in newspapers, television advert, radio adverts, or social media platforms to know when and where the public hearing is scheduled.
- Be informed on the Bill to be discussed and get a copy of the Bill.
- For the Constitution Review, identify the priority issues and draft your recommendations in line with the issues. You can also include an issue you believe should be addressed which has not been included..
- Prepare a memorandum detailing your view(s) and recommendations. Submit copies before the public hearing.
- Attend the public hearing and present your view.

CAN THE RESULTS OF ENGAGEMENT INFLUENCE ANYTHING?

Yes, through advocacy, lobbying, signing a petition, peaceful protest, and further engagements placing demands on the legislators.

MEMORANDUM TEMPLATE

This Memorandum Template is a guide to help you/your organization in drafting a memorandum.

Cover page

Name/Name of Organization
Address
Mobile Number/Email Address

Introduction

This should cover information about you/your group/your organization, why you/your group/your organization is interested in a Constitutional amendment, highlight the key issues and recommendations. You should also state why the proposed amendment is important. If you think the amendment is not important, you can also state it and explain why you believe it is not important.

Tip: Keep it simple and straight to the point.

Argument and Recommendation

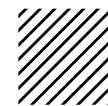
This section will contain you/your group/your organization's proposed amendments/arguments for/against a Bill or an issue. It should provide recommendations for consideration to amend or dismiss a clause or section or make a new introduction of a new clause or section in the Constitution or proposed bill.

Tip: Be sure to quote/mention the relevant sections to strengthen your argument.

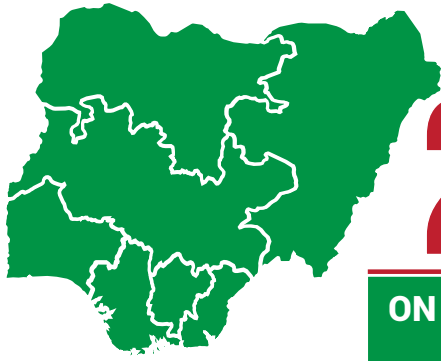
Conclusion

This section summarizes you/your group/your organization's position and why the relevant Committee should take your recommendations.

TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR PRESENTATION AT THE PUBLIC HEARING



- 1. Greetings:** Begin with acknowledging the legislators and other stakeholders (this can include government institutions represented, stakeholders, media and other citizens) present at the public hearing. However, if you cannot properly acknowledge the protocol, it is safe to just offer a general greeting and say: "allow me to stand on the already established protocol" or "allow me to stand on the existing protocol."
- 2. Introduce yourself and the organization/group.** State your name, your organization, and your designation. If you are speaking for yourself, your name will suffice.
- 3. Identify the issue briefly,** referencing the clauses, sections, or areas in your Memo. List your proposed recommendation(s). Hearings usually have a long list of organizations scheduled to speak. Keep your presentation short and simple. Sometimes, to ensure more participation, between 3-5mins may be allotted to each person speaking. KEEP IT SHORT. FOCUS ON YOUR MAJOR ARGUMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.
- 4. Closing:** Thank the legislators and the audience for listening. End with a call to action; an example is: "I hope this Committee will consider all the submissions contained in our memo and give Nigerians a Constitution that we can all be proud of."



2 DAYS ZONAL PUBLIC HEARING

ON

THE PROPOSED ALTERATION TO THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, 1999

Holding in two centres in each of the 6 (Six) Geo-political Zones as follows:

North-Central

Jos Centre

Plateau, Nasarawa and Benue
Mercy Biyah (0803 450 4093)

Minna Centre

Niger, Kwara, Kogi and FCT
Isiaka Adinoyi (0806 395 3074)

North-West

Kaduna Centre

Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa and Katsina
Nasiru Liman (0803 281 3266)

Sokoto Centre

Sokoto, Kebbi and Zamfara
Halima Abdulaziz (0803 703 7143)

South-South

Asaba Centre

Delta, Edo and Bayelsa
Eminike Uboh (0809 752 2601)

Port Harcourt Centre

Rivers, Cross River and Akwa-Ibom
Asandia Eke (0703 594 8080)

North-East

Bauchi Centre

Bauchi, Yobe and Borno
Zarah Mandara (0803 311 9928)

Gombe Centre

Gombe, Taraba and Adamawa
Hassan Ibrahim (0813 326 5934)

South-East

Owerri Centre

Imo and Abia
Uche U. Uche (0803 339 0280)

Enugu Centre

Enugu, Ebonyi and Anambra
Ebere Emeribe (0803 318 4759)

South-West

Lagos Centre

Lagos, Oyo and Ogun
Jokotola Falope (0816 094 7246)

Akure Centre

Ondo, Osun and Ekiti
Gbenga Okenla (0906 960 3308)

DATE:

Wednesday 26th May
& Thursday 27th May, 2021

TIME:

10:00am- 5:00pm
daily

ISSUES FOR THE PUBLIC HEARING

1. Gender Equity/Increased participation of Women and Vulnerable groups in governance
2. The Federal Structure in governance and Power Devolution
3. Local Government Administration/Local Government autonomy
4. Public Revenue, Fiscal Federalism and Revenue Allocation
5. Constitutional Provision for the Establishment of State Police
6. Judicial Reform - Adjudication of election and pre-election matters and other justice delivery concerns.
7. Electoral Reforms that will make INEC deliver transparent, credible, free and fair elections, Political parties, Independent candidature and election management
8. Socio-economic rights as contained in Chapter II of the Constitution.
9. Residency and indigeneship
10. Immunity – Removal of immunity in prima facie criminal cases
11. Time-line for Assent of Bills and Passage of Appropriation Bill
12. States and local government creation
13. Strengthening the independence of institutions like the office of the Accountant General of the Federation, Auditor General of the Federation and Office of the Attorney General of the Federation.
14. F.C.T. Administration
15. The Legislature and Legislative Bureaucracy
16. Constitutional Roles for Traditional Rulers
17. Any other issues that promote the unity and good governance of the Nigerian nation.

DATE: Wednesday 26th May
& Thursday 27th May, 2021

TIME: 10:00am- 5:00pm
daily



About #FixElectionsNG

#FixElectionsNG is an initiative of Yiaga Africa designed to inspire a citizen-movement demanding for electoral reforms and collaborative efforts around priority issues for specific reforms in the Electoral Process. This is pertinent in Nigeria's democratic space, particularly as it relates to entrenching a democratic culture that lends credence to effective democratic governance and development guaranteed by a vigorously reformed electoral process and active citizen's participation.

In recognizing the fundamental challenges with Nigeria's electoral process, Yiaga Africa's #FixElectionsNG will partner with relevant citizen groups, Civil Society Organisations (CSO's), EU-SDGN partners, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), National Assembly and other stakeholders in the process of reviewing the legal framework for elections in Nigeria. This is especially important with the introduction of bills to amend relevant sections of the Constitution and Electoral Act. Collaboration in this regard aims to address five key agenda namely; Election Management and Technology, Party Politics, Candidate Nomination and Campaign Finance, Electoral justice, Elections security and political inclusion of women, youth and persons living with disabilities. Achieving these objectives requires a mindset shift in conceptualizing electoral reforms, facilitating a consensus among key political actors and building on a consultative process to aggregate the needs and preferences of society.

Yiaga Africa's quest to Fix Elections in Nigeria revolves around three fundamental resolves: electoral reforms must not be limited to legal amendments as they extend to administrative and political reforms: the jurisprudential basis for reforms must also be established for wider public acceptance of proposed amendments and electoral reforms also need to take place outside key election periods if they are to be completed.

To ensure successful electoral reform, stakeholders and advocates must effectively manage the dilemmas of democratic reform which include political will on the part of decision-makers like the President, National Assembly and INEC; the timing of the reform process and lastly the perception that electoral amendments could potentially limit chances of future electoral victory for politicians who won elections based on existing electoral laws and hold the key to change the rules of the game. To manage these dilemmas, electoral reforms should be conceptualized as a democratic reform project that promotes the common good, political stability and national development.

It is against this background that the #FixElectionsNG project seeks to deepen Nigeria's electoral democracy, promote citizens participation and accountability. Yiaga Africa believes that a reformed electoral process will improve the quality of public leadership and governance at all levels and also increase public trust in democracy and democratic institutions. Under this project, Yiaga Africa will mobilize citizens using traditional and digital tools to build consensus on priority issues for electoral reform. This will be accompanied by an elaborate strategy to galvanize the support of legislators for the proposed amendments. In addition, political parties, professional organizations, traditional and religious groups and civil society organizations and women groups will be equipped with operational and political tools for effective electoral reform advocacy. Yiaga Africa will also mobilize support from the international community (including the EU parliament) through its support to democratic governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) to hold state actors especially the Executive and Legislature to account for their commitment to electoral reform and implementation of recommendations on electoral reform from the EU EOM, CSOs and INEC.

The project is designed and implemented by Yiaga Africa on behalf of the Nigerian people. Support for this project is provided by the European Union through its support to democratic governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Project.



3, Frantz Fanon Street, 17th Road, 4th Avenue, Gwarimpa Estate, Abuja.

