

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

(Mainstreaming Social Justice in Public Life)

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Press Release

Celebrating the World Social Justice Day 2024

As we celebrate the World Day of Social Justice 2024, Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) calls on all tiers of government in Nigeria to take concrete and targeted steps to mainstream social justice into all processes, mechanisms and instruments of governance.

The theme of the 2024 World Day of Social Justice – “Bridging Gaps, Building Alliances.” – indicates that there is no better time than now for the government to bridge the gap of increasing poverty, hunger and degraded living conditions occasioned by the rising cost of living. This is also the time to bridge the inequality gap against the background of the ostentatious and opulent lifestyles of top level public servants and elected officials. While the average Nigerian has been subjected to misery, the ruling class revel in a competition to mismanage and abuse public resources.

With increased resources available to the three tiers of government arising from the removal of fuel subsidy and floatation of the Naira, there was a public expectation under the Renewed Hope Agenda that these new resources would be invested for the public good in education, health, housing, roads and other infrastructure. Rather than investing the resources to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor and build a national alliance and consensus for development, the leaders have cornered all the resources for their personal gain as there is nothing to show for the increased resources available to the government. Promises of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu era had remained pipe dreams and none has been fulfilled.

The Abacha presidency era had the Petroleum Trust Fund while the Goodluck Jonathan era had SURE-P for the investment of fuel subsidy removal gains. The Bola Ahmed Tinubu presidency has NOTHING to show. Rather, we have witnessed a bloating of the cost of governance and frivolous expenditure.

The three arms of government have not demonstrated any sense of patriotism to bridge the gap of injustice, inequality and poverty in Nigeria. On the part of the Judiciary, we have witnessed the brazen attempt of senior judges to install/appoint their relations by all means as judges of the various courts. The executive and legislature have refused to cut down the cost of governance and re-channel the bulk of the public resources to cushion

the effects of poverty. It is alarming, that in the face of the current hardship plaguing the nation, the President still maintains a bloated retinue of staff with increased personnel cost, while the legislators went on a spending spree in the procurement of SUVs worth 160million each for its members. The legislature also scandalously increased its budget. The government refuses to pay the promised wage award of N35,000 to civil servants whereas the minimum wage still remains a paltry N30,000.

We call on the government to use this occasion to reflect on implementing life-saving measures that would bridge the gap of inequality experienced by 133million multi dimensionally poor Nigerians. It is not too late for the Federal Government to review and course correct on its stringent policies such as the removal of fuel subsidy and the floating of the naira which has resulted in run-away inflation and high cost of living.

Against the background of the foregoing, CSJ proffers the following recommendations:

- Bridge the gap of poverty by drastically reducing the cost of governance and redirect more public resources to meet the needs and welfare of the poor.
- The President should review the economic team and build alliances with competent citizens in all political affiliations who have proven capacity to proffer solutions that will reposition the economy.
- Social welfare programs should be created to benefit poor and vulnerable Nigerians who are currently grappling with the economic hardship plaguing the nation.
- Principal officers of the three arms of government should be rededicated to service delivery and effective implementation of mandates as well the tenets of social justice - the national interest above the self-interest.

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