



RC:31137

NIGERIAN GUILD OF EDITORS (NGE)

Secretariat: No. 24, Mojidi Street, off Toyin Street, Ikeja, Lagos.
Website: ngeditors.org.ng.
Email: ngeditorsnigeria@gmail.com

7th June, 2020.

Communiqué of the Standing Committee Meeting of the Nigerian Guild of Editors held via Zoom on Thursday, June 4, 2020, at Editors' House, Ikeja, Lagos State.

The Standing Committee acknowledges the dire state of the media, now made worse by the **COVID-19** pandemic and reaches the following conclusions:

There is an urgent and very compelling need for Nigerian government intervention to save the media from total collapse. The Guild specifically recommends the injection of funds by the federal government, not only to help keep media jobs but, also to ensure continued existence and operations of the various media houses, be they Print, Electronic or New Media.

Notes that using public funds to finance private sector operations to save them from bankruptcy and total eclipse is not new and has been adopted in other jurisdictions. It cites the instance of the United States government, which used public funds to save the U.S. automobile industry, banking and other ailing sectors from insolvency during the financial crisis of 2008 and currently with the \$2 trillion bailout for companies, amid the **COVID-19** scourge.

The Guild emphasises federal government financial intervention on the ground that media services are regarded as “essential services” and hence, deserve to be treated like other essential services that played key roles on the frontline of the fight against **COVID-19**.

The body of Editors avers that government intervention at this point is imperative, to ensure that the media continues to discharge its constitutional duty; stressing that survival of the media is sine qua non for the survival of democracy.

It supports the position of the Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria (BON) and the Newspaper Proprietors Association of Nigeria (NPAN), both of which have made strong appeals to the Federal Government of Nigeria for financial intervention.

MEMBERS President: Mustapha Isah,

Vice President (East): Samuel Egbala, Vice President (North): Hajia Sani,

General Secretary: Mary I. Atolagbe, Assistant General Secretary: Austeen Elewodalu, Treasurer: Victoria Ibanga, Social/Publicity Secretary: Ken Ugbechie,

STANDING COMMITTEE: Catherine Agbo, Eze Anaba, Freston Akpor, Gabriel Akinadewo, Hussein A. Bangshika, Ngwuoke A. Ngwuoke, Steve Nwosu.

The Guild notes that the **COVID-19** pandemic has exposed the poor state of infrastructure in the nation's health sector and urges governments at all levels, to apply the lessons learnt from the pandemic to fix the nation's healthcare delivery system.

In the same vein, the Guild frowns at the sudden spike in gender-based violence, especially rape and calls on law-enforcement agencies, the criminal justice system officials and other relevant bodies to consider gender-based violence as 'special offences' deserving of special attention, including expedited investigations and judicial process.

The distinguished professional body urges the Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, to set up a Special Investigation and Prosecution Team, trained and primed, to deal with gender-based issues.

The Guild notes that the Police play a major role in the course of investigation and prosecution of gender-based violence; therefore, the Police should be seen to be helpful and empathetic, not bullish and frustrating.

While expressing dismay at stigmatisation of victims of rape and allied crimes, it urges parents and guardians not to succumb to intimidation and societal scorn but to boldly speak out against such violence.

Recalling recent incidents of attack on media personnel, the Guild condemns the penchant of some State Governors to assume the role of judges in their own case, by arbitrarily harassing, assaulting and in some cases, detaining journalists. The Guild describes such predilection to impunity as unconstitutional, violation of individual rights and threat to the practice of journalism and freedom of speech.



Mustapha Isah
President
0802 334 3447



Mary Atolagbe
General Secretary
0803 335 2743