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REPORT FROM THE TECHNICAL REVIEW OF THE BENUE STATE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY BILL

Date: 13th May, 2025

Venue: Benue Metropolitan Hotel

Introduction

The Benue State Government, in collaboration with the Inclusive Friends Association (IFA) and the Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities (JONAPWD), convened a one-day technical review of the Benue State Persons with Disability Bill. The session, held on the 13th of May, 2025, at the Benue Metropolitan Hotel, aimed to critically assess the bill ahead of its final hearing and passage.

The meeting was chaired by Honorable Kennedy Angbo Agbogo, with the participation of our founder Barrister Joseph Mtemdoo Gbagyo, serving as a consultant. He joined other experts and stakeholders in deliberating on creating a more inclusive and equitable legal framework for persons with disabilities in Benue State.

Objectives of the Review

The primary objective of the technical review was to meticulously examine the bill to ensure that it becomes a functional and impactful legal document. The focus was on addressing the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Benue State, refining the legislative framework to make it practical, comprehensive, and beneficial for all.

Key Highlights

During this pivotal meeting, the panel meticulously reviewed the bill to ensure it becomes a functional and impactful document that addresses the unique challenges faced by persons with disabilities in Benue State. The goal was to fine-tune the legislative framework, making it more practical, comprehensive, and beneficial for all.

Grace Jerry, the Executive Director of the Inclusive Friends Association (IFA), emphasized the importance of the review, noting that persons with disabilities constitute a significant demographic of over 40 million in Nigeria. She stressed the need to strengthen the legal framework that promotes and protects the rights of persons with disabilities in Benue State.

Grace Jerry encouraged participants to engage openly, listen actively, and share constructively to ensure the bill reflects the collective input of stakeholders. She highlighted that the bill has already passed the first and second readings and requires thorough examination before its final passage.

The session's chairman, Hon. Kennedy Angbo Agbogo, representing the Otukpo/Akpa State Constituency, informed participants that the bill has undergone its first and second readings.

He noted that after the third reading, the bill would be forwarded to the Governor for assent. Hon. Agbogo highlighted the bill's potential to promote the values and rights of persons living with disabilities.

Our founder Barr. Joseph Mtemdoo Gbagyo, serving as a consultant, presented many insightful contributions to the bill's review. He outlined key provisions, including the Prohibition of discrimination through mandatory accessibility to public buildings, Creation of employment opportunities for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and establishment of institutional supports to enhance inclusivity.

Furthermore, he advocated for the establishment of a dedicated commission to oversee the law's implementation, monitor compliance, investigate complaints, and promote awareness once the bill is enacted.

Conclusion

Barr. Joseph Mtemdoo Gbagyo's involvement as a consultant demonstrates the Aza Gbagyo Foundation's commitment to advocating for the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The technical review marks a critical step towards finalizing a legislative framework that safeguards the interests of PWDs in Benue State.

The collaborative efforts of the Benue State Government, IFA, JONAPWD, and other stakeholders underscore the commitment to inclusivity, and the reviewed bill, once passed, will significantly enhance the quality of life for persons with disabilities in the state.

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