PRESS RELEASE

JULY 10TH 2020

YOUTH ALIVE FOUNDATION (YAF) APPLAUDS PASSAGE OF THE SEXUAL HARASSMENT BILL AND CALLS FOR SPEEDY PRESIDENTIAL ASSENT.

YAF salutes the effort of the 9th Senate, especially the Deputy Senate President (DSP) and the sponsor of the bill, Distinguished Senator Ovie Omo-Agege and other Civil Society Organizations who threw their weight behind the sexual harassment in tertiary institutions campaign. This consented effort birthed the passage of the bill on Tuesday 7th July 2020.

As an organization, our interest in the subject matter rests on the fact that far too long, sexual predators masquerading as educators have plied the corridors of Nigeria's higher institutions unchecked and will continue in the absence of appropriate laws to curtail them. Youths especially females have been the primary victims of this act.

YAF has been on the front-line of the campaign since 2018 where it launched the Sexual Harassment in Higher Education (SHE) campaign under the hashtag #Sex4Grades before the famous BBC Eye Witness investigative video from the University of Lagos was released. YAF conducted a national survey to ascertain the prevalent rate of sexual harassment in higher institutions in Nigeria. The survey was conducted with a sample of over 3000 students in 19 tertiary institutions across 6 states. Findings showed that 51.7% of female undergraduates had suffered one form of sexual violence or another in school.

In furtherance to the pursuit of the #SexualHarassmentBill, YAF convened a Policy Dialogue on "Anti-Sexual Harassment in Tertiary Education Bill" which had in attendance the DSP, Distinguished Senator Ovie Omo-Agege, the sponsor of the bill. Representatives from Committee of Vice Chancellors, Civil Society Organizations, Members of the press and the public were present to share their input and exposition towards the bill. This effort amongst others earned YAF nomination by the 9th Senate through the office of the DSP to coordinate CSOs for the public hearing and subsequent engagements on the bill.

As a youth organization that works with and for youths in Nigeria, it is on this premise that Youth Alive Foundation joins her voice with other CSOs on this coalition/network to call on President Muhammadu Buhari to give assent to the Anti-Sexual Harassment Bill to save Nigerian Youth and the Educational system.

The Bill is positioned to address gender discrimination and human rights abuse, jail terms for offenders. Youth Alive Foundation will not relent in contributing efforts with other civil society actors to ensure safety, accountability and increased youth participation in the fight against corruption in all ramifications as well as deepen their contribution to national development.

Signed:
Joseph Otu ,
Media and Communications Coordinator,
Youth Alive Foundation, Abuja, Nigeria
joseph@yafnet.org