

INSIDE THIS EDITION

Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform Partners TAF Africa to Host an Inclusive Tax Reform Town Hall for Persons with Disabilities

The Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, in collaboration with TAF Africa, convened an...

Cover Page

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Page 7

INSIDE TAF Africa

... Disability Inclusion Champion

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PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE ON FISCAL POLICY AND TAX REFORM PARTNERS TAF AFRICA TO HOST AN INCLUSIVE TAX REFORM TOWN HALL FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

In collaboration with TAF Africa, The Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms convened an inclusive tax reform town hall meeting, bringing together key stakeholders to discuss fiscal policies that promote the economic empowerment of persons with disabilities (PWDs) in



Nigeria. The event served as a platform to deliberate on policy recommendations that would enhance financial inclusivity and ease the economic burdens faced by PWDs.

The high-level engagement was attended by prominent figures, including Prof. Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda, Honourable Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction; Hon. (Dr.) Bashir Dawodu, Chairman of the House Committee on Disability Affairs; Mr. Taiwo Oyedele, Chairman of the Presidential

Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform; Amb. Jake Epelle, Founder/CEO of TAF Africa; Dr. Chike Okogwu, Founder of the Center for Ability Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CARE) Nigeria; Hon. Mohammed Abba Isa, Senior Special Assistant to the President on Special Needs and Equal Opportunities; renowned human rights lawyer Mr. Femi Falana (SAN); and Lois Auta, Founder of the Network of Women with Disabilities. Also present were leaders of disability clusters, media representatives, and civil

society organizations (CSOs).

In his goodwill message, the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Reduction, Prof. Nentawe Goshwe Yilwatda, outlined four critical tax reform proposals aimed at promoting economic relief and empowerment for PWDs:

- **Tax Relief for Persons with Disabilities:** Possibility of special tax deductions or exemptions for disability-related expenses such as medical care, assistive

devices, and accessibility modifications. The possibility of personal income tax relief for PWDs and their caregivers to reduce the financial strain of living with disabilities should be considered.

- **Corporate Incentives for Inclusive Employment:** Providing tax credits for businesses that employ a certain percentage of PWDs, ensuring economic empowerment through sustainable jobs. Encouraging businesses to invest in workplace accessibility by offering tax deductions for modifying office spaces

to accommodate employees with disabilities.

- **Reduced VAT on Essential Disability Aids and Services:**

Reviewing VAT policies to exempt or significantly reduce taxes on assistive technologies, mobility aids, and specialized healthcare services for PWDs.

- **Strengthening the Disability Fund through Tax Revenues:**

Earmarking a portion of tax revenues to directly support the National Disability Fund, ensuring sustainable financial backing for social protection programs.

Prof. Yilwatda emphasized that the successful implementation of these reforms would require a collective effort from stakeholders, urging the disability community to actively contribute their lived experiences to inform policy decisions. He further called on CSOs and organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs) to maintain their advocacy roles, to ensure that government commitments translate into actionable policies. The private sector was encouraged to adopt inclusive employment practices not as an act of charity but as a strategic





economic decision.

Chairman of the Presidential Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform Committee, Mr. Taiwo Oyedele, reaffirmed the committee's dedication to guaranteeing that Nigeria's tax policies are inclusive and accessible to all citizens. He emphasized the importance of a tax system that does not disproportionately burden economically disadvantaged groups, including persons with disabilities.

Mr. Oyedele highlighted measures already in place, such as tax exemption thresholds for small businesses, opportunities for online jobs, and tax exemptions for low-income earners. He emphasized that the committee's goal is to create a tax system that promotes economic equity and opportunity for all Nigerians.

Hon. (Dr.) Bashir Dawodu, Chairman of the House Committee on Disability Affairs, identified loopholes in existing fiscal policies, particularly the lack of tax credits and waivers for companies manufacturing assistive devices. He also advocated scholarships for special education teachers and the establishment of a disability trust fund to provide financial assistance to



PWDs. Amb. Jake Epelle, Founder/CEO of TAF Africa, expressed strong support for the proposed reforms and stressed the need for continued inclusion of PWDs in policy-making processes. He commended the government's proactive approach to ensuring that consultation platforms are accessible and responsive to the needs of PWDs.

"We are part of the society, so when important bills like tax come up we have to find our voices and make sure that we are included in the room. We are grateful

to have someone like the committee chairman who listens. The bill will help us in rejigging the economy and building the nation. You have the support of the PWD community," Epelle stated.

Renowned human rights lawyer, Mr. Femi Falana (SAN), advocated for a progressive tax system where high-income earners contribute more to social welfare rather than placing excessive financial burdens on vulnerable groups, including PWDs. He criticized the government's practice of granting tax exemptions to wealthy corporations

under free trade zones while subjecting vulnerable communities to multiple taxation.

"The process of reforming tax laws is rigorous, and it requires the backing of the Nigerian people. We must ensure that tax policies promote social equity rather than exacerbate economic disparities," Falana stated.

The town hall meeting concluded with a communique summarizing the key discussions and commitments made during the session. Stakeholders agreed on the need for continued engagements to refine and implement inclusive tax policies. The Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reform pledged to integrate the proposed measures into Nigeria's broader fiscal reform framework, to ensure that the tax system advances economic justice for PWDs.

EU-SDGN II PROGRAMME RETREAT IN LAGOS STATE



The sixteen organizations responsible for implementing the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EUSDGN) Programme, Phase II gathered for a retreat to assess progress, refine strategies, and reinforce their commitment to democratic governance in Nigeria. The retreat

served as a platform to evaluate successes, address challenges, and enhance coordination among partners, ensuring more effective implementation and impact.

As a key implementing partner, TAF Africa was fully represented with a 6-member delegation, actively contributing to

discussions aimed at strengthening democratic governance and promoting inclusive electoral and political participation in Nigeria.



INTRODUCING... MICdisABILITY: AMPLIFYING VOICES, EMPOWERING CHANGE!

TAF Africa MICdisABILITY PODCAST

At TAF Africa, we believe that every voice deserves to be heard, and every story has the power to inspire change. That's why we launched MICdisABILITY, a monthly podcast dedicated to reshaping narratives and sparking conversations around disability inclusion.

From accessibility and employment to education, relationships, healthcare, and policy implementation, MICdisABILITY digs into the real challenges and triumphs of persons with disabilities. Through compelling discussions, expert insights, and lived experiences, we uncover what it truly takes to create equal opportunities for all.

Why should you tune in?

- Gain firsthand insights from advocates, policymakers, and changemakers.
- Discover actionable solutions to drive inclusion in your community.
- Celebrate the achievements and contributions of persons with disabilities.

Whether you are a disability rights advocate, a policymaker, or someone eager to learn and make a difference, MICdisABILITY is your go-to platform for knowledge, advocacy, and real impact. Be part of the conversation! Subscribe now and join us in building a more inclusive world - one episode at a time.



COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE INCLUSIVE TAX REFORM TOWN HALL MEETING WITH DISABILITY COMMUNITY LEADERS ORGANIZED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL FISCAL POLICY AND TAX REFORMS COMMITTEE

Date: February 25, 2025

Time: 9 am

Location: Transcorp Hilton, Maitama, Abuja, Nigeria

This roundtable is pleased to present the communiqué from the Inclusive Tax Reform Town Hall Meeting held on February 25, 2025, at the Transcorp Hilton, Maitama, Abuja. The event brought together key stakeholders, including policymakers, tax experts, government officials, private sector representatives, and disability rights advocates, to discuss critical issues surrounding tax inclusivity and economic empowerment for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Nigeria.

The town hall meeting was convened in recognition of the urgent need for a tax policy framework that accommodates the specific needs of PWDs, ensuring their full integration into the economic landscape. The event featured panel discussions, expert presentations, and interactive sessions that provided a platform for stakeholders to identify challenges, propose policy solutions, and develop a roadmap for implementation.

Objectives for the Town Hall Meeting:

The discussions at the meeting were guided by the following key objectives:

- 1. Identifying Tax Challenges:** To examine the tax-related challenges faced by PWDs and develop targeted solutions.
- 2. Enhancing Policy Frameworks:** To explore inclusive tax policies that foster economic opportunities for PWDs.
- 3. Advocating Legislative Reforms:** To push for legal amendments that align Nigeria's tax policies with international disability rights standards.
- 4. Strengthening Stakeholder Collaboration:** To encourage synergy between the government, private sector, and civil society for effective policy implementation.

- 5. Establishing Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms:** To track the effectiveness of inclusive tax reforms and ensure continuous improvement.

Key Outcomes and Recommendations:

Following extensive deliberations, the town hall meeting reached the following conclusions and put forward key recommendations:

- 1. Tax Incentives for PWDs:** The government should introduce tax relief measures such as income tax exemptions, VAT reductions, and business incentives for entrepreneurs with disabilities.
- 2. Direct Tax Relief for PWDs:** A system should be established to provide direct tax relief to ease the financial burden on PWDs and enhance their economic participation.
- 3. Employment Inclusion in the Private Sector:** A mandatory employment threshold should be implemented for corporate organizations to promote workforce inclusion for PWDs.
- 4. Reduction of Taxes on Mobility Aids and Assistive Devices:** Taxes on essential mobility aids and assistive devices should be reduced or eliminated to improve accessibility.
- 5. Accessibility of Tax Processes:** Tax filing and payment processes should be made accessible through assistive technologies, sign language interpretation, and simplified documentation.
- 6. Legislative Reforms:** Existing tax laws should be reviewed to incorporate the rights and privileges of PWDs in line with international best practices and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD).
- 7. Provision of Resource Funds for PWDs:** A dedicated fund should be established to support entrepreneurship, skill development, and other economic activities for PWDs.
- 8. Implementation of a Social Backing Program:** A structured social support program should be introduced to provide financial assistance and welfare benefits for PWDs.
- 9. Capacity Building and Awareness Campaigns:** Nationwide campaigns should be launched to educate PWDs on their tax rights and responsibilities.
- 10. Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration:** Government agencies, civil society organizations, the private sector, and disability advocacy groups should work together to drive policy reforms and implementation.
- 11. Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanism:** A structured framework should be put in place

to track the implementation of inclusive tax reforms, with periodic assessments to measure progress and address gaps.

Commitment to Action:

The Inclusive Tax Reform Town Hall Meeting reaffirmed the collective commitment of all stakeholders to fostering a tax system that upholds the dignity, rights, and economic participation of PWDs. The recommendations from this communiqué will be submitted to relevant government authorities for further deliberation and implementation.

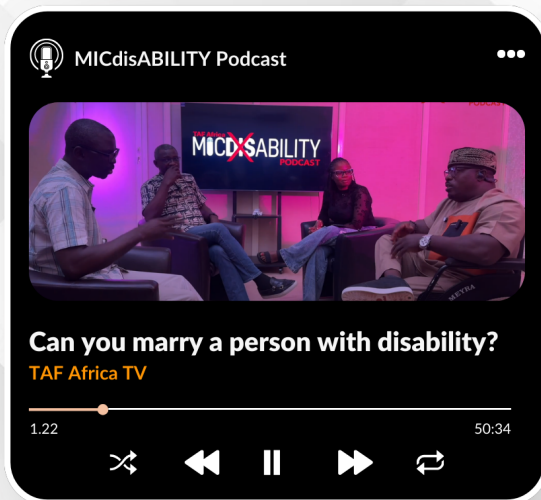
Signatories:

The following Cluster Heads of the Disability Community and Organizations signed the Communique:

- Joint National Association of Persons with Disability (JONAPWD)
- National Association for the Blind (NAB)
- Nigeria National Association for the Deaf (NNAD)
- National Association for Persons with Physical Disability (NAPPD)
- Albinism Association of Nigeria (AAN)
- Spinal Cord Injury Association of Nigeria (SCIAN)
- Amputee Coalition of Nigeria
- TAF Africa
- Center for Ability Rehabilitation and Empowerment (CARE) Nigeria
- Network of Women with Disabilities
- Qualitative Magazine
- Inclusive Friends Association
- Cedar seed foundation
- Hope Alive for Possibilities Initiative (HAPI)
- Potters Gallery Initiative
- Disability Right Advocacy Center (DRAC)

Issued on the 25th day of February 2025, in Abuja, Nigeria.

EPISODE 1 of MICDISABILITY PODCAST



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