COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF THE ONE-DAY ELECTABILITY CONFAB ORGANISED BY THE ALBINO FOUNDATION WITH SUPPORT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION, HELD AT THE ABUJA CONTINENTAL HOTEL (FORMERLY SHERATON HOTEL) ABUJA ON MONDAY THE 12TH OFDECEMBER 2022.

Preamble:

1. We the undersigned persons with disability contesting for elective office in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria attended the *Electability Confab* organized by The Albino Foundation (TAF) with support from the European Union (EU) which was put together to build the capacity of the persons with disabilities and enhance their chances of winning the elections. Additionally, the conversations held around the policy reforms, legislative changes, funding opportunities, and other initiatives were to enhance our understanding of the opportunities to improve our electability. The overarching aim of the event was to contribute to the improvement of democratic governance in Nigeria.

2. This communique is therefore issued as a joint statement by the undersigned persons with disabilities, representing different party platforms, and vying for various offices, to articulate our agreed agenda and action plan for enhancing the electability of persons with disabilities in Nigeria's political landscape.

3. Present at the event was the Canadian High Commissioner to Nigeria, the hon. minister for Women Affairs, the representative of the European Delegation to Nigeria, the Country Director, Action Aid, and convener Situation Room, the Executive Director, Act Initiative, the Chairman, and the members of the Board of trustees of The Albino Foundation (TAF), and others. We invite these distinguished personalities as well as members of the public to serve as our allies and support us infulfilling the herein stated.

General Comments/ Observations:

4. We the undersigned persons with disabilities contesting for elective office in 2023 hereby recognize that the right of persons with disabilities to contest for elective office is a fundamental right and cannot be under-emphasized.

5. We recognize that the largest minority group in the world, people with disabilities, continue to be underrepresented in parliaments and political parties, which further restricts our ability to actively participate in choices that influence their life.

6. We recognize that the poor representation of persons with disabilities on the ballot paper reduces the quality of attention accorded to the community of persons with disabilities and thus the limited scope of impact that can be brought to bear by our capacity and vision.

7. We recognize that the challenges of funding for the purchase of nomination forms, funding campaigns, and money politics, among other things, direly hamper the aspirations of persons with disabilities to vie for elective office. This is witnessed at the various levels of the campaign and electioneering process.

8. We recognize that the sheer discrimination of persons with disabilities places us in an unfair and disadvantaged position and exposes us to undue threats, maltreatment, unwholesome internal party politics, and generalized marginalization.
9. We recognize that the practice of godfatherism in current political trends will continue to pose a critical opposition to the enhancement of the participation of persons with disabilities in the electoral process unless critical steps are taken to nip the trend in the bud.

10. We recognize that several institutional, infrastructural, and attitudinal barriers still exist to the electability of persons with disability.

11. We contend that the group of people with disabilities constitutes a powerful bloc of capability and competence that are essential ingredients to make Nigeria's next political trajectory and succeeding phases robust and more developed.

12. We recognize and appreciate the effort of INEC and other institutional actors at providing a framework for disability inclusion that is responsive to the needs of the community of persons with disabilities.

13. We recognize the need for added effort to be made towards improving the electability of persons with disabilities vying for political office in Nigeria, and appreciate the work done by The Albino Foundation and the European Union towards achieving this objective.

Resolutions:

14. In light of points 4 – 13 above, we the undersigned persons with disabilities contesting for elective office in the 2023 general elections in Nigeria hereby resolve and reaffirm as follows:

    i. That we will continue to demonstrate courage and responsibility, take advantage of the opportunities and pursue our empowerment for mainstreaming persons with disabilities in politics at both the community and party levels.

    ii. We will demonstrate the moral and ethical fortitude to provide good leadership at every level we are privileged to serve.

    iii. That we will commit to building our emotional and intellectual capacities as much as is required for the building of efficient systems for a development, social cohesion, and progressive leadership for not just the community of persons with disabilities, but also our wider electoral constituencies.

    iv. That we will work with INEC, the SIECs, inter-security agencies, and other stakeholders towards ensuring the smooth conduct of the 2023 general elections and subsequent off-cycle elections.

v. That we will support each other, as much as is practicable in the circumstance and regardless of our party affiliations, to pursue our common aspirations that further the achievement of full and equitable representation of the community of persons with disabilities in Nigeria's political landscape.

vi. That the core values and competence we represent shall be beyond our identity as persons with disabilities but will include goodwill, community-based leadership, and hope for our various constituencies, regardless of the outcome and beyond the 2023 elections.

15. Finally, we recommend the establishment of a Trust Fund for persons with disabilities to cater to the needs borne out of our socio-economic status.

Endorsed this 12th day of December 2022

HON. ABDULLAHI AHMAD (ADC CANDIDATE, SHOA - ZAMFARA STATE)

HON. AHMED ABDULKAREEM ONIMISI (YPP CANDIDATE, SHOA – KOGI STATE)

HON EMMANUEL ADUKU (APC CANDIDATE, SHOA - KOGI STATE)

HON. OBASI CALISTUS MADUABUCHI (PRP CANDIDATE, SHOA – ENUGU STATE)

RILWAN MOHAMMED ABDULLAHI (YPP CANDIDATE, HOR – KADUNA STATE)

HON. YAKUBU NAZIR ABDULHAKEEM (YPP CANDIDATE, SHOA - KOGI STATE)

HON. LAWAL ABOLAJI (NRM CANDIDATE, HOR - OGUN STATE)

HON. MRS. NIFEMI AREGBESOLA (PRP CANDIDATE, HOR –ONDO STATE)

HON. WOGU CHINOYEREM (NRM CANDIDATE, SENATE – ABIA STATE)