



CATHOLIC CHURCH EDUCATORS ADVOCATE ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL ABUSE OF MINORS AND VULNERABLE PERSONS

Nov 30, 2018

ABUJA, NIGERIA -

Stakeholders of Catholic Education in Nigeria have advocated zero tolerance for sexual abuse of minors and harassment of vulnerable people in the society, describing such actions as infringement on the fundamental rights of the victims.

This admonition was contained in the resolutions adopted by participants at the third National Catholic Education Summit, held recently at the CSN Resource Centre, Durumi, Abuja. The theme of the summit was: *Catholic Education in Nigeria: Challenges of Child Protection and Human Sexuality*. The summit was attended some members of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), Catholic educators, proprietors, principals and teachers of Catholic schools, and other stake holders of the sector , including government officials

In the resolution endorsed by the CBCN Education Committee Chairman, Most Rev. Peter

Odetoyinbo and Secretary, Rev. Fr. Bernard Asogo; the participants called for full wrath of the law on the perpetrators of these evil acts, irrespective of their status or position in the society. They reiterated the goal of Catholic education which is part of the life of the Church saying: “The provision of qualitative and holistic education for the average Nigerian child irrespective of religious or ethnic differences, is the primary goal of Catholic Education”

They added: “This combines intellectual, physical, moral, spiritual and cultural formation that is premised on Christian religious principles and the social teachings of the Church.” The participants discussed extensively the challenges facing the education sector in the country, regretting that many children in Nigeria have no access to qualitative education.

They further stated; “There are also children who, because of terrorists attacks, are not able to go to school. These include children whose schools have been destroyed; the many children who have lost their lives while going to school, as well as the Chibok girls and many others who are still being held against their will.”

Other areas of interest which the participants deliberated on and made useful recommendations include: partnership of Church with Government in the education sector; need for the return of schools taken over by Government in the 70s to their original owners with adequate compensation and the challenges of child protection and

human sexuality. They reiterated their commitment to the protection of children and vulnerable persons entrusted to their care.

They noted the increase in the number of private schools in the country, pointing out that the private sector is taking over the provision of qualitative education from the public sector and therefore urged the Federal Government to give subsidy to this sector to enable them discharge their duties effectively and accommodate more children of school age in their institutions.

While warning against the politicization of the education sector, the participants also advocated the return of missions' schools with adequate compensation. They commended the State Governments that have taken this noble steps in the interest of better delivery and development. They also emphasized the need for the return of religious education in all institutions of learning and assured of continued improvement of standard in Catholic schools, in spite of challenges encountered.

The summit was attended by about 700 delegates from different parts of the country, including the CBCN President, Archbishop Augustine Obiora Akubeze, Archbishops Anthony J.V Obinna of Owerri, Matthew Ndagoso of Kaduna, and Bishops: Hilary Okeke of Nnewi; Gabriel Dunia of Auchi; Peter Kayode Odetoyinbo of Abeokuta and CBCN Education Committee Chairman; and Most Rev. Anselm Umoren, the Auxiliary Bishop of

Abuja.