

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
25th session (3-28 March 2014)
Agenda Item 6: Consideration of UPR reports/Nigeria



Thank you, Mr. President.

The Association for Progressive Communications speaks on behalf of a coalition of national and international civil society organisations concerned with the protection of human rights in Nigeria.

We welcome Nigeria's acceptance of recommendations to fully implement CEDAW, improve policies and practices to combat violence against women and children¹, to address gender and regional disparities regarding the right to education² and to guarantee a favorable climate for the activities of human rights defenders, journalists and other actors in civil society. We note that Nigeria accepted similar recommendations during its 2009 review, with no significant progress made.

We request that the government of Nigeria consider the impact of new technologies in implementing these recommendations, to include access to the internet in its strategies to address disparities in the right to education, and to work with civil society to extend laws proposed to protect the rights of women, children and other marginalised groups to include online protections.

In accordance with the Human Rights Council resolution 20/8, supported by Nigeria, the same rights that human rights defenders, journalists and other civil society actors have offline "must also be protected online, in particular freedom of expression, which is applicable regardless of frontiers and through any media of one's choice"³. We appeal to the State of Nigeria, to uphold this resolution, and we recommend that the government discontinue any interference online through internet intermediaries, and that efforts to conduct internet surveillance in the country be halted.

We call for a national dialogue on internet intermediary liability and copyright law reform. The State needs to give assurance that termination of internet access will no longer be a penalty for violating intellectual property laws. Constitutional protections should be established stating clearly that freedom of expression in Nigeria includes internet-related expression, in accordance with the Human Rights Council Resolution 20/8.

We are deeply concerned by the rejection of a number of important recommendations by Nigeria, including recommendations to "*ensure the universality of human rights, safeguarding and protecting human rights of all Nigerians irrespective of gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity or religious affiliation*", and to establish policies and procedures that protect the human rights and security for all Nigerians including LGBT persons, their families and associates⁴.

We urge the government of Nigeria to reconsider policies and practices that are in clear violation of international human rights standards and commitments.

Thank you Mr President.

1 Report of the Working Group on the UPR of Nigeria, A/HRC/25/6 Paras 135.46; 135.97; 135.98; 135.99
2 Ibid Para 135.149, 135.159
3 <http://geneva.usmission.gov/2012/07/05/Internet-resolution/>
4 Report of the Working Group on the UPR of Nigeria, A/HRC/25/6 Paras 138.1-138.10