



Federal Ministry of Justice

FG PLANS TO IMPLEMENT AMNESTY AND DECONGESTION FOR JUVENILE INMATES

The Federal Government has disclosed its readiness to commence the 2nd Phase of the Custodial Decongestion which will focus on Implementation of Amnesty and Decongestion for juveniles deprived of their liberty during Covid- 19 Pandemic and beyond. This was made known by the Honourable Attorney -General of the Federation (HAGF) and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN at the Virtual Interactive Session with Attorneys-General and Heads of Courts of the 36 States and FCT, organised by the Presidential Committee on Correctional Service Reform and Decongestion (PCCSRD), on Tuesday September, 2020 in Abuja.

The HAGF in his keynote address said, the 2nd Phase would be very



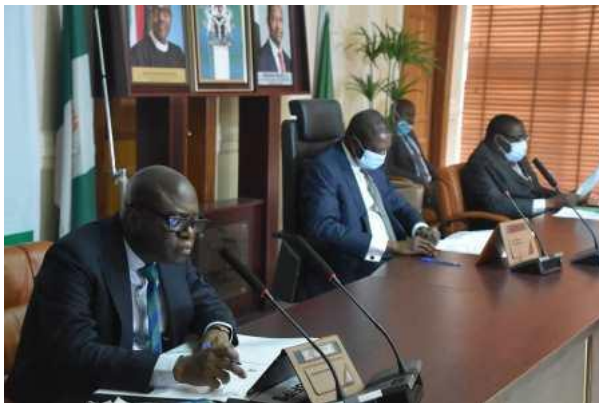
HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION/MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ABUBAKAR MALAMI SAN, GIVING HIS KEYNOTE ADDRESS AT THE VIRTUAL INTERACTIVE SESSION OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY - GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION WITH ATTORNEYS - GENERAL AND HEADS OF COURTS OF THE 36 STATES AND FCT HELD TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT THE MINISTER CONFERENCE ROOM ABUJA.

strategic in achieving Juveniles Justice Reform and attainment of Goal 16 of the Sustainable Development Goals which it aims to promote peaceful and inclusive societies sustainable development, provide justice for all, build effective accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

“Considering the vulnerability and susceptibility of juveniles and children deprived of liberty in locked facilities, correctional centres borstal homes, including those detained with their parents or caregivers, and those detained on national security grounds to contracting the Coronavirus, due to the congested environment they are detained in”, he explained.

Enumerating the importance of the intervention exercise Malami said, it is focus on juveniles due to its implementation according to Correctional Service Act, 2019 especially section 35, which stipulates provisions on juvenile offenders. The intervention will also serve as an impetus to the adoption and implementation of the United Nations convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) and a Child’s Right Act 2003 that promotes the principle of detention as a last result and the use of diversionary alternatives for children in conflicts with the law. Parts of the aims of the Virtual interactive exercise according to Malami, included, promoting Juvenile justice standards in Nigeria, to minimise violence against children and to support those currently in the custodian settings to reclaim their child wood through protective and child- sensitive justice system.

He expected the participants at the event to consider the following



L-R HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION/MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ABUBAKAR MALAMI SAN, MIDDLE SOLICITOR GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION/PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, DAYO APATA,SAN, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CHIEF JUDGE FCT AND CHAIRMAN, PRESIDENTIAL COMMITTEE ON CORRECTIONAL SERVICE REFORM & DECONGESTION, HON. JUSTICE SALISU GARBA AT THE VIRTUAL INTERACTIVE SESSION OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY - GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION WITH ATTORNEYS - GENERAL AND HEADS OF COURTS OF THE 36 STATES AND FCT HELD TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT THE MINISTER CONFERENCE ROOM ABUJA.

objectives; how to use arrest, detention and imprisonment as a measure of last result; how to treat every child deprived of liberty with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person; how to provide every child deprived of his/her liberty with prompt access to specialised legal and appropriate assistance and also how to prioritizes the release of children who can safely return to their family and community. He commended the Attorneys -

General of Kogi, Kaduna, Edo, Ebonyi, Anambra, Delta and Zamfara for submitting their juveniles list while encouraging other States to follow suit.

The Chief Judge of the FCT High Court, Hon. Justice Ishaq Bello represented by Hon. Justice Salisu Garba, in his Welcome address made reference to the implementation of the Nigeria Correctional Service Act, 2019 where one of the key recommendations was the development and

issuance of a Sentencing Guildlines and practise direction on Non-custodial measure beginning with the FCT. Bello said “ I am glad to inform you all that, the said Sentencing Guildlines will be signed by me and issued in October, 2020 as the Federal Capital Territory Court (Custodial and Non-Custodial Sentencing) direction, 2020. He believed that the said practice direction would go a long way in addressing some of the concerns of juvenile inmate, which is align with the international standard, as contained in the UN Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC).



HONOURABLE ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION/MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ABUBAKAR MALAMI SAN, SOLICITOR GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION/PERMANENT SECRETARY, FEDERAL MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, DAYO APATA, SAN, IN A GROUP PHOTOGRAPH WITH SOME PARTICIPANTS AT THE VIRTUAL INTERACTIVE SESSION OF THE HONOURABLE ATTORNEY - GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION WITH ATTORNEYS - GENERAL AND HEADS OF COURTS OF THE 36 STATES AND FCT HELD TUESDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER, 2020 AT THE MINISTER CONFERENCE ROOM ABUJA.

As part of the expectations, Bello said, all Children eligible to be released will be reunited with their parents/ caregivers and Children without a primary Caregiver will be identified and referred for special intervention for post released life through social workers. He called on the Government and relevant Stakeholders to consider building Children and young person’s home where some of these children who for no fault of theirs come into confrontation with the law, may be kept pending the final decision on the matter.

Hon. Chief Judge of Lagos State, Hon. Justice Kazeem O. Alogba, during the Panel discussions said, parental failure is the major cause of increase juvenile delinquency. According to him, after the amnesty granted to the children, there is the need for government to support them financially, one year supervision after release, vocational programmes, which will be of help after being re-integrated back to the society.

In his vote of thanks, the Solicitor-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Dayo Apata SAN, commended the efforts of State Governments in addressing the welfare of juveniles in detention centres in various states. He thanked the HAGF for dogged and unflinching efforts to address the situation and welfare of juveniles in detention centres and also ensure that circumstances associated with juveniles are indeed adequately addressed.

Also at the event were Representatives of the Minister of Women Affairs, Director (Child Development) Mrs Jumai Mohammed, Inspector General of Police, Mohammed Adamu, Chief Judges of State/Heads of Court, Country Representatives, UNODC Mohammed Azim Arshad, UNICEF, Peter Hawkins, Executive Secretary NHRC, Anthony Ojukwu and DG Nigeria Law School, Prof. ISA Hayatu Chiroma, SAN, among others.