

# SECRETARY GENERAL'S REPORT

## 1.0 COSROPIN ACTIVITIES

### 2015/2016 ACTIVITIES

The idea of a Coalition started on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2015 being the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Graceful Ageing Fellowship (GRAF), which brought together many organizations that were associated with Older Persons, where it was agreed that working alone, Organizations were unable to achieve much with Government on issues of Ageing. However as a Coalition, Government would definitely listen to one voice on issues pertaining to Ageing. At the meeting of CSOs, NGOs, FBOs and various Associations of retired people, held on 27<sup>th</sup> of November 2015 at GRAF Hall, the name Coalition of Societies for the Rights of Older Persons in Nigeria (COSROPIN) was adopted. The Communiqué that was developed on the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2015, but was further revised, was also adopted. At an election held on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2015, with Dr. Emem Omokaro as the Returning Officer, the following Executive Officers emerged:

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1. President   | Sen. Eze Ajoku                 |
| 2. Vice President  | Sen. (Gen.) John Shagaya (rtd) |
| 3. Secretary General   | Engr. May Ikokwu               |
| 4. Assist. Secretary General   | Mrs. Anne Timni-Aku            |
| 5. Public Relations Officer (PRO)  | Sir Peter Aliu                 |
| 6. Assist. PRO   | AFL Olu Sobo                   |
| 7. Financial Secretary   | Barr. (Col.) Paul Omeruo (Rtd) |
| 8. Treasurer   | AIG Steve Aiyewunmi (Rtd)      |
| 9. Legal Adviser   | Z.O. Senbanjo, Esq.            |
| 10. Welfare Officer  | Arc. Victoria Onu              |
| 11. Ex-Officio:  |                                |
| • Rep. of Assoc. of Para Military Officers (NARPO), Dr. G.O. Oloyode                                   |                                |
| • Rep. of Assoc. of Retired Federal Senior Public Officers of Nig. (ARFESPON) Chief F. Ndeokwelu (OON) |                                |
| • Rep. of SCANON, R/Adm. Chris Ehanmo (Rtd)  |                                |
| • Rep. of Assoc. of Retired Federal Perm Secs, Chief Jeff Nwosu  |                                |

## **Board of Trustees Appointments**

The House further appointed the following persons as BOT members:

- |                                   |                                    |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sen. (Gen.) John Shagaya (Rtd) | Chairman                           |
| 2. Dr. Tim Menakaya               | Member                             |
| 3. Prof. Tunde Adeniran           | Member                             |
| 4. Dr. Emem Omokaro               | Member                             |
| 5. Sen. Eze Ajoku                 | Member                             |
| 6. Alh Yusufu Abdullahi           | Member (appointed at a later date) |

A Registration Committee was set up to ensure immediate registration of the Coalition with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).

## **COSROPIN Motto**

During subsequent meetings the house adopted a motto – Protecting the Dignity of Ageing.

## **COSROPIN Logo**

The COSROPIN Logo was designed by Arc. Vic Onu.

## **LETTERHEAD**

COSROPIN now having a Motto and Logo, produced a Letterhead.

In order to fulfil the obligations for registration with CAC, a sub-committee was set up to draft the COSROPIN Constitution. Obtaining clearance from CAC with the name choice that included “Coalition” was very difficult and finally a Lawyer was engaged, at a fee, to solve the problem. The Coalition was finally issued a Certificate of Registration with RC No. CAC/IT/NO 90454 on 6<sup>th</sup> of September 2016.

In 2016, a Bill’s Committee was set up to develop the Older Persons’ Rights Bill. This involved reviewing Older Persons’ Acts from several countries where such Acts were in place, in order to formulate an Act adaptable to the Nigerian condition and lifestyle.

In order to create awareness and to put the business of Ageing on the front burner, COSROPIN held a Press Conference, produced a handbill on Respect for the Elderly and also did several Radio interviews to enlighten the public on the plight of Older Persons in the Society.

During the year, COSROPIN attended Public Hearings in support of an Act for a Commission for Senior Citizens (which later on passage in 2017 became the National Senior Citizens' Centre).

## **2017 Activities**

- The Older Persons' Rights Bill was developed by the Bills Committee and was polished up by professional Bill writers to be presented as a Presidential Bill.
- COSROPIN collaborated with a member NGO, I-Care Foundation, on UN Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2017.
- Several Press Conferences were held and several Radio and TV interviews were undertaken.

## **2018 Activities**

- Lobbying for the Older Persons' Bill commenced with visits to key Federal Executives of the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The Bill was handed over to the Senate President on 29 March 2018.
- COSROPIN collaborated with I-Care in partnership with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) on UN Elder Abuse Awareness Day on June 15, 2018.
- Former Head of State, Dr. (Gen) Yakubu Gowon, (Rtd) GCFR became the Patron of COSROPIN.
- The first National Conference was organized in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development on 06 December 2018 with the theme: Stepping Into The Future; The Nigeria Perspective on Ageing, Care-giving, Rights and Privileges of Older Persons in Nigeria. The Conference was attended by our Patron Dr. (Gen.) Yakubu Gowon (Rtd) GCFR with Prof. Ibrahim Gambari as the Keynote Speaker. A huge turnout of people was recorded.
- A Press Conference was held and several Radio and TV interviews were granted.
- Alh Aliyu Abdullahi was appointed Vice President in replacement of the seat vacated by the late Sen. (Gen.) John Shagaya (Rtd).

### **COSROPIN/FGN and others Partnerships:**

- COSROPIN participated in Stakeholders meeting organized by Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development on 6<sup>th</sup> Of April 2018
- COSROPIN participated at the UN meeting with Stakeholders on the National Policy on Ageing on 26 April 2018, in Abuja.
- COSROPIN collaborated with the Federal Ministry of Women Affairs to review the National Policy on Ageing.
- COSROPIN participated in the Stakeholders Group on Ageing (SGA) Africa on 05 November 2018 in Abuja.

## 2019 Activities

- Lobbying for the Older Persons' Bill was stalled because of the National elections and the members of National Assembly were busy pursuing their campaigns not knowing whether they would be returned to the House or not.
- COSROPIN expanded outside Abuja through the creation of Zonal and State Coordinators in SE, SW and NC and State Coordinators in Rivers and Cross River States.
- COSROPIN arranged a Press Conference for UN World Elder Abuse Awareness Day and encouraged all member NGOs to mark the day anytime convenient in the month of June.
- COSROPIN continued the campaign on the Rights of Older Persons through Radio and TV interviews.
- COSROPIN participated actively in the Presidency Sustainable Dev. Goals, with COSROPIN President emerging the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice Chairman of Nigerian CSOs - SDG Strategy group.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> National Conference was held on 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2019 with the theme: Journey to Age Equality: The Society and the Older Persons: The Nigerian Perspective. The Chairman of the Conference Aare Afe Babalola was ably represented by Chief Adegboyega Awomolo, SAN, who was subsequently approved and appointed Special Legal Adviser.
- COSROPIN resumed lobbying for the Bill, which would no longer be a Presidential Bill but would pass through the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly Senate and House of Representatives. The Bill was resubmitted on 13<sup>th</sup> of October 2020 through Sen. Ezenwa Onyewuchi of Imo East Senatorial Zone.
- COSROPIN addressed House members of ECOWAS Parliament on the Older Persons' Bill, where the idea was received favorably.
- COSROPIN became a member of the Global HelpAge, while member NGOs joined international platforms like GAROP, Common Age, SGA Africa, Dementia Association etc.

### **FGN/COSROPIN Partnerships** in 2019 included:

- **Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development:** COSROPIN was invited to the inauguration of the Technical Working Group (TWG) on Ageing on 17 September 2019.
- **Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development:** COSROPIN played a major part in reviewing the National Policy on Ageing as part of the TWG.

## 2020 Activities

The COVID-19 pandemic froze activities in many sectors and shut down the economy of nations and companies. Older Persons were the most vulnerable because many of them had underlying ailments that reduced their chances of survival with this virus. COSROPIN capitalized on this state to expand her activities.

- COSROPIN produced radio jingles in three Nigerian languages that were broadcast on Darling FM Radio Station (belonging to COSROPIN President) and NTA News 24.
- COSROPIN produced short videos on Hand washing and wearing Face Masks in order to prevent exposure to COVID-19 that were shown on NTA News 24.
- COSROPIN produced Face Masks, which were distributed at NOA and to NTA News 24 for protection of newsmen against the virus.
- COSROPIN at Abuja and SW Zone undertook Credit Top-up for Older Persons in order to prevent loneliness during COVID-19 lockdown.
- COSROPIN collected COVID-19 Palliatives, supplied by Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD), and distributed door - to - door to One hundred recipients in Abuja.
- COSROPIN organized an **International Webinar** on 01 October 2020 titled: Geriatrics Current Demography and Available Services in Nigeria.
- COSROPIN participated in Raypower FM Nigeria @ 60: The Aging Giant and her Geriatrics, on October 1, 2020.
- COSROPIN participated in **International Webinar** organized by HelpAge, Kenya on 02 October 2020 titled:- PANDEMICS: Do they change how we address Age and Ageing?
- COSROPIN organized a **One-day Webinar** on 13 November 2020, titled: The Carer and Diabetes.

### **Some of Government/COSROPIN Partnerships in 2020 included:**

- **National Orientation Agency (NOA):** COSROPIN went into an MOU with NOA, on 1<sup>st</sup> of May 2020, for wide coverage of awareness about COVID-19.
- **National Orientation Agency (NOA):** COSROPIN and NOA organized COVID-19 Awareness Seminars for three groups, namely: Religious (FBOs) and Traditional Chiefs; Market Leaders and Commercial vehicle drivers.
- **Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD):** The Ministry with COSROPIN flagged off the first distribution of COVID-19 Palliatives to Older Persons at Karshi, Nasarawa State, after COSROPIN had convinced the Hon. Minister that Older Persons could not go and queue up at a stadium with younger people in order to collect palliatives.

- **Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD):** COSROPIN participated in planning and participated in FMHADMSD COVID-19 lecture for UN Older Persons’ Day and the Grand Finale commemoration of 2020 UN International Day of Older Persons, on 20 October 2020, with the Theme: Pandemics: Do they change how we address Age and Ageing?
  - **Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD):** COSROPIN brought to the attention of the Hon. Minister FMHADMSD the Act that established the National Senior Citizens’ Centre and requested for its implementation.
  - **National Assembly (NASS):** COSROPIN submitted recommendations to the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendment – Mainstreaming the Rights and Privileges of Older Persons in the Nigerian Constitution.
  - **National Population Commission:** COSROPIN was part of the Technical Working Group to review population changing demographics caused movement of people across the nation, as it would affect the proposed national census.
  - **National Population Commission:** COSROPIN was part of Technical Working Group in preparation for Census on 03 and 04 November 2020.
  - **Federal Ministry of Finance and Budget and National Planning:** COSROPIN was part of the Technical Working Committee to review the National Social Security Protection Policy (NSPP) designed to show the commitment of the FGN to the effective mobilization and effective utilization of national resources to improve the quality of lives of its citizens, using a bottom-up approach.
  - **Inter-Sectoral Meeting:** COSROPIN was invited on strengthening Stakeholders’ engagement on the Environmental dimension of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria (23 September 2020).
  - **Federal Ministry of Health – Nigeria Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, Adolescent and Elderly health Plus Nutrition (RMNCAEH+N):** Invitation to two-day Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Coordination Platform launch. (12 and 13 October 2020).
  - **Federal Ministry of Health:** COSROPIN was made a member of Ministerial Committee, for The Provision of Health Insurance For Retirees And Elderly in Nigeria.
  - **MDAs –** On provision of Healthcare, Geriatric Wards/Hospitals, Social Security and Safety Nets for Older Persons.
  - **United Nations:** In February 2020, COSROPIN attended the UN-sponsored 7 African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development, in Zimbabwe.
- Other events that took place in 2020 were:**
- The **Appointment** Prof. Tunde Adeniran as Chairman BOT to fill the vacancy created by the death of Sen. (Gen.) John Shagaya (Rtd).

- **COSROPIN Secretariat** was enhanced through the engagement of ‘Experienced’ staff to man the Secretariat, with the main objective being to source funds.
- **Board of Trustees** member Alh Yusufu Abdullahi resigned his appointment because of his job schedule that prevented him from being active on the COSROPIN Board.
- SS Zone became active through the appointment of a Zonal Coordinator.
- The Older Persons’ Bill scaled through 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Readings at the House of Senate.
- Weekly interviews covered by News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) got wide publicity.

## 2021 Activities

1. Introduction of Health Webinars:
  - ❖ On 29 Jan 2021 a webinar was organized on Health with the topics by four erudite persons:
    - The place of Liquid Food in Boosting Immunity
    - The place of Water, Vitamins, Oxygen and Sunshine
    - The benefits of Physical Activities
    - The role of Healthy Eating
  - ❖ On 27 March 2021 organized a Webinar: Care-givers’ Hangout.
  - ❖ On 28 May 2021 organized a Webinar: Gains & Challenges of Elderly Care – North- Central in Focus.
  - ❖ On 14 August 2021 a Health Watch Webinar titled: All You should know about Prostate Cancer and Cervical.
2. The Older Persons’ Bill passed the 3<sup>rd</sup> and final Reading through the Senate and moved to the House of Representatives.
3. COSROPIN made presentation to Anglican Church of Nigeria Synod (about 400 Bishops in attendance) on Older Persons’ Bill and the benefits; a similar presentation was also made at Abuja Central Mosque.
4. COSROPIN launched the Senior Citizens’ Games attended by the Rep of Min of Sports and Youth Dev with a football match between COSROPIN and Area 8 All Stars football team and COSROPIN won by 6 goals to 3.
5. COSROPIN signed an MOU with International Federation on Aging – Nigeria (IFA-N)
6. COSROPIN introduced Elders’ Parliament on 19 August 2021 at a meeting that was attended by the Secretary to the Federal Government of Nigeria, Mr. Boss Mustafa, represented by the Director, SGOF.
7. Dr. Emem Omokaro was appointed the Director General while Revd. Arc. Vic Onu was appointed a Board member of the newly established National Senior Citizens’ Centre.

8. Two-day webinar was organized, on 17 and 19 June 2021, to mark UN Elder Abuse Awareness Day with the theme: Access to Justice. The first webinar was International and had speakers from Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya and South Africa, while the second outing was for various arms of Federal Government of Nigeria. This webinar got the affairs of COSROPIN into the program of the Federal Ministry of Information and Culture. It also generated many questions on Pensions and the DG PTAD agreed to appear at another Webinar on Pensions to answer the numerous questions generated.
9. Hangouts were organized by SW Zone. The SE Zones with the theme - Older Persons Imperative for Inclusion: A COSROPIN Mandate.
10. Weekly Media interviews were covered by News Agency of Nigeria (NAN).
11. A **Family Day** was organized by COSROPIN at GRAF HALL on 15 June 2021 and the Special Guest of Honor was the Hon. Federal Minister of Health.

**Some of Government/COSROPIN Partnerships in 2021 included:**

- **National Population Commission:** COSROPIN was made a member of the Technical Working Group on Population, in preparation for the next Census (25 February 2021).
- **Federal Ministry of Health:** COSROPIN participated in a Conference titled National Arts in Health (May 24 – 30, 2021).
- **Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHADMSD):** The Ministry, with COSROPIN as implementing partner, distributed items for vulnerable Older Persons e.g. Wheel Chairs, Beds and Mattresses, Strollers, Clutches etc.

## **2.0 MEMBERSHIP**

- **The total number of registered members = 68**
- **Paid up members = 62**

## **CATEGORIES OF MEMBERS**

1. Care givers and Institution
2. Advocacy/Awareness
3. Capacity Building, Education, Training, Research and Data
4. Social Workers
5. Retirement Organization
6. Ageing/Health/Wellness
7. Geriatric Care Services
8. Vendors



9. Media
10. Indigenous/Culture
11. Consultancy

### **3.0 VISIBILITY**

COSROPIN has achieved her goal in putting Ageing at the front burner through advocacy, fliers, webinars and interviews in print media, radio and TV interviews.

### **4.0 KWAMBA PROJECT**

After the 2019 Conference, COSROPIN adopted Kwamba Village in Suleja as a community to build a pilot Older Persons' Centre. The community provided land (without documents) and COSROPIN team did the architectural drawing. Progress has been stalled because of documentation before fund can be sourced from government or any philanthropist.

### **5.0 FUNDING**

Funding has remained a challenge as COSROPIN does not receive subvention from the government nor grants from international organizations. Thus far the executives and mainly the President have provided the funds to run COSROPIN. Registration and membership subscriptions assist to a small extent. Even the subscription of N20,000 annually had to be reduced to N10,000, because member NGOs were financially strained. So far, the National Conferences have generated fund to subsidize contributions by the Executives for the events.

It was for this reason that the first set of Secretariat staff was engaged at high salaries to attract grants. Having not succeeded, a different approach with less expense, was adopted to train the Secretariat staff to gradually learn how to source grants.

### **6.0 DEATH**

Sadly on Feb 18, 2018 COSROPIN witnessed the death of the Vice President and Chairman BOT, Sen. (Gen.) John Shagaya (Rtd). The wife of the deceased had earlier passed on in 2017. The Abuja executives of COSROPIN played active roles at both occasions, through providing purse for the family and self-sponsored trips to Jos on occasions, hiring a bus and paying for hotel accommodations.

## **7.0 WAY FORWARD**

COSROPIN has set in motion projects that should start attracting funds and increase the energy level and interest of members, such that Ageing would be seen as a money-yielding venture rather than a drainpipe.

Our membership would be intensified and more events organized like:

- Senior Citizens' Games
- Elders' Parliament
- Older Persons' Fellowship in FBOs etc.

**Senator Dr. Eze Ajoku**  
**President**

**Dame May Ikokwu**  
**Secretary General**