



Delivering on our pact with The People



ANNUAL REPORT | 2025

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Delivering On Our Pact With The People

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Who We Are

Citizens Free Service Forum (CFSF), is a non-profit making, non-political and non-governmental organization that serves as a platform of likeminded advocates, professionals and activists concerned about addressing the decline in the living standard of Nigerians and particularly the plight of public sector workers.

The CFSF was founded in the year 2015 and subsequently registered at the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on the 23rd day of February, 2016 (Reg. No. CAC/IT/84336). The CFSF is hosting the Secretariat of the CSOs coalition in Nigeria fighting against water and energy privatisation and any form of privatisation of public utilities.

Programme Areas

- Access to Public Services
- Trade Union and Workers Rights
- Safe Environment
- Good Governance
- Gender Justice
- Tax Justice



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Acknowledgement

We wish to express our deepest thanks and appreciation to our partners who, through their backing and encouraging support made 2025 an outstanding year in our advocacy activities. They include:

- Public Services International
- International Labour Organisation
- End Water Poverty (EWP)
- Renvlyn Development Initiative
- The Environmental Defenders Network
- Child Health Organisation
- New Life Community Care Initiative
- Ecumenical Water Africa/Blue Communities Africa
- New Life Community Care Initiative
- Nigeria Labour Congress
- Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria (MHWUN)
- Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation, Civil Service, Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE), Nigeria
- National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE)



Executive Director's Remarks



In spite of the challenges associated with the global funding climate in 2025 the Citizens Free Service Forum was able to navigate the spaces we work effectively. We creatively engaged our constituencies on crucial issues affecting them in relation to access to water, climate change impacts and the importance of transparency in managing the resources of the people.

A major plank of our work in the year under review was the need to bring journalists up to speed on the issues we advocate for so as to elicit balanced and well researched reports. In this regard, we organized a virtual training on climate change and water stress for journalists in the earlier part of the year. We escalated the

trainings in the final quarter of 2025 by partnering with the International Labour Organisation to widen the scope of the topics and resource persons.

Our work in the environment front was also escalated as we joined other partners to sustain pressure on the Nasarawa State Government to address the grave mining challenges in the state especially activities linked to Chinese firm – Multiverse Mining Company in Abuni community. 2025 was also a year we built solid strategic partnerships. We thank our friends at the Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI), the Environmental Defenders Network (EDEN), and the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) who we collaborated with on different anti-privatisation campaigns especially in the waste, water and electricity sector.

On the regional front, we built solidarity with unions in Kenya, Uganda and other parts of Africa. We also strengthened the robust partnership we have with the Public Services International to amplify our conviction that workers must work in decent spaces.

No doubt, 2025 was an epochal year and we believe we will make more strides in the incoming year.

Solidarity forever!

- Comrade Sani Baba



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CFSF Collaborates with Water Justice Groups to Expose State of Water Utilities in Nigeria



Launch of Dry Taps Report in Abuja to mark World Water Day 2025

In furtherance of advocacy for government intervention to address the dire water situation in Nigeria, in the year under review the CFSF and water justice advocates in Nigeria documented and released a report outlining the causes of water shortage in Nigeria and made recommendations on how to address the issue.

The findings were compiled in a report titled, Dry Taps: A Damning Verdict on the State of Water Utilities in Nigeria focusing on fact-finding exercises which included visits to water utilities in six states of the federation - Enugu, Edo, Lagos, Oyo, Kogi and Kano.

The fact-finding visits were conducted by the CFSF and the Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI), New Life Community Care Initiative (NELCCI), the Ecumenical Water Network Africa (EWN-A), Environmental Defenders Network (EDEN), Socio-Economic Research and Development Centre (SERDEC) in collaboration with the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations Civil Service Technical and Recreational Service Employees (AUPCTRE).

The report uncovered aging and crumbling infrastructure due to lack of maintenance, poor funding for purchase of treatment chemicals, erratic power supply resulting to use of alternative power sources at huge cost, shortage of manpower and irregular payment of salaries of workers, among other challenges besetting the water utilities.

In the public presentation of the report in Abuja which coincided with the commemoration of World Water Day 2023, AUPCTRE General Secretary, Comrade Sikiru Waheed explained that though the scope of the research is limited only to six out of Nigeria's 36 states, it deliberately captures the situation in at least one state per geographical zone, making it a sneak peek into the overall picture of the access to water situation in the entire federation.



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Executive Director of CFSF, Comrade Sani Baba cautioned that if the government continues on the trajectory of neglect of the water utilities, then a public health disaster of unimaginable proportions is inevitable. He also insisted that the appetite for privatisation sweeping across the country from Lagos to Kano and the other states is a wind that will ultimately blow no good because it does not concern itself with the situation in the rural communities".

Interventions were also taken from Executive Director of RDI, Philip Jakpor, Executive Director of EDEN, Barrister Chima Williams, Coordinator of EWNA, Reverend Kolade Fadahunsi, Executive Director of SERDEC, Tijani Abdulkareem and Executive Director of NELCCI, Florence Ifeanyi-Aneke. The findings show that in Kano the three waterworks combined only meet the needs of less than 10 percent of the population in the city. In Enugu the previous administration is said to have voted billions of naira for expanding the network of mains but nothing on ground to show what the funds went into. At the Eleyele Scheme in Ibadan a disturbing sight in the premises is the number of electricity generators used to pump water due to the erratic power supply. In Edo State the Ikpoba River Dam, which is supposed to feed the headworks in Ugbowo and Iyaro has been left fallow. Some privately owned fish ponds were also sited within the vicinity. The dam which used to produce over 90MGD, was confirmed to be no longer operational as the pumping facility had been abandoned.

Kogi state is also in the red as the Greater Lokoja Waterworks and all other zonal sub-station offices are not producing water and have been on lock down since the 2022 floods damaged them. In Lagos, about N760 million was committed to rehabilitation of the 48 mini and micro waterworks in 2017 following findings that there was already a deficit of 500 million gallons per day in water supply in the state.



Control room in Tamburawa too hot for water staff in Kano



Dire water situation in Kano



Subsequently there have been votes for the sector but disturbingly, nothing on ground suggests that the monies were put to good use as most of the waterworks are comatose, impaired or at best operating far below their installed capacities. The Adian and Iju Waterworks visited in the course of this investigation work sub-optimally.

Some of the recommendations in the report on how the government can address the water crisis include the need for the declaration of a state of emergency in the water sector and the integration of broad public participation in formulating plans to achieve universal access.

The investigation was conducted by Aminu Mohammed Shehu of CFSF, Reverend Fadahunsi Kolade of Ecumenical Water Network Africa, Florence Ifeanyi-Aneke, New Life Community Care Initiative, Tijani Abdul Kareem of Socio-Economic Research and Development Center (SERDEC), Philip Jakpor of Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI) as well as Chima Williams and Hannah Akpan of the Environmental Defenders Network (EDEN) with technical support from the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations, Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE) state offices.



CFSF Capacitates Journalists, Partners ILO in Training on Climate Reporting

Virtual Training on Reporting Climate Change and the Water Sector

Resource Persons:

- Comrade Sani Baba**, Executive Director, Citizens Free Service Forum (CFSF)
- Philip Jakpor**, Executive Director, Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI)
- Vicky Urenma**, Executive Director, Child Health Organisation
- David Boys**, Deputy General Secretary, Public Services International (PSI)
- Comrade Obenga Komolafe**, Federation of Informal Workers Organization of Nigeria (FIWON)
- Hauwa Mustafa**, Executive Director, Tubali Development Initiative
- Michael Oche**, Journalist

Virtual Training on Reporting Climate Change

The need for in-depth and factual reports on climate change and its interconnectedness with water and other sectors were the thrust of capacity building trainings that the CFSF organized in the year under review. Two major trainings were organized in 2025. The first was a one-day virtual training on climate change and the intersections with water stress and water privatization for select journalists in Abuja, Lagos and Kano, and the second - a two-day in-person training on climate reporting organized by CFSF and the International Labour Organization (ILO) on 23-25 October in Abuja

The resource persons in the virtual training included David Boys, Deputy General Secretary, Public Services International (PSI), Ferney Voltaire-France, Philip Jakpor, Executive Director of Renevlyn Development Initiative (RDI), Comrade Hauwa Mustafa, Executive Director, Tubali Development Initiative, Gbenga Akomolafe, General Secretary of the Federation of Informal Workers of Nigeria, and Vicky Urenma, Executive Director of Child Health Organisation.

In his welcome, Executive Director of CFSF, Comrade Sani Baba said that the media is key not only in keeping the public informed as part of its watchdog role, but also in eliciting robust discourse that ultimately translate into policy responses and actions. "The indispensability of the media in addressing the climate crisis and its impacts on other sectors is exemplified in the prioritization of education and training in Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Education and training are useful resource for governments, civil society and of course, the media as they encourage people to take the lead and cooperate in creative climate change actions.



The topics treated included Introduction to Climate Reporting: Key Issues, Concepts, Climate Change and the Water Sector, Gender Impacts of Climate Change/Water Shortages, Organising and Collaboration to Address Climate Change and the Water Challenges, and, The role of the media in addressing reporting gaps in climate change and the water sector. David Boys spoke on Privatization Failures and the Growing Recourse to Remunicipalisation.

On 23 and 24 September 2025 CFSF also partnered with the ILO in organizing a training on climate reporting. The event facilitated by a team of experts in investigative journalism, trade union activism and the development field. At the training which held at the United Nations Building in Abuja, Executive Director of CFSF, Comrade Sani Baba said that the organisation conceived the training based on its belief that the media is key not only in informing the public informed as part of its watchdog role, but also in instigating robust discourse that would ultimately translate to policy responses and actions.

Sani Baba who was represented by Mohammed Bomoi the Deputy Director, Programmes, said that the indispensability of the media in addressing the environment and climate crisis informed the prioritization of education and training in Article 6 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) which Nigeria has signed and ratified. He explained that education and training are useful resources for governments, civil society and the media to encourage different stakeholders to work collaboratively in advancing climate change actions. He explained that Nigeria, like most African countries and countries of the Global South carry the biggest burdens of the climate impacts, hence the subjects the trainees would dwell on would also serve to amplify the big as well as the less reported impacts of environmental degradation and climate change on workers.



Deputy Executive Director of CFSF,
Comrade Mohammed Bomoi (middle)
at the CFSF/ILO Training in Abuja



Award Ceremony at the end of the training



The presentations at the training included The Science of Climate Change and the Evolution of the Struggle for Just Transition by Comrade Echezona Asuzu, Coordinator, Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) Climate Change, Green Jobs, and Just Transition Program, Contemporary Environmental Degradation and Climate Change Issues in Nigeria, by Philip Jakpor, Executive Director of the RENEVLYN Development Initiative (RDI), and Interpreting Global Politics for Climate Justice into National Realities by Elijah Iklaga, Environmental and Sustainability Consultant at Natural Eco Capital. David Boys, Deputy General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI), also advised the trainees to publish well-researched reports that can be useful for policy makers to make laws rooted in facts.

At the close of the event, ILO representative, Stephen Agugua presented the trainees with certificates, expressing confidence that the training would impact on the quality of climate and environment reports from the trainees. Agugua restated the commitment of the global body in working with the media to amplify the largely unreported impacts of climate change on frontline communities and the work space which are largely neglected in news reports.



Comrade Sani Baba delivering the welcome words



Group photograph of participants at the CFSF/ILO training in Abuja.



Silver Lining in the Advocacy for Public-Public Partnership in the Lagos Water Sector

In the year in focus, the CFSF escalated its campaign against water privatization with a host of activities targeted at getting the Lagos State Water Corporation to halt the planned Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the Lagos water sector.

The Lagos Water Corporation had organized a two-day (14th and 15th August 2025) 'Stakeholders' Engagement' on the Pilot Public-Private Partnership (PPP) with support from WaterAid where it announced plans to proceed with the privatisation of 10 per cent of the Lagos water utility. At the engagement, the organisers endorsed the PPP in the water sector, and Chairman of the Lagos State House of Assembly Committee on Information, Hon. Steven Ogundipe, who was in attendance, promised swift legislative backing for the pilot PPP initiative.



Comrade Sani Baba (extreme left) at the PSI DGB Regional Meeting in Abuja



Comrade Sani speaking at the National Utilities Summit in Abuja

A Strong Petition

In response to this development, on 18 August 2025, the CFSF and five other civil society groups wrote a petition to the Speaker of the Lagos State House of Assembly, Hon. Mudashiru Obasa urging the House to stop the planned PPP in the water sector and carry out a comprehensive probe of the funds allocated to the sector since 1999.

The six groups specifically demanded the following:

We are particularly interested in the following projects and how the monies were expended:



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- Probe of the N4 billion for Otta-Ikosi waterworks awarded in 2007 but is still not working;
- Probe of the N3 billion expended on construction of an Independent Power Plant (IPP) which also included an additional N180 million expended monthly on purchase of fuel;
- Probe of the N897m released by the Lagos State government for rehabilitation of Iju and Adian Waterworks;
- Probe of the N789m released by the Lagos State Government for rehabilitation of 48 mini and micro waterworks across Lagos.
- Probe of the N2.7bn voted by the Lagos State Government and expended on the rehabilitation of Ishasi waterworks supervised by Mr. Governor.
- Probe of the N950 million budgeted for purchase of chemical for year 2023;
- Probe of the N315 million paid as 50% advanced payment to contractors for the supply of liquid alum in October 2023;
- Probe of the N1.2 billion budget for water treatment chemicals in 2024;
- Probe of the N9.5 million for repair of chemical store gate at Iju and Adian.



The petition elicited a response from the Lagos State House of Assembly with an invitation of CFSF and the other petitioners for a meeting with the House Committee on Environment (Parastatal) on 9 September 2025 in Lagos. At the meeting, the Lagos State House of Assembly expressed interest in understanding the concept of Public-Public Partnership to address the water crisis in the state.

The request was made by the Hon. Shabi Rasheed Adekola, Chair, House Committee on Environment (Parastatal). The Committee also promised to investigate the allegations of corruption in the petition.



High- Level CSO Meeting on Public-Public Partnership with Lagos House of Assembly and Lagos Water Corporation

On Friday 19 December 2025 the CFSF and other water justice groups converged on Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital for a high-level meeting with the Lagos State House of Assembly and the Lagos Water Corporation, LWC, on Public-Public Partnership in the Lagos water sector.

The meeting, supported by the Public Services International (PSI), was convened in response to the interest of the Lagos State House of Assembly in the Public-Public Partnership in the water sector, and also to explore ways to support the efforts of the Lagos Water Corporation in providing universal access to water and cushioning the water challenges confronting citizens.

The hybrid event was jointly organized by the Renelyn Development Initiative, Environmental Defenders Network, Help Initiative for Social Justice and Development, Ecumenical Water Network, Child Health Organisation, New Life Community Care Initiative, NELCCI, and the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporations Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees, AUPCTRE, with support from Public Services International.

The Lagos State House of Assembly members were led by Hon. Shabi Rasheed Adebola Adekola, Chair, House Committee on Environment (Parastatal), who gave a goodwill message, and Hon. Stephen Ogundipe, Chairman, House Committee on Information and Strategy.

Representatives of the Lagos Water Corporation in attendance also explained the thrust of the recent public private partnership involving 10 percent of its water utility in the state. International participants included Emanuele Lobina, Associate Professor, Water Service Reform, Public Services International Research Unit, University of Greenwich, London and David Boys, Deputy General Secretary, Public Services International (PSI), France.

Julie Perkins, Program Management Officer, UN Habitat GWOPA, spoke on Helping Lagos strengthen and deliver SDG6: Cases and Lessons from Existing Water Operator.



Solidarity Engagements

In the year in focus CFSF continued to engage in synergic activities with partners to address the challenges affecting workers in Nigeria. The meetings also served as opportunity for joint planning and coordination of campaigns against privatization in the water, waste and electricity sectors. Some of the meetings included

- The Joint Trade Union and CSOs meeting on Promoting Transparency and Decent Work in supply chains in Electricity, Water and waste service in Sub Saharan Africa. This was a DGB sponsored project facilitated by AUPCTRE and NUEE.
- PSI symposium on socioeconomic and political implication of privatisation of public assets and the way forward.
- PSI Stakeholders engagement/meeting on Organising community Health workers for a progressive vision of public health in West Africa.
- PSI- IDP Nat advocacy evaluation
- CFSF with its Office in Kano was invited to a 3-Day Advocacy Programme on Community Health attended by officials and members of Medical and Health Workers Union of Nigeria (MHWUN). CFSF expertise on advocacy and campaign was shared with the participants Symposium on Implications of Privatisation on Public assets and Utilities
- The Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) 2025 Rain School as a discussant on "Building Trade Union Consciousness and Working-Class Ideology. The event held in Uyo, Akwa Ibom, on 21st July 2025.
- CFSF was invited to moderate the panel discussion on the theme: The Role of CHWs in Attaining Universal Health Coverage in Nigeria: From Policy to Practice. Held in Kano from 2 – 3 October 2025.
- Lagos Town Hall Meeting Engagement on the Public-Public Partnership model in addressing Lagos Water Crisis



When the CFSF team visited WRECA office in Kano



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As a fallout from the meetings and in response to emerging national issues, CFSF also issued press statements on the following:

- Federal Government Intention to import waste from Europe
- Reaction to mob action that killed a District Police Officer in Rano Local Govt (Kano State) and the need for robust Police/Community committees.
- Applauding the Nigerian Senate's decision to sanction use of carbide, other chemicals for fruit ripening
- Warning on impending disaster in Borno as Federal Government stalled repair of Alau Dam that claimed lives in the previous year as a result of flooding
- Urging Niger State Government to tackle flood fallout and improve IDP camp conditions.
- This call was made urging the Government to take full responsibility for the flood disaster which happened in Mokwa town that claimed many lives
- Rejection of privatisation plans of the Lagos State Water Corporation at meeting with Lagos Assembly on Tuesday September 9, 2025

Promotion of Public-Public Partnership Model

The CFSF team also visited the Water Resources, Engineering and Construction Agency (WRECA) management in Kano State to discuss how the work of the organisation can be showcased as a model for Public-Public partnership.

It is anticipated that in the incoming year we will escalate these engagements and continue deepening our pact with workers and the Nigerian people.



