

Drug Abuse, Ritual Killings and Cultism Among Youth in Nigeria

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Theme Setting

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The rising incidence of drug abuse, ritual killings, and cultism in Nigeria especially among youths, is a source of concern for most Nigerians. We have seen the effects on individuals, families, the society, and the development of our youths.

1. We hear of horror stories of ritual killings among teenagers. Our youths succumb to death associated with drug use
2. We are aware of the negative impact of these issues on individuals, families, and local communities
3. These issues clearly stand in the way of the development of our youth, and the future of Nigeria
4. The danger arising from these issues make potential investors nervous about investing in Nigeria's economy. So, what could have served as a source of employment for the youths is taken away and invested elsewhere.
5. There is the fear of the average Nigerian in performing normal day-to-day activities

We have heard many sectors of the society cry for help, parents, faith communities, educational institutions, local communities.

We gather in the next few days to plan and do something about it. We have the personnel, and our collective experience as our most valuable resource to make this happen.

Our gathering will provide us the opportunity to listen to presentations, to develop immediate and long-term strategies to tackle these issues to safeguard the future of the youths and the nation at large.

More specifically, we hope to achieve the following specific objectives

- (1) Bring our collective expertise, experiences, and talents to create awareness on the dangers of the rising incidences of drugs abuse, ritual killings, and cultism in Nigeria,
- (2) Develop a comprehensive, workable, and practical strategy for tackling these issues, and
- (3) Identify coalition partners, religious institutions, government agencies, educational institutions, NGOs, and other stakeholders to join forces in driving this initiative.

An African proverb reminds us that “***when spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.***” The problem is not too big for our collective efforts.

However, we must act now rather than later. Because if we do not act now, the problem will become too big for our efforts.

Our ancestors developed an inward-looking strategy to analyze and tackle problems that arose within the community, especially when it concerned young people.

1. When things went wrong with young people the older generation asked themselves: **What did we do wrong?** What values are we transmitting to the younger generation, directly and indirectly? Our ancestors understood that it was the duty of the adults in the community to lead the young in right path, to be the role model for the young to follow. Failure to lead by example leads the young into deviant behavior. The problem we gather to tackle has its roots in the modeling of adults,

including the get rich quick mentality without working for it, and the display of ill-gotten wealth with impunity. It has to do with the way public officials who embezzle (steal) from the national treasury and give the crumbs to the community who thank them for it.

2. This is not the time for “It does not affect/concern me attitude.” We cannot be indifferent, for what might seem far away now will soon affect all.
3. We need to examine them closely the structural, economic, social, cultural and factors that bring us to where we are now.
4. We will ask ourselves - What are the sources of these problems? How did it enter the youth population? Who introduce it and for what reason? Who is benefiting from it directly or indirectly? These are important questions to examine that will help get to the root of the matter.
5. We can point to examples around the world where this problem has created serious problems in communities. Some neighborhoods in the United States, where drugs have taken a foothold have seen generations of young people destroyed, fighting over control, and killing each other senselessly. Yet the real drug kingpins do not live in these neighborhoods. There is the situation of drug cartel in Mexico, where drug gangs are running parallel government. There are more elsewhere.
6. Once this problem takes root in the community, it is exceedingly difficult to get rid of, it becomes a way of life.
7. It is our hope that by the end of this gathering, we would have armed ourselves with practical, workable, and effective strategies to address these issues.
8. Thank you for being here and for the valuable contributions you will make towards realizing these goals.