

## Enugu State Hosts Nigeria Social Forum (NSF)

The Nigeria Social Forum (NSF) is an open meeting place where groups and movements of civil society engaged in building a Nigerian society centred on the human person come together to pursue their thinking, to debate ideas democratically, to formulate proposals, share their experiences freely and network for effective action. The NSF proposes to debate alternative means to building a Nigeria, which respects universal human rights and those of all men, women, girls and boys, grounded in democratic African and International systems and institutions at the service of social justice, equality and the sovereignty of peoples.

The Nigerian Social Forum, an offshoot of the World Social Forum, African Social Forum and West African Social Forum is an approach at strengthening organizations of social movements in Nigeria. From the inception of the 1<sup>st</sup> Nigeria Social Forum in Makurdi in 2004 with the theme *"Another Nigeria is Possible"* and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Nigeria Social Forum *"Demanding Change and Achieving Rights: Providing Alternatives for Human Centred Development"* in Lagos in 2005 which were hinged on the discourse of another Nigeria and proffering alternative development paradigms, the NSF has taken the initiative to bridge the recognized gap and lack of an existing space, based on the diversity of opinions and approaches to the various challenges facing Nigeria as a state. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Nigeria Social Forum which was co-hosted with the West Africa Social Forum focused on the theme *"Elections for Social Change"*.

Mrs. Oby Nwankwo (Chief Magistrate (Rtd.) and Executive Director of the Civil Resource Development and Documentation Centre (CIRDDOC) is the current the Chair of the NSF and by virtue of that, her zone will host the 4<sup>th</sup> NSF which has been scheduled to hold on **the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> November 2008 at the University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus**. The Forum will attract over 2,000 participants from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. It will serve as a space for learning, sharing, showing best practices across the zones; the forum would also be a market place of ideas and constructive debate that would respond to the challenges of political and economic governance in Nigeria and the West Africa sub region. It is a move to mobilize Nigerian and the people of the zone towards setting the agenda for transforming the country into a pro poor and pro people state.

The NSF is gaining momentum in building a mass of critical Nigerians capable of responding to the challenges of governance and at the same time harmonizing the various struggle into a mass movement, thereby creating the space for periodic interactions, reflections and for joint action.