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CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP ON ONLINE ASSETS DECLARATION SYSTEM

COMMUNIQUE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Capacity Building Workshop on Online Assets Declaration System (OADS) was convened by Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) in collaboration with the Code of Conduct Bureau, and supported by IDEA/European Union under the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) programme at FOX HOTEL, Jos, Plateau State on April 14th and 15th 2025. Participation was drawn from Federal and State Public Service in Plateau State, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the Media.

The workshop is part of a series of activities under the “Improving the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Processes and Reforms” project which seeks to contribute to the effectiveness of anti-corruption laws, policies, interventions and strategies for the entrenchment of reforms at national and subnational levels.

The workshop was convened to build the capacity of the aforementioned stakeholders on the OADS in the context of the constitutional imperative mandating all public officers to declare their assets, low compliance levels to assets and liabilities declaration by public officers, the innovations introduced in the OADS which simplifies and makes it easier for public officers to declare their assets and the commitment of the Bola Ahmed Tinubu administration to fight corruption to a standstill. The workshop sought to improve the skills of participants in the practical online declaration of assets and liabilities, understanding of various assets and liabilities classes, the constitutional and statutory provisions guiding declarations and the code of conduct for public officers.

Participants stated their expectations to include full and practical understanding of the online assets and liabilities declaration regime; understanding the importance of assets declaration; understanding anti-corruption strategies; role of OADS in fostering accountability and transparency; benefits of OADS; proactive knowledge of the issues and challenges of the OADS; trouble shooting issues on the OADS; being equipped to facilitate the training of other officers in their respective Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government (MDAs); understanding the implications of failure to comply with the compulsory assets declaration regime; being equipped to inform and educate

others; to guarantee compliance with laws so as to evade sanctions for non-compliance; and holding duty bearers to account.

The following presentations were made:

- ❖ The Code of Conduct Bureau, Code of Conduct for Public Officers and the Code of Conduct Tribunal
- ❖ Categories of Assets and Liabilities
- ❖ Step by Step on Online Assets Declaration Procedure (Practical Demonstrations)
- ❖ A Bill for an Act to make the assets and liabilities declared by public officers accessible to the public, protect the privacy of declarants and other matters connected therewith

Two group exercises were conducted to sharpen participants knowledge and understanding of the issues at stake.

2. OBSERVATIONS

The Workshop Made the Following Observations

a. Contextually, OADS is premised on the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as amended which makes it mandatory for all public officers to declare their assets and liabilities - from the Cleaner in the Local Government to the President of the Federal Republic.

b. Furthermore, Nigeria is a State Party to the United Nations Convention against Corruption [articles 8 and 52 (2)] and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption (article 7). These Conventions provide for declaration of assets and liabilities and other measures to fight corruption.

c. Every public officer is mandated to declare his assets and liabilities immediately after taking office and thereafter - (a) at the end of every four years; and (b) at the end of his term of office. The requirement is a written declaration of all properties, assets, and liabilities and those of unmarried children under the age of eighteen years.

d. However, and further to “c” above, for legislators and other elected officials, the Constitution requires a declaration of assets and liabilities before assumption of office.

e. The declaration is to be based on the principles of honesty, transparency, truth telling and requires a complete disclosure of all assets and liabilities. Declarants should neither under-declare or over-declare their assets and liabilities.

f. The Code of Conduct Bureau is constitutionally mandated to receive assets declaration, examine the declarations, retain custody and ensure compliance with the law and make them available for inspection by any citizen of Nigeria on such terms and conditions as the National Assembly may prescribe. The Bureau is also to receive complaints about non-compliance and verify declarations.

g. The constitutional code of conduct in the Fifth Schedule provides detailed rules of conduct mandatory for public officers across the three tiers of government. This

includes rules against abuse of office, bribery, conflict of interest, prohibition of foreign accounts, restrictions on loans, gifts or benefits, etc.

h. The Constitution stipulates penalties for non-compliance with the code of conduct for public officers.

i. Civil society has hardly engaged the assets declaration system while there is no public access to declared assets and liabilities of public officers.

j. Participants recall the challenges facing the CCB in the execution of its mandate including poor funding, and the fact that only one panel of the Code of Conduct Tribunal serves the entire country.

3. RESOLUTIONS

Based On The Foregoing Observations, The Workshop Resolved As Follows:

a. Public officers should promptly and honestly declare their assets and liabilities in a timely manner in accordance with constitutional stipulates.

b. Participants resolved to enlighten and sensitize other public officers within their MDAs and subject to availability of resources, to organise step down training in collaboration with CCB.

c. Federal Government should consider increased funding and support to the Bureau to facilitate the enhanced performance of its constitutional duties.

d. The National Assembly in the constitution amendment exercise should consider increasing the panels of the Code of Conduct Tribunal to adjudicate infractions of the code of conduct for public officers.

e. The National Assembly should expeditiously consider the enactment of a Bill for an Act to make the assets and liabilities declared by public officers accessible to the public, protect the privacy of declarants and other matters connected therewith

f. CCB should expeditiously conclude the establishment and logistics of the OADs and ensure that full compliance by all public officers in the next two years.

g. Civil society and other stakeholders have agreed to intensify engagement of the OADS. This should include the engagement of the CCB and MDAs; raising awareness, education and advocacy for enhanced declaration of assets and liabilities.

h. Participants acknowledged the initiative of CSJ and CCB, the support of the European Union/IDEA and the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Project and urged CSJ and CCB to facilitate the continued education of public officers in all the states of the Federation on the OADS.

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