

**SPECIAL REMARKS BY**

**DR. MUSA ADAMU ALIYU, SAN,  
CHAIRMAN, INDEPENDENT CORRUPT  
PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED  
OFFENCES COMMISSION (ICPC)**

**AT THE 7TH ANNUAL GENERAL  
ASSEMBLY OF THE NETWORK OF  
NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION  
INSTITUTIONS IN WEST AFRICA  
(NACIWA)**

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## **Protocol**

It is with great pleasure and a deep sense of duty that I welcome you to Abuja — the heart of Nigeria and the headquarters of our regional economic community — for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual General Assembly of the Network of National Anti-Corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA).

Distinguished delegates, the theme of this year's Assembly — “A United ECOWAS Against Corruption: Strengthening Regional Collaboration for Asset Recovery and Exchange of Information” — is not only timely but an existential call to action for our region.

Corruption, as we all know, transcends borders. It metastasizes across our economies, erodes public trust, fuels illicit financial flows, and tragically diverts resources meant for schools, hospitals, and infrastructure. In West Africa, it poses a direct threat to democratic stability, peace, and shared prosperity.

### **Asset Recovery as Restitution to Citizens**

Central to our discussions today is the issue of asset recovery. Stolen public wealth, often spirited away to foreign jurisdictions, represents the direct theft of our people's collective future. When a corrupt official diverts funds meant for clean water, healthcare, or education, lives are imperiled, and development is reversed.

We must therefore move beyond merely prosecuting offenders to ensuring that crime does not pay. That requires tracing, freezing, and repatriating stolen assets — and deploying them transparently for the public good. The success of asset recovery remains the ultimate measure of accountability and restitution to our citizens.

Under my tenure, the ICPC has deepened its commitment to criminal and non-conviction-based forfeiture mechanisms, achieving several notable recoveries in the past year. Yet, domestic success alone is insufficient. Asset recovery is most effective when driven by regional and international cooperation, anchored on mutual trust, legal reciprocity, and operational synergy among anti-corruption agencies.

## **Regional Collaboration and Information Exchange**

The second pillar of this Assembly's theme — regional collaboration for information exchange — is the operational backbone of our collective fight. We must simplify and accelerate processes for Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA), because delays only embolden corrupt actors. A unified, harmonized regional approach will enable us to track illicit gains swiftly and prevent their reinvestment within the ECOWAS sub-region.

Criminal networks exploit our institutional gaps. It is therefore imperative that we develop a secure, standardized platform for real-time exchange of intelligence on illicit financial flows, money-laundering typologies, and politically exposed persons across all NACIWA member states. Our institutions must be faster, smarter, and more connected than the criminal networks we seek to dismantle.

Equally important is joint capacity-building — specialized training in digital forensics, blockchain tracing, financial intelligence, and beneficial ownership transparency. When our investigators and prosecutors speak the same professional language, our regional response becomes truly formidable.

### **Nigeria's Reform Experience: The CARE for Impact Agenda**

Permit me to reflect briefly on the strides Nigeria's ICPC has made in this direction. Since assuming office, I have introduced a new policy thrust known as "CARE for Impact" — anchored on Culture, Accountability, Responsibility, and Efficiency. This framework is driving a profound transformation in the Commission's work culture and operational outcomes.

Through this initiative, the ICPC has expanded preventive interventions such as system studies, corruption-risk assessments, and ethics compliance monitoring across public institutions. We have revitalized collaboration with civil society, academia, and youth groups, aligning with the National Ethics and Integrity Policy (NEIP) to strengthen integrity systems at all levels.

On the international stage, the ICPC continues to play an active role within the global and regional anti-corruption community — from the Conference of States Parties to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), to partnerships with the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre

(CAACC) in Gaborone, and active participation in the African Union Advisory Board Against Corruption (AUABC). Recently, Nigeria also hosted a continental dialogue on asset recovery in partnership with the Africa Asset Recovery Practitioners Forum (AARPF), where I serve as Interim Chairperson of its Steering Committee.

These engagements reaffirm Nigeria's commitment to transparency, accountability, and cross-border cooperation in asset tracing and recovery. They also demonstrate that progress is possible when commitment is collective — and that is precisely what this Assembly must now strengthen.

## **The Abuja Commitment: From Rhetoric to Measurable Action**

Distinguished colleagues, this 7th Annual General Assembly must not be another ceremonial gathering. It should mark a turning point — a moment when we move from rhetoric to measurable action. Let us emerge from Abuja with a shared “Abuja Commitment” anchored on the following resolutions:

1. A binding framework to expedite regional requests for asset tracing and freezing.
2. A roadmap for the full implementation of the ECOWAS Protocol Against Corruption by all member states.
3. A pledge to uphold transparency and public accountability in the management of recovered assets.

4. A framework for peer review and mutual evaluation among member institutions to sustain progress.

Our citizens are watching. They have placed their trust in us to rid this region of the scourge of corruption. A truly united ECOWAS against corruption is not a choice — it is a necessity for our collective survival and prosperity.

## **Conclusion**

Together, let us make this Assembly the moment when West Africa says — with one voice — that corruption will no longer dictate our destiny.

Thank you, and God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the ECOWAS Community.