

COMMUNIQUE OF THE ONE-DAY WORKSHOP ORGANIZED BY THE INDEPENDENT CORRUPT PRACTICES AND OTHER RELATED OFFENCES COMMISSION (ICPC) WITH THE NIGERIAN UNION OF JOURNALISTS (NUJ) ON EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION AND CORRUPTION PREVENTION HELD ON MONDAY, 21ST OCTOBER 2024 AT REIZ CONTINENTAL HOTEL, ABUJA

INTRODUCTION:

Cognizant of the pivotal role of the media in combating corruption by exposing graft, holding public office holders to account, demanding transparency in governance, and mobilizing the citizenry on and against corruption in Nigeria. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) convened the One-Day Engagement with the Nigeria Union of Journalists [NUJ] with the aim of informing the NUJ on mandates of the ICPC, reviewing the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) and identify the roles of the NUJ in its implementation, explore methods of disseminating information on the activities of the ICPC to the right public, and to identify platforms of the ICPC which the public and journalists can use to contribute to corruption prevention. The programme was also co-sponsored by MacArthur Foundation.

The engagement had in attendance 67 professional journalists from both foreign and local media, 3 media related NGOs/CSOs, 4 Panellists, Special Guests, Directors of ICPC, staff of the NUJ Secretariat and ICPC personnel, as well as the media. It also featured Goodwill messages from the Senate Committee Chairman on Anti-Corruption on behalf of the National Assembly, the President of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, Managing Director, NAN, Director-General, FRCN, Director-General, NTA and the Country Director, MacArthur Foundation.

The workshop also featured a robust keynote address by the President and Chairman Council, Nigeria Institute of Public Relations (NIPR), Dr. Ike Neliaku, fnipr, in his address, he emphasized the need for:

1. New approaches and narratives in the fight against corruption
2. The adoption of prevention strategy due to its cost effectiveness
3. Leveraging on technology to promote transparency and accountability

4. To rebuild trust capital among Nigerians due to huge deficits in the political economy of Nigeria as this will encourage citizens' cooperation in the fight against corruption.
5. Highlighted the immense power of the pen in the crusade against corruption.

The event also featured a robust panel discussion moderated by the Special Assistant to the Chairman of ICPC on Media and Strategy, Mr. Abdulsalam Badamasi, and featured panellists namely, Dr. Sule Ya'u Sule, fnipr, member governing board of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations(NIPR); Mr. Achike Gregory Chude, General Secretary, Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ); Mr. Jimoh Abubakar, CISLAC Programme officer who represented Mr. Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, Executive Director, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC); and Mrs. Azuka Ogugua, fnipr, Head, Reforms/SERVICOM Unit, ICPC.

This was interspaced with an interactive session during which different opinions on the best way forward were expressed and various submissions were made for the role of the NUJ in the fight against corruption.

General Issues:

The workshop:

- **Acknowledged** the devastating impact of corruption which among other things hampers economic development and increase poverty and that these are enabled by weak institution.
- **Noted** that Journalists as members of the 4th estate of the realm have a great role to play in the fight against corruption in Nigeria and their cooperation with ICPC is needed to prevent and expose corruption; create public awareness and mobilize Nigerians to support the fight against corruption and corrupt practices.
- **Further acknowledged** that the fight against corruption cannot be won by one organization; hence, anti-corruption must be made a collaborative enterprise to which the media have a prominent role to play.
- **Commended** ICPC for recognizing the immense role of the Media in the fight against corruption which requires a collaborative effort and synergy the workshops intend to achieve.

- **Noted** the media has a constitutional role in the fight against corruption as enshrined in chapter two of 1999 Constitution [amended] and must discharge such role conscientiously by holding public office holders to account.
- **Emphasized** the need for the role of the media to go beyond reportage of corruption and move to mobilizing for social change through storytelling that highlight the social and economic implication and the opportunity cost of corruption.
- **Underscored the need for information sharing between the ICPC and the media** to help proper reportage of the Commission's programmes and activities.
- **Noted** that the fight against corruption is a risky one hence the need for a protection mechanism to be established for the protection and safety of journalists and citizens who expose corruption everywhere.
- **Affirmed** the potency of the role of the media in advocacy and creating public awareness and mobilization of the public against corruption.
- **Called** on the Media to take advantage of the FOI Act and the recent Supreme Court decision granting financial autonomy to local governments to collaborate with ICPC to help promote transparency and accountability at the grassroots level.
- **Enjoined** the media not to be interested in publishing only bad news- corruption and corrupt people- but to also publish stories of good deeds by honest Nigerians.
- **Advised** for the need to support the building of the capacities of Journalists through training and retraining so as to build confidence for the effective performance of their roles
- **Hopeful** that the ICPC initiative to engage with the media should be a yearly one and not one-off.

Resolutions:

In view of the above issues, the workshop, during the technical session:

1. **Recommended** stronger collaboration between the Commission and the media and for the Commission to ensure that this kind of workshop is sustained.
2. **Advised** ICPC to consider instituting an annual award and reward system to Media houses/Journalists that reports the Commission's activities, and Corruption and Anti-Corruption stories most.
3. **Emphasized** the need for attention to be paid by the ICPC and the media on how public resources are stolen, concealed, utilized and transferred.
4. **Highlighted** the importance of data journalism and the need for the ICPC to encourage research/data based journalism to help advance the cause of anticorruption and good governance.
5. **Urged** Media house owners/editors to desist from putting undue pressure on journalists/reporters who embark on uncovering major cases of corruption to discontinue their reports for whatever reason in the interest of the nation.
6. **Advised** the ICPC to focus on the Nigeria's pension system with a view to ensuring that workers' fear of a bleak future after service is dispelled and they can work without engaging in graft.
7. **Advocated** for the passage of the whistle blower protection law to encourage undeterred reportage of corrupt practices and mitigate the risks faced by journalists as safety of journalists must be a priority.
8. **Stressed** the need for NUJ, Online News publishers of Nigeria and the Nigeria Guild of Editors to help in checking the activities of online purveyors of fake news who are making a living out of it.
9. **Advocated** the need to build the capacity of Journalists through training and retraining and also build confidence in them to enable them do their jobs effectively.
10. **Called** on the ICPC to identify and collaborate with rural-based Radio Stations on issues of ethical reorientation to help bring about the needed change.

11. **Urged** Media Houses to pay commensurable wage to journalists so as to discourage gratification and embolden them to embark on daring risk of uncovering corruption.

Signed:



Dr. Musa Adamu Aliyu, SAN
Chairman, ICPC



Mr. Christopher Isiguzo, MFR
President, Nigeria Union of
Journalists