



**OPENING REMARKS BY EKPO NTA, ESQ., CHAIRMAN, ICPC
AT THE ICPC GOOD GOVERNANCE FORUM, TUESDAY, 11TH
MARCH, 2014, ICPC AUDITORIUM, ABUJA**

It is indeed my pleasure to welcome you all, particularly our Distinguished Guest Speaker, His Excellency, Ogbeni (Engr.) Rauf Aregbesola, the Governor of Osun State, to this auspicious occasion to deliver a lecture under the ICPC Good Governance Forum 2014. The ICPC Good Governance Forum, formerly known as ICPC Governor's Forum, is a non-political initiative which started in 2008 to promote the culture of good governance across all States of the federation. The forum has in the past hosted the following State Governors: Babatunde Raji Fashola (SAN) of Lagos State (2008), Ibrahim Shehu Shema of Katsina State (2009) and Godswill Akpabio of Akwa Ibom State (2013)

In addition the Commission had also initiated the **ICPC Guest Forum** aimed at identifying exemplary and distinguished public officials, professionals and persons who have through good practices, processes and systems impacted positively on the lives of Nigerian citizens. Our past invitees were the following: Dr. Joseph Makoju, mni, OON, former MD/CEO PHCN & Special Adviser to President on Electric Power (2006), Prof. Dora Nkem Akinyuli, former DG of NAFDAC - (2006), Chief Emmanuel Afe Babalola (SAN) - 2007, Alhaji Yayale Ahmed, former Head of Civil Service of the Federation (2007), His Eminence, The Archbishop of Abuja Arch Diocese, The Most Reverend (Dr.) John Onaiyekan (2007), etc.

Your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between high public-sector corruption and pervasive poverty with attendant consequences if not properly addressed. You are no doubt aware, that a cardinal mandate of ICPC is to prevent corruption through public enlightenment and education. Consequently, the ICPC Good Governance Forum is meant to serve as an interactive platform,

where high – flying personages like State Governors, top government officials and professionals in the private sector, who in public opinion, are adjudged to have impacted meaningfully on the lives of Nigerian citizens through innovative processes that have significantly reduced poverty and corruption on a sustainable basis. ICPC is currently developing tools for empirical measurements of performance along these lines to reduce dependence on "perception" or newspaper reports.

We would like to hear, appreciate and share more success stories rather than promoting a culture of lampooning and distrusting public officials so that Nigerians can appreciate good governance, transparency and transformation.

Good Governance as generally used, encompasses all aspects of the way a country is governed, including its economic policies and regulatory framework (Subramanian, 2001). In practice, there are four principles of good governance. These are transparency, accountability, responsibility and fairness. The children or by-products of good governance include the provision of basic amenities such as clean potable water, good network of roads, good quality education, social security, free and fair elections, equal opportunities and justice for all irrespective of social status, etc. That is why a corrupt society cannot guarantee good governance. The choice of "Good Governance" a name for this Forum is therefore a deliberate attempt to encourage Governments to contribute their quota actively in the fight against corruption.

Your Excellency, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, permit me at this point to conclude this brief remark by highlighting a few achievements the Commission has recorded in the past one year. We are more interested in strengthening anti-corruption processes in public institutions so that they can withstand and repel corrupt individuals. To this end we have beamed our searchlight on the integrated payroll information systems (IPPIS) in the public service, the education sector with emphasis on higher education through our University System Studies and Review (USSR). The Commission collaborated with the National Universities Commission (NUC) as part of this holistic intervention in the education sector which resulted in 21 illegal Degree-awarding centres being closed down and some proprietors are being prosecuted.

Other areas include pensions management by collaborating with relevant stakeholders, redefining local government administration through targeted system studies, monitoring and investigating and prosecuting infractions public sector contracts for goods and services in collaboration with the Bureau for Public Procurement, and monitoring transparency of privatization of public properties e.g. PHCN in collaboration with Bureau for Public Enterprises where necessary.

In addition we have stepped up collaboration with several diplomatic institutions as we investigate scams in the area of visa acquisition. ICPC has achieved tremendous success and has began the curtailing of unwholesome practices that plagued that sector and created massive problems for Nigerian travellers the world over. In order to further deprive persons who have unjustly enriched themselves from public coffers ICPC has stepped up asset tracing, recovery and monitoring activities and has in the past year seized, confiscated and recovered several buildings, undeveloped plots and bank accounts.

Furthermore, the Commission has invested in retraining and building up the capacity of 632 of its staff (70%) through local and foreign trainings and has collaborated with many technical partners and sister agencies both local and foreign in the pursuit of its mandate.

On this note, I once again welcome His Excellency, Engineer Rauf Aregbesola, the Governor of Osun State and you, distinguished guests, to this very important occasion.

Thank You