



Project NGA/S08: "Support to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Nigeria Judiciary"
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STATE JUDICIARY PLAN OF ACTION FOR STRENGTHENING JUSTICE SECTOR INTEGRITY AND CAPACITY 2008-2010



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Foreword

It is my pleasure to present this second updated version of the Action Plan for Strengthening Integrity and Capacity of the Justice System in Delta State, which is endorsed by the Implementation Committee in early 2008 after extensive stakeholder consultations.

The Action Plan proposes a comprehensive set of measures aimed to bring significant improvements as relates to access to justice, timeliness and quality of justice delivery, transparency, accountability and integrity of the courts and those who work in them, and coordination among the various justice sector institutions, including the Attorney General's Office, the Police, the Prison Service, and the Bar.

This Second Action Plan follows the First Action Plan on Strengthening Judicial Integrity and Capacity which was adopted by the First State integrity Meeting for the Delta State Judiciary held in September 2002. As such this action plan is a testimony to our continuous strives towards excellence in the Delta State Judiciary. Different from the first version, this second updated version contains also a detailed list of indicators which will enable us to measure the future impact of our efforts with greater precision.

While we are humbled by the ambitious goals which we have set for ourselves, we draw great confidence from the fact that our endeavours since 2002 have led to massive improvements already. A survey conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP) gives us cause to believe that we are achieving our goals. E.g. since 2002, we have managed to reduce the average time of prisoners awaiting trial in remand from more than 30 months to less than 10 months. We also succeeded to clamp down on unnecessary adjournments.. I am most pleased by the fact that today I can confidently claim that bribe-seeking behaviour within our courts has become largely an issue of the past. While in 2002, more than 50% of the court users indicated that they had been approached for an unofficial payment when being in contact with the courts, in 2007 only 9% of the court users made such allegations.

It is against this background that I call upon all stakeholders in the executive and legislative branches of government, the Nigerian Bar Association, the police and prison services, as well as the private sector and civil society, and you my fellow judges to work jointly towards improving the services we deliver to our citizens and those who come to our country to participate in our economy, to punish effectively those who violate our laws and to protect the weak.

Hon. Justice R.P.I. Bozimo,
Chief Judge of Delta State



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PLAN OF ACTION OF THE DELTA STATE JUDICIARY TO STRENGTHEN JUSTICE SECTOR INTEGRITY AND CAPACITY

I. Enhance Access to justice

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
1. Enhance public enlightenment concerning court related basic rights, court process, bail, legal aid, the complaints system, etc.					Increased awareness and understanding of court users and citizens at large of their basic rights, the court process and other relevant issues; resulting among others, in a reduction of court user complaints.
1.1. Produce and broadcast radio/ TV programmes to educate the public and court users on various aspects of the judicial system and process as relevant from a court users perspective.	High	Court User Committee/ UNODC/ NJI	November 2008	2,000,000	
1.2. Produce and broadcast public service announcements (jingles) for the radio and Pointer Newspaper.	High	Court User Committee/ UNODC/ NJI	November 2008	2,500,000	
1.3. Develop and disseminate information materials (flyers, posters, billboards, stickers) aimed to provide court users with basic information as concerns their procedural rights, the court process, bail, legal aid and other relevant issues.	High	Court User Committee/ UNODC/ NJI		1,000,000	
1.4. Conduct one day peoples Forum in Asaba and three senatorial zones to conduct life drama and awareness program aimed to inform the public about the Peoples rights centre , the justice system, rectify popular misperceptions about its functioning and educate about corrupt and related practices in the justice system including how users should react to them.	Medium	UNODC/ NJI/Court User Committee	January 2009	2,000,000	



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I. Enhance Access to justice (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
2. Enhance the effectiveness of ADR, restorative justice and diversion techniques, in particular as far as applicable to judicial officers					Enhanced accessibility for and satisfaction of court users with the services provided
2.1. Training of Judges , Magistrates, customary court judges on ADR, restorative justice, and diversion techniques, including the training of trainers	Medium	Judiciary/ UNODC/NJI	Ongoing	2,000,000	
2.2. Strengthen the people's rights center at the ministry of Justice.. Peoples rights center works closely with the state judiciary providing services on ADR, legal services and prison decongestion	Medium	Ministry of Justice; AG Office, Judiciary, State Govt.	December 2008	3,000,000	Increased access to Justice for the poor
2.3.Improve capacity of peoples rights center by providing stationary, furniture and computers We can delete this if we cant do it. I told them we may not be able to. They said since their services support the judiciary, it should be included	Medium	Ministry of Justice; AG Office/ State Govt	Dec 2008	500,000	
3. Assist in efforts towards legal assistance to prisoners awaiting trial and rehabilitation of released inmates.					Improved access to justice to prisoners awaiting trial contributing to the decongestion of prisons.
3.1. Support capacity building measures, including training to Strengthen NGOs working with the State Judiciary on Prison decongestion and rehabilitation of released prisoners.	High	UNODC/ NJI/ CJ /State Govt.	August 2008	2,500,000	
Impact Indicators					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Affordability of court and lawyer fees for court users and business people- Average number of postponements per case-category- Access to free defense for prisoners awaiting trial- Access to Information concerning their own case for court users, business people and prisoners- Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques, restorative justice and diversion concepts					



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II. Improve Quality and Timeliness of Justice Delivery					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
4. Improve case-flow management in the courts					Improved case flow and faster disposal of cases
4.1. Review case-flow management software, in particular its analytical functions with a view to enhancing its usefulness to the supervision and management of the courts.	Medium	NJI/UNODC/ Impl. Committee	August 2008	1,000,000	
4.2. Provide specialized training on using case flow management software to 40-60 registrars.	Medium	CJ/UNODC/ NJI	September 2008	1,000,000	
5. Enhance basic professional capacities and skills of magistrates, police prosecutors, investigators, court staff and bailiffs and other justice sector professionals.					Improved knowledge and professional skills of justice sector staff
5.1. Develop comprehensive justice sector training schedule for 2007, including training needs, content of training, target	High	Training Committee/ UNODC/NJI	Ongoing	5,000,000	
5.2. Conduct local training programmes for magistrates, police prosecutors, investigators, court staff and bailiffs in 2007. Each training programme will include one session on professional ethics as applicable to the respective category of trainee.	High	Training Committee /UNODC/NJI/	August 2008	2,000,000	
5.3. Conduct Basic IT training programmes for magistrates, court staff and bailiffs in 2007.	High priority	Training Committee/NJI UNODC	September 2008	2,000,000	
5.4. Train all Magistrates and customary court judges on Practice and procedure.	Medium	Training Committee/NJI UNODC	August 2008	1,500,000	
5.5. Train Court Bailiffs on service of processes ,Sheriff and civil process laws and ethics.	Medium	Judiciary/ Training Committee/NJI/ UNODC	2008-2009	2,000,000	
5.6. Train Police prosecutors and investigators on Procedure / investigation /Human rights and ethics.		Judiciary/ Training Committee/NJI UNODC	2008-2009	2,000,000	



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II. Improve Quality and Timeliness of Justice Delivery (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
6. Review of Rules and Procedures to further enhance the efficiency of justice delivery.					Reduced caseload and backlog at the High Court level, Enhanced accessibility of the justice system
6.1. Continue the review of the civil and criminal procedural rules with a view to assess their functionality and propose further amendments, as appropriate.	Medium	CJ/Rules and Amendment Committee	ongoing	To be determined	



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II. Improve Quality and Timeliness of Justice Delivery (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
7. Equip judges and magistrates with electronic legal resource materials (Nigerian Law Resource Series), Enhance IT Capacity of the courts .		UNODC			Improved legal research capacities of judicial officers resulting in improved and more timely court decisions
7.1. Train judges and magistrates in the applications and use of the software	High	Training Committee	September 2008	1,200,000	
7.2. Provide Desktop computers, Printers and Photocopiers to all Judicial Divisions and Magisterial Districts.	High	State Govt/Judiciary	2008-2009	Budgetary allocation	
8. Reduce Backlog and enhance the efficiency of the courts in the disposal of criminal and civil cases					
8.1. Provide policy advice and technical expertise on the creation of fast track courts/ system.	Medium	UNODC/ NJI/ Impl. Committee	2008-2009	To be determined	
8.2. Review and, as appropriate, design strategies to deal with backlog of cases drawing from international good practices	Medium	UNODC/ NJI, implementation Committee	August 2008	2,500,000	

Impact Indicators

- Average duration of cases per case-category
- Average time required for enforcement of court decisions
- Average Backlog per judge
- Basic IT knowledge of judges / magistrates and staff enhanced.
- Average number of postponements required because of absence of parties, witnesses, accused
- Case-management authority of judges room for delay tactics of prosecutors, lawyers and parties
- Quality of record-keeping
- Availability of judicial resources (laws, jurisprudence of higher courts, legal literature, sentencing guidelines)
- Perceptions of stakeholders concerning consistency, coherence, predictability of court decisions
- Opinions of judges and prosecutors concerning adequacy of continuous professional training (quality and frequency)
- Time required for prisoners awaiting trial to initiate/ conclude their case (first instance)



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III. Strengthen the Accountability, Integrity, Oversight and Independence of the courts

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
9. Strengthen appreciation and adherence of judicial officers with the Code of Judicial Conduct					Increased compliance with standards of professional conduct
9.1. Develop and conduct training programme on judicial ethics, including the training of trainers for all cadres of judicial officers.	High	UNODC/ NJI	Ongoing	To be determined	
9.2. Select and build capacity two judicial officers from the DELTA State Judiciary to act as trainers for other justice sector staff	High	CJ/NJI/UNODC	Ongoing	No cost	
9.3. Develop and disseminate computer based training on judicial ethics.	Low	UNODC/NJI		To be determined	
9.4. Develop and install software to register, analyze, manage and report on complaints received and disposed of. Install complaints management soft ware in the office of the court monitoring committee.	Medium	Public Complaints Committee/ UNODC/ NJI	Ongoing	To be determined	
9.5. Train Secretaries of the Public Complaints Committee in the operation of the complaints software.	Medium	UNODC/ NJI	September 2008	3,000,000	
10. Review and improve standards and systems of Performance Evaluation of Judicial Officers					Enhanced professional accountability through fair, accurate and comprehensive criteria and systems for performance evaluation
10.1. Present international experiences and good practices in performance evaluation of judges.	Medium	UNODC/ NJI	2008-2009	To be determined	

Impact Indicators

- Perception of judges, prosecutors, lawyers, court users and businesses concerning the independence of the judiciary.
- Opinions of judges concerning fairness and transparency of recruitment and career development.
- Availability, adequacy, and active knowledge of content of Code of Judicial Conduct
- Frequency and content of performance evaluation of judges and prosecutors.
- Perceptions concerning credibility, transparency, fairness and effectiveness of disciplinary authorities and disciplinary process
- Awareness and use of any existing complaints system and mechanisms.
- Frequency of court users, business people and prisoners being asked by judges, prosecutors, police, lawyers and court staff to pay a bribe to solve or accelerate their cases.



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IV. Increase Coordination in the Criminal Justice System

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
11. Improve case-flow management across criminal justice institutions, including police, Ministry of Justice, courts, and prisons					Enhanced overall efficiency of the criminal justice process
11.1. Enhance effectiveness of the coordinating role of the Criminal Justice Committee.	High	CJ, AG, Commissioner of Police, Comptroller of Prisons,	Immediately	1,000,000	
11.2 .Organize annual justice forum to discuss the challenges faced in implementing the project.	High	CJ, AG, Commissioner of Police, Comptroller of Prisons, UNODC.	2008/2009	3,000,000	
Impact Indicators					
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Perceptions of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers concerning the coordination among criminal justice institutions.- Perceptions of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers on the quality of work performed by other criminal justice institutions- Existence and functioning of a criminal justice committee					

Total Budget: (₦)42,700,000

Abbreviations

ADR	- Alternative Dispute Resolution
AG	- Attorney General
CJ	- Chief Judge
IT	- Information Technology
NGO	- Non Governmental Organisation
NJI	- National Judicial Institute
UNODC	- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime