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PROJECT LAUNCH OF STRENGTHING ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA INITIATIVE (SAGNI) HELD ON 29TH OCTOBER AT THE DENIS HOTEL, WUSE 2, ABUJA



Cross section of participants at the Launch

INTRODUCTION

The Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) was officially launched on October 29, 2024, at Denis Hotel, Wuse 2, Abuja.

This initiative aims to enhance transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within Nigeria's governance framework, addressing critical gaps in public access to information. Supported by the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC) and funded by the European Union through International IDEA, SAGNI seeks to empower civil society, media, and marginalized groups to effectively engage in governance processes.

Since the enactment of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in 2011, Nigeria has faced significant challenges in implementing its provisions. These challenges include limited public awareness, barriers within government institutions, and inconsistencies in record-keeping practices. As a result, the potential impact of the FOIA has not been fully realized. The SAGNI project specifically targets Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) at the federal level, as well as in Anambra and Edo states, to build upon the FOIA framework and bolster citizen engagement.

By fostering a collaborative approach that includes various stakeholders—civil society organizations (CSOs), youth and women’s groups, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and legal practitioners—SAGNI aims to create a governance culture that resists corruption and promotes transparency. The initiative encompasses a range of activities, including research, capacity-building workshops, policy dialogues, and advocacy engagements, designed to advance understanding and effective utilization of the FOIA as a tool for accountability.

The launch event gathered key stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society organizations, and community groups, united in the goal of bridging existing gaps that hinder citizens' access to government information. The discussions highlighted the importance of the FOIA as a mechanism for promoting good governance and emphasized the need for a concerted effort to enhance its implementation across the nation.

OBJECTIVES

- To capture and analyze stakeholder discussions and actionable recommendations aimed at enhancing the implementation and domestication of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) within the three focal states and Nigeria's governance framework in general.
- To underscore the critical importance of transparency, inclusivity, and accountability in promoting effective governance and citizen engagement in Nigeria.
- To establish a foundational reference for ongoing advocacy, capacity-building initiatives, and policy reform efforts that facilitate open governance and empower civil society participation as it regards the FOI.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS: Total 52: Female; 23, Male; 29, PWDs; 5

PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS:

- Media groups
- CSO groups
- Women groups: National Council of Women Societies
- PWD groups – JONA PWD, Original Inhabitants PWD, FCT and the National Commission PWDs.
- MDA – FmoJ, MoJ Anambra State, MoJ Edo State,
- Area Council – Area Council Services Secretariat

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SPEECH

Executive Director of the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA), Faith Nwadishi, highlighted SAGNI's objectives and outlined the project's framework. She acknowledged the support of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC) and funding from the European Union through International IDEA, emphasizing the collaborative efforts in enhancing transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in Nigeria's governance.



She explained that SAGNI would focus on empowering various stakeholders—civil society organizations (CSOs), youth and women's groups, persons with disabilities, and the media—to use the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as a tool to demand accountability across federal MDAs, the Federal Capital Territory, Anambra, and Edo States. She addressed the challenges hindering FOIA's effectiveness, including exemptions, complex language, low public awareness, and weak record-keeping practices, while noting that CTA is actively working to address these issues. She reaffirmed CTA's commitment to promoting good governance and transparency and called for continued collaboration to strengthen Nigeria's institutions and empower citizens to hold leaders accountable.

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KEY NOTE PRESENTATION

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATION ON THE UTILIZATION AND APPLICABILITY OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) ACT



The keynote emphasized the importance of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act in promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in governance, with support from CSOs and public institutions to ensure compliance and proactive information disclosure.

He emphasized the critical role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in promoting governance transparency and accountability through the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, enacted on May 31, 2011. The Act mandates public records accessibility to encourage openness, deter corruption, and increase citizen engagement.

KEY POINTS FROM THE PRESENTATION

1. FOI Act Purpose and Scope:
 - To ensure public access to government records and information without requiring justification for requests.
 - Applicable to all public institutions, encompassing government branches and private entities utilizing public funds or fulfilling public functions.
2. Constitutional Alignment:
 - Chapter IV, Section 39 of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution protects the right to freedom of expression and information access, with the FOI Act outlining specific mechanisms for obtaining government records.
3. Oversight and Compliance:
 - The Attorney General's Office oversees FOI Act compliance across institutions and participates in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Access to Information Thematic Group. Collaborative initiatives include sensitizations, roundtable meetings, and communications with public entities.
4. Role of Civil Society:
 - The Federal Ministry of Justice collaborates with CSOs to enhance public awareness and strengthen FOI compliance. The Centre for Transparency Advocacy's (CTA) "Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria" project advocates for FOI desks to facilitate proactive information disclosure by government bodies.
5. Citizen Empowerment and Inclusivity:
 - This initiative aims to equip citizens, CSOs, and media with the skills to utilize the FOI Act effectively for demanding transparency, thereby fostering a culture of accountability.

GOODWILL MESSAGES

BARRISTER CHINWE G. OKOM, THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER OF JUSTICE IN ANAMBRA STATE



During her address, Barrister Chinwe G. Okom, acknowledged that the state has yet to domesticate the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act. However, she emphasized that when information is requested and does not conflict with FOI provisions, the ministry actively encourages its disclosure.

She further highlighted the Commissioner's commitment to ensuring justice is served equitably to all citizens. The Ministry of Justice plays a supportive role in facilitating access to information for individuals seeking such data. While Anambra State has not formally adopted the FOIA, there is a pressing need for increased advocacy and public awareness regarding the FOIA as a vital tool for accountability. The Ministry remains dedicated to supporting public requests for government information, fostering transparency, and promoting responsible governance.

MRS NNENNA EMEDOLIBE, PROGRAMME OFFICER, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN SOCIETIES (NCWS)



She brought greetings from the national president. She added that the council is ready to walk with CTA on the project to ensure that Nigeria Women have access to information through the FOI. Importance of citizens access to information to help promote

inclusivity and ensure that Nigeria women have access to information through the FOI.

CHIEF LAZARUS NYAHOLO, SECRETARY TO THE SA'PEYI OF GARKI CHIEFDOM



He started by saying that information is key and that where there is no flow of information, good governance will not be known but the flow of information give people the access to it. Lack of access to information gives room for speculations and keep citizens in the dark. Charged government to be allow public access to government information. By

making information accessible, we make room for development and inclusion.

BARR. ALIYU BAGUDU ABUBAKAR, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE LEGAL AID COUNCIL OF NIGERIA, REPRESENTED BY BARRISTER MICHAEL GUDA UGOH, CHIEF LEGAL AID OFFICER OF THE LEGAL AID COUNCIL



The Legal Aid Council of Nigeria recognizes that accountability is essential for national development. In support of the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) Project, launched by the Centre for Transparency Advocacy with the backing of national and international partners, the Council emphasized that

accountability is the cornerstone of trust and national progress. SAGNI marks a significant step towards establishing a transparent and accountable governance framework within Nigeria, empowering citizens to seek accountability and ensuring that institutions operate with integrity and uphold the rule of law.

The Legal Aid Council pledged its full support for the SAGNI Project, reaffirming its dedication to advancing justice, transparency, and accountability across all sectors. The Council also commended the Centre for Transparency Advocacy and its partners for their commitment to fostering a more equitable and prosperous Nigeria.

BARRISTER OROBOSA OKUNBOR, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS AND REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HONOURABLE COMMISSIONER OF JUSTICE IN EDO STATE



Barrister Orobosa Okunbor highlighted that while the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has not yet been

domesticated in Edo State, the state remains committed to providing public access to information. He emphasized the need for increased advocacy in Edo to enhance understanding and utilization of the FOIA as a vital tool for transparency and accountability.

He further noted that the Federal Ministry of Justice is actively engaging in sensitization efforts with public institutions to promote FOIA compliance, referencing a recent Court of Appeal judgment affirming that states lacking formal FOIA domestication can still grant information requests. Barrister Okunbor underscored Edo State's longstanding commitment to transparency and its willingness to promote open governance.

MR. ODASOJI ADEWALE, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (NCPWD)



He started by saying that the Executive Secretary of the commission is pleased with what Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is doing and is aware of the difficulty associated with FOI task. He is willing and ready to work with CTA. He encouraged that the campaign for the use of FOI spread beyond the scope of the project to

other states.

MR. ANAYO AKWETTI, REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MEDIA, DEMOCRACY RADIO



The media continues to face challenges in effectively utilizing the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act as a tool for transparency. A call was made for capacity-building initiatives to strengthen media proficiency in FOI usage,

alongside a commitment to fully support the project.

ADDRESS BY MRS. OBIALUNANMA NNAOBI-AYODELE, CO-CHAIR (CS), OGP NIGERIA:



Delivering a goodwill message at the launch of the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI), Obialunanma Nnaobi-Ayodele, Co-chair of the Open Government Partnership (OGP) Nigeria, emphasized the critical role of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in advancing democratic values. She remarked that SAGNI

exemplifies civil society's commitment to open governance and accountability, with FOIA serving as a foundation for empowering individuals and strengthening public institutions through accessible information.

Mrs. Nnaobi-Ayodele highlighted that information access is a public right, vital for fostering innovation, building trust, and enabling communities to participate actively in governance. She expressed hope that the SAGNI initiative would drive meaningful progress toward a society where every citizen has the knowledge and tools to contribute to shared national goals. Concluding her message, she expressed gratitude to the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) for its leadership and extended best wishes for the successful implementation of SAGNI.

SUMMARY OF CONVERSATIONS

Stakeholders, including government representatives, civil society organizations (CSOs), and media representatives, convened to discuss strategies to enhance transparency through the domestication and implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Discussions underscored the FOIA as a powerful tool for citizens and the media to foster accountability, transparency, and inclusivity in governance.

KEY POINTS FROM THE CONVERSATIONS

1. **Advocacy for FOIA Domestication in States and establishment of FOI desk:** Both Anambra and Edo States have not domesticated the Freedom of

Information Act (FOIA) and establish an FOI desk, though each expresses a commitment to grant access to government information upon request. There is a recognized need for greater advocacy and public awareness on FOIA's role in fostering accountability within these states.

2. **Transparency as a Pillar for Accountability:** Limited access to government information fuels speculation and restricts citizens' understanding of governance. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of open access to information to build trust and transparency in government.
3. **Inclusivity Through Information Access:** Enhanced citizen access to information via the FOIA can drive inclusivity, especially for marginalized groups, including women and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). Stakeholders advocated for targeted efforts to ensure these groups benefit from FOIA's provisions.
4. **Capacity Building for FOIA Utilization:** The media and the Civil Society Organization faces challenges in effectively using the FOIA as a tool for transparency and accountability because of weak demand and proper follow-up to FOI requests. There was a call for capacity-building programs to empower Citizens groups, CSOs, media professionals in FOIA usage.
5. **Government Awareness on FOIA Requests:** Educating government officials on handling FOIA requests is essential for effective implementation. There is a need to equip officials with the knowledge to process requests transparently and efficiently.
6. **Challenges in FOIA Enforcement:** Stakeholders raised concerns about the lack of penalties for non-compliance with the FOIA, which discourages adherence. Although the Federal Ministry of Justice (FMOJ) is promoting FOIA compliance, stakeholders stressed that enforceable sanctions are crucial to ensure public institutions respond adequately to FOIA requests.
7. **Sensitization and Public Engagement:** Slow adoption of the FOIA is partly due to limited public awareness of its power and potential. The FMOJ highlighted its ongoing sensitization efforts and recognized the need for intensified public education on the FOIA's benefits.
8. **Legal Framework for Non-Domesticating States:** A Court of Appeal ruling allows states that haven't formally domesticated the FOIA to still grant access to requested information. This highlights an opportunity to encourage Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) across Nigeria to comply with FOIA requests, even in the absence of formal domestication.

COMMITMENT NOTES FROM KEY STAKEHOLDERS

1. Federal Ministry of Justice: Commitment to work with CTA and Civil Society Organizations on the FOIA and ensure and disclosure of public information
2. Ministry of Justice, Anambra State: Emphasized the ministry's commitment to encouraging information disclosure when requests align with FOI provisions.
3. National Council for Women Societies: Expressed readiness to collaborate with the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) to ensure that Nigerian women have access to information through the FOI.

4. Community Chief: Commitment to collaborate with CTA on the project.
5. Legal Aid Council: Pledged support for the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) Project and committed to advancing justice, transparency, and accountability across all sectors.
6. Ministry of Justice, Edo State: willing to take action on the uptake of FOI in the State and promote public access to information.
7. National Commission for Persons with Disabilities: Expressed willingness to collaborate with CTA and support the campaign for the use of FOI beyond the project's scope to other states.
8. The Media: Willingness to partner with the CTA in participating for capacity-building initiatives to enhance media proficiency in FOI usage and committed to supporting the project.
9. Open Government Partnership (OGP): Willingness to collaborate with CTA on the project to promoting democratic values and accountability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen Advocacy for FOIA Domestication and the establishment of FOI desk:** Launch dedicated advocacy campaigns in states like Anambra and Edo to promote the benefits of FOIA domestication, highlighting its role in improving transparency and governance.
2. **Enhance Public Awareness and Inclusivity:** Drive awareness initiatives on the FOIA's importance as an accountability tool, especially targeting marginalized groups to ensure equitable access to information.
3. **Capacity Building for citizens groups, Media, CSOs and Public Officials:** Organize capacity-building workshops to equip media professionals with FOIA skills and train government officials on best practices for handling FOIA requests.
4. **Implement Sanctions for FOIA Non-Compliance:** Advocate for enforceable penalties for institutions that fail to comply with FOIA requests, reinforcing the importance of timely and transparent responses from public bodies.
5. **Expand FOIA Awareness Campaigns Nationwide:** Extend the campaign for FOIA beyond the current scope to cover other states, ensuring more uniform understanding and application across Nigeria.
6. **Promote FOIA as a Tool for Inclusive Development:** Emphasize FOIA's role in promoting inclusive development and provide targeted resources to make FOIA access available and beneficial for all citizens, including women and PWDs.
7. **Support FMOJ's Engagement with Public Institutions:** Back the FMOJ's ongoing sensitization efforts, promoting compliance and reinforcing FOIA as a fundamental right across all sectors of government.
8. **Enhance FOI request:** Collaborate with the Attorney General and the Federal Ministry of Justice to enhance the FOI request process.
9. **Promote resource sharing:** proactive disclosure, resource sharing, and improved record-keeping by digitalizing FOI records for greater effectiveness and transparency.

OUTPUT

1. **Strengthened Commitment to FOIA Implementation:** Stakeholders demonstrated a unified commitment to advocating for the domestication of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in Anambra and Edo States, recognizing it as essential for enhancing transparency and accountability in governance. There is also a need for the Federal Minister of Justice to particularly send representatives to participate in advocacy visits and town hall meetings in various states.
2. **Established Collaborative Framework:** A collaborative framework was initiated among civil society organizations (CSOs), government representatives, and media personnel to promote effective FOIA utilization and support the establishment of FOI desks in key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs).
3. **Actionable Recommendations Developed:** Participants developed actionable recommendations aimed at increasing public awareness, capacity building, and advocacy for the FOIA, setting a clear agenda for future activities to promote transparency and inclusivity in governance.

CONCLUSION

The launch of the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) marks a pivotal step towards enhancing transparency, accountability, and inclusivity within Nigeria's governance framework. By fostering collaboration among civil society organizations, government agencies, and the media, SAGNI aims to empower citizens to utilize the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) effectively. The collective commitment to advocate for the domestication of the FOIA and the establishment of FOI desks will not only bridge information gaps but also promote a culture of accountability. As stakeholders embark on this transformative journey, the potential for positive change in governance practices and citizen engagement remains profound, laying the groundwork for a more transparent and accountable Nigeria.

ANNEXES

MEDIA LINKS

- <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/6AaYFCDXCmokpuvB/>
- https://www.instagram.com/p/DBtrXz_gW5a/?igsh=bzN3ZGd4bHF2dGtn
- https://x.com/Cta_Abj/status/1851305517014249569?t=yLJbylx2g9SViacUqRRQg&s=19
- <https://workersvoice.com.ng/cta-launches-project-to-foster-transparency-tackle-corruption-in-govt-agencies/>
- <https://nannews.ng/2024/10/29/cso-urges-states-to-enforce-foi-act/#:~:text=The%20Centre%20for%20Transparency%20Advocacy,to%20ensure%20transparency%20in%20governance>
- <https://nigerianpilot.net/cta-launches-project-to-mobilise-citizens-in-tracking-govt-spending/>

PICTURES











Welcome address by Executive Director Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) at the inception meeting/project launch of the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) Project at Denis hotel, Abuja on 29th October, 2024

Good morning, distinguished guests, esteemed partners, and respected colleagues,

It is a sincere pleasure to welcome you to today's inception meeting for the Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI), with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC) and funding from the European Union through International IDEA. This gathering brings us together with a shared commitment to deepen transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in our country's governance. I would like to extend special gratitude to the representatives of the Honourable Minister of Justice, the Commissioners of Justice from Anambra and Edo States, Executive Secretary of NEITI, Mandate secretaries of the FCT, and all dignitaries and partners whose presence and support have made this occasion possible. We are also incredibly grateful to the RoLAC team, the whose dedication has been instrumental in bringing this initiative to life.

Project Overview and Goals

The Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative, or SAGNI, focuses on Ministries, Agencies and Departments (MDAs) at the Federal level, the Federal Capital Territory, Anambra, and Edo States. Our goals align with the

objectives of the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption (RoLAC) Phase II program, particularly in promoting the effective use of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) of 2011. Through SAGNI, we aim to empower citizens, civil society organizations (CSOs), youth and women's groups, persons with disabilities (PWDs), the media, and legal practitioners to demand accountability at all levels of governance. We hope that by fostering greater transparency, this project will catalyze a shift toward a governance culture that openly resists corruption and celebrates accountability.

The SAGNI project, with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC) and funding from the European Union through International IDEA, over the coming year, includes a range of strategic activities. These activities are research, capacity-building workshops, policy dialogues, and advocacy engagements, all designed to improve access to information and to make the FOI Act an effective tool in citizens' hands. SAGNI will also facilitate the establishment of FOI desks within key Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) and form FOI support groups for citizens, media, and legal professionals, amplifying the voices of the Nigerian public in governance processes.

Challenges in FOIA Implementation

Since the FOI Act's passage in 2011, some progress has been made. However, significant barriers remain. The Act has a concerning number of exemptions, making it challenging for the average citizen to access government information. Additionally, complex terminology within the Act, such as "public interest," often creates ambiguity. Another challenge is Nigeria's literacy rate, which stands at just 57.9%, limiting citizens' understanding and engagement with the Act.

A historical culture of secrecy within our public institutions—rooted in colonial-era practices—also continues to influence governance. While mindsets are slowly changing, this is an uphill battle that the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is dedicated to addressing. Public awareness of the FOI Act is low, with many citizens unaware of its potential to impact their lives. This awareness gap hinders the Act from being fully tested and used as a vehicle for accountability.

Compounding these issues are weak record-keeping practices in many MDAs, where information remains largely in paper form and lacks organized archiving systems. With so few states—Lagos and Ekiti, just the two—having domesticated the FOI Act, enforcement remains inconsistent. The Official Secrets Act and similar regulations also clash with FOIA, impeding public access to critical information.

CTA's Role in Championing Transparency

As the Executive Director of the Centre for Transparency Advocacy, I am immensely proud of our organization's commitment to promoting good governance and transparency in Nigeria. Founded in 2005 and registered in 2012, CTA has worked tirelessly to advocate for transparency and accountability, particularly in the extractive sector. We have focused on improving contract transparency, advancing beneficial ownership disclosures, and supporting initiatives like Reducing Methane Emissions in Nigeria, pushing for these reforms.

Our work goes beyond just advocating for reforms. Through our collaboration with media, CSOs, and community groups, CTA serves as a vigilant observer in elections, a champion for public service transparency, and a voice that actively demands reforms and transparency across all sectors. Our efforts to leverage the FOI Act to promote transparency in Nigeria's Extractive Industry are ongoing. Through sustained advocacy and FOI requests, we work to ensure that the information citizens need is accessible, thereby fostering a culture of transparency and accountability that aligns with global best practices.

Inclusivity and Capacity Building at SAGNI's Core

SAGNI emphasizes inclusivity, involving diverse voices in the governance dialogue. CSOs, youth and women's groups, PWDs, and other marginalized communities will play integral roles. Through this project, we will equip these groups with the tools and skills necessary to use FOIA as a means to demand greater accountability. Our hope is to foster a society where citizens feel empowered to access information and hold leaders accountable for actions affecting their lives.

Conclusion

In closing, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all our partners, stakeholders, and community representatives for their support and dedication to our shared mission. As we embark on this journey with SAGNI, we look forward to impactful collaboration, strengthening Nigeria's institutions, and empowering its citizens. Together, let us make transparency and accountability not just ideals, but realities.

Thank you, and I look forward to the collective success that lies ahead.

Faith Nwadishi

ED, CTA

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION ON THE UTILIZATION AND APPLICABILITY OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) ACT WITH A FOCUS ON THE EXTENT OF FOI UPTAKE IN RELEVANT SECTORS.

PROTOCOLS

All protocols duly observed.

Good morning, everyone. The Hon. Attorney General Federation is delighted to see Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) involved in enlightening and encouraging the citizenry to participate in governance with the interest to know, demand transparency, and accountability in public offices by ensuring the implementation of FOI Act, 2011.

The Freedom of Information Act was enacted on the 31st of May, 2011 to make Public records and information more freely available and to promote

openness, accountability, and deter corruption, The Act also promotes and encourages Citizens' inclusion and engagement.

The Act guarantees the right of the people to request government information and records without establishing the intent or reason for the request. The Act is applicable to all Public Institution, which includes the three (3) Arms of Government and private companies utilizing public funds, providing public services or performing public functions.

Chapter IV, Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution provides for the Right to Freedom of expression, which states that every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference. The Nigerian Constitution did not expressly state how information could be accessed but the FOI Act provides clearly the process of receiving Government information & records.

However, as we gathered here to shed light on the utilization and applicability of the Act, with a specific focus on the extent of FOI uptake in relevant sectors. As we, all know the Hon. Attorney General of the Federation has the oversight responsibility to ensure that all Public Institutions comply with the provisions of the Act. He is also a member of the Open government Partnership (OGPI National steering Committee on the Access to information thematic working Group. The HAGF has held several engagement with Public Institution through sensitizations, round table meetings and various communication platform in ensuring compliance.

Federal Ministry of Justice is collaborating with different Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Public Institutions in ensuring citizens' participation in governance to strengthen transparency in Public Institutions, and foster a culture of accountability.

The Project of Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) on Strengthening Accountability and Governance in Nigeria Initiative Project is laudable as it advocates for the establishment of FOI desk for government to proactively disclose information about its activities and programme for citizens' access to information and to increase capacity of citizens group, CSOs, and the Media in the use of FOI to demand for accountability.

This project is a testament to the commitment of promoting accountability and inclusivity in our society. By fostering a better understanding of governance, we can work towards creating a more informed citizen in Nigeria, where everyone has the opportunity to access government information.

I encourage all of us to actively support this project for the betterment of our nation as a whole.

I will stop by reminding us of the Maya Angelou's quote that says;"Because equal rights, fair play, justice, are all like the air: we all have it, or none of us has it. That is the truth of it"

Thank you.

AGENDA



AGENDA

INCEPTION MEETING AND LAUNCH OF: STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA INITIATIVE (SAGNI)

@ Denis Hotel, Plot 910 N'jamena Street, Off Aminu Kano Crescent, Wuse 2 Abuja.

29th October, 2024

TIME	ACTIVITIES
10:30-11:00	Arrival/Registration of Participants
11:00-11:10	National Anthem
11:10-11:20	Introductions
11:20-11:35	The Executive Director's Opening Remarks
11:35-12:05	Goodwill Messages: ROLAC, NEITI, Min. Of Justice Anambra and Edo states, National PWDs commission, Legal Aid Council, Mandate Secretaries of FCT, NOA,
12:05-12:35	Introduction of the Project: STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY AND GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA INITIATIVE (SAGNI) - Program Manager
12:35-12:50	Group Photograph