

Welcome address by Faith Nwadishi JP, mpi Executive Director, Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) ON ANTI-CORRUPTION DAY celebration on 9/12/2024 at the Federal Ministry of Finance HQ, Abuja.

Protocols

Today, December 9, 2024, we gather to commemorate International Anti-Corruption Day in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Justice. The Centre for Transparency Advocacy is honored to join forces with global stakeholders especially the Federal Ministry of Justice, ROLAC project, Idea International and the European Union to intensify the fight against corruption.

It is my honour to stand before you today, commemorating International Anti-Corruption Day 2024, under the theme "Uniting with Youth Against Corruption: Shaping Tomorrow's Integrity Using FOIA 2011 as a Tool."

In a world where corruption threatens the very fabric of our societies, we gather to reaffirm our commitment to integrity, transparency, and accountability. Today, we recognize the pivotal role of youth in shaping a corruption-free future.

The Freedom of Information Act 2011 (FOIA) is a powerful instrument in our arsenal against corruption. By leveraging FOIA, we can unlock the secrets of governance, promote transparency, and hold leaders accountable.

As we unite with the youth, we acknowledge their energy, creativity and determination. Together, we will harness the potential of FOIA to build a brighter tomorrow, where integrity is the cornerstone of our collective existence.

Let us march forward, empowered by knowledge, driven by conviction and guided by the unwavering pursuit of a corruption-free Nigeria.

Corruption undermines democratic institutions, distorts economies, and erodes public trust. Nigeria's ranking on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index underscores the urgency for collective action.

As we reflect on our journey, we recognize the Freedom of Information Act 2011 (FOIA) as a potent tool in combating corruption. This legislation empowers citizens to demand transparency and accountability from government institutions.

At CTA, we are working towards a Nigeria where citizens have access to information, where citizens are free to request records and documents from public institutions and have them. A society that promotes openness in governance and decision-making processes. Also, a responsible use of public resources for public good.

We therefore, urge for effective domestication, implementation and deployment of the FOIA across states in Nigeria as this will expose embezzlement, misappropriation, and abuse of office. It will ensure transparency in budgeting, contracting, and public procurement leading to good

governance while empowering citizens hold leaders accountable through inclusive participation in decision making

Importantly, as we go on with this project, we aim to increase awareness: Educate citizens on their rights and responsibilities even as we plead with government institutions to ensure proper information management and disclosure.

We commend the efforts of whistleblowers, journalists, and civil society organizations utilizing FOIA to expose corruption. We urge citizens to utilize FOIA to demand transparency, participate in governance. While the civil society should continue advocating, monitoring, and supporting anti-corruption efforts.

Strengthening Accountability and governance in Nigeria Initiative (SAGNI) implemented by the Centre for Transparency Advocacy (CTA) is with support from the Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Programme (RoLAC) and Funding from the European Union Through International IDEA

Project Overview and Goals

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, 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.

In conclusion, the fight against corruption requires collective action. Let us harness the power of FOIA to build a transparent, accountable Nigeria.

Thank you.

Faith Nwadishi

ED, CTA