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EDITOR'S NOTE.

The issue of inclusion of marginalized groups in the electoral and political processes in Nigeria is long overdue.

As a signatory to several International instruments, the country is yet to go far and deep in implementing the binding agreements.

That is why issues of inclusion of women, youths and People with Disabilities, PWDs, will continue to be on the front burner until deliberate efforts are applied to implement the relevant instruments.

Key to the achievement of this noble objective on inclusion is the media. Its role on information dissemination and agenda setting, particularly on the issue of inclusion of women, youths and People with Disability, PWDs, in governance cannot be over-

emphasized. But to play that role effectively and professionally, the media needs to be adequately informed on the prevailing issues.

That was the import of the recent workshops organized by the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, across the country in the month of October. The Anambra event towards the governorship election was jointly organized with the International Press Centre, IPC. It was two-pronged; an appearance on a live TV popular programme alongside stakeholders in the state to drive home the need for citizens' participation as well as fair, ethical coverage of the upcoming elections in the gateway state to the southeast heartland. We bring you reports of these events in our major story in this edition.

IMS also held a meeting of stakeholders on the development of guidelines for disability inclusion in a bid to strengthen the media to provide fair, accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria ahead of the 2023 general elections. You will find the story on pages 4, 10 & 11.

To add more bite to the stories, we bring you an engaging interview with Mr David Anyaele, Executive Director of Center for Citizens with Disability, CCD, who explains in detail what his organization was doing to address issues of disability and inclusion of PWDs, the challenges faced and overcome and the prospects of marginalized groups during and after the 2023 general elections in the country. It is on pages 8 & 9.

Our regular photo pages capture images of the period in an engaging way for your delight. Happy reading.

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IMS Promotes Inclusive Regulatory Framework, Hosts Stakeholders.

Inclusion of marginalized groups in the electoral and political process in Nigeria and promoting inclusive media regulatory frameworks, dominated discussions at recent workshops organized by the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, in Lagos.

The activity geared towards inclusion of marginalized groups in the political and electoral process, held on Wednesday, October 20 and Thursday, 21, 2021 in Lagos, while the one on media regulatory frameworks, held on Friday October, 22 and Saturday,

youths and marginalized groups in politics.

He said: "The issue of inclusion is very serious, it is at the heart of democracy and must be addressed if we are truly developing democracy in our country. Other players in the political space are raising their games and the media has to be in the forefront on the issue of inclusion, urgently. This event is structured as a conversation and everyone is urged to participate so that we can deliver on the objective that brought us here today."

inclusion of the minority in governance is usually through deliberately planned policies hence the need to advocate for inclusion of women, youths and people with disabilities who are often excluded from the political processes in the country.

He cited statistics from a study on broadcast media news coverage of elections conducted by IMS in 2018/19. According to him, the study showed that at 46.1 per cent of youths in contrast to 49.6 per cent for older persons featured in broadcast news

coverage while the figure for PWDs stood at 6 per cent compared to 94 per cent for others and 70.4 per cent for men as against 29 per cent for women. The media, Ojebode said, still need to "go the extra mile to include PWDs, women and youths in their reportage," because, "inclusion talks about equity, not equality. Equality excludes while equity includes."

For Fijabi, the media is yet to give adequate coverage to women during elections even when they participate as aspirants because the focus is always on who wins.

"The Nigerian governance process must include women and deliberate effort should be taken by stakeholders to enable women play active roles in the political and electoral processes," she said,

harping on the importance of implementing UN conventions and other instruments like the Beijing Convention on 35 per cent inclusion for women in all administrative and legislative structures of government.

Epelle spoke on the topic; Disability Inclusion in the Electoral Process: The Media Perspective. Epelle, who defined disability as the social consequences of impairment, said language was key in describing people with disabilities so as not to disempower them and surround them with myths, adding that, for example, blindness, deafness, albinism do not make one disabled, rather the barriers that exist such as inaccessibility to media, public health services and the judicial system make one as such.

He listed five types of disability to include albinism; physical impairment of mobility and stamina; hearing impairment; deafness and visual impairment and urged the media to take the following advocacy measures:

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Participants at the two-day workshop on Promoting Inclusive Media Regulatory Frameworks held in Lagos

October 23, 2021. Both events drew participants from the civil society, media, academia, industry and women groups from all parts of the country.

The first event, entitled *Conversation by Media Industry Groups on Inclusion*, was facilitated by Mr Lekan Sote, a senior journalist, newspaper columnist and a media trainer and Mrs Funke-Anike Treasure Durodola, senior broadcast journalist and a media trainer.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr Akin Akingbulu, said the workshop, holding under the Support to Media Component 4A component of the European Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria, EU-SDGN Project, with priority to reinforce democratic governance in the country through fair and ethical media reportage of the electoral process, would focus on generating ideas for inclusion of marginalized groups in the electoral and political processes.

This focus, he stressed, fulfils the fourth pillar of the 4A component of the EU-SDGN project, which is improving media engagement in promoting women,

To set the conceptual framework for discussion by participants, Professor Ayo Ojebode of the Department of Communication and Languages Arts at the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo state, Mrs. Mufiliat Fijabi, Executive Director of Nigerian Women Trust Fund and founder and Director of The Albino Foundation, Mr Jake Epelle, spoke briefly on elements of democracy, travails of women in politics and lingering issues on People With Disabilities, PWDs, respectively. While Ojebode and Fijabi spoke virtually, Epelle was present at the two-day workshop.

According to Ojebode, there was need to contrast majoritarian rule with democracy to give meaning to the concept of democracy as government of the people, for the people and by the people.

"Majoritarianism is a system when the majority has its way, different from a democratic system where the will, expression and expectation of the minority find their way in democratic governance," he said and added that

Stakeholders Stress Importance of Developing Media Guidelines for Disability Inclusion

In a bid to strengthen the media to provide fair, accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria, the Institute for Media and Society organised a two-day meeting on development of media guidelines for disability inclusion in Abuja.

The event held under Component 4: Support to Media, of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Project, brought together participants from the media, unions/associations, marginalized groups, civil society groups, academia, and others to put ideas together for the development of a resource material for improved media coverage of inclusion in the electoral and democratic governance processes in the country.

In his welcome remarks, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr. Akin Akingbulu appreciated participants for making out time to attend the activity. He observed that the engagement which falls under the fifth result pillar of IMS work under the EU-SDGN project was targeted at refocusing media attention to the participation of people with disabilities, women and youths in the electoral process.

Dr. Akingbulu noted that through the implementation of the EU-SDGN project in the last four years, IMS had recorded significant mileage on the issue of inclusion by giving priority attention to the participation of the marginalised groups in electoral and broader governance processes, part of which were deliberate actions to bring to the front burner of discussion disability inclusion, and well as drawing media attention to the need for giving coverage to persons with disability.

He pointed out that more attention would be given to issues affecting

participation of PWDs because their participation in all processes would further strengthen decision making within the democratic process in the country.

While highlighting the need for a resource material that would guide the media in its coverage to PWDs, Dr. Akingbulu made it clear that priority attention in the coverage of PWDs would not only create awareness about their issues, but also give them opportunity to participate in the media space to showcase their capacity, as well as gather more support to improve their participation in electoral and broader democratic process.

Inclusion in the Electoral Process: Baseline Perspectives

Delivering his presentation on: *Broadcast Media and Inclusion in the*

terms of will and expectations of governance. He noted that in any governance system where different segments of the people are not given fair treatment in terms of inclusion, there is bound to be denial of rights and varying levels of abuses.

Professor Ojebode expressed his dissatisfaction with what he referred to as a majority rule which is being misconstrued as a democracy. With the minority strata of the society such as women, people with disabilities, young people and those from small political parties being excluded in true participation, he expressed fears that such situation may give way for leadership to abuse power and privileges by running the system the way they want in clear demonstration of majoritarian rule.

While he noted that attempts have been made by government to promote inclusion of different segments of the society in the democratic process especially in the electoral process, he believed there were still structural barriers militating against true inclusion

Drawing information from the media monitoring report of the 2019 electoral process by IMS, the scholar expressed

concern over what the media is saying about the young people, women and PWDs. He also noted the level of media coverage of issues affecting marginalised groups was very minimal, implying that little media space had been allotted to these categories of people.

In view of this, the media was encouraged to raise its game by giving adequate attention to the inclusion of the marginalised groups in terms of coverage.

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Blessing Oladunjoye, Publisher of BOnews, addressing participants at the two-day meeting on Developing Media Guidelines for Disability Inclusion, Abuja.

Electoral Process: A call for Intentionality, Professor Ayobami Ojebode, a media scholar from the University of Ibadan, pointed out that poor media coverage of marginalised groups, particularly People with Disabilities (PWDs) in the electoral and political process had become a major source of concern, and a setback for building an inclusive electoral and broader democratic process in the country.

He explained that a true democracy provides for a broad inclusion where all interests are adequately represented in

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Raise awareness of persons facing disability and issues of disability and challenge the idea in the public arena that it is a taboo; feature examples of persons with disability as providers of expertise, services as sources of support for their families and communities; call for better resources to address exclusion of PWDs and promote products, services and environment that support full participation of people including PWDs, allow persons with disability to speak for themselves and work with journalists with disabilities.

The discussion that followed centered on the need to create alternative models on inclusion; support the youths though the social media as happened during #EndSARS protest, understand and communicate in their language in editorial policies and creative programmes that emphasize inter-generational connectivity in programme production planning.

Participants broke into group sessions which discussed extensively the views that were canvassed the previous day by Ojebode, Fijabi, Epelle with contributions from Sote, Professor Ifeoma Dunu of the Department of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Treasure Durodola and participants.

General Resolutions:

Media should be intentional in news coverage on inclusion; policy makers should be made to listen to issues of the excluded as media managers engage and interface with different political parties; appropriate media should be chosen to deliver the message, eg community radio and TV, online and print media; training media personnel to understand points of view of the excluded; agree to call out the National Orientation Agency, NOA, to rise to the demands of their office because the media cannot take up the issue of agenda setting alone; using appropriate language of the youths: Inter-generational connectivity in programme planning on inclusion; pressure group for the inclusion of women, youths and PWDs.

The second event was facilitated by Professor Abigail Ogwezzy-Ndisika of the Department of Mass Communication at the University of Lagos, Dr Tunde Akanni of Mass Communication Department, Lagos

State University and Mr Lekan Otufodurin. The two-day retreat was titled "*Promoting Inclusive Media Regulatory Frameworks.*"

In his opening remarks, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr Akin Akingbulu expressed his gratitude to stakeholders who graced the event. He encouraged participants to actively participate in the meeting and come up with recommendations that would help promote regulatory frameworks of the media and speed-up inclusivity of marginalized groups such as People with Disabilities, PWDs, women and the youths by the media in their reportage.



Participants at a two-day Retreat on Inclusive Media Regulatory Framework held in Lagos.

Dr. Akingbulu made it known that through the implementation of the EU-SDGN project in the last four years, concerted efforts had been made to engage issues of inclusion of marginalised groups with a wide range of stakeholders, including the policy environment with tremendous successes being recorded. He observed that the issue of inclusion is a very serious one in strengthening the country's democracy and explained that the diversity of participation in the event would provide opportunity to have different perspectives on the issues for discussions with a bid to deliver quality outputs from the activity.

In his good will message, Mr Lanre Arogundade, Executive Director of International Press Centre, IPC, expressed his delight in the existing partnership between IPC and IMS as complementers of the Support to Media component of the EU-SDGN project and urged the media to ensure the PWDs, women and Youths are adequately included in their reportage.

Professor Ojebode, made his input in a video message; *Broadcast Media and Inclusion in the Electoral Process: A call for Intentionality*:

Mr Waheed Oguntade of the Centre for Citizens with Disabilities, CCD, stated that people with disabilities should be

carried along from the registration to election stage. He commended the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, for carrying some PWDs along in some states of the federation.

In his presentation titled; *Status of Inclusion in regulation-industry level frameworks(Self-regulation)*, Dr Akingbulu, gave insight into how some developed countries have set the rules towards achieving inclusion in their media regulatory frameworks.

He used their case study to proffer solutions to the problem of inclusion in Nigeria enumerating the cases of Canada and France where broadcast regulators have taken into cognisance inclusivity in media regulation. He stated that quality audio description, captioning and sign language were provided which made it possible for people with hearing disabilities to be carried along in broadcast programmes as well as voice support in broadcast for the visually impaired.

According to him the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission, CRTC, ensured minimum levels of described programming for visual disability and followed the same level of commitment to inclusion in broadcast media regulatory frameworks. Provisions were made in 2009 to provide audio description for all in-house productions related to information-based programmes. These actions, according to him have continued to increase obligations by working with industry experts.

Akingbulu expressed concern that the present provisions in the Nigerian broadcast regulatory frameworks was not sufficient to drive the much expected inclusion, hence the need for review.

Speaking on the need to be guided towards ensuring inclusive regulatory framework, Arogundade maintained that the present media regulatory frameworks has insufficient provisions for inclusion. He added that driving media inclusion requires sufficient statutory provision which would put the media in a compulsory task to drive quality participation of PWDs, women and youths in electoral process.

He noted that having self-regulatory guidelines on inclusion will further strengthen the media to be intentional and deliberate in bringing to the front burner issues affecting marginalized groups as he encouraged practitioners to use relevant guidelines to ensure coverage is done more inclusively.

Activities by IMS and other Implementing Partners



Regulatory Frameworks held in Lagos.



Blessing Oladunjoye, publisher of BOnews, addressing participants at the two-day meeting on Developing Media Guidelines for Disability Inclusion, Abuja.



Chapter, Mr. Andie Onwuahe, NUJ Chairman, Mr Ekpene Francis, Mr Lanre Akin Ogunna of UniZik and Dr Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director, IMS, NAWOJ



A group session at the two-day Meeting on Development of Media Guidelines for Disability Inclusion held in Abuja.



Regulatory Framework held in Lagos.



Group photograph of participants at the meeting for Development of Media Guidelines for Disability Inclusion held in Abuja

Events, People and Places at the EU-SDGN act



L-R: Mr Lekan Sote, Punch Columnist, Executive Director of IMS, Dr Akin Akingbulu, Mr Jake Epelle, Executive Director, The Abino Foundation, Prof. Ifeoma Dunu of the Dept. of Mass Communication, Unzika on Conversation by Media Industry Groups on Inclusion in Electoral and Political Process held in Lagos.



Participants at the two-day retreat on Media Regulation held in Lagos.



Participants at the training workshop organised by Yiaga Africa for Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly in Abuja



L-R: RATTAWU Chairperson, Anambra State Chairperson, Arogundade, Executive Director, IPC, Prof. Stella Oduro, Chairperson, Mrs Franklyn Onyekachi,



Participants at a two-day Retreat on Inclusive Media Regulatory Framework held in Lagos.



Participants at a two-day Retreat on Inclusive Media Regulatory Framework held in Lagos.

Appointing PWDs Policy Makers, Implementers Can Speed -up Inclusion, Says Anyaele

Mr David Anyaele is the Executive Director of the Centre for Citizens with Disability. In this interview with Media4DemocracyNG, he bares his mind on the need for inclusion of women, youths and People with Disabilities, PWDs, in the political and electoral processes in the country and highlights the role of his organization in this effort. Excerpts:

The Federal Government of Nigeria recently listed inclusion of marginalized groups in governance as one of its major achievements in the past six years. Do you agree with this view?

Yes, I think the Minister for Information and Culture who said that is correct. Immediately President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Disability Act in 2019, the government went on to set up the Disability Commission, which is headed by someone with disability. Moreover, Buhari has consistently restated similar views in his nationwide addresses, particularly in 2021, when he did that in paragraph 29. There is no government in Nigeria that has done that and to that extent, I must give them kudos.

How far do you think the Disability Commission can go in terms of implementation, sustainability of its set goals?

As far as the law provides. I think the issues are sustainable. It is the law that sustains the policy and I think the law is going to be implemented. It may not go at the rate we expect but it is better than nothing. The mandate of the Commission is explicit enough and it is derived from the Act. It also provides a framework for government agencies like the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, to measure themselves to ensure that no one is left out in the matters of voter equity for PWDs. The major problem, however, is that of employment of PWDs. It is about time organizations reviewed their policies and integrate such people. The media and people at the personal level should create awareness on this matter.



Anyaele

What are the highlights of your organization's achievements and challenges in this regard?

CCD was founded in 2002. It was formerly called Amputees Rehabilitation Foundation, founded by its founder whose hands were chopped off in Sierra Leone as a result of identifying with Nigerian mission in that country during its civil war and was evacuated by the ECOMOG forces to Nigeria where he was treated and confirmed stable in August 1999. His rehabilitation into the Nigerian society made him to establish the organization in 2007.

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It was in using his success stories in Lagos and campaigns in Abuja alongside other PWDs that led to the drafting of the Disability Act.

Also, we have successfully built capacity of PWDs in Nigeria, developed documents on PWDs in Nigeria and done some authority reporting on international instruments and advocacy projects. As for the challenges, we have



Anyaele

experienced discrimination first hand; some people envy what we do. Funding is also an issue. But we have to continue to create awareness of these issues and do what we need to do in an effort to secure inclusion.

What level of monitoring has organizations like yours done to ensure the issues are being addressed by the Commission?

It is interesting to note that since 2019 we have been monitoring the implementation of the Act. And we report the outcomes in our reports. In 2020, for example, we published a study on the level of compliance in

the implementation of the Act. Apart from the Commission, we also monitor bodies like INEC on their level of compliance with issues dealing with inclusion. On that note, let me say that because some groups, organizations allow participation of PWDs does not mean that their environment is accommodating. Do they have special toilets or braille for writing? Does accommodating PWDs mean discrimination has stopped in the organizations? How do people relate with PWDs in their organizations? It is a process and it must begin with a change of attitude.

As one of the implementers of the EU-SDGN project how would you assess its impact as it affects your area of core competence?

Ordinarily, we would not do our work effectively without the EU support. Because of this support to organizations like ours, we have been able to create visibility around issue of disability. The EU Ambassador to Nigeria,

Ketil Karlsen and Mrs Laolu Olawunmi are very passionate about issues of disability and they have the passion to help. We are indeed happy about the EU support.

What is the relationship of your organization with other implementers of the project like?

Very good. I have good relationship with all of them or else I would not be talking to you now. And that is going to continue when we enter the phase two of the project. It means the success of the project will deepen sustainability of the issues taken up by implementers.

Do you foresee a better deal for the marginalized groups, particularly PWDs during and beyond the 2023 general election?

Of course, I do. The law on disability is being implemented, that was why we had to struggle to secure the passage of the Act. We see it as a benchmark to secure the process of political and electoral inclusion. We won't hesitate to go back to the National Assembly, NASS, to seek amendment of the law if the prevailing issues are not properly addressed. No law is perfect; it can become obsolete with time.

Are you suggesting that advocacy can include protests and demonstrations to attract attention to issues on disability?

Yes. We used protest to secure the passage of the Act. On October 10, 2018, I demanded that the NASS should conclude the process of debating the bill and we gave them a 7-Day ultimatum. The NASS passed the bill and submitted it on November 18, 2018 to the President for his assent. On January 17, 2019, I also led a protest against President Buhari and the law became a reality in 2019. Anybody who says protest should not be done does not know what they are talking about. We got the Act through struggle, not through an executive bill. It was the PWDs that submitted the proposal before some Senators like Bode Olajumoke and others took it up from there. Though organizations like INEC is doing their best to implement issues related to inclusion of marginalized groups, particularly PWDs, we still think the fastest way is to appoint PWDs into positions where policies on disability are made, policies are implemented and designed.

IMS, IPC Harp on Professional Media Coverage of Anambra Polls, Citizen Participation

In furtherance to efforts towards strengthening the media to provide fair, accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria, IMS and IPC organised a media engagement and TV appearance in preparation for the Anambra State governorship election. The two engagements aimed at strengthening the role of the media in deepening voter education and inclusive coverage of the upcoming Anambra State governorship election.

The events were part of efforts made by IMS and IPC to improve media capacity to deliver its mandate of providing quality information towards enhancing voter education on inclusive participation in the electoral process, as well as encouraging the conduct of a peaceful election in the gateway state into the southeast heartland. The Institute for Media and Society (IMS) and International Press Centre (IPC), implement Component 4: Support to Media, of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Project.

International Press Centre, IPC and the National Association of Women Journalists, NAWOJ, Chairperson in the state, Ms Franklyn Onyekachi, Dr. Akin Akingbulu highlighted the need for citizens to vote during elections because elected officers represent the people's interests and to also advance their welfare and security. He said the role of the media in civic and voter education towards advancing credible elections in Nigeria cannot be underestimated.

Addressing concerns in achieving a free and credible election in Nigeria, Mr. Arogundade observed that free and credible elections were possible when citizens have adequate education and duly mobilised to perform their civic responsibility.

Highlighting some of the grievous implications of voter apathy, Mr. Lanre Arogundade observed that one of the major implications of voter apathy is that citizens would not be able to hold political office holders accountable, as

media academics and CSOs, Dr. Akingbulu explained that through the implementation of the EU-SDGN project in the last four years, several engagements had been organised which brought together media practitioners and other stakeholders in numerous parts of the country with tremendous successes recorded.

Dr. Akingbulu appreciated the support of Professor Stella Okunna for development of the media industry and for accepting the invitation to be the facilitator of the event.

Goodwill Messages from Media Industry Groups: NUJ, NAWOJ and RATTAWU

The Acting Chairman, Nigerian Union of Journalists, NUJ, Mr Ekpone Francis, the chairperson of NAWOJ in the state chapter, Onyekachi, and the chairman of RATTAWU Anambra State Chapter, Mr. Andie Onwuahe, called on media professionals to abide by editorial principles and standards in their coverage and reportage of the electoral process and avoid all actions that could jeopardise elections and the peace of the society.

Salient Issues from Statutory and Self-Regulation in Election Coverage (IMS/IPC)

Dr. Akingbulu identified a number of indices to be examined so as to clearly understanding how effective the media have performed in the area of compliance with statutory and self-regulation in election coverage. These indices considered include: training/capacity building, gate-keeping, planning and security.

Experience from Recent Elections in Nigeria

Jake Epelle, the Executive Director, The Albino Foundation; Franklin Oyekachi (Chairperson, NAWOJ Anambra) and Mrs Mariam Menkiti, Executive Director of Women Information Network, (WINET), shared experiences on issues around inclusion in recent elections in Nigeria.

They admonished civil society organisations and the media to help bring issues of inclusion of PWDs to the front burner of discussion at different fora, thereby escalating concerns of marginalized groups and ensuring that such concerns were adequately addressed.

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L-R: RATTAWU Chairman, Anambra State Chapter, Mr. Andie Onwuahe; NUJ Chairman, Mr Ekpone Francis; Mr Lanre Arogundade, Executive Director, IPC; Prof. Stella Okunna of UniZik; Dr Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director, IMS and NAWOJ Chairperson, Mrs Franklyn Onyekachi.

The media appearance organised by IMS in partnership with IPC at a popular live breakfast TV show: *Good Morning Anambra*, on Anambra State Broadcast Service (ABS) Television on Friday, September 24, 2021, sought to deepen voter education on issues of inclusivity in the electoral and governance process of Anambra State as well as highlighting the role of the media in election coverage.

Speaking on the show alongside the Executive Director of the Institute for Media and Society (IMS), Mr Lanre Arogundade, Executive Director of the

they were not part of the process that brought them into such offices they occupy.

Ms Onyekachi said that deliberate or systemic exclusion of women and other marginalised groups from the electoral process had always been detrimental to election credibility at all levels in Nigeria.

The Workshop

In his keynote address at the opening of the media engagement workshop which brought together stakeholders from broadcast, print, online media,

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The scholar reiterated that inclusion remains a deliberate action that must be fulfilled in a true democracy and as such the media has a huge responsibility on its shoulders stating that the media has to commit more to its social inclusion and drive for equity in terms of participation of the marginalised groups in the electoral and political process.

Disability Inclusion in the Electoral Process in Nigeria: My Perspectives

Giving her perspective on disability inclusion, Blessing Oladunjoye, publisher BOnews, an online publication covering disability issues expressed dissatisfaction with the way PWDs were treated in the electoral process in the country.

She frowned at the poor access for persons with disabilities and inadequate provision of enabling facilities that would make participation in the electoral process easier. Citing a number of examples of access issues during voter registration and elections, Oladunjoye noted that data on PWDs had become very essential in planning for participation of PWDs.

Responsibilities of the Media on Disability Inclusion: Insights from Local and International Instruments:

In his presentation on responsibility of the media on disability inclusion: insights from local and international instruments, Dr. Akingbulu explained that there are provisions in several instruments at the national and international levels which address media and freedom of expression responsibilities on disability inclusion,

which are either self-regulatory or statutory frameworks.

Citing the Discrimination Against Persons with Disabilities (Prohibition) Act 2018, the media policy scholar noted that even when there are provisions that deals with issues of inclusion of persons in local instruments, the need arose to further deepen such provisions.

On media responsibilities in disability inclusion, representatives of the disability communities and stakeholders expressed dissatisfaction with the very little attention given to issues of PWDs in legislation and by the media. While noting that the media had not given sufficient coverage for PWDs, they also complained that the media is not deliberate enough in giving space to PWDs.



Participants at the two-day meeting on Media Guidelines for Inclusion in Abuja.

Drawing lessons from international instruments which provided for the inclusion of PWDs by the media. They noted that it was essential for the media to give attention to quality participation of people with

disabilities, while observing that the 5 percent employment quota provided for in the disability act had not been met by the media.

To foster more responsiveness of the media to disability inclusion, stakeholders advocated for intentional media policies that would create space for inclusion of PWDs and also put in place mechanisms with monitor compliance to such policies.

Promoting Disability Inclusion in Media Content in the Electoral Process:

Members of the disability community were of the view that the media is vested with the responsibility of leading public discussions that will facilitate and promote disability inclusion. They urged the media to be intentional and deliberate in creating

specialised contents that would help promote disability inclusion in the electoral process.

Access for PWDs in the Media:

Defining access as the means or opportunity to approach or enter a space, be it structural, lending of voice or participation in programmes focused on electoral processes, stakeholders observed that the media should take up the challenge and responsibility of informing, educating and persuading the public and the policy environment to give attention to concerns of inclusion of PWDs at different stages of the electoral process.

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Coverage and Deepening Voter Education in Anambra State Governorship Election

Participant in the interactive session on coverage and deepening of voter education in Anambra State governorship election agreed that their media platforms had always been interested in educating the public on their roles and responsibility in the

electoral process.

They reiterated their commitment to voter education, while they also called for support from stakeholders to provide training and re-training of media professionals in the deepening and delivery of voter education. They further emphasised the need to engage media owners on the importance of voter education and to provide opportunity on their media platforms for voter education.

Stakeholders Meet on NBC Act Amendment Process

The Institute for Media and Society, IMS, recently organised a two-day stakeholders' consultative meeting on NBC Act amendment process as part of efforts towards strengthening the media to provide fair, accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria

The event which held in Abuja on October 25-26, 2021, brought together participants from the media, unions/associations, marginalized groups, civil society groups, academia, regulators, policy analysts and others, focused on matters arising from the reform processes of the broadcasting legislation and regulatory framework.

Delivering his welcome remarks at the opening of the event, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, said that engaging in discussions on issues on matters arising from the reform processes of the broadcasting legislation would further advance the advocacy towards achieving a better media legislative framework for the industry.

Dr. Akingbulu noted that through the implementation of the EU-SDGN project in the last four years, issues around amendment of broadcast media legislation had been a priority of engagements by IMS at different levels, including the policy environment. This, according to him, had increased public awareness.

He pointed out that a lot had been done in advocating for the amendment of the legislative instrument, driven by media stakeholders from the beginning.

While acknowledging the diversity of participation in the event, he stated that engagements of this nature had helped tremendously in driving the process leading to a plurality of the

broadcasting sector between 2015 to 2020, with the emergence of community and campus radios in the country. Akingbulu expressed optimism that the gathering would provide opportunity to have different perspectives towards driving the amendment process of the NBC Act.

In his brief goodwill message, the Lagos Zonal Director of NBC, Dr Chibuike Ogwumike, commended IMS for stirring discussions on the amendment of the NBC Act and bringing together relevant stakeholders to push for the review of the legislative framework.

Overview of the NBC Act Amendment Process:

In his overview of the NBC Act Amendment process, Dr Akingbulu noted that the effective functioning of the media largely depends on the quality of legislation, adding that a defective legislation would impact negatively on media professionalism.

Dr. Akingbulu noted that from 2017 to the present time, IMS had brought together stakeholders to implement activities within the NBC Act amendment initiative, which include: convening conversations, development of resource/public education materials, engagement with policy bodies, including the executive and legislature. Disclosing that IMS submitted a Memorandum to the House of Reps and made a presentation at the public hearing organised by the House of Reps Committee on Information, Ethics and Values, he assured the stakeholders that

engagements would continue through the other phases of the process of the passage of the Bill at the Senate, up to Presidential assent.

Institutional Structural Issues:

Opening discussions with stakeholders on institutional structural issues, Dr. Tunde Adegbola explained that the legislative environment limits the operational space for the NBC.

On funding and accountability of the NBC, Dr. Akingbulu observed that NBC should be funded directly to enable it perform its regulatory roles without any hindrance.

Inclusion in the Broadcast Media Regulatory Framework:

Stakeholders' canvassed for inclusion of marginalized groups in the broadcast media regulatory framework to allow for representation of all segments of the society.

Stakeholders in their responses articulated the need for representation of people with disabilities, women and young people in the NBC structures to achieve a more representative regulatory operation.



Executive Director of IMS, Dr Akin Akingbulu, Dr Tunde Adegbola and other guests at the NBC Stakeholders Meet on NBC Act Amendment Process held in Abuja

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