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## EDITOR'S NOTE.

The watchdog role the media play in the sustenance of democratic governance is globally acknowledged. That is why in a developing country with many structural, institutional and personnel challenges, the media needs the constant involvement of critical stakeholders to chart a way forward.

Accurate, ethical and fair reportage of events, particularly the electoral process, is crucial to the larger issues of survival, growth and development of a developing country such as Nigeria. Eight months after the 2019 general election was held in Nigeria and six months after the winners have been sworn into office, the electoral process is still an ongoing concern as some victors are losing their Certificates of Return and some new actors are being sworn in, particularly at the legislature, courtesy of the Election Petition Tribunals and Appeal Court rulings.

In the light of these of events, the Institute for Media and Society, IMS,

held a 2-Day Focus Group Discussion for stakeholders in Lagos and in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory, in the months of September and October. The events, held under the European Union Support for Democratic Governance in Nigeria, Project, EU-SDGN and attended by media professionals, academics, scholars, civil society and women groups, examined the emerging trends in the media, the challenges the media has faced since twenty years of uninterrupted democratic governance in the country and made robust recommendations towards improvements. We serve you details of the deliberation and recommendations that would definitely go a long way in improving the Media Coverage of Electoral Process in the country.

At another level for the state of the media in the country is the decision of the government to embark on a broad reform of the broadcasting sector.

Against this background, we bring you highlights of the public presentation of a report titled; Towards The Review of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Ac, Nigeria: Proposals of Stakeholders, launched by IMS at a media stakeholders meeting in Lagos.



Then our interview session: It is with a veteran broadcaster who has been a pioneer staff of some vibrant broadcast stations in the country such as DAAR/AIT, Channels TV, FM stations such as Cosmo FM in Enugu besides serving as trainer of broadcasters across the West African region. He is Mr Jika Attoh, currently a member of the Board of West Africa Democracy Radio in Dakar, Senegal.

The picture segments, as usual, sparkle with a panoramic vision of events covered during the period. Enjoy. And remember to help us serve you better by sending feedbacks.

Please send your comments to [Media4DemocracyNG @ imesoimeso.org](mailto:Media4DemocracyNG@imesoimeso.org)

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# IMS Launches Publication on Review of NBC Act

On the backdrop of stakeholders' clamour for reforms in the broadcasting sector, the Institute for Media and Society IMS, on Thursday, November 21, launched a publication on the review of the NBC Act, in Lagos.

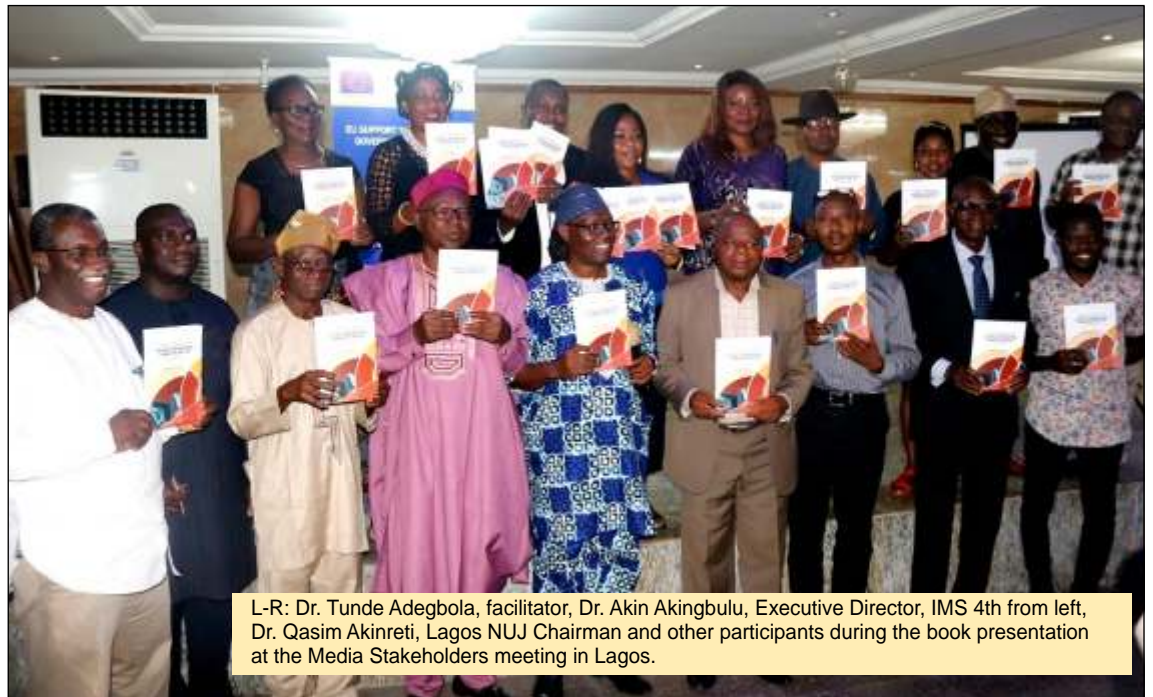
Titled: *Towards The Review of the National Broadcasting Commission, NBC, Act, Nigeria: Proposals of Stakeholders*, the publication was unveiled before stakeholders drawn from the media, academia, civil society and government agencies.

The launch was part of a stakeholder's meeting, which kicked-off with a session on "The Media in the Progressive Refinement of Nigeria's Electoral Processes", was chaired by Mr Lanre Arogundade, Director of the International Press Centre, IPC, while Dr Tunde Adegbola of the African Languages Technology Initiative, was guest speaker and Dr Qasim Akinreti, Chairman of the Lagos State Council of the Nigeria Union of Journalists, unveiled the publication.

In his welcome address, the Executive Director of IMS, Dr Akin Akingbulu, stated that the Media stakeholders meeting was an activity under the Support to Media Component of the European Union Support to Democratic Governance in Nigeria {EU-SDGN} Project, which sought to reinforce democracy in Nigeria.

He said: "Broadly speaking, it seeks to strengthen democratic governance through improving the capacity of national institutions in the electoral and broader democratic process."

Disclosing that the event was the third in a series on the activities and objectives of the EU-SDGN project, he said the event aimed to bring the



L-R: Dr. Tunde Adegbola, facilitator, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director, IMS 4th from left, Dr. Qasim Akinreti, Lagos NUJ Chairman and other participants during the book presentation at the Media Stakeholders meeting in Lagos.

attention of stakeholders to the performance of the media on the coverage of the 2019 electoral process along with emerging issues in the electoral process "so that we can collectively address them."

He said that though the media continues to be very central in the electoral and broader democratic process, its role is to ensure that the management of our elections moves to greater heights of quality despite institutional and environmental challenges.

He urged the participants to use the opportunity to "conduct a self-appraisal on the performance of the media in the coverage of the electoral process."

While welcoming participants to the event, the chairman of the occasion, Arogundade, highlighted the involvement of IMS in the broadcast sector of the media under EU-SDGN Project and urged participants to remember the current move by the government to regulate social media and the public reactions.

He said, "I think the discussion should look at the emerging issues and how we can engage them."

While unveiling the publication, Lagos

NUJ Chairman, Dr. Akinreti hailed it as timely. He disclosed that with the publication the union would be in a better position to engage the management of the NBC during its upcoming meeting.

Earlier, Dr Akingbulu had explained that the publication was one of the outcomes of a process initiated by the IMS in the course of "implementing the Support To The Media component of the EU Support to Democratic Governance since late 2017 through four outcome pillars, namely, enhanced professionalism of media professionals; strengthening and deepening delivery of civic and voter education; strengthened capacity of the regulatory agency to perform its mandate; and improved engagement in promoting women, youths, persons with disabilities and other marginalized groups in the electoral process and politics in general".

He further stated that the conversations and proposals of the stakeholders had a specific objective, which was the independence of the NBC.

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Giving insight into the proposals on the broadcast regulator's independence, he listed features such as the need for the NBC to be a full legal entity protected from political and economic pressures and interests; and to have full regulatory powers.

Others are: exclusion of representatives of the Ministry of Information and the Department of State Services, DSS, from membership of the governing board; appointment of the board and D-G by the President upon consultation with sectoral groups and the Senate; tailoring ministerial involvement to formulating, monitoring, regulating and evaluating the general policy of broadcasting sector in Nigeria; regulating and implementing international broadcasting-related treaties and agreements on behalf of Nigeria; notifying the Commission on the general policy direction of the Federal Government in respect of the broadcasting sector and ensuring that the independence of the Commission is protected at all times.

On the licensing function of the Commission, the proposal included:

Regular publication of NBC's licensing process, specifying persons who are eligible to apply for licenses; providing written information for applicants on the status of their applications; ensuring that the revocation of license is done through a transparent process; and providing space for appeal of regulatory decisions, through the establishment of a high-level appeals committee, whose decisions should be subject to judicial review.

Another area in the proposal, according to Akingbulu, deals with accountability, on which the following suggestions are made:

The Commission is to prepare annual reports of its activities and submit to the President and through the President to the National Assembly;

prepare and publish to the public periodic reports during each year on the status of licences granted, renewed or sanctioned, performance of licences and industry developments, quality of services, and the availability and adequacy of services in all parts of the country. Others are that the funding stream of the Commission from government appropriation should be through direct budgeting allocation from the consolidated fund rather than from a share of the budget of the Ministry of Information; that the powers granted in the Act for the Commission to collect radio and TV licence fee should be activated, and Section 1 (b) of the fourth Schedule of the Constitution which empowers local governments to collect the fees should be removed or amended to enable NBC exercise this power.

Concluding, Akingbulu said the plan to have the law reviewed would continue with wide dissemination of the publication, engagement with government agencies, civil society groups leading to legislative activity at the National Assembly.

Guest Speaker and facilitator, Dr. Adegbola, while giving his keynote address on the topic "The Media in the Progressive Refinement of Nigeria Electoral Process," emphasized that the media should take comfort in the fact that they were assisting to build a democratic culture and not necessarily an immediate corrective measure of what they see as inappropriate in

governance.

"The job of the media is to play a role in building a democratic culture. Democracy is a process not a destination in which certain social imperatives are continuously and continually being engaged," he said, adding that democracy in Nigeria is a work in progress. "The question is how much progress are we making. Democracy is constantly moving, so we should also refocus on our vision."

Illustrating his points with examples of recurring electoral malpractices such as rigging, he urged the media to explore modern technology in the area of data management and computer analyses to expose the culprits and always tell compelling stories which have the power to sway any reader, regardless of his station and status in society.

"The media should make the people aware that democracy is a process. It should see that as an ultimate goal beyond immediate objectives," he concluded.

After robust contributions, participants agreed that though the media still faces societal and professional challenges, practitioners should be more imaginative and creative in the conduct of their professional duty of holding government accountable to the people and providing information that assist the people to make informed choices.



Participants at the Media Stakeholders meeting in Lagos.

# Stakeholders Review Trends, Challenges in Media Coverage of Electoral Process

As part of its efforts to strengthen capacity of media platforms to diversify and deepen civic and voter education, the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, organized Focus Group Discussions for media stakeholders in Lagos and in Abuja.

The activities, which held on Friday, September 20, in Lagos and on Tuesday, October 8 in Abuja, brought together different media stakeholder groups to discuss trends and challenges in the

and Ethical Coverage of the Electoral Process in Nigeria.

The facilitator of the Lagos event was Professor Ayobami Ojebode, Head, Communication and Language Arts, University of Ibadan, South West Nigeria, while Mr Dapo Olorunyomi, Publisher of Premium Times, an online publication, facilitated the Abuja, event.

In his introductory remarks at both

accurate and ethical coverage of the electoral process.

He noted that media issues had always been on the front burner of discussions over the years, and as such, it was necessary to bring together a wide range of critical media stakeholder groups involved in the electoral process with broad understanding of issues at stake to be discussed.

He said “Participants in this activity have been carefully selected to attend this event.

Secondly, the institutions and organisations understand the issues. We have the civil society groups, women groups, media owners and regulatory agencies, here. We have media scholars and media organisations and media owners represented here, just as civil society and women groups to participate in this event.”

On his part, Prof. Ayobami Ojebode, the facilitator and



Publisher of Premium Times, Mr Dapo Olorunyomi, (middle), Facilitator of the Abuja version of Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process, leading the discussion.

media coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria with a view to producing recommendations, which would be used as an advocacy document to engage the broadcast and other media proprietors/managers and other relevant stakeholders.

At the events, media bodies and professionals, media regulatory groups, women and civil society groups were fully represented. They included the Nigeria Union of Journalists, NUJ; National Broadcasting Commission, NBC; Broadcasting Organisations of Nigeria, BON; Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, and the Nigeria Women Trust Fund. Others were Media Executives from Online and Print media and Academics.

The one-day event in both locations was themed: Focus Group Discussion on Trends and Challenges in Fair, Accurate

occasions, the Executive Director, Institute for Media and Society, IMS, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, said the event was organized because the media constitute a very important institution for the advancement of democracy in Nigeria.

Declaring open the one-day Focus Group Discussion in Lagos, Akingbulu said that the media component of the EU-SDGN being implemented by IMS, is tailored towards achieving four outputs, namely: i) Ensuring Professionalism of the Media ii) Diversifying and Deepening Delivery of Civic and Voter Education iii) Strengthening the Regulator to Perform its Mandate and iv) Improving media engagement n promoting women, youths and marginalised groups in politics. Achieving these outputs, according to him, would contribute immensely to strengthening the Media to provide fair,

moderator at the Lagos event urged every participant to make contributions to the discussion, especially personal experiences in the coverage of the electoral process in Nigeria, to enrich the discussion.

In his opening remarks, Mr Olorunyomi, who moderated and facilitated the Abuja session, acknowledged the rich mix of participants.

He urged participants to take a broad contextual view of Nigeria’s election and media practice, saying, “whether our democracy is regressing or consolidating in a way that gives us hope”. He noted that the discussion was important because it affords the participants the opportunity to discuss “the status and nature of our democracy”. He then invited participants to start the discussion.

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# An Array of Personalities, Facilitators and Participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process in Abuja and Lagos and an ECES/INEC Voter Education Campaign



L-R: Facilitator, Prof. Ayobami Ojebode, of the University of Ibadan, Miss. Timilehin Durotoye, the Executive Director of IMS Dr. Akin Akingbulu and Opeyemi Owolabi of SERAP, at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of Electoral Process held in Lagos.



Participants and resource persons at the Focus Group Discussion on Electoral Process held in Lagos



Participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of Electoral Process held in Abuja



Participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process in Abuja



Dr. Akin Akingbulu, Mr. Lanre Opeyemi Owolabi and other participants



An ECES/INEC Voter Education Campaign in Kogi State



An ECES/INEC Voter Education Campaign in Kogi State



Participants at the Media Stakeholders meeting in Lagos

# nd Participants at events organised by C Voter Education Campaign in Kogi State



Group Discussion on Media Coverage



Dr. Akingbulu, of IMS, middle left with Mr. Dapo Olorunyomi, Publisher of Premium Times, and facilitator, Mr. Rotimi Oyekanmi, Chief Press Secretary to INEC Chairman and other participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process in Abuja.



Akingbulu, Executive Director of IMS, standing, flanked on his left by Arogundade, Dr. Qassim Akinreti, Mrs. Bisi King-Paul and others at the Media Stakeholders meeting in Lagos.



Participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process in Lagos.



Kogi State



Lagos.



Martins Oloja of the Guardian Newspaper leading the discussion at the Lagos version of Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of Electoral Process held in Lagos

## 'Broadcast Media Provided Seamless Coverage for 2019 Poll But...'

*Mr Jika Attoh, ex-MD of Blaze FM, former MD of Cosmo Radio and ex-MD of Enugu State Broadcasting Services was for 21 years a broadcaster with the NTA before joining the AIT where he pioneered KAAKAKI for six years, and Channels TV where he pioneered News At 10. He is currently a member of the Board of West Africa Democracy Radio based in Dakar, Senegal. In this interview with Media4DemocracyNG, he taps his solid experience in the broadcast media and declares that the industry still has much to give.*



*Jika Attoh*

*As a veteran broadcaster, how would you rate the Nigerian broadcast media coverage of the 2019 polls?*

There are reports of varying levels on interference in the broadcast media. The reports ranged from threats in Osun, Kano and Imo. There was outright attack in Lagos, Rivers and Benue where there were reports that equipment were allegedly damaged.

However the broadcast media coverage of the 2019 poll was seamless. The major networks such as NTA, AIT and Channels provided continuous reports with location updates and analyses by relevant resource persons.

Nonetheless, handicapped by lack of facilities and dearth of experienced reporters, the smaller stations had to contend themselves with routine coverage of local polls, that is those close to them with the reports flavoured with official dispatches from the Independent Electoral Commission, INEC.

*What about post election coverage. Do you think the media is holding government accountable to the people?*

For a good number of media houses, the election ended with the announcements of the results and after the poll, the stations, those we talked about earlier, returned to their routine broadcasting, pausing periodically to report election outcomes of petition from Election Tribunals and the law courts.

The responsibility of holding government accountable to the people requires deep understanding of issues-based journalism and investigative reporting, plus the courage to broadcast content which may be disagreeable to the ruling authority. For example, the

budget projections for the next year has been announced by both the Federal and State governments. The budgets have been widely reported by the media with the main thrust of these reports being the difference between provisions for some sectors in the previous years' budget and provisions in the current budget.. I mean they would say, agriculture and education got such figure last year and this year. Again, except for the major networks already identified, nearly all the broadcast media failed to evaluate the performance of the previous budget and perhaps file any justifications for the variations in the provisions.

It is also significant to mention that over 70 per cent of TV and radio stations in Nigeria belong to the Federal and State governments.

This ownership pattern may be responsible for the failure of these stations to broadcast any content that may be disagreeable to their owners.

So it is left to a few of the privately owned media to attempt to somehow hold government accountable to the people who elected the officials, even though they have their own challenges, like affiliations, patronage and the perception of being in the opposition.

*Having worked in radio and TV for much of your professional career, held capacity training for colleagues in that section of the media and pioneered some outfits too, what would you identify as the major challenges in the broadcast media?*

With the deregulation of the broadcast media in 1994, private owners set up many radio and TV stations; these stations needed large numbers of management and operations staff and

unfortunately, there was not a critical mass of experienced personnel to draw from. Consequently, the new broadcast stations were understandably peopled by a motley collections of staff drawn from existing government owned radio and TV houses, complemented by inexperienced personnel. Now, this was the face of the new broadcast media that came at that time, operating within the boundaries of their limited experience. The civil servants recreated the very establishment they were coming from, with the new stations aping the public service work style, ethics and attitudes. They virtually replicated the same programmes they had been used to all their working lifestyles.

So there were new stations but with old profile and mentality from the public service.

Then, there is also the matter of training and re-training. Truthfully there are not enough institutions and faculties for the raining and re-training of staff of broadcast media industry. Closely related to training is equipment. The digital and Internet era came with rapid modifications of technology and techniques in broadcasting. Sadly, many Nigerian broadcast stations lack equipment, management and upgrade. Even while they change their cars, furniture, they still work with old equipment.

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Still, there is the challenge of staff welfare. Inadequate and often irregular remuneration are constant features of broadcast media industry in Nigeria. Only a very few organisations within the industry pay competitive salaries. It is a well known but sad fact that some state and private stations owe staff salaries for up to 10 months.

*On the question of training, don't you think the recent approval of the Nigeria University Commission to unbundle academic study of professional courses to allow for specialization in areas such as journalism, mass communication, advertising, PR, is a welcome development?*



Attoh

That is being academic, and certification, which is a quite different

thing. I know lecturers who have taught the same topics with the same note for 20 years. There are TV Colleges in Jos, Plateau State and Radio Academy. The question one should ask about the new approval you talk about is what is the content of the curriculum?. Are they designed to cope with contemporary challenges? If you send a reporter to Maiduguri for instance where there is the insurgency, does he understand conflict reporting? Do new reporters understand contemporary issues like climate change, women and children rights? Would these be part of the new curriculum? These are the issues we face everyday. You may be splitting departments, that is Ok but are these the

## IMS Calls for End to Impunity Against Journalists

To mark the International Day To End Impunity Against Journalists held in November of every year, the Institute for Media and Society, IMS, issued a press statement in solidarity with the rest of the world and drew attention to the state of the media and journalists in Nigeria.

In the statement signed by Dr Akin Akingbulu, Executive Director of IMS, the organization called for an end to Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists, stating that Journalists, the world over, are recognised as part and parcel of the development strides of their nations.

He said: “In Nigeria, journalists were central in the successful prosecution of the anti-colonial struggle and the attainment of independence.

“In the post-independence period, they have been in the vanguard of such noble assignments as dismantling anti-democratic causes and terminating military rule. Today, after two decades of our fourth attempt in building a democracy, the positive roles played by journalists remain paramount.

“Unfortunately, the environment and conditions for the practice of journalism has become difficult. For doing their work, journalists find themselves detained and charged in court for treason or terrorism!

Stating that reporters who go out to gather information and provide professional coverage get arrested or brutalized and many have been killed in line of duty, he called for the culprits to be brought to justice.

He then called on the Nigerian government to take some proactive measures to put an end to the situation, while alerting civil society and the media to rise to the occasion with professional strategies

According to him all state and non-state actors should perform the under listed roles to address this situation:

The Government of Nigeria should:

1. Domesticcate and implement international instruments which provide for the safety of journalists.
2. Amend outdated local legislations which are inimical to the practice of journalism.
3. Promptly condemn attacks on journalists and ensure that perpetrators are punished.
4. Engage with other stakeholders, especially the civil society and the



Dr. Akingbulu

media, to dialogue and structure arrangement for professional journalism.

International organisations such as inter-governmental bodies, and independent development agencies, should:

1. Constantly monitor the situation in Nigeria and remind the government of its obligations on the promotion and protection for journalism and freedom of expression in general.
2. Regularly condemn attacks on journalists, send special missions to understand in-country situations and disseminate findings widely.

Civil society organisations should:

1. Intensify campaigns on journalists' safety and general welfare.
2. Collaborate with the media to deal with the frustrating environment and expand the frontiers of freedom for professional practice.
3. Strengthen advocacy to demand justice for journalists who are victims of attacks.

The Media should:

1. Put public information and education on the front burner on the safety and welfare of journalists.
2. Remain organised and use their platforms to build synergies with other stakeholders to deal with perpetrators of attacks on its members.
3. Strengthen investigation desks by providing support for investigative reporting on corruption in governance.

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The focus group discussions, held in four plenary sessions, dealt with sub-topics: Behaviour of State and Non-State Institutions in the Electoral Process; Policy and Regulatory Environment of the Media in the Electoral Process; Institutional Issues of the Media in the Electoral Process;

that democratic governance was still undergoing a process of evolution which had brought about some notable improvements, others disagreed, stating that 20 years of democratic governance has yielded no encouraging dividend. Nonetheless, discussants arrived at a point of convergence in their general

assessment of Nigeria's democratic governance as they agreed that progress has been made in the areas of citizens participation in public discussion on different platforms such as social and online media.

In their assessment of policy and regulatory environment, discussants identified inadequacies in enforcement of regulatory policies as a critical challenge to the electoral process.

Discussants also identified a number of institutional and personnel issues affecting the media, such as inadequate capacity development and over-bearing ownership control which affects professionalism negatively, erosion of press freedom, behavioural issues, poor remuneration and deplorable state of investigative journalism, poor reportage of marginalised groups and issues around newsroom diversity.

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Participants at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process, held in Lagos

Perception and Engagement by Electoral Actors in the Electoral Process.

Behaviour of State and Non-State Institutions in the Electoral Process was discussed in the first plenary, while, the second plenary had the topic: Policy and Regulatory Environment of the Media in the Electoral Process.

Institutional Issues of the Media in the Electoral Process was discussed in the third plenary. The discussion ended with the fourth plenary on the topic: Perception and Engagement by Electoral Actors in the Electoral Process.

Issues discussed included participation of women in the electoral process and governance; involvement of youths and people living with disability in the electoral process; election violence; safety of journalists on election duty; the conduct of the electoral umpire; the conduct of state and non-state actors, among others.

In a general overview of Nigeria's democratic governance issues, discussants expressed divergent views. While a segment of discussants agreed

## Recommendations:

Participants at the Focus Group Discussions in Lagos and Abuja made the following recommendations:

### To Media Industry Groups:

- The participants identified the need for the media to build capacity of practitioners as a critical way of bridging the knowledge gap especially on media code of ethics.
- Training and mentoring of young journalists and other media practitioners should be prioritized by media organizations to raise the competencies of journalists.
- Media organizations should have 'Compliance Unit' or 'Ethical Desk' as an internal regulation mechanism in compliance with code of ethics.
- Persons with disability and other marginalized groups should be included in the coverage of electoral processes.
- Media need to support the advocacy on the administrative independence of INEC by actively collaborating with the Commission.

### To Civil Society:

CSO's should also collaborate with

journalists in the effective utilisation of the FOI law.

- CSOs should continue their empowerment support –especially in manpower and capacity development of journalists.

### To Development Agencies:

- International development agencies, including the European Union, should continue to support such dialogue as this, which brings together various perspectives in assessing the democratic progress in Nigeria.
- The agencies should support CSOs in continued empowering of the media in Nigeria.
- Journalists should recognise the role they play in the overall perception and image of their profession. A conscious attempt to be professional in their dealings and not tarnish the image of their profession is very important.
- Journalists should seek to enhance their own competence and capacity by taking (free) online courses on different aspects of journalism.
- They should be conscious of how they present themselves to politicians because the way "they are dressed is the way they would be addressed".

*Continues on pg 11*

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Among those present at the Lagos event were: Prof. Armstrong Idachaba of the NBC, Sir Godfrey Oluabunwa Acting Chairman of BON, represented by the GM Family Love FM, Port Harcourt, Ms Pat Idowu; Dr Qasim Akinreti, Chairman NUJ Lagos State Council; Mrs Mufuliat Fijabi, Executive Director Nigeria Women Trust Fund; Ms Constance Meju, Media Executive; Dr. Abiodun Olufemi- Ogidan, Media Executive/Academic; Mr Samson Ademola of the Wole Soyinka Centre for Investigative Journalism; Dr. Jide Jimoh, Media Academic, Lagos State University, LASU; Mr Martins Oloja, Media Executive, The Guardian; and, Mr Opeyemi Owolabi, SERAP. Kabir Alabi Garba, print media; Raheem Akingbolu, print media; Ademola Lawrence, broadcast media, Kehinde Adeyemi, broadcast media and Chinwe Maduagwu, print media.

Participants at the Abuja event included Bodunrin Adebayo of African Independent Television, AIT, Sani Suleiman of the Federal Radio

Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, Tony Akowe of The Nation Newspaper, Solomon Adoga of CISLAC, Mr Jake Epelle, Director of The Albino Foundation, TAF, Tope Shaba of CODER, Benjamin Gudaku, Radio, Television, Theater Arts Workers Union of Nigeria, RATTAWU; Maria Odeh, former Acting DG of FRCN, Rotimi Oyekanmi, INEC, Dr Samson Shaibu of Bingham University, Karu,

Abuja. Others are Abass Ibrahim, NUJ Chairman, Kano State Council; Adebowale Olorunmola of Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Pauline Ehusani of the NBC, Eddie Emissiri of BON.

Following the discussions in the four plenary sessions at the end of the Lagos and Abuja events, participants made recommendations.



Facilitator, Prof. Ayobami Ojebode, of the University of Ibadan, Left, and the Executive Director of IMS, Dr. Akin Akingbulu, Right at the Focus Group Discussion on Media Coverage of the Electoral Process, held in Lagos

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- Journalists and editors should avoid doing Public Relations job for politicians: it lowers the professional esteem of the journalist.
- Media need to build alliances within and across the profession as a means of effective handling of challenges faced by media organizations or practitioners.
- Bodies such as NUJ should seek to address the institutional constraints to professionalism especially the sometime unpleasant relationship between editors and reporters; work without pay, and other aspects of journalists' welfare. NUJ could institute a "fame-or-shame" award for media owners – fame for media owners who treat their employees well; shame for those who do not.
- Media should stop the conferment of Award on governors who are supposed to be sources journalists investigate.

#### **To Media Regulator:**

- Regulatory agencies, especially the NBC, should begin to pay attention to how stations treat their employees. Regulation should go beyond contents because a well-trained and well-paid journalist is better positioned to turn out good contents than an unpaid one.
- NBC should continue to publicise the performances of broadcast stations in election reporting and coverage.

#### **To INEC:**

- INEC should see the media as partners in progress and sustain a relationship with media groups all the time—before, during and after elections.
- INEC should reward accurate, fair and ethical reporting of electoral activities as motivation for more of such.

#### **To Academia.**

- The academia should be more active in critiquing the media and ill practices among the media and government.

- They should also further educate the media on the importance of self-regulation, and the role of the ombudsman in electoral activities.

#### **To State Actors:**

Public institutions should respect the rule of law.

The National Assembly need to address every lacuna in the Electoral Act and represent it to the President for his assent.

The three arms of government should work together for the National interest.

- The three arms of government and the numerous parastatals should recognise the media as partners in progress and seek to forge a mutually beneficial relationship with the media.

- Government should work with the professional bodies such as Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ) and Nigeria Guild of Editors (NGE) to promote policies that protect journalists and promote journalists' welfare.

# Bayelsa And Kogi Election Day Media Monitoring Report

The Institute for Media and Society, IMS, set up Broadcast Media Monitoring teams at the Lagos headquarters Office and other Centres in Kaduna, Port Harcourt and Yola to monitor contents of selected media on election day, November 16, 2019.

Mr Sunny Dada, Programmes Manager, Mr Olusegun Samuel, Communication and Visibility Officer, Mr Femi Oni, the Finance and Logistics Officer and Ms Damilola Agbaje manned the Lagos office, while Raymond Genesis monitored TVC and Bayelsa state- owned Glory FM in Port Harcourt; Binam Javan handled AIT, Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria, FRCN, in Yola, Adamawa State; Deborah Zakariyah monitored Kogi Radio and privately-owned Grace FM.

The Lagos Situation Room opened at 8am at the IMS Conference room and monitored the contents of four television stations, namely:

NTA Network (Owned by the Federal Govt); AIT (privately owned); TVC (privately owned); Channels TV (privately owned)

IMS also monitored selected online newsmedia, which include:

Premium Times (privately owned); The Cable (privately owned)

## FIELD REPORTS

Journalists who covered the November 16 polls in Kogi and Bayelsa are still recounting tales of woes they encountered in the field.

Online, electronic and print journalists were all involved in attacks reportedly carried out by security personnel, politicians and thugs.

In Kogi state, Chinedu Asadu, a reporter with the privately owned The Cable, an online newspaper, Lolafunke Ogunlolu with the African Independent Television, AIT, Tobi Kusimo and David Bello, both of Splash FM, narrated stories of how policemen prevented them from covering voting at some booths, while in another instance, they were confronted by thugs who seized their phones and deleted pictures and videos they had taken.

In another incident, Sam Egwu, a journalist with Leadership newspaper, and Sunday Amachi, a reporter with Kogi State Radio were not spared. According to them, they were stoned and chased away from polling units they had wanted to cover in the university town of Anyigba.

In Bayelsa, a crop of reporters posted on their Facebook wall monitored in Lagos, a violent scene in Nembe, during pre-election campaign by political parties there. They had to flee and scrambled for safety as the guns kept booming repeatedly.

Also in Bayelsa, thugs reportedly intercepted Adejumor Kabir, a reporter with the Premium Times newspaper, while he was traveling to the main office of the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, to cover collation of results. The police reportedly blocked him and other journalists from entering the collation center, even when they identified themselves and produced their clearance tags of the Commission.

The elections were marred by violence, especially in Kogi State where a PDP woman leader, Mrs. Acheju Abuh, was burnt to death by thugs loyal to one of the political parties.

Responding to enquiries by *Media4DemocracyNG*, Police Public Relation Officer, PPRO, in Kogi State, DSP William Ovyo Aya, said he was unaware of any such incident.

He said: "Nobody reported any attack to me. When journalists came to cover the election in the state, I introduced them to my boss. I am not aware of any attack on them."

His counterpart in Bayelsa State also cleared the police of any allegation.

"We work with things that are reported. I am not aware of any report, so that I would have been able to identify officers responsible", said SP Butswat Asinim, PPRO of the Nigeria Police Force, Bayelsa State Command.

TV stations monitored focused more attention on the major political parties. For instance, in Kogi state, the parties that received major mentions were All Progressives Congress, APC, the Peoples Democratic Party, PDP, and the Social Democratic Party, SDP, despite that 25 parties contested the election. In Bayelsa State, it was the PDP and APC that dominated the airwaves despite that 45 political parties were cleared by the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, to contest the governorship and a House of Assembly seat.

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