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STATE JUDICIARY PLAN OF ACTION FOR STRENGTHENING JUSTICE SECTOR INTEGRITY AND CAPACITY 2008-2010



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RIVERS FOREWORD

It is my pleasure to present this Action Plan for Strengthening the Integrity and Capacity of the Justice System in Rivers State. This Action Plan was developed, deliberated upon and endorsed by a broad spectrum of Stakeholders at the State Integrity Meeting for the Justice Sector held on 15th and 16th November 2007 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. After Extensive stakeholder consultations, the Implementation Committee for the Action Plan has further reviewed and developed the Action Plan to its present status. As such, this action plan is a testimony to our continuous strives towards excellence in the justice sector in Rivers State.

While appreciating that our goals are ambitious, we are encouraged by the support we continue to receive from our international partners especially the European Union and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as the broad involvement of all stakeholders in the planning exercise. We are therefore confident that this Action Plan will boost Justice Sector Reform in Rivers State.



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Yet, the real work is just starting. It is only if we all contribute our quota to the implementation of this Plan that we will be able to deliver on its ambitious objectives of enhancing access to justice, improving timeliness and quality of justice delivery, strengthening independence, accountability and integrity of the justice sector institutions as well as increasing coordination in the criminal justice system. It is against this background that I call upon all stakeholders in the Executive and Legislative Branches of Government, the Nigerian Bar Association, the Police and Prison Services, Non-Governmental Organizations and the Civil Society, as well as my learned colleagues on the Bench to step-up their relentless efforts in improving the services we deliver to our citizens and those who come to our country to invest and participate in our economy, and to punish effectively those who violate our laws, and protect the poor and the weak.

ICHE N. NDU, OFR
CHIEF JUDGE, RIVERS STATE
NIGERIA



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

I. Measures to Enhance Access to justice					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
1. Enhance Public Enlightenment Programs on basic rights, Access to Justice, and the court system.					Increased awareness of legal rights and availability of legal services.
1.1. Set up Public Information sub Committee from the implementation committee.	High	CJ/IMP CTEE	March 2008	Admin cost	
1.2. Produce and disseminate information on citizens' rights and the court system especially in rural areas in local languages.	Medium	NJI/UNODC /State Govt/ State Judiciary.	March 2008	500,000	Materials produced in 3 languages, Pidgin, kana, kalabari
1.3. Carry out rights awareness campaigns in markets, churches and public places, including Public enlightenment on bail related issues.	High	NJI/UNODC /State Govt	March 2008	500,000	Distribute IEC materials at locations
1.4. Carry out TV/Radio programs talk shows and interactive sessions with the public on Justice related issues	Medium	Judiciary/ UNODC/NJI /State Govt.	March-April 2008-June 2009	1,000,000	
1.5. Support Legal Aid council by way of provision of vehicles, staff working materials and IT training.	Medium	Funders/ Federal/State Govt	June 2008	To be determined	
2. Ensure Access To Courts for the poor and vulnerable groups.					Improved Access to Courts and ADR systems for citizens especially the poor.
2.1. Set up Human rights desks at all police stations in the state	High	CP/NBA/IG	April 2008		
2.2. Train law enforcement officers (Police, SSS, NDLEA, Prisons) on basic rights of citizens including the right to bail.	High	NJI/UNODC /IG/CP/CJ/ AG	June 2008	1,000,000	30 law enforcement officers trained
2.3 Enlist support of Office of the public defender, legal Aid Council, FIDA, NBA human rights committee to assist indigent litigants	Medium	Judiciary/ NBA/ State & Fed. Govt	June 2008	To be determined	



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I. Measures to Enhance Access to justice (continues)					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
2.4 Build capacities for pro bono services agencies to assist them in their activities	Medium	Fed/State Govt, Int. Funders	June 2008	To be determined	
2.5 Provide a list of agencies, NGO's that provide free legal services at court premises and enlist their assistance for indigent litigants.	Medium	Police/Prisons/ Public awareness committee/ MOJ/Judiciary/ UNODC/NJI	April 2008	100,000	
2.6 Review the current filling fees and costs of levying execution and other services to make them affordable	High	CJ/AJC/State Assembly/NBA	Ongoing		Greater affordability of court services
2.7 Create awareness on the court rules that allow waiver of court fees for the poor and include in pamphlet under 1.2 above	Medium	UNODC/NJI/ Judiciary/Public awareness committee	Jan- March 2008	No cost	Citizens have information on court reduced fees
2.8 Judges to report lawyers who refuse to take up cases pro bono to NBA	High	Judiciary/ NBA	Jan – March 2008	No cost	
3. Develop the multi door court house/ other suitable ADR system for the state and create awareness on the system Enhance effectiveness of legal aid		CJ/JSC/NJI/ UNODC/State Govt			ADR system functional in Rivers State
3.1 Enlighten and Train Traditional rulers on their rights and responsibilities regarding conflict resolution; including Human Rights training	Medium	NJI/UNODC/ State Govt./MOJ	2 nd quarter 2008	2,000,000	50 traditional rulers trained on conflict resolution
3.2. Organize a forum for traditional rulers and customary court judges and members of the public in a rural community to create awareness on the roles of traditional rulers in conflict resolution. (ADR).	High	MOJ/NJI/ UNODC/State Govt	June 2008	1,000,000	
3.3 Formal communication to leadership of the traditional ruler's council appraising them on the specific enabling areas of the customary court laws on ADR.	High	MOJ/AG	July 2008	No cost	
4. Provide Legal services and rights awareness for Vulnerable Groups.					Better protection for rights of vulnerable groups
4.1. Carry out rights Awareness campaigns at prisons and rural communities	Medium	LEDAP/PRAWA/ WOCON/FIDA/ WAC/ NJI/UNODC	June 2008	1.000,000	Three prisons and five communities visited



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1. Measures to Enhance Access to justice (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
4.2 Training of paralegals to provide legal aid to women, children and prisoners awaiting trial,	High	CIRRD/DOC/ FIDA/MOJ/NJI	August 2008	500,000	Ten paralegals trained.
4.3. Provision of free legal services to indigent women, widows and juveniles in conflict with the law.	High	FIDA/LEDAP/ WAC	April 2008	750,000	Legal services provided to 200 indigent women, girls and juveniles.
5 Explore avenues to ensure access to law enforcement officers.					Greater Access to Justice ,bail And to law enforcement officers
5.1 Organize a Police/Bar/ citizens forum with DPP, s office.	High	NBA/Police/MOJ/ NJ/UNODC/ Judiciary/ Funders	April 2008	500,000	
5.2 Report HR violations to police Human Rights monitoring committees	High	NBA/ NGO's/ DPP.	Immediately	No cost	
5.3 Establish Hotlines in all agencies (Police. SSS, NDLEA, MOJ, Judiciary) with phone numbers accessible to the public To receive complaints and information, suggestions.	High	NBA/ NGO's DPP/Funders/ Police	Jan- march 2008	To be determined	
Impact Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordability of court and lawyer fees for court users and business people - Average number of adjournments per case-category - Access to free defence for prisoners awaiting trial - Access to Information concerning their own case for court users, business people and prisoners - Use of Alternative Dispute Resolution techniques, restorative justice and diversion concepts 					



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2. Enhance Timeliness and Quality of Justice Delivery

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting	Cost	Output
6. Improve and modernize recording, investigation and identification system to modernize investigative and recording procedures.					Reduced delays and inefficiency
6.1 Set up citizen's identification and Record keeping system using biometric technology.	Medium	State Govt/ National Assembly	Sept -Dec 2008	To be determined	
6.2 Continue and enhance the National Identity card scheme	Medium	Federal Govt	Ongoing	To be determined	
6.3 Establish forensic laboratory and train more pathologists and post mortem investigators.	Low	Fed & State Govt/ IGP	Sept- Dec 2008	To be determined	
6.4 Review the Coroner laws to make them more effective	High	National Assembly/ State Govt	Sept-Dec 2008	No cost	
7. Enhance professional skills, efficiency and capacity of Investigating Police Officers (IPOs) , Prosecutors and prisons officers					Improved quality of investigations resulting in more rapid proceedings and higher conviction rates
7.1. Improve conditions of service and welfare packages for the police.	High	IGP/PSC	Ongoing	To be determined	
7.2. Raise the entry requirements (recruitment) into the police	High	IGP/PSC	4th quarter 2007	No cost	
7.3 Increase operational budget allocated for the purpose of investigation and prosecution	High	IGP/PSC	4th quarter 2007	To be determined	
7.4 Training and retraining of IPOs, including in-house and on-the-job training	High	IGP/PSC	4th quarter 2007	To be determined	
7.5 Train all investigators and exhibit keepers in investigation, search and seizure, and handling of evidence.	High	UNODC/NJI/ judiciary/ NPF/ NGOs		600,000	50 Police investigators and prosecutors trained
7.6 Renovate existing prisons and add more structures to old ones.	Low	Fed/State Govt	2009	To be determined	Greater efficiency of police and prisons services.
7.7 Provide more black Maria vehicles and medium size escort vans + funds for fuelling and maintenance	Medium	Fed/State Govt, Donors	2008-2009	To be determined	
7.8 Provide computers, scanners and printers for all prisons.	Low	Fed/State Govt Donors	June 2008	To be determined	



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2. Enhance Timeliness and Quality of Justice Delivery (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
8. Eliminate corrupt activities of justice sector personnel. MOJ, Judiciary, Police. Prisons, SSS, NBA etc,					Increased efficiency of court proceedings, including reduced No. of adjournments) and improved conviction rates
8.1 Set up anti corruption units (Servicom) at the MOJ, Judiciary and NBA headquarters	High	IGP/AGF/ PSC	August 2008	Administrative	
8.2 Set up police prosecuting Unit at all police commands	Medium	IGP	From April 2008	Administrative	
8.3 Allow trained lawyers of the Police Legal Dept. to prosecute cases in court without recourse to legal advice by AG Office	High	AG/ Nig. Police	Immediately	No cost	
8.4 Commence quarterly assessment of performance of personnel in the non judicial agencies in the justice sector	High	IGP/AGF/ PSC	Immediately	No cost	
8.5 Establish a time frame of two weeks for DPP office to prepare legal advice	High	IGP/AGF/ PSC	Immediately	No cost	
8.6 Ensure adequate remuneration for lawyers in the MoJ	Medium	AGF/IGP/ PSC	Budgetary Allocation	To be determined	
8.7 Training and retraining for lawyers in the MoJ and police prosecutors on preparation and prosecution of cases. Judges to volunteer to conduct such training.	Medium	AGF/IGP/ PSC/ NJI/ UNODC/ Judiciary	March-August 2008	3 training sessions @ 500,000 per session=1,500,000	3 Training sessions for 30 prosecutors conducted
8.8. Increase salaries and welfare packages of Judicial officers and staff.	Medium	NJC/CJ/NJI	Ongoing	Budgetary	
8.9. Set up staff performance monitoring units for judiciary, police, MOJ and prisons.	High	AGF/IGP/ PSC/CJ/AG	Immediately	No cost	
8.10. Allow media access to monitor and report on court proceedings.	High	CJ/JSC	Immediately	No cost	
8.11. Establish media desk in the court.	High	CJ/ IMP CTEE	Immediately	No cost	



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2. Enhance Timeliness and Quality of Justice Delivery (continues)					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
9. Enhance professional skills and qualification of court staff					Improved administration of the courts
9.1. Train all categories of Judiciary staff on Ethics, case management and relevant skills	Medium	CR/UNODC/ NJI/ JSC	March 2008	500,000 for 4 training sessions=2,000, 000	
9.2 Establish a training schedule covering all categories of staff, ensuring training opportunities for all staff	Medium	CJ/ IMP CTEE	February 2008/ Ongoing	No cost	
9.3 Provide computers and electronic court recorders for the courts including Basic IT training for all categories of staff.	Medium	State Govt /NJI/ UNODC/ Judiciary	Ongoing	2,500,000	
9.4. Employ Only qualified personnel and conduct induction training for all cadres of new employees.	Medium	Judiciary/State Govt.	Immediately	Budgetary provision	
9.5. Investigate and prosecute corrupt staff and keep records of antecedents of such staff.	High	Judiciary/JSC.	Immediately	No cost	
9.6. Provide internet and research facilities and materials for lawyers and judges at court premises.	High	CJ/State Govt/UNODC/ NJI/NBA	Jan-march 2008	Ongoing Will require technical assistance	
10. Enforce measures to reduce unnecessary delay and reduce backlog of cases.					Increased public confidence in the courts, including increased user satisfaction
10.1 Amend the criminal procedure Laws relating to remand of suspects.	High	CR/ NJC/ CJ/ JSC/National Assembly	2008	No cost	
10.2 Enforce prompt sitting hours for Courts from Monday to Friday.	High	CR/ NJC/ CJ/ JSC	Immediately	No cost	
10.3 Set up special courts to decide minor and urgent cases.	High	CJ/JSC/State Govt	February 2008	To be determined	
10.4 Reinstitute payment to state witnesses to make sure witnesses appear in court	Medium	CR/ CJ/ JSC/MOJ	4th quarter 2008	Budgetary provisions	
10.5. Increase oversight and monitoring of all judicial staff by stakeholders	High	CR/ NJC/ CJ/ JSC	4th quarter 2008	No cost	



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2. Enhance Timeliness and Quality of Justice Delivery (continues)					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
10.6 Appoint more judicial officers and Strengthen the CJC to decongest the courts especially cases of detainees awaiting trial.	Medium	CJ/MOJ/State Govt.	On – going (need for a sustained efforts)	To be determined	
10.7 Liaise with the police to establish Court marshals department to enforce Court orders.	Medium	CJ/State Govt/IG	2008	To be determined	
10.8 Provide adequate working materials for the court. Stationary, files. Ink etc	High	CJ/JSC/State Govt	2008	Budgetary allocation	
10.9 Undertake Regular prison visits to address cases of prisoners awaiting trial.	High	CJ/NBA/MOJ	Ongoing but to be more frequent	Administrative	
10.10 Provision of vehicles and boats to enable regular production of accused persons in court especially from riverine areas	Low	State Govt/prisons	2008	To be determined	
11 Improved technical capacity of courts and judicial staff					Enhanced record keeping/retrieval and faster disposal of cases.
11.1 Improve and modernize recording, investigation and identification system to modernize investigative and recording procedures					Reduced delays and inefficiency
11.2 Regular training and retraining of court employees on use of new technologies including court recording systems and computers.	High	NJI/UNODC/ CJ State Govt	March – Dec 2008	2,000,000	
11.3 Provision of IT equipment and Budget Software for keeping track of and record of pending cases and litigants.	High	NJI/UNODC/ CJ/ State Govt	2008	2,000,000	
11.4 Strengthen facilities for research including and stocking the librarian	Medium	Judiciary/ UNODC/NJI	July 2008	2,000,000	
11.5 Install case management tools for judges and registries.	High	State Govt/Judiciary	Sept 2008	3,000,000	
11.6 Provide Libraries for judges chambers and judicial divisions	High	State Govt/Judiciary	Sept 2008	2,000,000	
11.7 Provide electronic research tools (Lexis Nexis) and train judges on the use of such tools	High	NJI/UNODC/ Judiciary/	March 2008	1,000,000	



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2. Enhance Timeliness and Quality of Justice Delivery (continues)

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
11.8 Improve, reorganize and modernize the archival and case management system for keeping and retrieval of court records.	Medium	CJ/JSC/ NJC/State Government	June 2008	To be determined.	
11.9 Organize basic computer training for all judges and magistrates.	Medium	Judiciary/NJI/ UNODC	April 2008	Ongoing	
Impact Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Average duration of cases per case-category - Average time required for enforcement of court decisions - Average Backlog per judge - Average number of postponements required because of absence of parties, witnesses, accused - Case-management authority of judges – room for delay tactics of prosecutors, lawyers and parties - Quality of record-keeping - Availability of judicial resources (laws, jurisprudence of higher courts, legal literature, sentencing guidelines) - Perceptions of stakeholders concerning consistency, coherence, predictability of court decisions - Opinions of judges and prosecutors concerning adequacy of continuous professional training (quality and frequency) - Time required for prisoners awaiting trial to initiate/ conclude their case (first instance) 					



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3. Strengthen the Accountability, Integrity, Oversight and Independence of the courts					
Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in	Output
12. Enhance judicial Independence and accountability.					Fiscal independence and Improved performance in Justice delivery to citizens.
12.1 Deduct funds for the Judiciary from consolidated revenue fund and remit to heads of courts.	High	CJN/NJC/NA	First quarter 2008	Budget	
12.2 Review and improve the criteria for appointment and promotion of judicial officers and magistrates.	High	CJ/NJC/JSC	Ongoing	No cost	
12.3 Establish a permanent desk officer to receive complaints and increase the provision of public complains/suggestion boxes to all courts	High	CJ/PCC	Immediately	Minimal	
12.4 Improved remuneration for all categories of staff in the justice sector.	Medium	CJ/NJC/State Govt	2008	To be determined	
12.5 Publish courts hearing lists at strategic places in court premises including on the website and court notice boards.	High	CR/CJ/JSC	January 2008	ongoing	
13 Enhance the performance evaluation and oversight of courts and individual judges and other justice sector staff					Improved system of evaluation and Increased acceptance of performance evaluation by judicial officers and staff.
13.1 Review the criteria for assessment and evaluation of judicial officers to include good practices from other jurisdictions.	High	NJI/UNODC	March 2008		
13.2 Proper monitoring of judicial staff activities regarding sitting hours, and corrupt activities. Strengthen the inspectorate division of lower Bench by the provision of logistical support (transportation, IT equipment, etc.)	High	CJ/JSC/NBA/ NGO. CJ	On – going	No cost	
13.4 Quarterly returns of cases disposed of by magistrates to be verified from record books or by use of portal from the website.	High	CJ/JSC/NJI	Sept 2008	To be determined	



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

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
13.5 Distribution of cases for trial by administrative judges and magistrates to be open and transparent.	High	CJ/CR/JSC	Immediately	No cost	
13.6 Institute a system for performance evaluation of prosecutors and prison staff	High				
14 Ensure adherence to codes of Ethics and discipline by all staff of justice sector institutions.					Improved work ethics and transparency in the justice sector.
14.1 Train all court staff on the code of ethics for court employees as well as international codes of ethics as applicable.	High	NJI/UNODC/CJ/JCS	April 2008	500,000 per session for 3 sessions.	
14.2 Train all Judges, magistrates, lawyers and prosecutors on ethics as applicable to their profession.	High	NJI/UNODC/CJ/JSC	2008-2009	500,00 per session for two sessions	
14.3 NBA to ensure compliance of members with rules of professional conduct for lawyers and sanction erring lawyers	High	NBA/Disciplinary bodies of NBA	2008 onwards	No cost	
14.4 Ensure that all lawyers are familiar with the code of ethics for legal practitioners.	High	NBA	2008 onwards	Printing cost.	
14.5 Produce and disseminate codes of ethics as relevant to all justice sector staff and paste at court premises	High	NJI/NBA/UNODC/CJ/JSC	2008	Ongoing	

Impact Indicators

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



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4. Increase Coordination in the Criminal Justice System

Measures and Activities	Priority	Responsible	Starting Date	Cost in Naira	Output
15 Improve communication among stakeholders and to citizens on Justice issues.					Increased appreciation of stakeholders of the roles, functions and responsibilities of the criminal justice institutions
15.1 Organize quarterly criminal justice stakeholder fora , including CSO involvement, at the State level	High	CJ/State Govt/AJC	Ongoing	To be determined	
16 Strengthen the effectiveness of the Administration of Justice Committee					Improved coordination among criminal justice institutions at the policy and operational level
16.1 Strengthen the Administration of Justice Committee, in particular through establishment of permanent secretariat function. AJC to develop and adopt the Terms of Reference of the secretariat (staffing, functions, budget)	High	CJ/State Govt/AJC	1 st quarter 2008		
Impact Indicators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceptions of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers concerning the coordination among criminal justice institutions. - Perceptions of judges, prosecutors, police and lawyers on the quality of work performed by other criminal justice institutions - Existence and functioning of a criminal justice committee 					

Total = 32, 850,000.00



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Abbreviation

ADR	-	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AG	-	Attorney General
AGF	-	Attorney General of Federation
AJC	-	Administration of Justice Committee
CP	-	Commissioner of Police
CR	-	Chief Registrar
CJ	-	Chief Judge
COP	-	Commissioner of Police
DPP	-	Director Public Prosecution
FIDA	-	International Federation of women Lawyers
IMP CTEE	-	Implementation Committee
IG	-	Inspector General
IGP	-	Inspector General of Police
IT	-	Information Technology
JSC	-	Judicial Service Commission
LEDAP	-	Legal Defence and Assistance Project
MOJ	-	Ministry of Justice
NBA	-	Nigerian Bar Association
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organisation
NPF	-	Nigeria Police Force
NJI	-	National Judicial Institute
PCC	-	Public Complaints Commission
PRAWA	-	Prisoners Welfare and Rehabilitation Association
PSC	-	Police Service Commission
UNODC	-	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WAC	-	Women Action Committee
WOCON	-	Women Consortium of Nigeria