EU, UNODC Support Code of Conduct Tribunal to Improve Operational Capacity

The European Union-funded project "Support to Anti-Corruption in Nigeria", implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), recently donated some operational equipment to the Code of Conduct Tribunal (CCT), in an effort to strengthen the Tribunal’s capacity to deliver on its statutory mandate, and to support the administration of justice in Nigeria.

Mr. Alan Munday who represented the Head of the European Union Delegation to Nigeria and ECOWAS, Ambassador Michel Arrion, said the gesture was to enhance the operational capacity of the CCT. Speaking during the handover ceremony, Mr. Alan Munday said, “Corruption represents one of the major obstacles facing Nigeria today. This is because it impedes the development of the country and diverts resources away from the population. We are pleased that the government of Nigeria recognises the impact of corruption. We are pleased that the government of Nigeria recognises the impact of corruption on the country and has put in place institutions to fight corruption.”

According to Mr. Munday, the recognition of the roles of Anti-corruption Agencies (ACAs) in the fight against corruption informed the partnership between the EU and the Government of Nigeria to support the work of the ACAs through a €35m Financing Agreement which is being implemented by UNODC.

In his remarks, Justice Danladi Umar, Chairman of the Tribunal, who was represented by Mr. Bello Kauw, Chief Registrar of the Tribunal commended the EU and UNODC for the donation. He said it was the first of its kind since the inception of the Tribunal in 1989. He pledged the commitment of the Tribunal to ensure judicious use and maintenance of the donated equipment. He said the donation which included a Toyota Hilux Van, computers and other operational items would enhance collaborative efforts and interface between the Tribunal and other Anti-corruption Agencies in the fight against corruption in Nigeria.

Lagos State Stakeholders Develop Justice Sector Action Plan

In continuation of its commitment to support reforms in the justice sector in Nigeria, the European Union-funded project ‘Support to the Justice Sector in Nigeria’ provided technical and financial support to the Lagos State to develop a State-level Action Plan for the justice sector. Participants at the Action-Planning workshop included the Lagos State Attorney-General and Commissioner for Justice, Mr. Ade Ipaye, judges, and representatives of the courts, the State Ministry of Justice, the Nigeria Prisons Service, the Nigeria Police Force, the National Human Rights Commission, the Legal Aid Council, the Public Defender, the Nigeria Bar Association, and civil society organisations.

In his opening remarks, the Lagos State Attorney-General said the justice sector constitutes the backbone of civilisation. He indicated that the State government was ready to implement actions that would be recommended in the action plan, as these would help to further improve the administration of justice in the state. Stakeholders at the workshop conducted an assessment of the status of justice delivery in the state, reviewed the Lagos State Justice Sector Action Plan 2008-2009, and drew on its recommendations to develop a new action plan for the State.

The project “Support to the Justice Sector in Nigeria” is being implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime at the federal level, specifically in the Federal Capital Territory, and nine focal States namely: Lagos, Rivers, Imo, Anambra, Benue, Bayelsa, Yobe, Osun and Katsina. The project has three main outcomes, in support of: effective coordination and cooperation among justice sector institutions, with an enhanced legal and policy framework; enhanced operational structures and capabilities of officials in the sector; and increased access to justice and respect for human rights and the rule of law, especially for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Anti-Corruption Agencies Close Ranks in Renewed Effort to Fight Corruption

In a renewed effort to step-up the fight against corruption in Nigeria, the Heads of 12 Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) met on 23 May 2014 in Lagos to formally seal a pact to increase the level of cooperation and coordination among them.

The event followed a two-day technical meeting of the Heads of Investigations and Prosecutions of frontline Anti-Corruption Agencies in Nigeria held on 21-22 May 2014 in Lagos to discuss the mechanisms and modalities for cooperation and coordination among ACAs. The meeting took place under the auspices of the European Union-funded project “Support to Anti-Corruption in Nigeria” being implemented by UNODC.

At the end of the meeting facilitated by UNODC, a communiqué was issued which recommended Heads of ACAs to commit through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to improve coordination, create three inter-agency working groups on investigation, prosecution and asset recovery as well as standard operating procedures for information sharing among them. The Heads of Agencies adopted these recommendations which led to the signing of a MoU to improve inter-agency cooperation and institutionalise the working groups.

In addition to providing a platform for exchange of ideas, practices and difficulties encountered in establishing cooperation mechanisms, the workshop also focused on enhancing the knowledge, attitudes and skills of high-ranking officials representing key Anti-corruption Agencies in Nigeria.

A cross section of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies deliberating on the inter agency cooperation