



CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY WATCH

MONTHLY TRANSPARENCY WATCH



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October 2022 Edition

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INTRODUCTION▶

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to share another exciting edition of our **Monthly Transparency Watch** with you.

In the month of October, the Center expands its advocacy in our core thematic areas of fiscal transparency, accountability, anti-corruption and good governance. With the successful public presentation of the 2022 Transparency and Integrity Index (TII), the Center is poised to expand and mainstream this project as a tool for measuring public sector transparency and accountability in the continent.

Over the month, the Center joined other civil society organizations in Accra Ghana to discuss civic space protection in the West Africa sub-region owing to growing concerns. We are pleased to be part of this process led by the West Africa Civil Society Institute (WASCI).

In this edition, you will also find reports from the Center's participation at the Bureau of Public Service Reforms' (BPSR) "Lunchtime Seminar," where the Center recommits to supporting government efforts at deepening fiscal transparency measures; and the Stocktaking Report on Nigeria's implementation of the recommendations from the UNCAC Country Review, among others.

We do hope that you will find this edition resourceful as we look forward to your continuous partnership and support.

Victor Agi
Public Relations Manager

Center Joins other CSOs in Accra to Discuss Civic Space Protection

Organized by the West Africa Civil Society Institute under its Civic Space Resource Hub for West Africa (CSR-Hub) project, the cohort of 25 national NGOs, youth networks and women's organizations drawn from the West African sub-region was to discuss ways of protecting the shrinking civic space.

The workshop tagged "Contextualizing civic space in west Africa: Interrogating the Rapidly Changing Context, Dynamics, Emerging Issues of Restrictions and Threat to Civil Liberties," aggregate CSOs leader's opinion on how to address emerging issues that continue to threaten civil liberties across the subregion.

Addressing the cohort, Nana Asantewa Afadzinu, the Executive Director of WACSI said that the subregion in recent times has suffered coups and other civic-based restrictions which

has worsened the plight of civic actors.

Afadzinu noted that undemocratic actions of regional leaders continue to muffle citizens' voices and threaten civil society's existence, while also challenging citizens' collective power for inclusive development.

While decrying the failure of CSOs in the region to work together, saying "solidarity in the civic space has become weak, partly because we are all struggling for resources," she called for cooperation and renewed commitment.

The Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW) is committed to working with local and regional players toward promoting civic liberty and open governance. It is our belief that civic liberty enhances transparency and accountability of systems, and we are pleased to be part of this timely intervention.



With 58.74% Score, DBN Emerges Top in 2022 TII Ranking, Center Records Overall Improved MDAs Performance over 2021

The Development Bank of Nigeria has emerged as the overall best in the 2022 Transparency and Integrity Index report presented by the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW).

The Index, borne out of the need to strengthen existing preventive mechanisms in combating corruption in the public sector, is a scientific research that assesses MDAs' compliance with relevant laws and international conventions/treaties on open governance and transparency of government business.

The research was conducted in line with the Center's objective of promoting transparency, monitoring public sector expenditure and strengthening public institutions integrity mechanisms; given the concerns of non-disclosure of vital information that is supposed to be in the public domain by government institutions.

Making the presentation to stakeholders, the Center's Executive Director, Umar Yakubu said that the year's assessment was hinged on twenty-nine variables drawn from six themes including information on website accessibility/integrity,

fiscal transparency, citizens engagement, open procurement, anti-corruption, and human resources & inclusion.

Yakubu said that the Index provides the benchmark to rate public sector institutions in Nigeria and, at the same time, empowers Nigerians to demand accountability at all levels.

Announcing the top ten MDAs in the year's report, Umar said: "the Development Bank of Nigeria has the highest score of 58.74% and ranked 1st. It is followed by nine (9) other institutions in the top ranking, the institutions are: Bank of Industry and National Pension Commission, ranked 2nd with 48.33% respectively. Nigerian Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, 4th with 47.50%."

Others in the top ten are: "Bureau of Public Service Reforms, 5th with 47.17%. Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission, 6th with 45.83%. Bureau of Public Procurement, 7th with 42.50%. Debt Management Office and Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission, 8th with 40.83% respectively."

Read full report here: <https://bit.ly/3TYeVKS>



At BPSR Lunchtime Seminar, Center's ED Recommits to Promoting Fiscal Transparency Measures

At the October edition of the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) Lunchtime Seminar, a monthly program organized to promote innovation and service delivery in the nation's public service, the Executive Director of the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW), Umar Yakubu has recommitted to continuous promotion of fiscal transparency measures.

Umar pledged to continue to support and complement the Fiscal Responsibility Commission (FRC) through the deployment of technological tools and solutions to strengthen transparency and accountability within the public service especially with regard to fiscal discipline.

Citing one of the ways the Center has supported fiscal transparency measures, the Executive Director noted that the recent presentation of the second edition of the Transparency and Integrity Index (TII), a homegrown assessment developed by the Center to monitor compliance with relevant laws on transparency and open governance, has shown improvement in the ways

Ministries Departments and Agencies proactively disclose information on fiscal transparency on their public portals.

He said that the Center will continue to advocate and partner with relevant stakeholders including government agencies like the BPSR and the FRC to entrench best practices in the nation's public sector.

In his presentation on "Strengthening Fiscal Responsibility, Accountability & Prudence through the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2007," the Executive Chairman of the Fiscal Responsibility Commission, Victor Muruako disclosed that the FRA has empowered the Commission to compel officers or government institutions to disclose information relating to public revenues and expenditures, and also cause an investigation into any case of violation of the provisions of the Act.

While noting that the Commission has made some strides in strengthening MDAs fiscal responsibility, he decried the weak sanctions provided for

by the Act. Muruako stated that some agencies also continue to flout the directive to publish daily financial transactions on the Open Treasury Portal in formats that would enable ordinary citizens clearly understand what is being displayed.

Muruako further stated that the unavailability of information on quarterly financial statements by MDAs and quarterly consolidated financial statements by the federal government negates the provision of the transparency policy which mandates that unaudited financial statements should be made public within a month to the end of the quarter.

In his opening remarks earlier, the Director General of the BPSR, Mr. Arabi Dasuki said that the monthly program is organized to build the capacity of MDAs and educate the public on the reform strategies adopted by the government to deepen transparency and accountability within the public service.

He said that the platform facilitates a regular review of reform implementation efforts and the presentation of best practice models.



Nigerian civil society stock taking of progress in implementing recommendations from the UNCAC country reviews

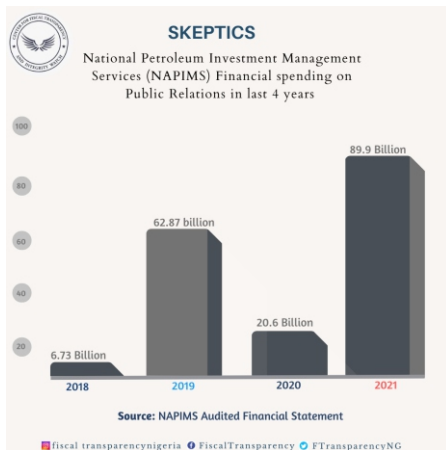
The Center joined other CSOs at the Stocktaking Report on Nigeria's implementation of the recommendations from the UNCAC Country Review.

While there is progress, more work needs to be done, and we called for attention to be paid to the priority actions from the review.

Given our strategic position as the sub-Saharan representative at the board of the UNCAC coalition, the Center will continue to support government and stakeholders' efforts toward implementing these priority areas.



Skeptics



SKEPTICS
Accountability Questions on the Use of Ecological Funds

Despite reported billions ecological funds allocation to state and local government to address floods and other ecological issues, several states are currently still submerged across the nation with attendant loss of lives, livelihood and destruction of properties

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SKEPTICS
SUPREME COURT UNDER PROBE OVER ALLEGED N2.2BN FRAUD

- 01. Scope of allegation**
The true ownership of a bank account domiciled at the United Bank for Africa with Account Number 2027642863 from which a cumulative sum of N2.2 billion allegedly belonging to the Supreme Court of Nigeria, was purportedly diverted into in 11 years
- 02. Investigating Agency**
Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)
- 03. Petitioner**
Aliyu Mohammed on behalf of concerned staff of the Supreme Court of Nigeria
- 04. CJN Involved**
Justice Aloysius Katsina-Alu (2010-2011)
Justice Dahiru Musdapher (2011-2012)
Justice Aloma Muhktar (2012-2014)
Justice Mahmud Mohammed (2014-2016)
Justice Walter Onnoghen (2017-2019)
Justice Ibrahim Muhammad (2019-2022)

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SKEPTICS
DO YOU KNOW?

In 2013, NSITF allegedly paid over N17 billion to private accounts as per the 2018 Auditor-General report. It was later claimed by the Fund's management that termite ate the vouchers and evidence, hence the monies could not be accounted for

In an investigative hearing by the Senate Committee on Public Accounts on 14th August 2022, the Committee ordered the Fund to re-appear before it with all evidential documents unfailingly on September 22, 2022

However, the public is unaware of the outcome of the follow-up hearing, and actions taken

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SKEPTICS
Do you know?

Despite facing fiscal challenges amidst dwindling revenue, Daily Trust has reported the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) to have concluded arrangements to begin the process of upward review of the remuneration of President, VP, Senate President, Speaker, CJN, Governors, and others

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Cognitive Fatigue of the Electoral Mind

By Umar Yakubu



Our opinions, our acumen -all of it, are the result of years of selectively choosing to pay attention to that information only, which confirms what our limited minds already accept as the truth – Ina Catrinescu

An annual ranking of universities worldwide places Stanford University in the top five. In terms of research, it is among the best. They made several intriguing discoveries regarding the human mind and its limitations to reason, as well as how well-established facts do not always cause individuals to change their beliefs, in one of their research on human psychology.

One example, out of thousands conducted since the 70s, was recruiting some students for a psychology study. For this experiment, researchers had a group of students who had opposing opinions about capital punishment. Half of the students were in favour of it and thought that it deterred crime; the other half were against it and thought that it had no effect on crime.

The students were asked to respond to two studies. One provided data in support of the deterrence argument, and the other provided data that called it into question. Incidentally, both studies were made up, and had been designed to

present what were, objectively speaking, equally compelling statistics. Students who had previously supported the death penalty gave the evidence in favour of deterrence a high level of credibility while finding the evidence against it unpersuasive.

The students were once more questioned about their opinions after the experiment. Those who had first supported the death penalty were now much more in favor of it, while those who had previously opposed it were even more hostile. Even after the evidence supporting their views has been contradicted, the researchers observed that people fail to make appropriate changes in their beliefs.

The Stanford studies became famous in psychology studies. These results have been validated and expanded upon by thousands of additional trials.

I found the series of research interesting because we have upcoming elections in 2023, and all the facts supported by reliable data are available to support rational decision-making of our next political choices. The problem is that facts do not seem to positively influence our minds in electing leaders.

Four months to the elections, minds have been made up based on winning arguments, instead of thinking logically. Ego dominates the space. Just like the study above, there is nothing these same set of politicians have not told us before. Most of their promises have been fictional, revealed by their past performances. Most aspirants at the national and sub-national levels have been in positions of authority, so there is

a basis for comparison. There is little evidence to indicate that they possess the competence, character and capacity to execute anything meaningful. Yet, we have almost all made up our minds on whom to vote for without thinking about whether we even understand what they say- assuming they are saying anything.

Ironically, several similar studies have demonstrated that reasonable-seeming people are often totally irrational. Studies show that the habits of the mind that seem weird from an "intellectualist" point of view differ when seen from a social "interactionist" perspective. That is probably why most geniuses and reformers are often seen as mad by the majority. And this becomes more intriguing in a complex democracy like ours where the majority determine the trajectory. We are driven by herd mentality where emotions trumps rationality.

Emotions feeds our confirmation biases - the tendency people have to embrace information that supports beliefs and rejects information that contradicts them. Neurologically, people experience a dopamine rush when processing information that supports their beliefs. It leads people to dismiss evidence and underappreciated threats. When presented with another person's argument, we are adept at spotting only weaknesses, blind to other viewpoints.

You can read the full opinion published by Premium Times here: <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/560783-the-cognitive-conditioning-of-the-electoral-mind-by-umar-yakubu.html>

STOP CORRUPTION



Stop corruption please,
It's a contagious disease,
That not only affects the persons,
But also the whole nation.

Corruption is like cancer,
Spreading from one part to another,
And its movement is so fast,
That almost nothing's left to be done at last.

The apparent patriots like the scared birds,
Fly away to the distant lands,
In search of a secured,
And better life indeed.

If anyone dares to stand against corruption,
The ones suffering from the very pollution,
Throw him in the jail,
Or bury under the soil.

As the sunset lets the dawn to appear,
We shouldn't let our dreams expire,
Since the expected moment isn't far away,
Only you and I can bring that day.

@Md. Ziaul Haque



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