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INTRODUCTION

Dear readers,

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

As a nation, the month of May is significant as it marked the successful transfer of power from one democratically elected leader to the other. The inauguration President Bola Ahmed Tinubu on May 29 is yet another indication that our nascent democracy is on a path of growth despite a few lapses in our processes.

The Center joins all lovers of democracy to congratulate the country's new president and wish him and all other elected leaders successful terms in office. At the same time, we quickly want to draw the President's attention to the enormity of task before him, especially the need to block leakages in governance. It is our belief that the new administration will be successful to the extent that the President is willing to lead the fight against public sector corruption through the promotion of measures that promotes transparency and accountability in governance.

The Center is therefore urging new leaders at national and subnational levels to spearhead a new Nigeria by demonstrating strong political will against wastage, impunity, nepotism, red-tapism and all forms of corruption.

Over the month, the Center in partnership with the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) presented the Transparency and Integrity Index (TII) Methodology Handbook for 2023 Assessment. The handbook provides a detailed guide to the variables and scoring criteria that would be used in the assessment of public institutions' compliance to fiscal transparency and accountability laws and other commitments, and we hope that public institutions will take advantage of the handbook to improve their ranking in 2023.

In this edition, you would also find story about our participation at the launch of the open register of beneficial owners which will promote transparency and reduce opacity in government contracting processes, and what the register means for the fight against corruption.

We hope that you will find this edition resourceful, as we look forward to your continuous partnership in the task of nation building.

Victor Agi
Public Relations Lead

2023 TII to Assess Local Government, as Center Presents Methodology Handbook

The Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch (CeFTIW) is set to assess compliance of local government alongside states and federal ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in the 2023 Transparency and Integrity Index (TII) as a means of promoting accountability and transparency in line with extant laws at subnational levels.

The TII developed by the Center in 2021 is a technological solution that promotes transparency in governance by closely monitoring the publication of vital information that should rightfully be in the public domain, particularly through the websites and portals of public institutions in line with the principles of proactive disclosure.

Speaking at the presentation which was done in partnership with the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR), the Center's Board of Trustees Chairman, Amb. Angela Nworgu noted that the variables for assessment were carefully designed to align with applicable laws and statutory instrument, ensuring a robust and comprehensive assessment process.

She added, "for the upcoming 2023 assessment, we have identified six thematic areas of focus for government institutions at the national, sub-national and local government level. These variables include Website Integrity; Fiscal Transparency; Open Procurement; Anti-Corruption; Citizens Engagement; and Human Resources and Inclusion."

While presenting the methodology, the Center's Executive Director, Umar Yakubu however noted that the state and local government assessments would exclude the "human resources and inclusion" variable since there are not established laws backing the issue of human resources and inclusion at individual states, and across the different 774 local government in the federation.

The Center's Head of Programs, Tamara Berepubo also noted that the presentation of the TII methodology before assessment is aimed at equipping public institutions with knowledge of tools and variables so they can improve their performances in the year's assessment. She added that a culture of proactive disclosure would improve transparency in

governance, and ultimately reduce corruption in the nation's public service.

In his welcome remarks, the Director-General of the BPSR, Mr. Arabi Dasuki commended the Center for developing the TII as a means of entrenching accountability and good governance. He said that government's quest for citizens' greater responsiveness, better use of public resources and development has heightened the need for transparency of public revenues.

While pointing out that government has promulgated several laws that should promote transparency and accountable use of public resources, he decried that the "level of sensitization and compliance still remains low across MDAs, and this is why the Bureau has decided to partner with Civil Organizations to increase the level of awareness, before the release of the next Transparency and Integrity Index assessment of MDAs by September, 2023."

He encouraged non-state actors to develop initiatives and support government as exemplified by the Center for a virile and sustainable economy for all Nigerians.

The methodology handbook is presented every year as a detailed guide to the variables and scoring criteria that would be used in the assessment of public institutions' compliance to fiscal transparency and accountability laws and other commitments.



Nigeria's Open Register of Beneficial Owners Will Promote Transparency in Govt. Contracting, Procurement Processes

Nigeria's Open Register of Beneficial Owners Will Promote Transparency in Govt. Contracting, Procurement Processes

In compliance with sections 119-123 of the 2020 Company and Allied Matters Acts (CAMA) which mandated the disclosure of persons with significant control as a means of promoting transparency on matters of ownership, the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) with support from the World Bank has officially launched the Open Register of Beneficial Owners.

As a stakeholder working to promote transparency in the use of public resources, the Center applauds this stride in the nation's effort towards addressing corruption around diversion of public funds by public officer affiliated to entities, as the database will aid in knowing the ownership structure of companies and persons with significant control.

The Center aligns that the BO register will impact on efforts to reduce opacity in contracting and substantially address the use of proxies to register companies, which influence economic and commercial decisions in government's procurement processes. It is also believed that institutionalization of BO register will aid the fight against financial crimes and illicit financial flows.

We look forward to improvement of the register to be in line with commitments made at the UK anti-corruption summit.



Dialogue on Corrosive and Constructive Capital in Nigeria

At a 3-day networking and experience sharing workshop on corrosive and constructive capital in Nigeria organized by the Center for Journalism Innovation and Development (CJID) in collaboration with the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), the need for media and CSOs actors to interrogate the opacity around capital inflows to the country either as loans, aids or FDI was accentuated.

The dialogue raised concerns over the lack of transparency and accountability in the process of obtaining certain loans by the government, and the consequent erosion of values of such capital inflow (corrosive); and ways to ensure the inflow of constructive (responsible, market and value oriented) capital were also discussed.

The Center welcomes this advocacy drive aimed at drawing stakeholders' attention to the implication of corrosive capital to the nation's economy. This is also because of the country's dire fiscal condition and huge debt burden which currently stands at N77 trillion based on figures by the Debt Management Office (DMO), inclusive of the recent securitization of the N22.7 trillion Ways and Means advances at the Central Bank of Nigeria.



Sights and Scenes from the Presentation of TII Methodology Handbook for 2023 Assessment



Sights and Scenes from the Presentation of TII Methodology Handbook for 2023 Assessment



Center Pledges Technical Support for Development of Harmonized Template for Reporting Corruption



Working to strengthen social, economic, and democratic governance, the Center for Media, Policy and Accountability is currently seeking collaboration with stakeholders to develop harmonized template for reporting anti-corruption efforts by anti-corruption agencies (ACAs).

This, the Executive Director of the Center, Dr. Suleiman Amu Sulieman said, during a courtesy visit to the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Integrity Watch, will address concerns around duplication of efforts by ACAs and ensure that the impact of their works are measurable.

Suleiman noted that the harmonized template for reporting corruption is an integral part of its “Nigeria Anti-Corruption Performance Public Reporting (NAPPR) project,” which seeks to address the variance between public perception of ACAs efforts and their personal assessment of the work they do; adding that the process will also foster synergy among agencies and build a community of actors working together to reduce corruption.

The project lead seized the event to applaud CeFTIW’s unique approach to the fight against public sector corruption and look forward to a rewarding partnership.

Responding, the Executive Director of the Center, Umar Yakubu welcomed the initiative by the CMPA and pledged the Center’s technical and otherwise support required to develop the template.

While acknowledging that there may be challenges in the process of bringing all ACAs together to sanction a unified reporting guide, Yakubu said that the harmonized template is long overdue and commended the Center for taking up the project.



Another Season of Bumper Severance Packages for Public Officers; to What End?

By Victor Agi



A 2022 analysis of figures from the Revenue Mobilization and Fiscal Allocation Commission (RMFAC) by a Punch newspaper report puts the severance package for President Muhammadu Buhari, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo, state governors and other political appointees leaving office this month at N63.45bn. This figure, according to the report, is different from other financial packages including retirement benefits or pensions. The analysis revealed that political office holders were entitled to 300 percent of their annual salary as severance packages; with some state governors also entitled to 100 percent of their annual basic salary for life after leaving office, aside from other bumper packages for ‘serving’ their states for 8 years.

These official figures from the RMFAC are a far cry from what some state governors have proposed and approved for themselves through state legislation. For instance, Daily Post just reported that the Ebonyi State House of Assembly approved the sum of N1.6 billion as severance package in what was described by the leader of the House, Victor Chukwu as “appreciating those who have worked with the governor.” He was quoted as further saying that the severance package is “an extension of the empowerment program that the governor has been doing and there is nothing new about it.” What a way to describe and justify the payment of severance package for public officers.

Ebonyi state is not alone on this “state empowerment program.” Before a purported downward review by Governor Babajide Sanwo Olu in 2020 due to public outcry, the Lagos state severance packages for governors signed into law by the now president-elect, Bola Ahmed Tinubu are staggering and incredulous. An ex-Lagos governor is entitled to two houses in Lagos and Abuja respectively, six brand new cars which are replaced every three years, furniture allowance of 300 percent of annual salary to be paid every two years, and a reported

N2.5 million monthly as pension, among other humongous components.

As at the last count, about 22 state governments have signed into legislation this arrangement that arrogate state resources to governors and state legislators upon leaving office. It is even more ridiculous for Governors who eventually became senators after their tenures, actively being paid from the nation’s coffers as lawmakers and also parting away with their enormous severance packages and pension at the same time.

This has become our reality in the same country where the highest ranked civil servant which is the position of the permanent secretary takes home 300 percent of their meagre annual basic salary of N1, 925,865.00 that amounted to N5, 777,595.00 after 35 years of active service to the country. Needless to mention that thousands of civil servants who painstakingly served the country for 35 years continue to fruitlessly struggle to be paid their pension and other emoluments, with some losing their lives in the process of waiting to get their entitlements. Isn’t it also absurd that some governors who cornered state resources in the guise of severance packages continue to contest and have refused to implement the N30,000 minimum wage law, with some governors still owning their civil servants for several months. It is therefore against natural justice that people who could not substantially make meaningful impact in the lives of ordinary people during their term in office would part with so much public fund as severance and pension for the rest of their lives.

How do we rationalize the very fact that these state governments are currently indebted to the tune of over N5 trillion naira as at December 2022 in the domestic debt profile without commensurate impact in the lives of the people of their states, but would go ahead to plunder their states further? It is even more unfortunate because majority of the states under the watch of the outgoing governors exist merely to pay salaries from monthly allocations. It is hard to point to any creative project that will continue to generate revenue for their respective states. It is no wonder that the World Bank Macro Poverty Outlook for Nigeria described the nation’s fiscal condition as “a more fragile position than before the late 2021 global oil price boom,” putting the country’s National poverty rate at 41.1%, and further revealing that the country used 96.3 percent of its revenue generated in 2022 to service debt. There is also the controversial issue where the Central Bank of Nigeria’s advances (Ways and Means) to the government have ballooned in the last seven years to N22.7 trillion, violating the Banks’ law which stipulates that advances “shall not at any time exceed five (5) percent of the previous year’s actual revenue of the Federal Government.” The last week’s securitization of the CBN Ways and Means by the National Assembly has officially put our public debt at N68.95 trillion, representing a 447 percent increase from the 12.6 trillion the administration met it in 2015.

Read full on Daily Trust here: <https://dailytrust.com/another-season-of-bumper-severance-packages-for-public-officers-to-what-end/>

May Infographics Corner

CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY WATCH



STOP CORRUPTION
#EVERYNOCOUNTS

JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION

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CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY & INTEGRITY WATCH

Join the conversation on  Spaces

Fuel Subsidy, Nigeria's Fiscal Condition and the Task Before the Incoming Administration

This Friday 19th May 2023 @FTTransparencyNG 4.00 p.m



Victor Agi
Public Relations Lead, CeFTIW
Moderator



Prof. John Chizea
HOD, Economics, Baze University



Jet Philips
ED, Exceral International Center

CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY WATCH

2023 WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY
-3RD MAY



Free press and freedom of expression are fundamental rights that promote transparent and accountable institutions

"Shaping a Future of Rights: Freedom of expression as a driver for all other human rights"

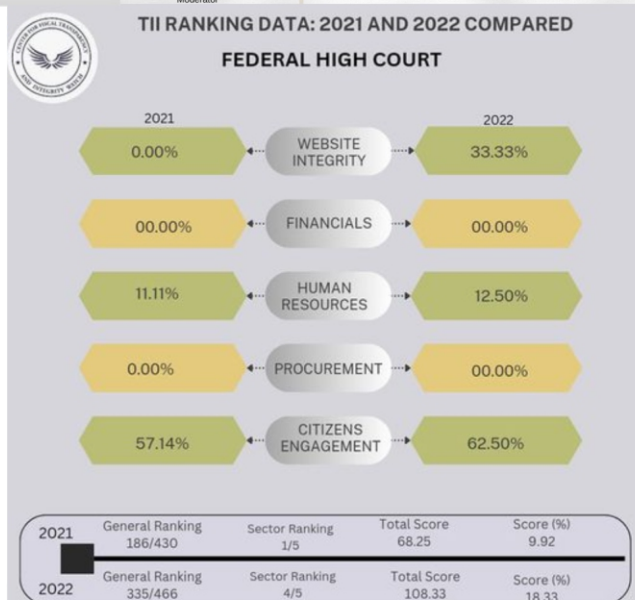


CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY WATCH

2023 TII Assessment Timeline

- MAY 2023** Presentation of the 2023 Methodology Handbook
- JUNE - AUGUST 2023** Research and Data Collation
- 28 SEPT. 2023** Presentation of the 2023 TII Report

www.fiscaltransparency.org



CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY WATCH

“Once there is transparency, corruption will reduce”

-Dr. (Mrs) 'Dere Ajoritsedere Awosika MFR mni



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At GMI, We Identified a Link Between Accountability and Gender-based Violence in Nigerian Universities



The Center was received in courtesy visit at the Gender Mobile Initiatives, where we identified a point of convergence between gender rights and accountability.

It is our strong belief that if gender policies are implemented transparently and accountably, stakeholders would have made progress in curbing gender-based violence and abuses in our society and higher institutions of learning

in particular.

The Center looks forward to a collaborative work with the GMI that will see to effective monitoring of the implementation of gender-based policies aimed at addressing violence against women in Nigerian universities by developing an accountability index for gender-based policies.





Words on the Marble

They are so obsessed with the neo-classical position of removing subsidies. The main problem is the inefficiency in the utilization of resources. Remove it. All you will have is an extra 4 trillion naira to pass through the same inefficient system. It will be more revenue but not necessarily more growth. States and LG governments will have more funds that may likely go the same route.



UMAR YAKUBU
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY
AND INTEGRITY WATCH

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



Contact us at:
No 11 Ado-Ekiti Close, Area 11, Abuja

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