



CENTER FOR FISCAL TRANSPARENCY  
AND PUBLIC INTEGRITY

JULY EDITION

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# MONTHLY TRANSPARENCY WATCH

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## TOP NEWS

**Engagement session with National Climate Change Council on Transparency and Integrity Index Methodology**

The Center discussed strategies to enhance their rankings on the Transparency and Integrity Index and delved into Climate Action Index.

**Agora Policy Partners with the Center as it hosts its Second Policy Conversation on Local Government Reforms.**

Policy Conversation  
Local Government Reforms: A Year after Supreme Court's ruling.



### Engagement session with National Climate Change Council on Transparency and Integrity Index "TII" Methodology

The Center discussed strategies to enhance their rankings on the Transparency and Integrity Index and delved into Climate Action Index.



### The Center Monitors the NDLEA's Asset Disposal Process at its headquarters in Abuja.

The Center witnessed the public auction of properties which were acquired through drug trafficking or used as an instrument in committing crime to ensure transparency of the exercise.

“  
Transparency is a powerful tool to build peaceful, prosperous and stable countries.  
”

Kofi Annan



### Dear Readers,

Welcome to the latest edition of our Monthly Transparency Watch, where we highlight ongoing efforts to promote accountability, transparency and good governance through out Nigeria. Enhanced transparency boosts public trust, contributes to economic growth and development, and empowers citizens to engage in decision making processes and hold their leaders accountable.

As we remain committed to promoting transparency and accountability in governance, here's something you should know: your unwavering support is our driving force. Thank you for your continued support. We invite you to explore the stories, insights and observations we've shared and remember to stay the course.



## ENGAGEMENT SESSION WITH NATIONAL CLIMATE CHANGE COUNCIL (NCCC) ON TRANSPARENCY AND INTEGRITY INDEX “TII” METHODOLOGY



As part of our commitment to advancing transparency in governance, The Center held a training session with the National Climate Change Council (NCCC) at their headquarters in Maitama, Abuja. The meeting focused on developing strategies to improve transparency, accountability and institutional performance in relation to the Transparency and Integrity Index, where public institutions are evaluated on five key variables and also strengthen its alignment with Climate Action Index.

During the session, the Director General of the NCCC, Mrs Omotenioye and Majekodunmi commended the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity for its significant contributions to promoting transparency and accountability in the public sector.

Discussions were centered on the practical ways for NCCC to improve its standing on the index which is through good governance practices such as fiscal transparency, open procurement, anti corruption, human resource and inclusion and citizens engagement.

The session was highly engaging and reaffirmed a shared commitment to strengthening public sector transparency.





# YOUR TAX IS NOT CHARITY

Your Taxes, Your Rights, Our Nation's Future! 🇳🇮

Ever feel like paying taxes is just doing the government a favor? Think again! Every naira you pay isn't a gift; it's your rightful contribution to building the Nigeria we all deserve.

Here's the deal: Those taxes are meant to fund the essentials – roads, schools, hospitals, clean water, electricity, and public safety.

These aren't privileges; they're entitlements that your hard-earned money should guarantee!

Sadly, many of us have been led to believe that asking for accountability is being "ungrateful." But let's be clear: It's YOUR money. It's YOUR right. It's YOUR power to demand better!

At the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity (CFTPI), we're all about empowering YOU. We want every citizen to understand their fiscal rights and responsibilities so you can effectively hold public officials accountable.

It's time to break the cycle of silent suffering! Let's make governance truly serve the people.

#YourTaxesYourRights #Accountability #FiscalTransparency #CFTPI







## AGORA POLICY PARTNERS WITH THE CENTER AS IT HOSTS IT'S SECOND POLICY CONVERSATION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORMS.

Agora Policy with the support of the MacArthur Foundation, partnered with the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity (CFTPI), African Cities Research Consortium (ACRC) and The Cables Newspaper to organize a policy discussion on “Local Government Reforms: A Year After Supreme Court’s ruling” in order to discuss the ruling’s outcome one year later and suggest the next steps for Nigeria’s Local Government Reforms.

In his keynote address, the Honorable Minister of Finance and Coordinating Minister of the Economy, Mr Olawale Edun stated that the government understands the importance of an effective local administration in the country because it will stabilize the economy (boost revenue, increase productivity, improve education and job creation) and also mentioned that the local government is fundamental to President Bola Ahmed Tinubu Renewed Hope Agenda, specifically development at the grassroots level.

Local Government Autonomy, He pointed out, is a development necessity as well as a constitutional one. He revealed that the government is actively involved in this course and cited the “Nutrition 774 Initiative” which is a government led, community driven designed to vitalize and incentivize local action and improve food security, health and nutrition in Nigeria, also “Project 774 Local Government Connectivity” which aims to furnish local governments with dependable and cost effective internet access alongside essential resources needed to facilitate efficient public service delivery. Although direct transfers to Local Government are still being worked out, Mr Olawale Edun Acknowledged that considerable reforms must be made to the current fiscal structure to ensure that Local Government Areas can receive and effectively manage their funds.



This event also included a panel session with the Center’s Executive Director as one of the panelists.

During the panel discussion, one of the questions raised was about transparency within Local Governments. In response, the Executive Director of CFTPI, Dr Umar Yakubu, highlighted the importance of transparency in Local Governanc. Dr Umar Yakubu introduced the **Transparency and Integrity Index (TII)** as a tool for assessing how transparent local government councils are. He also added that the councils would receive training to improve their understanding and for efficient performance.

#TransparencyandIntegrityIndex  
#LocalGovernmentReforms  
#AgoraPolicyPartners



## THE CENTER MONITORS THE NDLEA'S ASSET DISPOSAL PROCESS AT ITS HEADQUARTERS IN ABUJA.



The Center found the straightforward and transparent approach to disposing of these properties particularly commendable.

This level of transparency is crucial for any public agency as it builds trust and helps prevent corruption. By conducting the process in such an upfront way, the NDLEA not only fulfilled its legal obligations but also significantly enhanced its public image and operational integrity as a law enforcement body.

**#Transparency**  
**#AssetDisposalProcess**  
**#CSOMonitors**

National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) held a public auction of forfeited homes that were either purchased through the earnings of drug trafficking or utilized in the commission of drug related offenses.

The event held at the Agency's National Headquarters in Abuja included; prequalified auctioneers, bidders, civil society representatives, media personnel and various government agencies.

The Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity's key role was to monitor and ensure that the process which involved properties, mainly landed assets, that had been legally forfeited to the government from various part of the country was transparent.





## SCENES FROM JULY

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From L-R, Ms Cynthia Rowe, Development Director, at the British High Commission, Mr Olawale Edun, Hon. Minister of Finance/Coordination Minister of the economy, Ms Ojobo Atuluku, Board Chair Agora Policy.



AIG Zubaru Muazu (rtd) mni  
Member, Board of Trustees of the Center



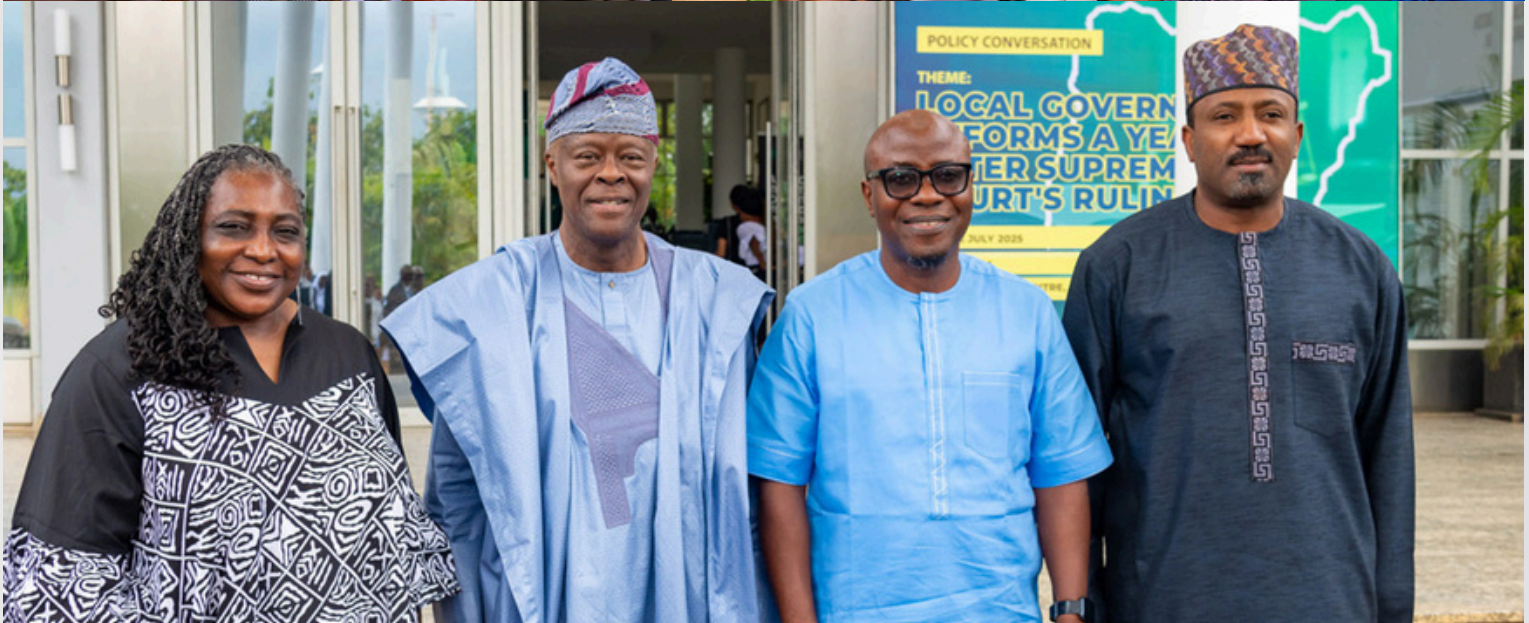
Prof. Tunji Olaopa, Chairman of the Federal Service Commission



Staff of NCCC during the Training



Hon Akala Samuel, Technical Assistant at ALGON and former Chairman Karu LGA







News Night segment discusses the non-implementation of a Supreme Court judgment concerning the autonomy of local governments, one year after the ruling.

#### Key points from the discussion include:

The consensus from a forum organized by Agora Policy was that while the court has ruled, political and administrative factors, including the need for stakeholder engagement and buy-in from state governors, are causing delays.

ALGON (Association of Local Governments of Nigeria) stated that they are the beneficiary of the judgment, which aims to strengthen local government existence and operations. They clarified that the federal government, which initiated the lawsuit, is the one causing delays, not the state governments.

Despite the Supreme Court's order for immediate compliance, direct payments to local governments have not commenced. ALGON refuted reports that their members have refused to open accounts with the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), stating that local governments have fulfilled CBN's requirements, but the Federal Ministry of Finance has not yet issued payment instructions.

Umar Yakubu, Executive Director at the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity, suggested that the delay might be due to concerns about low capacity at the local government level, implying a need for accountability measures and capacity building before funds are transferred. However, Samuel countered this, asserting that local governments are financially and administratively ready to handle autonomy and that the issue is the lack of fund disbursement, not capacity.

Both guests agreed that the federal government should effect direct payments to local governments, with Yakubu adding that accountability mechanisms are crucial.

#### Local Government Autonomy

The Center joins NTA Business Experience to discuss the implementation and impact of the Nigerian Supreme Court's ruling on July 11, 2024, which granted financial autonomy to the 774 local government councils across the country.

Despite this ruling, Dr. Umar Yakubu, Executive Director of the Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity, states that the implementation is "zero," as local governments have not yet directly received funds.

Funds are still being channeled through state governments, a practice that has been in place for decades, with the Minister of Finance citing administrative issues as the reason for the delay.

The non-implementation has significant consequences, as approximately 4.4 trillion naira, intended for local governments, could have greatly improved local infrastructure such as schools, healthcare centers, and markets.

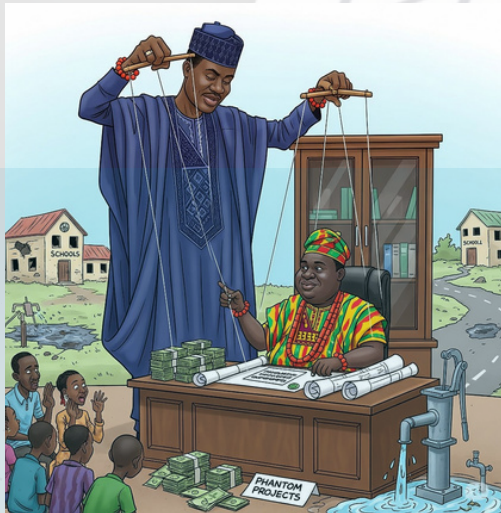
Concerns about mismanagement and corruption are high due to weak accountability at the local government level, evidenced by the fact that only seven out of 774 local government areas had functional websites in 2023, scoring low on transparency.

Dr. Yakubu advocates for proactive disclosure of financial information and increased citizen engagement through "bottom-up" budgeting to ensure funds are used for essential services. He proposes a framework for fiscal autonomy that includes fiscal transparency, open procurement, citizens' engagement, human resources capacity, and control of corruption.





The Auditor Generals Office , a titan in chains,  
A captured fortress, where no true audit of public institutions reigns.  
Though power's deep current within its walls lies,  
It stands, strangely tethered, beneath watching skies.  
#Accountability #OAuGF #NASS #StateCapture



In Nigeria's glorious political theater, our local governments are simply miniature kingdoms. Their strings? Expertly pulled by state governors, those selfless titans who, despite ruling entire states, find boundless energy to micromanage every local council.

It's a miracle of governance!

#LocalGovernments #Accountability #CeFTPI #ALGON #ICPC



NGN 24 Billion for Government House CCTV

A tale from Rivers, both bold and grand, of billions spent for watchful eyes across the land.

Not for schools that are crumbling, but for cameras so keen, sixteen million dollars, a truly scandalous scene.

Past leaders, they say, were rather blind, no twenty-four billion Naira for education in mind.

While classrooms are collapsing and teachers are few, a digital guardian emerges, shiny and new.

“For security’s sake!” cries a voice, loud and clear, but what of the budget and the funds that disappear?

So let us praise the lens and the pixel's bright gleam, a luxurious safety, a technocrat's dream.





### **The Golden Runways: A Chronicle of Nigeria's Airborne Prosperity**

From 1999, a glorious new era dawned upon Nigeria. An era not of schools, not of healthcare, not of agriculture, but of a newfound obsession with renovating airports. Not just any airports, mind you, but grand, palatial structures that were less about facilitating travel and more about providing a tangible testament to the nation's unparalleled commitment to... well, spending money.

And so, the money flowed like a river during the rainy season. Contracts were awarded with the speed of light, often to companies with names like "Enginos Nigeria Limited" and "Samahah Integrated Investment Limited"—firms whose primary expertise lay not in construction, but in having a CEO who is "a close acquaintance" of a serving minister.

Take, for instance, the infamous Abuja airport runway project. Originally budgeted at a humble N90 billion, the price tag ballooned faster than a politician's belly after a contract signing ceremony. It grew to N532 billion! The contractors, in a magnanimous show of goodwill, later offered to "cut" the price to a measly N300 billion. The reason for the increase? Unforeseen "consultancy fees" and "land compensation expenses." One can only assume these "consultants" were paid to consult with their bank accounts, and the "land compensation" was for the land of the ancestors who had to make way for a second runway that no one was entirely sure was needed.

The minister in charge, a man of profound wisdom and an even more profound sense of self-entitlement, explained the situation with the eloquence of a man who knew he was untouchable. "The cost variation," he announced, "is a necessary adjustment for national progress. How can you put a price on a legacy? Besides, do you know how many invoices we had to print for a project of this magnitude? The paper alone is worth a fortune!" The beauty of it all was in the aftermath. The subsequent investigations! The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) would swoop in with the righteous fury of a hawk, arresting a junior supervisor for diverting N11 million in "missing funds" and a minister's brother for his role in a N5.8 billion contract fraud. The arrests were always televised, a performance as elaborate as any Nollywood film, complete with dramatic headlines and stern-faced officials. The public would praise the government's renewed fight against corruption, blissfully unaware that the arrested officials would likely be released on bail, their cases dragging on for years until they were quietly forgotten, like two ministers of aviation before him.

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## **The Rebuilding of a Rebuilt Airport**

The narrative of Nigeria's glorious golden runways was so inspiring, so breathtakingly expensive, that it was only a matter of time before the story required a sequel. And what a sequel it was. Just yesterday, a new and bold proclamation echoed across the land, a declaration that was both a triumph of vision and a quiet, dignified burial of all the billions spent before.

The Federal Government, in its infinite wisdom and with the financial swagger of a man who just found a forgotten wallet, announced that the Murtala Muhammed International Airport (MMIA) in Lagos would be completely rebuilt. Not renovated. Not touched up. Rebuilt. Stripped down to its "carcass" and re-outfitted with brand new everything. The cost? A cool N712.3 billion. For just the Lagos terminal, and a few other things. The announcement was a masterclass in political doublespeak, as a minister, with a straight face, declared this was "not a patchwork."

This, of course, came after the nation had already sunk countless billions into previous "upgrades." The last major "rehabilitation" had barely concluded, and a new international terminal, built with a Chinese loan, was just commissioned a few years ago. But why use a functional, new terminal when you can rebuild an old one for a price that could fund a small country? It was a clear signal that the government was committed to a new kind of economic model: an infinite loop of deconstruction and reconstruction, each cycle more expensive than the last.

## **The Phantom of the National Carrier**

And what of the national carrier? The beautiful, ethereal dream that has haunted the minds of every aviation minister since the dawn of democracy? Ah, that is the most poetic part of this grand opera of spending. Time and again, successive ministers, with the fervent conviction of a televangelist, promised to revive a national airline.

There was "Air Nigeria," then "Nigeria Air," a project so real that it had its own logo, launch ceremony, and even its own leased aeroplane, which promptly flew back to its Ethiopian home right after the ribbon was cut. The project, which was described by a House of Representatives committee as a "fraud," officially died a quiet death, having swallowed billions of naira without ever taking a single Nigerian on a paid flight.

The latest minister, a man who clearly learned from the "patchwork" mistakes of his predecessors, has now declared that the government is abandoning the idea of a national carrier. It seems the well-fed public servants have finally concluded that it is far easier to build and rebuild palaces for planes that are not there than to actually put those planes in the sky.

So, as the contractors for the new Lagos airport terminal prepare to demolish the previous round of billion-naira renovations, the people of Nigeria can hold their heads high. We may not have a national airline, but our local carriers may be struggling, and our travel experience may still be a test of patience. However, we have something far more valuable: a never-ending cycle of construction projects. And that, dear citizens, is what progress truly looks like.

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## CONNECT WITH US

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: [mail@fiscaltransparency.org](mailto:mail@fiscaltransparency.org)



: [FiscalTransparency](https://www.facebook.com/FiscalTransparency)



: [fiscaltransparencynigeria](https://www.instagram.com/fiscaltransparencynigeria)



: +2348033278895  
+23492921659



: [www.fiscaltransparency.org](http://www.fiscaltransparency.org)



: Center for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity



: [FTransparencyNG](https://twitter.com/FTransparencyNG)

For Additional Information, kindly visit us @



No 11 Ado Ekiti Close, Area 11, Abuja.

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