

NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION, ABUJA

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED AT THE END OF TRAINING WORKSHOP ON SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2011 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) IN NPC BY THE NPC IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ITS PARASTATALS HELD AT THE BRIDGE WATER HOTEL, ENUGU FROM 25TH TO 28TH JULY, 2011

A training workshop **ON SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF FOI ACT IN NPC** was organised in collaboration with the Democratic Governance for Development Project II (UNDP) and had in attendance the Honourable Minister/Deputy Chairman, National Planning Commission ably represented by the Secretary to the Commission, Ntufam Fidelis Ugbo, Esq., members of the NPC FOI Implementation Committee and representatives of our parastatals (NBS, CMD, NISER) and some officers of NPC. Others in attendance were representatives of the Attorney-General of the Federation; Chairperson, Inter-Ministerial Implementation Committee/Permanent Secretary, MDO, UNDP Resident Representative, Retired Permanent Secretary/Former National Coordinator - NV20:2020; Civil Society Organisations; and the Media.

2. Key Objectives of the Workshop

The critical objectives of the workshop were:

- i. To acquaint members of the NPC's FOI Committee and its Parastatals with the content's of the Act and ways to successfully implement its provisions;
- ii. To educate participants of their role and responsibilities for the successful implementation of the FOIA in line with the mandates of the Commission and its Parastatals;
- iii. To familiarize participants with baseline data about disclosure of information in the Public Service prior to the Act;
- iv. To synthesize on the principles and fundamental elements of FOIA;

- v. To identify the role of development agencies in implementing FOIA; and
- vi. To share experiences of Public Service, vis-a-vis modern records creation, management, and timely provision to the public.

3. The outcome of the workshop were as follows:

- There was a Consensus on the need for effective implementation of the Freedom of Information Act
- Proactive Information disclosure serves greater public interest
- Acknowledgement that Freedom of Information Act will change how the business of governance is conducted
- NPC should use Freedom of Information Act to achieve its functions and exercise its powers
- NPC should set means to ensure that whistleblowers are protected under the Act
- The need to strengthen the ICT unit of NPC to assist officers in record creation, management and dissemination
- There is also the need for our parastatals to establish Freedom of Information web page on their websites like NPC to proactively disclose information
- The need to digitalise and strengthen the Registry Units of NPC and its parastatals for easy management of records and accessibility
- The need for synergy between National Planning Commission and National Orientation Agency to continuously create awareness on the functions and activities of NPC and its parastatals.

Dr. Anne Nzegwu
Chairperson, NPC FOI Implementation Committee

29th July, 2012