



**REPORT OF IN-PLANT TRAINING PROGRAMME ON ADVANCE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (2011) HELD ON WEDNESDAY 6
-8 MARCH AT EVENTS AND CONFERENCE CENTER, MARARABA
NASSARAWA STATE**

Attendance

1. James Akwada	Director
2. Sabo Isiaku	Deputy Director
3. Aisha Wando	Deputy Director
4. Eric Ani	Deputy Director
5. Emmanuel Longza	Deputy Director
6. Chinwe Neboh	Deputy Director
7. Benjamin Ikheleah	Deputy Director
8. Debbie Dibal	Deputy Director
9. Lovina Kayode	Deputy Director
10. Edu Oladapo	Deputy Director
11. Bashir Muktar	Deputy Director
12. Gloria Chukwu	Assistant Director
13. Hassan Lawal	Assistant Director
14. Bolanle Baba	Assistant Director
15. Billy Gaduya	CEO
16. James Kolo	CEO
17. Emeka Nwachuku	CIO
18. Nancy Chkwura	CLO
19. Shuaibu Enejo	CIO
20. Aisha Adamu	ACLO
21. Nnamdi Offor	ACIO
22. Surajo Sabiu	ACIO
23. Joseph Attah	ACIO
24. Safiya Hanafi Sa'ad	ACIO
25. Bala Bature	ACIO
26. Sunny Diet-Spiff	PIO
27. Rahinatu Idris Shehu	PIO
28. Mustapha Kukawa	PIO
29. Adamu Abdulrahman	PIO
30. Awoderia George	PIO
31. Auta Emmanuel	PIO
32. Abubakar Sani	SIO
33. Linus Otogo	SIO
34. Cyril Ripji	SIO
35. Yusuf Mohammed	SEO
36. Zakari Usman	CO

1.0 Introduction

1.1 In response to Section 13 of the FOIA which provides that every government or public institution must guarantee the provision of appropriate training for its officials on the public's right to access information or records held by government or public institutions and for the effective implementation of this Act.

1.2 It was in light of the above that the Executive Secretary of the Commission approved the advanced training on Freedom of Information Act (2011) for the NIPC FOI Committee members, heads of Departments, and Units in charge of proactive disclosures of the Commission as well as heads of Zonal offices.

1.3 The objective of the training was to secure concrete commitments from NIPC staff to develop initiatives that promote transparency, empower citizens, fight corruption, and harness new technologies to strengthen governance.

1.4 The capacity building took place at the Events and Conference Centre, Mararaba, Nassarawa state from 6-8 March 2024. The Institute of Corporate Administration of Nigeria organized the training.

1.5 The 3-day training involved lectures on; Understanding Our New Work Environment and the Emerging Technology Trends, Overview of the Freedom of Information Act 2011, Handling Request for Information and Refusal Using Emotional Intelligence, Freedom of Information Act 2011 as a Driver for Improved Service Delivery, Ethics, Transparency and Anti-Corruption Measures in Managing Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Provisions, Dispute Resolution Strategies in Handling Freedom of Information (FOI) Request.

• Opening

2.1 The keynote address was delivered by Dr. G.C Onyekwere FIIA FWsc FCAI. In his speech, he stated that they have been supporting NIPC to make sure it complies with the FOI Act and other commitments in the Freedom of information activities. He commended NIPC on the FOI ladder for the past years and stated that this feat would not have been possible without the complete support of the Executive Secretary/CEO and some other notable persons named Sabo Isiaku, James Akwada, and Shettima Barma for an outstanding performance toward the approval of the program. He informed members that NIPC has become a reference point for other agencies to copy. He therefore stated that the training was to improve the status NIPC has reached over the years to the advancement of the Freedom of Information Act of (2011).

2.2 NIPC FOI Committee Chairman, Mr Sabo Isiaku in his welcome address on behalf of the Executive Secretary/CEO, thanked the Institute of Corporate

Administration of Nigeria for supporting NIPC with the training program. He thanked the Executive Secretary for her support and informed that NIPC is fully committed to the continuous implementation of the provision of FOIA, and will continue to make information readily available for public access without undermining specified exemptions and due process.

3.0 Training

3.1 Lecture one;

i. The first lecture was on Understanding Our New Work Environment and the Emerging Technology Trends by Mr. Dr. G.C Onyekwere. The presenter informed us that no doubt that we live in a world of wrenching changes that are constantly challenging the status quo. These changes are also manifest in different forms and scope. They extend to Technological evolutions, Economic disruptions, and Behavioural and Attitudinal Issues.

ii. He informed the audience that some have been quite disruptive, attentive, and distracting. Discussion about high energy costs (fuel and gas), lingering security issues, and skyrocketing exchange rates occupy the front burner, sapping people's energy and attention to many other serious developments.

iii. He stated that the scope of the distractions prevents many persons from taking cognizance of many other positive developments that impact heavily on our work-life and economy.

iv. The presenter gave an insight into the work environment which reveals the following positive trends:

- Digital Transformation
- Japa Syndrome
- Skill Development and Online Education
- Entrepreneurship and Start-ups
- Remote Work Culture
- Collaboration Skills
- Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation
- Cyber Security and Data Privacy
- Infrastructure Development
- Freelancing and Independent Contracting Opportunities

3.2 Lecture two;

- i. Lecture two was on Overview of the Freedom of Information Act 2011 by Harriman Ilode. The presenter informed that the Freedom of Information Act made it clear how information records can be obtained such as the right to access records, and applications for access to records due to refusal by the Head of Government to Public Institutions to disclose records.
- ii. The presenter also explains the history of the Freedom of Information Bill in Nigeria and the relevance and Challenges of FOI to National Development, a quick review of the sections in the Act, and the sections that deal with the exemptions/restrictions.
- iii. Finally, by section 27 of the Act, whistleblowers and public officers who release information to the public are protected as no civil or criminal proceedings can be instituted against them for disclosing such information as informed by the presenter.
- iv. In the conclusion, he mentioned that the enacting of the Freedom of Information Act is a right step in the right direction. It shows that Nigeria is making progress in the democratic setup in the country. If the information and data are not prohibited by law and made available to researchers, journalists and other users Nigeria will grow into an egalitarian society in the real sense of the word, the implementation of this Act will facilitate the social and economic development of the country.

3.3 Lecture three

- i. The Third paper was presented by Dr. G.C Onyekwere on Handling Request for Information and Refusal Using Emotional Intelligence. The presenter informed that the paper was developed to help Members know and understand that, over the years, journalists and other news sniffers have always been at loggerheads with the custodians of the vital information they seek to make news and news headlines. It has not always been a pleasant interaction. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is critical in managing the person to person-cantered relationship
- ii. The paper highlighted the following:
 - Our Natural Response
 - What is Emotional Intelligence
 - What Emotional Intelligence is Not

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Management
- Social-Awareness
- Social Skills

iii. At the end of the presentation of the paper, he informed members that in many forward-thinking organizations that are really in tune with reality; the development of emotional intelligence is considered a necessity because co-workers and team members come to see themselves as team members and better still as family members where the loss of virtues associated with intimacy, love, care and focus are practiced.

3.4 Lecture four

i. The fourth paper was on the Freedom of Information Act 2011 as a Driver for Improved Service Delivery by Dr. G.C Onyekwere. The presentation of the paper began with the introduction which we live in a period in man's economic history tagged a service economy. This is largely because the bulk of the working population is occupied with providing one form of service or another. This contrasts sharply with earlier generations like the farming age or the industrial age.

ii. The presenter explains the quality of the service being rendered determines the viability of the economy, hence over the years, successive governments globally and locally have developed tools and packages to ensure continuous improvement and accountability.

iii. He further explains the benefits of the FOI Act for improved service delivery:

- Everyone can access any information or record, subject to specific exemptions, in the custody of any public institution or private institution, utilizing public funds, performing public functions or providing public services.
- Everyone is entitled to receive a request for information within seven (7) days.
- Everyone will enjoy open access to information on issues such as health and social development projects, public procurement and public budgeting, public-private partnership projects, asset declaration of serving public officials, etc.

- iv. At the end of the presentation of the paper, the presenter informed members that the provision of timely and accurate information from an authorized source is a boost to national development, Openness and transparency serve as a restraint to diverting public funds, which is one of the major issues in Nigeria's economy.
- v. Freedom of Information is an extension of freedom of speech, a fundamental human right recognized by law, denial of access to relevant information fuels corruption, branding information that should be available to the interested public as 'Top Secret' or 'Official Secret' is anti-development.

3.5 Lecture Five

- i. The fifth paper was presented by Providence Osimen on Ethics, Transparency, and Anti-Corruption Measures in Managing Freedom of Information Act (FOI) Provisions. The paper presented enlightens the participants on the concept of Ethics, which concerns the nature of ultimate value and standards by which human actions can be judged right or wrong. It deals with such questions at all levels. Its subject consists mainly of the fundamental issues of practical decision-making.
- ii. The presenter also defined transparency as a situation where a business and other activities are done openly without secrets, in a way that engenders trust, honesty, and fairness. Like Ethics, the Freedom of Information Act has transparency and accountability as part of its core principles.
- iii. Anti-corruption activities are measures intended to reduce corruption, illegal or dishonest practices, and behavior, especially by people in positions of power. It has to be stated that the essence of the FOIA was to forestall corruption, it is an anti-corruption measure both in public and private institutions, as stated by the presenter.
- iv. The presenter explains and mentions a few of how FOI helps fight corruption under the NIPC which are as follows:
 - Empowering Public Scrutiny: by enabling citizens to request and access information, FOI fosters public participation. Individuals can analyze NIPC decisions, identify potential irregularities, and then hold the commission accountable if there is any malfeasance.

- **Detering Corrupt Practices:** the very existence of FOI creates a deterrent effect, knowing their actions might be exposed through FOI requests discourages officials from engaging in corrupt activities.
- **Shining a Light on Decision-Making:** FOI allows public access to information about the NIPC's activities, including investment approvals, funding allocations, and communications with businesses. This transparency makes it harder for corruption practices to occur and or thrive in the shadows.
- **Promoting Public Trust:** increased transparency through FOI builds public trust in the NIPC. This fosters a more cooperative environment where citizens are more likely to report suspicious activity.

v. He mentioned some of the limitations to Anti-Corruption Measures which are **Limited awareness**- that public awareness about FOI remains low, hindering its full utilization by citizens, **Weak Implementation**- Bureaucratic hurdles or lack of resources within public institutions can make it difficult to fulfill FOIA requests promptly, **Corruption**- in some cases, corruption itself may hinder FOIA implementation, as some officials may be reluctant to disclose information that could expose wrongdoing.

vi. In conclusion, the overall FOI is a crucial tool for combating corruption under the NIPC. By promoting transparency, empowering citizens, and deterring corrupt practices, FOI helps create a more accountable and ethical investment environment.

Recommendations:

- It is one of the group recommendations that, NIPC should empower citizens to use information to participate and shape policies, services, and budgets.
- That NIPC should embrace the concept of using new technologies that have been simplifying tasks and empowering individuals, highlighting the power they have over shaping their job roles.
- NIPC should continually be developing a culture of the right to information.
- NIPC should do away with the old-fashioned approach to leadership of shouting and berating people must give way to the era where the human elements are valued, appreciated, and enabled to contribute their best, while also getting actualized.

Report Team

1. Abubakar Sani
2. Cyril Ripji
3. Yusuf Mohammed

Signatures

