

PRESS STATEMENT

Hon CJN Commissions Retrofitted Courtroom; Launches National Legal E-Mail Project

The Honourable Chief Justice of Nigeria, His Lordship, Hon. Mr. Justice Walter Samuel Nkanu Onnoghen, GCON, has announced July 16, 2018 as the effective date when the Supreme Court of Nigeria will commence the use of electronic mail as the exclusive means to serve processes on all matters before the Court.

The Hon. CJN made this disclosure on Friday (February 2, 2018) at the commissioning of the newly Retrofitted Court Room of the Supreme Court and launching of the National Legal E-Mail Project at the Supreme Court Complex in Abuja.

The Hon. Chief Justice called on all judges and lawyers to join the Judiciary's quest for excellence by subscribing to, and acquiring the legal email, as manual forms of communication within the Nigerian Courts will soon be phased out. He said lawyers who have acquired the legal email can, henceforth communicate electronically with the Courts and with each other, adding that all new filings from 16th July, 2018, must bear Counsel's legal email address.

The CJN described the new legal email project which began with the inauguration of the 14-member Judicial Information Technology Policy Committee (JITPO-COM) in 2012 during the tenure of the late former Chief Justice of Nigeria, Hon. Justice Dahiru Musdapher, GCON, as a milestone that will go a long way in enhancing justice delivery in Nigerian courts and commended the commitment of successive leadership of the judiciary in seeing the project to fruition.

The Hon. CJN said the Retrofitted Court project will be replicated in all other courts in the

near future as the Nigerian Judiciary is committed to employing cutting edge technology to enhance justice administration and providing Nigerians with the transparent, fast and accessible justice system they deserve.

The CJN directed all Heads of Courts to acquire the unique legal email addresses for their Courts from the JITPO Committee, especially for their Litigations Department Staff even as he encouraged courts to start using the email to serve Lawyers. He said this will serve as a means of communication between the judges, court staff and lawyers, as well as between lawyers and provide a seamless exchange of information electronically within the judicial ecosystem.

Commending the Nigerian Bar Association for its collaboration, the CJN said "I am delighted that the email project illustrates how the justice system works better when the Bar and Bench work together to improve it. From the inception of the email project, the committee, of which the president, Nigeria Bar Association is a member, worked in tandem with the Bar to ensure the successful completion of what we are witnessing today. I trust that the Bar Association will now drive the adoption so that the system will enable us move forward to implement and improve the other components that depend on it"

In his remarks, the Chairman of the Judicial Information Technology Policy Committee (JITPO-COM), and the Hon. Chief Judge of Borno State, Hon. Mr. Justice Kashim Zannah, OFR, said the twin project was a culmination of concerted efforts to integrate Information Technology into the court processes in Nigeria by providing access to the latest audio-visual aids, transcription and other systems obtainable in the most advanced courts of the world.

He said the project was the realisation of a key plank of the National Judicial Policy which creates for the Judiciary a Charter of Commitment "to promote and ensure the highest possible standard of qualitative justice delivery."

Hon. Justice Zannah said JITPOCOM was tasked to develop policies and an implementation roadmap for the adoption of information technology in the Nigerian Judiciary with representation from across the Federal and States' Judiciaries and the Nigerian Bar. The Committee, he said, is also advised by consultants from the National Centre for State Courts (NCSC), Virginia, USA.

He listed the Committee's four main projects to kick-start the automation process for the Nigerian Judiciary to include the Supreme Court Room Retrofitting, the National Legal Email Setup for Bar and Bench, the Nigerian Case Management System (NCMS), and the National Data Centre at National Judicial Council (NJC).

Members of the Committee are:

1. Hon. Justice Kashim Zannah (OFR) CJ, Borno & Member, NJC - Chairman
2. Hon. Justice Helen Ogunwumiju, Justice of the Court of Appeal - Member
3. Hon. Justice Abdul Kafarati, Ag. Chief Judge, Federal High Court - Member
4. Hon. Justice B. A. Adejumo, President of the National Ind. Court - Member
5. Hon. Justice I. U. Bello, Chief Judge Federal Capital Territory - Member
6. Hon. Justice Tanimu Zailani, Chief Judge, Kaduna State - Member
7. Hon. Justice Aloysius Nwankwo CON, Chief Judge, Ebonyi State - Member
8. Hon. Justice A. I. Iyayi-Lamikanra, Chief Judge, Rivers State - Member
9. Hon. Justice O. Olufumilayo Oke, Ag. Chief Judge, Lagos State - Member
10. Hon. Justice N. A. Ajanah CON, Kogi State - Member
11. Hon. Justice R. P. I. Bozimo, OFR, Administrator, NJI - Member
12. Abubakar Mahmud, SAN, President, Nigerian Bar Association - Member
13. A. M. Bashari, Deputy Director P RS, NJC - Secretary
14. Hadiza S. Sa'eed, Deputy Director, Perf. & Eval/Legal NJC - Alt. Secretary

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