



**GOODWILL MESSAGE**

**BY**

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Honourable Attorney General of the Federation  
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**At A TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR THE FOIA IMPLEMENTATION  
COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**

**At the BRIDGE WATERS HOTEL, ENUGU STATE  
25<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012**

## Protocols

I am grateful for the opportunity given to me by the National Planning Commission to deliver this address at this significant training workshop which I understand is being organised in response to the incessant enquiries and concerns about the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2011(FoIA). I commend also the initiative of the organizers of this event.

2. The Freedom of Information Act (the FOIA) came into operation on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2011. Under Section 1 of the Act, all government or public institutions are required, subject to certain exceptions, to disclose information pursuant to a request by any person.

3. It is worth recalling that the implementation of the FOIA is one of the cardinal strategies of the HAGF being pursued under the aegis of the panel on the Implementation of Justice Reforms (PIJR) chaired by Justice Ishaq Bello. The sixth platform of HAGF's plan outlines as priorities the development of FOIA guidance manuals for all government agencies training programs for all the government agencies and the facilitation of desk officers for the management of FOI information and privacy issues

4. Section 29 (6) of the FOIA entrusts the Office of the Attorney General of the Federation with the responsibility of ensuring

compliance by MDAs. It in particular requires Public institutions to submit to the Attorney General, annual reports of dispositions made by them under Act in the preceding year.

5. The HAGF has through several initiatives encouraged compliance by public institutions. Towards this end the HAGF organized on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October last year a sensitization workshop of the FOIA for legal advisers of MDAs and law officers of the FMOJ.

6. Furthermore the FMJ issued an advisory memorandum of 28<sup>th</sup> January to all public Institutions which was published in the papers and widely circulated. The FMJ has also developed comprehensive guidance notes for all public institutions on the operational, institutional and substantive aspects of implementing the FOIA

7. It is also noteworthy that a compilation of the Report by HAGF on compliance with section 29 by public institutions was submitted to the National Assembly by April 1 in compliance with the FOIA

8. There is no doubt need for a strong internal mechanism within MDAs for monitoring compliance and responding to FOIA requests. The guidelines on implementation are primarily intended to facilitate compliance by affording a greater understanding of the obligations custodians of public records under the Act. There is also need for robust interaction and consultation among public institutions. There is

no doubt that in balancing the public interests involved in disclosure or non disclosure of information factors that are germane may be better appreciated by such consultation particularly where custody of the information sought is shared.

9. Once again I congratulate the organizers of this event and wish you a fruitful discussion

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