

Communiqué

Issued at the end of a Two-Day Freedom of Information Training Workshop for Journalists and Representatives of Civil Society Organizations organized by Media Rights Agenda (MRA) on December 9 and 10, 2025, in Abuja.

Preamble

Media Rights Agenda (MRA) organized a two-day Freedom of Information (FOI) Training Workshop for Journalists and representatives of Civil Society Organizations on December 9 and 10, 2025, at Davina Hill Resort and Hotel in Abuja, the Federal Capital Territory.

The workshop, which was supported by funding from Luminate, brought together 35 participants from the media and civil society organizations from Abuja and across States in the North-West, North-Central and North East geo-political zones of Nigeria.

The workshop featured presentations, practical sessions, group discussions, and experience-sharing on the use of the FOI Act as a tool for investigative reporting, civic monitoring, and democratic governance. It also examined the state of implementation of the FOI Act as well as the role of the media and civil society in advancing transparency, accountability, and citizens' access to information.

Observations

Participants noted with concern that:

- Despite the existence of the FOI Act for well over a decade, compliance by public institutions across all levels of government remains largely poor, with many agencies refusing to respond to requests for information or denying such requests for information for no legitimate reasons, and failing to proactively publish information, as required by law
- There appears to be a high degree of ignorance of the provisions of the FOI Act among public officials, which continues to hinder its effective implementation. In addition to this, there is a pervasive culture of secrecy within many public institutions with the result that public officials are frequently unwilling to disclose even the most harmless information.
- The lack of effective sanctions for non-compliance with the provisions of the Act is also engendering a culture of impunity among public institutions and has contributed significantly to the weak enforcement of the law.
- Although the Judiciary is the main mechanism for enforcing compliance with the provisions of the Act, the slow pace of judicial processes often diminishes the value of the information sought, particularly for journalists and other media practitioners for whom information is frequently time-sensitive.

Resolutions

Participants reaffirmed their belief in access to information as a fundamental right and a cornerstone of democracy. They pledged to remain steadfast in promoting the effective implementation of the FOI Act as a tool for ensuring good governance, enhancing anti-corruption efforts, and realizing the public's right to know. They further resolved to:

- Make greater and more strategic use of the FOI Act in their professional and advocacy work, to promote transparency, accountability, and public participation. Further to this, wherever

possible, to integrate the FOI Act as a primary and systematic tool in research, investigative reporting and advocacy campaigns, moving beyond anecdotal evidence to verifiable facts.

- Champion public enlightenment campaigns and other activities at various levels, including at the grassroots level, to educate ordinary citizens about their right to information and how to make effective FOI requests.
- Collaborate more closely across media and civil society organizations to track public expenditure, monitor government projects, and expose corruption, using FOI requests.
- Share knowledge and experiences on the use of the FOI Act to strengthen collective capacity and impact.
- Document and publicize cases of non-compliance with the FOI Act to enhance public awareness and accountability.
- Pursue legal remedies, including litigation, where necessary, to enforce compliance with the Act, particularly for wrongful denials of requests for information.

Recommendations

Participants called on:

- Federal and State Governments to demonstrate genuine political will by ensuring full implementation of the FOI Act at all levels of government.
- Further to the above, public institutions should take steps to ensure full implementation of the Act, particularly by complying with their statutory obligations under the Act, including establishing dedicated FOI Desks staffed by trained personnel, and proactively publishing a wide range of official information in accordance with Section 2(3) and (4) of the Act.
- The Attorney-General of the Federation to exercise his oversight responsibilities to ensure compliance with the law by issuing appropriate directives and initiating legal action against officials and institutions that persistently and wilfully violate the provisions of the Act, including wrongfully denying requesters information.
- The Judiciary to give expedited hearings and judgments in FOI cases to guarantee the timeliness and continued relevance of any information that may ultimately be disclosed as a result of litigation, in accordance with the intent of Sections 20 and 21 of the Act.
- Given the strong intersection between the right to information and the broader digital rights landscape as well as the potential of digital technology to facilitate the gathering, storage, processing and dissemination of information,
- Public institutions to develop and adopt digital tools and platforms that will simplify information requesting procedures and the processing of requests for information given the strong intersection between the right to information and the broader digital rights landscape as well as the potential of digital technology to facilitate the gathering, storage, processing and dissemination of information.
- All stakeholders, including public institutions, journalists and civil society actors, to leverage digital technology in performing their respective roles in the access to information ecosystem, including record keeping, tracking requests, analyzing disclosed data, and

making information more easily available to members of the public in order to ensure the full realization of the purpose of the Act.

Conclusion

Participants commended Media Rights Agenda for its commitment to promoting freedom of information, digital rights, media freedom, and accountability in Nigeria. They expressed appreciation to the facilitators and sponsor that supported the successful hosting of the workshop.

Participants reaffirmed their commitment to working collaboratively to advance the effective implementation of the FOI Act and to uphold the public's right to know as a cornerstone of democracy and good governance.

Adopted in Abuja this 10th Day of December 2025.

Signed:

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