Parliamentary Oversight and Corruption in Nigeria

Policy Brief, Presenting Key Issues & Lessons Learned

Introduction

Corruption in Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, is rampant —136th out of 176 countries in the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Index. Stakeholders are looking to the Executive rather than the legislature to take the lead in anti-corruption efforts, and executive-legislative relations are underdeveloped.

Through

documents from these institutions and makes reports public. Nigerians are mostly unaware of the PCC (no MPs), do not know how it is run and to whom it reports, and were not considered effective in uncovering fraud and corruption.

- *Anti-Corruption Agencies.* Nigeria has two anti-corruption agencies: the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offenses Commission (ICPC) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC). Respondents were fully aware of these agencies, though there does not appear to have been a stable legislative establishing Inquiries. Technical support to each committee averages between five and six members of staff, in addition to the support provided by NILS, NABRO, and CSOs that increasingly provide training and support. Legislative committees meet roughly eight to eleven times a year.

- *Chamber.* The House of Representatives is constitutionally mandated to sit for 181 days in a year but rarely meets this requirement. Approximately 8-11 plenary sessions are held per year but not fully attended. The average respondent felt that the Question Period was not adequately effective at uncovering fraud and corruption. Many respondents say the culprits would suffer naming and shaming, referral for investigation, punitive measures and discipline, or no consequences at all. This reduces the effectiveness of such oversight tools as their gravity, and thus potential, for influence is minimized.

- *Procedural Safeguards.* The legislature possesses formal autonomy in establishing its own rules of procedure,

CSOs and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) is being discussed in the House. However, opponents fear it could attempt to manage CSO financing and stakeholders.

Recommendations

Nigeria should consider amending the Constitution to clarify legislative powers on executive estimates. Restricting the ability of the legislature to either reduce or disallow an expenditure item and not to either introduce extraneous details or increase any

A closer relationship between the AG and NASS, as in the 2015 Audit Bill passed by NASS, awaiting presidential assent, will not likely improve the audit regime. The AG cannot examine the books of corporate entities and cannot audit the accounts of Statutory government Corporations, Commissions, agencies, and other bodies

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