



PRESS RELEASE

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UNODC, NJI AND NPC VISIT KATSINA STATE FOR ASSESMENT OF EU FUNDED PROJECT



Caption clockwise: Group photograph L-R UNODC 's National Program Officer Ms. Ugonna Ezekwem, NPC's Desk Officer Mr. Emmanuel Atiata, The Chief Judge of Katsina State - Honorable Justice S.A Mahuta, The Deputy Governor of Katsina State Alhaji Surajo Umar Damari, UNODC's Senior Project Coordinator Mr. Oliver Stolpe and the Chairman Katsina State judiciary implementation committee Honorable Justice Danladi Abubakar; Oliver Stolpe discussing with the Grand Khadi of the Sharia Court Katsina State; The Deputy Governor of Katsina State Alhaji Surajo Umar Damari exchanging pleasantries with Honorable Justice S.A Mahuta and NPC's Desk Officer Mr. Emmanuel Atiata; Oliver Stolpe and Alhaji Surajo Umar Damari discussing the Katsina State Judiciary Action Plan; lady Justice sculpture at the entrance of the Katsina State High Court.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the European Union (EU), the National Judicial Institute (NJI) and the National Planning Commission (NPC) visited Katsina State on 10th June to assess the progress made in the implementation of the Katsina State Action Plan on Justice Sector Reform 2007-2010.

As one of the ten States benefitting from the 25 Million Euro project funded by the European Union in support of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Nigerian Judiciary, the Katsina State Judiciary developed an action plan in collaboration with other stakeholders and commenced its implementation with the support of the European Union and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. The other State judiciaries benefitting from the

project are Anambra, Benue, Borno, Delta, Enugu, Kaduna, Lagos and Rivers State as well as the Federal Capital Territory.

The action plan which was adopted by the Katsina State Judiciary Integrity Meeting focuses on, enhancing access to justice; improving timeliness and quality of justice delivery; strengthening the integrity, accountability, transparency, independence and impartiality of the court system and coordination across the justice sector.

During the mission, the monitoring team had discussions with the Governor of Katsina State who was represented by the Deputy Governor of Katsina State His Excellency, Alhaji Surajo Umar Damari. The Team also met with the implementation committee as well as a team of journalists. While addressing the Deputy Governor, the Senior Project Coordinator Dr. Oliver Stolpe congratulated the Katsina State Judiciary, under the leadership of Honorable Justice S.A Mahuta, OFR, the Chief Judge of Katsina State. He stated that in a 2007 assessment carried out on the justice sector, Katsina State had recorded 88% in timeliness of justice delivery as against the National average performance. In effect court users in Katsina experience less delay than in other states.

Dr. Stolpe called on the Judiciary, the Legislature and the Executive to make provisions for and support the development and implementation of a new action plan in 2011. He suggested that action planning for justice sector reform should become a permanent feature of the state's annual budget and could serve as a model for other public sector agencies both within and beyond Katsina State.

The Deputy Governor in turn welcomed the monitoring team on behalf of the Executive Governor of Katsina State, Alhaji Barrister Ibrahim Shema and the people of Katsina State. He stated that the project has had a tremendous impact on the independence and capacity of the Katsina State judiciary. He assured the team that "the government of Katsina State would continue to make budgetary appropriations in funding the Katsina State judiciary to enable it perform its responsibilities of adjudication"

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