

Report from the Department of Law Reporting

The Primary duties of the Law Reporting Department are to resuscitate and continue the publication of the all Nigeria Law Report and to revive and continue the publication of the Justice Law Journal and other legal and intellectual publications.

The department also:

Carries out periodic visits to the courts to collect and collate judgements which would be reported. These judgements are analysed, scanned and styled, summaries, headnotes and referencing created;

Overview of the activities

In line with the mission statement of the Ministry, the Department of Law Reporting visited the courts, collected and collated judgments and has produced authentic and credible Law Reports, which will compete with the others in terms of quality, content, editorial work and affordability. By this singular act, the Ministry has been able to restore the All Nigeria Law Report (All NLR) to its place of pride amongst Law Reports in the country and beyond.

The Department has successfully convened several Editorial Board Meetings and provided secretarial services and has assisted the Editorial Board in the selection of landmark cases for publication. Worked with Lexis Nexis South Africa to produce the first leg of the Law Reports for 1991 to 2005 which was launched by the Ministry on the 24th May, 2007. The complete 10 volumes of the Law Reports for that period were produced and launched at the annual Nigerian Bar Conference held in Ilorin in August 2007. The 2006 (1), 2006 (2), 2007 (1), 2007 (2) 2008 (1), 2008 (2) volumes have also been published. 2009 (1), 2009 (2) 2010 (1), 2010 (2), 2010 (3) are being processed. The 2011 (1), 2011 (2), 2011 (3) and 2012 (1), 2012 (2), 2012 (3) are in top gear. There is no doubt that the All NLR is of tremendous assistance to legal practitioners, judges, researchers and many others who yearn for a credible and authoritative source of case law in the country.

The Department has also revived the publication of the Justice Journal which was last published in 1994. The Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice (HAGF/MOJ) has, among other things, the responsibility of educating and enlightening the general public. This he does through the instrumentality of the Justice Journal. The Journal provides an additional means of disseminating information about

the Ministry and it creates a platform for informed discussion and analysis of legal and topical issues of contemporary relevance. As part of its duties, the Department is developing the best possible market strategy of presenting, distributing and selling the Justice Journal to the public.

The Department also carries out legal research and renders legal advice/opinion on matters relating to the Ministry and Government, which are referred to it by the HAGF and SGF/PS. Staff of the Department also attended approved meetings to render legal advice or guidance.

Challenges

The functions of the Department entail regular visits to the Supreme Court of Nigeria, other divisions of the Courts for the collection and photocopying of the judgment from the archives for publication. This assignment can be carried out and sustain: with adequate funding.

Law Reporting is an intellectual assignment that is specialized and requires good knowledge of research and sound legal writing skills. To sustain the Department this area there should be efficient capacity building. Legal Officers in the Department need to be trained and re-trained on research methodology and leg writing within and outside the country to enhance efficiency and performance.

Law Reporting duties are tasking, deskbound and require concentration, painstaking study, editing and proof reading of judgments and Articles for publication under a calm environment, adequate and good accommodation. The demands of the job often times cause Legal Officers and support staff in the Department to work beyond official closing time. It is suggested that both legal officers and support staff should be adequately motivated by payment of overtime allowances for working beyond official closing hours to meet certain deadlines fixed by the publishers.