



# ABUJA DECLARATION

## OF ACTION ON WHISTLEBLOWING LEGISLATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION IN NIGERIA

On the 8th of November 2022, stakeholders working in various areas to ensure transparency and accountability at all levels of governance in Nigeria met in Abuja and reaffirmed the urgency to fast-track the passage of the whistleblower protection legislation as a means of protecting public interest whistleblowers and advancing the fight against corruption and other wrongdoing.



### PREAMBLE

- **Welcoming** stakeholders to the advocacy meeting on whistleblowing legislation and whistleblower protection in Nigeria
- **Noting** the importance of whistleblowing as a potent tool in the fight against corruption and checking other forms of wrongdoing, as well as a natural extension of the citizens' right of freedom of expression
- **Stressing** the nexus between corruption and human rights and why the state has an international obligation to protect whistleblowers, human rights defenders, activists and journalists as a way of promoting good governance and accountability
- **Emphasizing** the need to ensure effective protection for citizens who show courage in blowing the whistle as a way of safeguarding public interest and their fundamental human rights
- **Recognizing** that the absence of a whistleblowing and whistleblower protection legislation is hampering smooth implementation of the Nigerian government's whistleblowing policy
- **Further recognizing** that there has been a steady increase in the cases of adverse action (retaliation) taken against whistleblowers in the public sector, and that this scenario is a disincentive to the act of whistleblowing

- **Expressing** the need for collaboration and stakeholder engagement with relevant institutions such as the Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget and National Planning, Presidential Initiative on Continuous Audit (PICA), Federal Ministry of Justice, NASS anti-corruption committees, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), National Orientation Agency (NOA), ECOWAS Commission, Network of Anti-corruption Institutions in West Africa (NACIWA), civil organizations, public and private sector institutions, the media, etc., for the purpose of advancing whistleblowing and whistleblower protection as a means of achieving good governance and accountability at the sub-national, national and sub-regional levels
- **Further expressing** the need to strengthen criminal justice institutions to protect whistleblowers
- **Highlighting** the role of anti-corruption and law enforcement agencies (EFCC, ICPC, CCB, the Police, etc) in the success of any whistleblowing regime and the need for them to create an enabling environment for disclosure by citizens
- **Fully embracing** the imperative of encouraging state governments and private sector organisations to put in place frameworks for people/workers to safely make disclosure of wrongdoing and protect them against retaliation as a result of such disclosure
- **Underscoring** the need for journalists to commit to highlighting the plight of whistleblowers as both groups are dedicated to holding power to account and working towards the same goal of public good
- **Further underscoring** the need to build a strong coalition of duty bearers who would be consistent in the agitation for a whistleblower protection legislation
- **Reaffirming** support for the whistleblowing policy as an anti-corruption strategy of the Nigerian government as announced by President Muhammadu Buhari through Executive Order No. 6 on December 21, 2016

### Therefore:

We, the participants at the stakeholders' advocacy meeting in Abuja on whistleblowing legislation and whistleblower protection in Nigeria, declare our commitment to creating a core group that will drive a strong coalition to advocate an urgent passage of the whistleblower protection bill before the 9th National Assembly runs its course on June 11 2023. The passage of this very important legislation will put Nigeria in the same category, as far as whistleblowing is concerned, with countries like Ghana, South Africa, and Uganda.

### SIGNED:

