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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PLSI says 18 states in Nigeria are without audit law, ranks Enugu 36th in Sub-national Audit Efficacy Index 2020

Paradigm Leadership Support Initiative (PLSI) - a civic organization fostering accountability in Nigeria has released its Sub-national Audit Efficacy Index for 2020 assessing all 36 states of the federation against public finance management practices and accountability mechanisms leveraging on the role of public audit as a potent tool for improving efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of public spending.

PLSI which published the SAE index 2020 on its website on Monday 10th May 2021 highlighted twelve states including Delta, Jigawa, Kaduna, Lagos, Niger, and Rivers as states with the most potent audit process in Nigeria having scored 70/100. Also, Anambra, Borno, Yobe, Katsina and Gombe occupied 13th position with 60/100 as their score while the 2020 index ranked Oyo, Sokoto, Imo, Benue among others 25th with 40% score point and Enugu as state with the least potent audit mechanisms having scored 20/100 and ranked 36th.

Presenting the latest report during a virtual briefing, PLSI Executive Director, Olusegun Elemo explained the methodology adopted in the assessment exercise. He mentioned that “PLSI undertook data integrity exercise to ensure that information used in assessing efficacy of public audit in each state were drawn from reliable sources. certain evaluation criteria were employed in arriving at the SAE index 2020 and data used fulfilled certain conditions to qualify as a valid data”.

“The SAE index 2020 was assessed using each sub-national entity’s fiscal information, legal framework, and stakeholder involvement in the public audit cycle. We standardized data sources to a scale of 0-100 where 0 equals the lowest level and 100 equals the highest level of audit capacity to produce intended result of ensuring that public funds are adequately accounted for. This standardization was done by aggregating scores due from all stages of assessment which include availability (publicly) of financial statement/audited financial statement/audit report, operationalization of a modern or obsolete audit legal framework, legislative involvement in the audit process, executive actions on audit recommendations, and level of citizens participation in the audit process”.

“The lack of independence of Legislative arm of government at sub-national level is a cause for concern and this is evident by the recent call for legislative and judicial autonomy across the 36 States of the federation. The inability of State Assemblies’ Public Accounts Committees (PACs) to issue recommendations based on their review of reports of Auditor-Generals is negatively impacting the public audit eco-system particularly at sub-national level which in turn hindering accountability in the management of public funds.

Similarly, the failure on the part of sub-national audit institutions to allow for citizens’ participation in the audit process renders audit functions inadequate and unable to facilitate sustainable development. It was disappointing to know that 50% of states including Sokoto, Imo, Osun, Benue, and Anambra do not have modern audit laws that should guarantee independence of the Auditor-General in their states and enhance effective stakeholder involvement in their audit process. Some states including Zamfara, Delta, Kano and Edo are however showing progress having enacted modern audit laws and should be encouraged to do more. Also, Delta state is among the very few if not the only state that has published audit report on Covid-19 intervention.

Signed,

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