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THE NEW AGE: GOVERNANCE, TECHNOLOGY AND LAW

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NEWSLETTER

Editorial

“You either innovate or die” - this is presently a popular aphorism that aptly captures the essence and need of constantly updating and equipping one's self with the tools, skillsets and demands of one's times. One must constantly infuse new blood, new ideas or fizzle out into irrelevance. There is no room for complacency in this regard or an arrogant mindset. Lacking the drive to change can only be dangerous. Alas, you could look back one day, and before you could say “Jack Robinson”; you have been left behind, crawling and limping to oblivion, all the while, every other person will have been miles ahead, because they innovated, and you did not. Therein lies the danger, Death.

This scenario is especially true in the legal realm, and Nigeria is not any different. Innovation in law is beyond a trend or hype, but a necessity. The legal landscape is undergoing necessary changes for ease and efficiency. Lawyers must answer urgently and honestly to the pertinent question: do we ride this wave or risk missing out on the chance to play in the big league of tomorrow's law industry? Law firms and lawyers must gravitate towards constantly improving. It is the only way to go. They must keep up with modern realities and demands of the present times, especially given the tremendous technological advances being made. Lawyers must understand that lack of innovation and evolution would mean to fall off the top of the ladder and spiral into oblivion.

Speaking even further, farther and deeper on the above is the Keynote Speech by Joe-Kyari Gadzama, OFR, MFR, SAN, titled “THE NEW AGE: GOVERNANCE, TECHNOLOGY AND LAW” delivered at the 2022 Annual Summit of the NBA-Port Harcourt Branch, Young Lawyers' Forum on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 at the Multipurpose Hall, NBA House, Port Harcourt, Rivers State. This Keynote Speech elegantly adorns the pages of this edition of our Quarterly Newsletter. Legal jokes, words on marble and pictures of other events hosted or attended by the firm have also been included in this edition.

This and previous editions of our newsletter are available on our website at <https://jkgadzamallp.com/publications/newsletters>

Happy reading.

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THE NEW AGE: GOVERNANCE, TECHNOLOGY AND LAW

Keynote Address by



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At the 2022 Annual Summit of the NBA-Port Harcourt Branch,
Young Lawyers' Forum on Wednesday, March 23, 2022
At the Multipurpose Hall, NBA House,
Portharcourt, Rivers State

INTRODUCTION

I appreciate and thank the organizers of this event for the privilege to speak on the topic: *the new age: governance, technology and law*. Each time we have gatherings such as this, with such educative topics to discuss, I believe it to be a time of enlightenment, a time to know more, to discover, to learn, and a time to develop oneself in every ramification. The theme is not only well-selected but is apt and immensely significant especially when reviewed from the lens of current developments in Nigeria and beyond. Efforts to improve and develop the legal profession must go together with efforts at increasing opportunities for young lawyers.

The Paper Outline

This paper has been divided into six sections, namely: introduction, definitions, old age, the new age: governance and technology, lawyers and technology, and conclusion. These sections have been further broken down into numerous sub-sections.

The essence of Continuing Legal Education

To begin, permit me to pose the question, *what is legal education?* It is the education of individuals in the principles, practice and theory of law. It is a means of transferring knowledge to others about the theories, philosophies, principles of law and how it relates to their life in general. By giving legal education, we can prepare people for the better application and appreciation of the law as well as for the research and development of the law. Legal education can take the form of a variety of programs, including primary degrees in law which may be structured at either undergraduate or graduate level depending on the country.

The prime object of legal education is to produce professional lawyers. The term, professional lawyers, does not only cover the litigating lawyers but all persons trained in law whose employment is mainly dependent on their degrees. Legal awareness sometimes called public legal education or legal literacy is the empowerment of individuals regarding issues involving the law. Legal awareness helps to promote consciousness of legal culture and participation in the formation of laws.

An important question that we may need to answer is whether legal education is enough? Being a law graduate and admitted into the Nigerian Bar is definitely not sufficient as one needs to continuously improve oneself in the ever-evolving legal profession. One way through which this can and has been achieved is through Continuous Legal Education (CLE).

CLE is a lifelong learning process that is indispensable to the professional growth and individual competence of a lawyer. Entry into the practice of law is not the end of legal education but rather the beginning. The National Executive Committee of the NBA at its meeting of February 15, 2007, in Owerri, Imo state approved the Mandatory Continuing Legal Education Rules pursuant to Rule 11 of the RPC rules 2007. The rule states that a lawyer who wishes to carry on practice as a legal practitioner shall participate in and satisfy the requirement of the mandatory continuing professional development program operated by the NBA.

The administration of the program is under the supervision of the MCLE Board. The CLE is a multi-disciplined and multipurpose educational system that helps in the development of human reasoning and idealism needed to strengthen the legal system. It helps lawyers who are the product of such education to contribute to national development and social changes in a much more constructive manner. It can be viewed as akin to meditation, which rejuvenates, rebuilds, and re-energizes our mind and body. It also draws a fresh vision to legal earning and pays rich dividends to synthetic knowledge while practised, to nurture judicial capacity. It has been observed that the need for CLE is essential under the garb of ever-growing challenges encountered by the legal profession. It helps lawyers and students to acquire versatility on rights of persons, criminal laws, land laws, human rights etc. CLE encapsulates a catalogue of techniques inextricably linked with the legal profession, impeccably perpetuating the learner's spirit.

I believe that all lawyers in Nigeria must comply with the NBA mandatory continuing legal education program (NBA CLE). The NBA Institute of Continuing Legal Education (NBA ICLE) serves as the regulatory authority for the CLE and the profession by providing the standards and scope for the MCLE program. The NBA branches,

sections and fora hold workshops and seminars now and again. These programs connote the combination of lectures and workshops to present valuable information to the legal profession. Its benefits cannot be overemphasized. In addition to the legal instructions offered; they provide unique networking opportunities for lawyers who practice in the same or related areas of interest; helps lawyers to remain current on the requisite knowledge, skills, and values necessary to fulfil the professional responsibilities and obligations of their respective practices, thereby improving the standard of the profession in general.

A good example of an avenue for CLE is the NBA-AGC. It provides lawyers with the opportunity to acquire more knowledge of the law from the discourse of varying legal issues by numerous guest speakers. Knowing the benefit of consistent improvement in law is enough for government agencies, financial institutions and multinational companies to sponsor lawyers within their employ to the NBA-AGC, otherwise, they face the reality of losing touch with the evolving nature of law as practised in Nigeria.

According to Makkau Maisuma Esq, a legal officer, in the compliance department of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC or Commission), the Commission sponsors its staff on a rotational basis to the NBA-AGC for the training. This should be encouraged. Agencies that do not send their lawyers to these seminars should endeavour to do so as knowledge gained at these conferences is first applied in the workplace, and is not solely for the legal practitioner. This is to ensure better performance at work which in turn adds value to the company. It is for this purpose that a lawyer cannot remain secluded from enlightening experiences that these conferences offer and expect to grow in the profession.

The practice goes beyond desk work; it involves communication with clients, advocating for a cause, legal drafting etc. A lawyer who is restricted to learning only from the four walls of his school or office is definitely missing a great deal. To safeguard the sanctity of justice, lawyers must remain professionally competent throughout their careers. They must network among learned friends from different parts of the country and mingle with other professionals in the society.

My good friend, the immediate past Chairman of

the Young Lawyers Forum, Mr. Tobi Adebawale believes that knowledge and skills are the greatest tools of lawyers, and these tools can be acknowledged and sustained through CLE. He explained and I concur that the dearth of knowledge on the parts of some lawyers have led to their low earning capacities, but he asserted that with a continuous grasp of knowledge and acquisition of new ideas, lawyers will earn more².

The witty saying that a good lawyer knows the law and a great lawyer knows the judge has some merit. Those who practice the profession know that technical depth, versatility, commercial awareness and top professional skills remain the foundational blocks to success within the legal profession. The knowledge and skills required to succeed as a lawyer are not taught in schools and may even elude some who choose to embark on the expedition on their own without some initial guidance and coaching. This has also resulted in unemployment and under-employment of lawyers in many parts of the country. This dearth has shifted revenue that should ordinarily accrue to Nigerian lawyers to their counterparts outside the country, or too few lawyers in selected jurisdictions who dare to do more by growing their skills and knowledge³.

The increasing presence of foreign lawyers travelling in and out of the country to advise on some of the most significant transactions involving Nigerian businesses is a testament to the fact that there is work to be done. More should be done in closing the gap by ensuring that the learning and earning capacity of lawyers through CLE is not lost. This can be achieved by advocating for the increased roles of lawyers in the public and the creation of initiatives that encourage lawyers to expand the scope of their practice. Law should be an experienced reality; hence, it should encounter all subversive radicals, and inculcate zeal and zest to douse some trauma and macabre agony. Our constitution is a living law that warrants constant and persistent study. Through this, lawyers and law students come to know the crux and catena of issues that strengthen them to fight legal battles. The acquisition of law degrees and CLE sharpens the talents of these lawyers to do so.

DEFINITIONS

Permit me to take the time to define some keywords that may be used in this presentation.

- i. Governance: may be defined as the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something (such as a Country or an Organization).
- ii. Technology is the application of scientific knowledge for practical purposes, especially in industry. Technology includes the use of materials, tools, techniques, and sources of power to make life easier or more pleasant and work more productive. Whereas science is concerned with how and why things happen and technology focuses on making things happen. Legal technology can thus, accurately be defined as the application of scientific knowledge in the provision of legal services.
- iii. Law: is a system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties. According to the Black's Law Dictionary (10th Edition), Law is the regime that orders human activities and relations through the systematic application of the force of politically organized society, or through social pressure, backed by force, in such a society; the Legal System.
- iv. Young Lawyers: may be defined as lawyers within one to seven years post-call to the Nigerian Bar. The Nigeria Bar Association Young Lawyers Forum was established with an underlying objective of articulating the welfare of lawyers within the first seven years of practice at the Nigeria Bar, the promotion of professional development and addressing challenges faced by Young Lawyers. They have a tremendous task or role of adapting the innovative trends and emerging fields of the Legal profession.

THE OLD AGE AND PROGRESS OF THE LAW

No doubt, the future of legal practice in Nigeria is anchored on the use of legal technologies as the legal landscape has radically changed with the disruptions engendered by the worldwide pandemic, and reliance on the use of technological tools and appliances in the delivery of basic legal services is now the new norm.

Currently, in the world, nearly every lawyer uses email and other electronic tools as fasteners in their daily practice. Reputable law firms make use of software applications for both internal and external affairs in ensuring speedy turnaround of work activities. Undeniably, technology has also become an integral part of creating efficiency and promoting access to justice in the world currently. Hence, technology has also revolutionized the way, ease, speed, and time with which legal practitioners conduct their activities.

Unlike the age-long practice of flipping through a large number of heavy books to search for cases, practitioners and clients can now speedily, via access to the internet, get in touch with decisions from anywhere in the world just by logging onto a website that keeps a legal database like Law pavilion, NWLR online, West Law, Lexis Nexis, and others. Also, social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and the likes, where legal-related content are regularly posted makes it easy for citizens to gain legal knowledge and create awareness on legal related issues.

With legal technology, lawyers, law students, and others can gain easy access to study materials and case files without having to break a sweat in what has become our sad reality - poorly equipped libraries, or resort to borrowing books from colleagues.

Technology, most especially Information and Communication Technology (ICT), now plays a quintessential role in legal practice and education. It has become a prerequisite for effective and efficient legal practice, such that if lawyers in Nigeria continue to resist the need to incorporate technologies into the practice of law, they will likely lose their relevance in the fast-unfolding future.

THE NEW AGE: GOVERNANCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The main object of technology is of course to make tasks easier and to solve many problems of mankind. This is the new age we now find ourselves in. To briefly recap, the first age was the first industrial revolution of 1765 which brought about mechanization, after this, we entered the second industrial revolution of 1870. This revolution brought about massive technological advancements in industries that helped the

emergence of a new source of energy – electricity, gas, and oil. The third was the industrial revolution of 1969 which brought the rise of electronics, telecommunications and computers. This revolution opened the door to space expeditions, research and biotechnology through the new technologies. The final is revolution is called industry 4.0. This industry started at the dawn of the third millennium with the internet. This industry is rapidly advancing and will witness a considerable amount of technological and innovative changes.

With the introduction of technology into the system of governance, the government can put a wealth of information for the public to use without having to leave their homes. The work of government will equally be made more efficient with the utilization of technology as against human beings. This in turn will result in a reduction in the cost of governance. Regarding the legal field, technology-centric solutions also ensure work continuity in law-making institutions even when meetings cannot be held physically.

Recent lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic evoked a wave of uncertainty that gripped the legal fraternity. The dire necessity to reshape the entire gamut of the standstill legal community forced practitioners to commence the organization of webinars on relevant legal topics. It ushered in fascinating experiences in the access of knowledge through the spectrum of speakers from various legal fields. The galaxy of speakers shared thoughts from around the globe which could be accessed with just a click of a button. The discovery and evolution of technology have brought about a change in the way, speed, and ease with which we conduct our everyday activities. With the emergence of Information Communication Technology and its introduction into our society, business transactions are done faster; learning processes have become easier and the legal profession has not been left out. One can say that Information Communication Technology has become an indispensable part of all human endeavours and in every aspect of our society.

Communication and information form the basis for order in all societies. It goes without saying that the Law in itself depends on a network of information while its form and content change constantly to conform to the available communicative device for that time. Looking back

at the judicial process, it is evident that some progress has been made in fast-tracking the legal and court process in its administration of justice, but more strides need to be made as the world is fast evolving and any system not on board the technological train would get left behind.

The world experienced a deadly blow as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic, agricultural, health and even legal systems suffered greatly due to the inconveniences caused by the pandemic. The 2019/2020 legal year experienced delays in the hearing of court cases and administration of justice arising from the lockdown imposed on the country in a bid to contain the coronavirus. Court sittings were suspended indefinitely at the direction of the Honorable, the Chief Justice of Nigeria, Dr Justice Tanko Mohammed on April 8, 2020, in a circular with Ref No. NJC/CIR/HOC/II/656 in keeping with guidelines on social distancing and safety protocols. From the foregoing, it can rightly be inferred that the pandemic caused a lot of delays in the administration of justice in Nigeria which could have been mitigated had the legal system adopted in full, Information Communication Technology and all its perks as it relates to law and court processes.

It was rather unfortunate that matters which were time-bound by the Constitution and other laws of the National Assembly were dismissed without a hearing on the merit of the application. It is however important to point out that judicial systems, in other parts of the world, which had already adopted groundbreaking technological advancements of our time were able to carry on with “work as usual” despite the pandemic. It became apparent that the Nigerian justice system was unprepared to handle the limitations created as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It exposed what was lacking and showcased the need to ensure our court processes adopt relevant Information Communication Technology practices that are up to par with those around the world⁴. It can be recalled that during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, while the Nigerian Courts were not sitting, Courts in China were sitting virtually without much difficulty because the procedure for the same was already in place for such an occurrence.

Wang and Huang⁵ note that as far back as the early 1990s, the internet was argued to be a unique

medium showing the fastest speed of diffusion in human history. Today, there are very few people whose lives are not affected beneficially and or harmfully by the technology of the internet era. The positive side is the ability to share and exchange information instantaneously has provided benefits in the areas of education, commerce, entertainment and social interaction. Similarly, according to Vladimir⁶, the internet is a global network that unites millions of computers located in different countries and opens broad opportunities to obtain and exchange information, but it is now being used for court processes and judgment purposes due to pandemic issues.

Although the internet has penetrated many fields, it has not garnered much success in the penetration of the Nigerian legal industry. One of the barriers to technological advancement in the judicial system is the desire of people in the legal profession to stick to traditional modes of adjudication. Mauro highlights this same issue with regards to the Supreme Court of the United States of America. However, though this resistance is apparent, there is evidence of incremental change. It is not surprising as internet usage in Nigeria in 2012 was less than 16% and that is a very low rate for the number of people in Nigeria but towards the end of 2012, it increased to 28.4% of the population.⁷ This particular statistic is unbelievable when Nigeria has the largest population in Africa⁸;

Virtual Court Settings

Virtual Court sittings are proceedings that are conducted electronically or using electronic means⁹. There are two types of virtual proceedings:

- i. Hybrid – these proceedings are held with some parties in another place while the others join online. It could either be the Judge, Clerk, Witness will be in court alone, others will join in online or Judge, Clerk and lawyers will be in court alone, witness to join in online or;
- ii. Fully virtual- In these proceedings, everyone will see all parties join in from separate locations. The Judge, Lawyers, witnesses will all join virtually.¹⁰

Although some may argue that the Courts have tried to refuse to merge Information Communication Technology with court proceedings, some Courts have held onto virtual sittings. For example, the High Court of Borno State held the first-ever virtual court proceedings in Nigeria on Wednesday, April 27, 2020, in a session hosted on Zoom, a video teleconference platform, which was presided over by Justice Fadawu Umar of High Court Number 13.¹¹ Similarly, the Chief Judge of Lagos State on April 27, 2020, issued a Practice direction for remote hearing which came into effect on 4 May, 2020.

The benefits of Information Communication Technology cannot be denied. Some of the impacts of Information Communication Technology on courtrooms are as follows:¹²

1. The judicial process entails a large process of gathering information and procedures which can be strenuous and cause a delay of justice. The application of technology will reduce the lack of transparency, inefficiency, and integrity which are the major causes of delay of administration.¹³
2. Applying Information Communication Technology in the judicial process also increases efficiency, promotes easy research and allows for easier retrieval of information in the long run.
3. With the rapid increase in litigation across the courts, the staff, judges and lawyers all have voluminous records to keep up with and the filing of such takes a lot of time. Technology can come in here to help organize the records while also making the filing process very easy and stress-free.¹⁴
4. The case management system can be made available to make it easy for the cases to be managed efficiently. Also, the use of transcribers and court recording equipment will reduce the stress of judges writing down everything happening.¹⁵

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Nigeria adopted virtual proceedings, but there have been legal issues relating to its adoption. Despite the possibility of challenges regarding the legality of virtual sittings, many have approved the concept.

After all, it saves cost as there is no need to travel to any location or pay for accommodation in the event of visiting a Court out of the jurisdiction and reduces the need to worry about security, parking and other inconveniences because everything is done virtually.

It is important to highlight that the National Judicial Council created a policy in 2012 called the judicial information technology policy of the Nigerian judiciary that seeks to merge Information Communication Technology and the Courts. At its 91st Meeting held on April 22, 2020, the National Judicial Council created a committee to create guidelines and measures to enable safe Court sittings during the COVID-19 pandemic and areas of necessary cooperation with the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation and others in meeting the challenges. The Committee headed by the Hon. Justice Olabode Rhodes-Vivour, JSC, CFR, submitted its Report on Wednesday, May 6, 2020, with the Formulated Guidelines attached.¹⁶

In a positive and well-considered ruling, the Judiciary affirmed its commitment to the development of a remote justice system while considering the legal challenge to the constitutionality of virtual hearings in *Attorney General of Lagos State v. Attorney General of the Federation & Anor LOR (14/07/2020) SC (Unreported)*. The plaintiff subsequently withdrew the appeal when it realized from the reaction of the Supreme Court that the case was considered to be incompetent, speculative, and premature. However, while striking out the case, RHODES-VIVOUR, J.S.C. (Delivering the Leading Ruling) stated that "Virtual sitting as of today is not unconstitutional".

Court of Appeal Rules

Recently, notable changes were made to reflect the new reality of virtual proceedings and innovative provisions prompting the expeditious disposal of appeals in the Court of Appeal Rules 2021 which repeals the 2016 Rules. It came into force on Monday, November 1, 2021. The Rules made some excellent advancements towards the adoption of Legal technology in Nigeria. I will take some time and highlight some of the key technological changes.

First, as contained in Order 2 Rule 1, a notice of appeal may be served by electronic mail, especially if the party gave an email address during the proceedings at the lower court.

"Every Notice of Appeal shall, subject to the provisions of Order 2 Rule 8, be served on the Respondent personally or by electronic mail to the electronic mail address of the Respondent: provided that if the Court is satisfied that the Notice of Appeal has in fact been communicated to the Respondent, no objection to the hearing of the appeal shall lie on the ground that the Notice of Appeal was not served in accordance with this Rule".

Secondly, Order 8 of the Rules permits the Registrar of the lower Court or the Appellant, to compile, encrypt and electronically transmit Records of Appeal to the court through the electronic mail address of the registry of the judicial division of the court where the appeal is to be entered, provided that ten (10) physical copies of the Records of Appeal will also be transmitted to the Court of Appeal. And also, every document or process in every electronic version of the Record of Appeal prepared under these Rules shall be recorded, scanned, or stored in a searchable but not editable format.

Also, Order 20 now provides that electronic filing is to run parallel with manual filing. Order 20 Rule 1 stipulates that:

"There shall be established a 24-hour electronic filing system in the Registry of the Court, functional in all the Judicial Divisions of the Court, for the electronic filing of Court processes and documents by parties".

Lastly, Order 21 Rule 1 provides that:

"The Court may conduct its proceedings virtually where it deems fit". Furthermore, Order 21 Rule 2 provides that: "The virtual hearing shall be by means of any audio-visual platform approved by the Court and a link will be provided to enable the public to observe the virtual proceedings".

The Rules permit the virtual hearing of appeals at the discretion of the Court. A virtual hearing is very suitable at the Court of Appeal as the proceedings are almost always based on documents only. The adoption of virtual hearings brings the practice of the law in Nigeria in sync with the international practice of law.

Federal High Court Practice Directions

Similarly, the Federal High Court of Nigeria Practice Directions 2020 (for the COVID-19 period) also adopted virtual proceedings for adjudication via Zoom, Skype, and other audiovisual platforms approved by the court. The Federal High Court's Practice Directions now specifically provides that, where parties and lawyers in a case agree to virtual proceedings, they shall liaise with the registrar to schedule the hearings, and also cases for virtual proceedings shall be stated on the cause list, posted on the Federal High Court's website and communicated to Counsel and Parties, either by e-mail or any other electronic means, as the Court may direct amongst others.

National Industrial Court of Nigeria Practice Directions and Guidelines for Court Sitting 2020

These Practice Directions and Guidelines were set out to Direct and Guide the adoption of remote and physical sittings, recognizing the urgent need for the Court to put in place measures to guarantee continued access to justice and expeditious disposal of cases while minimizing the risk of transmission of Coronavirus (COVID-19) from the 18th day of May 2020.¹⁷

Challenges In The Adoption Of Information Communication Technology For Virtual Proceedings

The benefits of virtual proceedings and Information Communication technology have been discussed but some challenges are restricting the easy flow from the physical proceedings to the remote sittings. Some of those challenges will be discussed as follows:

i. Technological illiteracy – this in simple terms means that some of the lawyers, judges and other staff in the court do not

know how to use the technological devices and because they do not know how to use them, they do not want it. This is a major challenge in the courtrooms today, it is hard to adapt to change but this is one change we must learn to adapt to.

ii. Witness credibility – the court feels that because the witness would not be in court and all everyone sees is what the witness displays on the screen then someone can be in the room telling the witness what to say. Also, during cross-examination, the court cannot determine the body language of the witness to know how they react and that also poses an issue because it would not enable the lawyer to be able to achieve his goal which will hinder the court from delivering the right judgment.

iii. Lack of stable internet network – It is a known fact that internet networks in Nigeria can sometimes be epileptic. If this happens during a proceeding it will frustrate the whole proceeding because issues come up when both parties are not able to hear each other due to network problems or the network of both parties start to fluctuate and only bits and pieces of information gets passed through. This will discourage everyone in the court and hinder the court from giving accurate judgment as there would be a lot of missing information. If someone in a more developed country with a better internet network and another person in an underdeveloped country with a less stable network are in a trial and there is a connection problem the person in the underdeveloped country will be at a disadvantage because the court will not be able to provide a fair hearing to that party.

iv. Security and confidentiality – online proceedings are prone to hacking and viruses as a means to destroy the proceeding or change information. These occurrences will destroy the whole aim of the virtual proceedings if it transpires.

The hackers can also tamper with evidence to be in favour of the party they support and that will lead to the court delivering wrong judgment. In July 2015, well before the trend to move proceedings virtually, the Permanent Court of Arbitration was hacked amid an ongoing maritime border dispute between China and the Philippines. The malware was implanted on the PCA's website which infected the computers of visitors, potentially exposing them to data theft.

- v. The difference in time- zones: Usually in arbitration cases, the parties could be anywhere in the world with different time zones. As a result of this. it may pose a challenge to fix a convenient time to hear such matters; however, if these matters were to be adjudicated physically, the parties could decide a location where the meeting would hold and this would resolve the issue of time difference.
- vi. Lack of funds for the Information Technology department (IT): The use of technology is an expensive venture. As we are well apprised, there is hardly any branch of government or even institution in Nigeria that receives sufficient allocation to perform properly. To enjoy the benefits of technology in our adjudicatory process, this is a critical problem that must be surmounted.

Recommendations on How To Surmount These Challenges

Given that the significant challenges preventing the enormous benefits of Information Communication Technology is felt in the legal profession in Nigeria, some important steps must be taken to avert this situation. Based on the above observations the following recommendations were made:

- i. Users of Information and Communication in the legal profession must be made aware of the benefits of technology to them - Court administrators should organize virtual court proceedings, seminars and sessions on the benefits of Information

Communication Technology to law teachers, students, lawyers and justices. Experts in the use of the internet to access law-related content can be invited to educate lawyers and justices on how to access legal content with the aid of technology and how best to make use of them. Lawyers must go to conferences and seminars regularly. These outings will expose them to the latest developments in the legal profession through the use of Information Communication Technology and its impact on virtual court proceedings. Lawyers can then organize some sessions for their clients, especially on how best their clients can make use of Information Communication Technology in preparation for proceedings.

- ii. Increasing Investment in Information Communication Technology - The Government must invest in Information Communication Technology by creating a special fund for the use of technology in the legal profession. This could be funded via public-private partnerships or the allocation of more funds to the judiciary. Apart from funding the bench, law firms must be funded as well. To address the difficulty of law firms obtaining credit facilities from banks, the Nigerian Bar Association can assist, particularly the small firms, in gaining access to funds to help undertake the cost of using the internet/technology in court processes.
- iii. Government must ensure that internet service providers provide quality services to the law courts, especially during virtual court proceedings - Once this is done, the legal profession can also benefit from improved services from internet service providers. The Federal Government on behalf of the populace must also hold internet service providers accountable for the services they provide the courts. Licenses must be issued to the providers who can provide the best services and where any provider defaults, the necessary sanctions should be meted out to that provider. The Nigerian government must also find a lasting solution to the issue of

electricity supply to the nation. Moreover, the government must equip our courts with the necessary courtroom technology to enhance virtual court processes among our lawyers and justices - Inadequate funding should not be a problem for the courts.

LAWYERS AND TECHNOLOGY

In recent years, technology has become an essential part of our lives. From our homes to our schools and our offices. It is now literally an indispensable part of our daily activities which makes it difficult to imagine a life without technology. We have gone from using maps to get around to the GPS, from hand-written letters to emails and text messages, from waiting a week for films to develop to using digital cameras. In more advanced forms, we now have innovations like Artificial intelligence (Siri, Alexa), blockchain technology, cloud computing and the Internet of things just to mention a few, the list is endless. With all of this, there are many who, facing the next century, wonder if it will be possible to continue along the path of such tremendous development.

In a bit, we are going to discover more ways through which technology is going to become a bigger part of our lives and more importantly, as lawyers, how we can use these advancements to our advantage.

The future of the human-technology interface is mostly dependent on the fact that every business—be it providing legal services, hospitality, education, logistics, food & beverage, personal care etc. is a technology business. Interactive kiosks, radio-frequency identification tags, virtual reality simulations, and computer vision are examples of how immersive human-technology interactions are in business-to-customer models and in our case, counsel to client models. Technology is also having profound effects on labour markets. Automation and digital advances are shifting labour demand away from routine low- to middle-level skills to higher-level and more sophisticated analytical, technical, and managerial skills. On the supply side, however, it is becoming necessary to equip ourselves with skills that complement the new technologies so as not to be rendered redundant in the labour market.

In a world of seemingly infinite unknowns, enterprises are establishing programs that can effectively identify, evaluate, and incubate digitization to transform themselves. By doing so, they are also creating new opportunities and harnessing advanced technologies to chart a path to the next horizon.

How Legal Practitioners Can Benefit From The New Order

The relationship between law and technology forms two distinct areas for discussion and debate but both are intertwined and no discussion is complete without acknowledging the other. In any conversation about the growth of the legal profession, there must be a consideration of the role that technology takes in shaping and enhancing the future of the legal profession. Likewise, any discussion on technology must involve proper acknowledgement and consideration of the legal framework in which it operates.

Many fear that these innovations might be disruptive to our industry as we work in an industry built on people and as technology advances it reduces the usefulness of some of the assignments that lawyers are assigned to undertake. But instead of being carried away by this fear, what we can do to be ahead of the curve and make out roles for ourselves by studying the tech industry and its future.

Here is a list of jobs lawyers can take on in the tech industry to benefit from the new order-

1. **LEGAL TECHNOLOGIST:** This is conceivably one of the newest roles in the legal tech space. In short, this role entails using your knowledge of technology to provide solutions for companies.

One of the major skills required for this role is communication and problem solving, as most of the work requires one to interact with law firms, clients, and other legal tech software providers. The ability to know your way around legal tech software

currently on the market is also quite important as it forms the basis of the technical aspect required for the role but also an understanding of how technology in general works. For example, how application programming interface (APIs) work, or which software can be used to store data and review documents.

2. **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE ANALYST:** In the legal tech space, a recurring theme is Artificial Intelligence (AI) which is basically how machines learn and make decisions. In the past, a role like this would not be mainstream, especially in the legal sector which unfortunately is sometimes one of the last sectors to get them informed on the “cool tech innovations”. Nonetheless, as machines are getting more intelligent and machines run on data, if you are a data enthusiast with knowledge of coding languages like Python and C++ then these sorts of roles are perfect for you, although it is very much outside our scope of work as legal practitioners.

Of course, with anything technology and coding, there are big bucks involved with companies offering incredibly lucrative incentives to help them build software or keep their existing technology running spick and span.

3. **LEGAL ENGINEER:** The term engineer is used to signify a person who can solve a problem and the same rule applies in the legal sector for a Legal Engineer which combines the skill set of a person with a sound background in law and technology. Now unlike a software engineer, this role does not necessarily require in-depth coding experience; rather, the understanding and application of tools to help problem solve. Examples of such said understanding could be basic Application Programming Interface (API) knowledge and website applications.

These sorts of roles open opportunities for working directly with both law firms and

also start-up and larger technology software companies across the globe.

Now, to more lawyer-related tech jobs;

4. **TECHNOLOGY CONTRACT DRAFTING AND NEGOTIATION:** Contract drafting is one of the most quintessential skills for any lawyer. For tech lawyers, this skill has to be above average, you need to possess more than the basic drafting skills. As a lawyer in the tech industry, you need to know about contracts that are more relevant to tech companies daily such as Standard Distributor Licensing Agreement, Cloud Computing Agreement, Outsourcing Agreement, Software Licensing Agreement, etc. Even concerning more commonplace agreements such as NDAs, non-compete agreements, employment agreements, investment agreements, vendor agreements etc., you need to learn to draft improvised versions that are more suited to the technology industry.
5. **MANAGING THE IP PORTFOLIO:** The primary product of any technology-based company or client is their intellectual property. The interesting thing about technology is that more than one person could be working on the same technology, at the same time. If the intellectual property of your client is not adequately protected or it overlaps with existing technology, lawyers have to ensure that the damage is mitigated while protecting their client's interests.
6. **LITIGATION AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN TECH:** Thankfully, this does not entail so much of moving outside our comfort zone. Tech litigation is on the rise along with the global growth of the tech industry, as well as the increasing complexity and regulation of this sector in almost every part of the world. From IP disputes to co-founder conflicts, from data theft to class action suits for malpractice, tech litigation has never been as interesting as it is now.

Possible Areas In Tech And Governance That A Lawyer May Explore

I am certain that a good number of persons here have heard of tech law, it is an emerging area that so many young lawyers want to take advantage of, which is a good thing. It would be even better to pick a particular niche in the field of tech law or governance so you master what it entails to be a lawyer in what you have chosen while still having an idea of what that area of law is as a whole.

We often limit the roles of tech lawyers to areas that involve software engineering like website creation, application building, intellectual property and common areas we are used to hearing about. I do not want to bore you with these areas that you might have heard of or have resources on, I would rather we talk about the new emerging areas with little to no resources in Nigeria like Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs), Bitcoins, and the Metaverse. What are the roles of lawyers in these areas you might ask?

NFTs

I will begin with NFTs. With the global market for NFTs exploding right now, it will be beneficial for lawyers to better understand the various issues associated with it. Without a doubt, the popularity of NFTs is only likely to increase over time and a lawyer who is interested in making a career in this field would need to make time to better understand the blockchain space. Interestingly, the NFT market has grown over 300 percent in the past year.

However, fortunately for us as lawyers, despite the hype around such units of data, there are a handful of legal issues surrounding NFTs that lawyers need to be aware of to be considered useful in the NFT market.

Firstly, we need to be aware of what rights are transferring or associated with an NFT, ie what is the purchaser of the NFT is receiving. Secondly, there are data issues at play “because an NFT on a blockchain has a publicly verifiable chain of ownership – if Person B purchases an NFT from Person A, Person B will know Person A's digital wallet address and can have visibility into what

transactions have occurred in Person A's digital wallet. Again, practically, there are also issues if an NFT, which uses a digital title, needs to be recognized at law for a real-world asset.

The blockchain space moves so fast and has such a technical barrier to entry that it is easy for something to be overlooked. To steer such issues for clients, if and where applicable, lawyers need to gain an in-depth understanding of how NFTs work, which would mean making out a career for themselves in this emerging area.

The Metaverse And Cryptocurrency

In short, the Metaverse is a virtual world to which participants connect via the internet to interact with other participants. It has been speculated within the last 4-5 months since the craze of the metaverse began that it will revolutionize many sectors, the legal sector inclusive. The question now is what opportunities does it bring for lawyers or what legal issues will we be dealing with in the metaverse?

Concerning data protection, new types of data will be processed in the metaverse, such as facial expressions, gestures and other physiological reactions to certain content and events in the metaverse. Competition law (how can companies advertise their products in the metaverse?), copyright law (what must be observed when digital assets are embodied as NFT or real buildings replicated in the metaverse?), securities and banking supervisory law (are there licensing and prospectus obligations for trading digital assets in the metaverse?), tax law (how should income from renting virtual land be treated?) or general civil and criminal law will keep lawyers busy in the future.

What Legal Practitioners Must Do To Be Ahead Of The Curve

As I have said earlier technology has become an integral part of our society. It plays a vital role in human lives now transforming every section and strata of society. In the competition to attract more clients and be ahead of the curve, lawyers need to race to increase the value they provide. Thankfully, we live in a country where these new tech developments are still very exciting to us and would be a form of client attraction. Young lawyers must do the following to be ahead of the curve:

- i. Participate in more lifelong learning courses relating to tech: do something different, something outside of what the legal profession is used to. This would mean attending tech conferences, collaborating with the tech industry, etc.
- ii. Create and make use of software to make litigation easier: this is something we cannot do alone; we are going to need to work with tech experts on this one. I suggest software that tracks time and also billing, also one that assists in client relationship management and finally document management solution, we do not need to have as many papers and hard copies of documents as we do in law firms, the world has moved far beyond that. This is something we can start with almost immediately.
- iii. Finally, know emerging technologies, be in touch with the developments going on around the world. I am not proposing that you go and get a technical degree, although that would be nice, there needs to be familiarity with the technological advancements. You don't need to be a techie to be a technology lawyer, but you must be able to understand the mechanisms, parlance and terminology of the technology world.

Possible Barriers That A Lawyer May Face And How To Overcome Them

As interesting as the technological developments around the world may sound, it is unfortunate that Nigeria is significantly behind. Tracking Nigeria's development in the tech space, the Chairman, Mobile Software Company, Chris Uwaje, said at a time like this, maturity demands that:

“We clothe ourselves with the audacity to emit the truth in us. If I were to act as an IT Professor engaged to access and score Nigeria (as an Informatics Student, passing through the tutelage of digital transformation), my score will be 49.1 percent! Nigeria eminently deserves to have an equitable global rating of above 75 per cent. The reason is not that we cannot

attain the 80 per cent scoreline, but we doggedly refused to apply meritorious strategy to attain the desirable mark as a global contender in the global ICT/Digital Hall of Fame, and the ability to create technology wealth, through scientific knowledge adventure.”

He stressed that Nigeria is not yet where it is supposed to be technologically, and cannot realise her earthly mission by placing a “physical file carrying job at the top” and technology at the bottom. Now, even though the slow growth pace is something we can leverage by becoming pioneers in this field, it proposes numerous barriers to our career development as lawyers in the tech space. Here are some barriers you might face as a lawyer in the tech space include:

- i. Cyber-attack risks: as Nigerians, we do not fully trust our devices to let them do all the work just yet, it is our default setting that is difficult to let go of. Then again, you cannot blame us. Cyber-attacks are increasing rapidly since the lockdown, as various big organizations and companies have embraced the work from home culture and home internet networks and systems are not fully cyber secure. Security can be breached easily, and the organization's confidential data can be stolen. Therefore, the risk is high using the unsecured system.
- ii. Lack of fully trained users can cause the risk of data loss.
- iii. Numerous Regulations: since mid- 2020 a whirl of regulatory activities had put the Nigerian tech ecosystem on the defensive, necessitating many startups to grow silently with minimal media attention and scaring investors both home and abroad.

The most notable of these regulations is the proposed National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) bill which bestows on the agency the power to license and tax technology companies this has escalated concerns. Under the bill, NITDA would be solely responsible for issuing licences as well as registering and determining which

companies can operate in the country's tech sector. Companies with annual revenue exceeding approximately \$243,000 (100 million naira) will have to pay a 1% levy to the agency's development fund. Those companies that fail to comply with the new rules risk jail time or a fine no less than approximately \$73,000 (30 million naira).

While the NITDA amendment bill may be new, much of the regulatory risk for Nigerian startups have been in the fintech subsector and has often been generated by the Central Bank of Nigeria. Just recently, the CBN secured a court order to freeze the bank accounts of fintech stock trading platforms Risevest, Bamboo, Trove and Chaka for six months for allowing the trading of cryptocurrencies.

Over the last decade, the country's tech ecosystem dubbed the "new oil" has bloomed, despite a stagnant economy and little to no government support. Nigeria is home to two of Africa's four unicorns; Flutterwave and Interswitch—and has attracted over a billion dollars in venture capital investments yet the country's uncertain regulatory environment continues to dampen investor confidence in Africa's biggest market. "We are somewhat over-regulated for our stage of development."

- iv. Inadequate power supply. This factor makes maximizing the potential of technology to the legal sector unachievable. While the use of other alternative sources of power such as inverters, generators, solar panels, etc., could be recommended, this adds a huge financial burden to the already expensive cost of using technology.
- v. High cost of technology or access to technology in Nigeria. A high amount of capital needs to be invested if a Law firm is to be technology compliant. Computers and other ICT devices or hardware need to be purchased and constant maintenance of this equipment will be required from time to time. In addition to this, quality

online legal research tools will also have to be subscribed to by law firms in ensuring accessibility to online information and materials.

- vi. Lack of Access to internet services. The high cost of subscriptions and the non-availability of fast high-speed internet networks also pose a threat to the assimilation of legal technology in Nigeria. Access to internet services in many parts of Nigeria is unreliable and slow, this discourages users and lawyers and often makes it impossible for them to perform some tasks which require a stable high-speed internet connection.

What can we do as lawyers to overcome the barriers we are faced with in Nigeria?

- i. Be updated with technological innovations.
- ii. Use technology in our daily work routine.
- iii. Research and explore Artificial intelligence and other aspects of technology.
- iv. Not restraining themselves to a particular software or application.

CONCLUSION

In precis, this paper has shown that the future of the legal profession is anchored on technology. As a result of this, it is essential for young practitioners in the teething stage of their careers to understand the impact of technology in our profession and how they may use it to their advantage. After the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Nigerian economy, the Nigerian government and in our particular context, the Courts were forced to adopt technology via virtual sittings to ameliorate the delay in the administration of justice. This was backed by various rules and practice directions being created by the Courts.

As noted in the paper, there are numerous challenges that legal practitioners and the Courts may be faced with in adopting technology; however, if serious efforts are put in place, these challenges can easily be surmounted and opportunities created for legal practitioners to earn a living from the unstoppable movement of the world into the technological phase.

END NOTES

¹Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN was called to the Nigerian Bar in 1986. He underwent his undergraduate studies at the University of Maiduguri where he emerged as the best graduating student in the common law department. He obtained a diploma in International Commercial Arbitration from Keble College, Oxford University, UK in 2006. He also attended the Institute for Public-Private Partnerships (IP3), Allington, USA in 2009 before undergoing a short course on regulation at the London School of Economics and Political Science in 2010. He was appointed Notary Public in June 1996 and elevated to the rank of a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN) in 1998. He has served the NBA in numerous capacities and has remained active in matters concerning the Bar.

²<https://www.lawyard.org/opinions/increasing-lawyers-earning-capacity-through-continuing-legal-education-why-the-nba-is-on-the-right-track/>

³ Ibid

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⁶VladimirVasilyeva, 'ICT in Teacher Education: Policy, Open Educational Resources and Partnership' (November 15–16, 2010)lite.unesco.org. <<https://iite.unesco.org/pics/publications/en/files/3214684.pdf>> accessed 21 April 2021

⁷Just answer experts 'Answers about Information Technology' (2021) <<https://www.answers.com/t/information-technology>> accessed 15 April 2021

⁸ [Michalsons](#), 'What is IT law, ICT law or Cyber law?' (10 January 2016)<<https://www.michalsons.com/blog/what-is-it-law-Information-Communication-Technology-law-or-cyber-law/286>> accessed 31 March 2021.

⁹Patricia Hughes, 'VirtualCourt Proceedings: Fictional and the Real Thing' (12MAY 2020)

<<http://www.slaw.ca/2020/05/12/virtual-court-proceedings-fictional-and-the-real-thing/>> accessed 15 April 2021

¹⁰Uninichioma, 'A Simplistic View on Virtual Court Proceedings and the Requirement of 'Public Hearing' (Thenigerialawyer.com, 2020) <<https://thenigerialawyer.com/a-simplistic-view-on-virtual-court-proceedings-and-the-requirement-of-public-hearing/#:~:text=Virtual%20Court%20proceedings%20are%20proceedings,fully%20Virtual.>> accessed 11 April 2021

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¹² AbubakarNpom, 'Impact Of Technology On The Law And Court Process' (19th AND 23rd MARCH, 2018). <[Http://Edojudiciary.Gov.Ng/Wp-Content/Uploads/2018/04/Impact-Of-Technology-On-The-Law-And-Court-Process-By-Justice-M.-D.-Abubakar-Npom.Pdf](http://Edojudiciary.Gov.Ng/Wp-Content/Uploads/2018/04/Impact-Of-Technology-On-The-Law-And-Court-Process-By-Justice-M.-D.-Abubakar-Npom.Pdf)> Accessed 21 April 2021

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¹⁴ Iheanyi Nwankwo, 'ict technology and Law in Nigeria' (April 4, 2018) <<https://Iheanyisam.Wordpress.Com/>> Accessed 15 April 2021

¹⁵ AbubakarNpom, 'Impact Of Technology On The Law And Court Process' (19th AND 23rd MARCH, 2018). <[Http://Edojudiciary.Gov.Ng/Wp-Content/Uploads/2018/04/Impact-Of-Technology-On-The-Law-And-Court-Process-By-Justice-M.-D.-Abubakar-Npom.Pdf](http://Edojudiciary.Gov.Ng/Wp-Content/Uploads/2018/04/Impact-Of-Technology-On-The-Law-And-Court-Process-By-Justice-M.-D.-Abubakar-Npom.Pdf)> Accessed 21 April 2021

¹⁶ National Judicial Council (2021) <<https://njc.gov.ng/30/news-details>> accessed 31 March 2021)

¹⁷ National Industrial Court Of Nigeria Practice Directions and Guidelines for Court Sitting 2020

SIGHTS AND SCENES

The Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner held on Friday, 18th February, 2022 at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving vote of thanks during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



L-R: Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN; Chief Chris Uche, SAN; Chief Adegboyega S. Awomolo (SAN) and Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



Chief (Mrs.) Victoria Awomolo, SAN and Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and Mela Audu Nunghe, SAN during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama; Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN; Sarah Atunga and Victor Ehiosun during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



Chief (Mrs.) Victoria Awomolo, SAN and Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



A cross section of some of the guests during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022



Mr. Oyetola Muyiwa Atoyebi, SAN giving his remarks during the Body of Senior Advocates of Nigeria (Abuja Chapter) Annual Dinner 2022

SIGHTS AND SCENES

NBA - Security Agencies Relations Committee's courtesy visit to the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) on Wednesday, February 16, 2022



NDLEA DG, Brig. Gen. Mohammed B. Marwa (Rtd) decorating Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with Lapel Pin during his appointment as an Ambassador of War Against Drug Abuse



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN presenting a copy of the J-K Gadzama LLP quarterly newsletter to Brig. Gen. Mohammed B. Marwa (Rtd)



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving his remarks during his appointment as an Ambassador of War Against Drug Abuse



NBA-SARC Committee led by Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (6th right) with the DG of NDLEA, Brig. Gen. Mohammed B. Marwa (Rtd) (middle) during the courtesy visit on the NDLEA



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving a remarks during a courtesy visit to the chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC)



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN receiving books from the chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Prof. Bolaji Owansanyo, SAN



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN chatting with the Chairman of Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), Prof. Bolaji Owansanyo, SAN



NBA-SARC Committee led by Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (5th right) with the Chairman of ICPC, Prof. Bolaji Owansanyo, SAN (middle) during the courtesy visit on the ICPC

Words on Marble

Law and order exist for the purpose of establishing justice and when they fail in this purpose they become the dangerously structured dams that block the flow of social progress.

– **Martin Luther King Jr.**

No man is above the law and no man is below it; nor do we ask any man's permission when we ask him to obey it. Obedience to the law is demanded as a right; not asked as a favor.

– **Theodore Roosevelt**

“The leading rule for the lawyer, as for the [person] of every calling, is diligence.”

– **Abraham Lincoln**

“Be sure to put your feet in the right place, and then stand firm.”

– **Abraham Lincoln**

The Corrupt should be tied to a rock & thrown into the sea.

– **Pope Francis**

If you are a judge and you are corrupt, where do we go from here? Then everything has come to a halt. If the legislature is corrupt, you go to the judiciary for redress. If the executive is corrupt you go to the judiciary for remedy. If the judiciary itself is corrupt, where do you go from there?

- **Justice Chukwudifu Oputa**

The history of the world is full of wars of religion. When you look at these wars, what caused them and how they were ended, you can never justify the amount of blood lost because after each war, no war has ended or settled on the battlefield.

- **Justice Chukwudifu Oputa**

Each man has to find out why he was created, has to find out how do I achieve my purpose. At the end of that creation, how do I make a positive impact on my age, on my nation, on my family. If you do that, you are living a footprint for those coming behind to follow.

- **Justice Chukwudifu Oputa**

PHOTO SPEAK



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN being appointed as Chairman of the NBA Security Agencies Relations Committee (NBA-SARC) by the President of the Nigerian Bar Association Olumide Akpata on Friday, January 7, 2022



L-R: DIG Taiwo Lakanu Rtd, Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN; Olumide Akpata, Mr. Mohammed Tsav, Mr. Salman Salman during the inauguration of the NBA-SARC, on Friday, January 7, 2022 at the NBA Secretariat Abuja.



L-R: YC Maikyau, SAN; Roland Oturu, SAN; Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and Chief Judge of the High Court of Justice of Borno State, Hon. Justice Kashim Zannah during the Justice Sector Summit in Abuja, Tuesday, January 25, 2022



L-R: Adama Mohammed and Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN during the Justice Sector Summit in Abuja, Tuesday, January 25, 2022



L-R: Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN and Hon. Babatunde Ogala, SAN during BOSAN Annual Dinner at the Continental Hotel, Lagos



400 Level Law Students of Baze University, Abuja with some of the Partners and Associate of J-K Gadzama LLP during the students visit to the firm on Friday, January 28, 2022



L-R: Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama; Taiwo Adewole, Managing Director, Okitipupa Oil Palm Plc and Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN



R-L: Mr. Taiwo Adewole (Managing Director of Okitipupa Oil Palm PLC); Chief Bayo Ojo, SAN (Fmr. Minister of Justice and Attorney General of the Federation); Mr. Bayo Adalakin and Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama during a friendly golf game at the IBB International Golf and Country Club on Saturday, January 29, 2022

PHOTO SPEAK



Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama giving the host's remarks on behalf of the firm at the NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly meeting at A-Class Park, Maitama, Abuja on Friday, February 4, 2022



Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama (2nd right) receiving an award on behalf of Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN for his Meritorious contributions to the NBA Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) during the branch monthly meeting at A-Class Park, Maitama, Abuja on Friday, February 4, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with some guests during the NBA Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly meeting at A-Class Park, Maitama, Abuja on Friday, February 4, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving a remark at the NBA Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly meeting at A-Class Park, Maitama, Abuja on Friday, February 4, 2022



Mr. Francis Ornsaye (Managing Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP) receiving the Sir Ahmadu Bello Sarduana Sokoto Platinum Leadership Award from the Northern Youth Council of Nigeria on behalf of Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN on Wednesday, February 16, 2022



Mr. Francis Ornsaye, Managing Partner, J-K Gadzama LLP (middle) with the representatives of the Northern Youth Council of Nigeria on Wednesday, February 16, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN (3rd right); Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN during the conferment of NIALS Honorary Institute Fellowship on Tuesday, February 22, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with colleagues during the Arewa Young Lawyers Forum Summit in Abuja on Thursday, March 31, 2022

LEGAL HUMOUR

1. A secretary, a paralegal and a lawyer in a Minnesota law firm are walking through Como Park on their way to lunch when they find an antique oil lamp. They rub it and a Genie comes out in a puff of smoke. The Genie says, "I usually only grant three wishes, so I'll give each of you just one."

"Me first! Me first!" says the secretary. "I want to be in the Bahamas, driving a speedboat, without a care in the world."

Poof! She's gone.

"Me next! Me next!" says the paralegal. "I want to be in Hawaii, relaxing on the beach with my personal masseuse, an endless supply of pina colodas and the love of my life."

Poof! she's gone.

"You're next," the Genie says to the lawyer.

"I want those two back in the office after lunch."

2. A man walked into a lawyer's office and asked him how much he charged.

The lawyer responded "it's [\\$100](#) for three questions."

"Isn't that a lot?" asked the man.

"Yes" responded the lawyer...."and whats your third question?"

3. Why are lawyers always so charming? Because they have their own appeal.
4. Why didn't the deaf lawyer come to his court case today? He lost his hearing.
5. What do poets always keep in their car to avoid paying legal fees to a lawyer? A poetic license.
6. What do barristers always keep with themselves to smell good? A judge-mint.

PHOTO SPEAK



Young Lawyers Group of J-K Gadzama LLP celebrating Valentine's Day with Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN on Monday, February 14, 2022



Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama exchanging gift with Cynthia Igwedibia during the Valentine's Day Celebration on Monday, February 14, 2022



Hafsat Garba Maidugu exchanging gift with Ebube Okpogu during the Valentine's Day Celebration on Monday, February 14, 2022



Cross section of members of the Young Lawyers Group of J-K Gadzama LLP, during the Valentine's Day Celebration on Monday, February 14, 2022



L-R: Olalekan Olasehinde, Darlington Onyekwere, Jerry Musa, Mark Agbo, Ifeoma Nwankwo, Emmanuella Eze, Sunday Ali Dzarma, Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama and Emmanuel Bakwu



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN celebrating with Ao2 Law during their 5th Anniversary



Back row: Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama, Osilama Ozekhome, Bryan Anyawata, Chris Hon, Michael Hon, Prosper Okwu, Lamar Joe-Kyari Gadzama, Frank Nwankwo
Front row: Nnamdi Uzuogbu, Tammy Quakers, Cyril Mbatsav, Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN, Promise Godwin and Jerry Musa during the Abuja Lawyers League



Gadzama FC team celebrating after ending on a high note to clinch 3rd place at the Abuja Lawyers League (Mahmud Magaji Super Cup) 2022

NEWS FROM THE FIRM

- The Firm has recently promoted Mr. Mark Chidi Agbo to the position of a Junior Partner. The firm wishes him the best in his new position.
- The Firm welcomed a new Practice Manager, Miss Emmanuella Chinonso Eze. We wish her a joyous and productive period at J-K Gadzama LLP.
- The Firm also recently hosted the Nigerian Bar Association, Abuja (Unity Bar) Branch Monthly Meeting for January 2022. The Firm also hosted the February edition of the Unity Bar's Monthly Aerobics for Lawyers.
- The firm has also further accepted new graduate interns, viz; Mrs. Hauwa Abba Ruma and Miss Rabiātu Abba Ruma. The firm wishes them a fruitful stay.
- Mrs. Ifeoma Juliet Nwankwo (ACA) accountant has left the firm. We wish her the best in her future endeavours.
- Gadzama FC clinched 3rd place at the Abuja Lawyers' League (Mahmud Magaji Super Cup) 2022, the firm congratulates the team

PHOTO SPEAK



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving Host's remarks at the NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly meeting



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN with some members of the NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) during the branch monthly meeting



A cross section of some of the guest during NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly meeting



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN during a lunch with members of NBA-Katsina Branch on Saturday, March 12, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN hosted the NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) monthly aerobics for lawyers at the J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



Some members of the NBA-Abuja Branch (Unity Bar) during the monthly aerobics for lawyers at the J-K Gadzama Court, Abuja



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN giving the keynote speech at the NBA Port Harcourt Branch Young Lawyers Forum Annual Summit on Wednesday, March 23, 2022



Chief Joe-Kyari Gadzama, SAN receiving an award from Mr. Tonye KruKrubo during the NBA Port Harcourt Branch Young Lawyers Forum Annual Summit on Wednesday, March 23, 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS & CONFERENCES

7th Hon. Justice Chukwudifu Oputa JSC, (Rtd) Professional Training and Mentoring Programme for Young Lawyers, J-K Gadzama LLP, Abuja, May 14, 2022

3rd African Arbitration Association Annual International Arbitration Conference, 3rd November, 2022

6th International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Africa Conference on International Arbitration, 1st - 3rd June, 2022

Nigerian Bar Association Annual General Conference, August, 2022

International Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference, 30th Oct - 4th Nov, 2022, Miami, USA

15th J-K Gadzama LLP Public Lecture, 2022

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb.) Nigeria Branch Annual Conference Gala Nite, 3rd - 4th November, 2022

Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CI Arb.) Abuja Chapter Annual Conference Gala Nite

OUR PEOPLE

PARTNERS

1. Joe-kyari Gadzama, OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FICMC, DipICarb, FNICarb, FCI Arb, C.Arb.
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2. Prof. Tahir Mamman, OON, SAN
Senior Consulting Partner
3. Francis O. Oronsaye, AICMC
Managing Partner
4. Geraldine Mbah
Partner
5. Darlington Onyekwere, ACI Arb
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6. Madu Joe-Kyari Gadzama, LL.M (Warwick), MCI Arb., MICMC
Partner
7. Jerry Ombugadu Musa
Junior Partner
8. Oluniyi Adediji, ACTI, ABR
Junior Partner
9. Agbo Mark Chidi, MCI Arb.
Junior Partner

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2. Rashidat Banke Obamajure

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Ignatius Ozoilo, Pg. Dip., LL.M

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7. Onyekachi Agbonma Eluwa

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4. Ojeke A. Hillary
5. Ulasi M. Precious
6. Igwedibia Cynthia
7. Etim-Ikang Grace Bassey
8. Chukwumerije L. Chinweotuto
9. Hafsat Garba Maidugu
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11. Mbah Uchenna Zita
12. Okpogu Ebube Charity
13. Tengya Jochebed Habila
14. Hussiena Jafiya
15. Hajara Garba
16. Ahmad Musa Garba
17. Farida O. Lanre-Ipinmisho
18. Elisha Godwin

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Olalekan R. Olasehinde, CNSS (UK), CCNA

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Dafenone Emeke Akpomudiare
Hauwa Abba Ruma
Rabiatu Abba Ruma

JURIS CONSULT

1. Hon. Justice Alfa Modibbo Belgore, CJN (RTD), GCON
(FORMER CHIEF JUSTICE OF NIGERIA)
2. Hon. Justice George A. Oguntade, J.S.C (RTD), CON.

SENIOR CONSULTANT

Prof. Paul Idornigie, SAN, PhD, FCIS, FCI Arb, C.Arb

JICAM

JANADA INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR ARBITRATION & MEDIATION



Janada International Centre for Arbitration and Mediation (JICAM) was established in 2015. It is a dispute resolution centre in Abuja designed to promote a suitable forum for the resolution of domestic and international disputes. It is fully equipped with state-of-the-art facilities. The rules and guidelines for JICAM accommodate both ad hoc and institutional arbitration.

VISION

Creating an avenue for independent, confidential and efficient means of resolving disputes using Alternative Disputes Resolution (ADR).

SERVICES

1. Recording Services
(360 Systems' New Instant Replay², Networked Digital Audio, 1000 Audio Cuts at your fingertips, Instant Sound Effect, Instant Music)
2. Video Conferencing
3. Transcription
4. Case Management
5. Secretarial/Administrative Services
6. Fund Managers
7. Accommodation (Studio & En Suite)

OUR LOCATION

Plot 1805, Damaturu Crescent By Kabo Way, Off Ahmadu Bello Way, P.O. Box 20304, Garki II, Abuja, FCT, Nigeria.

Tel: 09 6233 626

MISSION STATEMENT


To provide a neutral venue for the resolution of both Domestic and International disputes; and encourage the settlement of disputes from Corporate, Domestic, International Trade, Investment and other Transactions.


FACILITIES


1. Hearing Rooms
2. Conference/Seminar Hall
3. Arbitrators' Retiring Room
4. Claimants'/Respondents' Meeting Rooms
5. Waiting Room/Lounge
6. Food Court (The Dome)
7. Library/Resource Room
8. Individual HP pro display desktop for Tribunal Secretary/Registrar
9. Wireless tabletop microphones
10. High Definition Conference/Presentation Interactive Screen
11. Projector screen
12. Transcriber
13. Shelving Units
14. Wi-Fi
15. 18-Seater bus
16. 24-Hour CCTV
17. Spacious car park with security


For enquiries and/or Reservation Contact:


Samuel Kayode Fagade, MCI Arb. (UK)
(General Manager)

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 @JICAM

 @JICAM

 info@jicam.org

 www.jicam.org





Who are we?

The Vox Populi Foundation for Leadership was founded in the year 2010 and was incorporated in the year 2012 by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama OFR, MFR, SAN, FNIALS, FCI Arb. (UK) (of Lincolns Inn, Barrister/Life Bencher/CEDR Accredited Mediator). The Foundation is a Non-Profit making institution formed to deepen the understanding of democracy by carrying out structured programmes that promote positive leadership qualities and ideals in the society. This is because we believe that a society can only evolve when the people have the opportunity to contribute to the process of governance and have a voice in the creation of policies and laws that affect them as a people.

How do we do this?

We sincerely believe the best way to achieve this goal is to pursue initiatives that look at proffering solutions to the issues that interfere with governance. We look at utilizing the immense manpower of youths and able bodied people who are hungry to bring about a change in their society through direct engagement with society in a volunteer signup process, which is one of the mechanisms we intend to employ to secure citizens participation. This process of inclusion we believe will foster and build a common front that will enable people to improve on their understanding of what leadership connotes in their everyday lives and reinforce their commitment towards creating a better society.

Governance

Created with gifts by its founder Chief J-K Gadzama, the foundation is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organization, with its own Board. The trustees of the foundation set policies and delegate authority to the Director General and senior staff for the foundation's operations. Zonal volunteer Heads in the 6 geo-political zones explore opportunities to pursue the foundation's goals and formulate strategies for action.

Location

The Foundation is headquartered in Abuja. It conducts its activities through an increasing pool of volunteers from across the country.



ADDRESS: 1st Floor, Plot 1805, Damaturu Crescent
by Kobo Way, Off Ahmadu Bello Way, Adjacent to Garki International
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Telephone: +234 (0) 815 656 5619

Our Vision

*to promote, protect and safeguard the tenets and ideals of democracy
leadership & good governance in our society.*

What is Our Goal?!

*to encourage citizens to participate in governance &
support a platform that will inspire proactive leadership
that will drive the
free flow of democratic ideals and social justice.*

Sign-up to Join and receive our e-mail Newsletter
and Special Notifications
Your information will be kept confidential and used
solely for our communications

Required Information

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____@_____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Phone: _____

Upon completing the information sheet, you can detach and send to our address above or you can email us on

info@voxpopulifoundation.org

for further enquiries, call us on

+234 (0) 8156565619 and +234 (0) 8091320558

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This publication among many other
articles and news from the firm are accessible online on the office website.