



**NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION
PRO BONO DECLARATION**

AND

**ESTABLISHMENT OF NBA NATIONAL
PRO BONO CENTRE**

THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION PRO BONO DECLARATION:

WHEREAS; access to justice and legal representation is essential to protection of human rights, good governance and democratic consolidation in Nigeria;

WHEREAS; the resources of Government and of legal services Organizations are insufficient to satisfy the critical legal needs of poor and underprivileged persons and communities;

WHEREAS; consequently, not all Nigerian's have meaningful access to justice or effective legal representation, and this is especially the case for poor and underprivileged persons and communities;

WHEREAS; the absence of access to justice and legal representation undermines public confidence in Governmental and judicial institutions and democracy;

WHEREAS; the legal profession has a privileged role and is uniquely positioned in matters of justice and therefore has the duty, means and opportunity to promote a fair and equitable legal system and respect for fundamental human rights in collaboration with the State, the judiciary and legal services organizations;

WHEREAS; new efforts are underway in Nigeria, including collaborations among Bar Associations, private and public interest law firms, law schools, foundations, Governmental actors and non-Governmental organizations, to address these pressing legal needs;

WHEREAS;the NBA is leading a concerted movement in Nigeria to promote access to justice through pro bono work that would strengthen commitments to democracy and public service in the legal profession;

The NBA, solemnly declares its commitment to pro bono by stating as follows:

All members of the NBA have a responsibility to provide Pro bono Legal Services. This responsibility stems from the profession's role and purpose in society, and from its implicit commitment to a fair and equitable legal system.

Pro bono is derived from the Latin phrase *pro bono publico*, which refers to actions carried out "for the public good." For purposes of this Declaration, pro bono legal services are those provided without a fee, or expectation of a fee, principally to benefit poor or underprivileged persons or communities or the organizations that assist them. They may include representation of persons, communities or organizations in matters of public interest who otherwise could not obtain effective representation. In addition, pro bono legal services can also benefit civic, cultural and educational institutions serving the public interest who otherwise could not obtain effective representation.

Pro bono legal services should be provided with the same quality of representation as services provided to paying clients, and in a manner upholding the applicable ethical norms and standards.

Effective delivery of pro bono legal services requires cooperation among the different actors in the legal profession – including Bar Associations, Private and Public interest law firms, law schools, foundations, Governmental actors and Non-Governmental Organizations.

The NBA commits to:

Act to improve effective legal representation for poor or underprivileged persons and communities;

Enhance widespread and effective access to justice and to legal services for persons and communities who lack such access;

Encourage law firms and individual lawyers to provide, on a pro bono basis, legal representation and advise to at least five [5] indigent individuals, group of persons or communities EACH YEAR.

Strengthen the profession's commitment to the provision and expansion of pro bono legal services by emphasizing its importance and practice in legal education;

Establish develop and operate a **National Pro- Bono Centre** dedicated to the delivery of Pro bono legal services in the public interest; and

Advocate and promote within the profession, the recognition and promotion of pro bono legal services as part of lawyers' ethical standards and obligations.

This Declaration is not intended to alter or supersede the Legal Practitioners Act or any other existing legislation, resolution or ethical code of the NBA that is more conducive to the provision of Pro bono legal services.

This Declaration will be effective from 1stMay, 2015.

AUGUSTINE O. ALEGEH, SAN FCI Arb [UK]
PRESIDENT, NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

MAZI AFAM OSIGWE ESQ.
GENERAL SECRETARY, NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION