



**8th Regional Conference for Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies
in Commonwealth Africa, Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja,
Nigeria**

(14-18 May, 2018)

Theme: Partnering Towards Assets Recovery and Return

COMMUNIQUÉ

WE, the Heads and Representatives of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa, meeting at the 8th Regional Conference of Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa (the Conference) hosted by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (the EFCC), Nigeria, sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat at Transcorp Hilton Hotel, Abuja, Nigeria, from 14-18 May 2018,

NOTING with gratitude the invaluable support and warm hospitality provided by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the EFCC and the people of Nigeria, the honour of the presence of His Excellency President Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, represented by His Excellency Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of the Republic of Nigeria, at the Opening of the Conference,

INSPIRED by the presence, participation and commitment of the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth Secretariat, Rt. Hon. Patricia Scotland QC, General Yakubu Gowon and General Abdulsalami Abubakar, former Heads of State of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, His Excellency Thabo Mbeki, former President of the Republic of South Africa and Nobel Laureate, Wole Soyinka, at the Conference,

CONCERNED ABOUT the heavy losses that Africa suffers as a result of illegal transfers of proceeds of corruption and crime out of Africa,

RECOGNISING the need to strengthen cooperation and collaboration among the Anti- Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa for purposes of facilitating assets recovery and return,

ACKNOWLEDGING the benefits of a platform for discussing emerging issues and sharing good practices and country innovations in the fight against corruption,

HAVING made presentations on the theme of the Conference, discussed innovative measures employed by anti-corruption agencies and explored other aspects of the programme of the Conference,

SATISFIED that a full exchange of views and innovative experiences among anti-corruption agencies and other participants has taken place at the Conference,

1. **CALL** upon African countries to strengthen cooperation and partnership in the tracing, recovery and return of assets in accordance with Article 54 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and Article 16 of the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption,
2. **URGE** Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa to effectively combat illicit financial flows,
3. **ENCOURAGE** African Countries to maintain a publicly available register of the beneficial owners of corporate entities and the level of ownership,
4. **FURTHER ENCOURAGE** African Countries to enact and vigorously implement asset forfeiture legislation to facilitate asset recovery and return,
5. **APPEAL** to judicial and prosecuting authorities to co-operate, support and fast track prosecution of corruption cases in their jurisdictions,
6. **DRAW** the attention of Anti-Corruption Agencies to the vulnerability of the extractive and construction sectors to corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows,
7. **FURTHER CALL** on African countries to ensure the independence and provide adequate resources for anti-corruption agencies to enable them to trace, recover and return assets,
8. **WELCOME** the initiative of the Commonwealth Secretariat to develop a Commonwealth Benchmarks package on anti-corruption and integrity standards and also call upon the Commonwealth Secretariat to incorporate existing benchmark packages,
9. **RECOGNISE** the importance of whistle blowing in the fight against corruption, asset recovery and return, further **URGE** African Countries to enact a strong whistle blowing legislation and provide protection to whistleblowers,

10. **FURTHER ENCOURAGE** Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa to explore innovative ways of delivering public education, awareness and sensitisation messages to the general public about tracing and recovering of assets,
11. **URGE** Anti-Corruption Agencies in Africa to sustain and deepen relationships, exchange of knowledge, experience learning and benchmarking visits,
12. **FURTHER URGE** African countries to develop integrity education programmes targeting children,
13. **APPRECIATE** the efforts made by the Centre to secure funding and support for the institution and **REQUEST** the Centre to continue to explore avenues for securing funding and support,
14. **FURTHER CALL** upon Anti-Corruption Agencies to pay the annual Heads of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa subscription fees on time.
15. **NOTE WITH APPRECIATION** the contribution of the Commonwealth Secretariat and Government of Botswana in setting up the Commonwealth Africa Anti-Corruption Centre (the Centre) to build the capacity of officers of Anti-Corruption Agencies and **URGE** Anti-Corruption Agencies to participate in the capacity building programmes offered by the Centre,
16. **RECOGNISING** the deleterious effect of corruption on our respective countries **URGE** the Commonwealth Secretariat to introduce Anti-Corruption forum as one of key events at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings.
17. **EXPRESS** appreciation to the President, the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) for the hospitality extended to delegates during their stay in Nigeria.
18. **FURTHER EXPRESS** profound appreciation to the Commonwealth Secretariat for having the vision to establish the Association of the Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa and co-sponsoring and co-organising the 8th Conference in succession.

19. **AGREE** that the next Regional Conference of Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa in 2019 will be hosted by Uganda in partnership with the Commonwealth Secretariat.
20. **ELECT** Nigeria (EFCC) as the Chair and Uganda (IGG) as the Vice-Chair of the Association of the Anti-Corruption Agencies in Commonwealth Africa.

HELD AT ABUJA, NIGERIA, THE 18TH DAY OF MAY 2018.