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**Remarks at the**

**Commissioning of the Judicial Research Centre (JRC) of the Kaduna State Judiciary  
at the High Court Premises, Kaduna on Thursday, 30 July 2009.**

*By*

*Alain NKOYOCK, Senior IT Coordinator, UNODC,  
Project NGAS08: "Support to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the  
Nigerian Judiciary"*

*Representing*

*Ms Dagmar Thomas,  
The Representative, UNODC Nigeria.*

*Your Excellency, The Deputy Governor of Kaduna State, Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa  
Your Lordship, the Chief Judge of Kaduna State, Honourable Justice R.H. Cudjoe, OFR  
Chief Judges of the pilot states of this project  
The Representative of the Administrator of the National Judicial Institute  
Mr. Claudi Ferrer-Savall, European Commission  
My UNODC Colleagues here present*

*Other protocols observed*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very happy to be here today for the opening ceremony of the Judicial Research Centre (JRC) of the Kaduna State Judiciary. I am representing the UNODC Representative, Ms. Dagmar Thomas, who couldn't attend this ceremony due to a busy timetable. I am also here as a Senior IT Coordinator of this project.



Ladies and Gentlemen,



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The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has been supporting the development and implementation of good practices in judicial reform through its Global Action against Corruption since 2000. This is because the implementation of all other rights ultimately depends on the proper, fair, and judicious administration of justice. A lack of judicial integrity threatens independence and fairness and undermines the rule of law – a key prerequisite for economic growth, democracy, and development. It is in this context that the European Union is supporting the UNODC to implement this project titled “Support to the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission and the Nigerian Judiciary”.

In 2007, the state judiciary assembled stakeholders at an integrity meeting to forge a comprehensive plan of action to improve access to justice, increase timeliness and quality of justice delivery, enhance the integrity, accountability and transparency of the courts, and to strengthen coordination and cooperation across the justice sector institutions.

Since then, much has happened under the leadership of the Honourable Chief Judge of the State, Justice R.H. Cudjoe, OFR. The project has continued to



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witness excellent improvements in several areas. The following are some of the achievements:

1. Hosting of several of the projects activities
2. Training for various categories of judiciary staff on judicial ethics and other areas.
3. Successful Conduct of “Town Hall” meetings at Kaduna
4. Commencement of the implementation of the Kaduna State Plan of Action for strengthening Justice Sector Integrity and Capacity
5. Deployment of the Judicial Research Centre (JRC).

In an assessment of the justice sector in the 10 pilot states carried out by the Legal Defence and Assistance Project (LEDAP), Kaduna justice sector recorded very good results when compared with the other nine states under this project. For example, Courts are largely perceived as accessible by the court users, as well as to prisoners awaiting trial. Lawyers, users, and judges agreed that timeliness had improved greatly. Also, all stakeholders rated independence of the judiciary high while corruption and other types of malpractices have been largely eradicated from the court system. These are achievements that Kaduna state judiciary can be proud of.



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Today, we are witnessing the commissioning of the Kaduna Judicial Research Centre implemented together with our partners, the National Judicial Institute, the European Union, and the Kaduna state government. This is one of the key achievements of the project.

But what is a Judicial Research Centre (JRC)?

\* A Judicial Research Centre is an IT facility which provides access to legal research tools, the Internet, and some specialized IT applications such as the Complaints Management System. A Judicial Research Centre has three main components: a satellite dish, a server room of equipment, and a pool of computers, printers, and scanner. By deploying the Judicial Research Centre here at the Kaduna State Judiciary, we do hope that it will help to improve the performance and efficiency of judicial officers and court officials.\*

But all of the above successes should not be a reason to sit back. There is a need still for Kaduna state judiciary to continue to work towards ensuring the overall implementation of the Plan of Action for Strengthening Justice Sector Integrity and Capacity. It is therefore very important for the Government and Legislature of the State to come forward and lend their support. Both resources and leadership are required to ensure that the implementation of the Action Plan is fully seen



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through, so that by the time of the next assessment of justice sector integrity and capacity in Kaduna State, already planned for 2011, we will be able to witness great improvements against the assessment conducted in 2007.

We salute the Chief Judge for her vision, wisdom, leadership, and her commitment and that of the Government of Kaduna State and the entire judiciary to the implementation of the action plan. We are greatly encouraged and confident that the vision of a justice system which provides easy access to courts to citizens, quick dispensation of justice, and lives up to the highest standards of integrity and professionalism will be achieved.

Thank you very much. God bless you.