

IJAW NATION CODE OF ETHICS, LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

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1.0 PREAMBLE

We the People of the Ijaw ethnic nationality,

Having subscribed to the Ijaw Charter,

Acknowledging and saluting the sacrifices made, traditions of excellence demonstrated and laudable foundations laid by our forebears and founding fathers,

Concerned at the steadily and progressively declining quality of leadership, representation and governance in all spheres in the succeeding eras, and

Having resolved to restore and institutionalize the best practices of leadership, representation and governance,

Do hereby affirm, adopt and enact unto ourselves this Code of Ethics, Leadership and Governance.

2. TITLE:

This instrument now enacted shall be known as the Ijaw Nation Code of Ethics, Leadership and Governance, and may also herein be called the “ELG Code”.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

The Code shall guide and govern the conduct of all citizens, public servants, leaders, institutions in Ijaw Nation, whether elected or appointed or otherwise positioned, in relation to the governance and management of the public, political and civic affairs, resources and interests of the Ijaw Nation and People, across all levels of national, subnational or international leadership or government, including at the levels of communities and representative organizations (of which the Ijaw National Congress is an example).

4. OBJECTIVES

The Code shall be applied, promoted and enforced to facilitate the fulfillment of the following fundamental objectives of the Ijaw Nation as enunciated in the Ijaw Charter.

- 4.1 Every Ijaw son and daughter shall mandatorily subscribe to and promote the ideals of the Ijaw Charter by upholding truth, probity, transparency, accountability, peace, law and order in their individual, corporate and public conduct to ennoble society.
- 4.2 Every Ijaw son and daughter shall ensure that those seeking the mandate of the Ijaw people and/or occupy public leadership positions are people that subscribe to and uphold the ideals and tenets espoused in the Ijaw Charter and this Code.
- 4.3 To ensure the application and entrenchment of the best principles and practice of good, accountable, transparent and participatory governance (including traditional governance) at national, subnational and community levels in order to engender peace, security, social inclusion and justice, sustainable economic growth

and development.

- 4.4 To serve as a minimum benchmark for the election, selection or endorsement of leaders and prospective leaders from the Ijaw Nation who may volunteer or seek the mandate of the Ijaw People or be appointed into positions, at all levels of governance and leadership.

5. VISION

The Ijaw vision, as enunciated in the Ijaw Charter, is to attain and maintain an autonomous, contiguous territory in love, unity and prosperity; and living in peace and harmony with its neighbours.

6. VALUES AND QUALITIES FOR LEADERSHIP

- 6.1 All Ijaw persons occupying leadership or management positions shall as far as lawfully possible enhance the deliberate, active and conscientious furtherance and attainment of the vision and core principles contained in the Ijaw Charter.
- 6.2 Accordingly, citizens, leaders and those aspiring to leadership shall at all times observe and promote the values of:
- i. Truthfulness and honesty, being the defining value of Izon,
 - ii. Humble, selfless and patriotic service,
 - iii. Abhorrence of mediocrity,
 - iv. Subordination of personal interest to the People and their collective interests,
 - v. Full transparency, accountability and open governance,
 - vi. Fairness and social compassion,
 - vii. High moral integrity,
 - viii. Gender balance, social inclusion and respect for demographic diversity,
 - ix. Minority protection,
 - x. Fair hearing,
 - xi. Strong sense of tolerance in all affairs,
 - xii. Political accommodation and consensus building,

- xiii. Respect for human dignity, including deliberate respect for the elderly, the vulnerable, the sick, displaced persons, and persons with special physical abilities or challenges,
- xiv. Dignity of labour,
- xv. Lawful self-improvement,
- xvi. Self reliance and healthy cooperation,
- xvii. Optimization and innovation,
- xviii. Environmental sustainability,
- xix. Regular and robust consultation,
- xx. Strict adherence to the rule of law, and
- xxi. Sustained excellence in service delivery.
- xxii. Abhor of indolence in all its ramifications
- xxiii. Hardwork, diligence and excellence
- xxiv. Self-respect and self-worth

7. MINIMUM GOVERNANCE GUIDES AND STANDARDS

7.1 Development Planning and Implementation:

Governments, community governance organs, elected or appointed representatives, and other institutions and leaders responsible for the governance and stewardship of states, local government areas, constituencies, communities, other geopolitical entities and socio-economic sectors in Ijaw Nation (in this Code also severally or collectively called leaders, responsible leaders, or responsible actors and/or institutions, as may be appropriate) shall periodically develop, review, update and make easily accessible to the public at nominal or no cost integrated sustainable development plans for the constituencies, entities, institutions and sectors they are respectively responsible for. This shall be undertaken or reviewed at least once in every five years by each responsible actor and shall be done in accordance with the best global and traditional practices of prior and informed public and expert consultations, transparency, accountability, open data, and current development standards and targets, including but not limited to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations against the 2030 timeline or such frameworks as may replace the SDGs or may be applicable at the time being.

7.2 Citizens' Right to Know and Freedom of Information:

There shall be maintained at all times publicly accessible records of all

public and community policies, programmes, projects, revenues and expenditures, except for highly sensitive security information. In this regard, all leaders are to publish authentic Annual Reports each year available in print and on the Internet, disclosing ALL revenues, expenditures, new projects and programmes initiated, progress or improvements of existing ones, projects completed, and wherever applicable the standing of their institutions or spheres of jurisdiction on standard United Nations development indices and other relevant performance parameters. Such Annual Reports for each community, local government area, state, organization or institution should be published not later than the second quarter of each succeeding year for the prior year. Every Ijaw person shall have a right and responsibility to demand for the publication of such reports.

7.3 Continuity of Policies, Programmes and Projects:

All leaders shall imbibe and sustain the culture of continuity in policies, programmes and projects in so far as such policies, programmes and projects serve the overriding interest of the Ijaw nation. Leaders shall cause to be timeously published for public consumption verifiable evidence for the discontinuation of any policy, programme or project, including associated losses, historical costs and other implications.

7.4 Continuous Monitoring and Impact Evaluation:

All leaders shall maintain a system of regular monitoring and clinical cost-benefit evaluation, which shall include open engagement with the specific publics served, to ensure faithful implementation and effective impact of their policies, programmes and projects. Responsible leaders shall publish their monitoring and impact evaluation reports at least once every year, either separately or as part of their overall Annual Reports.

7.5 Opportunity Costs and Value for Money:

All policy, programme and project proposals, budgets and expenditure frameworks, and monitoring and impact evaluation reports shall also contain assessments of their opportunity costs and value for money.

7.6 Alignment with Global Benchmarks and Best Practices:

All leaders and institutions shall submit to periodic reviews by Independent peer or performance review institutions, at least once annually, and shall adopt as acceptable benchmarks national and

global best practices and standards. All leaders shall subject themselves to public inspection and constructive engagement.

7.7. Minimizing the Cost of Governance Systems and Optimizing Common Resources:

All leaders shall take all practicable steps to minimize the cost of governance and optimize the use of public resources by:

- i. Keeping at a reasonable minimum the number of ministries, political and ad-hoc appointees, official agencies and other organs of governance, and
- ii. Government shall provide the necessary investible climate to enhance the drive for internally generated revenue (IGR) to fund recurrent expenditure. Such IGR should be built overtime to also fund capital expenditure.
- iii. The legislature shall enact laws to support and give credence to the prevalence of an investment climate that shall accelerate the drive for enhanced internally generated revenue (IGR) to fund government expenditures.

7.8. Qualitative and Mass Education:

- a. All leaders shall as a matter of utmost priority provide transformative, qualitative education at all levels; promote and invest in E-learning to accelerate learning towards attaining and sustaining a minimum target of ninety percent in school enrolment across Ijaw Nation by not later than 2030. Without prejudice, the efforts of Government should target the achievement of 90% literacy by 2040. However, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education should be accelerated to serve as bedrock of development in Ijaw Nation. In this regard, all who shall accept leadership positions at community, local government, state or organizational levels shall ensure that the quality and standard of education in public schools within Ijaw Nation are comparable to First World quality of education, ostensibly good enough for their children to attend.
- b. It shall be obligatory and mandatory for parents/guardians to ensure that every child/ward of school age be sent to school. It shall be criminal for any parent/guardian to willfully and/or inadvertently deny any child/ward the right to attend school for whatsoever reason(s).

7.9. Open Data Registries and Portals:

All governments and institutions shall maintain registries and portals of open data on the details of all public and community contracts, procurements, budgets, public debts and financial accounts, with the exception of highly sensitive security information.

7.10. Public Declaration of Assets:

All public office holders shall declare their assets and liabilities publicly within two months of assuming office, thereafter every three years, and finally within two months of leaving office.

7.11. Participatory Governance Culture:

All leaders shall promote and deepen a culture of participatory governance, and

- i. Conduct public hearings prior to the enunciation or taking of all major policies, projects, budgets (before presentation by the executive, and again before passage by the legislature), loans, and laws;
- ii. Be receptive to constructive feedback, and
- iii. Evolve and promote gender affirmative procurement and equal opportunity employment and empowerment policies to ensure social inclusion, with prescribed minimum gender ratios across all levels of the public service, including the reservation of a minimum of thirty five percent of positions in the Executive Council of the state and of other appointive leadership positions for suitably qualified women.

7.12 Capacity Building

- a. In recognition of its role as the enabler of social order and economic productivity, all leaders, especially the heads of the respective arms of government, shall implement programmes for revamping, training, professionalizing, and motivating the workforce to enhance its competitive capacity and excellence in the public service. In furtherance thereof, all leaders MUST accord priority to the regular and full payment of all lawful salaries, emoluments, gratuities and pensions as and when due and prompt settlement of all arrears as such payments are HEREBY DECLARED SACROSANCT.

- b. Ijaw sons and daughters who are in the employment of public and private institutions shall demonstrate exceptional commitment to, and productivity in their workplace to justify the payment of wages and emoluments. It shall be immoral for Citizens to show apathy to work and not offer commensurate services while continuing to receive payment of salaries and wages.
- c. Citizens shall take full advantage and ensure effective participation in skills and competences training and development programmes initiated by both private and public institutions.

8. LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOUR, CIVIC NORMS AND PERSONAL EXAMPLE

- 8.1 All leaders shall at all times manifestly in deeds and words eschew bad governance and practices, and maintain **zero tolerance** for:
 - i. Corruption, graft and misappropriation,
 - ii. Self-aggrandizement,
 - iii. Sexual harassment of any other person,
 - iv. Discrimination between Ijaw communities or peoples on any grounds,
 - v. Electoral violence and malpractices of any kind whatsoever,
 - vi. Betrayal of the common good for self or sectional interests, or collusion with other persons or groups to sabotage the interests of the Ijaw Nation for self or narrow interests.
 - vii. Extortion, enticement, inducement and other manifestation of an entitlement mentality.
 - viii. Mediocrity
- 8.2 All leaders shall limit their external travels (outside the state, country, constituency or official station) to not more than thirty percent of their time in office, except for illness and official leave periods, and shall be prudent with tax payers' or community or other collective stakeholders' funding of such trips.
- 8.3 To promote domestic tourism and encourage bonding with the people, all leaders shall spend a minimum of thirty percent of their official vacation time each year within Ijaw Nation.
- 8.4 All leaders shall publicly or otherwise officially in writing disclose

any conflicts of interest, pecuniary or otherwise, that they may have in the course of their official duties.

9. AWARENESS BUILDING AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- i. Leaders shall deliberately evolve a clear process of mentoring successors in all fields of service as a conscious step towards capacity building;
- ii. Leaders shall encourage regular town hall meetings at community and local government levels for enlightenment and education on the critical fundamentals of the binding philosophy of the Ijaw ethnic nationality;
- iii. Leaders shall demonstrate patriotism, devoid of self-promotion, so as to impart to future generations of leaders the ideology of altruism in the Ijaw ethos;
- iv. Leaders shall proactively facilitate the establishment and sustenance of world class leadership and management training centres in Ijaw Nation, to accelerate development of the best quality leadership capacity and management.

10. ENFORCEMENT AND SANCTIONS

- i) The Code of Public Governance, upon its formal approval and enactment by the Ijaw People through the leadership of the Ijaw National Congress and other appropriate organs, shall be enforced for compliance across Ijaw Nation;
- ii) Any deliberate or flagrant abuse of this Code of Public Governance shall invite the full lawful wrath of reprobation from all stakeholders in Ijaw Nation.
- iii) Appropriate steps shall be initiated to enforce the recall or removal of any leader who is found to have abused, undermined and flouted the Code of Public Governance.
- iv) Leaders and representative organizations of Ijaw Nation shall take lawful steps to ensure that Ijaw people do not lend support to anyone aspiring for leadership in government or communities at any level who does not subscribe to this code by explicitly signing in acceptance. Aspirants who decline shall be publicized as having declined.
- v) There shall be periodic audits of compliance by key leaders, especially but not only Governors and Local Government

Chairmen, their cabinet members, leaders and members of the legislatures within Ijaw Nation and elected Federal legislators. These audits shall be undertaken by credible audit or evaluation firms alongside broad based teams of credible and knowledgeable Ijaw citizens who are not in public leadership positions and not executing contracts or consultancies for the same governments or leaders at the point in time.

11. TRANSITIONAL AND MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

12. AMENDMENT

13. SIGNATORIES