



# **Ikot Ekpene Declaration**

## Resolutions and Commitments on Upholding and Strengthening Judicial Capacity on Digital Rights and Cyber-Governance

May 12 -15, 2025.

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### **Resolutions and Commitments on Upholding and Strengthening Judicial Capacity on Digital Rights and Cyber-Governance**

*Adopted at a series of Workshops for Judges from the Federal High Court and the National Industrial Court, with the participation of officials of the National Judicial Institute and the National Human Rights Commission, held in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, on May 12 – 13 and May 14-15, 2025.*

“Our mission is to shape policy, defend rights and build capacity in the digital environment towards a digitally inclusive and rights-respecting world.”

### **Preamble**

Arising from the two-day Workshop on Strengthening Judicial Capacity on Digital Rights and Cyber-Governance, held at the Four Points By Sheraton Hotel, Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, and following extensive deliberations on contemporary and emerging issues in the context of the current digital environment, participants recognized the profound transformations that digital technologies have brought to societies, economies, and governance across Africa and agreed as follows:

1. Participants acknowledged the constitutional role of the Judiciary on human rights and fundamental freedoms, and affirmed that human rights and fundamental freedoms which are applicable to physical activities, equally apply to online activities; and
2. Participants expressed their commitment to discharging judicial duties and performing their functions in accordance with the Constitution and the law, in a fair and impartial manner, including adjudication of cases involving digital technologies, data protection, online expressions, and other digital freedoms, guided by applicable international norms and standards.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the above commitments, participants recommend as follows:

- To ensure clarity, consistency and soundness in judicial reasoning, Judicial Officers must continue to uphold the principles of the

Rule of Law, necessity and proportionality concerning restrictions to human rights, including digital rights, in order to ensure that such limitations are legitimate and justifiable;

- Considering the evolving digital environment, continuing judicial education should include contents on cybersecurity, data privacy and protection, artificial intelligence, and cross-border data flows, while also encouraging peer learning and knowledge exchange across jurisdictions; and
- In order not to exacerbate existing inequalities and widen the digital divides, the Courts should strengthen ongoing efforts to ensure access to justice for all, including women, children, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups whose digital rights may be disproportionately at risk.
- The ongoing efforts at digitalisation of the Judiciary should be strengthened, through the prioritisation of the provision of adequate resources, to enable Judicial Officers adopt digital technologies and enhance their digital capabilities in order to better promote access to justice, including digital justice.

## Conclusion

In adopting this statement, we are motivated by our unwavering commitment to justice, inclusion, and the defence of rights of all in an increasingly digital world and guided by the need to do justice to all manner of people.

We call on all Judicial Officers, Legal Practitioners, and other stakeholders across the continent to uphold these shared values and work individually and collectively to advance a rights-respecting digital future for Africa.

*Adopted in Ikot Ekpene, Akwa Ibom State, upon a motion for adoption moved by Hon. Justice John T. Tsoho, KSS, OFR, FCI Arb (UK), Chief Judge of the Federal High Court; seconded by Hon. Justice Benedict B. Kanyip, PhD, FNI ALS, President of the National Industrial Court of Nigeria (NICN); and Hon. Justice Salisu Garba Abdullahi, Administrator of the National Judicial Institute (NJI).*