



British Nigeria Law Forum

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Dear friends and members of BNLF,

As we approach the end of year, I am taking the opportunity to reflect on some of the BNLF activities during the second half of 2009 and to inform you of our plans and aspirations for 2010. Please see my May Newsletter (on the news page of the BNLF website www.bnlf.org.uk), which covers the first half of the year.

ICAN UK

In August, a number of us attended a networking meeting of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (UK District), at the Keyworth Centre, London South Bank University. ICAN UK is a well-organised professional association chaired by Ladi Gladstone Hammond that has been in existence since 1989. An account of this meeting by Ezewanyi Atuloma is posted on the BNLF website. My wife and I were privileged to attend their Gala Dinner in December. I look forward to holding a joint workshop with ICAN UK on issues of mutual interest between the legal and accountancy professions.

Legal Surgery

The BNLF Legal Surgery continues to meet every first Thursday of the month at the Nigerian Chaplaincy, St. Marylebone Church Hall, Marylebone Road NW1 5LT, from 7.30pm-8.30pm. We have been looking at a number of options to make this pro bono legal service more accessible to members of the Nigerian Community. Following a courtesy visit to His Excellency, the High Commissioner to the Court of St. James, Dr Dalhatu Sarki Tafida OFR by Anthony Mordi and myself in September I am pleased to say that we have the support of the Nigerian High Commission in pursuing this endeavour. If you are interested in participating please get in touch via the BNLF email, info@bnlf.org.uk

Careers Seminar

Law students, graduates and paralegals attended this workshop (organised by Omosuyi Omojole & Olugbenga Ogunbode) on 17th September at the Training Suite of Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge LLP in the City. The delegates heard from Sarah Warnes, EAPD Graduate Recruitment manager; Craig Robinson, Solicitor and MD, www.ultimatelawguide.com; Jonathan and Stephen Akinsanya, Barristers (9 Bedford Row) on practical guides to qualification.

2009 Gala Dinner

Our third annual Gala Ball was held on Saturday, 31st October at the Holiday Inn, London Regent's Park. Our special guests were the Nigerian High Commissioner, ably represented by Minister Oniwon and the Chief Executive, Solicitors Regulation Authority, Antony Townsend. We heard congratulatory messages from the President of the Nigerian Bar Association, Chief Rotimi Akeredolu and the President of the Law Society, Robert Heslett. Guests were treated to a 3-course meal, with entertainment from the Oduduwa Drummers, who encouraged audience participation, followed by dancing with DJ Dayo Soloye. Our very own Stephen Akinsanya and Remi Aiyela performed excellent roles as comperes for the evening. Images of the Gala Dinner are posted on the website, www.bnlf.org

NBA Legal Services Trade Mission to the UK 30 Nov-4 Dec

The Law Society of England and Wales and BNLF welcomed the first trade mission of the Nigerian Bar Association to the UK. The week long programme gave delegates the opportunity to visit law firms and interact with their counterparts based in the City of London and in Liverpool. There were also networking sessions held by the Law Society and the Bar



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Council, which BNLF members attended. Mrs Funke Adekoya SAN led the delegation, which was co-ordinated by Boma Ozobia (also a BNLF Officer). 26 lawyers attended, representing firms such as: Adepetun Caxton-Martins Agbor & Segun, AELEX Legal Practitioners; Akin Delano Legal Practitioners; Jaiye Agoro & Co; JK Gadzama & Partners, Matrix Solicitors, Prime Solicitors; Rex-Ogbuko & Associates; Rimi & Partners; Saffron Professional Services; SPA Ajibade & Co, Sterling Partnership; Udo Udoma & Belo-Osagie, amongst others. Many thanks to Nankunda Katangaza (Policy Manager) and Lucy Hicks (Policy Adviser), both of the Law Society International Division who were instrumental in making this event a reality.

Professional Indemnity Insurance & ARP

This issue affects solicitors in private practice, who are required to take out and maintain professional indemnity insurance. Due to difficulties with obtaining insurance on the open market, the Assigned Risks Pool was created to assist law firms that were being turned down by insurance firms. The ARP itself is in danger of being scrapped. The Solicitors' Regulation Authority has issued a consultation document on the review of ARP. If your firm is affected by this, please respond to the consultation document, which can be found at www.sra.org.uk/consultations. The consultation ends on 12 February 2010, so it is imperative that you respond by the due date. BNLF has raised the concerns of its members affected by this and other issues and I am grateful to Tope Ojikutu and Yemi Daniel for working with the SRA and other stakeholders towards achieving an equitable solution. A number of law firms affected by the impact of the ARP have been meeting on this issue. If you wish to find out more you are welcome to join us at the next meeting at **5.30pm on Thursday, 21 January 2010 at Simon Bethel Solicitors, 58-60 Lewisham High Street London SE13 5JH**. Please confirm your attendance with the BNLF Administrator by email at info@bnlf.org.uk.

Abuja 2010

As in previous years, we intend to be in Nigeria in April 2010 for the **Nigerian Bar Association Section on Business Law Conference, 5th-8th April 2010, Sheraton Hotel and Towers, Abuja**. The theme for the conference is *Regulating the Business Environment in Emerging Markets*. The **Commonwealth Regional Law Conference (8-11 April)** is at the **Transcorp Hilton, Abuja**. The theme is 'the 21st Century Lawyer: Present Challenges & Future Skills' and the programme streams will focus on 'Human Rights & the Rule of Law' and 'Corporate & Commercial Law'. This would be the fifth year running that BNLF has participated in Nigeria. I thoroughly recommend both conferences. You will not find a better forum for networking and gaining an understanding of the current legal climate in Nigeria and the wider West Africa region. My colleagues, Seye Aina and Boma Ozobia are in touch with both sets of conference organisers to secure a good package for BNLF members. Please pencil those dates into your diary and indicate your interest by email to info@bnlf.org.uk. I will send out more information in due course.

It only remains for me to wish you a merry Christmas and best wishes for 2010.

Babatunde Akinyanju
Chair, British Nigeria Law Forum

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