



CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR

ELECTION OFFICIALS

NOVEMBER, 2014

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

ABUJA, NIGERIA.

FOREWORD

This publication is a compilation of essential rules, and regulations designed for the guidance of the conduct of all election officials both permanent and ah-hoc while they carry out the functions assigned to them.

The quality and standard of performance of officials during electoral activities impact on the credibility of the elections outcome and indeed the Commission itself. It is therefore imperative for all election officials, permanent or adhoc to adhere strictly to the guideline contained herein.

Generally, elections are a range of activities that command a huge volume of inter-related functions carried out by a multitude of officials sourced from various segments of society. They involve processes that bring them in contact with the generality of the people during electoral activities. Hence it is necessary to have periodic refinement of this interface, for the benefit of all.

In addition to the extant laws that border on performance of officials at election, this 'Code of Conduct' re-emphasizes the need to be of standard operational behavior, while on election duty. Other items of interest contained in this document are about the rights and privileges that can better facilitate the smooth operational performance of all election officials.

All officials in this regard are expected to be guided as they undertake to subscribe to this Code of Conduct. I therefore, urge each and every one taking part at various levels of the electoral process be of best conduct.

**Prof. Attahiru Muhammadu Jega, OFR
Chairman,
Independent National Electoral Commission.
November, 2014.**

ACRONYMS

In this Code of Conduct document the following acronyms mean:

1. INEC - Independent National Electoral Commission
2. RAC - Registration Area Centre
3. LGA - Local Government Area

INDEPENDENT NATIONAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION

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1.0 PREAMBLE

The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC):

- a) Having due regard to the need to conduct elections in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended), the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended), and laid down election Guidelines, Regulations and procedures;
- b) Recognizing the place of transparency and integrity in elections;
- c) Cognizant of the necessity for public acceptability of the outcome of elections;
- d) Conscious of its stated vision, mission and values; and
- e) Committed to conducting free, fair, and credible elections, hereby sets out the following Code of Conduct to be subscribed to by all election officials.

2.0 GENERAL CONDUCT

2.1 All election officials, permanent or adhoc, and any other person delegated by the Commission to act on its behalf shall subscribe and adhere strictly to this Code of Conduct.

2.2 All election officials shall:

- a) Adhere strictly to all existing laws, Regulations and Guidelines governing the conduct of elections in Nigeria;

- b) Not show or do anything that demonstrates a bias or preference for any political party or candidate in the discharge of their election duties;
- c) Not do anything that may influence voters and make them to vote for or against any candidate, or political party, and shall not wear or display any sign, emblem or slogan on their clothing that is connected to any candidate or political party;
- d) Maintain an atmosphere of fairness, neutrality, and decorum throughout the electoral process;
- e) Refrain from improper use or unauthorized release of information obtained in the course of their official duty with the Commission;
- f) Not smoke in the polling unit, station or collation centre;
- g) Not strike a match or use a lighter or any device capable of setting fire at a polling unit, station or collation centre;
- h) Not carry firearms, weapons or objects that could cause bodily harm;
- i) Not bring to their duty post any alcoholic beverage or use alcohol or illicit drugs in the course of their duty;
- j) Be ready to take appropriate actions for special, unpredictable events arising during the election, which may entail:
 - Carrying out their duties in very difficult circumstances; and
 - Undertaking additional tasks wherever and whenever necessary.

2.3 All election officials shall be committed at all times to act within their authority to condemn and prevent any violence, coercion or intimidation related to election, and to dissociate themselves from:

- a) Causing damage to any polling unit, station or its premises;
- b) Causing damage to any election materials or property;

- c) Concealing or withholding of election materials; and
- d) Hindering or preventing any eligible individual from going to a polling station or collation centre, or preventing an eligible voter from voting.

3.0 OPERATIONAL CONDUCT

To ensure operational integrity, all election officials are required to:

- a) Subscribe to the Oath/Affirmation of Neutrality;
- b) Subscribe to this Code of Conduct for Election Officials;
- c) Comply with process and procedure guidelines for elections;
- d) Manage and handle all electoral materials and equipment (sensitive and non-sensitive) in accordance with approved procedures, and ensure they are in the correct quantities and standards;
- e) Grant to those so entitled, access to polling units, polling stations, collation centres, distribution centres or any office or location allowed by the guidelines;
- f) Avail people living with disability any assistance or support which the guidelines and electoral laws allow;
- g) Wear a photo identity at all times;
- h) Not engage in any other duty or assignment likely to conflict with election duty; and
- i) Not hold meetings or consultations or maintain any unauthorized relations with political parties, officials, candidates or agents.

4.0 ETHICAL PRACTICE

All election officials and electoral personnel shall:

- a) Adhere strictly to the requirements of confidentiality, and disclose confidential information only to those authorized to receive it;
- b) Clearly demonstrate impartiality and fairness to all voters, political parties, candidates and their representatives, and all stakeholders;
- c) Conduct their duties with professional courtesy and decorum;
- d) Shun the pursuit of personal gain in the conduct of their duties and declare any conflict of interest, where this exists by making a declaration in writing;
- e) Avoid partisanship and conduct that may indicate preference of one party or candidate over another;
- f) Shun corrupt practices such as bribery, soliciting or accepting reward, treating or favoritism and gifts;
- g) Not gamble or play games at election duty posts; and
- h) Not attempt to discover the intention or choice of a voter, and be obliged to report any persons found to be doing so to the appropriate officials.

5.0 ENTITLEMENTS

All election officials are entitled to:

- a) Receive the approved course of training before being deployed for an election;
- b) Receive honoraria and other allowances in accordance with the current approved rates;
- c) The provision of adequate transportation and logistics of movement to and from the place of election assignment;

- d) The provision of adequate security in line with the approved standards, and within the framework of the security policy for the administration of the election;
- e) The security of insurance cover or hazard allowance, where applicable; and
- f) Appropriate commendation for manifest distinction in the conduct of their duties.

6.0 OFFENCES

All election officials are subject to the electoral offences contained in the Electoral Act 2010 (as amended) which include but not limited to:

- a) Announcing and publishing an election result knowing the same to be false;
- b) Any returning officer or collation officer who delivers or causes to be delivered to the Commission a false return on election, or votes scored, knowing the same to be false;
- c) Any person who delivers or causes to be delivered a false media certificate of return knowing the same to be false to any social news media website or candidate;
- d) Dereliction of duty, which involves lateness to duty post, failure to report and truancy, as well as non-compliance with guidelines and regulations;
- e) Bribery;
- f) Unlawful sale or use of election material;
- g) Making false or misleading statements;
- h) Withholding information unlawfully, and preventing a valid voter from voting;
- i) Impersonation;

- j) False representation;
- k) Inducement;
- l) Incitement, and
- m) Possession of offensive weapons.

7.0 Any election official who contravenes any part of this code of conduct shall be penalized if found guilty, in line with established lawful disciplinary procedures, which may include prosecution in the court of law.

8.0 ELECTION DAY ISSUES

All election officials shall:

- a) Report on time, to the State, LGA office of INEC, RAC and polling unit of assignment;
- b) Grant access to the voting, collation, or distribution areas, to persons so allowed by guidelines and regulations;
- c) Treat with compassion, but in accordance with the guidelines and regulations, elderly persons, persons living with disabilities, pregnant and nursing mothers, and provide the support that the regulations prescribe;
- d) Ensure that voters exercise their franchise without let or hindrance, and in secret;
- e) Ensure that all electoral materials are secure, complete and for the designated area;
- f) Not act or allow any act that exposes or reveals the choice that a voter makes; and

- g) Recognize the legitimate roles of party agents, security personnel on election duty, and accredited observers.

9.0 POST-ELECTION ISSUES

All election officials following the conclusion of election shall:

- a) Retrieve and return all election materials and equipment in accordance with the regulations and guidelines;
- b) Make themselves available for any post-election enquiry or litigation processes;
- c) Prepare and submit a report on the election as may be required; and
- d) Ensure that election results sheets are not fraudulently altered, cancelled or defaced.

10.0 DECLARATION

This Code of Conduct becomes binding upon the administration of the Oath/ Affirmation of Neutrality on a person or valid appointment of the person as an election official.



SUBSCRIPTION TO THE CODE OF CONDUCT **FOR ELECTION OFFICIALS**

This is to certify that I have read and understood the content of the Code of Conduct for Election Officials and hereby subscribe to it.

Name:

ID NO:

Election duty category/Post:

Organisation:

Date: Sign:.....

Counter Signing Officer

Name.....

Designation.....

Signature

Date