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PRESS RELEASE

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Swift Count Highlights Methodology for Verifying April 2011 Vote

The Project 2011 Swift Count is aimed at enhancing the electoral accountability of Nigeria's 2011 General Elections using a time-tested statistical method of quantitative analysis, which the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the Project described in detail at a pre-election press conference held at the Sheraton Hotel, Abuja on Thursday, May 31 2011. This methodology will allow Project 2011 Swift Count to provide voters, political contestants and INEC with systematic nationwide independent information on the conduct of the elections and verify the accuracy of the official results as announced by INEC.

Explaining the rationale and underlying principles behind the Swift Count method, Dafe Akpedeye (SAN), 1st Co-chair, said that 'highly trained accredited non-partisan observers will be deployed to a representative random sample of polling units to collect information on the conduct of the election as well as to record the official vote count as announced by INEC polling officials'.

A simulation conducted by all 8,060 members of the Project was also carried out on the same day of the press conference to provide members of the public with a sense of how the project works.

Noting that the history of Nigeria's elections and the lead up to this historic vote scheduled to begin with the National Assembly elections on Saturday, April 2nd has led to a great sense of expectation, Mashood Erubami Project 2011 Swift Count's 2nd Co-Chair said 'Civil society organizations, including ours, have been frustrated by the brazen electoral fraud in the past. Rather than giving in to this frustration, we have redoubled our efforts and have adopted a new and advanced approach... called Swift Count.'

Members of the Project's National steering Committee explained that the Swift Count method is based on a sample of the nation's electoral polling units which are the points at which election results will first be published, thereby making the project's unit of analysis (the polling units) the most accurate and reliable reflection of the actual voting patterns. The sample of polling stations drawn, is statistically representative according to geo political zones, states and local governments, using a systematic method known as stratification, which aims to eliminate bias and reduce distortion of the sample, they emphasised.

Essentially, the Swift Count will provide 'an accurate, real-time picture' of the conduct of the accreditation of voters, voting, counting as well as the verification of the accuracy of the result as announced by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). Each observer will send specially coded text message reports, which are not to be confused with the public participatory approach of other sister civic groups and organizations that have risen to the challenge of improving the quality of this election process.

In describing the expansive scale of the operations of the Project, the NSC noted the four Partner organisations had signed an extensive memorandum of understanding stipulating that all observers drawn from the four partner organisations behave in strict accordance with the principles of independent , non-partisan observation and specialised training.

The NSC further stated that the National Information Centre where information from across the country will be collated is to be located at the Sheraton Hotel for the duration of the elections. Regular briefings regarding the conduct of the election process itself will take place the Sunday after each election.

The NSC called upon on all Nigerians to go out and vote.

Project 2011 Swift Count is a joint initiative of the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN); Justice, Development and Peace/Caritas Nigeria (JDPC), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). Reflecting the diversity of Nigeria, the project brings together civic organizations and religious groups (Christian and Muslim) to promote free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate elections through non-partisan, independent citizen observation.



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Learn more about Project 2011 Swift Count at www.pscnigeria.org