



## National Steering Committee Members

Dafe Akpedeye (SAN)  
1<sup>st</sup> Co-Chair

Mashood Erubami  
2<sup>nd</sup> Co-Chair

Dr. Aisha Akanbi

Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi

Priscilla Achakpa

Rev. Fr. Ben Asogo

Reuben James

Farida Sada Yusuf

### Honourary Members

Olisa Agbakoba (SAN)

Prof. Bolanle Awe

Hajia Bilkis (mni)

### Ex Officio

Victor Agbogun  
Project Manager

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Voter Registration Gaining Momentum after Slow Start

Project 2011 Swift Count, an initiative of FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA, and TMG, released its mid-voter registration report showing the INEC gaining momentum from what was a very slow start. The project partners fielded approximately 1,000 observers who were deployed in every one of Nigeria's 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) and conducted a precise and comprehensive observation for three days during the first week of Voter Registration. Trained and accredited observers from the four organizations collected information on Saturday January 15, Thursday January 20, and Saturday January 22, 2011.

Observers' reports clearly show that the beginning of the exercise was fraught with registration centres not opening, equipment problems, and procedural challenges (such as problems with the scanning of finger prints) which were to a significant extent addressed within the first week. While optimism can be found in this evidence, problems remain and INEC should continue its efforts to improve the exercise. Further, INEC should endeavour to provide detailed information on the number of people registered on a daily basis. Based on this information INEC should be clear about whether an extension will be needed, and how, within the existing legal framework, this might be achieved.

"Project 2011 Swift Count data cannot be clearer," says Mashood Erubami, 2<sup>nd</sup> Co-Chair of the project's four respected Nigerian organizations. "On the first few days, as all Nigerians know there were serious problems with distribution of and functioning of equipment. While everyone knows this from their individual experiences our project is able to put out hard facts, collected through a rigorous and comprehensive observation and our data presents a detailed picture showing the process starting very poorly, but with dramatic improvement over the course of the first week."

Based on reports from its observers, Project 2011 Swift Count found:

- On the first day of voter registration only 16% of centres observed opened, on Thursday January 20 and Saturday January 22 that number increased to 93%. However, early closing of centres held constant at about 16% throughout the week.

- Direct Data Capture (DDC) systems properly functioned at 42% of the registration centres on Saturday January 15, but improved to 74% by the following Saturday January 22. At 63% of centers observed on the first Saturday all or most registrants were issued with temporary voter ID cards. By the end of the week, approximately 75% of centres observed were issuing all or most registrants with temporary voter ID cards.
- Attempts to intimidate or harass people at registration centres remained low at just 5% of centres observed throughout the week. Disruption or interference was observed at only 6% of the centres.

Significant improvements in voter registration observed during the course of the week points to INEC recognizing and addressing problems promptly. INEC needs to continue these efforts to ensure that all registration centres open and function smoothly. In order to understand the success of the voter registration exercise, INEC needs to release daily registration numbers by LGA and state. It is only with such information the public and political contestants will be able to meaningfully assess the overall success of the exercise and evaluate any possible INEC decision concerning the length of voter registration.

Erubami concluded that “Nigerian citizens should be congratulated for their conduct and participation to date. However everyone who is eligible, but has not yet registered must make every effort to ensure they are properly registered. Civil society and political parties must continue to encourage their members and all citizens to remain engaged and to register for the April polls.”

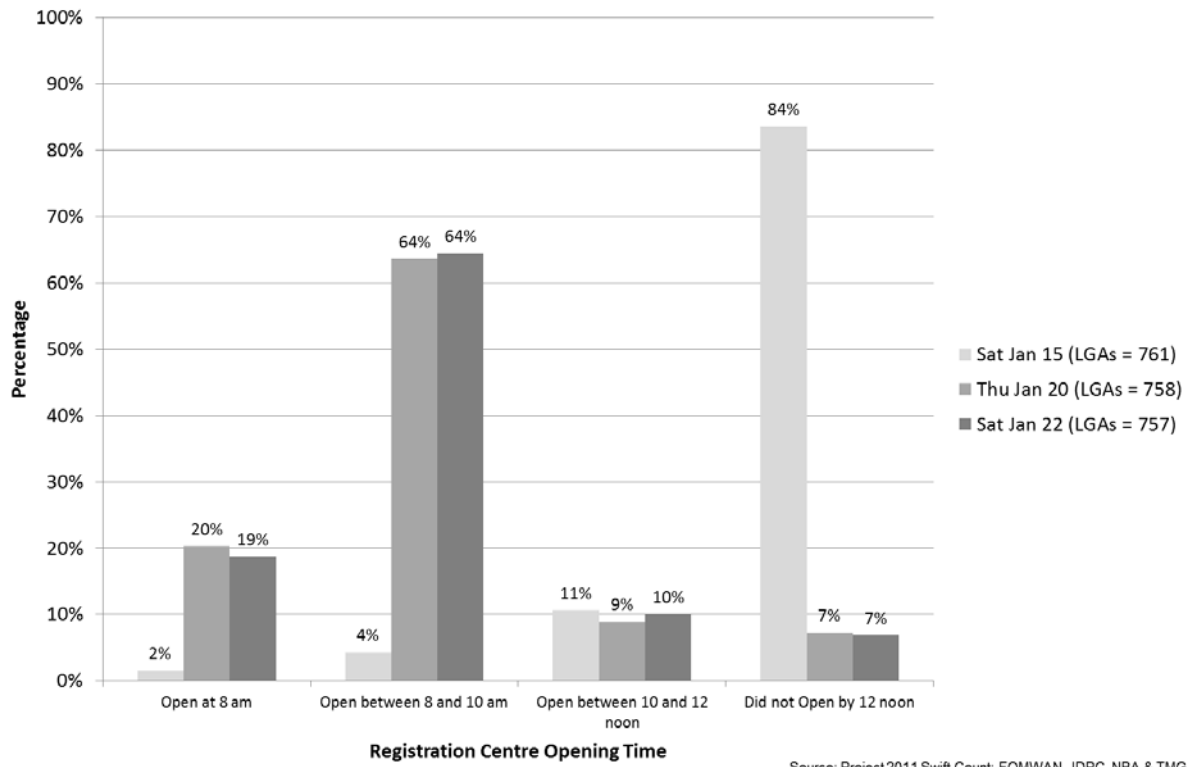
Project 2011 Swift Count is a joint initiative of the Federation of Muslim Women’s Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN); Justice, Development and Peace/Caritas Nigeria (JDPC), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), and Transition Monitoring Group (TMG). Reflecting the diversity of Nigeria, the project brings together 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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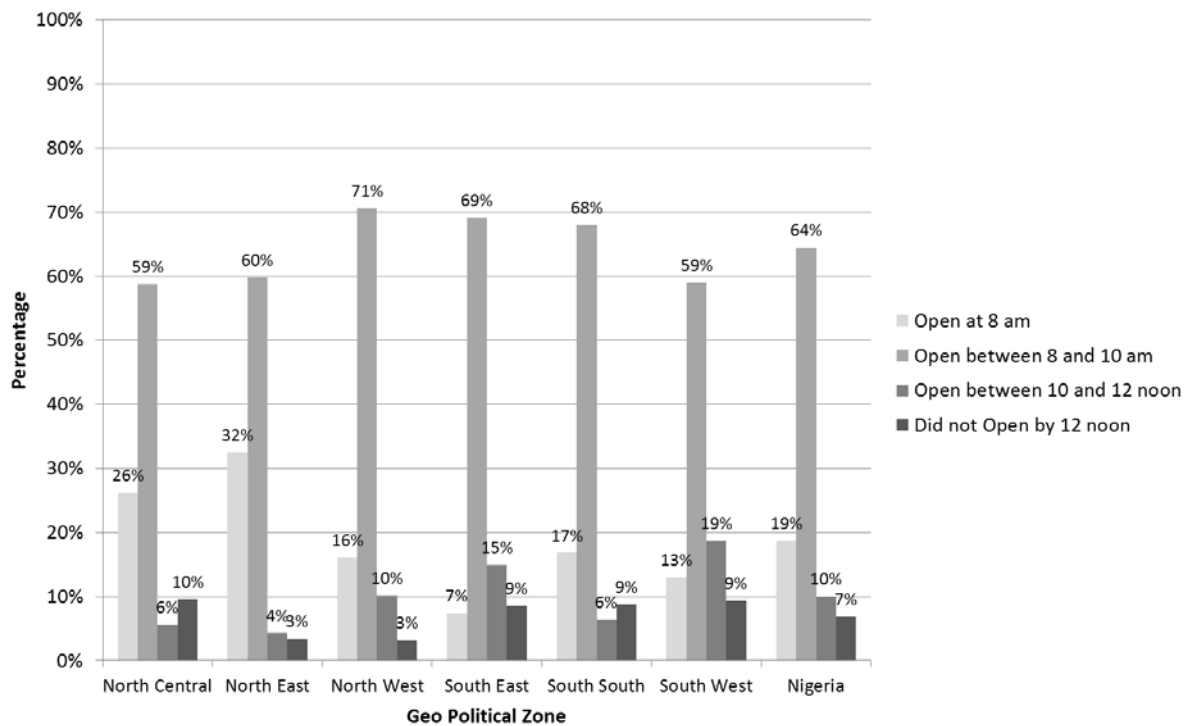
For media inquiries please contact: Chibuiké Mgbéahuruiké on +234 7036024736 or at [info@pscnigeria.org](mailto:info@pscnigeria.org)

Learn more about Project 2011 Swift Count at [www.pscnigeria.org](http://www.pscnigeria.org)

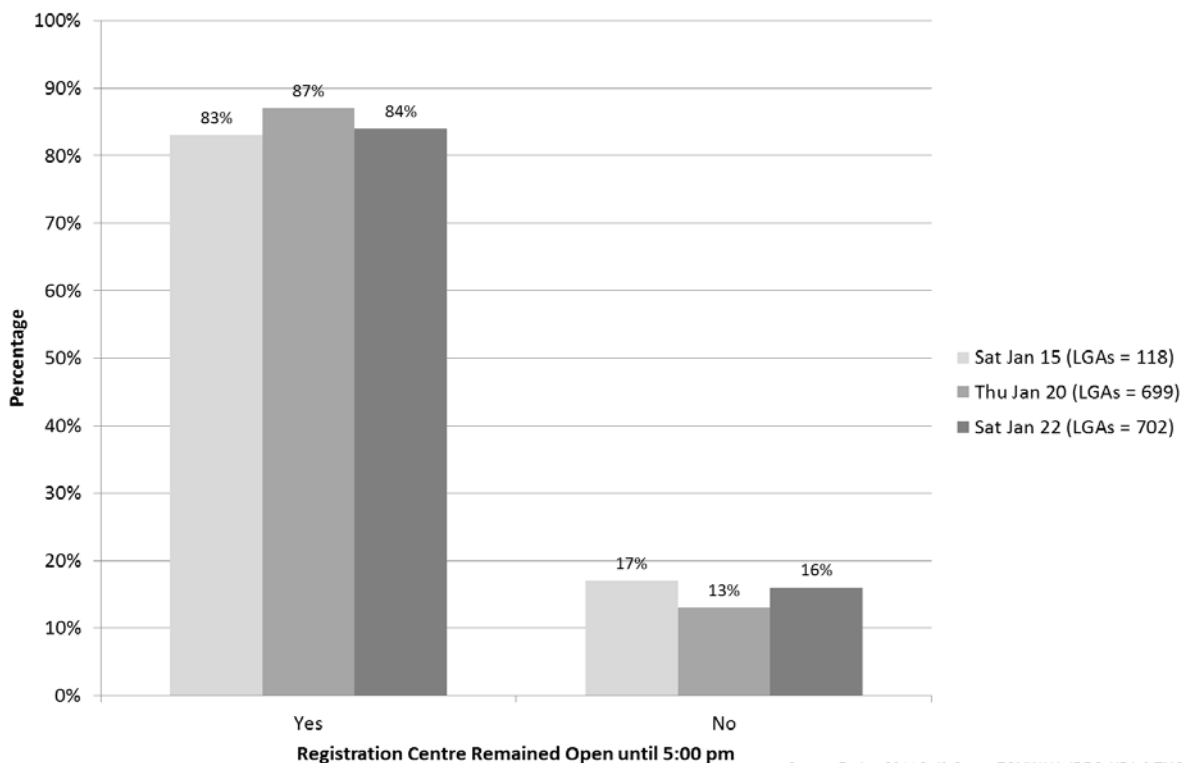
**Chart 1: Registration Centre Opening Time by Date**



**Chart 2: Registration Centre Opening Time by Geo Political Zone for Saturday January 22, 2011 (LGAs = 757)**

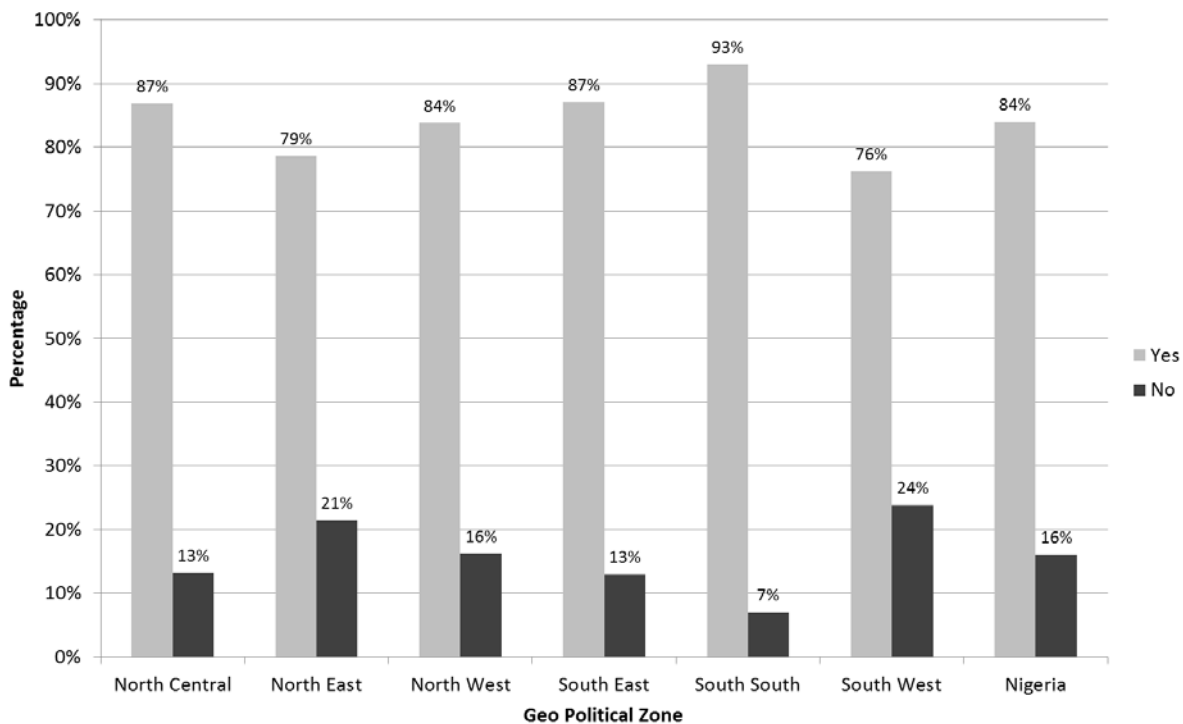


**Chart 3: Registration Centre Remained Open until 5:00 pm by Date**



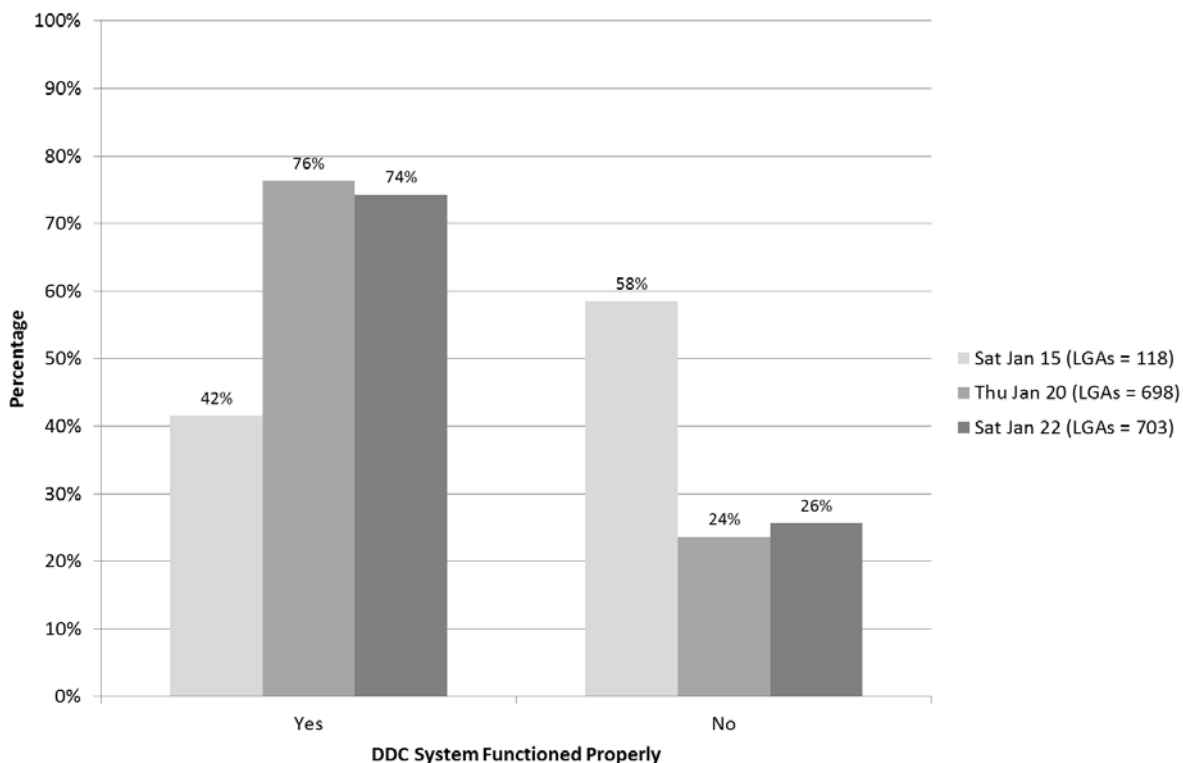
Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 4: Registration Remained Open until 5:00 pm by Geo Political Zone for Saturday January 22, 2011 (LGAs = 702)**



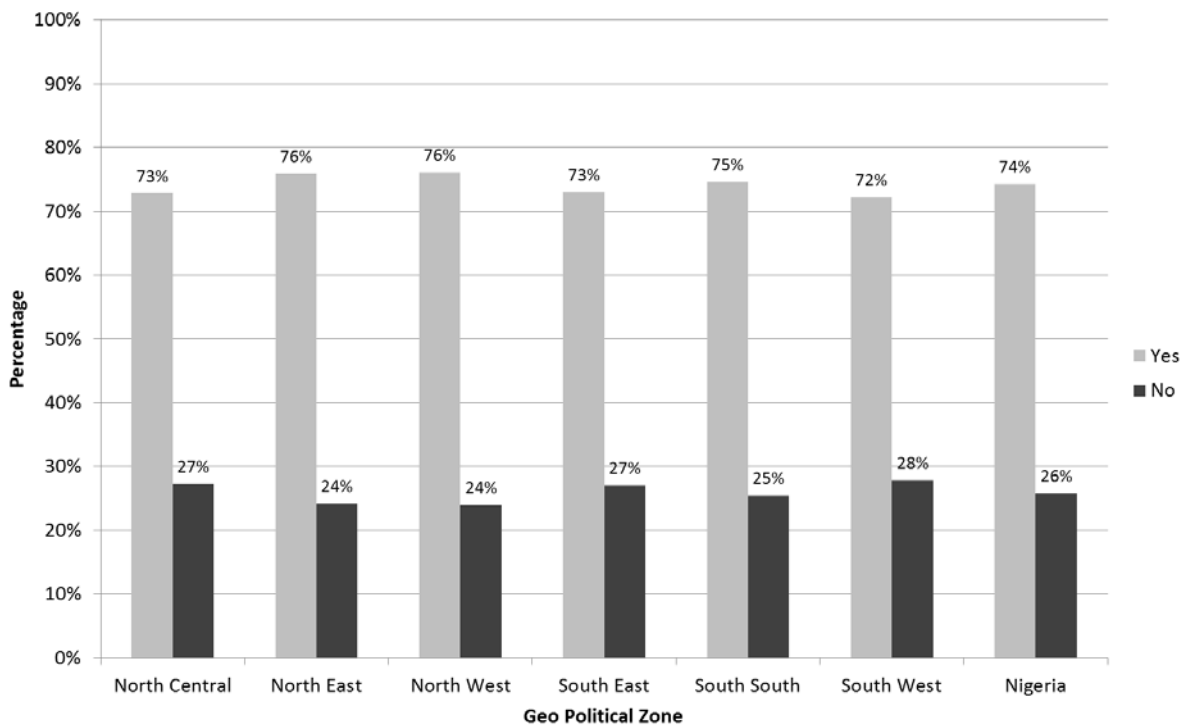
Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 5: DDC System Functioned Properly throughout the Day by Date**



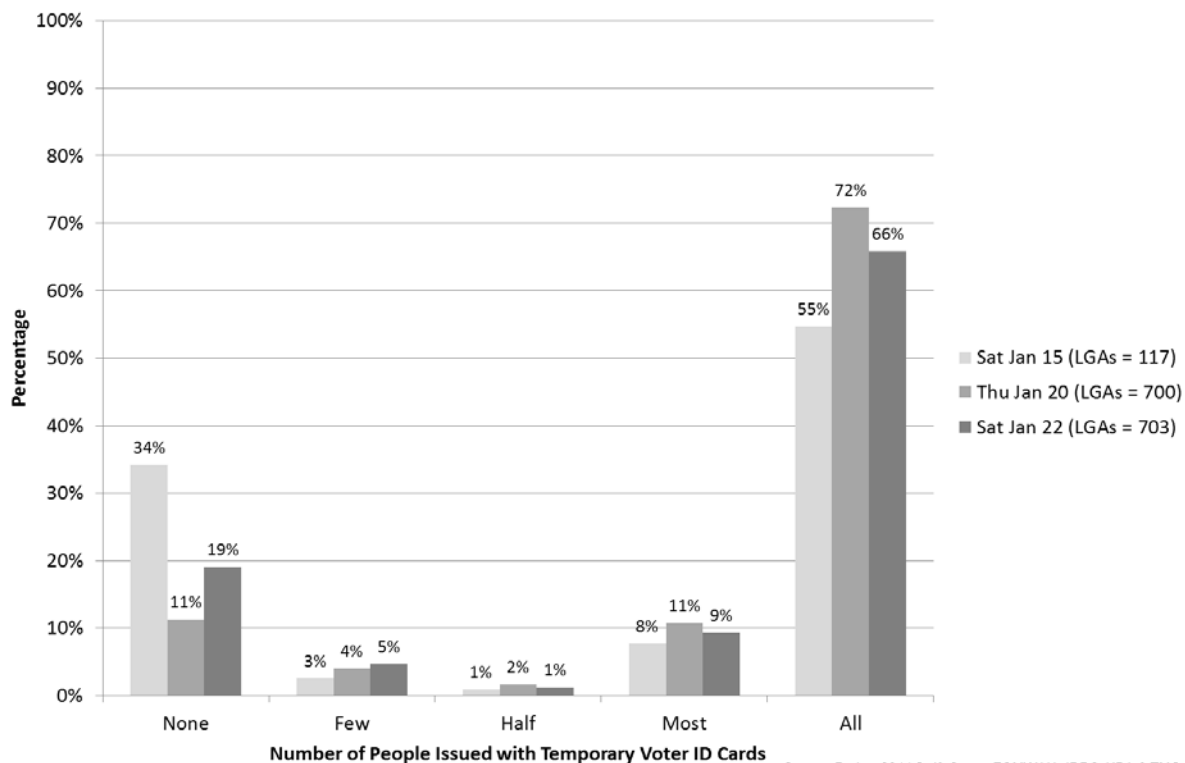
Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 6: DDC System Functioned Properly throughout the Day by Geo Political Zone for Saturday January 22, 2011 (LGAs = 703)**



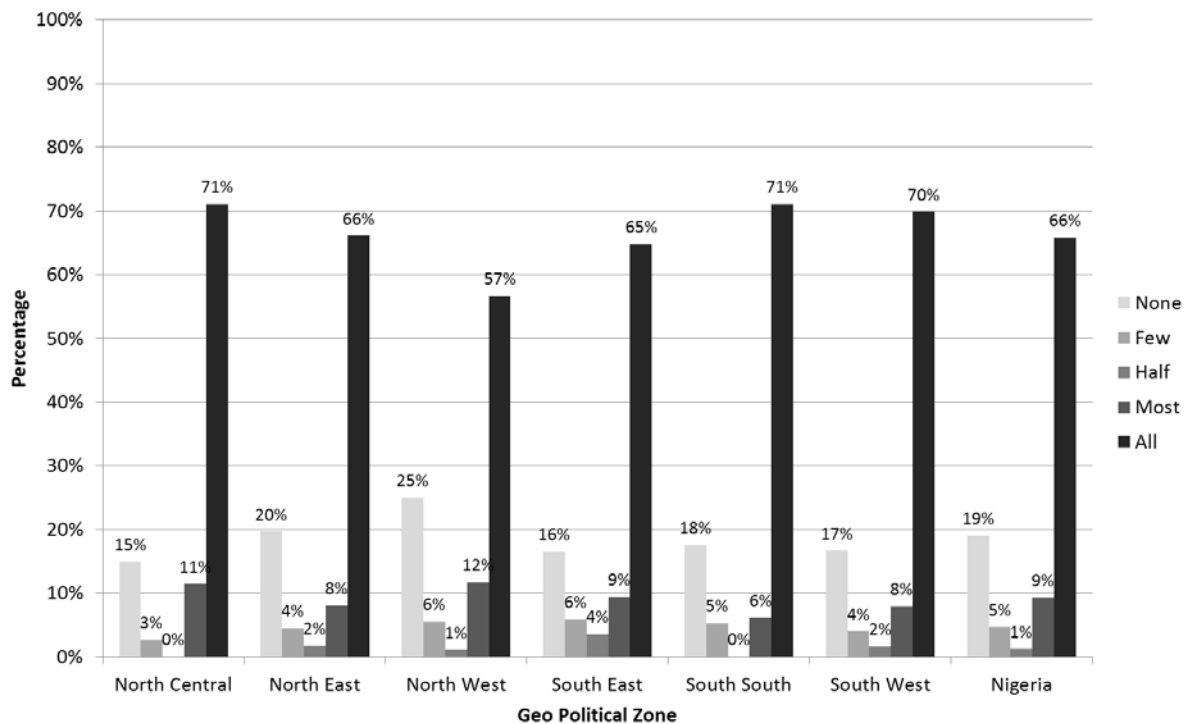
Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 7: Number of People issued with Temporary Voter ID Cards by Date**



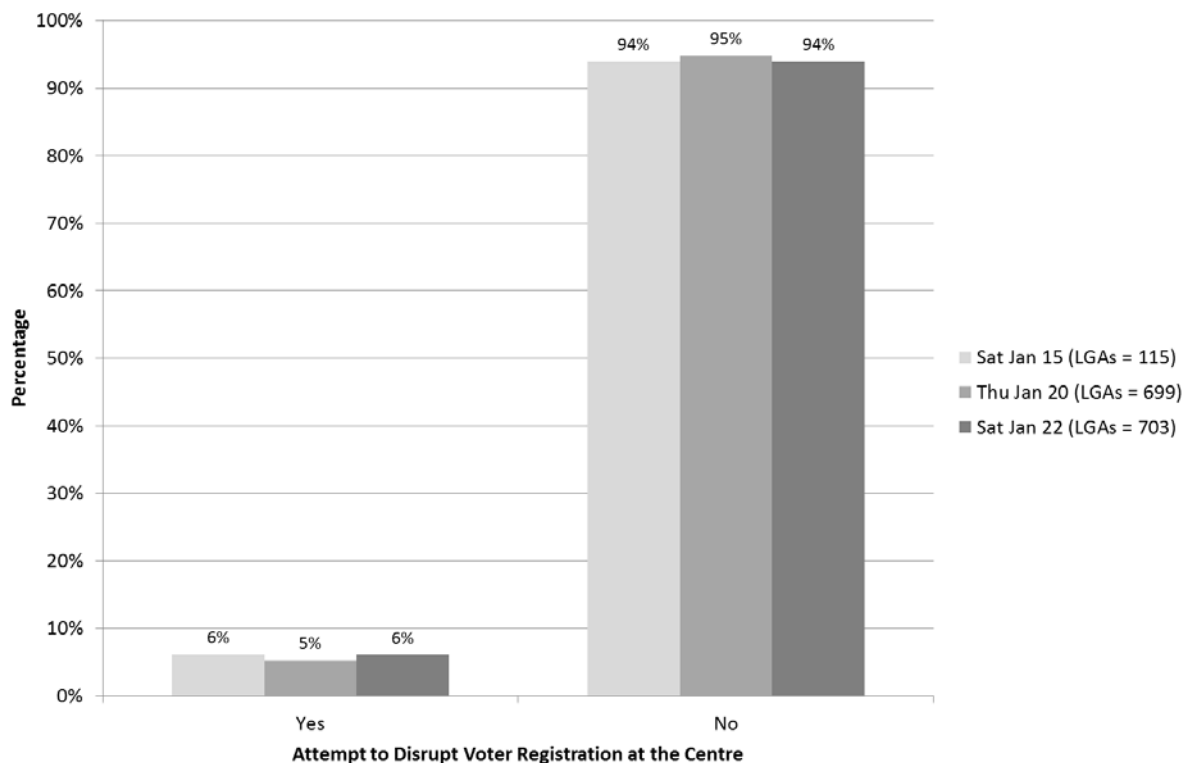
Source: Project 2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 8: Number of People issued with Temporary Voter ID Cards by Geo Political Zone for Saturday January 22, 2011 (LGAs = 703)**



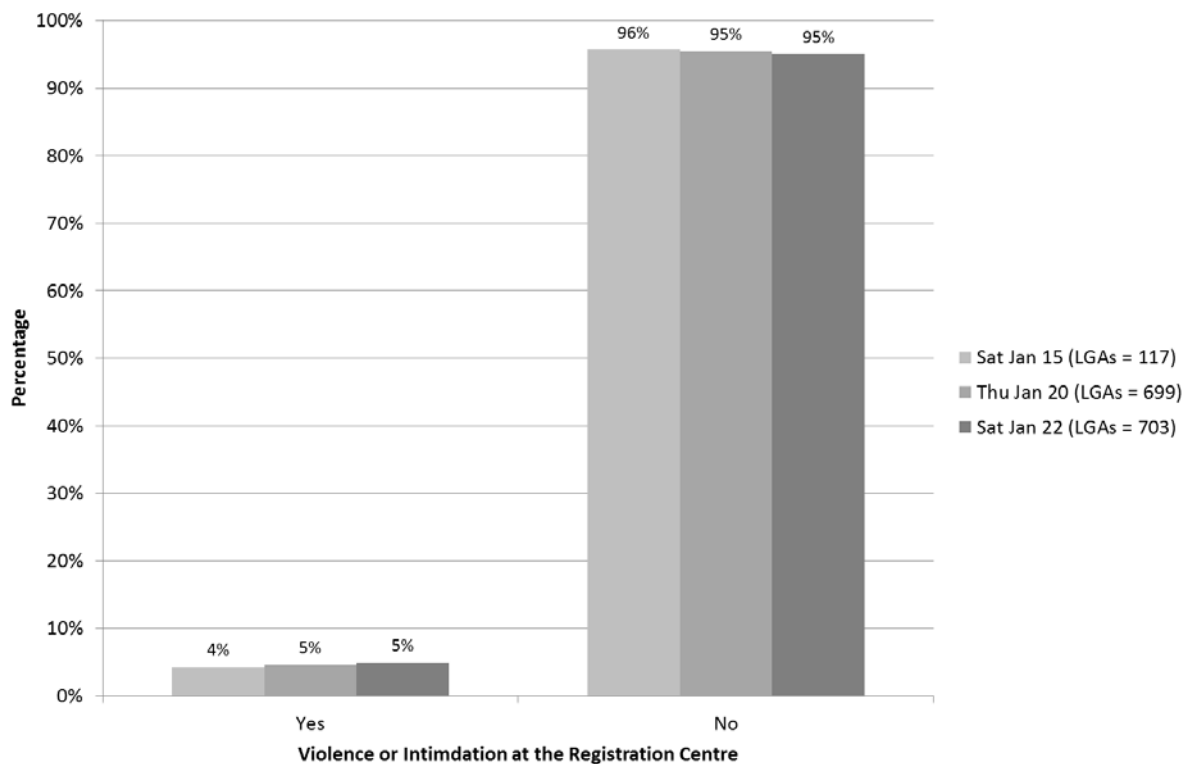
Source: Project 2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 9: Attempt to Disrupt Voter Registration at the Centre by Date**



Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

**Chart 10: Violence or Intimidation at Registration Centre by Date**



Source: Project2011 Swift Count: FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA & TMG

## Project 2011 Swift Count

### Background Information

**Our Vision:** A Nigeria where elections are free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate.

**Mission Statement:** To promote free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate elections for Nigerians through the active and committed partnership of FOMWAN, JDPC, NBA and TMG.

**Project 2011 Swift Count** involves comprehensive observation of the 2011 general election including systematic observation of voting and counting at a representative random sample of polling using the PVT methodology and employing information and communication technologies (ICTs). The partner organizations will jointly deploy and receive reports from a total of 8,000 observers who will be stationed at 4,000 polling stations located in all 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as well as in all 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs).

There is a lack of confidence among Nigerians in the conduct of elections and the accuracy of the results following successive elections that have failed to meet international and regional standards. However, in response to the public commitment of the President to genuine elections and the appointment of a new Chair for the Independent National Election Commission (INEC), Project 2011 Swift Count is being undertaken to promote free, fair, peaceful, credible and legitimate elections for all Nigerians. This endeavour is being jointly implemented by: 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).

This initiative involves comprehensive observation of the general elections (beginning with voter registration) using advanced observation methodologies. As part of the project, observers are deployed to a representative random sample of polling stations in all 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs). It is possible to draw a statistically sound sample because, in accordance with the Section 46 of the Electoral Act 2010, INEC provides a comprehensive list of all polling stations. Project 2011 Swift Count also employs information and communication technologies (ICTs) to rapidly transmit observer reports. Observers send coded text messages via mobile phones directly into a computer database located at a national information centre.

Deploying observers to a sample of polling stations and rapidly transmitting their reports using text messages, permits the initiative to use time-tested statistical principles to provide quick, precise and representative information on voting and counting. In addition, because observers record the individual results from sampled polling stations, Project 2011 Swift Count can independently verify the accuracy of the official results as announced by INEC in Abuja. The project will not announce official results. This is the responsibility of INEC.

As this is the first time the methodology is being used in Nigeria, Swift Counts are being undertaken for the presidential election and six gubernatorial elections (one in each geo-political zone).

Project 2011 Swift Count will carry out its observations in accordance with the "Declaration of Global Principles for Nonpartisan Election Observation and Monitoring by Citizen Organizations".



## Goal of Project 2011 Swift Count

Project 2011 Swift Count's vision is a Nigeria where elections are free, fair and peaceful as well as viewed as credible and legitimate by its citizens. To achieve this goal, the project seeks to enhance the confidence of the public and political contestants in the electoral process and the official results as announced by INEC. By providing more precise and representative information on voting and counting as well as independent verification of the official results as announced by INEC, Project 2011 Swift Count can: deter possible electoral fraud; increase transparency in the electoral process; and ensure that the elections truly reflect the will of the people.

## Use of the Swift Count Methodology

The Swift Count methodology was first developed by citizen observers in the Philippines in 1986. It has been used in numerous countries in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Europe. In Africa, the Swift Count approach was recently employed for the Constitutional Referendum in Kenya in August 2010. It has also been used in Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. For Project 2011 Swift Count, the methodology is being adapted to the unique conditions present in Nigeria.

## Project 2011 Swift Count Leadership

National Steering Committee (NSC) is led by 1<sup>st</sup> Co-Chair is Dafe Akpedeye (SAN) and the 2nd Co-Chair is Mashood Erubami. The other NSC members are: Dr. Aisha Akanbi; Rev. Fr. Zacharia Samjumi; Priscilla Achakpa; Rev. Fr. Bernard Asogo; Reuben James; and Farida Sada Yusuf. In addition, Olisa Agbakoba (SAN), Prof. Bolanle Awe and Hajia Bikisu are honorary members.

## Project 2011 Swift Count Structures

A joint National Secretariat, headed by Victor Agbogun, is responsible for the day-to-day management of Project 2011 Swift Count. The structure includes State Coordinating Committees in all 36 states plus the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as well as LGA Supervisors in all 774 LGAs. For the general elections, Project 2011 Swift Count is deploying thousands of volunteer observers to polling stations located in every LGA. All staff and observers are recruited from the four partner organization; trained through Project 2011 Swift Count; and accredited by INEC.

## Support to Project 2011 Swift Count

Project 2011 Swift Count partners are responsible for the design, implementation and conduct of the initiative as well as the content of all observation statements.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) provide support for Project 2011 Swift Count. The project receives technical assistance from the National Democratic Institute (NDI). A Memorandum of Understanding exists to ensure ownership of the initiative by the Project 2011 Swift Count partners.