**REVIEW AND UPDATES ON LAW OF CRIMES (CRIMINAL LAW) BY JOSEPH BODUNRIN DAUDU SAN AT THE 5TH ANNUAL NIGERIAN CRIMINAL LAW REVIEW CONFERENCE HOLDING AT THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE FIRM OF J B DAUDU AND CO, UTAKO DISTRICT, ABUJA ON THE 20TH – 24TH OF NOVEMBER 2023**

**WELCOME ADDRESS**

**INTRODUCTION**

1. This is the 5th edition of the Rule of Law Development Foundation (ROLDF) flagship event- The Nigerian Criminal Law Review Conference. Our goals are elaborately stated in the 6-point objective set out in this year’s Conference Concept Note as follows: ‘
2. **‘To review on annual basis developments in the Nigerian Criminal Law jurisprudence (Federal and States) including discussion on the institutional framework of the Nigerian Criminal Justice System.**
3. **To update participants and stakeholders by way of progress reports on activities of criminal justice sector institutions to wit: law enforcement agencies such as the Police, Civil Defence, EFCC, ICPC and recently State Security Service, (ii) Courts with Criminal Jurisdiction with particular emphasis on their powers of remand in incidents of abuse of remand powers by LEAs using the Courts and (iii) Correctional Institutions and the progress of reforms thereat including a discussion on developments within the executive, legislative and judicial sectors in the last 24 months.**
4. **To intensify conversations and debates on the revitalisation and reformation of the Administration of Criminal Justice in Nigeria with special focus on the FCT. This will form the primary focus of this year’s Conference.**
5. **To propose, collate and produce policy advisory for the information, consideration and action of public authorities and institutions.**
6. **To provide a platform for research on topical issues in statutory criminal law, procedural criminal law, evidence including electronic evidence, judicial and extrajudicial procedures and processes for criminal justice actors including Ministers, Commissioners, Heads of Courts, Judges, legal practitioners engaged in public or private practice, law enforcement agencies, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Independent Corrupt Practices and other related Offences Commission (ICPC), Nigerian Police Force, Customs Service, Immigration Service, Prisons Service, Nigeria Civil Defence Corp and the Department of State Services.**
7. **It is also the goal of the Foundation that the Conference will serve as a forum for advocacy, policy design, research, constructive criticism, inter-state and international comparative analysis, networking, intellectual brainstorming, and public and private stakeholder accountability.**
8. After 4 years, we thought that by now we would have attained, albeit to a reasonable extent, our goals as set out above. While we thank and appreciate our resource persons, participants, and our perpetual sponsors, we must be frank that we are not where we expect to be. The truth is that there is a gaping disconnect between those who on behalf of the nation’s criminal justice system need programmes and events of this nature, like the Magistrates, customary court Judges exercising criminal jurisdiction, Federal and State legal officers especially those in the office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, legislative assistants and legal officers in the National and State Assemblies, Prison Officers, investigators in the EFCC, ICPC, Civil Defence, Immigration, Customs etc and we are not discounting superior court Judges at both trial and appellate levels and senior lawyers.
9. Despite very wide, extensive, and indeed intensive publicity given to this heavily subsidised event, we regret to say that only 5-10 percent of those invited and who obviously need programmes of this calibre sign up for them. Apart from the Governments of Rivers State, Delta, Kogi, Ogun and to an extent Lagos and Niger States, who annually send us delegates to attend and participate in the programme and agencies such as the LPDC, National Industrial Court, etc., also make a reasonable appearance, the majority are unperturbed.
10. It is quite distressing to note that some of our courts/organisations outsource programmes like this to foreign consultants who externalise location and resource person to foreign countries and in the process divert what should accrue to our national patrimony to foreign lands. At the stage it is necessary to resound the caveat that we i.e., the organisers and resource persons are **not** in this business for the financial gain, if any, that can be made therefrom. The truth is that the persons referred to above have garnered substantial quality experience in their over 35-45 years of legal practice and their only desire is to seasonally transfer this skills/knowledge to young, up and coming technocrats and criminal justice practitioners before bowing out of the profession.
11. This year 2023, our Director of Conference Planning Mrs. Chinelo Ogbozor-Anarado and the Trustees of ROLDF have suggested that we make the Federal Capital Territory our focal point. This approach is apt as there is new wine in old wineskin (pardon the pun) as we have in Abuja, a brand-new President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu GCFR (ii) the Hon Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice Prince Lateef Fagbemi SAN and (iii) the Hon. Minister of the FCT, Nyesom E Wike (Life Bencher) GSSSRS. In addition, the FCT houses the Legislature i.e., the National Assembly and is also the headquarters of the Judiciary. Consequently, the highest policies of the criminal justice system ought to be and are being hatched or designed in Abuja for the benefit of the entire country and the residents of the FCT.
12. I now come to our main point in this welcome address; the laws of the Federal Capital Territory are laws inherited from the laws of Northern Nigeria and by extension the laws of Kogi, Niger, Kaduna, and Nassarawa States. While the legislatures of most of the Northern States have revised their body of laws, the FCT is saddled with obsolete laws such as the Penal Code, Local Government Law etc. By virtue of the provisions of section 299-(a) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as altered) the legislative powers of the FCT are vested in the National Assembly, while the executive powers are vested in the President of the FRN who by virtue of section 302 of the same Constitution delegates his authority to the Minister of the FCT. Consequently, unless there is one in existence, this is the appropriate time for the Hon. Minister (FCT) to appoint a law revision committee or commission to review in a comprehensive wholesale manner, all the laws of the FCT in existence since 1976 when the territory came into existence. There are for purposes of emphasis, 2 outdated legislations that need to be reviewed. They are the Penal Code and the Local Government Law. It constitutes a great disservice to the people occupying the FCT for these and other similar legislations to continue to exist on the statute book.

**CONCLUSION**

At this stage, my remaining task is to sincerely welcome you all to this years Criminal Law Review Conference, powered in this premises and beamed/transmitted to the whole world.

**JOSEPH BODUNRIN DAUDU SAN**

**COORDINATOR ROLDF**

**20TH NOVEMBER 2023**