

# WEST AFRICAN UNION OF TAX INSTITUTES<sup>1</sup> (WAUTI)

## Protocols

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<sup>1</sup> ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY THE WAUTI PRESIDENT PRINCE RASAQ 'KUNLE QUADRI, *FCTI, FCA, AMNIM* AT THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE WEST AFRICAN UNION OF TAX INSTITUTES (WAUTI) HELD AT NICON LUXURY HOTEL, ABUJA, *FCT*, NIGERIA ON WEDNESDAY, *11<sup>TH</sup>* MAY, 2011.

I have the privilege and honor to join the Chairmen, Joint Organizing Committee and other members of the Committee to welcome you to today's historic event. May I state that what started as a casual discussion some years back has grown to become a reality which we are here witnessing. It is therefore a matter of joy and satisfaction to note that the efforts of stakeholders on this project have not been in vain. Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I am delighted to have

you in our midst in an event that will in time to come have far reaching effects on the West African sub-region and the African continent at large.

## **ACCEPTANCE TO SERVE**

I stand before you today to accept to serve the West African Union of Tax Institutes (WAUTI) as the President for the next one year. I also accept the mantle of service on behalf of other officers, elected to various offices to

steer the mantle of leadership of our great body. We are indeed humbled by the responsibility placed on us to pilot the affairs of this Union in its formative stage.

As it is often said, in unity lies the strength. This underscores our commitment as professionals in the taxation profession to work together towards making the achievement of our set goals easier than planned. Today's event is the result of the collective painstaking efforts by past and present leaders of CITG, CITN

and Liberia Revenue Agency who envisioned the necessity of having a collective front towards addressing the issues peculiar to our respective bodies and countries. We are indeed witnessing today, a significant milestone as we move gradually towards providing a medium where ideas on how to improve tax practice, administration and proffer solutions to the various problems bedeviling the economy in our respective

countries are analyzed and brought to fruition.

The underlying objectives of WAUTI are as follows:

- ❖ To develop and enhance taxation profession in West Africa.
- ❖ To promote the development of common technical and educational guidelines,

professional ethics and standards in member-bodies;

- ❖ To act as a centre for the development and dissemination of information concerning taxation standards and practices in West Africa.
- ❖ To provide encouragement for and assistance in the formation and development of national taxation bodies.

- ❖ To collaborate with regional organizations, international bodies and agencies in the development and promotion of the taxation profession within and outside the sub-region.
- ❖ To provide a forum for the professional development of member-bodies through seminars, symposia, congresses and interchange of ideas and experiences.

- ❖ Generally to do such other things as may be incidental or conducive to the attainment of the Union's objectives.

## **ACTIVITIES SO FAR**

### **1. WAUTI Website**

WAUTI web site is under construction and can be accessed on *[www.fledgesnigeria.com/wauti](http://www.fledgesnigeria.com/wauti)* As soon as

this is completed, it will be deployed as  
*www.wauti.org*

## **2. Opening of WAUTI Current Accounts**

The Union had successfully opened both Nigerian Naira and United States Dollar denominated current accounts with ECOBANK Plc.

## **4. Recognition of Stakeholders**

The Council of WAUTI has recognized from the on-set on the need to ensure that all stakeholders are carried along. To this extent, all letters to non-English speaking countries were adequately translated. Kudos must be given to the leadership of Lagos State Internal Revenue Service who provided four staff as translators.

# **CHALLENGES WITHIN THE REGION**

It is a matter of concern that the level of tax awareness in the sub-region is abysmally low when viewed against the backdrop of the benefits that would accrue from a focused and conscious efforts at developing the sector. It is on the basis of this that WAUTI will assist to bridge the divide between tax professionals in the respective countries, their governments and taxpayers. The most daunting challenge that the Union may likely

face is ensuring that a professionalized tax administration and practice is established. As the world braces up to the challenges of economic development, social integration, technological advancement and better quality life, West Africa and indeed Africa must take the cue and make conscious and collective efforts towards improving the lots of the people. A paradigm shift is what is required towards changing the status quo as far as economic development in the region is

concerned. Taxation has become the beautiful bride that any nation desirous of making headway economically should turn to. Essentially, a starting point will be to encourage tax professionals in countries where a body of tax professionals does not exist to establish such bodies. This will assist to harness individual competencies of members in a collective front which will ultimately provide a basis for any meaningful

contribution to the development of taxation in their respective countries.

The challenges highlighted which include but not limited to funding constraints, absence of bodies of tax professionals in most parts of the sub-region, and low level of awareness impact negatively on the roles to be played by an efficient and professionalized tax system in our quest to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) as spelt out by

the United Nations. In this regard, WAUTI shall pursue with vigor the establishment of professional taxation institutes in countries where none exists at present.

# **PROPOSED ACTIVITIES**

The next few years shall see the WAUTI leadership engage various stakeholders in the region on propagating the need for the organization. Our focus as a body will be principally aligned towards achieving results premised on cooperation and a common goal that transcends language limitations, geographical boundaries and individual differences.

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen, I present below expected activities of Council within the next one year.

- To build a structure for WAUTI that would meet international standards.
- Massive publicity including visitations to member-countries to canvass on the need to establish tax professional bodies.

- Encouragement of educational programmes including literatures for member-bodies.
- Create strong platform for mutual relationship among member bodies.
- Relate with international tax bodies such as International Tax Directors Forum (ITDF), Confederation Fiscale Europeenne (CFE), European Union Tax Consultation, etc.

- Engage member-bodies and national revenue agencies within the region on research and training.
- Assist revenue agencies on programmes towards economic integration.
- Carry out any other assignment as may be required in the best interest of the organization.

It is no gainsaying that greater results and better approaches can only be gained

through increased co-operation amongst people of like minds, similar goals and perspectives on issues as they affect their common interest. Obviously our quest for greater economic stability and development will be but a pipe-dream if taxation is continuously relegated to the background. As professionals, our vocation has bestowed on us the duty of improving the processes leading to the enactment of tax policies, laws and administration. The Council of WAUTI, will

as a matter of priority, task member-bodies to evolve ways at ensuring that taxation assumes the front banner in the economic discourse and policies of their economies.

Much as we have peculiar issues relating to our respective countries, there are areas where we can juxtapose our experiences, ideas, strategies, and resources to help achieve our common goals.

Ostensibly, as an Association of tax institutes in West Africa, WAUTI is expected to work in

partnership with stakeholders in all areas that would ensure the fulfillment of the statutory responsibility of achieving sustainable growth of the West African Sub-Region. Revenue Agencies in the sub region will be strong allies in this quest, as critical agencies of governments. Our efforts will come to naught if adequate attention is not accorded this critical sector as the driving force in implementation of government tax policies.

# REQUEST FOR TAKE-OFF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Union is presently being funded by the founding members, CITG and CITN. In order to make better impact, there is need to invite stakeholders for support in the area of funding.

The Union would require the initial sum of \$136,776 USD (~~₦~~21, 200, 000.00, Twenty-one Million, Two Hundred Thousand Naira Only) to

enable it effectively take off from today. The three major areas of interest are:

- a. Capital Assets Expenditure - \$40,516  
USD (~~₦~~6,280,000.00)
- b. Personnel Expenditure - \$31,742 USD  
(~~₦~~4,920,000.00)
- c. Other Operation Expenditure - \$64,516  
USD (~~₦~~10,000,000.00)

An appeal goes to all stakeholders to consider investing in this noble project. I must not fail to mention here the donation received from the Lagos State Internal Revenue Service which contributed in no small way to the hosting of this programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, without doubt, the co-operation of all stakeholders would be needed by WAUTI in ensuring that its lofty objectives are not only met but surpassed. In

this regard, I solicit for the support of all member bodies to work assiduously to ensure the success of the Union in all its ramifications. I count on the support of all of you towards achieving the task before us.

My address will not be complete without appreciating all those that have made this event a reality. My appreciation goes to the Special Guest of Honor, Ambassador James Victor Gbeho, President of ECOWAS, who accepted to be part of this programme. I

must recognize the commitment of Mr. Abdallah Ali-Nakyea, who accepted with great enthusiasm to present a paper at this august occasion. The past presidents of CITG and CITN and Council members of the two bodies have been wonderful in their support towards today's success. To the worthy members of the Joint Committee on the inauguration of WAUTI ably led by Mr. Ezekiel Ferdinand Asamoah FCIT, PP and Mr. Foluso Fasoto, FCTI, PP, there is no doubt in my mind

that history will remember the good part you played to make today a reality. I solicit for your continued support to help keep this dream alive, such that in no distant time, we shall gather again to witness the inauguration of the Association of African Tax Institutes (AATI). Above all, I thank God for his mercies, guidance and blessings always.

As I conclude this address, a clarion call is once again made to all stakeholders to assist this new body as we embark on the journey

that we expect the benefits to radiate in our respective nations to the betterment of our union and living standard of our people.  
Thank you for listening and God bless.

**Prince Rasaq 'Kunle Quadri, FCTI, FCA, AMNIM**  
**PRESIDENT**