



**NATIONAL JUDICIAL COUNCIL,
SUPREME COURT COMPLEX,
THREE ARMS ZONE,
CENTRAL DISTRICT,
P.M.B. 483,
ABUJA - NIGERIA.**

NATIONAL JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF NIGERIA

POLICY DIRECTION

No. 1/2022

PURSUANT to the powers vested in the National Judicial Council by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Schedule III, Part I, 21 (i).

Council, at its 98th meeting held on the 11th day of May 2022, resolved on the following Policy Directions:

These Policy Directions shall apply to all suits filed in any court in Nigeria wherein the parties include the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), any political party or its officers, any other person, natural or legal, suing or sued for a declaration in relation to any action taken or to compel or restrain any action or omission with respect to the affairs of a political party or any election into a public office.

1. OBJECTIVES AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These Directions seek to:

- a. Prevent the multiplicity of litigations at different courts of coordinate jurisdiction across the nation, resulting in conflicting orders on the same issues and facts;
- b. Recognise that courts need to embrace prudential limitations on their powers with a view to curtailing the incidences of unscrupulous forum shopping disrupting the administration of justice and the democratic process; and

- c. Acknowledge that the circumstances necessitate further administrative measures and procedures to complement and support the judicial process.

2. DIRECTIONS

Without prejudice to the powers of Election Petitions Tribunals constituted pursuant to the provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Pending the constitution of a Cross Jurisdiction Litigation Panel (CJLP) to give directions on appropriate litigation fora for cross jurisdiction litigations:

- a. All suits to which these Policy Directions apply shall be filed, received, or entertained only at the High Court of the Federal Capital Territory in so far as the relief sought, or potential consequential order (s) or declaration (s) may restrain or compel persons or actions beyond the territorial jurisdiction of any one state.
- b. Where such suits are within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal High Court, they shall only be filed or received at Abuja and assigned by the Chief Judge of the Court.
- c. All such suits wherein the cause of action arose in a state and the relief seeks a declaration or to compel or restrain person (s), natural or legal, within that state's territory, with no consequence outside the state, shall be filed, received, or heard only in that state.
- d. All Heads of Court shall assign cases or constitute panels with a view to forestalling the incidences of conflicting judgments and rulings.
- e. Once facts or issues have been ruled upon, no other court or panel of coordinate jurisdiction shall be assigned or entertain suits on the same

subject matter and parties shall comply or proceed on appeal to the appropriate higher court.

- f. Rules of court shall require sufficient notice and publicity of actions that potentially impact other cases.
- g. Rules of court shall stipulate solemn disclosure duties on litigants filing actions that may impact other actions.

Heads of Court shall exercise their rule making and administrative powers to give effect to these Policy Directions.

These directions shall take effect from the 11th day of May 2022

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Hon. Dr Justice I.T. Muhammad, CFR
The Honourable Chief Justice of Nigeria
And Chairman, National Judicial Council