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IRIAD Commends Supreme Court Ruling on Local Government Autonomy

IRIAD believes that the recent Supreme Court ruling will contribute to better service provision, allowing local governments to prioritize essential services such as healthcare, education, sanitation, and infrastructure development for their communities without interference from state governments. This change is expected to reduce the development gap between urban and rural areas as local governments can now hopefully allocate resources according to the specific needs of their communities.But.....

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...promoting electoral knowledge, accountability, and integrity

The Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development (IRIAD) and THE ELECTORAL HUB applauds the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court affirming the financial autonomy of Nigeria's 774 local governments. This historic ruling is a significant milestone in strengthening grassroots democracy, good governance, and development in the country.

The suit brought by the Attorney-General of the Federation, Lateef Fagbemi, SAN to secure the independence of local governments was upheld by a seven-member panel of the apex court in a unanimous decision¹. Local governments will now directly receive their allocations from the Accountant-General of the Federation, bypassing state governments, according to the court ruling².

The new setup would enable local governments to independently make decisions, take actions, and handle their finances without requiring consent from state governments. They are now able to prioritize projects and programs that directly help their communities, fostering local development and transparency. We anticipate that this decision will significantly change the role of local government administration in Nigeria, reducing political influence and urbanization.

The decision also upholds the constitutional provisions for democratic elections of local government leadership. IRIAD-THE ELECTORAL HUB urges state governments to uphold the integrity of the constitution and refrain from arbitrarily dismissing elected local government officials.

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We urge all stakeholders, including civil society organizations, the media, and the public, to support the implementation of this ruling for the benefit of all Nigerians. Together, we can work towards creating a more prosperous and fairer Nigeria where every citizen has access to quality public services and opportunities for development.

¹ <https://www.thecable.ng/agf-scourt-verdict-takes-immediate-effect-lgas-now-emancipated-from-shackles-of-the-past/>

² Ibid

The Way Forward

To ensure the successful implementation of this judgment, IRIAD recommends the following:

- **Capacity Building for Local Government Officials:** Local government officials should receive training and support from federal and state governments to improve their expertise in financial management, project planning, and service delivery.
- **Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms:** Local governments should establish strong mechanisms for transparency and accountability, such as frequent public disclosure, social audits, and the development of anti-corruption strategies, as well as the provision of services.
- **Collaboration with Civil Society Organizations:** Local governments should collaborate with civil society organizations in order to encourage citizen involvement, oversee the execution of projects, and guarantee that resources are utilized for the well-being of the populace.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The progress and impact of local government autonomy should be tracked by the federal government through the establishment of a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.

IRIAD remains committed to supporting the implementation of this landmark judgment and working with all stakeholders to promote good governance, development, and the wellbeing of all Nigerians.

#LocalGovernmentAutonomy #AccountabilityAndIntegrityMatters #IRIADForPublicAccountability.

Signed

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ABOUT IRIAD AND THE ELECTORAL HUB

The **Initiative for Research, Innovation, and Advocacy in Development** (IRIAD) is an interdisciplinary knowledge and advocacy hub committed and focused on developing a critical understanding of governance processes and regimes from research, documentation, policy engagements, public education and impact advocacy.

The Electoral Hub is an affiliate of IRIAD. It is committed to promoting electoral knowledge, integrity, and accountability in Nigeria. Our aim is to strengthen electoral governance and accountability in Nigeria through the provision of data, critical and contextualized analysis, and solutions to improve the credibility and integrity of the electoral process.