



ATTAINING BEST PRACTICES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN EKITI STATE: TOWARDS A PARADIGM SHIFT

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is a pleasure to be here today for the Ekiti State Administration of Criminal Justice Summit. I am deeply honoured to be invited as the keynote speaker at this summit organised by the Office of the Attorney-General of Ekiti State in collaboration with the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA). I bring greetings from Lagos State, the Centre of Judicial Excellence, where we have been implementing reforms that have yielded measurable improvements in our criminal justice system.

This keynote address aims to share insights from our experience in Lagos State while recognising the unique context of Ekiti State. My address will explore strategies to expedite criminal trials, integrate technology into crime prevention and trial processes, decongest custodial facilities, develop alternatives to custodial sentencing, and address the unique needs of vulnerable persons within the justice system.

The theme of this summit, "*Attaining Best Practices in the Administration of Criminal Justice in Ekiti State: Towards a Paradigm Shift*," is most apt. Today, I will highlight some challenges facing criminal justice administration and offer suggestions that will stir discussions in each of the critical areas identified by the summit organisers.

I am confident that this summit will yield transformative resolutions and actionable recommendations that will reshape Ekiti State's criminal justice landscape, creating a system that not only responds swiftly to societal needs but also ardently upholds the sacred principles of justice. This reimagined framework will transcend mere institutional reform to become a cornerstone of public safety, social harmony, and collective well-being across the state. The path forward begins with our deliberations today, but its impact will resonate for generations to come.

OVERVIEW OF THE EKITI STATE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

The criminal justice system in Ekiti State, like that of Lagos State, comprises several key components: law enforcement agencies, the judiciary, correctional services, and other supporting institutions. While each element plays a distinct role, their collective efforts are crucial to the overall functioning and effectiveness of the criminal justice system.

The Ekiti State Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2014 ("the ACJL of Ekiti State") provides a comprehensive framework for administering criminal justice in the state. This law introduced several progressive provisions aimed at enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system. However, significant challenges remain in its implementation.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement agencies, including the police, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), and other specialised units, form the front line of the criminal

justice system. Their primary responsibilities include maintaining public order, preventing crime, investigating offences, apprehending suspects, and gathering evidence. The success of the criminal justice system relies heavily on the efficiency and professionalism of law enforcement in carrying out these duties while upholding the rights of citizens and adhering to the principles of due process.

One critical issue that often arises is the lack of inter-agency cooperation. In Lagos State, we have observed instances where a lack of communication between agencies has resulted in significant delays in the prosecution of cases. Effective inter-agency collaboration among the police, the EFCC, other prosecuting agencies, the Nigerian Correctional Service, and the judiciary is essential for an efficient criminal justice system.

Magistrate Oversight of Police Detention

The Ekiti State ACJL in Section 20 requires police to report all arrests to Magistrates within three days. In Lagos, we've implemented this oversight function vigorously. During the 2021 Judiciary Staff Union of Nigeria (JUSUN) strike, our Magistrates, accompanied by lawyers from the Office of the Public Defender, the Legal Aid Council of Nigeria, and the NBA, visited multiple police stations across Lagos. These visits resulted in immediate bail grants and releases, ensuring that detention facilities remained accountable even during judicial shutdown. This proactive approach has significantly improved compliance with detention regulations and protected citizens' rights. I recommend that Ekiti State consider a similar programme of regular, unannounced visits by Magistrates to detention facilities.

The Judiciary

The judiciary, comprising courts at various levels, is responsible for adjudicating criminal cases and ensuring that justice is administered fairly and impartially. In criminal proceedings, the judiciary provides a platform for the prosecution and defence to present their cases, weighs the evidence, and determines the guilt or innocence of the defendant. Court decisions must be based on evidence and precedents, not sentiments. The independence and integrity of the judiciary are essential to maintaining public trust in the criminal justice system.

Nigerian Correctional Service

Correctional services, including custodial centres and other detention facilities, are responsible for the custody, care, and rehabilitation of individuals convicted of criminal offences. The primary goal of correctional services is to promote public safety by preventing further offending and facilitating the successful reintegrating of offenders into society. This is achieved through secure confinement, rehabilitative programmes, vocational training, community service, and educational opportunities. The effectiveness of correctional services in reducing recidivism- the possibility of a

convicted criminal reoffending- and promoting positive change is a crucial determinant of the overall success of the criminal justice system.

Challenges

Despite the efforts of these institutions, the criminal justice system in Ekiti State, like in many parts of Nigeria, faces significant challenges. Law enforcement agencies are under-resourced, leading to investigation delays and a backlog of cases. The courts, too, struggle with a high volume of cases, limited infrastructure, and procedural inefficiencies, resulting in prolonged trials and overcrowding in correctional facilities.

From my experience in Lagos State, I can attest that overcrowding in custodial facilities remains a significant challenge. Our latest data (as of 31 March 2025) reveals the severity of this situation - Ikoyi Correctional Centre operates at 442.5% capacity with 3,540 inmates in a facility designed for 800, while our Maximum-Security facility holds 2,121 inmates in a space meant for 1,056. Even our Female Correctional Centre exceeds capacity by 74.4%. Overall, Lagos custodial facilities operate at approximately 204% of their intended capacity, creating conditions that undermine rehabilitation efforts and strain resources. I suspect Ekiti State faces similar challenges, albeit perhaps on a different scale, which underscores the urgency of implementing the alternatives to incarceration we'll discuss today.

POLICIES TO ENHANCE SPEEDY AND EFFICIENT CRIMINAL TRIALS

One of the primary concerns within the criminal justice system is the need for speedy and efficient criminal trials. Delayed justice has far-reaching consequences, including a backlog of cases, overcrowding in correctional facilities, and an erosion of public trust in the justice system. The ACJL of Ekiti State has provisions that are remarkable in addressing these issues, streamlining the criminal trial process, and ensuring that justice is delivered promptly and effectively.

Assignment of Criminal Cases

Section 252 of the ACJL of Ekiti State provides that where information is filed in the court, the Chief Judge shall take appropriate steps to ensure that the information is assigned to a Judge within fifteen (15) days of its filing. Upon assigning the information, the appropriate Court shall, within fourteen (14) days of such assignment, issue hearing notices to the witnesses and the defendant, and a reproduction warrant adequately endorsed by the Judge in respect of the person charged. This provision ensures that cases are promptly assigned and heard, reducing delays and promoting a balanced workload across the courts.

Specialised Courts

Drawing from our experience in Lagos, I would encourage Ekiti State to consider establishing or expanding specialised courts for sexual offences and financial crimes. In Lagos, we have 21 judges dedicated to criminal matters (subdivided into General, Special and Sexual). The judges meet regularly to coordinate and enhance their effectiveness. The Special and Sexual Offence Courts are staffed by judges with expertise in the relevant areas of law, enabling them to manage cases more effectively and efficiently. The creation of these specialised courts has helped improve the quality and speed of justice delivery in complex and sensitive cases.

Time Limits for Trial Process

To address the issue of prolonged trials, the ACJL of Lagos State, along with its accompanying ACJ Practice Direction 2019, introduced time limits for various stages of the criminal trial process. For instance, Article 8 of the Practice Direction stipulates that the courts should aim to conclude criminal trials within 365 days. In Ekiti, the ACJL provides for the commencement of trials without unnecessary delay, and it empowers the court to refuse adjournments where they are deemed unnecessary and terminate the charge. The law also introduces case management mechanisms to help ensure that cases are resolved within a reasonable timeframe, thereby reducing the burden on defendants, victims, and the judicial system.¹

Procedural Innovations

The Ekiti State ACJL introduced several procedural innovations to enhance the speed and efficiency of criminal trials. Section 260(2) provides that “an objection to the sufficiency of evidence disclosed in the proof of evidence attached to the information shall not be raised before the close of the prosecution’s case.” Lagos State amended its ACJL in 2021 to provide a more comprehensive provision in Section 374, which allows objections to the validity of charges and substantive issues to be determined simultaneously rather than separately. This helps to prevent delays caused by piecemeal adjudication and promotes a more efficient trial process. See the cases of Destra Investment Ltd v. FRN & Anor. (2018) LPELR-43883(SC),² Elijah Jeremiah v. FRN & Anor. (2018) LPELR-46050(CA)³ and Dayo Olagunju v. FRN (2018) LPELR-43909(SC).⁴

Another critical innovation is the prohibition of the stay of proceedings under Section 273 of the Ekiti ACJL. This provision prevents unnecessary delays and ensures that trials progress without undue interruption. By restricting a stay of proceedings, the law

¹ See sections 232, 233 and 252 of the ACJL of Ekiti State.

² On pages 6-7 (B-A).

³ On pages 10-23 (E-B).

⁴ pages 17-18 (F-B).

helps to safeguard the defendant's right to a speedy trial and enhances public confidence in the justice system.

In Lagos, the 2021 amendment (section 235) permits the trial and conviction of defendants in absentia under certain circumstances, such as when the defendant has been granted bail but fails to appear in court without providing a reasonable explanation. This policy helps to prevent defendants from evading justice and ensures that trials can proceed even when the defendant is not physically present. Any conviction imposed by the court shall commence counting from the day of the defendant's re-arrest.⁵ Such a trial will not violate the defendant's right to a fair hearing under the 1999 Constitution. See Faisal Abdulrasheed Maina v. FRN (2022) LPELR-58942(CA).⁶

Procedural Safeguards for Confessional Statements

The Ekiti State ACJL includes necessary procedural safeguards regarding confessional statements. Section 9(3) requires that when a person volunteers to make a confessional statement, the police must ensure it is recorded on video or, if video facilities are unavailable, that it is written in the presence of a legal practitioner of the person's choice. While the law includes a proviso recognising the Evidence Act's primacy regarding admissibility, Lagos State has enhanced its protections by amending our ACJL to allow "*another representative acceptable to the person making the statement*" beyond just legal practitioners. The Supreme Court, in cases such as FRN v. Akaeze (2024) LPELR-62190(SC), FRN v. Nnajofofor (2024) LPELR-62599(SC), and Friday Charles v. The State of Lagos (2023) LPELR-60632(SC), has emphasised the importance of these procedural safeguards against torture and coercion. Such protections represent the best international practices in striking a balance between effective prosecution and the protection of defendants' rights.

Promoting Plea Bargaining

Plea bargaining is a process whereby the prosecution and the defence negotiate an agreement in which the defendant pleads guilty to a lesser charge or receives a reduced sentence in exchange for waiving their right to a trial. The Ekiti State ACJL has provisions for plea bargaining under Sections 75 and 76, which outline the procedure for plea bargaining, including ensuring that the defendant understands the agreement, allowing the prosecution to conduct a review of facts, and prohibiting the presiding judge or magistrate from participating in the plea bargain negotiation. In Lagos, the ACJ Practice Direction 2019 outlines the protocols for plea bargaining to be applied by the judge or magistrate. The protocols align with sections 75 and 76 and are designed to preserve the defendant's rights. Data from the Lagos State Criminal Information

⁵ Section 235(6) of the ACJL of Lagos State.

⁶ On pages 51-52 (E). In Mr Kehinde Oduneye v. FRN (2014) LPELR-23007(CA), the Court of Appeal held that trial in absentia was not permissible because no law supported it.

Management System (LCIS) shows that the recent adoption of plea bargains has increased the disposition of cases by over 40 percent and has significantly reduced the case backlog.

Promoting plea bargaining has several advantages, including the quick resolution of cases, which provides certainty and predictability for defendants. This allows them to negotiate a known outcome rather than face the uncertainty of a trial. Additionally, it may potentially lead to non-custodial sentences or shorter custodial sentences for defendants who plead guilty, as well as payment of restitution and compensation to victims.

IMPLEMENTING ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

Restorative Justice

Restorative justice is an approach that focuses on repairing the harm caused by the offence rather than simply punishing the offender. In the context of criminal justice, restorative justice can be employed in minor cases where the parties are willing to negotiate, mediate, or reconcile. This approach can help alleviate the burden on courts, offer a more flexible approach to justice, and foster healing and reintegration.

The Lagos State Ministry of Justice has a Restorative Justice Unit that facilitates this process, ensuring that suitable cases are diverted from formal trial processes and that offenders can take responsibility for their actions and make amends. Restorative justice can help alleviate the burden on courts, offer a more flexible approach to justice, and foster healing and reintegration. The Unit can invite the parties to a restorative justice meeting when issuing legal advice. Even after issuing legal advice and filing information, either party may suggest further action. The judge or magistrates may even refer the parties to restorative justice. It, however, does not apply to sexual and other serious crimes. The Ekiti State Ministry of Justice can apply similar measures to minor offences.

Community Service

The Ekiti State ACJL provides for community service as an alternative to incarceration in Section 347. This provision allows a person convicted of an offence triable summarily to be ordered by the Court to render community service instead of a sentence or fine. The Community Service Order may involve environmental sanitation, assisting in the care of children and the elderly in government-approved facilities, or any other type of service that, in the opinion of the Court, would have a beneficial and salutary effect on the offender's character.

In Lagos State, we have seen significant benefits from the implementation of community service. The Community Service Unit of the Lagos State Ministry of Justice has played a vital role in administering non-custodial sentences and rehabilitating offenders, particularly those who have committed minor offences. By assessing

offenders, placing them in appropriate community service programs, and monitoring their compliance, the Unit has contributed to decongesting correctional facilities, preventing the intermingling of minor and violent offenders, and facilitating the reintegration of offenders into society.

Community service also provides psychosocial support services and refers suitable offenders to vocational training and skill acquisition programmes. In Lagos, we have supervised the community service orders of thousands of offenders over the past five years, resulting in significant benefits for both society and the government.

Treatment of Juvenile Offenders

Non-custodial measures are particularly significant when dealing with children who are in conflict with the law. Ekiti State ACJL, in Section 340, provides that where a child or young person is brought before the High Court or Magistrates' Court charged with an offence, the charge shall be inquired into under the provisions of the Children and Young Persons Law and the Child Rights Law. While noting that the Child Rights Law should have superseded the Children and Young Persons Law, the ACJL of Ekiti State nonetheless recognizes the implementation of special legal requirements regarding children in conflict with the law.

In Lagos, we have established dedicated facilities for juvenile rehabilitation, notably the Special Correctional Centre for Boys in Oregun and a similar centre for girls in Idi Araba. These institutions were established for the reformation, re-socialisation, rehabilitation, and reintegration of children who are beyond parental control, those in conflict with the law, and those who are victims of unfortunate circumstances. Rather than merely punishing juvenile offenders, these centres focus on their well-being, education, and social development through structured programmes that address their unique needs.

This approach recognises the importance of adopting a rehabilitative and therapeutic approach when dealing with children in conflict with the law, focusing on their well-being, education, and reintegration into society. Such specialised facilities, combined with appropriate legal frameworks, offer the best opportunity to transform young offenders into productive citizens while protecting them from the potentially harmful effects of adult correctional environments.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

Integrating technology into the criminal justice system has become a critical component of the comprehensive approach to reform. Technology has the potential to streamline processes, improve data sharing, and enhance the overall effectiveness of criminal justice administration.

Critical Gaps Addressable by Technology

The criminal justice system in Ekiti State, like in many other states, faces several challenges that can be addressed through the strategic deployment of technology. These include inefficient processes, a lack of integrated information systems, limited coverage and intelligence-gathering capabilities for law enforcement, inadequate transparency and accountability, and insufficient access to legal information and updates on case status for defendants.

Database Systems for Criminal Justice

In Lagos State, we have implemented the Lagos State Criminal Information System (LCIS), a crime data register that captures and stores information about defendants who have been convicted, are awaiting trial, or are in ongoing trials.

The LCIS data provides valuable insights for strategic planning and resource allocation. Analysis of offence types as of 31 March 2025 reveals that stealing-related offences overwhelmingly dominate the criminal landscape at 3,966 cases (60.0%), followed by breach of peace at 1,046 cases (15.8%) and assault at 406 cases (6.1%). Sexual offences are also significant, with defilement at 256 cases (3.9%) and rape at 225 cases (3.4%).

Geographically, our crime mapping as of 31 March 2025 shows that Ikeja (20.7%), Lagos Island (18.2%), and Lekki (15.9%) account for over half of reported crimes in Lagos State. This concentration in commercial and affluent areas suggests targeted policing strategies may be particularly effective.

Additionally, demographic data as of 31 March 2025 reveals that suspects originate from diverse states across Nigeria, with significant numbers from the states of Ogun (10.5%), Oyo (6.7%), and Lagos (6.4%). Ekiti and Kano states have the lowest rates at 2.5% and 1.7% respectively. This comprehensive profiling of crime types, locations, and offender demographics enables evidence-based decision-making for law enforcement resource allocation, targeted intervention programmes, and interstate cooperation in criminal justice administration. Such data-driven approaches significantly enhance the effectiveness of our efforts while optimising limited resources.

This has significantly impacted the criminal justice system by providing a centralised database of defendant information, helping to identify and track repeat offenders, exposing defendants who attempt to manipulate the system, and retrieving lost or destroyed case files.

Following legislative enactment for the establishment of a Sex Offenders Register,⁷ the LCIS now includes a specialised database providing comprehensive information on sex offenders. This register reveals important patterns – for instance, our data shows that

⁷ See The Domestic and Sexual Violence Agency Law 2021.

young girls are more vulnerable to sexual crimes, with 64% of sex-related cases in Lagos involving defilement, followed by sexual assault at 16%. Furthermore, 88% of defilement cases involve male offenders between 26 and 65 years of age. Such data is invaluable for developing targeted prevention strategies and ensuring appropriate sentencing for sexual offences.

I strongly recommend that Ekiti State consider developing a similar system. A centralised database system would help address the issues of inadequate integrated information systems, data sharing across criminal justice agencies, comprehensive databases and analytics, and access to legal information and case status updates for defendants.

Bail Information Management System

In November 2022, the Lagos State Judiciary introduced the Bail Information Management System (BIMS) to address challenges in the bail process and offender tracking. BIMS is designed to capture the biometrics of sureties and manage bail in Lagos State. By eliminating professional sureties and resolving difficulties associated with monitoring and verifying sureties, BIMS has helped increase the likelihood of judges and magistrates granting bail. I believe Ekiti State could benefit from a similar system. Closely connected to this is the Bondsman Scheme.

Bondsman Scheme

The Ekiti State ACJL, in Section 138, provides for the registration and licensing of bondspersons to undertake recognisance, act as surety, or guarantee the deposit of money as required by bail conditions. This provision has significant potential to address challenges in the bail process. In Lagos State, we are in the final stages of implementing our Bondsman Scheme, which represents a more robust and permanent resolution to bail challenges. This scheme aims to provide a reliable and accountable system for securing bail bonds for defendants. By institutionalising this approach, we can ensure that professional bondsmen are appropriately regulated, monitored, and held responsible for their role in the bail process. This helps reduce instances of defendants absconding or failing to appear in court, thereby minimising delays in criminal proceedings. I would encourage Ekiti State to fully operationalise its provisions under Section 138 to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of its bail system.

Offenders' Biometrics Scheme

Another technological initiative that Lagos has implemented is the Offenders' Biometrics Scheme (OBS), which complements the LCIS and BIMS by obtaining offenders' biometrics before a charge is filed using biometrics scanners. The OBS aims to establish comprehensive databases that covers warrants, fingerprints, photographs, case status, and defendants' criminal histories, utilizing unique identifiers to link

information across law enforcement, courts and corrections.
Inmate Court Attendance Endorsement Form

In Lagos, we have introduced the Inmate Court Attendance Endorsement Form (ICAEF) to address the issue of many defendants classified as Awaiting Trial Persons (ATPs) despite their cases being ongoing in court. The ICAEF is a tracking tool that collects, collates, and updates relevant details of ongoing criminal cases in magistrates' and high courts, as well as the status of ATPs in remand. The objectives of the ICAEF include eliminating broad classifications of inmates on trial, ensuring that all inmates in remand are captured in the LCIS system, identifying defendants whose cases are not ongoing or whose case files have not been forwarded to the DPP, and synchronising records of inmates whose cases are already before the high courts.

These technological initiatives have significantly improved the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Lagos State; I believe Ekiti State could also benefit from similar implementations.

MODERNISING COURTROOM TECHNOLOGY

Court Reporters and Stenographers

Section 245 of the Ekiti State ACJL envisages a handwritten transcript system, providing that "*The Court shall in every case take notes in writing of the oral evidence, as it considers material, in a book to be kept for that purpose and such book shall be signed by the Judge or Magistrate after each day's proceedings.*" While this traditional method has served its purpose, to achieve better efficiency and accuracy, we must consider modern alternatives.

In Lagos, we have introduced stenographers and court reporters since 2013 to enhance the accuracy and integrity of court proceedings and records. With ongoing training, these professionals are equipped to meet international standards for speed and accuracy in documenting proceedings. The establishment of a dedicated court reporters' department ensures proper editing of court proceedings, and efforts are underway to ensure that all courts have adequate coverage.

Beyond traditional stenographers and court reporters, AI-induced systems like Scribar are now available. Scribar is a comprehensive solution developed by Cinfores Limited that enhances transcription processes through voice-to-text technology specifically designed to recognise our peculiar intonation—a feature of particular value in our linguistically diverse nation. This system produces real-time transcripts and is available through a flexible subscription model, making it accessible to courts across the nation.

The introduction of these advanced transcription methods has significantly impacted the speed and efficiency of criminal trials in the Lagos State. By providing accurate and timely records of court proceedings, these technologies have helped to reduce delays

associated with manual transcription and have facilitated the prompt resolution of cases. The availability of reliable court records has also enhanced the integrity of the judicial process, reducing the potential for errors or misinterpretations that could lead to appeals or retrials.

Remote Hearings and Testimonies

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for remote hearing capabilities. Judicial pronouncements and practice directions in Lagos have affirmed the constitutionality of remote hearings, permitting their use in instances where they serve the interests of justice.

Several cases in Lagos State have demonstrated the effectiveness of remote hearing in facilitating the testimony of vulnerable witnesses and those unable to appear in court due to various constraints. Using video links and other remote hearing technologies has enabled courts to receive crucial evidence while protecting the well-being of witnesses and ensuring the fairness of the proceedings.

In January 2025, the Chief Judge of Lagos State, Justice Kazeem Alogba, approved virtual hearings for 234 inmates who had been unable to attend court due to logistical issues. This innovative approach aims to expedite the judicial process, decongest custodial centres, and ensure that justice is served efficiently.

The adoption of remote hearing technologies has positively impacted the speed and efficiency of criminal trials by reducing delays associated with witness unavailability and helping to decongest custodial centres.

ELECTRONIC CASE FILING AND MANAGEMENT

Court Management Information Systems

The Lagos State Judiciary inaugurated the Court Management Information Systems and Services (CoMiS) to automate the Magistrates' Court system. CoMiS aims to create electronic case files, improve the courts' speed and responsiveness in managing cases, enhance the efficiency and management of information across the courts, and provide electronic payment options for court fees and fines. The system has helped to digitise operations in all Magistrates' Courts and establish an integrated database.

Ekiti State should consider implementing a similar system tailored to its specific needs and circumstances. Electronic case filing and management systems streamline judicial processes, improve efficiency, and reduce reliance on paper-based workflows.

In Lagos, we are working to extend e-filing to criminal charges filed in the Magistrates' Courts, aiming to eliminate the practice of "overnights". By completing the filing of criminal charges online before the defendant is taken to court, the police can reduce the

time spent in court for fresh arraignments. This also enables the Director of Public Prosecution to access all charges filed by the police in the Magistrates' Courts, allowing for better screening of criminal charges by law officers attached to them.

Such electronic systems can be designed to ensure the Attorney-General's office receives all police case files after investigation. This aligns with Section 74 of the Ekiti ACJL, which addresses the issuance of legal advice. Section 74(1) mandates the Commissioner of Police to forward all duplicate case files concerning offences triable on information to the Office of the Attorney-General for the issuance of legal advice, provided that the Attorney-General is consulted. The law also requires the Office of the Attorney-General to ensure that a copy of the legal advice is served upon the person concerned, whether in custody or on bail.

Incorporating these requirements into an electronic case management system would significantly streamline the process, ensure compliance with statutory requirements, and reduce delays in the issuance of legal advice. It would also enhance transparency and accountability in the criminal justice process.

A similar approach could be beneficial for Ekiti State, helping to streamline the filing and processing of criminal charges while ensuring that the Attorney-General's office fulfills its statutory role in the criminal justice process.

PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

The various reforms discussed in this address collectively enhance public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system. When citizens witness speedy trials, transparent processes, and fair outcomes, their faith in the system grows. Technology integration improves accountability and reduces opportunities for manipulation, while alternatives to incarceration demonstrate the system's commitment to rehabilitation rather than mere punishment.

Modern courtroom technologies and electronic case management create a more accessible and efficient justice system. Together, these reforms show citizens that the criminal justice system is evolving to meet their needs and uphold the fundamental principles of justice. The resulting public confidence is essential for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the entire criminal justice apparatus.

CONCLUSION

As we commence this summit, let us acknowledge a fundamental truth: The criminal justice system is more than a collection of institutions and laws- it is the living embodiment of our commitment to fairness, equity, and human dignity. The reforms and innovations I have shared today from Lagos State's experience are not mere technical adjustments but transformative approaches that restore humanity to our justice processes.

The integration of technology, the implementation of alternatives to incarceration, the modernisation of court procedures, and the strengthening of procedural safeguards collectively represent our evolving understanding that justice must be both swift and compassionate, as well as efficient and fair. The path forward for Ekiti State is clear—not in unquestioningly adopting solutions from elsewhere, but in thoughtfully adapting proven approaches to the unique context of your state.

The criminal justice system is ultimately measured not only by statistics but also by its ability to inspire public confidence. When a defendant receives a fair trial without unnecessary delay, when a victim sees justice served, and when a community witnesses rehabilitation rather than mere punishment, these moments rebuild trust in our institutions and reaffirm our shared values.

I challenge each of you to leave this summit with renewed purpose. The reforms I have shared are not abstract concepts but practical solutions awaiting implementation. The barriers to change are not insurmountable, significantly when we recognise what is at stake: nothing less than the integrity of our democracy and the safety of our communities.

The administration of criminal justice is not simply a government function—it is a sacred trust. Together, let us honor that trust by building a system that reflects our highest aspirations as a society: justice that is accessible to all, processes that respect human dignity, and outcomes that strengthen rather than fracture our communities.

Dear Honourable Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Ekiti State has the opportunity to adopt a comprehensive approach to criminal justice reform, focusing on expedited and efficient criminal trials, the integration of technology, and alternatives to incarceration utilising existing laws. The state must remain committed to continuous evaluation and improvement to win the trust and confidence of its citizens.

I am confident that Ekiti State can achieve these goals through a holistic and collaborative approach.

I thank the Ekiti State Ministry of Justice and the NBA for organising this Justice Reform Summit, the Ekiti State Judiciary for their continued commitment to delivering a fair and efficient justice system, and all participants for their attention and engagement.