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DARIA MEDIA HOSTS ELECTION REPORTING WORKSHOP FOR POLITICAL EDITORS

On a mission to promote ethical journalism in Nigeria and to ensure credible coverage of the 2019 general elections, Daria Media with the support of the Macarthur Foundation hosted a 2 day media election training program for 10 leading Political Editors on the 25th and 26th of January, 2019 at The Sheraton Lagos.

The training which focused on effective ethical coverage of the forthcoming elections was facilitated by consultants from The Thomson Foundation and was supported by the Nigeria Guild of Editors.

In attendance were 10 political editors from 10 media houses across the country. Participating Editors were from The Punch, The Guardian, This Day, New Telegraph, The Vanguard, The Sun, Nigerian Info FM, The Cable, Radio Nigeria and Daily Trust.

The 2 day training provided an opportunity for political editors to come together to discuss the potential approaches to the challenges of election reporting with focus on balance, objectivity and impartiality of election reporting.

The Editors focus on ethical solutions to the problems of covering elections in Nigeria culminated in the creation of a voluntary, bespoke charter of election coverage and guidance on best practices to help ensure adherence to the rules and to win back public trust.

The training also created an opportunity to explore the range of options designed to assist in online newsgathering and social media, avoiding traps, verification and improving coverage.

At the end of the workshop, the political editors freely adopted an election charter for journalists in Nigeria which sets the threshold of fundamental values by which the media can be judged.

One of the participants, the political editor of Daily Trust, Hamza Idris said "The timing is apt, just few days to the 2019 general elections and at a time the attention of the whole world is on Nigeria to see whether we would get it right! As a political reporter, my biggest take from the workshop is the "Election Charter for Journalists in Nigeria" which we came up with after rigorous brainstorming by all of us, the 10 political editors present at the training with massive input from Kadaria Ahmed and Ian Beales. I strongly feel that if we all adhere to the content of the Charter, we would have a hitch free coverage of the election"

Another participant, Femi Owolabi who is the political editor at The Cable also said "The training presents a unique opportunity to improve our capacity for better practice, not only in covering elections starting in February, but also investigative journalism. It has helped us with new approach which makes our job more holistic, international in scope, more in-depth, more accurate, and with a broader network of valuable contacts. We have been equipped with the skill sets necessary to achieve significant breakthrough with our work".

Ms Bimbola Amao of Daria Media stated that Daria Media was driven to host the workshop so as to fill a need. According to her "The workshop became quite necessary because ethical



election reporting has become critically important as Journalists get pulled into enforcing our fault line in not only in Nigeria but globally. We believe that the press has a major role to play in promoting democracy and civic participation in governance. This can be achieved through accuracy, fairness and balance in their reporting especially during delicate times such as the election period.”

Ms Amao thanked the Macarthur Foundation and PLAC for supporting the workshop. She said she hopes the measurable improvement that follows the adoption of this voluntary charter by these 10 political editors serves as an impetus for the adoption of a unified voluntary charter on ethical journalism by the whole industry. Now more than ever , she added, Nigeria needs quality journalism