



## British Nigeria Law Forum

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### Background

The British Nigeria Law Forum is a professional organisation based in London, England. It was formed following the first African Law Week, organised by the British Council, in Abuja, in May 2001. The conference was attended by leading lawyers from Nigeria and the UK. One of the sessions at the conference concerned sustaining a bilateral law partnership between Britain and Nigeria. As a result, the British Nigeria Law Forum was launched in November 2002.

### Objectives

- To improve relations, understanding and mutual collaboration, between the legal profession in Nigeria and the UK
- To develop legal, business and cultural links with Nigeria and to exchange ideas and information
- To assist with the training and education of Nigerian lawyers and law students in the UK and vice versa
- To arrange conferences and other events on specific areas of law, of mutual interest

### Who we are

The patron of the Forum is the **Honourable Justice Emmanuel Olayinka Ayoola CON**, Chairman of the Nigerian Independent Corrupt Practices & Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC).

The current officers of the Forum are:

Oba Nsugbe QC, Senior Advocate of Nigeria, Chair

Babs Akinyanju, Solicitor, Vice-Chair

Tim Daniel, Solicitor, Treasurer

Tope Ojikutu, Solicitor, Secretary

Committee members are made up of the above, plus:

Boma Ozobia Solicitor, (Liaison in Nigeria)

Omosuyi Fred Omoloje, Law Student, (Student Affairs)

Anthony Mordi, Solicitor, (Legal Surgery)

### Membership

Membership of the BNLF is made up of members of the profession in Nigeria and the UK. They include solicitors, barristers, law students, trainees, etc. The current membership consists of senior members of the Bar, (including two Queen's Counsel and a number of Senior Advocates of Nigeria), partners of law firms, sole practitioners, in-house counsel, public sector lawyers, trainee solicitors and pupil barristers. Therefore, the Forum is truly representative of all sectors of the profession.



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## **Benefits of Corporate Membership**

BNLF has been described by **Nankunda Katangaza** (International Policy Manager, Law Society) as the “most active of the bilateral Law Associations” that works in collaboration with the Law Society. The benefit to a global law firm, such as Allen & Overy being part of the BNLf is that it would enhance its corporate identity, not only with African lawyers, based in the UK, but also with the Nigerian and West African legal landscape. This is evidenced by the activities of the BNLf, some of which are listed below:

### **✿ Relationship with the Law Society**

BNLF plays an active role within the Law Society. It has held seminars, jointly with the Law Society International Division, in Abuja, Nigeria and at Chancery Lane. For example, in March 2007 **Alison Hook** (Head, L.S. Int'l Div.) delivered a talk to members on the WTO GATT Agreement and the impact on legal practice in Nigeria. BNLf is a member of the Law Society BME Forum and the Solicitors Regulation Authority on Diversity.

### **✿ Nigerian Bar Association**

BNLF has a collaborative relationship with the NBA. Since the inception of the *NBA (Section on Business Law) Conferences*, which commenced in 2006, BNLf has been involved, with members attending and delivering talks on a range of topics, from commercial law, litigation, regulatory activities, anti-corruption and the judiciary. In March 2008, BNLf and the Law Society led a delegation of 30 lawyers (including **Andrew Holroyd**, former L.S. President) to the conference in Abuja.

The current NBA President, **Rotimi Akereolu SAN** is a member of BNLf hosted a reception held in his honour at the Commonwealth Club in September 2008.

### **✿ Other Events**

**Networking:** Networking meetings are held every 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month. This gives members the opportunity to meet in an informal and friendly environment and catch up on each other's news. The sessions are well attended and have proven to be successful in recruiting new members. The next networking meeting is on Wednesday, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2009, at the Old Bank of England Pub, Fleet Street, from 6.30pm.

A number of the networking sessions have been themed events. For example, in July 2007, BNLf and Paceworking (a business promotion organisation) held a joint event at Sterling Partnership, Solicitors, in London Bridge, on *Business Opportunities in Nigeria*.

### **✿ Cost of Membership**

The cost of individual membership is currently £30 per annum. However, the annual subscription for a corporate member is only £120. This enables up to 5 members of staff of the corporate body to attend and participate in BNLf functions, some of which are free to members. Therefore, it pays the firm to be a member, rather than interested members of staff taking out individual membership.

For further enquires regarding corporate membership please email the administrator at [info@bnlf.org.uk](mailto:info@bnlf.org.uk).