

The Nigerian Group on Private International Law Sets Sail

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On Thursday 5th of November 2020, the Nigerian Group on Private International Law (“NGPIL”) held its first committee meeting by virtual platform. In attendance at the meeting and forming the Committee of NGPIL were: Dr Onyoja Momoh (English Barrister at 5 Pump Court; Research Fellow at University of Aberdeen), Dr Pontian Okoli (Lecturer at University of Stirling), Dr Abubakri Yekini (Lecturer at Lagos State University) Dr Chukwuma Okoli (Post-Doctoral Researcher at T.M.C Asser Instituut), and Dr Chukwudi Ojiegbe (Contracts Manager at ACE Winches). This new initiative will bring together a unique group of experts with an important ethos: the promotion of private international law in Nigeria.

The NGPIL unanimously agreed that its aims are (1) to improve the law in Nigeria in matters relating to private international law (“PIL”) (2) to persuade the Nigerian government to accede to the Hague Conventions on PIL (3) to liaise with other experts, groups, and research centres on PIL on a global level (4) to nurture, guide and develop the legal mechanism and framework for PIL in Nigeria (5) to be the collective voice of PIL experts for the Nigerian government, the judiciary, lawyers and other relevant stakeholders and, (6) to improve the links and communication between PIL experts in Africa.

NGPIL’s activities will be far-reaching, from research projects to academic writings, dissemination events (conferences, seminars, workshops) and creating a platform for consultation and advisory work to the Nigerian government and other relevant stakeholders. A key aim is to build PIL recognition within the legal and judicial community, one that may lead to identifying a Hague Network Judge or Judges for Nigeria.

The Committee discussed plans for an inaugural event open to the public. There was a general consensus that the event will be hosted on a virtual platform given

the uncertain climate, to take place in the Spring/Summer of 2021. Holding a virtual event would have huge benefits, especially the ease of engagement and participation for our main target audience across Nigeria and beyond. The proposal is to work in collaboration with the Nigerian Bar Association and academics at the Nigerian Institute of Advance Legal Studies, drawing together academics and practitioners alike, and extending invitations to the Nigerian government and other relevant organisations.

The next meeting of the NGPIL will take place in January 2021.