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DevComs Rewards Eight Journalists for Outstanding Contributions to the Education Sector in Nigeria

(Abuja, October 19, 2011) Development Communications (DevComs) Network through its Journalism Development Programme (JDP) on Education Sector in Nigeria has awarded eight journalists from six states of the federation and the FCT, for effectively reporting the status of the Nigerian Education Sector.

The award presentation held at Bolingo Hotel and Towers, Abuja on Wednesday, was the completion of the Journalism Development Programme on the Education Sector which span between August 2010 and September 2011 to build broad based understanding and action towards the acceptance and support for initiatives on reform in the education sector in Nigeria.

The awardees were selected from the 18 journalists who were nominated from the 60 education reporters that were selected to participate in the Lagos and Kaduna capacity building, out of the 130 education reporters initially sensitized in Kwara, Lagos, Jigawa, Kano, Kaduna, Enugu and Abuja.

The eight winners have shown a high degree of commitment, and outstanding contributions to national development through their various reports on the state of the Nigerian Education Sector. These reports were selected out of the pool of media reports (from print, radio and television) submitted by the 18 nominated journalists at the final stage, based on richness of content, accuracy, relevance and logical sequence.

The eight awardees comprise of seven winners from the six states and the FCT, as well as the national winner. During his keynote address, the Policy Advisor, Civil Society Action Coalition on Education for All (CSACEFA), Mr. Wale Samuel urged the media to further deepen efforts at ensuring transparency and accountability in the education sector.

“The media’s active engagement with the FOIA will undoubtedly shed more light on incidence of corruption in the education sector and also enhance accountability”, he said.

While speaking during the Award presentation, the Programme Director of Development Communications Network (DevComs) said journalism need to take its pride of place in Nigeria’s

development and education is a key sector in this regard. Meanwhile, the award presentation had in attendance members of the Civil Society Organisations on education, journalists and Media experts and other stakeholder.

About Journalism Development Programme (JDP)

The Journalism Development Programme (JDP) began in August 2010 with a desk review of 5 national dailies, followed by sensitizations of about 130 education reporters drawn from Lagos, Enugu, Kwara, Kaduna, Kano, Jigawa and the Federal Capital Territory. These sensitizations set the pace for engagement with the media on education and generated a mass of stories from the print and broadcast media in the JDP States.

The goal of the project was to build broad based understanding and action towards the acceptance and support for initiatives on reform in the education sector in Nigeria, and Increase public awareness on the necessity of good education to improved living standards and better quality of live. The programme also established linkages between development experts from different fields of specialization and the education journalists.

Out of the 130 (about 20 from each state) journalists that attended the sensitizations in respective States and the FCT, about 60 of them who did stories resonating issues of basic education were selected for the State capacity buildings in Lagos and Kaduna State. These 60 were divided into two groups, the successful journalists from Lagos, Enugu and Kwara attended the capacity building in Lagos State. While those from Kano, Kaduna, Jigawa and FCT attended theirs in Kaduna State.

The state capacity building served as a way of deepening the knowledge of the journalists in reporting unreported developments and issues in the education sector. More so, this served as a way of charging the journalists to hold their various state governments accountable for issues on education and other linkages.

The best 18 committed journalists were selected for the national capacity building in Abuja, where media experts, education professionals and stakeholders in the education sector further equipped them with necessary details, facts and figures relating to the education sector in Nigeria. This workshop provided an opportunity for the participants to be linked with four experienced media experts who were introduced as mentors to the participants as their mentors.

Mentoring of the journalists started immediately after the national capacity building, and individual journalists have been guided and directed on how to go about their various stories.

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