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AROCSA Renames LTFP after Innocent Chukwuma in Honour of His Memory and Legacy

ABUJA, Nigeria. September 23, 2021 – In recognition of his immense contribution to civil society in Africa throughout the course of his life and in particular, the significant role he played in the founding of the Association for Research on Civil Society in Africa (AROCSA) and the establishment of the African NGO Leadership Transition Fellowship Program (LTFP), AROCSA is pleased to announce that the program has now been renamed the 'Innocent Chukwuma African NGO Leadership Transition Fellowship Program (ICLTFP)' as a way of honoring and immortalizing his memory and legacy.

The decision to rename the program after Innocent Chukwuma, who until his death in April this year, was the regional director of the Ford Foundation West Africa office, arose from the combination of the significant role he played in setting up AROCSA and establishing the LTFP; AROCSA's consideration of the best way to honor his legacy; and suggestions from some of the members of the last cohort of the LTFP which took place for the first time on African soil in Ghana from 1st March to 30th May, 2021.

At AROCSA's last quarterly board meeting which took place in September 2021, a unanimous decision was made to rename the program after Innocent Chukwuma. The decision was subsequently communicated to his family through his wife; Mrs. Josephine Chukwuma, who was deeply appreciative of the consideration, and happy to give her blessings to AROCSA's request. Her personal statement on the role Innocent Chukwuma played in the birthing of AROCSA and the establishment of the LTFP is appended to this press release. We pray that his soul continues to rest in perfect peace and that the Almighty continues to give his family the strength to bear his loss.

As part of efforts to further ground the program in the realities of the African experience, AROCSA is partnering with the Centre on African Philanthropy and Social Investment (CAPSI) at the Wits Business School in Johannesburg, South Africa to deliver the next couple of iterations of the program.

The Fellowship is funded by the Ford Foundation. Applications to the 2022 ICLTFP open on Monday, 11th October, 2021.

About AROCSA

Founded in 2015, the Association for Research on Civil Society in Africa (AROCSA) is an Africa wide membership organization set up to promote and advance a community of excellence in research and practice on civil society in service of Africa's development.

The AROCSA Story & Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma

In 2010, 12 years after Innocent Chukwuemeka Chukwuma founded CLEEN Foundation (in January 1998), he became restless on what next to do. He felt he had set CLEEN on a solid foundation and needed to move on to something else. What it was, he didn't know. He wasn't sure. He had discussions with his friend Prof Chris Stone, a criminal justice expert who he had met six years earlier when he was Director Vera Institute and together, they had formed the Altus Global Alliance with members spanning five (5) continents, promoting safety and security from a multicultural perspective and encouraging comparative analysis across various countries.

In 2010, Prof Stone was Professor of Practice of Criminal Justice & Faculty Chair of the Criminal Justice & Policy & Management programme at the Harvard Kennedy School. He invited Innocent to come over and join the Faculty as visiting Professor of Practice for 4 months, teaching NGOs in the Global South. Innocent was there between August – December 2010. That period gave Innocent time and space away from daily running CLEEN, to reflect on the journey thus far, and what next. He returned to the country in December 2010, and commenced putting in place a transition plan in 2011. In December 2012, he disengaged from CLEEN as Founding Executive Director and joined Ford Foundation as Regional Director for West Africa.

In 2014, just one year after he joined FORD, recognizing how the 4 months away in an academic institution (Harvard) helped him in reflecting on the work he had done so far; think about next steps; put in place a transition plan; and realize the importance of collaboration between academics & practitioners, Innocent initiated discussions with Association for Research on Non-Profit Organizations & Voluntary Action (ARNOVA). Shariq Siddiqui was the Executive Director. The idea was to see how a similar association of academics and civil society organizations could be set up in West Africa in particular, and Africa in general.

The discussions between Innocent and Shariq representing their respective organizations, metamorphosed to the very first meeting of academics and civil society leaders in West Africa in September 2015 in Accra-Ghana. There AROCSA was birthed. There it was decided that the flag programmes will include annual conferences that would bring academics and practitioners together, fellowships for civil society professionals and academics etc. This gave birth to the Leadership Transition Fellowship Programme that has been going on for four (4) years now.

The LTFP has given birth to almost 30 fellows who are currently at various stages of planning and implementing their transition plans.

Innocent passed on Saturday April 3rd, 2021 after a very brief illness. I am glad the Board of AROCSA has deemed it fit to name the fellowship after him. On behalf of the children, I would like to thank the Board and pledge the family support in any way we can towards ensuring this legacy continues.

Yours Sincerely,

Josephine Effah-Chukwuma