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# Foreword

The instrument setting up the National Institute, amongst other objectives and functions, empowers it to organise and carry out, on an inter-disciplinary basis, research into the social, economic, political, security, scientific, cultural, and other problems facing the country, and to formulate available options for their solution.

In pursuit of this objective, the Institute, in collaboration with the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), organised and hosted, a National Conference on Drug Abuse and Trafficking, between January 20-24, 1992, in the hope that the deliberations would lead to a better understanding of the drug problem.

It was the Romans, in the days of the Roman Empire several hundred years ago, who had cause to warn about three evils that could destroy nations and empires. These were (and still are) collusion with foreign enemies, indiscriminate sex and drug abuse. The focus of the issue under discussion is drug abuse and trafficking which are threatening to undermine our nation.

How serious is the drug problem? From reports world-wide, there have been allegations of drug abuse and trafficking against heads of state, senior government officers, military men, the judiciary, business men and the ordinary man on the street and school children.

The war against drugs is not easy to win. If the war were to be fought with scud missiles and electronically controlled, precision guided smart bombs with orbiting sky satellites providing the vital aerial photographs, it would have been over long ago. Frustration is seemingly creeping in everywhere.

Not too long ago, the Economist reported that nearly 12 tons of cocaine was seized by customs officers in Miami, U.S.A. Described as the second biggest seizure in America's history, the shipment allegedly belonged to the Colombian Carli drug cartel whose annual turnover was then put at $100 billion. The consignment, valued at $190m was also said to be a mere "mosquito bite" to the cartel's business.

This illustrates how complicated the issue of Drug Abuse and Trafficking has become in recent times. Back home however, it is refreshing to note that the war against drug trafficking in Nigeria is being won by the combined efforts of the NDLEA and other agencies charged with this task. Recent reports indicate that only nine Nigerians were arrested with hard drugs at the International airports between January and July 1995.

It is my hope that the proceedings of the conference here will further educate the nation on the matter and assist policy makers and executors in tackling imaginatively the various ramifications of the drug issue.


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Dec. 1995

# INFORMATION MANAGEMENT FOR DRUG TRAFFICKING AND CONTROL IN NIGERIA

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## Introduction

Achieving the aims and objectives of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) Decree of 1989 depends essentially on judicious consumption of up-to-date and comprehensive information for both policy decisions and operational effectiveness. This assertion in itself represents a daunting challenge to information works in the area of the management of drug related information. The challenge assumes a much wider dimension because the fight against drug trafficking requires inter-agencies cooperation which in its own way calls for information sharing among the individual agencies.

However, a careful look at the NDLEA decree reveals that there is no any clear cut provision for information component of the drug war. One can then only assume that information is either taken for granted as insignificant entity in the drug war or left to the operators of the decree to initiate modalities for generating, processing and dissemination of their own information. Either assumption has its own implications for drug information management. It is, therefore, against this background that this presentation aims at proposing an information model for a national data base for the control of drug trafficking and abuse in Nigeria.

Thus this presentation has Nigeria as its primary focal point although it may draw from the experiences of other countries. To this extent the paper will treat three important issues. The first issue relates to the value of information management for drug trafficking in relation to information generation and flow within the context of NDLEA structure. The second issue is a presentation of a national data base model for drug related information. Finally, the paper is concluded with a discussion on policy issues that may arise in the implementation of the model. Issues related to Information Technology (IT) are given prominence here. *The raison-d'etre* for this springs from the belief "that the failure of most programmes in this country derives from inadequate attention to the policy issues" (Adeyemi, 1989) pertaining to such programmes as opposed to defects in the conception and implementation of such plans. But before we go into the discussion of the three main issues stated above, it may be necessary to clarify some of the concepts being employed in the paper. This is important to avoid ambiguous interpretations. These concepts are "information" "information management" "drug trafficking and control".

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## Information

The definition of information is as varied as there are writers with each definition reflective of the contextual perception of such writers. A common denominator of such definitions is however, the emphasis on the utilitarian value of information relative to decision making process of individuals, organisations, agencies and nations in general.

Nonetheless information in this presentation is defined as the end result of

"structured data of value which in themselves are the outcome of conscious observations, thoughts and actions either for immediate or anticipated communication and consumption" (Oladele, 1991).

in relation to a designated goal. This then implies that information is a facilitating input to any decision making process. This it does when the individual, organisation or a nation is presented with relevant facts and figures pertaining to a situation which enhances final decisions in relation to other conflicting options.

An important characteristic of information which is very obvious in this definition is the symbiotic relationship between information and data. The line of demarcation between the two concepts is rather blurred. However, it may suffice to say that data is a function of information. In other words, proper analysis or interpretation of data will produce information or, further still, data must be related to events or situation before information can emerge on any given issue. To this extent, data and information are used interchangeably.

Still on the characteristics or attributes of information is what one may refer to as the trinity of information as far as its relevance is concerned. This trinity comprises accuracy, authenticity and timeliness. An inaccurate piece of information when used can lead to faulty results just as much as inauthentic information can lead to chaos. Also an untimely piece of information no matter how accurate and authentic may not likely yield the desired result. In most cases it will amount to medicine after death. Thus for information to be of value to any particular situations or operations, such information must be accurate, authentic and timely. Anything short of this is misinformation.

## Information Management

Information management is an all-embracing dynamic process geared towards holistic harnessing of the information resources of an organisation or nation for easy accessibility, transfer and delivery. As a process it relies on utilisation of spatial, material, equipment, and human resources for the selection, acquisition, processing and storage of information for future retrieval. At each level of the above functions, value is being added so as to give such information its distinct identity. Institutional outfits for

carrying out such functions include libraries and information bureaux.

Information management as a dynamic process, is not only geared towards satisfying immediate information needs but it is also expected to be able to anticipate future information needs. It is at this point that past experiences can come into play more than ever.

In recent times, the concept of information management has assumed a much wider dimension with the advent of information technology which is the application of information technologies (computer, electronics, and telecommunications) to information management. These technologies have made it possible for the information manager to process and transmit large volume of information with relative case. For instance it is very possible to transmit information from a single terminal to as many points as possible simultaneously. Other attributes of these technologies which have been found to be beneficial are high recall, precision, faster information transfer and delivery.

## Drug Trafficking and Control

The NDLEA decree of 1989 refers to "narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances," (Nigeria 1989). Thus drug trafficking in this context is construed to mean illegal movement or transportation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from one point to the other within Nigeria, and into, or out of Nigeria.

On the other hand, drug control embraces all collective efforts aimed at reducing drastically or outright elimination of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and their use in Nigeria. The attainment of this objective relies on human, and material resources coupled with comprehensive information resources. It is, however, pertinent to mention that ability to assemble such logistics is a function of existing data or information on drug trafficking and control in the country and elsewhere. For instance information on drug origin, destination, mode of trafficking and users readily become very crucial to drug control.

## The Value of Information Management for Drug Trafficking

In the typical African traditional society crime prevention and control was as much a collective responsibility of members of the society as much as it is the responsibility of the government in modern days. In the former setting, everybody had the moral obligation to contribute to the maintenance of law and order as well as eschewing those things that were likely to bring the family name into disrepute. For instance a child caught smoking tobacco or taking alcohol was not only frowned at but might be subjected to serious reprimand. In a more grievous situation the "convict" could become the object of satiric song rendition during some of the numerous annual festivals even though such offences might have been committed long before such festival.

This was enough indication of the existence of a sort of crime information/data base to which the people could fall upon in order to focus attention on offenders within

the community. Such data base was usually oral or in the collective memory of the members of the community. Herein lies the value of information management for crime prevention and control in its simple and rural form.

Modernization has changed all that now. Things are no longer the same. Reasons for this cannot be far fetched. Urbanization is not just having its implications for traditional values but it is also granting heterogeneity as well as anonymity. In addition to this, modern technology has in no small measure contributed to the progress of mankind generally, and also in the area of crime. The capacity to commit crime such as drug trafficking is as alarming as it has compounded the dilemma of those charged with the prevention and control of crime. In a situation like this, drug control can no longer rely on human memory as in the traditional rural life. Rather, control of drug trafficking can now benefit from the combination of human, material, and information resources within a broader context of inter-agencies cooperation.

Such inter-agencies cooperative initiative must as a matter of necessity develop the capability to grapple with the dynamics of drug trafficking problems in the country and elsewhere with the ultimate aim of evolving plans and strategies to combat the menace. It is at this level that information generation and use become very crucial and important as a strategic input. The absence of information at this level on the other hand can better be appreciated against its opportunity cost which is perpetuation of drug trafficking. A discussion of the value of information for drug control will be incomplete without reference to the nature of operations for the control of drug trafficking and abuse. This is of particular importance because of the implications such operations can hold for the kind of data base being envisaged in the succeeding section of this presentation.

The nature of operation for the control of drug trafficking is basically a field work and covert in nature up to the point of arrest of suspects. At the level of arrest, the operation becomes overt with the collation of facts and figures for eventual prosecution and final decisions of the tribunal. The covert nature of such operations requires that the NDLEA should be able to identify potential traffickers, barons and couriers. This operation relies more on tip-offs from informants leading to some monitoring to establish certain characteristics about the individual potential trafficker. The end result of the monitoring activity will reveal some data on the individual. Such data may include: (i) personal details (ii) type/nature of employment (iii) hobbies and pastimes (iv) movements. On the other hand, the nature of control for drug abuse is *largely* overt with seminars, lectures, sponsored radio/TV talks and jingles, newspaper advertisements, posters, bills and group therapy all becoming relevant modalities. The principal objective of these modalities is to both educate and create awareness in the public about the dangers of drug abuse.

Thus, any attempt to discuss the value of information for drug trafficking should not place emphasis only on information generation alone but should equally include the analysis of such information and use same for the identification and arrest of traffickers

as well as forecasting and explaining the incidence of drug trafficking in an environment. This postulation presumes the existence of a versatile data base that is capable of supplying such information that can lead to the evolvement of operational strategy, prosecution methods, rehabilitation of addicts as well as the welfare of convicts.

## Towards a National Data Base for Drug Trafficking

Efforts at combating drug trafficking in Nigeria is not just an exercise at reinforcing the internal security of the country and the enhancement of the general well-being of the citizenry but also a deliberate effort at redeeming the international image of the country and its citizens. Attainment of these goals represents a serious challenge to the NDLEA. To achieve its objectives, the NDLEA would require cooperation from other agencies, at least from the point of view of information/data generation, processing, transfer and delivery relative to operational efficiency and effectiveness.

To this end, a national data base divided into two inter-related cells for drug trafficking is hereby proposed as an initiative towards the realisation of the intentions of the NDLEA decree. This proposition derives from a number of factors which have all combined to make the data base imperative.

The NDLEA decree specifies the functional linkages among the various units. But one cannot but notice the apparent absence of provision for the management of drug related information which forms the quintessence of drug control exercise. And in a situation like this one cannot but assume that either the importance of information was taken for granted or it is deliberately subsumed within the respective component departments or units of the NDLEA. If the latter assumption holds, it then means that each unit is semi-autonomous with regards to generation and use of information. The implications of this type of arrangement can be numerous and far reaching. Some of these are exhibition of gaps for information collection and collation and inadvertent restriction of inter-units information flow. The overall import of this is unnecessary duplication of efforts and wastage of scarce resources. Furthermore, in the said decree, the fight against drug trafficking calls for joint effort on the part of the NDLEA and customs in particular. Since each agency has its distinct operational methods, it will only be more appropriate for all cooperating agencies to have a common pool of information with a view to initiating common strategy and service effectiveness.

The international character of drug trafficking also dictates the needs for a national focal point for international reference and information sharing.

## Objective of the Data Base

The data base being envisaged is expected to achieve the following objectives:

(i) to house and provide comprehensive records on any individual/group who must have been convicted of drug related offences either in

Nigeria or elsewhere as well as those currently under investigation. Such data must of necessity include details like name. aliases, addresses, particulars of case and conviction. worth or assets. laboratory tests, etc.

(ii) to be able to alert operatives about an impending trafficking. Such facility will provide information as to the port of departure and destination, particulars of the trafficker, mode of transportation and its particulars.

(iii) to provide enough materials on drug users and post rehabilitation records and the welfare of convicts.

(iv) to produce adequate information for analysis within the context of a general R & D on drug control measures and implications of drug for the socio-economic and political well-being of the country as well as for training purpose.

(v) to serve as a national focal point both for reference and information sharing between NDLEA and similar agencies outside Nigeria.

## Data Base Structure and Implementation

The proposed data base is conceived to be located within the NDLEA operational structure. It is also conceived to function in a sort of criss-crossing networking mode with a compliment of automatic data processing facilities, telecommunication and transportation technologies to facilitate input and output of data between the data base and all the cooperating agencies in the drug war. These agencies in addition to NDLEA are Customs. Immigration, Police, Courts, the Prison Service and the general public.

For the purpose of effective information delivery without necessarily compromising security, the data base is divided into two mutually inclusive inter-related cells with each cell meeting the information needs of the component units of NDLEA. The investigative cell is conceived to serve the general and assets investigation unit whose operation is by nature covert. The public awareness cell on the other hand is envisaged to take care of the information needs of both the prosecution and counselling units as well as the training programmes overt. With regard to the data base contents, the investigative cell will substantially house intelligence reports from operatives in the field. The public awareness cell on its own will house information sources like books, journals, magazines, newspapers, seminar/conference proceedings and reports of relevance to the NDLEA mandate. The relationship between the foreign agencies. interpol and the data base will be limited to the sharing of drug related intelligence of a much wider international

connections. It may be necessary to however mention that the relationship between the data base and the individual agencies does not mean that the agencies cannot in addition operate their individual in-house data base.

Successful implementation of the data-base should benefit from the collective planning exercise of the NDLEA in particular as well as those of other cooperating agencies. This collective planning exercise will in turn bear on the capability of the data base to respond to the demand of its users in general as well as meeting the aforementioned objectives without necessarily compromising security controls that must be built into the system right from the designing stage. The security controls will guarantee the safety of certain vital information/data such as intelligence, which may not necessarily be shared.

The design of a data processing system such as being envisaged in this presentation must benefit from both the operational objectives of the data base itself as well as from the overall policy objectives and plan of the environment in which the data base is to be operationalised. Directly tied to this, is the need to also consider the relationship between potential users of the system and the system itself. In this case the operational differences in terms of method of the cooperating agencies must be taken into consideration in order to have an acceptable operational mix. Other feature of data processing system that are peculiar to systems and are worth considering at the design stage are performance, flexibility, security and funding. These factors will in turn provide the necessary feedback for system evaluation.

The completion of the system design will naturally lead to the inputing stage provided the design has been tested and adjudged good enough. It is at this level that data capturing will come in. The need to evolve and utilize common approach to data capturing needs little or no emphasis. This approach is dictated by the inter-agency cooperative nature of the data base. The common approach to data capturing will require having common thesaurus or concepts and common formatting style. These uniform approach apart from enhancing the integrity of the data base will go a long way at facilitating operations at the clearing house relative to input into the system. This will in turn yield the expected common output. Some of the data expected from the agencies as input into the data base can be highlighted as follows:-

| Agency | Input Required |
|---|---|
|  | Personal data: Name, aliases, age, addresses (postal and residential), telephone number, height, colour of hair, eye, race/complexion, place of birth, home town, LGA, state, nationality, passport number, marital status, number of children, parents name, occupation. |
|  | Particulars of suspicion: types of drug, possession, trafficking, mode of trafficking, departure point, destination. |
|  | Finance/Assets: Bankers, account number (local and foreign), bank statement, properties and worth. |
|  | Other: Medical records, connection with previous cases, habits, friends etc. |
| Customs | Records of Detection and arrest |
| Immigration | Illegal entry, passport related matter, visas (foreigner). |
| Police | Previous criminal records, suspicious movements of goods, properties, and financial instruments, records of drug related crime etc. |
| Tribunals | Tribunal proceedings etc. |
| Prison | Completed sentences, welfare records etc. |
| Public/Private | Seminars/conference proceedings, journal/newspapers/magazines articles, policy papers, relevant laws, reports, R & D etc. |

## Technologies for System Application

*Computer:* The idea that the data base should benefit from available automatic processing facilities is a deliberate one. This idea derives from the need for speed and accuracy in a data processing environment coupled with the need for large storage facilities.

These conditions can all be met through the application of computers to information management as opposed to manual operations. There is no doubt that these

information management as opposed to manual operations. There is no doubt that these relative advantages of computer over manual operations commend it to most organisations in the service sector that are now computerising their information resources.

However, there are a number of mitigating factors to computer application at the global level in general and Nigeria in particular. Some of these factors are high cost especially in the world market and the dependent culture of Nigeria on foreign economies in terms of equipment sourcing. In the international market, there is a sort of inverse relationship between the cost price of computer hardwares and softwares.

For instance while the price of computer hardware is on the decrease as a result of new grounds being broken in science and technology the price of application softwares is, on the other hand on the increase. The analysis of this phenomenon is however outside the scope of this presentation. But the phenomenon holds some implications for the purchasing organisations in terms of cost.

At the national level in this country, there are as many computer salesmen as there are all sorts of computer hardwares for sale. Unfortunately these salesmen go about under the cloak of computer experts promising heaven and earth in the name of after sales service. No sooner do they succeed in talking their customers into buying their wares than they vanish into thin air. One should therefore be wary of some of these so-called experts and products in the market whose quality and reliability have not been tested within our local environment.

Of course acquisition of computer hardware is useless without the necessary application softwares. The option in this regard will be to develop an in-house software or obtain one on off-the shelf basis. In the latter case, one should be careful of what is known as "system virus". These are built in bugging devices that are capable of endangering the full performance of such softwares. This does not mean that all commercial softwares are bad. Thus it is the view of these authors that an in-house developed software may be more appropriate given the security nature of the proposed data base.

## Telecommunications

The importance of data transfer and delivery between the data base and the cooperating agencies on the one hand and between the data and the external bodies on the other hand needs little or no emphasis. In this regard telecommunication facilities that are capable of providing rapid and secured data base transmission to and fro the data base will be very crucial.

According to estimates, telecommunication facilities in Nigeria as at December, 1987, include far more than 236,858 telephone exchanges with about 400,000 lines, 5778 telex exchange and a number of radio link and facsimile (fax) facilities (Ayuba 1988:14). These are expected to increase within some years to come. All these have been described "as reliable" by NITEL sources. Inspite of this, the data base managers will still require

dedicated lines that can transmit data to and fro the data base without the usual disruptions such as currently being experienced in most of our communication systems. Such dedicated lines will go a long way in reducing security impairment of the data base thereby enhancing its integrity.

It is however necessary to point out at this level a technical constraint that may not be obvious to many people. In Nigeria effecting computer and telecommunication interfacing can be very problematic. This is because computers process data in digital mode while our telecommunication facilities are in analogue mode. This is an area that will attract experts in both computer and telecommunication technologies with a view to solving the problem.

## Manpower

The actualisation of the data base, all other factors being equal, revolves around personnel. Personnel in areas of system analysis, design, software engineering, computer operators, and communication experts are needed from the project planning stage right through the implementation stage. Such experts can either be got from the labour market or in-house trained. This of course is a policy issue for the project managers.

## Policy Issues Arising in the Implementation of the Data Base

The present national efforts at combating drug abuse and trafficking stand to gain immensely from the implementation of the data base. But its implementation is bound to raise some policy issues which must be addressed right from the inception of the project. Some of these issues are project funding, inter-agency rivalries and politics as well as diplomatic issues between the NDLEA and its counterparts elsewhere as well as with the interpol.

## Funding

A project such as this is capital intensive both in terms of manpower and equipment. In the case of the former, salaries and emoluments must be attractive enough to be able to attract the best of brains in this area. Of particular importance at this level is the project manager whose status within the NDLEA should be within the agency's management cadre. For equipment and other fixed capital, adequate funding must be available right from the inception of the project. A common practice in this kind of project is to release fund on a piecemeal basis which experience has shown to cause unnecessary delays. Secondly the project is bound to suffer from inflations since there is always a time gap between when fund is released and when expenditure was actually needed.

## Agency Politics/Rivalry

Most projects involving two or more agencies or services have failed in the past as a result of petty inter-agency rivalries and politics. Such politics may range from who the senior partner is to variations in the operational methods of the agencies themselves. To this extent it is imperative for all the cooperating agencies to come to agreement as to who the senior partner is as well as to harmonise those grey areas of their service operations. This will in turn lead to common operation proceeding in respect of drug control.

## Diplomatic Issues

The international character of drug trafficking calls for cooperation amongst all national agencies enforcing drug law with their counterparts elsewhere and the Interpol. This in itself calls for memoranda of understanding especially in the areas of information and intelligence sharing, in relation to the arrest of traffickers. This relationship in itself also calls for uniform standard of information exchange and wherever possible translation services.

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