"FROM DELAY TO DELIVERY. FROM PROCESS TO PERFORMANCE."

A MANIFESTO



By

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FOR THE

OFFICE OF
GENERAL SECRETARY
NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

#unwRAPaNewSecretariat
#TheEngine

"From Delay to Delivery. From Process to Performance."



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A WORD FROM Dr. Rapulu Ernest Nduka

I come before the Bar with a simple proposition: the Nigerian Bar Association deserves a Secretariat that matches the standards we hold others to. We are a profession built on precision, timeliness, and the faithful discharge of duty. We cannot credibly demand those virtues from the institutions we engage - the courts, the legislature, the executive- if we do not first model them within our own house.

I served as National Publicity Secretary of the Nigerian Bar Association from 2020 to 2022, as part of the National Executive Committee under the leadership of Olumide Akpata. I have also served on the General Council of the Bar, and prior to my elevation to the national stage, I served as Secretary of the Onitsha Branch of the Nigerian Bar Association from 2016 to 2018, a role that grounded me in the

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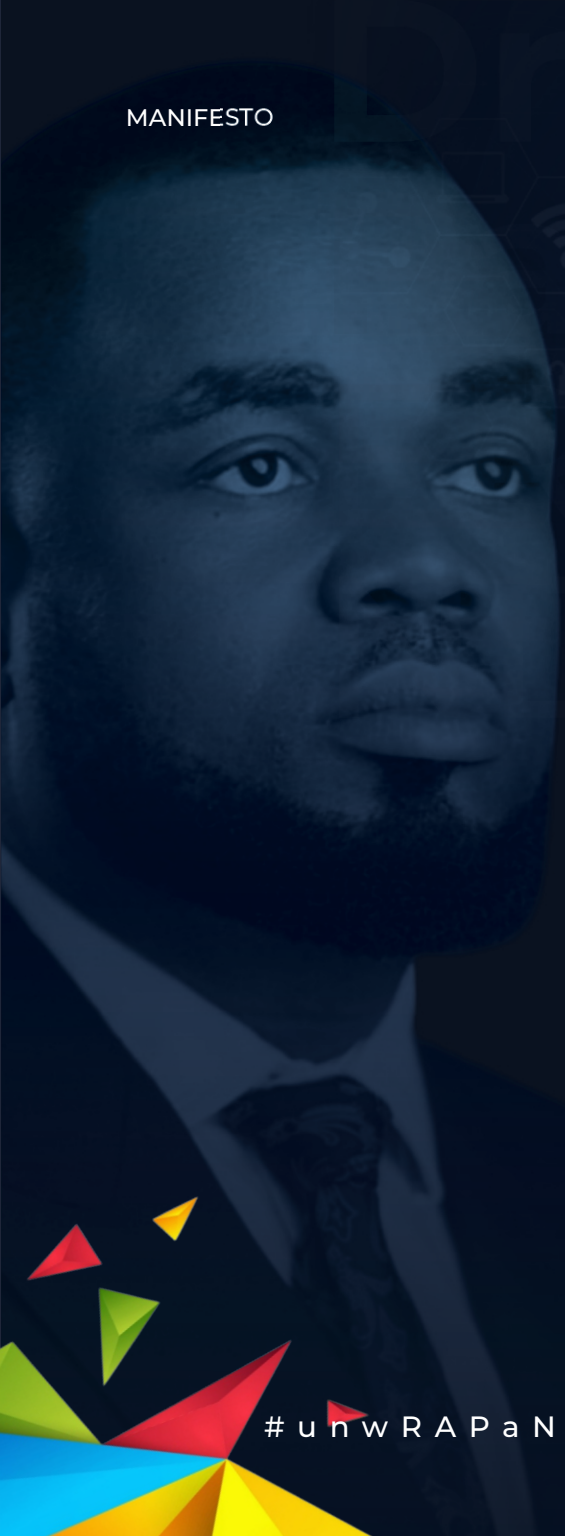
day-to-day administrative realities that branches across the country navigate, and that first sharpened my understanding of what members truly need from their Association.

My experiences, from serving as Branch Secretary in Onitsha, where I was immersed in the grassroots administrative realities that define the daily relationship between members and their Association, to managing the public image of the Bar at the national level, amplifying its voice by coordinating communications across a complex and diverse membership, working within the structures of the national Secretariat, and applying myself to the strengthening of our professional ethics and its administration, equip me with an intimate and multi-layered understanding of how this institution functions at every level, where the pressure points lie, and what it takes to make it perform at its best. It is precisely the breadth and depth of these experiences that prepare me to take the Secretariat to greater heights.

I am not here to tear down what exists. Much has been built. But frameworks without performance standards are mere architecture, impressive to look at, but insufficient to serve. My mission, if honoured with your mandate, is to close that gap: to make the Secretariat not just operational, but reliably excellent.

This manifesto is a commitment, not merely a list of intentions. Every promise herein is measurable. Every pillar is actionable within the tenure. You will know, at year's end, whether I delivered.

"From Delay to Delivery. From Process to Performance."



Vision

A Secretariat that functions as the true engine of the Association - efficient, transparent, accountable, and worthy of the trust of over 200,000 Nigerian lawyers.

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The Honest Diagnosis

We must speak plainly.
Members of the Bar routinely encounter the following:

- The seal issuance system, while functional, can be further streamlined and consolidated to deliver a faster, more seamless experience for applicants. The goal is to build on what works and eliminate the friction that remains.
- There is an opportunity to more widely promote and embed the digital stamp system introduced under the current administration, a genuine innovation that has not yet reached its full potential across the membership.
- Institutional memory in the administration of professional ethics and the work of the Legal Practitioners Disciplinary Committee remains fragile. When officers change, knowledge walks out the door with them, and the continuity of some disciplinary processes suffers as a result.
- Correspondence to the Secretariat does not always receive timely acknowledgment, leaving members uncertain as to whether their communication has been received and is being attended to.
- Lack of visibility into the status of pending requests means members are left to follow up repeatedly, with no reference point to track progress.
- Digital platforms exist but remain under-utilised and poorly integrated, creating a gap between the Association's digital capability and the service members actually experience.
- A sense, particularly among young lawyers and lawyers with disabilities, that the Secretariat is difficult to access or navigate, a perception we must actively work to change.

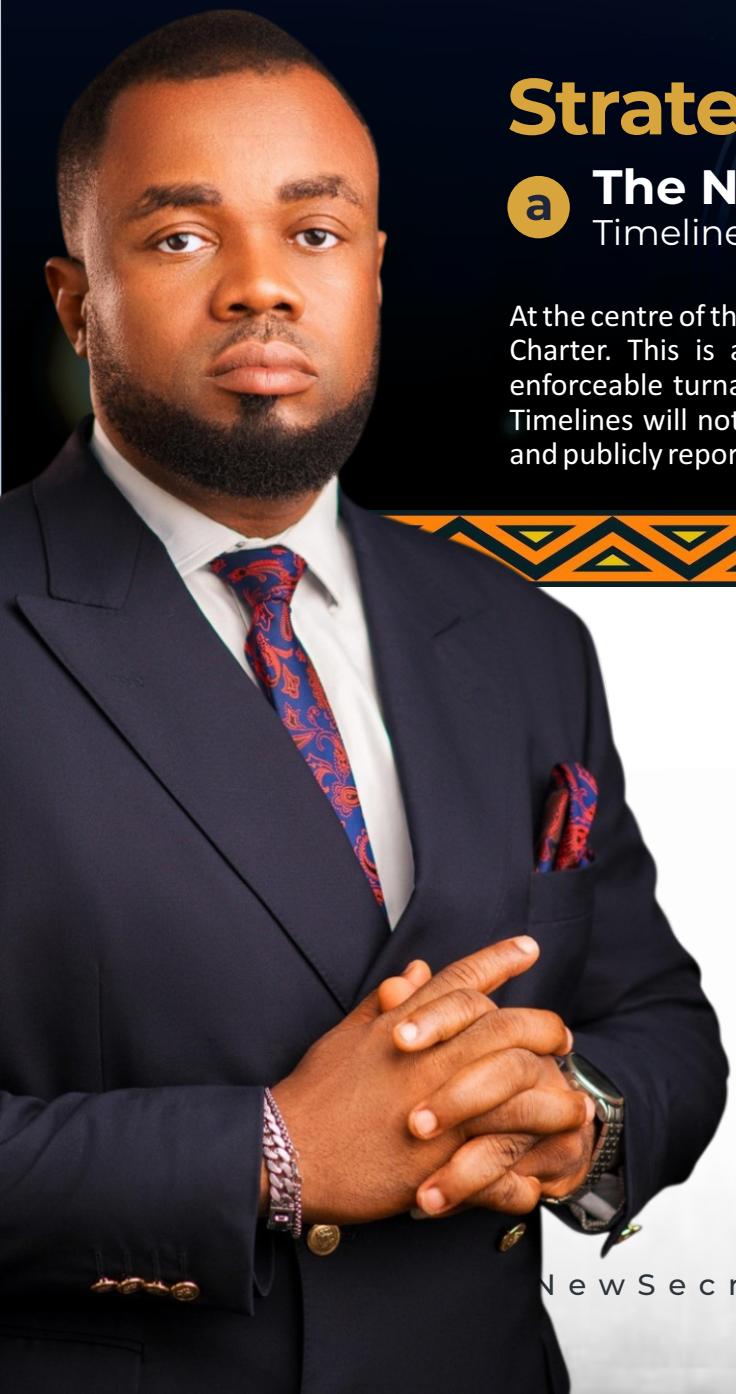
The problem is not the absence of systems. The problem is the absence of performance standards, enforcement mechanisms, and a culture of accountability. That is what this manifesto addresses.

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Mission

Optimisation, Not Reinvention

This campaign does not promise to dismantle and rebuild. It promises something harder and more valuable: to make what exists work as it was always meant to. Fix what fails. Strengthen what works. Deliver consistent, measurable results. The transition I am committed to is this: from systems to performance - from presence to productivity - from availability to reliability.



Strategic Pillars

a The NBA Service Charter:
Timelines as Binding Commitments

At the centre of this manifesto is one flagship reform: the NBA Service Charter. This is a formally published document that will define enforceable turnaround times for every major Secretariat process. Timelines will not be aspirational; they will be binding, monitored, and publicly reported upon.

The Core Charter Commitments

- NBA seal applications processed within a defined and published number of business days.
- All incoming correspondence acknowledged within 12 to 24 hours of receipt.
- A strengthened administrative framework that preserves institutional memory on professional ethics and disciplinary matters, ensuring that knowledge, precedent, and process continuity are not lost when personnel change.
- Active promotion of good professional practices and ethical conduct through periodic engagements, workshops, and recognition of members who exemplify the standards the Bar

expects of its practitioners.

- Formal requests (certifications, letters, approvals) processed within defined turnaround periods that are publicly posted and strictly observed.
- Complaints acknowledged within 24 hours, with a substantive response delivered within five working days.
- Quarterly compliance reports published to NEC and branch chairmen, so that performance against these commitments is transparent and verifiable.
- All digital processes and member data handled through the Secretariat will be administered in strict compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023.

b Digital Systems: Better Use of What We Already Have

The NBA already possesses a centralised digital portal and a member database. The objective is not to procure new technology but to maximise the return on existing investment. Specific measures include:

- Improving the speed, reliability, and user-friendliness of the existing portal.
- A member should be able to log on to the NBA portal and find everything that belongs to them (their Practising Certificates, their Bar Practising Fees, their correspondence history, their pending requests) in one place, without navigating multiple disconnected locations. The current fragmentation of member records across the platform will be addressed as a priority, consolidating personal and professional documentation into a single, intuitive member dashboard.
- Integrating more Secretariat services fully into the digital platform to reduce manual processing.
- Introducing a unique reference number system for all requests, enabling end-to-end tracking.
- Deploying automated status updates to members when their requests move through processing stages.

- All digital processes and member data handled through the Secretariat will be administered in strict compliance with the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023, embedding privacy and data security as a foundational principle of our digital administration.
- Eliminating the gap between what the platform is capable of and what it actually delivers.

c Internal Administrative Efficiency

A Secretariat that performs externally must first be well-ordered internally. I will introduce Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for all core processes, ensuring consistency regardless of personnel changes. Minutes of meetings will be circulated within a defined period following each sitting. Workflows will be mapped, bottlenecks identified, and streamlining undertaken as a standing priority rather than a one-off exercise.

d Communication: Proactive, Multi-Channel, and Consistent

No lawyer should have to chase the Secretariat for information that ought to have been communicated to them. I will institutionalise a proactive communication framework that includes:

- Monthly Secretariat bulletins distributed to all branches via digital channels.
- A consistent multi-channel communication strategy (email, SMS, platform notifications).
- Structured feedback mechanisms through which members can formally raise service concerns.
- Regular, structured engagement between the national Secretariat and branch executives.

e Accountability

Accountability is not a buzzword; it is a structural requirement. Under my administration of the Secretariat, performance benchmarks will be established at the outset of each year. Compliance against those benchmarks will be reported periodically to NEC, branch chairmen, and through published summaries to the general membership. Escalation protocols will be in place for processes that breach timeline thresholds, ensuring that delays do not simply disappear into silence.

Beyond institutional channels, I will make myself directly accessible. My personal contact number (08103692233) will be publicly available on all campaign and Association platforms. Any member who encounters a delay or a failure of service that has not been resolved through the normal process can escalate the matter to me directly. The General Secretary's office should not be remote or unreachable - it should be the last line of accountability, and I intend to be personally reachable as such.

f Inclusion

Inclusion must extend across the full breadth of our membership. Young lawyers navigating the early stages of their careers, lawyers living with disabilities, and our senior colleagues at the Bar all deserve a Secretariat and digital platforms that are designed with their specific needs in mind, not as an afterthought, but as a deliberate accessibility standard. We will audit our digital interfaces for accessibility compliance and ensure that no member is effectively excluded from Secretariat services by reason of inexperience, physical limitation, age, or digital unfamiliarity.

The process of effecting a change of name on the Call to Bar Roll is one in which the NBA Secretariat will take a more active and supportive role, interfacing directly with the Supreme Court to simplify the process, reduce the burden on individual members, and ensure that the administrative steps required from our end are completed promptly and without unnecessary friction.

g Institutional Memory and Continuity

An Association of our size and history must not be vulnerable to the departure of any single officer. I will prioritise robust documentation, archiving, and institutional knowledge management, ensuring that what is built endures beyond any individual tenure. The Secretariat must outlast its officers, not be defined by them.

Key Deliverables within the Tenure

I commit to the following concrete deliverables, to be assessed against defined milestones:

- Launch and formal publication of the NBA Service Charter within the first 90 days.
- Introduction of a request reference and tracking system by the end of the first quarter.
- First quarterly performance report to NEC within three months of assumption of office.
- SOPs for at least five core Secretariat processes documented and operational within 120 days.
- Monthly Secretariat bulletin published without interruption throughout the tenure.
- Measurable improvement in member satisfaction scores, assessed through structured surveys.
- Organisation of at least two ethics engagement programmes per year, bringing together practitioners across branches to discuss professional standards, emerging ethical challenges, and expectations of the Bar.
- Introduction of a recognition framework that identifies and celebrates members who demonstrate exemplary ethical conduct and professional practice.

THE CAMPAIGN IN A SENTENCE



"We do not **lack systems.** We lack **performance**"

"Make the **system work** for every lawyer, every time."

"If it **enters the Secretariat,** it exits on time."

"**Timelines** are not optional. They are the law of the Secretariat."

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My Pledge to the Bar

If elected General Secretary, I will:

- Administer the Secretariat with the same rigour and discipline I would demand of any institution I appear before.
- Establish clear performance standards and hold myself publicly accountable to them.
- Ensure that every lawyer, regardless of seniority, experience, or location, is served with equal efficiency and respect.
- Help build systems and structures that will outlast my tenure and serve future officers and members alike.
- Report honestly to NEC and the general membership, including on matters where delivery falls short, and with a plan to close the gap.



Closing Statement

The Nigerian Bar Association is one of the most storied and consequential professional bodies on the African continent. Its Secretariat must reflect that standing. Not in grand pronouncements, but in the quiet, daily reliability that our members have the right to expect.

The Engine must run smoothly, consistently, and in service of every lawyer it exists to serve.

Let us unwRAP a new Secretariat. Vote for performance.
Vote for Timelines. Vote for Results.

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Dr. Rapulu Ernest Nduka

DR RAPS

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National Publicity Secretary, NBA, 2020–2022
Past Member, General Council of the Bar

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