

EDO STATE MULTI-DOOR COURT HOUSE. (ESMDC)

THE ADR CENTRE

The Edo State Multi-door Court is an innovation aimed at offering institutionalized framework for resolution of disputes by a variety of alternative methods of dispute resolution. The Multi-door Court employs a wide range of dispute resolution process for resolving disputes in today's society. Given the fact that most disputes are interest based, they are better resolved using mechanisms or process other than litigation.

The ESMDC can help disputants resolve disputes in a professional and assured manner. The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms or methods available at the ESMDC are Mediation, Arbitration, Conciliation, Negotiation, Meditative-Conciliation, Expert Determination, Early Neutral Evaluation and other Hybrid processes. We have well trained and accredited Mediators, Arbitrators and Facilitators as in-house Dispute Resolution Officers and Panel of Neutrals.

Any party may walk into the ESMDC to request or initiate the ADR process. All level of courts in Edo State can also refer non-criminal matters to the ESMDC where the court in it's opinion consider ADR as a worthwhile option. The ESMDC is also empowered by laws to intervene directly by extending invitations to disputing parties in resolving disputes.

Lawyers as the gate keepers of the justice system have a responsibility to practice and promote ADR.

Rule 15 (3) (d) of the Rules of Professional Conduct (RPC) for Legal Practitioners 2007 makes it mandatory for lawyers to inform their clients about the options of ADR before resorting to litigation or in a pending matter. S. 55 of the same Rules of Professional Conduct states that the breach of any provision in the Rules amounts to professional misconduct. To avoid liability for professional misconduct, lawyers therefore need to be well acquainted with ADR.

It is imperative that lawyers undergo orientation and trainings in ADR to appreciate its benefit. To drive home this point, the Chief Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Hon. Justice W. S. N. Onnoghen in February this year directed the Nigerian Law School to post students on chambers attachment to only law firms with ADR facilities. He stated that the

adversarial system of resolving conflicts was no longer fashionable and urged law firms to make provisions for ADR mechanism as a way of promoting peace and harmony in the society. With this pronouncement by the Chief Justice of the Federal Republic of Nigeria the pinnacle of judicial hierarchy has further ignited the fire of ADR.

Apart from court annexed Multi-door Courts in over sixteen (16) states, other court connected ADR centres are, The Industrial Court of Nigeria Mediation Centre, Court of Appeal Mediation Programme (CAMP).

The benefit of court – annexed ADR is tremendous. ADR has now gained popularity because it is cost effective, party driven, private / confidential, flexible, convenient, devoid of stringent procedures and preferred by foreign investors because of its universality. The resolutions or settlement agreements by the parties are often adopted as consent judgement of the High Court or the referral court.

Embracing ADR is the way to go as it ensures swift dispensation of justice without acrimony. I must emphasize that the Multi-door court is not meant to replace the conventional courts. It should be seen as part of the court system that promotes and achieves the resolution of disputes by consensus. The primary aim is to ensure that only cases which should be in court get to court.

The role of the Multi-door Court is like a BALM of Gilead. It will expand the possibilities of peace, settlement, promote effective communication and establish a warm relationship between disputants.



Mary Itsueli (Mrs.)
Director