

currently a consultant to the World Bank. He drew from rich array of experiences both personal and that of others to show the complexities and effectiveness of investigative journalism.

The most striking was the example of the investigative efforts of some Philippine journalists under the auspices of The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, which, among other exploits, saw their former president, Joseph Estrada packing from office after they uncovered a massive corruption perpetrated by the president, through painstaking investigation.

Another was the one on *Interviewing Techniques* where the facilitator gave useful tips on successful interviews, using the participants for practical examples. His lectures on safety tips during investigation, usually laced with humour especially on personal experiences, were very appealing. He advised on ethics in the profession. The sessions also provided a forum for the media practitioners to deliberate on the constraints to effective journalism in the Nigerian environment and ways of circumventing them.

For many of the participating journalists, it was an important eye-opener to the world of 'digging the news behind the news'.

Dejo Olatoye, a veteran journalist, who served as one of the facilitators, told *Newswatch* at the end of the workshop that it was a timely response to the state of investigative journalism in the country. "It is very well known to practitioners in the field that we are not doing enough investigative journalism in this country," he said. According to him, little investigation being carried out are mostly done by the magazines, which he said is grossly inadequate in

the light of the moral challenges in the country. "We have systemic malfunction, a lot of things go wrong very frequently but we are not exposing

them the way we should, and this, to a large extent is contributing to the rot in the system, and until the journalist wakes up to expose these wrongdoings, we cannot improve governance," he added.

Obadiah Tohombet, a seasoned journalist and a staff of the Nigerian office of the World Bank, who also assisted McDonel, told *Newswatch* that the workshop was part of the World Bank's cardinal drive towards ensuring development as well as eradicating poverty through balanced information and transparency. "If we can have transparency and accountability, development would be enhanced. So we feel that the facilitators of development are journalists. The programme was designated to make them know the rules in the society, use the techniques of investigation to be able to contribute to accountability and transparency in governance," he explained.

Tohombet said the investigative workshop has been on for about five years now but mostly through the video-conference. The recent one, was the second face-to-face conference and the most successful having attracted 30 journalists drawn from the print and electronic media organizations around Lagos, the hub of the press in the country. McDonel, a former staff of the *Daily Gazette*, a Cana-

dian newspaper, told *Newswatch* that one of the workshop's aim was to verify the extent of availability of government's information to the public as a way of enhancing transparency especially in the governments of developing nations. "The result of the field work showed that, to some extent, information was available to the public. I never actually expected it would be to that extent," he stated.



Tohombet: Transparency enhances development

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Betty Dibiah, a presenter with *Channels Television*, a Lagos-based outfit, who participated in the workshop, was one of those who expressed satisfaction at the end of the five-day programme. "I was able to learn so much within the period of five days. I certainly won't remain the same after this," she told *Newswatch* excitedly on the last day. Participants who are mainly female journalists were drawn from *The News*, *TELL*, *Galaxy Television*, *News Agency of Nigeria*, *NAN*, *New Nigerian*, *The Sun*, *This Day*.

Favour Ojiabor and Betty Onuh, both reporter/researchers from *Newswatch*, also participated in the workshop. ■