

NEWS RELEASE: PUBLIC HEARING, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

The House Committee on Science & Technology in the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly has scheduled Wednesday, 22nd May 2024 for Public Hearings for 3 Private Member Bills sponsored by the House Member representing Etinan State Constituency, Hon (Engr) Uduak-Obong Ekpo-Ufot.

The bills include:

1. A Bill For A Law To Establish The Akwa Ibom State Bureau for Information Communication & Technology, Innovation & Emerging Technologies (AKBICT)
2. A Bill For A Law To Establish The Akwa Ibom State Start-Up Bill
3. A Bill For A Law To End Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities Bill & Related Purposes

All THREE bills are available on the Legislative section of the Etinan State Constituency website:

www.etinansc.com for comments, inputs, suggestions e.t.c. from the general public. Go to 8th Assembly Bills & fill the subsequent form that opens up when you click “Submissions for Public Hearing”

The Bill For A Law To Establish The Akwa Ibom State Bureau for Information Communication & Technology, Innovation & Emerging Technologies (AKBICT) was borne out of the need to support the ICT Development aspect s His Excellency Pastor Umoh Eno’s A.R.I.S.E. Agenda & facilitate an indelible footprint in the ICT space after his 8-year tenure. With the recent partnership with Main One, Akwa Ibom State is poised to explode positively in the ICT space and the main objective per establishment of the Bureau being to Co-ordinate, Own, Administer, Standardize, Strategic Plan, Monitor, (in their respective entireties) ALL the ICT-related & Digital assets in the best interest of Akwa Ibomites & the Akwa Ibom State Government as a whole. These ICT-related assets including but are not limited to: Domain Names, official websites across the Executive, Legislative, Judiciary, Boards & Commissions, Local Government Councils, Parastatals, MDAs; Liaise with all Agencies, Bureaus & MDAs at the Federal & International levels for AKSG-related discourses e.g. Nigerian Communications Commission, National Information Technology Development Agency, N.I.R.A., Telecommunication, Media & Technology firms; Create a framework for the planning, research, development, standardization, application, coordination, monitoring, evaluation and regulation of information technology practices, activities and systems in the State and all matters related thereto and for that purpose, and which without detracting from the generality of the foregoing shall include providing universal access for information technology and system penetration including rural, urban and under-served areas; Ensure the implementation of the Akwa Ibom State Information Technology Policy in accordance with the set-up of implementation strategies and taking into consideration, the National Information Technology development plans; Provision of Intranet and Internet System to encourage

automation and reduce bureaucracy in communication within MDAs; Taking periodic inventory of ICT equipment within MDAs; Responsible for Preparation, Implementation & Approval of the ICT Policies & Strategies

The Akwa Ibom State Start-Up Bill was borne out of the need to support the YOUTH Empowerment aspect of His Excellency Pastor Umoh Eno's A.R.I.S.E. Agenda & be fit for purpose by the time attendees in the subsequent batches of the Entrepreneurship Accelerator Programme are ready to commence their entrepreneurship endeavours. Also, the Honourable Minister for Science & Technology signed off on the STARTUP ACT, thereby necessitating the need to domesticate this law for use by Akwa Ibom State StartUps. Entities are labelled, receive a StartUp label & certificate and become eligible to receive grants of N10,000,000.00 (Ten Million Naira) per selected business. A number of States in Nigeria have already commenced the domestication process and this effort is to ensure Akwa Ibom State is among the compliant states. This bill will provide a legal and institutional framework for the development of Startups, provide an enabling environment for the establishment, development and operation of StartUps, provide for the development and growth of technology-related talents & Position Akwa Ibom State's startup ecosystem, as the leading digital technology Centre in Nigeria, having excellent innovators with cutting edge skills and exportable capacity.

The Bill For A Law To End Discrimination Against Persons With Disabilities is 10-section bill which broadens the categorization of People Living With Disabilities to about 22 different classifications and seeks to address a number of pertinent issues that hitherto have not been taken into cognizance. An ACT was signed into law, necessitating domestication across all the states in Nigeria. Only 6 (SIX) States have not domesticated this act, and Akwa Ibom State is among them- it will be necessary that we are counted among the compliant states, thereby providing a legal & institutional framework for the Prohibition of discrimination and awareness programmes, Accessibility of physical structure, Road transportation, Liberty, rights to education & first considerations in queues, accommodation & emergency, Opportunity for employment & participation in politics & public life & establishment of the State Commission for People Living With Disabilities.