ADDRESS DELIVERED BY HIS EXCELLENCY, MALAM DIKKO UMARU RADDA PhD., CON, (THE EXECUTIVE GOVERNOR OF KATSINA STATE) DURING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WORKSHOP ON INNOVATIVE PROVISIONS OF ADMINISRTRATION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE LAW, 2021 HELD ON TUESDAY; 24TH SEPTEMBER, 2024, AT JUSTICE UMARU ABDULLAHI AUDITORIUM HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE COMPLEX KATSINA

The Chief Judge of the State,

Members of the State Executive Council,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning.

Let me start by saying that since the time Nigeria attained Independence in the year 1960, we inherited two (2) major criminal procedure laws from the erstwhile colonial masters. These laws are the Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) that was applicable in the Northern States and the Criminal Procedure Act (CPA) that applied in the Southern States. These laws have now been replaced by the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 and the Administration of Criminal Justice Laws (ACJL) of the various states of the federation.

The federal ACJA and the ACJL of states are similar in several respects. But, in a bid to further strengthen the justice system, promote the rights of victims and suspects as well as address the issue of delay in the Administration of Criminal Justice in Katsina State, the State House of Assembly, in the year 2019, has passed the Katsina State version of the Administration of Criminal Justice Law, which marked the departure of the State from the old Criminal Procedure Code (CPC) era.

However, two (2) years later, a new ACJL was enacted to take care of some of the key challenges identified in the 2019 Law. This is the Katsina State ACJL 2021, which introduced some innovative provisions that could improve the criminal justice system in the state. The Law is aimed at making the criminal justice system more efficient because inefficiencies in the justice system may lead to long delays in criminal trials that naturally breeds resentment of the system by members of the public when their expectations are not met. This ultimately results in a total lack of confidence in the system to deliver justice promptly and in a fair and just manner.

The consequences of this loss of confidence in the system include resorting to jungle justice and self-help and no serious Government will allow that to happen. It has been part of the Reform Agenda of my administration to strengthen the Justice System, this is included in the State Development Policy Document that encased so many reform agenda.

The Katsina State Administration of Criminal Justice Law 2021 is the framework that governs the investigation, prosecution, and punishment of crimes. Its primary objective is to balance the need to hold offenders accountable on one hand and the need to protect the rights of the accused on the other hand.

Enactment of a Law is one step forward, but the quest to implement the law effectively and efficiently should be the key priority in order to achieve the desired objectives. However, most of the critical stakeholders in the administration of criminal justice were trained under the old system – the Criminal Procedure Code, which has been well entrenched since 1960.

Thus, Effective administration of criminal justice law relies on several key components including:

a) Fair and speedy dispensation of justice
b) Access to justice
c) Synergy and cooperation across the justice sector
d) Correctional and restorative justice
e) Protection and promotion of human rights
f) Alternative Dispute Resolution
g) Traditional justice system in a form of alternative dispute resolution, and
h) Independence of the Judiciary, among other things.

The state is going forward towards achieving all these. In its effort to consolidate reforms for effective Administrative of Justice, within this year the state established Sexual Assault Referral Centre and Gender Based Violence Centre to cater for victims of these crimes.

The violence against persons law was enacted, the task force for the prevention of trafficking in persons under the chairmanship of the Attorney-General was also inaugurated, and recently I have given directives to the office of the Attorney-General to amend the Penal

Code Law to make provision for effective punishment of informants and other accomplices to the offences of banditry and kidnapping among other things. Enhancing the skills and capacity of the major actors in the administration of justice in the state in order to be able to deliver, should therefore be one of the priorities of the State.

In conclusion, the Administration of Criminal Justice Law is critical to maintaining social order and protecting individual rights. By addressing challenges and implementing solutions, we can strengthen our justice system and ensure that justice is served. I therefore, urge all the participants to pay attention and make robust contributions to the discussions and the issues to be raised during the workshop.

Let us work together to build a more effective and just administration of criminal justice law. We owe it to ourselves, our communities, and future generations especially in this trying time of insecurity in the state. I commend the Ministry of Justice and the Honourable Attorney General of the State for this feat, I am therefore very happy for being opportune to be here today to declare this workshop open and I wish all of you happy deliberations. Thank you.