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## ASSIGNMENT: SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW IN NIGERIA

A secondary source of law is not the law. A secondary source of law is a commentary on the law. A secondary source can be used for three different purposes: it might educate you about the law, it might direct you to the primary law, or it might serve as persuasive authority.

Secondary sources of law or secondary authorities are summaries and explanations of the law that do not have binding effects on the court.

Examples of secondary sources of law in Nigeria are law reports; treatises, periodicals, journals, reviews, legal digests, casebooks, restatements, loose-leaf services, directories, legal dictionaries, ALR, annotations.

Casebook: A casebook is a type of textbook used primarily by law students in law schools. They contain excerpts from legal cases in which the law of that area was applied. Students analyze the language of the case in order to determine what rule was applied and how the court applied it. Casebooks sometimes contain excerpts from law reviews and treatises, historical notes, editorial commentary etc. the teaching style used is known as ‘casebook method’ and is supposed to enable students ‘think like lawyers’. Most casebooks are authored by law professors.

Law Reports: Law reports are compilations of judgments of other courts. Such judgments cover a broad area, be it constitutional law, company law, administrative law etc. they are published periodically and include the decisions of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Court of Appeal, the High Court, or any tribunal, whether existing or terminated. Law reports in Nigeria can be divided into two categories: Nigerian Law Reports (NLR) and Nigerian Weekly Law Reports (NWLR).

Legal Encyclopedia: a legal encyclopedia is a comprehensive set of brief articles on legal topics. It is arranged in alphabetical order, with an index generally included in the final volume. Legal encyclopedias are a great place to start your research on a new topic, since they offer a general introduction to a legal topic, and often include citations to cases and additional materials. They do not delve deeply into an area, nor will they discuss the finer points of an area of law.

Legal Periodicals: legal periodicals are very helpful in locating cases and statutes in a particular subject area. Periodicals are also an excellent method of locating current information. Subjects that are new or too specialized to be covered in books can often be found in periodicals. Articles in periodicals describe, analyze, and comment on the current state of the law. There are numerous types of periodicals, including legal journals, reviews, newspapers and newsletter.

Legal Journals: legal journals are scholarly publications covering the legal field. They publish articles that are comprehensive studies of current topics in law, generally written by law professors and practitioners. The articles generally contain substantial citations to primary and secondary sources on the topic, which may lead you to additional information on the subject.

Loose-leaf Services: loose-leaf services provide all of the law on a particular topic. They are useful tools for keeping up with rapidly changing laws, regulations and rulings. These publications include subjects such as banking, tax, health, or securities. All of these areas of law

change frequently. They are rarely cited except when they serve as a case reporter. Loose-leaf services don't exist for all areas of law, but when they do, it can be an invaluable resource.

Treatises: treatises provide an in-depth and scholarly treatment of a legal subject. They often clarify significant concepts in the area of law covered by the treatise and provide citations to pertinent cases and other primary materials. Law libraries maintain treatises covering a wide variety of subjects, both in print and electronic format. Treatises can be very good at describing the law, they are good law finders, and many classic treatises are persuasive.

Restatements: restatements were developed by legal scholars initially to restate the law, and currently to describe what the law should be. In either case, restatements are very persuasive although they are not very good at describing the law. They serve as adequate law finders. There are restatements for many areas of law; but not all. Restatements are divided broadly into chapters and sub-divided into titles and sections. Each section begins with a restatement of the law, followed by hypothetical illustrations.

Legal Dictionaries: legal dictionaries provide definitions of words in their legal sense of use. These publications provide a short definition of foreign and Latin legal words and phrases, refer to cases in other legal sources for authority, and may give examples of word usage in various legal situations. They also include tables defining legal acronyms and abbreviations. Black's Law Dictionary is a common example of legal dictionaries.

Law Review: a professional journal published by a law school containing scholarly articles on legal topics by experts and other legal professionals, usually compiled and edited by a staff of students chosen for their excellent academic record.

Legal Directories: legal directories are locators for legal and government information. They provide information about law firms, attorneys, legal experts, professors, government officers, corporate legal departments, legal aid organizations and elected officials.