



**SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS
& ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT**



4th September, 2020

Mr. Ahmed Idris
The Accountant-General of the Federation
Plot 1570, Ladoke Akintola Boulevard
Garki 2, Abuja
Nigeria.

Dear Mr. Ahmed Idris,

Re: Freedom of Information (Fol) request to urgently compile and provide details of total amounts allocated and disbursed by the Federal Government, donated by private individual and international donors to combat COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria

Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP) and Connected Development (CODE) are writing to acknowledge receipt of the undated letter signed on your behalf by Mrs Odanwu Chizoba, from the Office of Accountant General of the Federation, but received 2nd September, 2020, on the above subject-matter in which the Federal Government provided some information on inflows and outflows of COVID-19 funds, drawn from COVID-19 Eradication Support Accounts. We appreciate your co-operation in this regard.

SERAP is a non-profit, nonpartisan, legal and advocacy organization devoted to promoting transparency, accountability and respect for socio-economic rights in Nigeria. SERAP received the Wole Soyinka Anti-Corruption Defender Award in 2014, and was nominated for the UN Civil Society Award and Ford Foundation's Jubilee Transparency Award. SERAP serves as one of two Sub-Saharan African civil society representatives on the governing Committee of the UNCAC Coalition, a global anti-corruption network of over 380 civil society organizations (CSOs) in over 100 countries.

CODE is a non-governmental advocacy organization that strengthen local communities by creating platforms for dialogue, enabling informed debate, and building capacities of citizens on how to hold their government accountable through Follow The Money across Africa. CODE provides marginalized and vulnerable grassroots communities with resources to amplify their voices with independence and integrity while providing the communities with information that ushers social and economic progress.

We welcome your demonstrated commitment to transparency and accountability, and hope other public officials and institutions would emulate and

learn from the good example you have shown by honouring and respecting FoI Act as a matter of routine and practice.

We note that the government spent N30,540,563,571.09, representing 84% of the N36.3 billion of public funds and donations received to respond to COVID-19 between 1st April, 2020 and 31st July, 2020, leaving the balance of N5.9 billion.

We also note among others that the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 spent N22 billion; the 36 states spent N7 billion to support their COVID-19 initiatives; the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) spent N877 million for deployment of assets in support of COVID-19 operations; while the Nigeria Police spent N500 million on personal protective equipment. N17,865.09 was paid as bank charges.

Of the N36.3bn public funds and donations received, N1.4bn came from Nigerians and companies through accounts at the First Bank; Access Bank; GTB, Zenith, and UBA, while N536m donations were made through the Central Bank of Nigeria [CBN]. The N536 donations comprise of N89m and N279m from the Senate and House of Representatives, respectively.

In addition, China General Chambers of Commerce in Nigeria donated N48m; the Petroleum Equalization Management Board gave N50m while the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board donated N70m.

It is refreshing to note that 115 ordinary Nigerians donated between N1 and N100 to support the authorities' efforts to fight COVID-19, despite the fact that it is the country's poorest and most disadvantaged sectors of the population that continue to bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This is a huge lesson for public officials and politicians about the idea of public service to one's country. It also sends a powerful message about the need for politicians to see public office as an opportunity to serve and give something back to the country, and not a place to mismanage, steal or divert the people's commonwealth into private pockets for personal benefits.

However, we also note that the documents sent to us do not contain other significant details as indicated in our FoI request dated 10 August, 2020, including details and breakdown of the number of Nigerians who directly or indirectly have benefited from the spending; number of FoI training conducted by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation; and details of names and contacts of your Office's FOI desk officer.

We would therefore be grateful to receive more specific details and additional information on the spending of N34.4bn between April and July, and details on plans to spend the balance of N5.9 billion in the COVID-19 Eradication Support Accounts. Specifically, we request that you provide to us the following:

1. Details and breakdown of where the N34.4bn public funds from the Federal Government came from, and whether or not the money was duly appropriated by the National Assembly;

2. Details of specific projects and activities on which the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 has spent the N22.16bn, which represents 72% of the money spent, including how the spending has directly or indirectly benefited Nigerians, as well as details of names of any such beneficiaries;
3. Details and breakdown of money, if any, spent to provide personal protective equipment to Nigerian doctors and medical workers who are at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19;
4. Details and breakdown of the N7bn given to 36 states, and the specific amount of money collected by each state. This money represents 23% of the total amount spent within 4 months;
5. Details and breakdown of the N877m [2.9% of the money] spent by the Nigerian Air Force for deployment of assets in support of COVID-19 operations, as well as the nature of any such operations;
6. Details and breakdown of the N500m [1.6% of the money] spent by the Nigeria Police on personal protective equipment;

The Office of the Accountant General of the Federation should also take steps to approach and request from the Presidential Task Force on COVID-19, the Nigerian Air Force, Nigeria Police Force, and the 36 states any of the details highlighted above, if the information is not held by your Office, in line with the provisions of the Fol Act. Under the Fol Act, other public institution or institutions that may be holding the requested information are obligated to provide the information.

We would be grateful if the requested details and additional information are provided to us within 7 days of the receipt and/or publication of this letter. If we have not heard from you by then, SERAP and CODE shall take all appropriate legal actions under the Freedom of Information Act and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights to compel you to comply with our request.

Please accept the expression of our highest consideration. Thanking you in advance of your urgent attention to the matter.

Yours sincerely,

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