PRESS RELEASE

COVID-19 in Nigeria: CISLAC demands total accountability of the donated funds

While the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) commends and appreciates the ongoing donations by indigenous groups towards the combating the COVID-19 virus pandemic and its socio-economic impacts, we are at the same worried by proper accountability on the utilisation and distribution of funds.

As we welcome the recent constituted Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 response with specific responsibility to coordinate donations for efficient and impactful spending, we are also surprised that selection and appointment into the Committee did not take cognisance of representatives from the media and other credible organisations working on anti-corruption, transparency and accountability in governance; as a proactive measure to ensure judicious utilisation and distribution of funds.

Just as we observed that inclusion of media and other accountability institutions in the Committee would compel transparency and accountability in fund utilisation and dissemination.

We on this note have no hesitation to state that diversion or misappropriation of the funds would be tantamount to total betrayal, unpatriotic, unsympathetic and selfishness in the management of the nation’s treasury which are punishable under relevant laws.

While we monitor with keen interest, response of various authorities to commitment of the Federal Government towards alleviating impacts of the newly pronounced lockdown in some states, we demand sincere effort to ensure relief materials and other financial assistance are deployed accordingly to the common citizens with holistic and transparent strategy to adequately capture citizens at grassroots level, where Bank Verification Number (BVN) might not be relevant.

Give the global trend, we observed that the lockdown cannot be meaningful without adequate proactive palliative measures by the Government on the provision of basic amenities like sufficient food stuff, water and regular power supply to genuinely address the plights and agitations of common citizens, whose daily means of income would be largely affected.

We also observed that ongoing development has further revealed the government’s inadequate preparedness capacity to mitigate impacts of the pandemic and other national emergency with existing poor national storage capacity for food and other basic needs to respond adequately.

We therefore, call on the Federal Government, relevant authorities, anti-graft institutions to ensure proper accountability in the utilisation and distribution of the donated funds.

We also call on the civil society, media and all well-meaning citizens to constructively monitor and report progress as events unfold on the funds.
Signed:

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