



GEORGE UBOH
WHISTLEBLOWERS NETWORK

Friday February 21, 2025

The Executive Secretary
Nigerian Content Development & Monitoring Board (NCDMB)
1st Floor, Nuel Ojei Holding Building
Plot 459, Constitution Avenue
CBD, Abuja

NCDMB House
Isaac Boro Expressway
By Opolo Roundabout, Opolo
Yenagoa, Bayelsa State

Attn: Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe, Executive Secretary

Dear Sir,

Re: Sahara Reporters' "N7 Billion Consultancy and N580 Million 5-day London Training, Logistics, Allowances" Allegations against NCDMB and NCDMB's Response via NCDMB Website

Request to Furnish Information within Seven (7) Days Under the Freedom of Information Act; Fiscal Responsibility Act; and in the Public Interest or Face Court Action, Protest and any Legal Action Available to us.

The above-referenced attached hereto refers:

About us: Our undersigned chairman is the foremost whistleblower and anti-corruption crusader in Nigeria who, in that capacity, blew the whistle on alleged corruption at the EFCC and a former/late EFCC chairman starting from 2013 which culminated into a senate hearing and sack of the late EFCC chairman in 2015. He blew the whistle on alleged judicial corruption against a Federal Judge in 2014 on a case of clear-cut judicial fraud which led to the sack of the Justice in 2018. There are numerous cases of corruption he blew the whistle on which can be accessed via YouTube and George Uboh TV.

Instant Case:

The crux of this matter is clear cut. Sahara Reporters (hereinafter SH) made allegations supported with documents. NCDMD rebutted via its own website without attaching any iota of document. Any public officer is holding such position in trust and in the public interest thus that officer is duty bound to account to the public. Accordingly, NCDMB

was and still is duty bound to elicit to the public its response; also, such response MUST trump SH's documentary evidence.

Juxtaposing the above positions by SH and NCDMB, we are of the opinion that NCDMB's rebuttal via its own website is self-serving at best, assuming such rebuttal was not disseminated to other media houses. Secondly, given the fact that SH hinged its allegation on documentary evidence while NCDMB's response is devoid of any document, one needs not to be a lawyer to comprehend that a case built on documents can only be trumped or defeated by attacking the veracity, originality, genuineness, germaneness, etc. of the documents.

Given the above scenario, we hereby request via the Freedom of Information Act, Fiscal Responsibility Act and, most sacredly and sacrosanctly, the public interest, all documents germane to the above allegations and beyond, including but not limited to approvals that gave rise to all consultancy jobs, trainings, allowances, logistics, inflows/outflows from 2022 till date.

Be advised that we do not need to rely on any act to request and receive any document from any public officer insofar as the documents are germane to expenditures/funds. For instance, when we accused the former Vice-President Osinbajo twice, he responded attaching documents. Please see attached. Certainly, if a sitting VP who is grounded in law found it duty bound to comply, an executive secretary of a parastatal must comply.

Accordingly, you have 7 days to furnish the requested documents else your failure to comply shall be construed as acquiescence in which case we shall petition the requisite agencies and approach the court to compel the agencies to investigate and prosecute any culpable officer at NCDMB, stage protests in NCDMB Abuja and Bayelsa offices, among other legal remedies available to us. While we await your response, we remain,

Yours in whistleblowing services,

~~George Uboh~~

Dr. George Uboh

Chairman

+234 809 640 0000

+234 909 688 8888

SAHARA REPORTERS

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**EXCLUSIVE: Nigerian Content Board
NCDMB Boss Ogbe Spends N7Billion
On Consultancy, Over N580Million On
5-Day London Training, Logistics,
Allowances**



February 12, 2025

NEWS

EXCLUSIVE

The amount of N7.7 billion (\$4.7 million) was allegedly misappropriated without the necessary approval from authorised levels as stipulated in the relevant procurement protocols and policies, SaharaReporters has learned.

Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe, the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB), faces allegations of approving the diversion of public funds from the Nigerian Content Development Fund's US dollar account at the Central Bank of Nigeria into questionable contracts.

The amount of N7.7 billion (\$4.7 million) was allegedly misappropriated without the necessary approval from authorised levels as stipulated in the relevant procurement protocols and policies, SaharaReporters has learned.

According to sources, the Executive Secretary endorsed three requests made by Fatima Bashir Mohammed, who purportedly leveraged her previous role at the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission in Nigeria (ICPC) to authorize payments to a consulting firm, S.B Capital Partners & Advisory Limited, owned by Stephen Bawa.

These payments significantly exceeded the approval limits, even for the Ministerial Tenders Board (MTB).

The sources stated that the approving authority for such amounts is the Federal Executive Council (FEC).

"Two of the three payments are US\$3,062,089.52 and US\$1,636,846.42, totalling US\$4,698,935.94 (which amounts to N5,052,447,675.00 and N2,700,796,593.00 respectively, and totalling N7,753,244,301.00) at the average exchange rate of 1,650/US\$1 prevailing at the time. None of the three split amounts falls within the payment threshold outside the FEC," one of the sources said.

According to the source, the most troubling aspect is that the payment was processed at the Central Bank of Nigeria without any evidence that the consultant had actually recovered the funds for which the fee was paid.

"How much did the consultant recover to earn such a fee?" the source asked.

The contract is reportedly connected to the recovery of funds that were deducted from the Nigerian Content Development Fund by the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation (OAGF).

"The OAGF is a crucial office of the federal government under the Federal Ministry of Finance. The NCDMB is also a government-owned entity. Therefore, this is a government-to-government transaction that should not be subject to private consulting intervention," the source stated.

"The deduction was initiated by the federal government and requires direct communication with the relevant government officials or engagement at the highest level of both parties, rather than fleecing the public treasury of more than N7 billion under the guise of consulting," a source told SaharaReporters.

The source indicated that the three payments represent contract splitting, a practice forbidden by procurement rules and procedures.

Despite these infractions, the alleged individuals involved—Fatima Mohammed, the acting director of finance; Ifeanyi Ukoha; and Mubarak Zubair, the acting general manager of finance and accounts—who were all appointed by Felix Ogbe without government approval, went ahead with the payments.

"Regardless of these violations, the puppets — Fatima Mohammed, who originated the idea and wrote the memos, as well as the Acting Director of Finance, Ifeanyi Ukoha, and the Acting General Manager of Finance & Accounts, Mubaraq Zubair, who were all appointed by Felix Ogbe without the necessary government approval — proceeded to make the three payments," one of the sources said.

A document obtained by SaharaReporters, titled "Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board: Top Management Committee (TMC) Meeting" with reference number TMC-02/10/06/2024/01, shows the approval of thousands of dollars for sponsoring a five-day capacity training workshop for the Board's critical stakeholders in the financial sector, held in the United Kingdom.

The extract from the TMC Consideration of 10th June 2024, signed by Director, Legal Services, Naboth Onyesoh, partly reads: "TMC is requested to consider and approve the Board's sponsorship of a five-day capacity training workshop to be facilitated by Talent Expertise International in London, United Kingdom for the Board's critical stakeholders in the financial sector."

TMC considered and approved the following: "Engagement of Talent Expertise International to organize and execute the high-impact training programme for the identified critical stakeholders in London in October 2024 at a cost of USD\$110,993.75 (N182,251,737.5 at N1642 per dollar) (inclusive of taxes).

"The sum of USD\$5,950.00 (N9,769,900) be paid to each of the 15 critical stakeholders (amounting to N146,548,500) while the sum of USD\$2,000.00 (N3,284,000) be paid to the other 7 members of the Board management as course fees which will cover the course material, provisions for morning and midday snacks, lunch, and group excursion for team building.

"Payment of the sum of USD\$106,960.00 (N175,628,320) as estacode to all participants and USD\$17,780.00 (N29,194,760) to 5 members of the secretariat based on their applicable estacode rates for the duration of 5 training days plus 2 travel days.

"Payment of the sum of USD\$30,000.00 (N49,260,000) being the logistics cost for the critical stakeholders," the document partly read.

In the meantime, SaharaReporters' attempts to contact Omatsola Ogbe were unsuccessful. He did not answer his calls or respond to a text message requesting his comments on the allegations at the time of filing this report.

NCDMB'S RESPONSE TO SAHARA REPORTERS' ALLEGATIONS

**NCDMB Observes the Highest Standards of Accountability, Transparency, and due Process in its Operations*

The Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB) wishes to firmly and unequivocally rebut the false, malicious, and misleading publication by Sahara Reporters on February 12, 2025, titled – EXCLUSIVE: NIGERIAN CONTENT BOARD NCDMB BOSS OGBE SPENDS N7 BILLION ON CONSULTANCY, OVER 580 MILLION ON 5-DAY LONDON TRAINING, LOGISTICS, ALLOWANCES.

The publication is riddled with falsehoods, gross inaccuracies and baseless inferences.

We wish to state that neither the Board nor the Executive Secretary spent the amount stated in the headline of the referenced statement.

It is a fact that in 2017, the Board developed a 10-Year Strategic Roadmap underpinned by five pillars and four enablers. The 10-Year Strategic Roadmap targets in-country retention of 70% spend in the oil and gas industry by 2027, amongst other measurable targets.

One of the four enablers of the 10-Year Strategic Roadmap is Stakeholder Collaboration and Engagement, borne out of a need to ensure harmonious policy and regulatory implementation by all agencies and institutions of

government. It is against this background that the Board has every two years organised a Strategic Workshop with Heads of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of government that pertain to the oil and gas industry to interrogate and find areas of alignment in the implementation of the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development (NOGICD) Act, 2010.

In carrying out this Strategic Workshop and every other activity of NCDMB, due process was followed in ensuring that all financial expenditures were made following approved financial and procurement guidelines. We wish to emphasize that NCDMB operates under strict government regulations and oversight bodies.

It is regrettable that Sahara Reporters, known for its sensationalism and lack of investigative rigour, has once again published unverified claims designed to mislead the public and tarnish the hard-earned reputation of our Executive Secretary and esteemed organization.

The NCDMB categorically refutes the false claims made in the publication. The allegations of misappropriation to the tune of N7.7 billion without due approval are entirely baseless, mischievous, and aimed at tarnishing the reputation of the Board and the Executive Secretary. There was no such expenditure of N7.7 billion naira by the Board for consultancy services.

We wish to emphasize that the NCDMB led by Engr. Felix Omatsola Ogbe, operates with the highest standards of accountability, transparency, and due process in all its operations. All expenditures in the Board are subjected to rigorous approval processes in accordance with the provisions of the Public Procurement Act 2007, our enabling law, the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Act (NOGICD) Act 2010 and other relevant statutes and policies. The Board remains committed to upholding the principles of good governance in line with its statutory mandate.

It is on account of our strict adherence to due process that the NCDMB achieved remarkable milestones, including ranking first three consecutive

times in the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC) Compliance Report in the Ease of Doing Business, Transparency and Accountability among Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) of government in Nigeria. Additionally, the Board received the Nigeria Govtech Award and the Distinguished Govtech Trailblazers Award from the Bureau for Public Sector Reform (BPSR) for excellence in digital governance and public sector innovation.

The NCDMB remains resolutely committed to its core mandate of building local capacity and empowering Nigerians to participate effectively in the Nigerian oil and gas industry. Our initiatives are aligned with the Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, aimed at empowering Nigerians and creating sustainable jobs.

We encourage members of the public and media houses to always verify their sources of information before rushing to publish the "so-called exclusive report." The NCDMB has an open and accessible corporate communications team with verifiable addresses and contact details that if the above referenced online platform had bothered to reach out to for clarification, this undue sensationalism would not have happened. We believe this is a hatchet job and thus avoided the time held journalism practice of hearing the other side.

We assure the public that this malicious, false, and misleading publication will not distract the Executive Secretary from his commitment to driving the Board's mission. The Executive Secretary remains steadfast in advancing the goals of the organization and delivering on its mandate for the benefit of all Nigerians.

Corporate Communications Department Nigerian Content Development and Monitoring Board (NCDMB)

13/2/2025



STATE HOUSE,
ABUJA,
NIGERIA.

Reference:

SH/OVP/DCOS/LGR&C/Misc./GUWN

August 10, 2020

Dr George Uboh

Chairman

George Uboh Whistleblowers Network (GUWN)

11 Nun Street, Off Danube Street

Maitama - Abuja

Dear Chairman,

RE: AUD-GEN'S LETTER TO THE VP REQUESTING "CLARIFICATION AND GUIDANCE" ON SPIP'S LETTER INVESTIGATING AUDITOR-GENERAL; VP'S LETTER TO SPIP; AND SPIP'S RESPONSE TO THE VP

This is to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of your letter dated 10th August 2020 on the above stated subject.

2. First, it is interesting to note that you disassociate your organization from the allegation that the Vice President was ever involved in the purported illegal withdrawal of N10 billion from a TSA Account. The evidence which was available to Okoi Obono Obla, the then Chairman of the Special Investigation Panel (SIP), indicated clearly enough that there was in fact no withdrawal at all. There was only a transfer from a TSA Account of Government to the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the same Government, effected by the duly authorized Accountant-General of the Federation.

3. I believe that the acknowledgement of the above stated fact by your good self begins to resolve the outrage which our response to the then SIP Chairman may have provoked in your organisation. Not only was the allegation against the Auditor General patently baseless, the SIP's letter to him and his staff came across as extremely rude and crudely menacing. In the circumstance, Obla's letter was itself sufficient proof of negligent and reckless conduct on the part of a person who was supposed to be a high official of the Federal Government.

4. Another clarification which I trust would greatly assist you is as to the nature of the SIP itself. The Special Investigation Panel for the Recovery of Public Property (SIP or the Panel) was set up in July 2017, pursuant to the provisions of the Recovery of Public Property (Special Provisions) Act Cap. R4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004 (the Act). I strongly advise your quick review of that legislation.

5. As its name suggests, the Panel is convened for a particular purpose, which is to investigate specific cases specially assigned to it. It was not set up to replace or replicate the functions of the EFCC, ICPC, Code of Conduct Bureau or the Nigeria Police. If further elucidation is required of this point, you may wish to peruse the subsisting decisions of the Federal High Court and the Court of Appeal, which have restated this limitation of the Panel's mandate to cases specifically assigned to it by the President. See the unanimous decision of the Court of Appeal in the case of Tijjani Musa Tumsah V. FRN & Anor. (Suit No. CA/A/278/2018).

6. It would further interest you to note that Mr. Obla himself, had, in a letter to the Vice President, Ref. SPIP/SH/OVP/2017/VOL.1/1 dated 10 November 2017, acknowledged the limitation of the powers of the Panel and gave an undertaking to operate within such limits. He assured in the letter that the Panel would thenceforth:

"only act on a written mandate received from the Presidency, and will seek authorization from the Presidency to undertake fresh mandates in accordance with extant laws of the Federation."

7. Mr. Obla's subsequent actions unfortunately belied that undertaking, leading to streams of petitions to the Office of the Vice President and the Office of the Honourable Attorney-General of the Federation. The Panel's continued operation outside its mandate transcended individuals, Government agencies, the Judiciary and private companies, and extended even to foreign missions in Nigeria. Please find attached a summary of some of the petitions on the excesses of the Panel.

8. The 21st February 2018 letter of the Auditor-General for the Federation Ref. OAuGF/GEN.CORR.AuFG/IV/14, to the Office of the Vice President was therefore only one of many such letters on the SPIP. It merely sought for guidance, especially in view of the patent inconsistencies of the SPIP's requests of the Office of the Auditor General with the provisions of the Nigerian Constitution; and the need to forestall unnecessary confrontations between agencies of Government.

9. In the light of the foregoing, I trust you would now understand beyond any doubt the context of the enquiry sent to Mr. Obla by the Office of the Vice President. In view of your proven interest and reputation for integrity in these matters, I also look forward to your public dissemination of the above stated facts and circumstances with the same vigour and in the same manner as you had earlier manifested your outrage.

10. Please be assured of my highest regards always.



Ade Ipaye

**Deputy Chief of Staff to the President
Office of the Vice-President**

STATE HOUSE,
ABUJA,
NIGERIA.

Reference:

SH/OVP/DCOS/Misc./-610203

6 October 2020

George Uboh

Whistleblowers Network
11, Nun Street
Off Danube Street, Maitama
Abuja

Dear Dr. Uboh,

RE: ALLEGATION OF YOUR TRUNCATION OF APPROXIMATELY 20 BILLION EUROS GRANT FROM THE EUROPEAN UNION THROUGH PROFESSOR JOHN KESTER, AND ALLEGATION THAT SUCH "BAD BLOOD" LED TO KESTER'S CURRENT DETENTION BY THE ICPC FOR OVER ONE WEEK: URGENT REQUEST FOR YOUR RESPONSE OR MEETING

I am directed to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated September 24, 2020 and, in response to issues raised in the said letter, to bring the following to your attention:

- i. The Basic Registry and Information System in Nigeria (BRISIN) was introduced as an Integrated Data and Information Management System designed to capture, manage and integrate socio-economic data. Records show that it originated from Italy and was proposed to Nigeria by Messrs Impex Nigeria Ltd., in collaboration with its sister organization in Italy.
- ii. In view of vast public information on EU sponsored projects, a cursory investigation on your part would have revealed that the European Union never endorsed BRISIN as a sponsor or promoter, let alone as having made a commitment of 20 billion Euros, or any amount at all, towards the Project. A 20 billion Euro grant by the EU cannot possibly be frustrated in the manner alleged. You may however wish to produce any EU document presented to you to back up this claim.

**STATE HOUSE,
ABUJA,
NIGERIA.**



iii. Records show that the BRISIN project was introduced in 2004 and approved by the Federal Government in April 2007. The host agency was the Federal Ministry of Budget and Planning. Curiously, the renewed push for its commencement began late in 2016, almost 10 years after the "approval". The Office of the Vice President had no role in the conception or implementation of the project.

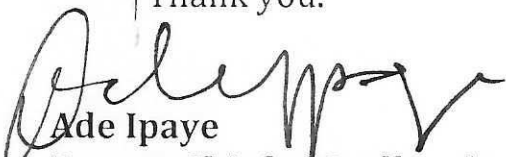
Reference:

- iv. Professor John Kester was never part of the project team on record. He only showed up as "Consultant" trying to arrange a meeting between the project proponents and the Vice President. His failure to explain his proper role in relation to the project and his apparent desperation to secure a meeting at all cost, aroused considerable suspicion in the VP's Office.
- v. Besides, the delegates for the proposed meeting were not EU officials (See ANNEXURE I). If they were, such a meeting would have been arranged through the Foreign Affairs Minister, and the EU Ambassador to Nigeria, with whom I am in constant touch, would have been involved.
- vi. Contrary to allegations in your letter, there was never any amount or 'deal' on the table. On the contrary, the whole project was presented as being 'at no cost to Government'. Even if there was monetary value involved, the question of anyone being 'carried along' could never ever have arisen.
- vii. When the proponents started pushing for a flag-off date for the project, I wrote to the host Ministry, Ministry of Budget & Planning for an update and advice. In response, the Ministry noted that it would not be advisable to start the project (even if at no cost to Government) without a holistic assessment of the National Data Requirements and redefining the scope, in view of the long interval of inactivity. The Ministry further observed that the Project had not been reviewed since 2007, whereas the inflation rate, foreign exchange rate, price of oil, etc. had all changed considerably.

- viii. Considering the foregoing and the very suspicious outlook of its letter of February 22, 2017 (ANNEXURE II) which had various font sizes and irregular presentation), we became suspicious of the so called "organizers". This necessitated the suspension of our engagement with them, upon the advice that they should rather engage the Ministry for a comprehensive review.
- ix. It later transpired that the BRISIN proponents had fraudulently designed a letterhead with the official Coat of Arms of Nigeria and were already presenting the project as residing in 'the Presidency.' They also advertised vacancies online and were defrauding applicants by collecting N1,000 on each application (See ANNEXURE III). This necessitated the Budget and Planning Ministry reporting the matter to security agencies.
- x. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) is a statutory agency and not under the control of the Vice President's Office. We do not intervene or interfere with ICPC's investigations.

2. In view of the foregoing, you are advised to seek further information about the person of the said Professor Kester and his actual role in the BRISIN project before proceeding further on the basis of obvious lies he has put together in the petition to your office.

Thank you.



Ade Ipaye
Deputy Chief of Staff to the President
Office of the Vice President