

Former Coordinator Alleges Shady Deals in PTF

A former field coordinator of Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) Community Education Programme in Osun State, Mr. Babatope Babalobi has alleged shady deals in the operations of the disbanded fund.

Babalobi raised the allegation at a press briefing in Lagos organised under the auspices of the Bread of Life Foundation, a Christian organisation, said the enormity of irregularities that marked the operation of PTF must not be condoned.

While making efforts to establish his facts as a back-up to his allegations, he said, "the PTF has no doubt been mismanaged. How will the PTF finance its N156 billion deficit? He said, adding that, "there are more information at our disposal which we intend to reveal in our subsequent reports. We are not interested in running a campaign of calumny against any personality. Our desire is for the PTF to avoid a recurrence", he noted.

Continuing, Babalobi revealed that, "the PTF and its coordination consultant, the Atri Projects Consortium should explain reasons for gross disparities in the distribution of PTF's projects".

He pointed out that the

Implement 13% Derivation Formula, FG Told

Oil Producing States have insisted that pursuant to the provisions of section 162 of the 1999 Constitution which came into effect on May 27, 1999, accruals to the Oil Producing States on a minimum of 13 per cent derivation, take effect from 27, 1999.

This was contained in a communiqué issued at the end of a meeting of Commissioners for Finance of the oil producing state held in Benin recently.

The communiqué which was signed by the Commissioners from Edo, Rivers and Ino States, Clem Ehebba, Akeodi S. Oyaghin and Ngozi Amaliri on behalf of others, also called on the Federal Government to constitute the Niger-Delta Development Commission with membership, management and control exclusively drawn from the Niger-Delta areas.

Association Seeks Compulsory Retirement of Library Boss

The National Library of Nigeria (NLN) arm of the Senior Staff Association of Universities, Teaching Hospital, Research Institutes Associations (SSAUTHRIA) has called for the immediate and compulsory retirement of the Chief Executive Officer of NLN, Alhaji Muazu having allegedly spent over 39 years in the civil service, contrary to the laws of the land.

The SSAUTHRIA alleged in a series of letters addressed to the Chairman, Federal Civil Service Commission, the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education noted that Alhaji Muazu has not only spent over 13 years as the Chief Librarian but has been in the civil service for over 13 years.

According to SSAUTHRIA, Muazu joined the civil service on March 1, 1960 and to date has spent 39 years, 13 and half years being in the NLN as chief executive.

"On 1st July, 1991, he was appointed the National Librarian and he has since been the

By Wale Olaleye

Federal Government should stipulate a winding-up time for the incumbent leadership of PTF under Alhaji Haruna Adamu, suggesting that the leadership itself should endeavour enough to set up a fund projects probe committee to investigate internally,

the extend to which the affair of PTF was damaged.

Meanwhile, he appealed to the Federal Government not to relent in mandating also, all matters pertaining to the disbursement of the sum of N110 billion which was allocated to the PTF right from inception of its operation to execute its programmes.

Pupils Demonstrate over Non-payment of Teachers' Salaries

Thousands of secondary school students in Osun State Thursday took to the streets in Osogbo to protest non-payment of their teachers salaries for four months.

In the process, the students forced the Secretary to the State Government to his car and asked him to partake in the protest.

As early as 9.00am, the students in their school uniform trooped out from various secondary schools in the town marching towards Abere Secretariat, the seat of government.

However on their way around Coca-Cola, the SSG ran into demonstrators who quickly recognised him and forced him out to march with them.

Fortunately for the state's scribe, the Ooni of Ife, Oba Okunade Sijuwade and other traditional rulers who were holding a meeting at the old secretariat came to his rescue as the students were pacified.

Immediately they got to the secretariat, the irate students deflated the tyres of all vehicles parked within the premises while the national flag was torn into shreds.

Besides, the placard-carrying students vandalised few electric fittings outside and plucked the flowers planted to decorate the premises of the secretariat.

For hours, the students blocked the main road causing hold up while they chanted anti-government slogans and unprintable words against the person of the governor, Chief Bisi Akande.

Speaking against the background of the backlog of the salary arrears owed the teachers, the state Finance Commissioner, Chief Lere Adebayo described

areas are clear indication of the lack of infrastructure in these areas.

While thanking the Federal Government for winding up the Petroleum (Special) Trust Fund PTF and IMPADEC they also thanked Nigerians for embracing Democracy but, added "Having resolve to practice true Federalism, we call on the Federal government to ensure the practice of fiscal federalism".

They further called on the Federal Government to constitute without further delay the Revenue Mobilisation Allocation and Fiscal Commission in addition to the implementation of section 162 of the 1999 constitution with particular reference to the derivation principle.

According to them, since the Federal Government has belatedly become aware of the plight of the Oil producing areas and pledge to the remedial action, "we plead that it grant a minimum of 50 per cent derivation".

This they said would assist the states in their development programmes. It added that the level of unemployed and other social ills in the oil producing

From Hammud Boduurin in Osogbo

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By Ndubuisi Francis

National Librarian till date. National Librarian is a political appointment and by 30 June, 1999, he has spent 8 years which means two terms as stipulated in the circular No. 58819/S.3/CI/III/977 of 18th April, 1985", the Association argued.

According to SSAUTHRIA, the circular which states that "the appointment of managing director/chief executive of Federal Government Statutory Corporation and government owned company shall be for four years term in the first instance, renewable for only one more term of four years".

It called on the Federal Government to act in tandem with the guidelines contained in the circular No. 58341/S. II/T/S/146 of July 6, 19995 which outlined that officers who have already served 35 years or have attained the compulsory retirement age of 60 years should be retired.

Federal Government has been called upon to adequately fund research institutes to enable them carry out research into areas which could be of economic benefit to the nation.

The Borno State Governor, Alhaji Mala Kachallah, made the call while exchanging views with the Minister of Science and Technology, Chief Ebitimi Banigo, who paid him a courtesy call at the Government House, Maiduguri.

Kachallah remarked that

Borno Urges Adequate Funding of Research Institutes

From Abel Orih in Maiduguri

Nigeria has many products and mineral resources which if fully exploited can fetch the country lots of foreign exchange, adding that developed countries of the world are investing billions of dollars every year in research and development.

The governor expressed delight with the ministry's plan to

establish a zonal office in Maiduguri.

He further stated that the state was one of the largest producers of foods, particularly wheat, Sorghum, beans and millet among others, adding that proper research would enhance meaningful success for both the federal and state governments.

Nigeria, he said, should not continue to be dumping ground and therefore need her local products to meet standard in the global market.

Speaking earlier, the Minister thanked the governor for the marvellous reception accorded him and members of his entourage.

Banigo stated that the ministry has a proposal to establish a zonal office in Borno. He said the ministry has a well planned blue print to improve the present standard of science and technology in the country with a view to recording landmark in the production sector.

Gone were the days, he said, when the country depended on foreign goods, adding that the country should not only strive to produce enough for its use but also for export, with qualitative and commendable goods and services to meet global requirements.

the situation as "unfortunate" accusing the teachers of speaking half truth, and inciting the pupils.

According to him, the government has approved part payment of workers salary in the state which they initially rejected adding the state inherited part of arrears from the last regime.

Meanwhile, students of tertiary institutions in the state have given 72-hour ultimatum for government to settle the workers salary from April to July.

In a statement signed by the students caretaker committee's chairman and secretary, Messrs. Sokeke Ademola and Oke

Oladipo respectively, the students threatened breakdown of law and order due to what they called "nonchalant attitude of the state government towards resolving the issue amicably".

The students in the statement titled, "strike looms, in tertiary institutions" said their "life is at stake" adding they would not take it lightly if their lecturers should go on strike again.

They accused the government of not giving the lecturers audience to iron out things and as such the tuition fees already paid would waste away and could amount to breach of contract.

Ebonyi Needs Take-Off Grant - Legislators

From Tom Udechi in Abakiliki

Ebonyi State legislators have sent a Save Our Soul (SOS) appeal to the Presidency to increase the state's statutory allocation and approve a take off grant for the state.

The legislators passed the unanimous resolution after an exhaustive debate on a motion introduced by the deputy speaker of the house, Mr. Onwe S. Onwe.

In the motion, the deputy speaker contended that Ebonyi State needed special financial assistance considering its political background as a new state without existing infrastructure.

The deputy speaker gave a history of states creation in the country and observed that

every state was in the past given special take off grant to solve its immediate problems.

He regretted that the six states created in 1996 were not given any take off grant under late General Sani Abacha.

Onwe contended that, part of the loot recovered from officials who served the Abacha regime might have been part of the money slated as take-off grants to the new states.


Arguing the motion, Mr. David Onuoha of Ikwo-North said that unless a special grant was approved for

Ebonyi, its rate of development would continue to be slow.

When the motion was put to vote, it was supported unanimously by the members.

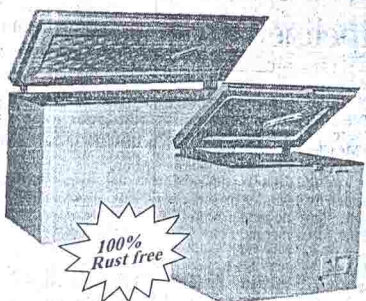
The speaker, Mr. Julius Ucha, directed the Clerk of the House to send a copy of the resolution to both the National Assembly and President Olusegun Obasanjo for necessary action.

Thereafter, members of the Assets Sharing Committee for Enugu and Abia States were invited to brief the House on how the assets were shared. Journalists however were not allowed to cover the briefing.



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