

GOODWILL MESSAGE BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, AHMAD IBRAHIM LAWAN (CON), AT THE 3RD NATIONAL SUMMIT ON DIMINISHING CORRUPTION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR HELD AT THE STATE HOUSE CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA ON TUESDAY, 30TH NOVEMBER, 2021

PROTOCOL:

It gives me great pleasure to be part of this year's National Summit on Diminishing Corruption in the Public Sector which has as theme **“Corruption and Cost of Governance: New Imperatives for Fiscal Transparency”**.

I wish to commend the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) for bringing stakeholders together for the third year running to proffer solutions to address the menace of corruption in the public sector. I also wish to applaud the Chairman and Board of the ICPC for sustaining the fight against corruption and coming up with innovative initiatives to support the anti-corruption programmes of this Administration.

We cannot divorce corruption from high cost of governance. It has been observed that weaknesses in public institutions and agencies of government are often attributed to corrupt practices and other vices. Diminishing corruption in the public sector is therefore crucial to the delivery of government programmes and services to meet the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), check insecurity and ensure transformation.

Your Excellency, Mr. President, the Ninth National Assembly remains committed to the fight against corruption. We will continue to partner and work assiduously with the executive through the passage of crucial legislations to eradicate corruption in all segments and sectors of the country. Part of our recent contributions are passage of the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020 which requires beneficial owner disclosure, globally regarded as crucial in the fight against corruption, and the Petroleum Industry Act to promote transparency and accountability in the oil and gas sector.

Mr. President, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the enormous loss of revenue through Illicit Financial Flows is concerning. Withholding and non-remittances of

revenue generated by some Ministries, Departments and Agencies into the Treasury have also diminished resources available for developmental projects, leading to domestic and foreign borrowings by the government to address critical developmental and infrastructural deficits. While revenue has been reducing, the cost of governance has continued to grow. Similarly, there are leakages of money that could have easily been available for national development.

While we appeal to the governments of destination countries to support the efforts of the current Administration and the African Continent in the repatriation of looted and illicit funds, on our part at the National Assembly, we will continue to reinvigorate measures and pass laws that will strengthen the fight against corruption and limit illicit financial flows. I wish to also reiterate that we will not shy away from our constitutional responsibility of overseeing MDAs, including monitoring of implementation of loans approved by the National Assembly. We will also monitor the personnel and capital expenditure of MDAs with a view to curtailing wasteful expenditure towards reducing the cost of governance.

The National Assembly is conscious of the financial constraint of the country and has not increased its budget for the past three years. This is our own sacrifice to reduce the cost of governance in the country.

Your Excellencies, I will like to reemphasize the need to diversify sources of funding of our programmes and projects. We need to encourage and promote more private sector participation in developing some of our physical infrastructure. The government should continue to explore the Public Private Partnership (PPP), Build Operate Transfer (BOT), and many other funding options. This is with a view to reducing our dependence on oil revenue.

The National Assembly remains committed to the aspiration of a corrupt-free and indivisible Nigeria. We therefore remain focused on this altruistic and patriotic path, in order to continue to provide pro-people and life improving legislative interventions throughout our legislative mandate.

Once more, I commend the ICPC for organising this Summit. We look forward to the outcome of this Summit. I wish us fruitful deliberations.

Thank you!