



CORRUPTION WATCH

MONTHLY LEAFLET OF COALITION AGAINST CORRUPT LEADERS (CACOL) JUNE 2008

Name, Nail, Shame and Shun Corrupt Leaders Anywhere, Everywhere

LABOUR, FORGE A COMMON FRONT, LEAD US TO FIGHT

The Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) felicitates with the working class people, various industrial labour unions and the two labour centers - the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and Trades Union Congress (TUC) on this auspicious occasion of their day. This is the day set aside by the International Labour Organization (ILO) the progenitor of the United Nations Organization (UNO) to honour the toiling people of the world. The day is expected to be spent rejoicing by and with the working class people of every country for global recognition of their contribution to global development, peace, and harmony.

This is the contribution they make through the products of their industry, which provide vitality for the human body and wealth for his environment. Workers' work provide food, shelter, clothing, education, health, safety and security in a nation while lack of work for the workers creates famine, homelessness, nakedness, ignorance, unsafe environment, insecurity of life and property, disease and death. A nation that fails to provide conducive working environment for its working class unwittingly creates a state of anarchy where security life and property becomes a mirage but crimes of all sorts hold sway. That typical state in the threshold of anarchy is Nigeria, where a crime is committed by the second and corrupt practices become the normal art of governance rather than exception.

Nigeria produces nothing but consumes everything. From expensive food items to automobiles and houses, Nigerian privileged class have peculiar ferocious taste for ostentatious goods. The few privileged individuals hold the majority of the people to ransom. They appropriate the Nigerian commonwealth to themselves, cronies and foreign collaborators. They import all items that are and can be produced in Nigeria to the detriment of local industries. These local industries, which they sell to themselves, are close down to pave way for them to import inferior version of their products. This practice that kills jobs on daily basis and creates conducive environment for violent crimes to thrive.

Ironically, it is the defenseless working class that fall victims of all criminal activities. They form the class that are not protected by bodyguards, their houses are not fortified with high fences with strong gates with barbed coil on top, they have only little access to power and energy at exorbitant rates because the money and labour to make them cheaper has been

misappropriated by the powerful. It is the workers who have no access to quality medical care abroad while the local health facilities have been rendered prostrate because part of health budget must be left unspent for it to be shared as end-of-year booty. Children of the working class have no access to quality education since public education has been destroyed in favour of the private ones being run at exorbitant rates in violation of the constitution by the same ruling elites who also have access to foreign institutions of learning at the expense of tax paying workers.

Food has become the albatross of the working class as the ruling elite never planned for food security. The global food crisis doubles for Nigerians that has no food aid but in-built local famine procedures. Food producers are not given governmental support in terms of farming loan, public irrigation facilities, and subsidized farming inputs such as fertilizers, necessary chemicals and storage facilities. Food producers are not given incentives like training, bulk-purchase of farm produce to relive producers of problem of wastage, even good transportation facilities to move their farm produce to markets, etc. Too many areas of governmental negligence against the Nigerian working class!

The question then arises: for how long would the workers of Nigeria remain complacent while both their active and retired colleagues are decimated physically and psychologically? For how long would the workers of Nigeria leave their defenseless children and aged die of preventable diseases occasioned by ignorance, hunger, malnutrition and governmental negligence? For how long would workers' union stand politicking among themselves and watch their members and potential members being driven into labour market or untimely death through retrenchment, industrial disharmony and workplace closure as well as reluctance or outright refusal of employers honouring their pay agreement with employees.

"Workers of all countries, Unite!" so says Lenin, one of the founding fathers of labour movement in the world. Labour movement in Nigeria should realize that fight alone die alone it is. It is a people that are united that can never be defeated. Workers of Nigeria should speak with one voice. They should direct their voice, their energy, and their expertise for the defense of the masses of this country. It is the labour movement that has the potentialities of mobilizing the mass of Nigeria people to fight for their fundamental, social and economic rights. Labour movement in Nigeria should not allow various governmental hierarchies who are perpetually hypocritical to divide their ranks. For us at CACOL, there is no reason why labour movement should allow itself segregated into junior and senior labour centres. Everybody buys from the same market, face the same hardship and needs the same succour.

The Nigeria labour movement owes Nigerians the duty to strengthen the Labour and Civil Society Coalition (LASCO). This will make the Coalition more vibrant, more formidable and more active for Nigerians to look forward to as the vanguard to lead them to demand for everything that is rightly theirs from their government. Let the new motto of the labour movement be "United we stand, divided we fall!"

FOIB: The Reps' Naked Dance in the Market Place

The Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders, CACOL, as a coalition of organizations that stand against corruption of any sort in the socio-political process in Nigeria, condemn without reservation the anti-people action of most supposedly honourable members of the House of Representatives in throwing out the Freedom of Information Bill (FOIB) with *ignominy* the way they did on Thursday.

For an unprecedented ninth time the pedestrian egoism of the so-called representatives of the people was allowed to overwhelm the political expediency the bill which made them see it as an expressway to their political Golgotha. A former IG once condemned the National Assembly as a haven of fraudsters and allied criminals. We challenge the reps to prove him wrong. After all, one of them died in detention while undergoing trial in the last dispensation and another in this dispensation got impeached as Speaker for fraud-related offences.

The FOI bill is a patently harmless bill if passed into law. The only person or group who should dread the bill is anyone who has a shady past or a corrupt present. Members of the House of Reps must realize that by whatever means they got into the national assembly, they owe it a sacred duty by their legislative actions to reflect the total aggregate of the opinions of the majority of Nigerians. Rejecting the bill shows that the reps are telling Nigerians that we have no right to know how we are being ruled, or that we have no say in our own affairs. And that is a sacrilege.

CACOL hereby accuses the reps of conspiracy with some extraneous but decidedly negative political forces against the wishes and aspirations of majority of Nigerians. They are dancing to the tunes of their political godfathers who imposed them on the nation. The fight against the deadly virus of corruption would be extremely enhanced by the FOI bill if only it becomes a legal instrument. But if the current House of Reps members find it so abhorrent that they almost came to blows in throwing it out, we can only conclude that they are there to perpetrate and perpetuate corruption. They are afraid of their own shadows.

But whether they like it or not the bill will one day be passed. The only thing we have realized now by the reps' action is that democracy is still floundering on the sea of power cultism in Nigeria and that anti-corruption is a mere lip service on the megaphone of political deception as manifested by these 'representatives'.

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT FOR FARIDA WAZIRI BY THE US, BRITAIN AND SPEAKER BANKOLE, PREPOSTEROUS

The Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) believes that the recent pronouncements of support for the appointment of Mrs. Farida Waziri as substantive Chairman for the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) by the United States through her Ambassador to Nigeria, Ms Robin Renee Sanders, the British Government and Nigeria's House of Representatives Speaker, Hon. Dimeji Bankole, were both unnecessary and hypocritical. It is unnecessary and self-serving in the first instance because Nigeria, being a sovereign state, does not require the endorsement of the United States government to legitimize her choice of public office holders.

But we daresay that both the US and Britain lack the political credibility, social legitimacy and the moral integrity to endorse a choice rejected by most Nigerians because both are major receivers, and their economies major beneficiaries of stolen treasures from Nigeria. It would have been a major disincentive to the insatiable pecuniary thievery of the persistent looters of our treasury who parade themselves as leaders if the US and other advanced economies of the world block the easy access of stolen money from Nigeria to their financial institutions.

If the US and Britain are genuinely concerned and serious about helping Nigeria free herself from effects of decades of unbridled, open and blatant official corruption that had made this country lose trillions of dollars stashed around the world the US and British governments should, as a matter of deliberate urgency, repatriate the enormous stolen Nigerian monies laundered and lodged in various US and European banks. They have the wherewithal to trace and recover this stolen wealth of our country if they so wish.

WHILE we have no bias against any competent person becoming the EFCC chairman, we however believe that that position is important and sensitive enough to be occupied by a man/woman of impeccable character. The senate's confirmation of Mrs. Farida Waziri as substantive EFCC chairman without a thorough and satisfactory investigation of all the allegations against her is, to say the least, preposterous.

Of particular note is the unresolved issue of her standing surety for former Gov. George Akume of Benue State who has been accused by the EFCC of various acts of corruption. This is a big moral question standing against her. Of course we are aware that Mrs. Waziri has denied this point and that the Senate had depended on nothing else of substance than her denial to confirm her appointment. We hereby call on the Senate to take immediate steps to withdraw their confirmation if or whenever there is a concrete evidence to show that Mrs. Waziri had lied under oath, deceived the nation and must not only be removed but prosecuted. We are closely monitoring events as they unfold. Nigerians reject the tendency by their rulers to take them for fools or hold them to contempt with arrogant impunity.

CACOL believes that it is not a mere coincidence that despite the unwarranted hurried confirmation of Mrs Waziri's appointment as the Chairman of EFCC, Hon. Dimeji Bankole did not find a better place to declare his total support for that flawed appointment, of which credibility is still shrouded in mystery, than far away United States at the same time the latter's ambassador was paying homage and tribute to Mrs. Farida Waziri at home. How much antecedents of the appointee does the 'Honourable' Speaker know that made him declare that "her appointment would help in reducing corruption" in Nigeria?

Being the head of a part of the legislative arm of government, the Honourable Speaker is expected to exercise intelligent restraint before applauding wholesale any action of the executive arm that he is supposed to regulate. This is even more relevant especially when Mrs Farida Waziri has not satisfactorily discharged herself on the allegation of standing surety for the erstwhile Governor of Benue State, George Akume, who stands accused of massive corruption while in office.

It should be noted that CACOL is not bothered by whoever occupies the highest position at the EFCC as long as the person can, despite its imperfections, meet or surpass the 'Nuhu Ribadu standard' in the Commission. However, the journey of such person to the position need be on pure merit - open, transparent and devoid of fraudulent practices. We believe those who come to equity must do so with clean hands. This is because whoever occupies a position of power through dishonest means will never trust or work with honest people hence no matter how hard such a team works, no one, except beneficiaries of such dishonesty, will repose adequate confidence in the outcome of their activities and that will be a national calamity. In this case, we believe that Madam Waziri still owes Nigerians the cleaning of her hands of the stain occasioned by the controversial standing surety for George Akume in a matter bothering on corrupt practice. It is against this backdrop that CACOL hereby urges Madam Waziri to, in the very least, step aside or the Senate reverses itself on the issue and orders her to resign, while Malam Lamorde continue to act as the EFCC Chairman, pending the determination of the suit filed by Chief Gani Fawehinmi challenging her moral integrity to occupy such exalted position that requires absolute honesty and impeccable integrity.

The Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) was established in August 2007 to exert pressures on anti-graft agencies to investigate and prosecute known corrupt leaders in Nigeria. CACOL also undertakes to sensitize Nigerians to Name, Nail, Shame and Shun Corrupt Leaders Anywhere, Everywhere, to serve as deterrent that corruption does not pay. Leaflet is supported by **ActionAid Nigeria** through **CHILDREN Project**. For further information contact: Chairman, 610 Lagos-Abeokuta E/way, Ijaye-Ojokoro, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: cacolc@yahoo.com Phone: 01-4736534, 08037194969, 08023226276