



# NIGER DELTA DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Office of the Chairman

COVID-19 Palliative/ Distribution Committee

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3<sup>rd</sup> August, 2020.

Senator Ayo Akinyelure  
Chairman, Senate Committee on  
Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions  
Federal Republic of Nigeria,  
Senate Wing,  
National Assembly Complex,  
3 Arm Zone,  
Abuja Nigeria,



Sir,

**DEMAND FOR INVESTIGATION OVER ALLEGED MISAPPROPRIATION AND  
DIVERSION OF 6.2 BILLION NAIRA NDDC PALLIATIVES MONEY.**

**CALL FOR SUSPENSION INTERIM MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE (IMC) FROM  
OFFICE FOR FREE AND FAIR INVESTIGATION.**

**THE ROLE OF NDDC IMC IN INVESTIGATING UNREST IN THE NIGER DELTA  
THROUGH EXTORTION AND WITHHOLDING OF PAYMENT OF CONTRACTORS.**

## BACKGROUND

1. I serve in my capacity as the current Chairman of the COVID-19 Palliatives Distribution Committee of the NDDC appointed by the President, His Excellency, Muhammadu Buhari through the Interim Management Committee hereafter referred to as the IMC of the NDDC. That I was officially inaugurated along with members of my Committee to oversee the distribution of Palliatives in the nine Niger Delta states and my committee was made up of Directors in the Commission covering the nine states. That the Palliative Distribution was officially flagged off in Port Harcourt with the mandate to commence distribution. Today, all of that can be regrettably described as a show of shame and a scam. The Six Billion, Two Hundred and Fifty Million Naira (N6,250,000,000.00) only that was magnanimously approved by Mr. President to help the poor and indigents of the Niger Delta during this difficult period of the pandemic as Palliatives has curiously been allegedly misappropriated and embezzled by the IMC of the NDDC and their Co-conspirators. As the Chairman of the Palliatives Distribution Committee, my findings is not only that the money cannot be accounted for, but there is nothing on ground to show that that 6.2 billion Naira of our hard earned tax payers money was invested for its original purpose which the President approved. The materials and supplies according to the statement were to be done through Emergency Procurement method as provided in Sections 42(b) (c) and 43 of the Public Procurement Act, 2007.

## PALLIATIVES FRAUD

2. Whereas the Palliatives was meant for the indigent and poor, curiously, just a handful of food items though staged-managed, was provided and distributed to an insignificant number of persons

have been distributed. Some of the food items were politically shared among the IMC choice areas including a few states of choice which aligned with them politically to undermine the original essence of the Palliatives by President Muhammadu Buhari which was approved with tax payers monies. As the chairman of the Palliatives Distribution Committee, I can not account for the Palliatives as my Committee was sidelined just because I as the Chairman demanded for ACCOUNTABILITY and TRANSPARENCY in the processes as well as value for money with respect to the Palliatives.

3. That I was handed the template for the distribution of the Palliatives wherein it was indicated that Nine Trucks of food items will be distributed to each of the Nine states in the region. However, the IMC hijacked the entire process. They called and handed me with few bags of rice and beans just to induce me to play along with them giving the false impression that the process was successful. This appears to me as a coverup plot. MOST of the food items that they claimed to have distributed were spoilt and unhealthy for human consumption. Thus only the IMC can tell where they got those poisonous and rotten food items from. The next thing we hear surprisingly, is that the Palliatives has been distributed. I managed to monitor from a distance the charade and show-off since I and my Committee was stripped of our assignments by the IMC in the distribution processes and left us incommunicado. All needed logistics that my Committee was supposed to work with was entirely denied us.

#### **MEDICAL EQUIPMENT.**

4. As chairman of the Palliatives Distribution Committee, I am aware that what was distributed under the guise of medical equipment were old goods and wares in the Commission's warehouses which was put on Camera just to deceive the unsuspecting public and mislead the President. This too was staged. No single kits or COVID-19 Test Centres were set up by the Commission in the Nine Niger Delta states till date. It is for the records that I state these facts. The money for Palliatives approved by Mr. President was allegedly corruptly diverted by the IMC in concert with identifiable powerful forces and so cannot be accounted for.

#### **SECURITY COMPROMISE BY IMC**

5. It is not in doubt that prior to my appointment as Palliatives Distribution Committee Chairman, I have been personally and voluntarily sponsoring the Procurement and distribution of Palliatives and other charitable support for various communities in the Niger Delta from my personal funds. My antecedents as per my role in ensuring peace, security and advocating for development in the region is public knowledge and the IMC is also aware. This may not be far from considerations that resulted in my appointment as Chairman of NDDC Palliatives Distribution Committee during this pandemic. They are aware of my reach in the region and they have been leveraging on it seriously and this is not the first time. I say this with the highest sense of humility and responsibility.

Sometimes in 2019, the current Acting Executive Director of Projects, Dr. Cairo Ojugbo, and the late Executive Director of Finance and Administration Chief Ibanga Basse Enang, on behalf of the IMC under the former Acting Managing Director, Dr. Joi Nunieh had approached me requesting that I helped to intervene in quelling the raging unrest and insecurity in the region particularly in the host state of the Headquarters of the Commission. They expressed confidence that I had the command to manage the restive youths and other stakeholders who frequently mounted pressures on them making it almost impossible for the IMC to do their job successfully. They committed and pledged to provide me with the needed logistics and other necessary resources on a monthly basis for this purpose from the Commission. This necessitated my visit along with other major stakeholders such as Mr. Ebokabowei Victor Ben (Boyloaf) etc in the region in November 2019 to the NDDC headquarters on a solidarity visit to Joi Nunieh-led IMC to give them the needed support so as to enable them succeed. During that visit we passed a vote of confidence on the IMC as a way of accepting them before the aggrieved people's of the region. As a public commitment, as an acknowledgement that I am a respected and responsible leader in the region, I had to start work immediately using my personal resources to pursue peace and security in the region with the consent of the IMC believing

that the commitment on trust will be implemented by the IMC. Upon the assumption of office by the current IMC led by Prof. Daniel Pondei, Dr. Cairo Ojugbo also led another IMC delegation in furtherance to our existing engagement on a consultative visit to my country home in Rivers state to commit the new IMC to this particular understanding with a view to sustain it. As at today, despite my huge investment and productive results on this task to the evidential knowledge of the Commission, the IMC has refused to pay me. I presented the matter before the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs Senator Godswill Akpabio and he intervened. He directed the IMC to pay me all outstanding monies owed me as well as resolve any issues because of how sensitivity of what I do and the need to sustain it. Surprisingly, till date, the IMC is still playing games with my payments.

This cunning posture of the IMC is deepening the unrest and insecurity in the region, thus blackmailing the efforts of President Muhammadu Buhari in developing the Niger Delta. The further abuse of goodwill from myself and other critical stakeholders in the region by the IMC is not encouraging moving forward.

6. Surprisingly again, at their corrupt leisure and malevolent unbridled appetite, the Managing Director openly on camera admitted to some disturbing embezzlement of unbudgeted funds in the Commission during this pandemic. Responding to questions at the National Assembly regarding the COVID-19 Relief Fund paid to NDDC staff the MD said "ONLY N1.3 billion was used to take care of staff" despite being paid their salaries. He said "We used it to take care of ourselves. We are NDDC, we need to take care of ourselves too." That is the level of impunity and fraud in the Commission. This is not in the mandate of the President when he approved the 6.2 billion Naira for Palliatives in the region.

7. There have been several barefaced embezzlement of billions of Naira from the Commission that was originally established to help the people's of the region but to no avail. There have been records of scam contracts supervised by the IMC. Unfortunately, they have procured some dubious Non Governmental Organizations NGO's to defend and cover up their malfeasances and give them a clean bill through procured reports and presentations during the course of ongoing investigations. The media has been awash for some days now with respect to sweeping allegations and counter allegations against the IMC over alleged corrupt embezzlement of billions of Naira from the NDDC through countless fronts. These stories further show the level of deep seated corruption going on in the Commission against the impoverished peoples of the Niger Delta.

#### **EXTORTION OF STAKEHOLDERS AND CONTRACTORS BY IMC**

8. That there is a long list of genuine Contractors from the Niger Delta that were awarded Distilting and other Contracts which they fully executed and their executed jobs are verifiable with evidence of confirmation by the IMC which visited the sites for verification. Most of these contractors are genuine and critical stakeholders in the Niger Delta who play major roles in helping to keep the peace and security in the region. However, the IMC under Prof. Daniel Pondei has refused to pay them because the Contractors refused to play along with the IMC which fraudulently sought to cut their payments by thirty to forty percent for themselves at the total loss of the contractors.

Meanwhile the IMC has paid and continued to pay ghost and suspectedly fraudulent contractors billions of Naira for jobs and contracts that cannot be verified or justified serving as conduit pipes. These issue are part of what I have painstakingly tried to get the IMC resolved as part of the peace and security efforts in the region but they have chosen to look the other way while the region is put on the edge for crisis. This also I have brought to the attention of the Minister of Niger Delta Affairs. This is what has been happening in the NDDC as the IMC continues to thrive in the unrest in the region through corrupt means.

9. The expenditures did not observe the extant provisions of the Public Procurement Act. The IMC may be compromising and jeopardizing the Forensic Audit said to be ongoing in the NDDC. The IMC by their actions is by omission or commission instigating crisis and insecurity in the Niger Delta.

### **I SHALL UPON INVITATION TO A PUBLIC PROBE TENDER NECESSARY EVIDENCE TO BACK UP THESE CLAIMS**

#### **PRAYERS:**

- a) The National Assembly should probe and investigate the IMC under Prof. Kemebradikumo Daniel Pondei with a view to make them to account for the 6.2 billion Naira approved by the President for Palliatives in the Niger Delta during the pandemic. That they should show material evidence of compliance with the relevant Sections of the Public Procurement Act, 2007. That they should show proof of procurement and utility of the necessary foodstuffs keeping the approved figures in mind the medical equipment and distribution of same to the Niger Delta states by the Palliatives Distribution Committee chaired by High Chief Sobomabo Jackrich.
- b) The IMC and any other public office holder(s) no matter how highly placed as long as this probe is concerned should be made to step aside or be suspended from office just like Ibrahim Magu of the EFCC so as not to interfere in the ongoing investigations in the NDDC. This will disable him from compromising relevant documents and or personnel in the interest of transparency. The sweeping allegations against the IMC and their overtures disqualify them from overseeing any forensic audit because they have become interested Parties in the criminal investigations ongoing in the NDDC both by the audit and the National Assembly just to sabotage President Muhammadu Buhari.
- c) That the IMC should be made to explain the hijack of the Palliatives Distribution process and the sidelining of the inaugurated Palliatives Distribution Committee which was saddled with the task of Distribution of the Palliatives in the nine Niger Delta states as approved by President Muhammadu Buhari.
- d) That the IMC should be made to pay all outstanding stakeholders and contractors whose job have been verifiably executed. That I should be paid all my monies and logistics owed by the IMC and the NDDC.
- e) The National Assembly should take into consideration all issues raised in this petition and any other relevant information and investigate/probe into them in the interest of justice for the people's of the Niger Delta.

Signed:



3/2/2020

**High Chief Sobomabo Jackrich,**  
*Chairman, NDDC COVID-19 Palliatives Distribution Committee*