15th April 2021.

Mr. Abdulrasheed Bawa,
Executive Chairman,
Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC),
Plot 301/302, Institution and Research Cadastral District,
Jabi, Abuja.

Dear Sir,

Request to Investigate Claim of over 500 Million Naira Spent On School Feeding in Lagos, Ogun and FCT During COVID-19 Lockdown

I write on behalf of Human and Environmental Development Agenda (HEDA Resource Centre), a leading anticorruption organisation in Nigeria, to call your attention to and request the investigation of the alleged claim by the Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development (FMHDSD), Hajia Sadiya Farouq, that the sum of 523,273,800 Naira was spent to feed school pupils in Lagos, Ogun and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, between May 14, and July 6, 2020 (For more details on the report, see https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/451639-covid-19-lockdown-minister-insists-n500m-was-spent-on-school-feeding-in-two-states-abuja.html)

This is indeed shocking as the feeding was said to have happened during a period when the schools were all closed due to the lockdown directive of the Federal Government occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is even more worrisome as we further read in the above-cited link that when a civil society organisation reportedly made a Freedom of Information (FOI) request on August 6, 2020, to the ministry for the detailed breakdown of the spending, rather than provide the breakdown, the minister and the ministry refused the request leading to unnecessary litigation and additional cost to the government.

Apart from the fact that the information requested is a public and mundane information which should ordinarily be in the public domain, we are also concerned by the fact that a ministry such as of humanitarian affairs will prefer to waste taxpayers’ money on such needless litigation which is therefore suggestive of the fact that the ministry may be trying to hide some untoward activities that might have occurred.

As an organisation with practical engagement\(^1\) with frontline workers and monitors in the States mentioned by the Ministry, we are able to confirm that there was no feasible or documented experience of school operations in Lagos, Ogun or FCT during the period under review. We also confirm that our monitoring activities reflected no evidence of any

\(^1\) https://allafrica.com/stories/202004200378.html
beneficiary of such school feeding intervention by the Federal Government during that period stated by the ministry. The report of our monitoring activities is attached to this letter.

We are therefore urging you to undertake necessary investigation of this matter and ensure that the ultimate beneficiaries of the budgeted and expended intervention received the benefits.

We shall look forward to your response and working closely with your team in getting justice in this particular matter.

We thank you in anticipation of your understanding and necessary action.

Sincerely,

Olanrewaju Suraju
Chairman.

CC: President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, 
President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 
Yakubu Gowon Crescent, 
Three Arms Zone, 
Asokoro, Abuja.