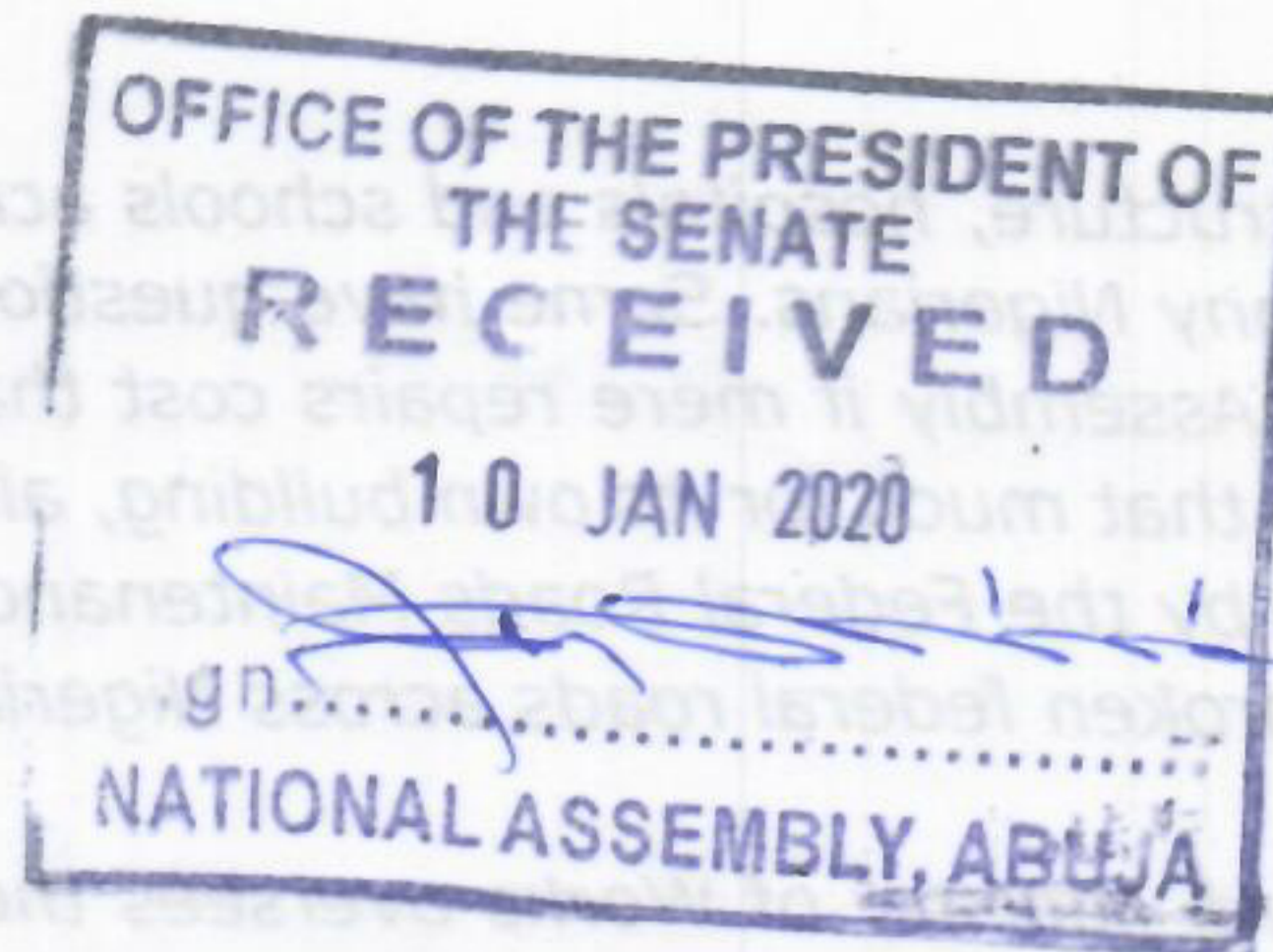


3rd January, 2020

**The President of the Senate
National Assembly Complex
Three Arms Zone
Abuja**



Dear Sir,

**REQUEST BROUGHT PURSUANT TO THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, 2011
FOR DETAILED INFORMATION ON THE BREAKDOWN OF THE PROPOSED
SPENDING OF THE N37 BILLION FOR THE RENOVATION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY COMPLEX**

The above subject matter refers.

We write this request based on provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, 2011, Section 1 states that notwithstanding anything contained in any other Act, law or regulation, the right of any person to access or request information, whether or not contained in any written form, which is in the custody or possession of any public official, agency or institution howsoever described, is established. The Act also provides in Section 1(2) that an applicant need not demonstrate any specific interest in the information being applied for. Section 2 of the also provides that a public institution shall ensure that its records and keeps its information about all its activities, operations and businesses. And Section 3 provides that an application for access to a record or information shall be made in accordance with Section 1 of the Act.

It is based on the above that we demand for a copy of the proposal, assessment, and procedure employed by the National Assembly and or the FCDA in arriving at the N37billion budget for renovation of National Assembly in the 2020 budget. it was widely conveyed in media report that the National Assembly complex is to be renovated for N37 Billion Naira. Premium Times¹ on the 18th December 2019 in a report titled, "As it stands, Nigeria is poised to spend more on renovating the National Assembly complex in Abuja than it would on repairing federal roads across the country". In order to aid proper appreciation of our request kindly find below the extract of the report by Premium Times,

"As it stands, Nigeria is poised to spend more on renovating the National Assembly complex in Abuja than it would on repairing federal roads across the country. In the 2020 budget signed on Tuesday by President Muhammadu Buhari, the renovation of the National Assembly complex is set to gulp ₦37 billion. Details of the spending were first given on Monday by the Senate President, Ahmed Lawan, who said Mr. Buhari approved the amount after lawmakers met with him to explain the poor condition of the legislature building in Abuja. The plan to spend the equivalent of \$100 million on repairing just one building at a

¹ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/368724-while-buhari-approves-n37-billion-for-nass-renovation-nigerias-roads-repairs-get-less.html>

time key infrastructure, hospitals and schools across the country remain in terrible shape, has angered many Nigerians. Some have questioned how much would be required to build a new National Assembly if mere repairs cost that much. For comparisons, while National Assembly votes that much for its own building, all that is earmarked by the government for capital projects by the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) — the agency saddled with repairing broken federal roads across Nigeria — is ₦36.6 billion.

While the Federal Ministry of Works oversees the building of all federal roads, it is FERMA that is in charge of their repairs. Both agencies have struggled with poor funding over the years and have left hundreds of roads in the country in disrepair. Last week, the Minister of Works and Housing, Babatunde Fashola, said the government owed contractors working on federal road projects up to ₦306 billion. He defended why the government should raise VAT and borrow more. "If we had ₦1 trillion to spend on Nigerian roads we would be in a much better position. As of October, we were owing contractors ₦306 billion and more bills are coming in and all we got was ₦73 billion," he was quoted as saying. Federal roads span 32,980 km (17% of the nation's road network of 194,000 km), according to the estimate quoted by Mr. Fashola in October when he appeared before the House of Representatives Committee on Works. Most of the roads are broken and require attention.

The money for the renovation of the parliament building is not part of ₦128 billion voted for the National Assembly next year. The ₦37 billion is tucked under the capital spending of the Federal Capital Development Administration. The capital expenditure for the FCTA is ₦62.4 billion, meaning more than half the money that should address Abuja's deplorable infrastructure will go to fixing only the National Assembly.

Allocation to renovate NASS complex over the years:

The Senate President, Mr. Lawan, told journalists that no major renovation had been done on the National Assembly property for 20 years and many parts of the property had become dilapidated. "The phase one renovation will commence — the chambers and committee rooms in the white house. ₦37 billion was sourced and was given. It was put under the FCT, not national Assembly. All we require is to have the complex renovated," Mr. Lawan said. "When we are through with phase 1, we will go to phase 2. It is not under the control of the National Assembly. The complex is a national asset and is for the FCDA to take care." While monies may not have been assigned specifically for the "renovation" of the building, the National Assembly has received multiple funding for improved infrastructure since 1999. In 2013, the Federal Executive Council approved a contract of ₦40.2 billion for the "construction of Phase III, Part III of the National Assembly complex and the upgrading of the assembly's two chambers".

Additionally, in the proposed 2017 National Assembly budget, ₦1.25 billion was budgeted for the purchase of security equipment by the Senate. Apart from this, ₦440 million was allocated for the same purpose under capital expenditure for the National Assembly office. Also, at the peak of the scandal between the eighth Assembly and erstwhile finance minister, Kemi Adeosun, PREMIUM TIMES found that ₦454 million was spent on office equipment, and another ₦109 million was paid to Navadee Integrated Nigeria Ltd for "ICT supply of equipment" at NASS. Aside a sum of ₦250 million paid to DCN Nigeria Ltd for "general renovation of main building", this newspaper also found that the National Assembly spent ₦578 million on the refurbishing of meetings and committee rooms.

In like manner, the House of Representatives paid H and H Inter-Biz Services ₦50 million for the renovation of its committee rooms. This is notwithstanding another "painting of committee rooms" project worth ₦46 million and awarded to Jagsul Nigeria Ltd. The lower chamber also awarded ₦39 million for the replacement of public address system in its committee rooms to Dee Ex Associate Ltd.

How big is ₦30 billion?

An investigation by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting in 2018 revealed that there are only four radiotherapy machines available all over Nigeria, out of which only one — at the National Hospital Abuja — is functional for cancer treatment. According to the report, barring associated costs such as the machine vault, treatment planning, oncology information system software, lasers, and other accessories, the most expensive linear radiotherapy machines cost between \$750,000 and \$1.5million (between ₦228 million and ₦457 million at the official rate of N305 to \$1). If the most expensive type is bought for ₦457 million, to equip each of the 21 federal teaching hospitals in the country with a radiotherapy machine would cost the country just about ₦9.6 billion. Also, in the 2020 proposed budget of the National Primary Health Care Development Agency (NPHCDA), between ₦9 million and ₦16 million is allocated for the construction, renovation and equipping of the various Primary Health Centres (PHC) across the country. If the most costly PHC is to be constructed for ₦16 million, each of the 774 local government areas in the country would get two Primary Health Centres. This would gulp ₦24.77 billion. Additionally, the 2015 Constituency Projects report by BudgIT shows that the construction and furnishing of three classrooms, a headmaster office and toilet at Ukpogo, Uhumwode LGA of Edo State, cost ₦15 million. At this rate, about five of these classrooms can be constructed in each of the 36 states of the Federation...."

This request is of utmost importance at this time because as established by this report over the years, there has been an indirect fund for the renovation of the NASS. And more so, Nigeria has more pressing needs and concerns that would ultimately benefit the nation appropriately, for instance, the health sector, educational sector and citizens who pay their hard-earned resources as tax are made to die daily due to poor health infrastructures and schemes, bad roads to name but a few. This request is to demand the need for the National Assembly to reconsider this propose allocation and focus on the fundamental needs of electorates who have elected for service to the nation and not habiting a comfy office complex.

With all these pondering on our minds and the minds of Nigerians, we serve as voice to the common man and hereby demand a detailed breakdown on the proposed plan for the N37 Billion earmarked for the renovation of the National Assembly office complex.

At HEDA Resource Centre, this request is founded on our mandate as a non-governmental organization and non-partisan human rights and development league to protect and promote universally recognized human rights, accountability and environmental justice in Nigeria and Africa, in accordance with international standards. And in our bid to strengthening the course of accountability and transparency, we strongly believe this information will aid the investigation being carried out by our organization.

Section 20 of the Freedom of Information Act provides that any applicant who has been denied access to information or a part thereof, may apply to the court for a review of the

matter within 30 days after which the public institution denies or is deemed to have denied the application, or within such further time as the court may either before or after the expiration of the 30 days fix or allow.

We look forward to your utmost cooperation and the prompt response to this requested information and in any event, within seven (7) days of the receipt of this application in as provided for under the Freedom of Information Act.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,



Rebecca David (Miss)
Legal Officer

CC: The President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR
Aso Villa
Abuja

