

PRESS RELEASE

RE: MEDIA MISREPRESENTATION OF AUDITOR-GENERAL OF THE FEDERATION'S REPORT ON THE NIGERIAN LAW SCHOOL

The attention of the Management of the Nigerian Law School has been drawn to a lot of misleading media reports arising from the appearance of its Director-General, Prof Isa Chiroma, SAN at a public hearing conducted by the Senate Committee on Public Accounts (SPAC) on Thursday 2nd July, 2020 . The appearance was in connection with the annual report of the Auditor-General of the Federation on the Accounts of various ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) of the Federal Government of Nigeria for the year ended 31st December, 2015.

Whilst the institution would not ordinarily join issues or respond to such misleading publications, it has become necessary by Management to make some clarifications as most sections of the media have deliberately misrepresented the issues raised at the public hearing.

The facts are that five (5) queries were raised by the Auditor-General and the requisite explanations were proffered by the management as outlined below:

(1) QUERY: The Nigerian Law School at various intervals made use of pension fund to offset expenses not related to the payment of pension.

EXPLANATION: The payments of N401,000 (Four Hundred and One Thousand Naira), N413,600 (Four Hundred and Thirteen Thousand Naira) respectively were travelling expenses of the Nigerian Law School Pension Board of Trustee (BOT) members to visit the Chairman of the pensioners association who was terminally ill. N500,000 (Five Hundred Thousand Naira) was the benefit for the next of kin of the deceased Chairman of the pensioners association.

(2) QUERY: The sum of N34,330,500 (Thirty Four Million, Three Hundred and Thirty Thousand Five Hundred Naira) was at several times paid to members of staff as provision and cleaning allowance. The Management of the School could not substantiate these payments with any approval from the National Salaries, Income and Wages Commission (NSIWC).

EXPLANATION: The payments were not personnel cost and so did not require the approval of NSIWC. These were overhead cost items for telephone bills, toiletries, cleaning and related items. The payments were on mandates into individual bank accounts of staff and not to a single person. The documents evidencing these payments are still available.

(3) QUERY: The sum of N36,895,434.10 (Thirty Six Million, Eight Hundred and Ninety Five Thousand Four Hundred and Thirty Four Naira, Ten Kobo) representing 10% of consolidated salary was as several times paid to staff as dressing allowance with no approval from the NSIWC.

EXPLANATION: The Council of Legal Education **traditionally** has a dress code for its staff and students as part of its **work ethics**. In **furtherance** of this **tradition**, the Council approved a Scheme and Condition of Service on March 10, 2009 that provides in part, the payment of 10% dressing allowance **to its staff**.

The payments were made into the individual bank accounts of staff and not **to** a single person **as erroneously reported**.

(4) The erstwhile Nigerian Law School Pension Board of Trustees **s** has since been dissolved in line with circular from the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation and its assets and liabilities transferred to the Pension Transitional Arrangement Directorate (PTAD).

(5) The Office of the Auditor General of the Federation raised the above queries on the accounts of the Council of Legal Education for the Year ended 31st December 2013. **These** explanations along with others were made to the Senate Committee on Public Accounts but the proceedings were grossly **misrepresented and sectionalised**.

Members of the public are hereby assured that there is no fraud in the accounts of Nigerian Law School as reported. The management of the School will appear before the Senate Committee this week to clear the other queries raised by the Auditor-General.

Mrs. E.O. Max-Uba
Secretary to the Council and Director of Administration