

Bayo Akinlade & Co.

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17th August 2020

OPEN LETTER

Prof. Koyinsola Ajayi, SAN
Chairman, NBA TCCP

Dear Learned Silk;

THE APPROXIMATELY 100 MILLION NAIRA BUDGET AMOUNT FOR THE HOSTING OF THE 2020 NBA VIRTUAL ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE: A NEED FOR REFLECTION, TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

With the greatest respect and humility to you learned silk regarding the above subject matter;

The word has gone round that the proposed budget for the NBA AGC is in the region of 100 Million Naira. I agree that this is nowhere near the almost One Billion Naira spent last year for the AGC which up until today has not produced any recordable or meaningful impact in the lives of Legal Practitioners in this Country neither has it had any known impact on our communities and nation as a whole.

One believes that to spend or rather; to invest such a sum in a 6 day event would at least yield some measurable outcomes which will help in ascertaining the worth of hosting such events.

In the Post-Covid era which has negatively affected the earning capacity of Lawyers, one would think that the NBA would take a closer look at its structures and review its activities with a view to impacting the lives of its members. It therefore begs the question whether holding a virtual AGC this year is a priority for our embattled Association.

Please let us consider the condition of the least of us within the profession in asking the most vital question of all which is: Of what benefit is a virtual AGC in light of the current state of affairs in our nation?

Points to consider here in spending our collective income:

1. Who pays for the data or other mediums with which to view this year's AGC? is it the members? I suppose.

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2. Will this AGC provide anything different from what individual law firms, Lawyers, Lawyer groups have been doing since the Covid Pandemic by hosting virtual conferences and Webinars?
3. Will the TCCP be disbursing funds to the Branches so that they can host a viewing centre which can cut down the cost of individual use of data?
4. What are the advantages of having virtual entertainment and who does it benefit
5. What do you need venues for? Can speakers not address us from their respective locations?
6. Why do you need advertisement and other expensive media infrastructure?
7. Have you considered the network challenges across the nation and the fact that our telecommunications infrastructure is at its lowest regarding standard services?

Mr. Chairman; to spend or propose to spend this amount is not only immoral but a serious waste of scarce resources.

These are funds that could be used for developing our human rights outreach platform, to provide an Intervention fund for law firms and lawyers that provide pro bono services, funds that could be used to start an insurance scheme for lawyers who find themselves out of employment for a brief period, funds that could be used to assist the Judiciary with much needed infrastructural requirements, funds that could be donated as grants, funds that can be used to improve the lives and practice of members through diverse schemes and initiatives; etc.

Mr. Chairman; you are greatly respected both home and abroad; you were in a webinar not long ago speaking about our lack of capacity in this nation, you alluded to how corruption and mismanagement of funds have crippled this nation's infrastructure and because of this our justice delivery sector has suffered great setbacks. You are a second generation lawyer as your father was one before you, would you say that we have a better profession in your generation than in the days of your father? Could you really beat your chest to say that being put in the position that you have been placed within the NBA as Chairman of the Technical Committee on Conference Planning (TCCP) for the second time that you have used the resources for the greatest and widest benefit of lawyers? Have you taken a poll to see how many lawyers want an AGC that cost this much? Have you taken a poll on the impact or otherwise of the previous AGCs?

Before Covid; almost 125 NBA Branches plan, organise and execute a Law Week every year. In that same year, the Sections/Fora also hosts conferences. In that same year the AGC is held. In that same year; IBA and its Regional Sections hold conferences. Should we not be more financially prudent and show the way for others to follow? Should we not consider other less expensive ways of hosting these events and making them more professionally impactful than retaining it as a yearly funfair for the elite members of our

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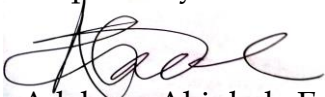
profession? Why use the collective heritage of all lawyers to satisfy the desires of the few?

Our Association at the national level did not raise a finger to provide palliatives during the height of the covid pandemic instead plans were ongoing to host an AGC. As I write this letter not one single lawyer has benefitted from the so-called palliative that NBA National was forced to embark upon. In the midst of all these; we conducted another less than desirable national elections which further undermines our integrity as the conscience of the nation and to crown it all up; we are faced with the news that a virtual conference will cost us nearly 100 million Naira or more.

Mr. Chairman; I know you to be a man of God who would not knowingly be part of a charade that will compromise your good standing in this profession. I therefore urge you to advice the President of the NBA to abandon plans to host this year's AGC as a sign of respect to those who have suffered a great deal from the covid pandemic.

Thank you

Respectfully Yours;



Adebayo Akinlade Esq.

Convener; FIACIJ and Former Chairman, NBA Ikorodu Branch