

His Excellency

President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR

President, Federal republic of Nigeria

Presidential Villa,

Abuja

Your Excellency Sir,

**FINANCIAL MISCONDUCT AND ABUSE OF OFFICE OF PROF. INNOCENT
ACHANYA OTOBO UJAH (THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, NIGERIAN INSTITUTE OF
MEDICAL RESEARCH).**

The staff of the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research has continued to witness several injustice, inequality and total disregard to staff matters, as well as accumulative mal-administrative actions of the Director General, Professor Innocent A. Ujah. The actions of Professor Ujah are not only against the countries ethical code of conduct and the civil service rules; it is also against the economic and financial principle of the country. The allegations brought against Professor Ujah are verifiable and investigation into this matter will bring further light on the matter. The anger of the staff and the union are based on the following:

1. EMPLOYMENT RACKETEERING

The last four years had witnessed a lot of employment racketeering and nepotism with most of the newly recruited staff not qualified for the positions in which they are placed, of note is those in the Directorate level

The main ones have been

- i. The Deputy Director-Administration position was not advertised but was filled by an outsider from the Director General's cronies (**see Document 1, which is the advertised vacancy for NIMR into the different directorate position. The post of the DD Administration was not advertised**)
- ii. The Deputy Director-Finance and Account position was filled by another associate of the DG, who is an outsider, and less qualified compared to the two chief accountants we already have in NIMR who could have occupied this position. More so, the newly employed DD Finance and Account do not have the pre-requisite qualification and years of experience for the position, and he is also a pensioner(who retired as a principal accountant) of a scraped government agency
- iii. Many of the newly employed staffs (mostly related to the DG) were placed on grade level higher than their qualifications with a MBA holder, without relevant experience, placed on CONHESS 12, and HND/BSc holders placed on CONHESS 9 and CONHESS 8 instead of CONHESS 7 which is the starting point for first degree holders. In the face of all these, he has refused promotion and upgrading of existing staffs despite having additional qualification (**See Document 2, the employment of Patricia Agbo, a sister to the DG, who has an MBA, finance, but employed as an Assistant Chief Admin. Officer on CONHESS 12).**)
- iv. Candidates with irrelevant qualification to NIMR mandate were employed particularly to the research area. A typical example is the case of a newly employed staff with first degree in Geology who was employed as a research

staff, whereas the minimum qualification for a research fellow is a master's degree in a biomedical field. Hence, new cadres such as scientific officer, commercial officer, information officer, program analyst among others were unilaterally created for people with this irrelevant qualifications (**Document 3 - Employment letter of Sharon Mokogwu employed as an Information officerI on CONHESS 9 with MSc admission letter not certificate**)

- v. The employment date of many of the new staffs, employed from late November 2014 to early 2015, was unduly backdated to be captured by the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). (**See Document 4, the list of names of staffs said to have been employed in 2013, but did not have any tax returns in 2014; The evidence in document 3 is the employment letter of one of the staff whose employment date was backdated; Document 4b shows the employment letter of a staff supposedly employed in 2013 but did not capture for the IPPIS until December 2014 as shown**).

[**Also refer to Document 2 again. The employment letter of Patricia Agbo reads 13th Dec. 2013; her acceptance letter is dated 16th December 2013. The letter was stamped twice as received on 18th January, 2013 and December 2014. The DG sent the letter to the Director administration on the 18th Dec. 2014. Yet Mrs. Agbo is said to have assumed duty on the 16th December, 2013. These anomalies are due to covering their tracks of backdating the employment of Mrs. Patricia Agbo**].

- vi. In early 2015, project staffs who were working under the US President Emergency Project for Aids Relief (PEPFAR), were absolved sequel to the end of

the project. Unfortunately, many people that were not project staff were smuggled into the staff nominal roll through this process. Leaving many of the qualified project staff laid off despite having their names on the initial list that was compiled, while those smuggled in did not follow any known due process like an interview.

- vii. It is pertinent to mention that a majority of the newly employed staffs are related to the Director General in one way or the other. The majority of these staffs are from his family, friends, or referral from cronies. Due to his nepotism we have in the pay role Mark **UJAH**, John **UJAH**(also doubling as a contractor supplying materials to NIMR store at overblown costs, employed as a commercial officer II on CONHESS 8 with BSc), Paulina **UJAH (now Paulina Michaels)**, and Abba **UJAH**. His cousins, and nephews also employed include Daniel Ochigbo (the procurement officer who he uses to siphon money from NIMR during procurements of materials for the institute), Dominic Achanya (placed on CONHESS 9 with an HND), Lawrence Ekoja (employed as an assistant executive officer on 4th March 2013, but upgraded to an Higher Executive Officer six months after due to a misunderstanding with the DG's driver. The upgrading was done by the order of the DG so Mr. Ekoja will senior the DG's driver), Christiana Abakpa, Abu Dennis, Daniel Ogbe, Ene Ogbe, and Agatha Wapmuk. The employment of these people did not follow any due process of recruitment into NIMR, and a majority is not qualified for the positions they are employed.

- viii. A majority of the people employed are support staffs thereby tilting the staff ratio in favour of non-research staff which should not be the case as NIMR is a research institute(See Document 5 – the 2015 Nominal role)
- ix. It is pertinent to mention that the employment racketeering done by Professor ujah is made possible due to the inefficiency and incompetence of the Director of Administration.

2. ILLEGAL PAYMENT OF SALARIES AND OTHER EMOLUMENTS

- i. As mentioned above, the employment date of some of the newly employed staff was backdated for capturing under the IPPIS. Some of these staffs even started earning salaries through the IPPIS before their resumption to NIMR. These people were asked to refund these up-front salaries to a private NIMR account that is not remitted to the Federation's account.
- ii. To crown it up, staff employed in 2013 without due process, and without an adequate budget in the 2013 budget subvention, were paid salaries using the salary shortfall of existing staffs of NIMR. As it is NIMR staffare already clamoring for the payment of their 2013 shortfall balance, and the union embarked on a 3 days industrial action from the 17th August 2015 to 19th August 2015 (find attached photos of a peaceful protest by the union).
- iii. The so-called scientific officers that the DG employed are being paid non-clinical allowance on Grade A which they are not entitled to, while the DG has refused to allow the science laboratory technologists be paid their non-clinical allowance on grade A, even when they are entitled to this.

3. UNACCOUNTED INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE (IGR)

NIMR makes an average of about one hundred and eighty million naira (180,000,000) annually through the Human Virology Laboratory (HVL), Clinical Diagnostic Laboratory, NIMR consult, and the Clinical Science Division (CSD) who attend to patients. Additional revenue is also made through the Hocal Suites (a guest house situated in the NIMR compound), the NIMR auditorium and the conference room. Each one of these entities has its own separate account. As an example, the money made through the HVL is remitted to UBA with account number 1015905647. This money is not remitted to the Federation account, and the above-mentioned laboratories are run like a private company under the control of the DG with the money made from them used as the DG pleases. It is imperative to mention that test in NIMR laboratories cost about three times the cost outside NIMR and patients are being cajoled on the pretext of quality of services of the laboratories. At the HIV clinic in the CSD, patients now pay for consultation and drugs, with patients who want to fast track their time paying more than double the fee. Again, the money realized from these transactions are kept in a private NIMR account and not remitted to the federation account.

4. INFLATED CONTRACTS AND PROJECTS

Contracts and capital projects are awarded without due process. The process of award is not open and transparent. All contracts awarded by the DG are given to his friend contractors and relations from either Jos or Abuja at overblown costs. Example of such contracts include the e-library building (which has gulped over 350 million naira already and is not near completion), the Human Virology Laboratory Extension (an existing foundation which was said to have been completed with 45 million naira), the Cancer Research and Screening Center (an already completed building but over 65 million naira was said to have been used for finishing). The cost of other supplies, such as the supply of laboratory equipment, chemical and consumables and

supply of stationery to the stores for the institute's use, were overblown to the tune of several millions of naira. It is pertinent to mention that the awarding of these contracts do not follow any due process.

Other Projects, which are also carried out at exorbitant costs, include but not limited to

- i. The Acquisition of a building for NIMR office use at Abuja (an old, semidetached building) at about 60 million naira, and renovated for over 7 million naira.
- ii. Consultancy fee paid for the NIMR strategic plan at an overturning cost of 21 million naira.
- iii. Acquisition of new internet facility with a high frequency of breakdown at about 12 million naira
- iv. Payment of illicit consultancy fee for jobs which consultancy could be handled by the internal works and maintenance department (**See Document 6**). Notable is the re-roofing of residential blocks A, B, and C for over 5 million naira each, consultancy paid for the cancer research and screening centre, repair of NIMR liaison office at Abuja, the HVL extension, laboratory complex, the Administration block, and the renovation of the House 6. Below is a list of some of such consultancy fees and their payment voucher number.
- v. Re-roofing of block A residential building by Bernas Investmet Limited for Six million, One Hundred and Sixty Five Thousand, Six Hundred and Six Naira, Thirty Kobo (6,165,606.30) (**See Document 7**)
 - a. CROSSGATE DESIGN LIMITED
Consultancy fee paid on NIMR E-library building includes
CP-47 (Tax inclusive)– 1,844,098.83

CP-84 (Tax inclusive) – 9,940,000

CP-068 (Tax inclusive) – 1,589,273

CP-81 (Tax inclusive) – 1,926,587.25

b. GOGA CONSULT

- i. Fee paid for the valuation of the Institute's Cancer Research Center.

CP-55 (Tax inclusive) – 7,500,000 for a building already existing and roofed.

- ii. Design and supervision of the re-roofing of Block B, NIMR residential quarters. CP-66 (Tax inclusive) - 1,298,073.1

- iii. Valuation and Architects certificate in favour of Messers A & B Global Consult for the construction of Cancer Research Center

OI-651 – 1,453,876.86

- iv. Consultancy service for provision of the roofing at Block A at NIMR Residential Quarters

OI-25 - 2,422,940.92 naira

c. A & B EVERGREEN GLOBAL CONCEPT LIMITED

Valuation for lot 1 for the construction of Cancer Research Center, NIMR.

OI-648 (Tax inclusive) – 21,337,741.34 naira

OI-777 (Tax inclusive) – 13,914,060.46naira

d. HL COMMUNICATION LIMITED

Consultancy services on feasibility of business plan for NIMR consult

OI-22 (tax inclusive) – 3,500,000 naira

5. INVESTIGATIONS INTO CONTRACTORS

Majority of all contracts in NIMR now go to contractors domicile at Jos (the DG lives and worked at the Jos University Teaching Hospital before coming to NIMR, and his home and family is still at Jos) and Abuja. The DG is fond of paying exorbitant consultancy fees, in millions of naira, to these contractors. The ownership and board of directors of these contractors used to launder money out of the institute through overblown project and contract cost needs to be investigated. These contractors include but not limited to

1. DP Nigeria Limited
2. Bernas Investment Limited
3. A and B Evergreen Global Ventures
4. Omalobo Nigeria Enterprises
5. Goga Consults
6. HL communications Limited
7. Crossgate Design Associates
8. Marafa Ventures

6. GHOST PROJECTS

Apart from overblowing project costs, the DG and his NIMR cronies are in the habit of initiating different projects just siphon the institute's fund. Ghost projects are some of the ways they squander the unremitted IGR made by the Institute. An example is the revamping of the engine of the PEPFAR/APIN generator. The generator was brand new, has never been repaired, and not faulty. However, about four million naira (4,000,000) was siphoned in the name of overhauling. Additionally, a payment of about two million naira (2,000,000) was made for the supply of diesel, which was neither requested nor supplied. Funding of the above so called ghost projects are also, sometimes, sourced from grant accounts.

7. FINANCIAL RECKLESSNESS

Apart from the payment of illicit consultancy fees which is a form of financial recklessness.

Other forms of financial recklessness and abuse of office are as follows.

- i. The DG is in the habit of taking frivolous trips that are non-beneficial to the institute, running into millions of naira annually. In 2013, the DG was paid 13,650,531 naira as touring allowance and 11,581,306 naira in 2014. Though NIMR makes over 180 million naira from IGR, NIMR is still in debt of over 30 million naira with about 20 million naira of this owed to the DG as touring allowance. Most of these trips to his home in Jos are being funded on NIMR cost.
- ii. Currently, a NIMR scheme of service is being made to account for the newly developed cadres and to make promotion and upgrading more stringent for existing staff. This new scheme of service is being done without the knowledge of the members of the senior management committee, and without the input of the senior management committee. The scheme is costing well over 7 million naira and 3 million naira (Tax inclusive) has already been paid to OGA Human Resources Consult (OI-81) being a 40% payment in respect of the review of NIMR scheme and condition of service.
- iii. As already mentioned, the DG awards contracts to his family and cronies at overblown cost. As example, Omalabo Nigeria Limited supplied and installed 16 units of window blinds and a 6.5 KVA generator at 2,488,500 naira at the Abuja liaison office. HL communication Limited provided illuminated signage for the Cancer Research Center at the cost of 2,488,762 naira (tax inclusive) on payment

voucher number OI-140. DPI Nigeria Limited supplied office equipment to the Abuja liaison office for 5,218,500 naira(CP-51).

- iv. Payment of touring allowance to family members that are staff and even non-staff. The wife of the DG is sponsored annually (air fare) from the institute's purse to attend the DG's annual anniversary celebrations (**Document 8**). Mr. Musa Mohammed-Awwal a staff and crony of the DG was paid 223,710 naira (OC-13) as transport allowance and night allowance from the Abuja to Lagos office for 16 nights under the pretext of carrying out an assignment for the DG for an assignment which staffs in Lagos can carry out. Mr. Mohammed-Awwal has also been paid other touring allowance on various journeys (both private and official). For example OC-163 refers to a payment of 180,000 naira, OC-92 -162,000 naira as a 17 nights tour duty allowance from Abuja to Kaduna, amongst others. Also, Michael Ochigbo, received touring allowance for visiting his family in Benue state, under the pretext of official assignment (**See Document 9**).
- v. On Thursday, 6th August 2015, the tender's board of the institute met for a briefing by the DG. The purpose of the meeting was to inform the tender's board that he has approved over 6 million naira for the painting of the laboratory complex (outside only). A building whose painting should not be up to a million naira.
- vi. The Nigerian Medical Association (Plateau Branch) was paid a sum of five hundred thousand naira (500,000) with payment voucher number OI-525 being support for Jos 2014 National Executive Council meeting from NIMR funds.

8. BRIBERY AND CORRUPTION

- i. Bribing of federal auditors – Federal auditors sent to audit the institute are bribed with money to the tune of millions of naira. Payment for this is always put in the form of DTA, local runs, transport, and airport taxi to cover his tracks. The auditor's supervisor and reviewers who did not come to the institute are also paid just to ensure that the audit report is doctored. Again such monies are removed from the unremitted IGR made through the HVL (see Document 10). Now the case has become one in which federal auditors now come to NIMR incessantly to make trouble knowing fully well that they will be bribed.
- ii. Purchase of a 2010 Toyota Highlander Jeep for the chairman of board. This served as a form of bribery leading to the reappointment of the DG for second term. The car was a used vehicle, bought with Six million Four hundred thousand naira (6,400,000) of the institute's fund. Currently, the board of directors of the institute has been dissolved, but the chairman is still in ownership of this vehicle bought with NIMR funds.

9. ABUSE OF OFFICE

- i. Donating NIMR funds to campaign for PDP.
- ii. Fleecing of foreign donors like the CDC, EDCTP, and IANPHI in conjunction with the former Director General who is on contract in NIMR.
- iii. Mismanagement and siphoning of pension funds through sitting allowances and so called retreats and workshops to board of trustee members using a 3rd party (Midlinks Insurance Brokers Ltd)
- iv. Abuse of official residence – The official domestic quarters meant for his domestic staffs such as drivers and cooks are used to accommodate non-domestic staff that are

his family members. Hence, the DG's official drivers are not provided official quarters. These drivers squat, and sometimes sleep in the office depending on how late the DG releases them. One of the DG's drivers, Mr. Sam Adegboyega, was transferred from Abuja to Lagos. With no accommodation and without access to the driver's official quarters, was sleeping in the office. This, of course, led to serious sickness, and subsequently his death.

- v. The DG's official guest house is used to accommodate his relations that are already NIMR staff and imprest of 50,000 naira is paid monthly from NIMR to cater for them. In the same vain, his guests that are supposed to use the official guest house are accommodated in hotels at the institute's expense.
- vi. The DG has turned NIMR into a one-man business with decisions made unilaterally by him sidetracking the HOD/HOUs, other directors, and the senior management committee.
- vii. Collects imprest monthly both for the NIMR Lagos (100,000) and Abuja (80,000) offices in addition to fuel imprest (50,000 each for Abuja and Lagos office respectively).
- viii. 50kg cooking gas is being refilled every other month to be used in the DG's residence at 48,500 per refill. Between 2014 to date, the institute has paid for 12 of these refills without due process of verification as the internal control measure of verification of purchase has been discarded by the DG. He now verifies the purchase with his signature on the receipts. The receipts are self made as no actual refills were made.

- ix. Diversion of staff shortfall balance of 2013, given to NIMR by the Federal government, to pay new staffs that were employed without due process, and unbudgeted for in the year 2013.
- x. A brand new Toyota Prado Jeep was purchased as his official vehicle for his use at the Abuja office. He has refused to submit the documents of the vehicle and the ignition keys to the maintenance department. The fear is that this arrangement may lead to the disappearance of this vehicle at the end of his tenure.
- xi. In 2015, NIMR held an international conference at Abuja where all staffs were expected to attend this conference at their own cost. He even mandated all senior staffs to attend the conference at their individual cost. The DG, however, processed his own papers for claims in respect to this trip and collected same.
- xii. All new official vehicles including the NIMR staff bus are parked at the DG's house. Staff and even directors are denied the use of these vehicles while cronies of the DG and other family members have free access to this vehicle for their private use. Of recent members of the Union were denied the staff bus to go for an inspection of some properties members of staff of the institute intends to purchase. His family members that are NIMR staff have boasted about obtaining the vehicle for the union whenever they need it as long as they can also go along for the inspection as they are also interested in the properties. Only 2 out of 10 official vehicles are made available for general use while the remaining vehicles are parked at his residence and being used by him and his family members.
- xiii. Total disregard to staff matters and welfare – He is inflexible. His decisions are always final even when such decisions are against the civil service rule and

detrimental to staff welfare. His idea of staff welfare and equality is giving one bag of rice to each staff every December. Even the giving of rice is done out of his greed and for his own selfish reasons as the rice is always bought at an inflated cost and supplied by his sister (See Document 11).

- xiv. The DG carries out all overblown purchases and inflated projects in the institute through the procurement officer, Daniel Ochigbo, who happens to be one of his relations. The procurement officer was employed in 2012 to facilitate inflation of project cost. There is physical evidence to the fact that the procurement officer who resumed NIMR in 2012 has purchased 3 cars and even completed a building at Kaduna on CONHESS 08 salary in three years.
- xv. The DG single handedly upgraded one of his relations, Lawrence Ekoja, despite refusing promotion and upgrading to other staff. Lawrence Ekoja was employed in March 2013 as an Assistant Executive officer (AEO) on CONHESS 5. Mr. Ekoja, however, had a misunderstanding in 2014 with the DG's driver who is on CONHESS 6. Upon hearing another staff refer to the DG's driver as Mr. Ekoja's senior, the DG asked the Director of Administration to upgrade Mr. Ekoja to an Higher Executive Officer on CONHESS 7 (Document 12 - The nominal role of 2013 showing Mr. Ekoja as an AEO, 2014 nominal role as an AEO and 2015 nominal role as a HEO. Mr, Larence Ekoja's file number is 489 - highlighted).
- xvi. The appointment of a staff not related to the DG was terminated for stealing an 800 naira rechargeable lamp belonging to NIMR. Whereas, one of the DG's relations, Abuh Dennis, was caught charging patients, doing the tests for patients, but not remitting the money to the laboratory. The test was to the tune of 40,000. Abuh

Dennis is a new staff and not confirmed. The DG, however, covered it up due to his relationship with this individual.

- xvii. Patricia Agbo, the DG's sister mentioned previously has been said to be posted to Abuja, however, report reaching us is that Patricia Agbo is in Kaduna with her husband but earning salary every month as an Assistant Chief Admin. Officer)

HIGH HANDEDNESS

1. His high handedness and total disregard to staff welfare and professional development has led to brain drain in the institute with research staffs migrating from NIMR to other establishments. From 2010 to date, at least 15 researchers have left NIMR resulting into a serious brain drain in NIMR. These include Dr. A Adesida, Dr. M. T. Niemogha, Dr. K.S.O. Oyedeji, Dr. Helen Goodluck, Dr. Monsuru Adeleke, Dr. Taiwo Idowu, Dr. Adedayo Oduola, Mrs. Judith Obansa, Dr. F. Nwaokorie, Dr. B.I.C Brai, Mrs. Faneye, Mrs. Emily Meshack, Dr. Chimere Agomo, Dr. H. Okoh, Dr. Muyiwa Salu, and Dr. Kalejaiye.
2. As a result of research staff leaving the institute, it would have been expected of the DG to look at how the institute can be conducive for staffs in terms of welfares and career progression, instead, he introduced the signing of bonds for staff on different ceurses, and illegally enforcing staffs to sign a training bond even when the training is at no cost to the institute, and the institutes time is not used for the training. Even staffs on part-time and weekend courses are asked to sign the bond before they can be granted examination leave.
3. Carrying out promotion interviews till 12 midnight and in some cases till 1 am. Telling staffs that those who cannot wait can go as it is not by force to be promoted. This has put

the lives of several staffs in danger with staffs going home way past midnight or even choosing to sleep in the office.

4. Telling staffs that in NIMR he is god and his decision is final. Hence, staffs that challenge his decisions or authority are unnecessarily victimized and punished. For example, he refused to promote three management staffs (that are deputy directors) known not to be in his good books to the director position while bringing in unqualified staffs to fill directorate positions. He also removed a director from the position of a head of division for refusing to be intimidated by him.

We want to mention here that earlier this year, SEARCHLIGHT started investigations into the dealings and happenings of the DG at NIMR. All efforts to have him clarify some of the allegations were unsuccessfully. We have attached a copy of the flier by searchlight to this letter.

We hope these few evidences are sufficient to launch an investigation into the happenings in the Nigerian institute of Medical Research. The union is ready to work with you on this issue to ensure that justice is served.

Sincerely

Concerned NIMR Staff