NABTEB Registrar, Prof. Ifeoma Isiugo-Abanihe, Refutes Allegations of Wrongdoing

Our attention has been drawn to a publication by SaharaReporters on Thursday, 30th January, 2020, with the headline, "NABTEB boss, Prof Isiugo-Abanihe, Enmeshed in Corruption Scandal."

Ordinarily, it is not in the tradition of the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) to join issues with faceless individual(s) and, or group(s); however, we wish to say that not presenting a response will be a disservice to the Board's Registrar/Chief Executive, Prof. Ifeoma Isiugo-Abanihe, the Board itself and the public who deserve to know the correct state of affairs.

Consequently, the National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB) hereby refutes the allegations contained in the report, as they are malicious, unfair, biased and baseless. Both the published report and the allegations contained in it are an orchestrated evil plot aimed at undermining the noble achievements of Prof. Ifeoma Isiugo-Abanihe since her assumption of office as the Registrar/Chief Executive Officer of NABTEB. This plan to tarnish her well-earned reputation as a consummate academic and administrator is most unfair and unfortunate.

Let it be known, for record purposes, that our response to a list of allegations earlier sent to us by Mr. Erasmus Ikhide, the Sahara Reporters' correspondent who contacted us to obtain our reactions ahead of the publication, was received by him before the malicious story went to press. Our response reached Mr. Ikhide, and he received same but chose to publish a one-sided report, which is unprofessional and against the ethics of journalism.

It is worrisome that Mr. Ikhide and his platform, SaharaReporters, for whatever reasons known to them, did not present our position in their report, apart from a brief attribution to the Board's Principal Press Officer. This
bespeaks of a predetermined mindset to rubbish the reputation of the NABTEB Chief Executive and the image of the Board. The report can easily be viewed as one that smacks of the job of hatchet men who are doing the bidding of their sponsors.

We therefore urge the Public to discountenance the malicious and libellous allegations but rather embrace the truth in the light of our response as earlier sent and also presented below:

Sack of Prof. Shilgba for Checkmating Acts of Corruption

NABTEB refutes the very unjust allegation that Prof. Shilgba was sacked because he was checkmating corrupt practices of the Registrar/Chief Executive Officer of the Board. NABTEB has no prerogative or mandate to initiate the removal of the Governing Board Chairman as such powers lies absolutely with the Federal Government. It will be recalled that Prof. Shilgba was removed as Chairman of the 9th Board because he went beyond his mandate as Chairman of the Board. His dealings with the Board as a Chairman did not show that he had regard for due process and the rule of Law.

Blocking of the Constitution of Another Board Chairman

This accusation is both absurd and unfair as the Registrar/Chief Executive has no role, nor powers vested as of right to play both in the appointment and removal of his/her Governing Board Chairman.

Illegal Appointment/Employment Without Required Qualifications

This is a fallacious statement. NABTEB as a Federal Government institution obtained requisite approvals from all relevant authorities of Government to replace staff that have exited the Board's services in line with the provisions of Chapter 2 of the PSR No.020101 -020607, Public Service Rules 2008, and only staff that were suitably qualified for the positions were employed.
Hurried Transfer of a Staff From One NABTEB State Office to Another

It is not only normal but also within the powers of the Board to transfer Staff from one state office to another and from one department to another in line with the provisions of PSR No.020501-020506 of the Public Service Rules. Transfer of Staff is an internal quality control measure which may be undertaken to maintain checks and balance and is also used to maintain or improve the number or quality of staff or the social dynamics in specific office. For instance, two staff of NABTEB were transferred on the same day in question for different reasons as aforementioned and more had been transferred months before.

Irregularities in Placement of Newly Employed Staffers

There was no observed any irregularities in placement of staff as the placement was done by the Board’s Administration Department in accordance with extant rules and procedures.

Retention of Dr. Obinna Opara Who Should have Retired Last Year

The issue of the Staff, Dr. Obinna Opara being retained by the Board beyond his retirement date is untrue as available records show that he has not reached the statutory retirement age of sixty years. Furthermore, there is no record to show that he merged his services which would have necessitated his exit from the service after thirty-five years of service.

Shortchanging Drivers of Their Night-Allowances

This issue was mentioned to the Registrar/Chief Executive took it straight to our Management meeting with the representative of the Drivers present. The matter was thoroughly discussed and both Management Staff and Drivers were advised as to how allowances should be disbursed to drivers, and since then, there has been no fresh complaint. Let it be known that no fresh complaint has been brought to the attention of the Registrar/Chief Executive as this is an internal administrative issue that the Registrar/Chief Executive and the Management could have easily handled if it was reported.
Subverting Rules in Favour of Son-In-law

This is sheer blackmail, as it is not clear what this allegation is all about. In the first place, all Staff were employed and placed based on their qualifications and experience and not as son-in-law. Again, in terms of placement of staff, all necessary approvals were obtained from relevant authorities and the Administration Department of NABTEB applied the necessary due diligence.

Over-Invoicing of Contract-Sum

The Board adopted appropriate Procurement procedures in determining contract sums and care was taken to obtain all necessary approvals to support contract awards.

Keeping Office Vehicles in the Custody of the Registrar/Chief Executive

This is absurd. Activities of NABTEB are organized and executed by various departments and units according to their specialties. They are not based on the dictates of the Chief Executive Officer. This includes the coordination of the use of both new and old vehicles of the Board.

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