



# Tertiary Education Trust Fund

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## OUR RESPONSE IN SUPPORT OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT EFFORTS AGAINST THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

1. On behalf of the Board of Trustees (BOT), Management and staff of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFund), we wish to first of all appreciate the commendable steps taken by the President, Muhammadu Buhari, *GCFR*, in addressing the nation on the COVID-19 pandemic threat to lives and wellbeing of Nigerians, announcement of the high-level Presidential Task Force (PTF) on COVID-19, the immediate pronouncement of several relief, mobilization, response measures and stimulus packages, for which citizens, WHO and other Development agencies have commended the government.
2. Additionally, we wish to commend the PTF chaired by the SGF, The Minister of Health, The DG of NCDC, The Minister of Finance and National Planning, The CBN Governor, Minister of Information, Minister of Aviation, the Technical Coordinator of the PTF, the experts in the Human Virology Institute and indeed many Medical experts, especially in virology, zoonosis and infectious diseases generally for their specific and coordinated efforts to save our country from what the UN has described as the greatest Test against humanity since the Second World War.
3. At a time virtually all nations of the world have closed their borders to most businesses, transactions, including Executive Orders stopping the export of live-saving Medical equipment and commodities, we now appreciate better the wisdom of Mr President when he approved that we scale up the funding of the TETFund National Research Fund (NRF) basket by his unprecedented approval of five billion Naira (N5b) for the 2019 NRF Call for Proposals, initially through Concept Notes last year. At the end of evaluation of the grant applications last year, 128 Research Grants were recommended and approved, with the tacit endorsement of the Hon Minister of Education, Malam Adamu Adamu.
4. Not only were most of the grants in the disciplines of Basic and Applied sciences, a significant number were in the field of medicine. As is the global practice, private institutions and the private sector were invited as research partners in many of the grant applications, thereby showing the way forward in a new paradigm shift of the indispensable partnership between the Academic Community and the Industry/Private sector. This has bolstered the *Triple Helixdrive* initiative of the National Universities Commission (NUC) which presently involves TETFund, NBTE, NCCE, the National Economic Summit Group (NESG), Office of the Presidential Advisory Council, the National Assembly, the Manufacturers' Association of Nigeria (MAN), the Chartered Institute of Bankers, etc.
5. We are presently in constructive liaison with key parties and stakeholder entities in the fight against COVID-19, hoping we shall identify specific entry points from where RESEARCH by hugely talented medical experts in our Universities, Colleges of Medicine, Teaching Hospitals, Research Institutes, Centres of Excellence, etc can be initiated and funded towards short term medical palliatives, but more importantly, towards breakthrough in WHO-certified VACCINE against COVID-19, other Infectious Diseases and indeed all other diseases that lead to more deaths. This will go a long way to consolidate on the new R & D drive in our tertiary institutions which has led to the emergence of the production of Sanitizers, prototype Ventilators and PPE in our Universities across the country. Furthermore, we have recommended the provision of modern Medical simulation equipment in 6 Colleges of Medicine, all aimed at reversing avoidable Medical Tourism by Nigerians, leading to capital flight.

(Signed)

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