



NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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STATEMENT OF PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIAN BAR ASSOCIATION, MR YAKUBU CHONOKO MAIKYAU, OON, SAN ON THE SAMOA AGREEMENT

8 July 2024

Prior to the signing of the SAMOA agreement, the Hon. Minister of Budget and Economic Planning requested the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), as a major stakeholder in the polity, to look at the agreement. Consequently, I constituted a committee chaired by Mr. Olawale Fapohunda, SAN, former Attorney General and Commissioner for Justice, Ekiti State and Chairman of the NBA Law Reform Committee, to vet, evaluate and advise on the agreement accordingly.

The SAMOA Agreement (named after the central South Pacific Ocean country of Samoa, where the agreement was signed), is a broad legal framework between the European Union (EU) member states and more than half of the 79 members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS). It is meant to serve as a basis upon which subsequent specific agreements can be negotiated between the European Union and the Federal Government, its sub-nationals and/or the Private sector. The agreement covers Six (6) main areas, namely: democracy and human rights, sustainable economic growth and development, climate change, human and social development, peace and security, and migration and mobility.

My attention was drawn to publications in newspapers and social media platforms, to reactions by some Nigerians to the signing of the SAMOA Agreement by the Federal Government; the alleged clauses in the agreement requiring Nigeria to endorse or accept LGBTQ rights, as a pre-condition to access an alleged loan facility to the tune of \$150, 000, 000, 000.00 (One Hundred and Fifty Billion USD), only.

Contrary to the narrative being propagated either due to ignorance of the content of the agreement or, a deliberate intention to mislead the public (neither of which is good), I wish to state that there is no provision in the SAMOA agreement which requires Nigeria to accept or in anyway recognise LGBTQ or gay rights, either as a pre-condition for a loan of \$150 Billion USD or at all. Instead, the agreement was expressly made subject to the local laws and the sovereignty of the contracting Nations. That is to say, the SAMOA agreement recognises, for instance, Nigeria's Same Sex Marriage (Prohibition) Act, 2023 and of course, the Supremacy of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended). If this were not the case, the NBA would have since advised the Federal Government not to enter or engage in any form of partnership or agreement that has the ability to undermine the sovereignty of our nation in anyway. For avoidance of any doubt, the SAMOA agreement does not, in any way, seek to compromise our existing legislations nor undermine the sovereignty of Nigeria.

It is important for all stakeholders, who have had the opportunity of engaging with Government on this agreement prior to its execution, and others who have read and understood the objective of the agreement to endeavour to educate the public on its true content. The negative narratives on this agreement are being pushed and propagated along very sensitive lines of our faith, culture and morality, thus the need for caution and proper education.

NATIONAL OFFICERS:

Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN President

Adesina Adegbite, FICMC, General Secretary; Linda R. Bala (Mrs), 1st Vice President; Chukwuemeka Clement Ugo, 2nd Vice President; Amanda Ego Demechi-Asagba, 3rd Vice President; Caroline Ladidi Anze-Bishop, Treasurer; Chinyere Gladys Obasi, Welfare Secretary; Akorede Habeeb Lawal, Publicity Secretary; Daniel K. Kip, Assistant Secretary; Charles Ajiboye, FICMC, FCAI, ACIS Assistant Publicity Secretary

I, therefore, call on Government to continue with the public enlightenment already being undertaken and for other stakeholders to join in doing so, in order to counter the negative perception being promoted on the agreement.

The public must, at all times, query newspaper and social media posts. Information in newspapers and social media platforms, should at the very best, put us on an enquiry – check facts to determine the veracity of information. August Ludwig von Schlözer (1735–1809), the German historian, journalist and publicist once wrote: ***“Foolish is the man who never reads a newspaper; even more foolish is the man who believes what he reads just because it is in the newspaper.”*** If this was written in today’s social networking culture, the reference to newspaper would have been the social media platforms. Let us beware!

The NBA remains committed to ensuring that actions of Government are people-focused and, to the extent of information available to us, we shall see to it that nothing is done to compromise the integrity of our sovereign nation, Nigeria. The NBA will continue to engage with Government, advise, provide direction, advance the cause of the Nation and at the same time, hold Government to account on behalf of the people of this Country.

Best regards,



Yakubu Chonoko Maikyau, OON, SAN
PRESIDENT

