

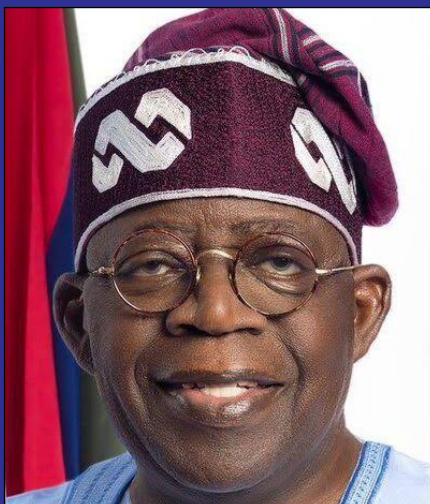
Ist Year Anniversary:

Publish Your Assets

– SERAP Tells Tinubu, Shettima

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), has challenged President Bola Tinubu and Vice President Kashim Shettima to use the anniversary of their first year in office to make public by publishing their assets declaration form. SERAP particularly urged President Tinubu to use the anniversary to demonstrate his oft-expressed commitment to democracy, accountability, and openness in government by immediately publishing his asset declaration form. These were contained in a statement on Sunday, May 26, 2024, by Kolawole Oluwadare, SERAP Deputy Director in which the organisation urged Tinubu to also encourage Vice President Kashim Shettima, ministers, and state governors to also widely publish their asset declaration forms.

SERAP specifically said that to promote public trust and establish a system of transparency, accountability and public participation, the President should urgently propose a constitutional amendment to include provisions on the creation of asset declaration database to publish government officials' asset declaration forms before, during, and after serving in public office. SERAP further said; "Openness and transparency in the details of asset declaration forms of high-level public officials would strengthen the country's democracy and promote accountability at all levels of government. "You promised in your inaugural speech on May 29, 2023, 'to take proactive steps to discourage corruption', and to ensure that 'Nigeria is impartially governed according to the constitution and the rule of law'. "We urge you to use your first anniversary in office as an important opportunity to underscore and reaffirm your oft-repeated commitment to democratic governance, openness and public accountability by immediately taking concrete steps to implement the proposed recommendations. "Transparency in the details of asset declaration forms would also enable Nigerians to scrutinize the forms and verify the financial situation



of public officials and alert about possible conflicts of interest and corruption," it said. The organisation noted that declaration of assets by public officials is a matter of public interest, adding that the Tinubu-led government ought to provide the leadership, stressing that one of the ways through which corrupt politicians in the country have perpetuated corrupt practices is through hiding assets.

SERAP said that its requests are brought in the public interest, and in keeping with the requirements of the Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended) and

Nigeria's international anticorruption and human rights obligations, adding that information regarding the property and economic interests of public officials ought to be accessible to the public through a website created for that purpose, In the words of SERAP; "Because asset declaration forms are public documents, public officials cannot claim that publishing their assets would violate their privacy rights. There is an overriding public interest in the disclosure of information on the assets of public officers who are trustees of Nigeria's

wealth and resources. "Publishing your asset declaration form and encouraging your Vice-President, ministers and state governors to also widely publish their asset declaration forms would enable Nigerians to scrutinise the assets and worth of public officials before taking office and at the end of their term of office," it said. SERAP further highlighted sections of the Code of Conduct for Public Officers, contained in Part I of the Fifth Schedule to the 1999 Nigerian Constitution 1999 (as amended), the Tribunal Act, the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption and Articles 7(4) and 8(5) of the UN Convention against Corruption, among others, as supportive of assets declaration by public officers. It said; "We hope that the aspects highlighted will help guide your steps in taking steps to publish your asset declaration form and to encourage others to do so".

Obasanjo Scores Tinubu on first Anniversary



Former President Olusegun Obasanjo has characterized President Bola Tinubu's policies on fuel subsidy removal and exchange rates as essential but "wrongly executed". Obasanjo's critique coincides with the Tinubu administration's commemoration of its first year in office. Olusegun Obasanjo specifically addressed three key decisions of the current administration: the removal of the fuel subsidy, the management of exchange rates, and the response to the military coup in Niger Republic. In a statement released by his media aide, Kehinde Akinyemi, Obasanjo's remarks were highlighted during his speech at the Paul Aje Colloquium (PAC) in Abuja. The event, titled "Nigeria's Development: Navigating the Way Out of the Current Economic Crisis and Insecurity," provided a platform for Obasanjo to share his views on the pressing economic and security issues facing the nation. He lashed out at Tinubu's government, saying "the present Administration has not found the right way to handle the economy to engender confidence and trust for investors to start trooping in." Obasanjo said "Today, the government has taken three decisions, two of which are necessary but wrongly implemented and have led to impoverization of the economy and of Nigerians. These are removal of subsidy, closing the gap between black market and official rates of exchange and the third is dealing with a military coup in Niger Republic. "The way forward is production and productivity which belief and trust in government leadership will engender. No shortcut to economic

progress but hard work and sweat."

To him, "Economy does not obey orders, not even military orders. I know that. If we get it right, in two years, we will begin to see the light beyond the tunnel. It requires a change of characteristics, attributes and attitude by the leadership at all levels to gain the confidence and trust of investors who have alternatives. He further said "Total Energy has gone to invest 6 billion dollars in Angola instead of Nigeria. If the truth must

be stated, the present Administration has not found the right way to handle the economy to engender confidence and trust for investors to start trooping in.

The know more than us and now they are laughing at us, not taking us seriously. We have to present ourselves in such a way that we will be taken seriously. If the existing investors are disinvesting and going out of our country, how do we persuade new investors to rush in. We can be serious if we choose to be but we need to change from transactional leadership in government to transformational and genuine servant leadership. "With change by us, the investors will give us the benefit of doubt, and security being taken care of on a sustainable long-term basis, they will start to test the water. With the right economic policies, attributes of integrity and honesty of purpose, all should be well with all hands on deck and the government becoming a catalyst for development, growth and progress. To conclude on the economy, "tinkering with the exchange rate is not the answer. The answer is consistency and continuity in policy to ensure stability and predictability. That way, we will be sure of incentivizing domestic and foreign investment. There must be honesty and transparency in government dealings and contracts and not lying with deception about these issues. When the government is seen as pursuing the right policy, the private sector will go for production and productivity."