

EFCC Presently investigating 18 serving Governors

-Olukoyede

The chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, EFCC, Mr Ola Olukoyede, has revealed that the Commission is presently investigating 18 serving governors. Olukoyede, who spoke in a Lagos on Friday at the naira abuse sensitisation campaign, said EFCC has taken it upon itself to investigate governors even before they complete their tenure. According to him, "there was a case of a Nigerian governor who travelled the second day he handed over to the United Kingdom to celebrate his birthday." As he was in the hotel celebrating with his friends and spraying £50 bill, the hotel waiter called 911, thinking he was mad. And by the time Metropolitan Police got there, he was arrested. But two of his fellow governors who were there pleaded that he was not mad and he was handed over to the EFCC. "He was prosecuted and jailed but was later pardoned. You could see that even the British did not allow people to spray or stamp their currency," he added. Speaking on how to curb the abuse of naira, Olukoyede said the naira is not only a means of exchange, but it's also our sovereignty. Continuing, he said, "People claim that naira spray is part of our culture and customs. Assuming that without conceding that it's true, I think culture and customs must add value to us and evolve the way our lifestyle evolved. There's nothing cultural about spraying and stamping of naira. The EFCC is mandated to enforce all naira abuse. The Commission will be failing in its operation by succumbing to such blackmail. "We must all lend our voices to restore the integrity of our naira because it's our sovereignty." The EFCC helmsman said two signatures programmes of Renewed Hope Agenda of President Bola Tinubu have benefitted from the proceeds of crimes recovered. The NEFUND & Credit Programme, he said were the two programmes. It's also on record that N50bn of the proceeds of crimes has been committed to the NEFUND so far. Olukoyede also said funds recovered from NDDC were deployed to build skills acquisition centre and NDDC's headquarters in Yenegoa, Bayelsa, which was commissioned recently. Olakoyede also explained that unlike in the past when some of the money recovered was relooted, the Commission, according to him, is poised to use money recovered judiciously. "We have also recovered a university which we later changed to the University of Applied Sciences, Kashia Kaduna, from a former director in a civil service who diverted about



N12bn to build a university. The university is one of the best private universities we have around." He said that out of 194 foreigners who were arrested in Lagos on charges of illegal cryptocurrency, 168 of them have been convicted, adding that the remaining ones would soon be convicted. "As of yesterday, 168 of the foreigners have been convicted. He noted that: "We are ready to clean our economic sector to make it attractive to foreign investors. "Yahoo Yahoo and other associated crimes have done a lot of reputation damage to us. At a time, Nigerian passports can enter 12 developed countries without a visa. But today, the international passports of Cameroon and Ghana are better than us." Olukoyede, who said he filled over 5,000 corruption cases last year alone also said it's very difficult

to prosecute the politically exposed persons and convict them, especially the former governors, because they have the wherewithal to hire lawyers and delay the prosecution. "More than 65% of the cases we filled last year were on civil servants, politically exposed persons. There was a case of a former governor that we spent 11 years on just interlocutory injunction from Federal High Court up to supreme court before the apex court

decided that he ex-governor had case to answer. "Do you know what it takes to prosecute ex governors?" He asked. "We received calls from high and mighty. At times, we have to relocate from our homes. We're constantly under pressure." On what the Commission has done to nip corruption in the bud, Olukoyede said: "I also established a fraud risk assessment unit to prevent money from being pilfered. Within one year of the unit, we have prevented N10bn from being stolen. The EFCC also owned an anti-corruption radio 97.3 FM for public enlightenment and anti-corruption efforts to curb the activities of fraudsters." Corroborating the EFCC chairman, Director General of the National Orientation Agency, Mallam Lanre Isa Onilu said DG NOA Lanre Isa Onilu said the abuse of naira is not only unlawful, but it's also unethical. "For civic responsibility and national cohesion, we must ensure that we treat our naira in a dignified manner. "The National Values Charter also dwells on how to curb the abuse of naira. "We have our television commercials running on some stations to sensitize Nigerians about this," he added.