



**ANTI-CORRUPTION COMMISSION
CATHEDRAL HOUSE
3 GLOUCESTER STREET
FREETOWN
SIERRA LEONE, WEST AFRICA**

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**MEDIA RELEASE
ACC CONCLUDES INVESTIGATION OF DR. MINKAILU BAH (NOW DECEASED) AND
THE LIMKOKWING UNIVERSITY**

The Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) has completed investigating the Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Malaysia, in Sierra Leone and the former Minister of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), Dr. Minkailu Bah, for alleged Misappropriation of Public Property and Revenue, Abuse of Office, and Abuse of Position; all contrary to Sections 42, 43 and 48 of the Anti-Corruption Act, 2008, respectively.

The investigations confirmed that Dr. Minkailu Bah single-handedly entered into an agreement with the Limkokwing University for its establishment as a private university in Sierra Leone in 2013, without following the due process as provided in the Laws that govern tertiary public education in Sierra Leone; which resulted in committing the Government of Sierra Leone (GoSL) to serious financial obligations.

Dr. Minkailu Bah invited the management of Limkokwing University of Creative Technology Malaysia to Sierra Leone with a letter dated 13th May 2013. Following the invite, discussions and negotiations, Dr. Bah signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the President of Limkokwing University on the 19th December, 2013. The agreement provided, among other things, that the GoSL would provide campus space for the University and scholarships for 1,200 students per annum, among other things. An addendum to this memorandum was signed on the 31st December, 2015.

Both memoranda did not spell out the fees to be paid for scholarship per student, but the fees later came up to be **Three Thousand United States Dollars (\$3,000)** for Bachelors' Degree students and **Two Thousand and Five Hundred United States Dollars (\$2,500)** for Diploma per student for one academic year. According to Dr. Bah, the fees structure was negotiated in the office of the former Financial Secretary, Mr. Edmund Koroma, with other staff

present. Ministry of Finance refuted this claim indicating that they were never part of any GoSL team that negotiated fees structure for any university, including Limkokwing. They further claimed that Dr. Bah had already committed GoSL by signing of MOA indicating to offer **One Thousand Two Hundred (1,200)** scholarships to Sierra Leonean Students before providing those estimates to the Ministry of Finance for inclusion in the National budget for Parliamentary approval.

Our investigations further established that the idea of Limkokwing University of Creative Technology to have a campus in Sierra Leone was initiated by a Sierra Leonean, Fyeston Bockary, but mid-way in its establishment and operations, Dr. Bah succeeded in removing him from the process based on what Fyeston Bockary alleges to be unfair means. According to the Tertiary Education Commission, Limkokwing University of Creative Technology was fully registered on the 20th March 2017.

Dr. Albert Dupigny, a senior staff at the Ministry of Education, confirmed to the ACC that he was the focal person for the Limkokwing University but could not recall being appointed by anyone. Rather, he assumed this position as discussions on the establishment of Limkokwing University evolved. He eventually became like a 'messenger' wherein he would receive emails and send same for and on behalf of the Minister, Permanent Secretary and any other senior officials of the Ministry. He denied playing any crucial role in the establishment and operations of the university.

The current Financial Secretary, Mr.Sahr Jusu, noted that upon assumption of office in late 2018, he instituted a financial audit, in order to ascertain the true financial obligations of the GoSL to Limkokwing, and to also map out the road forward. Following that audit, a financial obligation of about **Twenty-Five Billion Leones (Le 25,000,000,000)** was discovered which led to a request for an Executive Clearance to pay off the above sum in phases with a request signed by the Minister of Technical and Higher Education, and the Minister of Finance. Upon the granting of the Executive Clearance, over **Twenty-Two Billion Leones (Le22,000,000,000)** had been paid by the Ministry Of Finance to Limkokwing University of Creative Technology to settle financial obligations covering the period 2016/2017, and 2017/2018 academic years.

However, GoSL has a current outstanding financial obligation of over **Thirty-Three Billion Leones (Le 33,000,000,000)** for the 2018/2019. According to the Financial Secretary, this amount has not been paid due to fiscal challenges and the unfairness of incurring such liability for few students when compared to other students on government grants-in-aid in various Universities. Fees paid by other University students in Sierra range between **Ten (10) and Fifteen (15) Million Leones**, whilst the current exchange rate of one dollar is **Ten Thousand Leones (Le10, 000)**. Therefore, the fees/scholarship at Limkokwing for bachelors and diploma students stands at **Thirty Million (Le30, 000,000)**, and **Twenty-Five Million Leones (Le 25,000,000)** respectively per student, and per academic year. This is a huge variance, and is the case because Limkokwing is a private university (investment).

During the course of the investigation, information was received that the key person of interest in this matter, Dr. Minkailu Bah, had passed away. Enquires were conducted and a death certificate was obtained from the hospital where he met his demise. The investigation was summarily concluded as the main suspect in this matter is now dead and, as a Criminal Investigations-based Commission, a man dies with his indictment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

However, we have recommended the following to the government stakeholders:

- That the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, engages the Limkokwing University Management for a thorough review of the "Memorandum of Agreement" – especially on the fees structure, and seek ratification from Parliament as provided in Section 40 of the Constitution of Sierra Leone, Act No 6 of 1991.
- There is already in evidence a thorough audit report that was sanctioned and carried out by the Ministry of Finance to ascertain the number of students and GoSL financial obligations to Limkokwing. The ACC gives deference to that audit and its recommendations including the settlement of the outstanding liabilities of the government.
- Consider review of the powers of the Minister of (Technical and Higher) Education in terms of the award of scholarships to students and the establishment of a private University in Sierra Leone as enshrined in the Education and University Acts of 2004, and 2005 respectively; so as to remove the concentration of discretion and monopoly in one person (as was the case with Dr. Bah), and avoid future abuse.
- Additionally, the GoSL, through the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education, is advised to go by the agreement signed (though with serious improprieties) – as an Executive Clearance had already been sought in that regard and fresh steps taken; but must review same as aforesaid.

The Commission wishes to reassure the general public of its resolve to protecting public property and revenue across the country at all times.

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