



# NIGERIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Member Association of Professional Bodies of Nigeria (APBN), African Medical Association (AFMA)  
Commonwealth Medical Association (CMA) and World Medical Association (WMA)

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Date:.....

## **THE NIGERIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION (NMA) VEHEMENTLY REJECTS THE INVITATION OF CHINESE DOCTORS INTO THE COUNTRY IN THE GUISE OF OFFERING ASSISTANCE**

(1) The Nigerian Medical Association (NMA) received the news of the intention of the Federal Government of Nigeria to invite Chinese doctors into the country at this time of a global pandemic with great dismay and utter disappointment.

(2) It is a thing of embarrassment to the membership of the Association and other health workers who are giving their best in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic under deplorable working conditions, and a fragile health system to be subjected to the ignominy of not being carried along in arriving at such a decision.

(3) The lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), grossly inadequate test kits and test centres across the country, and the absolute lack of any form of insurance for the workforce are primordial issues begging for attention at this time.

(4) We are therefore profoundly dismayed to learn that the Federal Government is instead inviting the Chinese who from available accounts are not out of the woods themselves. The spike in cases and the death toll from COVID -19 in Italy coincided with the arrival of the Chinese in the guise of offering assistance. Even the United Nations has only just recently commended the efforts of Nigeria so far.

(5) The Association notes with grave concern that the Government did not take into consideration the extant laws regulating the practice of medicine in Nigeria as enshrined in the Medical and Dental Council Act. This is one such circumstance where the Medical and Dental Council of Nigerian should be consulted to grant necessary approvals to foreigners to interact with Nigerian patients.

(6) The Association appreciates the commendable work done by doctors and health workers at the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) and the various isolation centres across the country. It expects the Government to show appreciation by channelling the available resources and donations to improving testing facilities to detect more cases and ramp up capacity to train more workers.

(7) The Association is aware of a large pool of General Medical and Specialist Practitioners who are either unemployed or underemployed that can be engaged instead of bringing foreigners who aside from national security concerns may not be conversant with our culture, terrain and peculiar challenges.

(8) The Association believes that this invitation is ill-timed and of no overbearing significance considering that whatever experiences the Chinese have can be shared by digital technology through conferencing bearing in mind that Dr Chikwe Ihekweazu has only just returned from China. We are not averse to the donation of equipment and supplies because we can always do with such support as even the developed countries receive support.

(9) In rejecting the invitation of the Chinese doctors, the NMA would instead urge the Federal Government to review and approve better welfare incentives to the frontline medical personnel. The provision of adequate personal protective equipment, opening and properly equipping more isolation centres and health facilities across the country is an excellent first step. Deploying more resources to facilitate testing as we are beginning to witness community transmission of COVID 19 is equally a better application of scarce resources.

(10) The Government should declare a state of emergency in the Health sector and use the opportunity to fix our health institutions as a matter of urgency in a bid to stem the rot.

(11) The NMA urges the Government to expand the Presidential Task Force to include other critical stakeholders including journalists and the civil society to ensure more robust engagement especially as the decisions of the task force has implications for the health, wealth and security of our country.

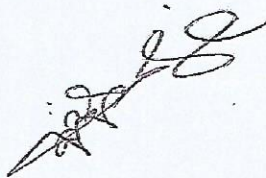
(12) It is a great disservice to the morale of the long-suffering frontline health workforce if the Government goes ahead to invite these Chinese doctors. The invitation demeans their sacrifices so far in this pandemic. We fail to see how the 18 man team would impact the current efforts in any significant way.

(13) The Association, however, expects that the Government would rescind the decision in the overall interest of the country.

(14) The NMA would loathe reviewing her participation in the fight against COVID-19 considering the grave implications and the risk to the lives of her members should the Government go ahead with this ill-thought-out invitation at this time.

(15) The Association remains committed to the Nigerian people and the Government. We support the efforts of our frontline health workers in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, and we expect reciprocal trust from the Government.

(16) Thank you.



**Dr. Francis A. Faduyile**  
**PRESIDENT**