



Federal Ministry of Justice

AGF URGES REPS TO CONSIDER UPWARD REVIEW OF JUSTICE MINISTRY'S 2017 BUDGET ALLOCATION

As both chambers of the National Assembly continues to entertain 2017 budget defence by the various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), the Attorney General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Abubakar Malami, SAN has pleaded with the House to consider an upward review of the allocation for the Ministry this year. Malami said this is necessary in view of the onerous responsibility bestowed on the Ministry of Justice as the Federal Government's primary institution for the Administration of Justice, adding that the 2017 budget appropriation to the Ministry is grossly inadequate.

According to a press statement issued Tuesday by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Comrade Salihu Othman Isah, the AGF also assured that the Justice Ministry would remain committed to the promotion and defence of constitutional values and principles in the nation's governance. Isah in the statement disclosed that the AGF expressed these views in his presentation at the 2017 budget defence session last week when he appeared before the House Committee on Legal Matters at the National Assembly Complex, Abuja.

He said Malami informed the House that the total allocation to the Justice Ministry in the 2017 Appropriation Bill amounting to N6.914 billion is inadequate to execute the Ministry's programmes for 2017 following the enormous additional responsibilities on the Ministry. The Minister said this arose due to the passage of the Administration of Criminal Justice Act (ACJA) 2015 as well as the increase in the quantum of other activities currently being pursued by the Ministry.

"This amount is undeniably, grossly inadequate, and will unfortunately stretch my Ministry's capacity to cope to the maximum in the light of prevailing realities", he stressed. Under the Capital Expenditure Proposal, Malami appealed to the House Committee to increase upward the sum of N689,108,794:00 allocated to the Ministry. He explained that the proposal, if implemented would greatly enhance capacity for effectiveness and improved service delivery and would undoubtedly encourage and motivate lawyers to give their best in their service to the nation.

The AGF therefore made a passionate plea to the Chairman, House Committee on Legal Matters, Razak Olatunde Atunwa and its members for their understanding and support in the consideration of the various heads of

expenditure as proposed, in order to enhance the Ministry's capacity to achieve its objectives and contribute maximally to the Federal Government's programmes and policies in 2017. "We need this understanding most, especially in the critical areas of greater coordination of justice sector institutions through the development of the Justice Sector Reform Action Plan 2016-2017, among other initiatives, anti-corruption initiatives and prosecutorial measures generally, that has already started under the 2016 Budget, to lay foundation for long-term action" Malami stated.

He went on to reassure of his Ministry's continued efforts within the limits of available resources, to ensure that the objectives of government being driven by the Ministry are progressively achieved. He added that the Justice Ministry is poised in 2017 to deliver maximally on the agenda of the present administration in the justice sector, through the adoption of appropriate policy options, implementation of approved programmes and projects, motivation of the abundant human capacity within the Ministry and engagement with the National Assembly in the discharge of its own oversight and investigative responsibilities.

Speaking, the Chairman, House Committee on Legal Matters, Razak Olatunde Atunwa disclosed that it is the legislative duty of the House to examine the performance of the 2016 budget, look into the 2017 proposed budget as it relates to the Federal Ministry of Justice and ensure a veritable proposal on decisions made to promote the interest of the justice sector and most especially, its importance to the anti-corruption drive of the present administration.

He agreed that underfunding would be a hindrance to performance and the success of the Ministry and pledged the Committee's efforts to look into the budget. The Committee also commended the Ministry's efforts and success story in the fight against corruption and also in ensuring compliance to the Rule of Law while promising to give their continued support to the Ministry.