**Press Statement**

For Immediate Release

**ActionAid Nigeria Condemns Extravagant Vehicle Purchases by National Assembly**

{Abuja, Nigeria 26th October 2023} — ActionAid Nigeria vehemently condemns the recent acquisition of exotic vehicles by the National Assembly. Nothing that the ostentatious display of opulence flies in the face of the very principles that the monetisation policy seeks to uphold.

Andrew Mamedu, Country Director of ActionAid Nigeria, expressed his deep concern over this issue, stating, "The decision to purchase over ₦70 - ₦100 billion-worth 2023 Toyota Landcruisers, amidst a backdrop of economic hardship faced by millions of ordinary Nigerians, is nothing short of a betrayal of public trust. At a time when citizens are grappling with financial instability, it is disheartening to witness their elected representatives indulging in such extravagance with the actual amount even shrouded in absurd secrecy. This display of insensitivity by the National Assembly is a stark contradiction to the principles of fiscal responsibility and accountability that should guide our leaders. It is a slap in the face of the very citizens they were elected to serve.

While we acknowledge the need for functional vehicles to facilitate the duties of public officials, the choice of luxury vehicles, in this case, raises serious questions about priorities. The justification citing the condition of Nigerian roads is a feeble attempt to rationalise what can only be described as an act of fiscal recklessness.

The lawmakers' decision to overlook Innoson Motors, a proudly Nigerian brand known for manufacturing quality vehicles, speaks volumes about their misplaced priorities. By opting for foreign-made vehicles, they not only disregard an opportunity to support local industries but also undermine the very essence of promoting self-sufficiency and economic growth in our nation. This choice reflects a glaring inconsistency between their rhetoric and actions and raises questions about their commitment to Nigeria's industrial development.

ActionAid Nigeria emphasises that the monetisation policy was introduced to curb reckless spending and promote responsible stewardship of public resources. It was not intended to provide a smokescreen for the purchase of extravagant vehicles, but rather to instill fiscal discipline and ensure transparency in governance.

We stand firmly with Nigerians and all calling for accountability across all tiers of government including the Legislative, Executive and Judiciary and the immediate halt to the acquisition of these vehicles. The funds allocated for this purpose could be redirected towards building nearly two thousand units of six-block classrooms, providing minimum wage payments for over 150,000 individuals, and other essential needs. We implore the Federal High Court sitting in Lagos to heed the injunction before it on this purchase.

The extravagant entourage accompanying governors and ministers on official and private travels have indeed become a matter of great concern. This practice not only strains public resources but also sends a message of excessiveness and disconnect from the realities faced by ordinary Nigerians. It is disheartening that lawmakers are citing these instances to justify their own indulgent purchases. ActionAid Nigeria calls for an immediate reassessment of these practices. We urge all branches of government to lead by example, embracing a more modest approach to official travels. We implore them to prioritise the prudent allocation of public funds, redirecting resources towards initiatives that directly benefit the citizens they are elected to serve. It is time for a collective commitment to responsible stewardship and a rejection of ostentation in public service.

It is dissapointing to hear that the purchase of SUVs is being attributed to the state of our roads. While it is undeniable that infrastructural challenges persist, it is imperative to hold our leaders accountable for implementing effective solutions. Allocating significant resources towards vehicles, without a comprehensive plan to address road conditions, is a missed opportunity to invest in long-term solutions. We implore our esteemed lawmakers to prioritize strategic infrastructure development and engage in a constructive dialogue with relevant stakeholders to ensure sustainable improvements in our transportation network.

At the immediate, ActionAid Nigeria calls on the National Assembly to revisit its decision. It is imperative that our elected representatives demonstrate a genuine commitment to the well-being and prosperity of the citizens they serve than an outright show of opulence.**’’**

**#ENDs**

Signed

Andrew Mamedu

About ActionAid Nigeria: ActionAid Nigeria is a non-governmental organization dedicated to social justice, poverty eradication, and inclusive development. With a focus on empowerment, advocacy, and community-driven initiatives, ActionAid Nigeria strives to create positive and lasting change in the lives of vulnerable populations across the country.

**Editors' notes**

ActionAid Nigeria, a social justice non-governmental organization working to eradicate poverty and all forms of injustice in Nigeria. We are an affiliate member of the ActionAid International Federation with a presence in 45 countries. AAN works in solidarity with people living in poverty and exclusion to achieve social justice, gender equality, and poverty eradication towards achieving a just, equitable, and sustainable world in which every person enjoys the right to a life of dignity, freedom from poverty and all forms of oppression.

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