



ECW/PARL/SPK/5/12-0423

6th April 2023

The Chief Clerk
The Central Criminal Court
Old Bailey, London, EC4M 7EH
United Kingdom

**A PLEA FOR LENIENCY
RE: SENATOR IKE EKWEREMADU**

My name is Dr. Sidie Mohamed Tunis, Speaker of the Fifth Legislature of the Parliament of the Economic Community of West African States, ECOWAS Parliament/Community Parliament (an organization similar in nature and function as the European Parliament). I am also a former Majority Leader and currently a Member of the National Assembly of the Republic of Sierra Leone, where I have served since 2012.

I am aware of the of the conviction and pending sentencing of Senator Ike Ekweremadu (my predecessor in office) and his wife, Mrs. Beatrice Ekweremadu, who had just undergone trial at the Central Criminal Court, Old Bailey over the breach of UK laws relating to organ trafficking and modern slavery.

Senator Ike Ekweremadu had over a decade of service with the ECOWAS Parliament. Within that period, he was Speaker of the Third Legislature of the ECOWAS Parliament from 2011 to 2015. He equally served as the First Deputy Speaker of the Second Legislature of the Parliament from 2007 to 2011. Ekweremadu is highly appreciated in the Parliament and the West African sub-region for his sterling roles in the development of the Community Parliament and the preservations and stabilization of democracy in the sub-region.

I wish to recall that as the First Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament in 2009, he chaired the ECOWAS Parliament Ad Hoc Committee on the Political Situations in Niger Republic and the Republic of Guinea. His efforts in that regard contributed in no small measure towards resolving the impasse in the two ECOWAS Member States.

As Speaker, he strenuously and diligently guided the ECOWAS Parliament in the actualization of the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan of the Community Parliament, among them, the strengthening of the institutional role and powers of the ECOWAS Parliament and the promotion and defense of human rights, justice, gender, democracy, peace, and security in the sub-region. He rallied the Parliament against unconstitutional takeover of power in West Africa, as well as the menace of terrorism, insurgency, and militancy. He visited virtually every flashpoint, sometimes at his very personal expense, in the quest to preserve democracy, peace, and stability in the sub-region.

Importantly, we, to a very great extent, owe it to his leadership the Enhancement of the Powers of the Community Parliament, a cause he dedicated himself and his resources to in the determined bid of the Third Legislature to transit the Parliament from a consultative to a legislative Parliament. In addition, we will always be grateful to his leadership for the infrastructural transformation of the ECOWAS Parliament.

I also wish to recall Senator Ike Ekweremadu's interventions in his personal capacity towards the welfare of Parliamentarians and their constituents in special need throughout his long years of service in the Community Parliament. Many Members of Parliament had had the opportunity of attending the Annual Ikeoha Foundation Day where he, together with his wife, doled out full scholarships and bursary awards to indigent students to brighten their future, while equally empowering widows and the youth.

In view of Senator Ike Ekweremadu's contributions to the West African Community Parliament and his knowledge of the sub-region, as well as his wide experience as a ranking Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, longest-serving presiding officer of the legislature in Nigeria, and a member of several international legislative institutions such as the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace, International Parliamentary Congress, Climate Parliament, among others, it could be understood why he has been a major asset to the ECOWAS region. He remains a priceless resource and his long absence owing to his circumstance since June 2022 has denied us his invaluable service. It remains dreadful if he faces a long prison sentence in the present circumstance.

Concerning his daughter, Sonia, I wish to state that it is a common feeling among parents, especially in Africa, not to bury or survive his or her child. As a father, therefore, I can easily relate with the pains, dilemma, and crossroads of the Senator and his wife over the health condition of their ailing daughter, who must still undergo a kidney

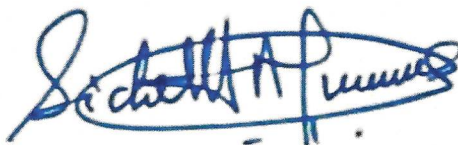
transplant to stand a chance of surviving to fulfill her destiny. And who else could foot the bills better and also provide that morale support for the daughter? It still remains Senator and Mrs. Ekweremadu. It is certain that Sonia cannot survive the absence of her parents in her present health condition.

At this juncture, I wish to add that I totally stand against the crime for which the Senator and his spouse have been convicted. The Community Parliament also stands against it. We do not support organ harvesting in anyway and by any method. Nevertheless, we believe that lessons have been learnt, not only by Ekweremadu, but by everybody.

In view of all these, therefore, I wish to fervently appeal to the honorable court, on behalf of the ECOWAS Parliament, for leniency in meting out justice to the couple. We understand the position of the law, but only appeal that the honorable court puts on a human face in this circumstance and temper justice with mercy, especially considering his good behavior and contributions to the good of the society, the less privileged, and democracy.

Importantly, the typical Ekweremadu, being one, who is given to charity work and experienced in lawmaking in Nigeria and internationally, could also be very useful to the Nigerian and international community in public enlightenment and legal reforms campaigns on organ trafficking to curtail such incidents drawing from his personal experience.

While wishing you the best in all your endeavors and counting on the lenient instincts of the honorable court, please, accept the assurances of my highest esteem.



Rt. Hon. Dr. Sidie Mohamed TUNIS
Speaker
ECOWAS Parliament