The Copyright Society of Nigeria (COSON) has finally reached an agreement with hoteliers in the country, thus bringing to an end the protracted disagreement over payment of music royalties by hotels.

The hoteliers, under the aegis of Hotel Owners Forum Abuja (HOFA), and Hotel and Personal Services Employers' Association of Nigeria (HOPESEA) had sought a reduction in the payment of copyright fee demanded by COSON, which they considered exorbitant and unaffordable.

They had asked for a review of the rates to make it affordable in order to prevent hotels from going out of business.

The Nigeria Copyright Commission (NCC) in 2010 gave approval to COSON as its sole fee collection management organisation.

It was also given approval to act on behalf of authors, composers, performers, publishers of musical works and sound recordings in the country.

Otunba Olusegun Runsewe, the Director General, Nigeria Tourism Development Corporation (NTDC) who mediated between parties expressed joy over the development.

He said that the society and hoteliers had agreed following their dedication and commitment to serve the nation and its people, and called on all sectors to take a cue on the development.

``We are happy that this has come to a logical conclusion and an agreement has been reached. We thank all parties for showing commitment to serve the nation," he said.

Runsewe noted that with the recent development, all court cases against the hotel operators had therefore been withdrawn.

It will be recalled that the society had in July filed a suit before the Federal High Court, Abuja, against Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, demanding more than N3 billion for unauthorised copying and communicating to the public the musical works belonging to its members.

COSON Chairman Tony Okoroji said the development was a great step forward for the society and the music industry.

He noted that with the signing of an agreement, all hotels in the country would comply with the society in paying copyright fees for music it used.

Okoroji said that the society had to reduce what it had demanded from the hotels before an agreement was reached.

``We had to deliberate into the night, and we are happy we were able to reach an agreement,'' he added.

Okoroji said that the positive development was as a result of the ``incredible wisdom'' the NTDC Director-General showed.

He had earlier said in an interview that in a bid to resolve the problem, Runsewe had intervened and had talks with HOFA, HOPESEA and COSON officials.

Besides Runsewe, those who endorsed the agreement included the legal adviser, Mr Jacob Fagbemi, Nigerian Copyright Commission (NCC); Mr Samuel Alabi, President of HOPESEA, and Mr Ekong Onofiok, President of HOFA.

(NAN)