



SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

ORDER PAPER

Thursday, 18th October, 2007

1. Prayers
2. Approval of the Votes and Proceedings
3. Oaths
4. Announcements (if any)
5. Petitions

ORDERS OF THE DAY

1. **Confirmation of Nominations:**

Senator Teslim Folarin:- (*Senate Majority Leader*)

"That the Senate do resume the screening of the following persons for confirmation as Ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in accordance with Section 147 (2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria".

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|------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| (i) | Orubebe, Peter Godsdai | South-South Zone |
| (ii) | Alhaji Alhassan Bako Saku | Taraba State |

The New World Heavyweight Boxing Champion - Samuel Peter (Nigerian Nightmare):
Senator Aloysius A. Etok:- (*Akwa Ibom North West*)

The Senate

Notes that Nigeria made Boxing history on 6th October 2007 by being the First African Country to win the coveted WBC World Heavyweight Boxing Title;

Notes that Samuel Peter by winning the Championship has brought glory not only to Nigeria, but the whole of black Africa;

Notes also that Samuel Peter's victory has once again drawn attention to the enormous potential which the average Nigerian possesses not only in the Boxing game or in soccer but in all fields of human endeavour;

Observes with excitement that Samuel Peter despite suffering three (3) knock- downs in the early second and third rounds of the fight got off the canvass to beat Janeel McCline to retain his WBC Interim World Heavyweight Title at the famous Madison Square Garden, New York in the Twelfth Round by unanimous decision thus proving to the World that he is a true example of that fighting spirit that has become a unique brand by which Nigerians are identified;

Accordingly resolved to:

- (i) *Send* a letter of commendation to Samuel Peter for the honour he has brought to Nigeria and the whole of Africa;

- (ii) *Congratulate* the President Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, National Sports Commission and all Nigerians for this great honour;
- (iii) *Urge* the President, Commander-in-Chief to adequately reward the WBC Champion beyond the esteemed Presidential Handshake;
- (iv) *Urge* the National Sports Commission to ensure Nigeria's retention of the Title by sponsoring Samuel Peter in the title defence that is coming up in three months time;
- (v) *Urge* the National Sports Commission to adequately upgrade all sporting facilities in the country so as to produce more future World Champions in all sporting fields especially in the individual sports.
- (vi) Commend the Akwa Ibom State Governor Barr. Godswill Akpabio who sponsored the live broadcast of the Match and for personally sitting at the ring side to cheer Samuel Peter to victory.

2. Menace of Erosion in the South-East Geo-Political Zone:

Senator Chris N.D. Anyanwu:- (*Into East*)

Senator Annie C. Okonkwo:- (*Anambra Central*)

The Senate

Notes the increasing problem of erosion in several parts of the South-East geo-political Zone of the country which has claimed and continues to claim lives and properties;

Notes that the erosion problems have led to the displacement of populations and communities from their homes;

Notes further that large acres of farmlands and arable lands for agricultural production have been destroyed and lost to erosion;

Notes that erosion has worsened the state of the Federal, State and Local Government roads in the Zone;

Concerned that the South-East geo-political zone with relatively small land mass is losing substantial part of its land mass to erosion;

Alarmed that more than half of the country namely the whole of South-East, North Central and South-East Zones will be thrown into total darkness for a very long time if nothing is done urgently to check the fully erosion which is threatening the twin towers of the PHCN installed at Ifite-Dunu in Anambra North Local Government Area which transmit 330 KVA of electricity from the Niger Delta;

Notes specifically that gully erosion ranging from 10ft - 50ft (depth) and 2.5km (length) has claimed over 50 lives in the following communities of Imo State, namely: (i) Imo State: Oparadim, Obohia, Eziudo, Chikoneze, Amunmara all in Mbaise, Amakohia-Akwakuma in Owerri, Umuneke-Ngor all in Imo State; (ii) Anambra State: Okwuohia, Okwelle and Agulu-Nanka, Umazu Abacha, Umuekpeli-Akanano Abacha, Egbema-Ozubulu, Ifite-Dunu, Umudim Nnewi, Ekwuluobia all in Anambra State. And at the following sites in other South-East States, the situation has reached equally frightening proportions;

- (i) Abia State: Arochukwu, Isiala Ngwa, Abia State University site, Ahaba - Okigwe, Isukwuato, Amakaka
- (ii) Enugu State; Obollo Afor, Onuyi Nsukka, c
- (iii) Ebonyi Nkalagu - Ogoja Highway, etc

Observes that the recent spate of flood across the country has aggravated the erosion problems in the zone as illustrated by the case of Pa Ilisha Ezeokeke, the 75 year old man whose four children were swept away by flood on 16th August, 2007 at the valley of the Nanka Erosion Site.

Regrets that the inability of the Federal Government and its Agencies to checkmate the erosion menace in the region which is beyond the scope of State Governments has led to continued loss of useable land, rendering important roads impassable while communities are cut off; loss of lives, properties and a state of perpetual fear among the affected communities;

Accordingly resolves to:

- (i) *Urge* the Federal Ministries of Environment, Housing and Urban Development and works in conjunction with the Ecological Fund Office to undertake without delay, assessment visits with a view to taking immediate intervention measures to arrest the dangerously rampaging erosion landslide in the following communities: Oparanadim, Obohia, Eziudo, Amumara, Amakohia, Umunekeke all in Imo State. Nanka - Agulu, Abacha, Egbema Ozubulu, Ifite-Dunu, Abba and Obosi in Anambra State, to forestall further loss of lives and properties in these severely endangered Communities. We also urge that more concrete measures be taken in the following erosion sites before the next rainy season, namely: Nnamdi Azikiwe University Teaching Hospital (NAUTH) site, Abia State University, Uturu Site, Okwuohia, Okwelle, Arochukwu, Ikem, Oboilo-Affor.
- (ii) *Urge* the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) and the Federal Ministry of Works to move into the Enugu - Port Harcourt Expressway at the Enugu end, Aba - Owerri Road (Otamiri Junction), Nekede - Imagwa - FUTO Road, Enugu - Nsukka Road, Ahaba - Okigwe Road and Nkpor - Obosi By-pass and restore the roads to normalcy;
- (iii) *Direct* its Committee on Environment and Ecology to undertake a tour of the South-East to evaluate the level of degradation for the purposes of accommodating such needs in the 2008 Appropriation Act;
- (iv) *Urge* the Ministry of Environment, Housing and Urban Development to commence, as a matter of urgency, a collation and compilation of data on the various erosion sites across the country and to present this Senate with a Master plan of action for resolving the erosion menace;
- (v) *Urge* the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to visit victims of the erosion menace in the South-East with a view to alleviating their sufferings;
- (vi) *Direct* its relevant Committees to come up with a proposal on strict disbursement and application of Ecological Funds to guarantee that the monies are used for fighting Nigeria's growing ecological problems.

2. **The Proposed Strike by Aviation Workers for Non-Payment of the Entitlements of the Nigerian Airways Ex-Workers:**

Senator Anyim Ude:- (*Ebonyi South*) **Senator**

Bala A. Mohammed: (*Bauchi South*) **Senator**

Ikechukwu Obiorah:- (*Anambra South*) **Senator**

Nicholas Y. Ugbane:- (*Kogi East*) **Senator Grace**

Folasade Bent:- (*Adamawa South*)

The Senate

Notes that the three Aviation Industry Workers Unions under the Aegis of Aviation Unions Grand Alliance (AUGA) have given the Federal Government one week's notice from 15th October 2007 to go on strike if the terminal entitlements of staff of the liquidated Nigerian Airways which has been pending since its liquidation on 21st May, 2003 were not paid;

Observes that the strike will paralyse activities in the Aviation Industry if Government fails to take urgent steps to effect payment of entitlements of the employees of the Nigerian Airways, before Sunday, 21th October, 2007 when the strike is expected to commence;

Observes further that the decision to proceed on strike was necessitated by the plight of former employees of Nigerian Airways in liquidation who are dying gradually from penury;

Notes that it is on record that about 400 out of these employees have already died because of lack of funds to sustain themselves; Alhaji Dalhatu from Kano and S.O. Sani from Enugu died on Friday, 12th October, 2007;

Recalls that at the kind intervention of the Senate Committee on Aviation in August 2005, it was clearly established that the workers of Nigerian Airways are indeed Public Servants and that their entitlements are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria vide S. 173 (1) and (2) and Pension Reform Act 2004;

Recalls that an Inter-ministerial Committee on the payment of the terminal benefits of the workers and pensioners was set up by the Senate Committee on Aviation on 22nd August, 2005;

Recalls that the Committee started sitting on the 8th of September, 2005 and finished its work since 30th October, 2006 and the report of the Committee is now the final documents containing the computation of the benefits of the workers as well as pensions;

Recalls that subsequently the former Honourable Minister of State (Air Transport) Chief Fani Kayode made the summary of the report to the former President, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo for approval of the payments which the former President graciously approved;

Notes that based on that approval the former Honourable Minister of Transportation, Chief Cornelius Adebayo made a Memo to the Federal Executive Council for the ratification of the former President's approval which the same former President stood down at the Federal Executive Council meeting of 9th May, 2007;

Observes that it is evident that the ex-workers of the Nigerian Airways did serve the country and, therefore, truly deserve their entitlements. And the decision to liquidate Nigerian Airways is evidently an Executive act which was not that of the workers;

Notes that the explanation of Government for paying the London-based Nigerian Airways workers was that it was in obedience to the laws of the United Kingdom and the same Government should consider the Laws of Nigeria worthy of compliance by paying the workers;

Recalls that the liquidation of Nigerian Airways was concluded by Bureau of Public Enterprise (B.P.E)-appointed liquidator, Mr. Barbington Asahaye who sold all assets of Nigerian Airways both at home and abroad but failed to use the proceeds from the sales to settle workers entitlements as envisioned by the Government;

Notes that other corporate assets of the Nigerian Airways in liquidation such as Sky Power Aviation Handling Company Ltd (SAHCOL) and Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) account said to be about \$6 Million were transferred to Government without settling the workers from their economic and cash values;

Accordingly resolves to:

- (i) *Sympthize* with the Aviation Unions for the hardships caused by the long delay in settling their entitlements;
- (ii) *Urge* the Unions in appreciation of the sensitivity and security implications of their services to the Nation, to give more time to the Federal Government to resolve the matter;
- (iii) *Urge* the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to take advantage of the period between now and the commencement of the strike action to enunciate concrete plans for the payment of the entitlements in order to avoid grounding of the Aviation Industry;
- (iv) *Urge* the Government to settle the entitlements of the workers from the economic and cash values accruing to SAHCOL, and in BASA accounts;
- (v) *Urge* the Government to transfer the BASA account which is meant for the development of Aviation Industry generally to Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) the regulator of Aviation Industry in accordance with the new Civil Aviation Act, 2006. This will enable the regulator to implement with immediate effect the payment of the entitlements of the ex-workers of Nigerian Airways as well as address the infrastructural and human capital requirements and the development of the Aviation Industry.