



SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 17th January, 2006

1. The Senate met at 10: 10 a. m. The Senate President read Prayers.
2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
The Senate President announced that he had examined the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 20th December, 2005 and approved same.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings were adopted.
3. **Oath of Allegiance and Membership — Senator-Elect:**
Senator-Elect Fred Orti (*PDF — Benue North West Senatorial District*) took and subscribed the oaths as required by law.
4. **Message from Mr President:**
The Senate President announced that he had received a letter from the President, Commander-in-Chief which he read as follows:



PRESIDENT,
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

PRES/134

19 December 2005

*The President of the Senate,
Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
National Assembly Complex,
Three-Arms Zone,
Abuja.*

Dear President of the Senate,

FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY,
ABUJA BUDGET 2006

Pursuant to Section 299 of the Constitution of the Federation, 1999, I forward herewith the Bill for the FCT 2006 Statutory Allocation Budget for consideration by the Senate.

While urging you to accept the assurances of my highest esteem, it will be most appreciated if the Bill is given urgent consideration by the Senate.

Yours Sincerely

(Signed) OLUSEGUN
OBASANJO

5. Remarks by the Senate President:



The President Senate of the Federal
Republic of Nigeria

TEXT OF REMARKS BY SENATOR KEN NNAMANI, PRESIDENT,
SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, TO
WELCOME SENATORS BACK TO PLENARY SESSION
ON TUESDAY, JANUARY 17, 2006

"FROM BETTER TO BEST"

I am honoured and delighted to welcome all of us back to plenary session. Like every other branch of government we took time off our busy schedules to celebrate the Christmas, New Year and the Sallah; but unlike any other branch of government, we continued to work even during the holiday period. It is our singular responsibility as representatives of the people to continue to care for the welfare of the Nigerian people even if the rest of the government goes on vacation. Many Nigerians may not know that when we adjourned plenary sessions, many of our colleagues continued in the line of duty, carrying out oversight functions.

Before we adjourned plenary session on December 22, 2005, Mr. President presented budget 2006 to a joint session of the National Assembly. While welcoming Mr. President to that joint session, emphasized the constitutional principle of co-management of the national economy through the national budget. I promised on behalf of all of us that in view of the important fiscal importance of the budget as a tool of governance and a determinant of economic welfare, we will expedite the passage of the 2006 appropriation bill. But, I also stated clearly that the power to approve budget estimates includes the power to comprehensively debate and, where necessary, review and amend the estimates. All through the processes of approval of the estimates and the enactment of the budget into law we shall be guided by principled commitment to uphold the constitution, especially its prioritized interests and directive principles of state policy. We shall also be guided by our mission of providing coherent and effective legislative mechanism to guide the Executive to -efficiently. pilot the national economy,.

/ am convinced that every distinguished Senator is passionate about quick passage of the 2006 budget. So far we are on the right direction. The relevant committees of both houses of the National Assembly have begun work in earnest on the budget estimates. There is ample evidence that we can meet our target. I urge harder and more coordinated efforts from both legislators and government officials to make sure we pass a budget that will reflect the expectations of ordinary Nigerians for more food, good education, better roads and affordable healthcare in 2006, a budget that matches government's commitment to human and physical capacity building.

During the break the agitation about the alleged Third Term Agenda became feverish. Expectedly, the pendulum of suspicion swung towards the direction of the National Assembly. We appreciate the right of Nigerians to contribute to the debate about the form governance should take before and after 2007. We assure Nigerian citizens that we will keep the faith and protect democratic rights. I appeal to our colleagues to focus on the challenges of ensuring that we bequeath to Nigerians after 2007, institutions and culture of politics that can guarantee continuity of such reform programmes that can transform the economic and social conditions of ordinary Nigerian citizens. We are settled in our commitment to uphold the constitution. We remain unshaken in our devotion to the common good and will continue to press for the deepening of democratic politics and the respect for the rule of law by all public officers.

Let me assure Nigerians that this Senate is committed to the continuation of those reforms embarked, upon by the government that can take Nigeria out of the woods of economic stagnation and pervasive poverty. Lessons from countries as diverse as South Korea, Singapore, Malaysia, the United States, China, etc persuade us that the key to continuity of beneficial reforms is essentially the institutionalization of democratic practices that encourage implementation of rational policies. Our economic prosperity and social stability require policy continuity, not necessarily regime continuity. Indeed, regime change and periodic renewals of the peoples' mandate are critical ingredients of participatory democracy. The National Assembly will continue to enact laws that make it possible for some of these good policies to continue after the end of the tenure of this government.

Distinguished colleagues, this year is crucial to the consolidation of real and lasting democracy in Nigeria. We have many important bills to consider, including the Freedom, of Information and the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) bills. We are also engaged in important constitutional amendments. As we undertake these constitutional responsibilities, may we continue to exemplify the highest rectitude, statesmanship and intelligent commitment to national unity and prosperity that is beginning to earn us the respect and support of Nigerian people. The Nigerian citizens now believe that this Senate will protect, not only the letters of the constitution, but also the spirit of constitutional democracy.

Distinguished colleagues, it is my pleasure to welcome you back to plenary session. May we have fruitful and convivial deliberations in this chamber'. May we move from strength to strength; from better to best!

Thank you

Signed:

Senator Ken Nnamani

President

Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

6. Matter of Urgent Public Importance:

Oyo State Crisis:

Rising on Rules 42 and 52 Senator Mamora invited the attention of the Senate to the Oyo State crisis concerning the impeachment and removal of Governor Ladoja. He sought and obtained the leave of Senate to introduce the matter as Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

Motion made and Question Proposed: That whereas the demise of the first Republic took its roots partly from the events in the old Western Region (which present Oyo State was part of);

Whereas last week, the Oyo State House of Assembly purportedly carried out "impeachment" and subsequent "removal" of Governor Ladoja in a rather controversial manner taking cognisance of the provisions of section 188 of the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and

Whereas arising therefrom constitutional crisis of immense magnitude has enveloped Oyo State where there now appears to be two governors with conflicting legitimacy,

Be it resolved

That the Senate do call on ALL parties in Oyo State Crisis to return forthwith to the path of constitutionalism and the Rule of Law in the interest of peace and democracy (*Senator Olorunnimbe A. Mamora*).

Debate:

Point of Order:

Rising on 53(5) Senator Dalhatu S. Tafida (*Senate Majority Leader*) invited the attention of the Senate to the fact that the matter under consideration was in court and urged the Senate to defer the matter till a later date.

Point of Order sustained.

7. Committee on Appropriation:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do receive a brief update on the 2006 Appropriation Bill and other matters related thereto (*Senator Abubakar Maikarfi*).

Question put and agreed to.

Report presented.

8. **Closed Session:**

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do resolve into a Closed Session to deliberate on matters important to the workings of the Senate (Senate Majority Leader).

Question put and agreed to.

Senate in Closed Session — **11. 40 a. m.**

Senate in Open Session — **12.50 p. m.**

9. **Adjournment:**

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do adjourn till Wednesday, 18th January, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 12. 55 p. m.

Ken Nnamani
President of the Senate
