



SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 27th June, 2007

1. The Senate met at 10: 20 a.m. The President read prayers.

2. **Votes and Proceedings:**

The Senate President announced that he had examined the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 26th June, 2007 and approved same.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings were approved.

3. **Announcement**

The Senate President announced composition of the Committee of Selection as follows:

(i)	Senator David A. B. Mark	Chairman
(ii)	Senator Ike Ekweremadu	Vice Chairman
(iii)	Senator Teslim K. Folarin	Member
(iv)	Senator Mahmud K. Bello	Member
(v)	Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba	Member
(vi)	Senator Mohammed Mana	Member
(vii)	Senator Maina Ma'aji Law an	Member
(viii)	Senator Ahmad Rufa'i Sani	Member
(ix)	Senator Olorunnimbe A. Mamora	Member
(x)	Senator Kabiru Ibrahim Gaya	Member

Appointment of Special Advisers:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do approve the request by Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the appointment of 15 (fifteen) persons as Special Advisers (*Senate Majority Leader*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved:

That the Senate do approve the request by Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for the appointment of 15 (fifteen) persons as Special Advisers (S. Res/002/007).

5. Release of Mr. Ralph Uwazuruike and other Leaders of the Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB):

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate notes that reconciliation is universally cherished as an important weapon of resolving social conflicts in a democratic society;

Observes that this tool has yielded positive results in numerous conflicts in our nation's political development;

Concerned that youth restiveness has increasingly become a major part of such conflicts in our political terrain and such restiveness tends to converge with alienation of the larger host environments;

Observes further that in recent times the most serious manifestations of youth restiveness include Odua Peoples Congress (OPC), Niger- Delta Peoples Volunteer Force (NDPVF) and Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB);

Notes that Government's even-handed response to the problem is yielding positive results as is evident in the post-detention public profile of Gani Adams, Leader of OPC, and Mujaheed Asari Dokubo, Leader of NDPVF;

Concerned further that the evident virtue of this even-handed ness will suffer a set-back if it is not extended to other cases such as the leaders of MASSOB who are still in detention;

Note that such serious set-back arises from the unfortunate perception of Government's response as selective and partisan, by a section of the Nigerian people;

Concerned that the consequences of such misgivings could be counter-productive to the Government's immediate need of peace and ultimate goals of social harmony and political stability;

Accordingly resolves to:

- (i) commend the Federal Government's policy on reconciliation with all aggrieved groups as a healthy way of lowering tension in the polity;
- (ii) applaud Yar' dua Administration' s placatory handling of volatile youth groups, as is evident in the release on bail of Asari Dokubo;
- (iii) request the release of Mr. Ralph Uwazuruike and other leaders of MASSOB as a logical extension of the Government's even-handed response to disaffected youths; and
- (iv) urge our youth movements to appreciate the supreme importance of peaceful mediation, reconciliation and conciliation in nursing our nascent democratic culture to maturity (*Senator Uche Chukwumerije*).

Point of Order:

Senator Iyiola Omisore invited the attention of the Senate to Rule 53 (5) of the Standing Rules of the Senate which states as follows:

"Reference shall not be made to any matter on which a Judicial decision is pending, in such a way as might in the opinion of the President of the Senate prejudice the interest of the parties thereto "

Debate: Ruling: The Senate President sustained the

Point of Order.

6. Strike Action by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU):

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate, concerned about the current strike action embarked upon by the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) for the past twelve (12) weeks;

Observes that industrial disputes in our Universities have become too frequent and often resulted in prolonged strikes with devastating consequences to our educational system;

Notes that prolonged periods of closure of universities during strikes expose students to social vices and moral challenges:

Notes that schooling time lost during these strikes can hardly be regained as crash programmes to cover lost grounds only negatively impacts on the quality of knowledge imparted and consequently on the quality of graduates from our University system.

Accordingly resolves to:

- (i) urge the leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to call off the strike action pending the resolution of the crisis;
- (ii) direct its Committee on Education to initiate dialogue with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and all Stakeholders in the educational system with a view to resolving all the contending issues; and
- (Hi) urge the President to set in motion the machinery for periodic review of all the problems in our University system (*Senator Sylvester N. Anyanwu*).

Debate:

Prayer (i):

That the Senate do urge the leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to call off the strike action pending the resolution of the crisis — *agreed to*.

Prayer (ii):

That the Senate do direct its Committee on Education to initiate dialogue with the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and all Stakeholders in the educational system with a view to resolving all the contending issues.

Amendment Proposed:

Leave out the provision in prayer (ii) and *insert* the following instead thereof:

"Direct its Committee on Education when constituted to understudy all contending issues and to report back to the Senate, suggesting a framework for a comprehensive and permanent Legislative Panacea for our decaying Educational System" (*Senator Tawar U. Wada*).

Question that the amendment be made, put and agreed to.

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Another Amendment Proposed:

Insert a new prayer (iii) as follows:

"Urge the Federal Ministry of Education to respect all outstanding agreements with ASUU" (*Senator Andrew A. O. Babalola*).

Question that the amendment be made, put and agreed to.

Prayer (iv):

Urge the President to set in motion the machinery for periodic review of all the problems in our University system.

Amendment Proposed:

Leave out the provision in prayer (iv) and *insert* the following instead thereof:

"Urge the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to take a comprehensive look at the educational sector, study the proposed reforms and evolve a marshal plan for rebuilding Nigeria's Educational System" (*Senator Chris N. Anyanwu*).

Question that the amendment be made, put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Senate do:

- (i) urge the leadership of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) to call off the strike action pending the resolution of the crisis;

- (ii) direct its Committee on Education when constituted to understudy all contending issues and to report back to the Senate, suggesting a framework for a comprehensive and permanent Legislative Penacea for our decaying educational system;
- (iii) urge the Federal Ministry of Education to respect all outstanding agreement s with ASUU; and
- (iv) urge the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to take a comprehensive look at the educational sector, study the proposed reforms and evolve a marshal plan for rebuilding Nigeria's Educational System (S. **Res/003/007**).

7. **Adjournment:**

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do adjourn till Thursday, 28th June, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. (*Senate Majority Leader*).

Adjourned accordingly at 12.10p.m.

David A. B. Mark
President of the Senate