



SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 5 March, 2008

1. The Senate met at 2.05 p.m. The Senate President read prayers.
2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
The Senate President announced that he had examined the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 27th February, 2008 and approved same.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings were approved.

3. **The Demise of Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta:**
Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do note with a heavy heart the sudden death of Late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta on Saturday 1st March, 2008 after a protracted illness at the age of 66 years.

He was born on October 1, 1942 and had Ph.D in Quantity Survey;

Notes further that during his lifetime Late Senator Kuta held many Political appointments,

- Commissioner for Information in the then North Western State, 1975;
- Commissioner for Trade and Industries in Niger State 1976 - 1977;
- Deputy Speaker, Federal House of Representatives 1979 - 1983;
- Minister, Mines and Power 1983;
- Three-time Senator of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1983, 1999 and 2003;

Notes also that while he was in the Senate, he served as:

- Chairman, Senate Committee on Aviation;
- Chairman, Senate Committee on Works and Housing;
- Chairman, Ad-hoc Committee of the famous Kuta Panel that investigated Contract Awards in the Senate;
- Chairman, Ad-hoc Committee on the Demolition of Houses in the FCT, 2005;
- Chairman, Northern Senators Forum;

Observes that Senator Kuta was courageous, forthright, and fearless; he stood for integrity and justice. His contributions to debates were unbiased, very incisive and explosive;

Notes that the Senate will surely miss him for his political astuteness, forthrightness and sagacity. His penchant for speaking the truth no matter whose ox is gored is a legacy that should be emulated by all.

Adieu Kuta.

May his Soul Rest in Peace.

Accordingly resolve that the Senate do:

- (i) Commiserate with the family, the Government and people of Niger State;
- (ii) Observe a minute in silence in honour of Late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta (*Senator Teslim K. Folarin*).

Debate:

Several Senators paid glowing tributes to the Late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta.

Prayer (i):

Question: That the Senate do commiserate with the family, the Government and people of Niger State — *Agreed to.*

Prayer (ii):

Question: That the Senate do observe a minute in silence in honour of Late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta — *Agreed to.*

Amendment Proposed:

Insert a new Prayer (iii) as follows:

"That the Senate do set up an Ad-hoc Committee to work out modalities to immortalise Senators and late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta in particular" (Senator Anyim Chukwu Ude).

Resolved:

- (i) That the Senate do commiserate with the family, the Government and people of Niger State;
- (ii) That the Senate do observe a minute in silence in honour of Late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta; and
- (iii) That the Senate do set up an Ad-hoc Committee to work out modalities to immortalise Senators and late Senator Idris Ibrahim Kuta in particular (**5. Res/050/08**).

4. Personal Explanation:

Rising on Rule 43, Senator Grace Folashade Bent sought for extension of time to enable the Senate Committee on Environment conclude the assignment on the Bill for an Act to Establish the National Climate Change Commission and for Other Connected Purposes and report as Ordered (2008) (SB. 24).

Committee granted additional 3 (three) weeks to conclude the assignment and report as Ordered.

5. Plight of Nigerian Coal Corporation Pensioners:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do note that coal was one of the earliest solid minerals that contributed to the development of Nigeria;

Aware that coal was vital for the successful take-off of Nigeria's pioneer cement factory, the Nigerian Cement Company, Nkalagu, the Nigerian Railway Corporation and the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria (ECN), among many other such Infrastructure, and as such can be said to have contributed in laying the foundation for the modern Nigeria we are all proud of today;

Affirm also that this praise-worthy contribution of coal to the country's economy and development could not have been possible without the commitment and dedication of a patriotic work force;

Distressed by the plight of these patriotic Nigerians, who are allowed to suffer avoidable hardship, their pension not having been paid for 64 months besides 12 months arrears of the 1998 harmonized pension pay;

Worried about the negative and unwholesome impact of this development on the lives of these over 4,000 Nigerian Coal Corporation retirees and their numerous dependants;

Concerned that the privatization of the Nigerian coal Corporation mines and property across the country willfully glossed over this critical liability, thus exposing these pensioners to difficulties, disillusionment and, in some instances, death.

Accordingly resolve that the Senate do:

- (i) Urge the Federal Government to pay the 64-months pension arrears to these senior citizens, some of who still have wards in schools, in addition to other responsibilities;
- (it) Urge the Federal Government to investigate an allegation that Linkage Assurance Plc, which verified the pension status of the Corporation, has been receiving monthly releases for the settlement of the pension arrears but has been withholding same,
- (Hi) Urge the Federal Government to review the flawed privatization process that has apparently left these senior citizens, who had given their best to their fatherland, in the cold (*Senator Ayogu Eze*).

Debate:

Prayer (i):

That Senate do urge the Federal Government to pay the 64-months pension arrears to these senior citizens, some of who still have wards in schools, in addition to other responsibilities;

Amendment Proposed:

Leave out the words "some of who still have wards in schools, in addition to other responsibilities" and *insert* the word "immediately" instead thereof (*Senator Osita B. Izunaso*).

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

Main prayer as amended put and agreed to.

Prayer (ii):

That the Senate do urge the Federal Government to investigate an allegation that Linkage Assurance Plc, which verified the pension status of the Corporation, has been receiving monthly releases for the settlement of the pension arrears but has been withholding same;

Amendment Proposed:

Leave out the provisions in Prayer (ii) and *insert* the following instead thereof:

"That the Senate do direct the Committee on Establishment and Public Service to investigate the allegation that pension arrears of the Corporation were been withheld" (*Senator Teslim K. Folarin*).

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

Prayer (iii):

That the Senate do urge the Federal Government to review the flawed privatization process that has apparently left these senior citizens, who had given their best to their fatherland, in the cold — *Negatived*.

Another Amendment Proposed:

Insert a new Prayer (iii) as follows:

"That the Senate do direct the Committee on Establishment and Public Service to take a wholistic look into the issue of pension and report back" (*Senator Teslim K. Folarin*).

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

Resolved:

- (i) That Senate do urge the Federal Government to pay the 64-months pension arrears to these senior citizens immediately;
- (ii) That the Senate do direct the Committee on Establishment and Public Service to investigate the allegation that pension arrears of the Corporation were been withheld; and

(Hi) That the Senate do direct the Committee on Establishment and Public Service **to** take a wholistic look into the issue of pension and report back (**S. Res/051/08**).

6. Committee on Finance:

Report on the Customs, Excise Tariff, Etc (Consolidation) (Amendment) Bill 2008 (HB. 01):

Consideration of Report deferred to the next legislative day.

7. Committee on Petroleum Upstream:

Report on the Nigerian Oil and Gas Industry Content Development Bill 2008 (SB. 81):

Consideration of Report deferred to the next legislative day.

8. Adjournment:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do adjourn till Thursday, 6th March, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. (*Senate Majority Leader*).

Adjourned accordingly at 4. 30p.m.

David A. B. Mark, GCON
President of the Senate