



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

FIRST VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Wednesday, 4 June, 2008

1. The House met at 11.10 a.m. Mr. Deputy Speaker read prayers.
2. **Votes and Proceedings:**

Mr. Deputy Speaker-announced that he had examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 3 June, 2008.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings was adopted.
3. **Announcements:**
 - (i) **Referral:**

Mr. Deputy Speaker referred the 2008 Draft Niger Delta Development Commission Statutory Budget Proposals to the House Committee on Niger Delta Development Commission.
 - (ii) **Visitors:**

Mr. Deputy Speaker announced the presence in the Gallery, of Staff and Students of the Holy Family Nursery and Primary School, Gwarimpa Life Camp, Abuja.
4. **Petitions:**

The following petitions were received and referred to the Committee on Public Petition:

 - (i) Hon. Independence Ogunewe (*Ahiazu Mbaise/Ezinihitte Federal Constituency*), from C. F. Nwokocha & Co on behalf of their client, Chief C. C. Nnorom, praying the House to investigate his alleged wrongful retirement from the Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) with a view to reinstate him;
 - (ii) Hon. Kayode Amusan (*Abeokuta North/Odeda/Obafemi Owode Federal Constituency*), from FATNUROYE Nigeria Limited, praying the House to intervene and prevail on the Management of the Federal College of Education, Osiele Abeokuta, Ogun State to honour the arbitration award against it and pay all the outstanding bills on the contract;
 - (iii) Hon. Kayode Amusan (*Abeokuta North/Odeda/Obafemi Owode Federal Constituency*), from Gbolahan Okemuyiwa, praying the House to redress his alleged wrongful dismissal from service by the former Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria now known as Nigeria Airspace Management Agency (NAMA) and recall and pay him all outstanding entitlements.
5. **Admittance into the Chamber:**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That pursuant to Order XV, Rule 9 (ii) and (iv), this House do admit into the Chamber, the new Presidential Adviser on National Assembly Matters, Senator Abba Aji for introduction" (*Hon. Tunde Akogun*).

Question put and agreed to.

(See Official Report for details).

6. Presentation of Bills:

- (i) Social Development Act Amendment Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (ii) Political Parties (Internal Democracy) Regulation Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (iii) Police Act (Amendment) Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (iv) Veterinary Surgeons (Amendment) Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (v) Armed Forces Medical Services Management Board Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (vi) Armed Forces Education Management Board Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (vii) Maritime Defence and Foreign Peace Keeping Operations Fund Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (viii) Pension Commission (Amendment) Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (ix) Federal Mortgage Bank of Nigeria (Amendment) Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (x) National Automotive Design and Development Council Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*
- (xi) Federal Caidiothoracic Centre Bill, 2008 — *Read the First Time.*

7. **Torture and Maiming of a Nigerian in Gabon:**

Motion made and Question proposed,
The House:

Notes the torture and maiming of a Nigerian living in Gabon by Gabonese Policemen as widely reported in "The Nation" National daily of Monday, 2 June, 2008;

Worried that the victim of the torture was not a suspect or accomplice to the purported crime alleged by the Gabonese Police;

Aware that Gabon is a signatory to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights and African Charter on Human Rights;

Concerned of the upsurge in the harassment, intimidation and brutality on innocent Nigerians in most African Countries in recent times;

Further aware that the 'centre piece' of Nigeria's Foreign Policy is "Citizen's diplomacy" which makes a Nigerian citizen wherever he or she may be the 'focal point' of Nigeria's interest,

Resolves to;

Mandate the Committee on Foreign Affairs to investigate the circumstances surrounding the gruesome torture of a Nigerian citizen in Gabon and report back to the House within one month (*Hon. Austin Nwachukwu*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted the torture and maiming of a Nigerian living in Gabon by Gabonese Policemen as widely reported in "The Nation" National daily of Monday, 2nd June, 2008;

Worried that the victim of the torture was not a suspect or accomplice to the purported crime alleged by the Gabonese Police;

Aware that Gabon is a signatory to the United Nations Charter on Human Rights and African Charter on Human Rights;

Concerned of the upsurge in the harassment, intimidation and brutality on innocent Nigerians in most African Countries in recent times;

Further aware that the 'centre piece' of Nigeria's Foreign Policy is "Citizen's diplomacy" which makes a Nigerian citizen wherever he or she may be the 'focal point' of Nigeria's interest,

Resolved to;

Mandate the Committee on Foreign Affairs to investigate the circumstances surrounding the gruesome torture of a Nigerian citizen in Gabon and report back to the House within one month (**HR. 29/2008**)

8. Immediate Construction of Runaway Vehicle Stoppers at the Steep Hills at Ewatto and Eko-Egbor in Edo State:

Motion made and Question proposed,
The House:

Notes the continuous carnage and loss of properties occurring on the Steep hills at Ena Ewatto and Eko-Egbor Ewu along the Federal highway in Edo State due to the frequent vehicular accidents that occur in the area;

Concerned that lives and properties of Nigerians and others alike are being lost continually without remedy and that many Nigerians are having sleepless night, nightmares from the shock and trauma of seeing their fellow Nigerians burnt alive and there is a growing population of those who are afraid to take these roads because they either saw or heard about the phenomenon of deaths and loss of properties, of being suddenly trapped or caught in a huge fire for most part, because of brake of vehicles plying through these spots;

Desirous of ensuring that these ugly occurrences be halted, since the security and well being of our people is the primary responsibility of government;

Determined to ensure the security of our people at whose instance we are in parliament;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the Ministry of Transportation (Work Section) to construct runaway vehicle stoppers at the sides of the steep hills and the repairs of the failed portions of the roads along the Federal high-way at Ena Ewatto and Eko-Egbor Ewu of Edo State as an immediate remedy to the re-occurring carnages and destruction of properties at these particular locations;
- (ii) Further urge the Ministry of Transportation to provide a bye pass or bridge across the said locations as a permanent solution to resolving the problem (*Hon. Friday Itulah and 4 Others*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted the continuous carnage and loss of properties occurring on the Steep hills at Ena Ewatto and Eko-Egbor Ewu along the Federal highway in Edo State due to the frequent vehicular accidents that occur in the area;

Concerned that lives and properties of Nigerians and others alike are being lost continually without remedy and that many Nigerians are having sleepless night, nightmares from the shock and trauma of seeing their fellow Nigerians burnt alive and there is a growing population of those who are afraid to take these roads because they either saw or heard about the phenomenon of deaths and loss of properties, of being suddenly trapped or caught in a huge fire for most part, because of brake of vehicles plying through these spots;

Desirous of ensuring that these ugly occurrences be halted, since the security and well being of our people is the primary responsibility of government;

Determined to ensure the security of our people at whose instance we are in parliament;

Resolved to:

- (i) Urge the Ministry of Transportation (Work Section) to construct runaway vehicle stoppers at the sides of the steep hills and the repairs of the failed portions of the roads along the Federal high-way at Ena Ewatto and Eko-Egbor Ewu of Edo State as an immediate remedy to the re-occurring carnages and destruction of properties at these particular locations;
- (ii) Further urge the Ministry of Transportation to provide a bye pass or bridge across the said locations as a permanent solution to resolving the problem (HR. 30/2008).

9. End of Session Address:

Mr Deputy Speaker read the End of Session Address as follows:

WE ARE KEEPING A DATE WITH HISTORY

My Honourable Brothers and Sisters,

Today marks the end of the First Session of the Sixth Assembly. I recall that in the early part of this Session, this House was seized with crisis and bitter partisanship that crippled legislative business for the better part of three months. Very few people gave us the chance to outlive those trying times. Our individual and collective rating was at an all-time low. We argued, we fought, we disagreed but in the end, we resolved to put our differences aside and move this beautiful nation forward. Already, we have started reaping the benefits of peace- building. At the risk of sounding immodest, I am glad to observe that even the worst of cynics are convinced about our determination to give Nigerians nothing less than purposeful leadership.

2. *During the last session, a total number of 70 Bills were introduced on the floor of the House. Out of this number, 62 were Members Bills while 8 were from the Executive branch. 35 of the Bills have undergone second reading; 25 Bills are pending in various Committees; 4 have been negatived while 10 have been passed into law. Let me quickly note here that this proactive disposition on the part of Members represents a marked departure from previous dispensations where most legislations were initialed from the Executive. Most importantly, I am convinced that most of these legislations are capable of adding value to the lives of our people.*

These include:

- *NNPC amendment Bill, 2007;*
- *Energy Commission of Nigeria Bill, 2007;*
- Appropriation Bill, 2007;*
- Maternal, New Born and Child welfare Health Services Bill, 2007;*
- Tobacco Smoking Bill, 2007;*
- Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (Amendment) Bill, 2007;*
- National Water Resources Development Bill, 2007;*
- National Building Code (Enforcement) Bill, 2008;*
- National Climate Change Commission Bill, 2008;*
- Student Union Activities (Control and Regulations) Amendment, 2008;*
- Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act (Amendment) Bill, 2008;*
- Desertification Control Commission Bill, 2008;*
- Prisons Bill, 2008;*
- Nigerians with Disability Bill, 2008;*
- Disaster Management Bill, 2008;*
- Legal Aid (Amendment) Bill, 2008;*
- Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy Implementation Bill, 2008; and*
- Robbery and Fire Arms (Special Provisions) (Amendment) BUI, 2008.*

3. *Honourable Members, your legislative activism was also demonstrated in the number of motions that were considered by the House. Altogether, we received 130 motions out of which 47 were considered and passed. Two of the motions were deferred; 4 were withdrawn; 9 were negatived; 30 were referred to Committees and 6 were reported out of Committees. The House also received 199 petitions from aggrieved Nigerians from all walks of life protesting their ill-treatment in the hands of government bodies, private companies and powerful individuals. The House has accordingly considered these petitions on their merit and recommended appropriate remedial measures. The resolutions of the House in this regard are clear evidence that the House is in touch with the yearnings and aspirations of the Nigerian people. Highlights of these motions include:*

Recent Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) and Trade Union Congress (TUC) industrial action vis-à-vis the on-going Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) strike;
 The Deplorable State of Benin-Ore Lagos Highways;
 Trapped Monies in failed and Un-recapitalized Banks;
 Gruesome Killing of a Nigerian Citizen — Mr Osamuyi Akpitanhi by Spanish Security Officers;
 Gradual Decay of Services provided by Global System Mobile Telecommunications (GSM) Network;
 Fire outbreak from Ruptured Pipelines belonging to Warri Refinery and Petrochemical Company in Ubeji, Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State;
 Deplorable State of Maiduguri and Kaduna International Airports and adverse effects on the Airlift of pilgrims from the Airport;
 Flood Disaster in parts of Wase Federal Constituency and 6 others Local Government Areas of Plateau State;
 Food Disaster in Anambra East/West Federal Constituency' of Anambra State;
 Urgent need for the Relocation of Ikot Ekpene Prison to its Permanent Site;
 Sale of Federal Government Houses;
 The sale of Ajaokuta Steel Company in Kogi State of Global Infrastructure (Nig.) Ltd;
 Unsatisfactory Practices in the Post-Consolidation Banking Industry;
 Revitalizing Nigeria's Textile Industry;
 Sale of Ajaokuta Steel Company In Kogi State to Global Infrastructure (Nig.) Ltd;
 Urgent Need to Review the Power Reform Programme Performance from 2000 till Date;
 Call for speedy action on the Resettlement plan for the Internally displaced people of Bakassi;
 Executive Interest Rates/Charges on Loans/services and other Unethical Practices in the Nigerian banking Industry;
 Anti Riot in a killing Spree and Arson attack in Ogaminana Town in Adavi Local Government Area of Kogi State;
 Food poisoning in Abwochichie - Bekwarra Local Government Area in Cross River State;
 State of Insecurity in the Country vis-a-vis Armed Robbery and Incessant Assassinations;
 Boat Mishap in Warri Dam between Bagwai and Badau Towns in Bagwai Local Government Area of Kano State;
 Rising Food prices and Threat to National food Security;
 Imminent Eruption of Lake Nyos;
 Upsurge in cases of Armed Robbery and Shooting of Nigerians in South Africa;
 Fire Disaster in Tarmuwa Local Government Area of Yobe State: a call for urgent assistance to the suffering victims;
 Call for speedy action on the evaluation/Rehabilitation of Lepers from our roads/highway; and
 Lingering land dispute and hostilities between Ibeagu and Ukella Communities of Ebonyi and Cross Rivers States respectively.

4. Another important aspect of our success story is the resolve of the House to ensure that leakages from the public purse are plugged. During the last Appropriation exercise for example, we ensured that all unspent allocations to Ministries, Departments and Agencies were returned to Public Coffers. In ensuring this, we led by example. The National Assembly as an institution returned over N7Billion unspent funds. Furthermore, we verified the existence of Special Accounts kept and operated by the Federal Government and captured same in the 2008 revenue profile. Through the due diligence of Honourable Members, the nation was saved about H500Billion in the last budget process alone. This solemn promise we have made to Nigerians: We have moved from the era of giving lip-service to issues of accountability, transparency and due process. We are now determined to walk the talk.

5. So much has been written on the investigative Hearings currently been conducted by the House. Let me quickly clarify once again that these Hearings are not witch-hunts targeted at any individual, interest or group. Instead, they are being undertaken in line with our Constitutional mandate as enshrined in Section 88 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. We cannot therefore, afford to abandon these patriotic exercises no matter the amount of blackmail and size of blackmailers. A situation where Billions of Naira of Taxpayers money meant for infrastructural development simply found its way into private pockets, is no longer acceptable. Our Hearings shall continue to be open to the Public just as we continue to interface with all stakeholders to deliver the dividends of participatory democracy to our people.

6. We have a date with history and we are determined to keep it. The Joint Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution (JCCR) presents such occasion. You will no doubt recall that the House on Thursday 24th April, 2008 resolved to review the 1999 Constitution with our Senate counterparts. The Constitution which is supposed to be the compass of our democratic journey is regrettably replete with anomalies, gaps and discrepancies. The House has therefore set upon itself the task of initiating the amendment process in line with Section 9 of the same Constitution. We call on Nigerians to be part of this historic exercise so that together, we shall craft a "Peoples' Constitution".

7. We have embarked on the reform of our Committee system. The objective of the reform is to refocus and reposition our Committees to effectively process legislation and undertake their oversight functions over Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). As you are probably aware, the Selection Committee which is the Midwife of all other Committees has been expanded and democratized. Membership of the Selection Committee now includes floor Members from the main political parties in the House. I wish to thank Honourable Members for their understanding while we go through the painstaking process of reconstituting our Committees. It is my hope that the era when Committees were "graveyards" for burying Bills and other referrals is gone for good. At this juncture, I wish to serve notice to Committee Chairs and Members that we shall embark on periodic reviews and evaluation of Committee performance in this dispensation. It is needless to add that we shall not hesitate to sanction under-performance.

8. In this task of nation-building, we are certainly not alone. We have friends, fellow-travelers and Compatriots from the other branches of Government. The courage exhibited by the Judiciary through its landmark judgments in the recent past has not escaped the attention of this Honourable House. We also wish to thank Mr President and Commander-in-Chief who is gradually entrenching a "rule-of-law" regime in our system. He refused to interfere in the legislative process even when it was tempting to do so. He has also ensured that Court Orders are promptly obeyed, no matter whose ox is gored. Let me place on record that because of Mr President's servant-leadership style, the polity is now enjoying an era of unprecedented cordiality in Executive-Legislative relations. Let me place on record that the successes recorded by the House would not have been possible without the tremendous professional support from the Clerk, Management and Staff of the House. Permit me also to thank our dear friends, members of the fourth realm of, the political estate, the Mass Media. We appreciate the partnership of all Civil Society Organizations and the vigilance of patriotic Nigerians whose support we enjoy. We salute you all.

9. Honourable Colleagues, I wish to seize this opportunity to briefly emphasize on the ethical conduct of Members, particularly as it pertains to attendance at Plenaries and Committee meetings. The Constitution is clear as to the number of sittings that an individual Member should attain within a Session. Moreover, this Honourable House also adopted a Code of Conduct for its Members on 4th November, 2004 where issues of morality, integrity and discipline on the part of Members were emphasized. This House shall therefore put in place adequate mechanisms to prevent, detect and sanction all cases of legislators who step out of our ethical guidelines.

10. Finally, I wish to seize this opportunity to pay tribute to our fallen colleagues who only recently shared the abiding desire and dream of a progressive Nigeria with us. These Patriots have been unfortunately snatched by the cold hands of untimely death. The memories of Hon. (Dr) Aminu Safana, Hon. Moses Olusegun Oladimeji and Hon. (Col.) Joe Anota remain evergreen in our minds. May their gentle souls rest in the bosom of their Maker. It is my firm belief that the best tribute to pay to these gentlemen is to continue to offer qualitative leadership to our fatherland.

Thank you all for listening and may God bless you all.

10. Adjournment:

That this House do adjourn till 1.00 p.m. This Day, Wednesday, 4 June, 2008 (Hon. Tunde Akogun).

Adjourned accordingly at 12.51 p.m.

Usman Bayero Nafada
Deputy Speaker