



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 4 June, 2009

1. The House met at 10.51 a.m. Mr Speaker read Prayers.
2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
Mr Speaker announced that he had examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 3 June, 2009.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings was adopted.

3. **Matter of Urgent Public Importance:**
Rising on Order VIII Rule 4, of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives, Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume referred to the Nigeria's Democracy in the last ten years and expressed concern over the events that marked the ten years of Democracy in the country.

He therefore urged the House to consider the matter as one of Urgent Public Importance.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance, put and negatived.

4. **Special Session of the House of Representatives:**
Motion made and Question proposed,

The House:

In view of the fact that the Legislature can best function when it has requisite institutional capacity, memory and linkages;

Recognizing the high turnover rate of the membership of the House of Representatives and consequent loss of such valuable experiences, skills and veritable knowledge bank;

Determined to further consolidate the gains of the current democratic process in Nigeria;

Resolves to:

Urge the current leadership of the House to take all steps to further strengthen legislative capacity by institutionalizing this initiative of building one family of Honorable Members of the House of Representatives of both serving and past members by using such platform to forge and develop a huge pool of legislative resource (*Hon. Tunde Akogun and 10 others*).

Debate:

Amendments Proposed:

- (a) *Insert a new Prayer (ii) as follows:*
"Have this kind of gathering between the serving and past Members of the House of Representatives annually" (*Hon. Aminu Shehu Shagari*).

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

(b) *Insert a new Prayer (iii) as follows:*

"Commend the mass-media for partnering with the Legislature so far and call for greater interaction and understanding between the two bodies in order to deepen our democracy (Hon Chile Igbawua).

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

Main Question as amended, put and agreed to.

The House:

In view of the fact that the Legislature can best function when it had requisite institutional capacity, memory and linkages;

Recognized the high turnover rate of the membership of the House of Representatives and consequent loss of such valuable experiences, skills and veritable knowledge bank;

Determined to further consolidate the gains of the current democratic process in Nigeria;

Resolved to:

- (i) *Urge the current leadership of the House to take all steps to further strengthen legislative capacity by institutionalizing this initiative of building one family of Honuorable Members of the House of Representatives of both serving and past members by using such platform to forge and develop a huge pool of legislative resource.*
- (ii) *Have this kind of gathering between the serving and past Members of the House of Representatives annually;*
- (iii) *Commend the mass-media for partnering with the Legislature so far and call for greater interaction and understanding between the two bodies in order to deepen our democracy (HR. 38/2009).*

5. Admittance into Chamber:

Motion made and Question proposed, "That pursuant to Order XV, Rule 9, the House do admit to its Chamber, former Speakers, former Deputy Speakers and former Members of the House of Representatives in commemoration of the tenth anniversary of Democracy in Nigeria" (Hon. Tunde Akogun).

Question put and agreed to.

6. 10th Anniversary of Democracy in Nigeria;

Hon. Speaker's Address:

It is my pleasure to welcome to this hallowed Chamber, eminent Nigerians who have distinguished themselves in the service of this country through the portals of the Legislature. It is by the grace of God that we have all assembled here to mark 10 years of sustained democracy in Nigeria, an event that calls for deep reflections and sobriety against the backdrop of the history of Nigeria's political development.

In our midst today, are distinguished Nigerians, pace-setters they are, who at various times in our legislative history, carried the burden of presiding and managing the affairs of this honourable House. My profound thanks to them for honoring our invitation to join us today and participate in activities to mark 10 years of sustained legislative growth and development in Nigeria.

Democracy has been defined as the government of the people, by the people and for the people. Representative government in Nigeria dates back to 1951 under the McPherson Constitution, and the Lyttelton Constitution of 1954. It is regrettable and indeed unfortunate, that democracy, as a popular and acceptable system of government lasted for only six years from 1960 on Nigeria's attainment of independence, to 1966 when the military terminated the democratic process. It is also sad to note that attempts at democratic governance to give the people of Nigeria the opportunity to elect their own leaders had suffered severe setbacks such that 49 years after Nigeria became a sovereign nation, the people of this country experienced only a combined period of 20 years of truncated democratic governments elected by the people. It is common knowledge that the absence of democracy in Nigeria for 29 years as a result of the inability of the people to elect their own governments, and it was not their fault, has adversely affected the growth and development of democratic institutions and the Legislature, particularly.

*10 years of sustained democracy and legislative growth in Nigeria calls for **cheers and celebrations**. During this period, the House of Representatives has worked tirelessly to preserve the unity of this country and promote the well-being of its people. May I, therefore, seize the opportunity offered by this occasion to congratulate the people of this country for their resilience, patriotism and support for democratic ideals. May I also on this historic occasion, congratulate our colleagues, past and present through whose efforts democracy has come to stay.*

As the peoples' representatives, the House of Representatives is committed to building a land of freedom and equal opportunities in which no man is oppressed. It is our resolve, in the words of Longfellow to "make our lives sublime, and departing, leave our footprints in the sands of time".

Long live the House of Representatives!

Long live the National Assembly!!

Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!

(See Verbatim Report of the Day for the Speeches of Leaders of the House and former Speakers)

7. Adjournment:

And it being 2.38 p.m. the House adjourned till Tuesday, 23 June, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Dimeji Sabur Bankole
Speaker