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**Thursday
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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES

FOURTH REPUBLIC THIRD ASSEMBLY (SIXTH SENATE)

THIRD SESSION

SENATE OFFICIAL REPORT

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**SENATE OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Thursday, 24th June, 2010

The Senate met at 10.40 a.m.

PRAYERS

(The President in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The President: Distinguished Senators, we have the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 23rd June, 2010 before us for approval: Pages 9, 10, 11, 12, 13.

Senator Dahiru Kuta (Niger East): Mr. President, on page 13 in the item dealing with, (*SENATE IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE*) he said: *Consideration of the Request of Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation on the screening of nominees as Chairman and Commissioners in the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).* In other area they would say *of the Independent National Electoral Commission.* I do not know exactly which one to take; we should be consistent. *As Chairman and Commissioners in the Independent National Electoral Commission;* before now they were saying *of the Independent National Electoral Commission.* I do not know the one that is more appropriate.

The President: Grammatically, the correct one should be *of*, therefore it should be *of*. Secretariat please take note.

We are now on page 14.

Senator Munirudeen Adekunle Muse (Lagos Central): Mr. President, I move that the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 23rd June, 2010 be approved as amended.

Senator Festus Olabode (Ekiti Central): Mr. President, I second the Motion that the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 23rd June, 2010 be approved as amended.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 23rd June, 2010 be approved as amended.

ANNOUCEMENT

Visit by the Staff and Students of Olumawo Basic Education School, Wuse II, Abuja

The President: I wish to acknowledge the presence of the Staff and Students of Olumawo Basic Education School, Wuse II, Abuja who are in the Gallery to observe our Senate proceedings. We wish them fruitful observation of our proceedings today. (*The visitors stood for recognition*).

Good morning and please sit down.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Senator Ike Ekweremadu (Enugu West): Mr. President, I have a Point of Order.

The President: Point of Order, Senator Ike Ekweremadu, CFR.

Senator Ike Ekweremadu: Mr. President, I rise, under Order 43 of the Senate Standing Orders. If I have your permission your Excellency, I will read.

The President: Please, read.

Senator Ike Ekweremadu: Order 43 reads: *By the indulgence of the Senate and the leave of the President of the Senate, a Senator may make a Personal Explanation although there be no question before the Senate; but no controversial matter may be brought forward nor may debate arise upon the Explanation. The terms of the proposed statement shall be submitted in detail to the President of the Senate when his leave to make it is sought.*

Distinguished Colleagues, yesterday the Media, both print and electronics reported that the House of Representatives directed the Clerk of the National Assembly (CNA) to withdraw the document sent to them which exactly reflects the harmonised version of the Constitutional Amendment and to replace it with another one. I have received a number of calls from my Colleagues and the general public and I want to use this opportunity to explain that I believe it was a mistake on the part of the House of Representatives.

I would like to reassure our Colleagues here and, indeed, Nigerians that what was sent to the respective Houses of Assembly reflects the harmonised version of the Bill to amend the 1999 Constitution.

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Some papers had said that Senate sent a doctored document; again I want to say that it is not true. What was sent to the Houses of Assembly reflects essentially and in all material particular, the harmonised version of the Bill for an Act to amend the 1999 Constitution.

If you permit me your Excellency, I have a file that was distributed to all State Speakers. It contains three sets of documents. The first is the Report of the Conference Committee on the Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and for Other Matters Connected Thereto 2010; dated June, 2010. That file also contains A Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 and for Other Matters Connected Thereto 2010, harmonised; dated June 2010.

The third document is a comprehensive Report in five columns. The first column is the provision of the Constitution; the Principal Act. The second column is the Senate Bill as passed; the third column is the House of Representatives Bill as passed. The fourth column is the harmonised version and the last which is the fifth is the Remarks.

If there is any confusion at any point, I believe it was deliberate and intended to frustrate this exercise. I have also tried to contact our Colleagues from the House of Representatives and the explanation we got was that there was a publication from the Lagos State House of Assembly and in that publication it was headed the Senate Bill. Assuming that is true, it must be a mistake either from the Clerk of Lagos State House of Assembly or from the publishers and I believe that the body of that document will contain just the harmonised version.

I needed to explain this so that our Colleagues would be reassured that what is being debated in the various Houses of Assembly reflects the harmonised version of the Bill as passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Finally, let me use this opportunity on your behalf to congratulate the Kogi State House of Assembly for being the first Assembly to pass the Bill for an Act to Amend the 1999 Constitution.

The President: Thank you very much. What is going on in the Media now is rather unfortunate. I think it would have been handled in a matured manner. There was absolutely no need for anybody

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to go to the Press to ask that what was handed over to the State Houses of Assembly should be withdrawn. The Deputy Senate President is in charge of the Constitutional amendment here in the Senate and the Deputy Speaker is also the Chairman in the House of Representatives and we were all there.

It was not only that we read out the various sections that were amended, because I know that the Deputy Senate President gave detailed explanations on the sections that were amended. However, to ensure that nothing is being done in a manner that would give an impression that we were hiding anything, the various positions of the two Houses were also compiled and given to the State Houses of Assembly in addition to the Harmonised Version. I think that this is the height of mischief and anybody who is going on saying that they should withdraw whatever has been sent to the State Houses of Assembly is certainly not saying the correct thing. They would not be withdrawn and I advise that those who have documents must endeavour to read them.

Every State House of Assembly was given a comprehensive file containing the Harmonised Version and the stand of both Houses just like the Deputy Senate President has said. This was just to make sure that we are running an open exercise. I do not understand how anybody would have gone to the Press on this. Truly, a more mature way would have been to call either the Deputy Senate President or the Deputy Speaker to first of all find out from them and leave what any State House of Assembly has decided to publish. That would have been the correct thing rather than just see one publication and then begin to order the withdrawal of the document.

For the future, we must learn how to work as a team and if there are areas that people are not very clear, we can resolve them internally here; but going to the Media is not a solution to it. We sent the correct and harmonised version to the State Houses of Assembly and we urge them to work on those documents. A House has already passed its own and I cannot see how somebody would be saying that the Senate sent only the Senate version. No where did the Senate send the Senate version. I handed the documents over to them symbolically because we got the Chairman of the Speakers to receive a set of the documents from me and they were very comprehensive.

I thank you very much, the Deputy Senate President for your explanation.

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PRESENTATION OF A REPORT

Report of the Committee on Drugs, Narcotics, Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption on the Money Laundering Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2010

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Mr. President, the first business of the day is the presentation of the Report of the Committee on Drugs, Narcotics, Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption on the Money Laundering Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2010.

You may invite the Chairman of that Committee, Senator Sola Akinyede to move the Motion for the Senate to receive the Report.

Senator Sola Akinyede (Ekiti South): Mr. President, I rise to move the Motion that the Senate do receive the Report of the Committee on Drugs, Narcotics, Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption on the Money Laundering Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2010.

Senator Osita B. Izunaso (Imo West): Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion that the Senate do receive the Report of the Committee on Drugs, Narcotics, Financial Crimes and Anti-Corruption on the Money Laundering Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2010.

Question put and agreed to.

(Report accordingly laid on the Table)

ORDER OF THE DAY

CONFIRMATION OF NOMINATIONS

Screening of the Chairman and National Electoral Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC)

Senator Teslim Folarin: Mr. President, the second business of the day is the Motion requesting the Senate to resume the screening of the persons listed on the Order Paper as the National Electoral Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC).

You may also recall that the Senate yesterday completed the screening of Prof. Attahiru Jega as the nominee for appointment as Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission. The

Senate would now resume the screening of the remaining nominees.

In order to carry out this exercise, I now move that this Senate do resolve into the Committee of the Whole to conduct the confirmation hearing.

Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion as moved by the Senate Leader that this Senate do resolve into Committee of the Whole to enable us resume the screening of nominees for INEC.

Question put and agreed to.

Request of Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief for confirmation of persons as Chairman and Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) – *CONSIDERED IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE*

Senator Teslim Folarin: Mr. Chairman, pursuant to Order 17, I now move that this Senate do now admit the Nominees and the Special Adviser to the President on the National Assembly Matters to the Senate Chamber.

Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora: Mr. Chairman, pursuant to Order 17, I second the Motion as moved by the Senate Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

The Chairman: What we are going to do is that because we have six of them, if you do not ask one person, you would have a chance to ask, at least, another person along the line. We would try to be as thorough and detailed as possible, but if you do not have the opportunity to ask one person, you will have the opportunity to ask some other persons. Everybody here would have an opportunity to ask question.

(Engr. (Dr.) Nuru Alhaji Yakubu appeared before the Senate)

Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu, what I want you to do is to give us a bit of your background; we have your CV already. If there is something you ought to have put in the CV which you did not put or anything in the CV that you want to emphasise just to assist us to assess you properly, tell us very briefly. There is no point in going through the entire CV. Your answers should be brief and direct to the point.

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Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu: The Senate President, other Principal Officers of this distinguished Senate, distinguished Senators, my name is Nuru Yakubu. I was born some 53 years ago at Umuru in Yobe State. I did my primary and secondary education in that State. After that, I was at the Ahmadu Bello University, School of Basic Studies from where I won a scholarship to travel to the United Kingdom to study Engineering. I graduated in 1979, came back to Nigeria, did my National Service, I taught in the Kaduna Polytechnic for one year at the end of which I won another scholarship. I went back to the United Kingdom to do a Masters Degree. After that, I joined the services of the then Federal University of Technology, Bauchi, as a member of the academic faculty. After working for another year, I went back to the United Kingdom to the Imperial College of Science and Technology in London to do a Doctorate in Engineering. I completed in 1986, returned to my academic responsibilities at the University and progressed steadily until 1990 when I became a Senior Lecturer at the University.

Later, during that year, I was appointed the pioneer Director of the College of Engineering in Kaduna Polytechnic. In 1992, I also became the Deputy Rector Administration of that Polytechnic, a position which I held concurrently with the Directorship of the College of Engineering. In 1996, I became the Rector of the Polytechnic, a position I also held for four years before my last appointment as the Executive Secretary of the National Board for Technical Education, a position I held for ten years completing two full terms.

What is probably not highlighted in the CV are some of the activities I did both in and out of school. I was Head of Students at the Government College, Maiduguri in 1975. I also have a scholarship scheme in my Local Government where I support indigent students to gain admission particularly in the Kaduna Polytechnic; this I have been doing for the last three years. At present, I have under my sponsorship about 65 students from my Local Government.

Professionally, I also did a few things outside. I was the Vice President for the Council for Regulation of Engineering for three years.

Senator Nuhu Aliyu (Niger North): Thank you Mr. Chairman, my distinguished Colleagues and the nominee, yesterday was a very busy and long day. I believe you must have witnessed probably on the television the number of questions put before your Chairman. In particular, I was very concerned about

an area which I still want an elaboration from you and this has to do with the voters registration. If you remember very clearly, it has been a very thorny issue through all the previous elections we have had. You find a voter registered in Area A, and then his name will feature in a very far away area from him and this had kept on repeating itself.

Your Chairman was asked yesterday but I am sure that since he mentioned that it is a team work including yourself and it is a work that is very important for the success of 2011 elections, I would want your own contribution in this regard. How best are you going to make sure that this problem is really eliminated?

The second question is in the area of complaints from Nigerians in respect of INEC. A number of times, so many Professors headed the Commission and the thing kept on coming again and again; that is the question of integrity. Are you going to give us an assurance like the Chairman did yesterday on the belief by Nigerians that this is the right team and that we have now arrived. Is it going to be so?

Senator Satty Davis Gogwim (Plateau Central): The nominee, I have gone through your CV and no doubt you have been in the academia throughout your life. Given the opportunity to serve in the capacity that Mr. President has chosen you, we assume that you are apolitical. How would you convince us that when you get there you will not have sympathy for any particular candidate or political party?

Secondly, would you in all honesty when given the opportunity, serve conscientiously to change the perception of Nigerians about the activities of INEC as it were for the betterment of that organisation?

Senator Uche Chukwumerije (Abia North): From your Curriculum Vitae I find that you have one of the most expensive hopefully intensive experience in administration for almost 48 bodies, you have always being at the head or a member of the Governing Board and I believe that your administrative experience will be very useful to INEC.

My question is that a troublesome administrative lapse in INEC in every election is inefficient distribution of polling materials and this occurs in every election. From your rich administrative experience please can we share from you some useful ideas how you think you can correct this.

The Chairman: Doctor, answer these ones first.

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Engr. (Dr.) Nuhu A. Yakubu: Mr. Chairman, the first question was from the distinguished Senator Nuhu Aliyu on the issue of voter registration on how best to tackle it. I have no doubt in my mind that voter registration is as important as the actual election itself. Indeed, it can be characterised as the gateway to free and fair elections and the Commission will have to tackle headlong the issue of ensuring a credible voter registration. If cleared by this distinguished Senate, what I will do, working with my Colleagues in the Commission is to look at all the options, get the few briefings and take the best decisions that in our opinion will lead to the emergence of a credible voter registration.

The second question from the distinguished Senator was the complaints about the issue of integrity. Distinguished Senators, I have worked in the public service for nearly 30 years now. From the classroom as an Academic Lecturer, as a Researcher to Academic Administration, to a Professional Engineer and a Member of the highest decision making body as far as professional engineering is concerned; and I worked over the last 10 years as the regulator of the entire Technical and Vocational Educational Sector in this country. This is a conglomerate of institutions amounting to over 350. I think it is indication that one has reasonably performed well in the various assignments and I think it is an indication that given the opportunity from the records that I have established over the 30 years, I assure you that we will discharge this responsibility with the highest level of integrity and dedication.

I might also add that as an acknowledgement of our effort and integrity with which one has held these previous public offices, I was awarded the National Honour of the Officer of the Order of the Niger in 2003.

The third question from the distinguished Senator Gogwim was that there is an assumption that I am apolitical; and it is true. Throughout my academic career as an Engineer, I have never been a partisan politician. Of course, as an academician I have had a lot of experiences in what you might call academic politics because I was the first Secretary of the Academic Staff Union of the then Federal University of Technology Chapter in Bauchi. I contested and won election from the congregation as a member of the governing council. I can assure you, Sir, if confirmed, having spent 30 years as a non partisan politician at this stage in my life I have no reason whatsoever to give preference to any candidate and I pledge that I will remain apolitical as I have always been throughout my academic career.

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I also pledge that I will continue in the same conscientious manner to change the perceptions that Nigerians have for INEC; but this issue of perception is not just an issue for the Commission, I think it is a national issue. All the stakeholders, the Government, the National Assembly, the Political Parties, the NGOs, the Face-based organizations must all participate in this change of perception in our INEC. I believe that we have a team and that given the changes on the horizon in terms of the Constitution and the laws affecting INEC I think this is probably one of the best teams and we should be able to give Nigerians the best democracy dividend in terms of credible, free and fair elections.

Most distinguished Senator Uche Chukwumerije talked about issues of logistics; the issue of inefficient distribution of polling materials. I would like to believe that as somebody who has come through academia administration at the college level in the tertiary institutions, heading the institution and also being the Executive Secretary over the last 10 years, I have gathered a lot of experience in management of logistic matters.

As a Professional Engineer, once we get the full briefing and look at the areas where there are gaps, I can assure you that we will deploy all our professional skills to ensure that the issue of inefficient distribution of materials remains a thing of the past.

Thank you, Sir.

Senator Odion M. Ugbesia (Edo Central): My Engineer, in every INEC office in Nigeria today, there are two sets of Registers; one that was done electronically and the other one manually. Do you think we are ready for e-voting in this country?

Secondly, do you think that the time at your disposal you have enough time to organize a credible election for this country?

Senator Sulaiman Mohammed Nazif (Bauchi North): Engineer Nuhu Yakubu, certainly if you do get confirmed by this distinguished Senate and you become one of the Commissioners in the INEC, you certainly will be meeting with the Senate Committee on Electoral Matters. What would be your special priority when you do meet with them?

I also want to say that over the years, the Senate Committee on Electoral Matters has always met with the staff of the INEC. Would you be in agreement that there should be a fixed number of appearances

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quarterly by the INEC, or should it be impromptu invitations by the Committee; and why should that be?

Senator Sidi Ali (FCT): Engineer Nuhu, in 1998 you were the Chairman of Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Management Committee. During this year you were in the University, I believe there were a lot of grudges on your actions that you were selfish, favoritism and most of the staff were not really very happy with your management then. Would you want to accept it and confirm; and how do you convince us that these groaning and grudges would not go along with you to INEC, if you are confirmed?

The Chairman: Doctor Nuhu, answer those questions.

Engr. Yakubu Nuhu: Mr. Senate President, the first question was on the two sets of Registers that were said to be available in INEC, the Electronic and the Manual. As I said Sir, I think it is best if confirmed by the Senate, to interact extensively with the management of INEC on the ground to do thorough investigation and analysis of these two sets of Register that are said to exist and to map out strategies in order to harmonize and bring out the best and the credible Voters Register.

As I said, it is my belief that a credible Voters Register is the gateway to a free and fair election. We would sit down as a Commission, get the briefing, look at those Registers and take the best decision on how to move forward.

With regard to the issue of time to organize credible elections in this country, the role of the Commission is predicated on the provisions of the Law. The Electoral Act is very clear and it gives guidelines on how to conduct credible elections in this country. As a Commissioner if confirmed by the Senate, I would work together with the Chairman and my Colleagues to ensure that we implement the provisions of the Reform Act to the latter.

The Second question was from Distinguished Senator Sulaiman Nazif. He wants to know about our priorities when we eventually meet after confirmation by the INEC Senate Committee. I think the major priorities I would want to agree with the Chairman designate of INEC are that there are probably three high priority areas on the Agenda of INEC. The issue of Voters Register is very important. The issue of the staff of INEC on the ground and the need to reinvigorate and ensure that we have highly motivated staff on the ground and the issue of the conduct of election itself.

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The distinguished Senator also asked whether there should be some periodic agreed meetings such as quarterly or other meetings that can come as and when necessary. Personally, I have no objection to such periodic meetings with the Committee because that allows us time to prepare and for the staff of the Commission to also interact with the Commissioners and bring out issues that would be discussed. But I think that should not also preclude meetings according to exigencies and the Commission should be prepared to meet with the Senate Committee on INEC as and when necessary.

The third question is from distinguished Senator Sidi Ali of the Federal Capital Territory.

He made reference to the fact that in 1988, I was Chairman of the Works and Services Management Committee as well as the Petrol Station Management Committee. Indeed, it was a very challenging work. In fact, it was a work that I reluctantly accepted. As the distinguished Senator would recall, those were very tough years of austerity and very low level of funding. It was therefore, very difficult to meet all the issues and the complaints of all the academic and non academic staff that were brought before the Works and Services Management Committee. But I believe that I did my best and it was a remarkable improvement on what existed before. We had no water services at the University and we took measures to make sure that there was adequate water supply within the Campus of the University. We made sure that all our facilities like the generating sets and so on that were needed were available. We were able to contact our practical works and experiments as at when due.

Naturally some people might have held some grudges but I can assure you that this is a normal thing to expect when you have demands and there are limitations in resources, but we did our best. My subsequent career progression has proved that I take particular pride in the fact that throughout my career, I have tried to be above board. I have tried to take decisions that were not based on favouritism, nepotism and things like that.

Senator Suleiman Adokwe (Nasarawa South): Mr. Chairman, I have two questions for the nominee. First, going through your Curriculum Vitae, we noticed that you schooled abroad and you have worked mostly in the academia. In your admission, you said that the closest brush you had with politics was the politics in the Campus. But as a Nigerian, you must have been exposed to the electoral process,

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either as a voter or as an observer of what has been going on in the country. Apparently, you are bringing only experience from the classroom. What is your impression of the electoral process in Nigeria and what do you have in mind to either improve upon what you have observed? In short, what is the vision that you would bring to the Commission?

Secondly, most of the nominees would always tell us that they promise to exhibit some level of integrity, but we know that there is a gap between the Commissioners who sit in Abuja, and what is happening in the field during election. In all electoral processes, elections are supposed to be won and lost at the polling units, but very often you would discover that there are discrepancies between the records at the polling units and what are finally announced as the final results. It is to that extent that very often the INEC is reluctant to bring out their records during litigations. I want you to tell us how you would ensure that the electoral processes at the polling units would be credible enough to ensure that the final results that would be out would tally with what was obtained at the polling units.

Senator Ayogu Eze (Enugu North): Mr. Chairman, our dear nominee, looking at your records I can see that you were one time Secretary of the University Committee on brain drain in 1998. I want to ask you a question in relation to the debate about the desirability or the necessity of giving Nigerians who live abroad an opportunity to exercise their franchise by having infrastructure where ever they are to vote for candidates of their choice. If you are confirmed, would you in conjunction with other members of the Commission come up with a strategy that would ensure within the shortest possible time that Nigerians where ever they live can participate in elections in Nigeria as is done in other countries?

Senator Mahmud Kanti Bello (Katsina North): Mr. Nominee, I just want to know what really your name is. This is because looking at what is on the Curriculum Vitae, you are called Engineer (Dr.) Nura A. Yakubu and in your NYSC Certificate you are Yakubu Nura Alhaji. In Council of Registered Engineers you are Nura Alhaji Yakubu, and in Nigerian Association of Teachers of Technology you are Engineer (Dr.) Nura Yakubu. So, which is which? I am an old man and an old Engineer, so I am confused.

Secondly, you people normally pay tax but I have not seen your Tax Clearance.

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The Chairman: All right, Doctor, answer these ones.

Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu: The Senate President, the first question is from the distinguished Senator representing Nasarawa South on how to improve what is on the ground. I would like to say here is that I come with an experience of more than one decade as a regulator. We have been able to regulate successfully over the past decade the entire Technical and Vocational Education Sector; and the responsibilities are similar, and they include to prepare, conduct, analyse and monitor application visits to over 350 Institutions. I think this decade of experience would result into what we actually see on the ground at the Commission.

As I said, after full briefing, we would look at the problems, the issues and bring decades of our experiences on how to improve the situation on the ground. But this requires the full participation of all the stakeholders. It is important for the Commission to as soon as possible interact and engage with all the stakeholders and come up with perhaps some code of conduct on how to improve the situation. This is because I believe that there is absolute unanimity in the country that the elections must be credible, free and fair.

The gap between what happens in Abuja has also been mentioned by a distinguished Senator on those on the ground. Indeed, I believe that the Resident Electoral Commissioners in the States can be characterised as the foot soldiers of the Commission. So, it is important that once confirmed there must be full interaction with the Resident Electoral Commissioners. We must be on the same page with them. In other words, whatever the Commission agrees must be done in total agreement with the Resident Electoral Commissioners because they are the foot soldiers of the Commission at various State levels.

The second question was on the fact that I was once Secretary of the University Committee on brain drain at the then Federal University of Technology (which is now the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University). Indeed, I was and it was a very challenging and very interesting experience because that was the period when the university system lost a lot of very valuable staff and brains. As major stakeholders of the Commission, the political parties and all the other stakeholders should agree on the issue of Nigerians being able to vote from wherever

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they are. This should be given due consideration. If confirmed, I intend to work along with the Chairman and my Colleague Commissioners to come up with a strategy for this process.

Distinguished Senator Kanti Bello has mentioned first about the issue of my name. My name is Nuru Alhaji Yakubu but my distinguished Senator is aware there are variations on my name in Nuru. Some people call it Nura and some people mistakenly call it Nuhu.

On what do I do for INEC, as I said, I have regulated the Technical and Vocational Education sector for the last ten decades and we have made a lot of progress. The job of a regulator is essentially an independent empire; and that is what INEC does. I believe that this experience I have gathered will help me tremendously if confirmed to ensure that we deliver credible, free and fair elections to Nigerians.

Thank you Sir.

The Chairman: Is the wish of the distinguished Senate that Engr. Dr. Nuru A. Yakubu take a bow and go.

Several distinguished Senators: Yes.

The Chairman: Engr. Dr. Nuru Yakubu, you may bow and go.

(Engr. Dr. Nuru A. Yakubu took a bow and withdrew from the Chamber)

The Chairman: The next person is Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren

(Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren Appeared Before the Senate)

The Chairman: Mrs. Thelma Iremiren, just tell us briefly if there is anything that you want us to know. We have your CV already but if there is any additional thing you want us to know or any particular area you want us to know in your CV then let us know.

Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren: Actually, I cannot think of anything in particular because I have tried to curve out the grounds as much as I can in my CV. I retired in 2005 and I have not been doing much since then.

Senator Anyim C. Ude (Ebonyi South): Madam, you must have read one or two papers this

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morning where the Chairman-designate of INEC said he was not for sale; that was a reaction to a question on corruption we asked him yesterday. Sometimes, ladies are said to be immune to it but we have seen evidence to the contrary. Part of the problem in INEC is corruption from the ward level up to the centre. I will like to know your thoughts on how to curb or eliminate the corruption in the system. Do you also think that posting Resident Electoral Commissioners to their States of origin where if they become corrupt they will easily be stoned will help the system?

Senator Simeon Olasunkanmi Oduoye (Osun Central): Mr. Chairman, my question is going to be predicated on corruption. The bane of this society is on corruption and we want to have a free, fair and acceptable election. It must be corrupt free and the corruption starts from the registration itself up to the polling booth and may end up or very closely at Resident Electoral Commission in the States. What do you think that you have in the kitty to curb the menace of corruption bearing in mind your previous experience when you serve as part of the Commission that controls internal security agencies in this country?

Senator Annie Okonkwo (Anambra Central): Madam, you may have heard that the President has been saying on three or four different occasions that he wants to conduct free, fair and credible election; and today you have been nominated to be part of the Commissioners to conduct this particular election. From your opinion, what will you do to support the idea Mr. President has? As I am seeing you today, you may have more than 10,000 staff and how would you imbibe that idea to other staff to have that singular idea that this election should be free, fair and credible?

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Madam, I think there is a bit of discrepancy in your CV. It says that you obtained LLB (Hons). in 2001, but if you look at your certificate from University of Abuja, it says 2004. That is the number one issue I want you to clarify. Secondly, I just think that I should widen the questions asked by my Colleagues; they talked about corruption. In your own view, I am sure that you have observed quite a number of elections in this country. What are the problems or challenges that you think we have that we cannot conduct a free and fair election in this country?

The Chairman: Answer these questions.

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Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren: Thank you very much Sir. On the first question on elimination of corruption in INEC, we have quite a number of bodies and agencies in place to tackle the issue of corruption. The problem that we really face is when people are found wanting, they are not made to face the music. In INEC, we make it a point of responsibility to ensure that when any person is found wanting, he should face the music. When people know that they have to account for their actions, I think there would be less corruption in the society.

On the issue of posting of Commissioners to States other than their State of origin, on moral ground, I think that is what it should be because the tendency is that if you are posted to your State of origin, there will be a lot of pressures on you to do what you would not want to do and except you are a very strong character, there is a tendency to succumb. So, it makes a very good sense as far as I am concerned to post people outside their States of origin.

The second question is also on corruption, it is a difficult situation. Everyday, we talk about corruption. We really have to make a conscious efforts to curb corruption and the bottom line as far as I think is that people must answer for what they do. If you are caught and found wanting, you should face the music. When an example is made of one person, others will take a queue from there. It is not something that we can attack over night but we have to start from somewhere. Once an officer is found wanting, the person should be handed over to the Police and Police should prosecute. But what I have noticed over time is, when people are found wanting, like we hear of people snatching ballot boxes and they get away with it. If they go to court because it is an offence and they are sentenced to imprisonment, next time they will not do it. People have to be accountable for their actions, I think it is the way forward.

The President wants to have a free, fair and credible election, and I think that is fair because the whole world is saying that you cannot trust Nigeria about free, fair and credible election. I think we can do it but it is not INEC alone that can do it everybody has a responsibility. I know that part of the functions of INEC is to carry out voter education and civic responsibility but parties also have a responsibility to educate their people that they should do the right thing. People should register when they are supposed to register. INEC should make it easy for people to register as voters. Of course, it is a continuous

exercise. So, when people register, they know where to go and vote and we expect the Law Enforcement Agencies to play their part by ensuring that things are orderly for us to have a free and fair election.

On my credentials, I actually finished the programme in August, 2001 and that was when I did my final examination. But for some strange reasons, when I went to collect my certificate just before I was to be called to the Bar, it was reading 2004 but because I was not really going to do anything with it and I did not really have the time, I did not contest it, so, I just left it. But the truth is that I finished in 2001. The University have to explain how they came about 2004. Maybe that was when the result went to Senate, I do not know. I did not contest it because I just did not bother.

Senator George Akume (Benue North-West): It has been stated that leadership in Nigeria is not accountable to the people principally because they believe rightly or wrongly that they were not voted into office by the people. Do you share this view?

Secondly, Mr. Cameron, then opposition leader of the British Parliament and now the Prime Minister of Britain was making some comments on the Afghan Elections and he said: *Afghan Elections are as fraudulent and useless as elections in Nigeria*. You are one of us. This is a very strong indictment. Do you believe that you along with others can put in place measures that can really make the British Prime Minister to reverse the statement that he made?

Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan (Yobe North): Mr. Chairman, I will wait for the next nominee because I did not raise my hands.

Senator Adegbo Erhiawarie Eferakeya (Delta Central): Madam Nominee, you are aware there many departments in INEC and considering your qualifications and background, in what departments do you think you will be most suitable to head? Can you identify some of the problems in those departments and proffer solutions?

Senator Andrew Abidemi Babalola (Oyo North): Mr. Chairman, it is going to be a very difficult pressure for me this morning to ask the nominee questions.

The Chairman: If it is difficult for you, then do not do it.

Senator Andrew Abidemi Babalola: I will do it because even though we agreed that this is not a

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praise singing situation, but the woman standing in front of us today is supposed to be my second mother. Every human being has a natural mother and you have one that brought you up in life. When I started working, I was posted into her hands and she nurtured me for 15 good years.

Several Senators: You have an interest and you have declared it. You can take your seat.

(Senator Andrew Abidemi Babalola withdrew from questioning)

Senator Mohammed A. Mohammed (Bauchi Central): Madam, you have a very interesting career in the Public Service. You retired as a Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Internal Affairs in 2005. I am a bit bewildered that you have not been doing anything since your retirement. Does it mean that you are not sitting on any Board or not even helping the community or your Delta State Government on some Committees and so on? This is because if somebody who has retired at that level, one would have expected a lot of commitments and services to the community. This is my only question because the INEC responsibility is going to be a very hectic one, and of course if someone who have retired since 2005, not doing much, then how do you catch up with the rigorous responsibility ahead of you.

The Chairman: All right, answers those ones.

Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren: Mr. Chairman, I do not agree that leadership is not accountable; otherwise it seizes the whole purpose of democracy. A leader is supposed to represent the interest of the people he governs and he is supposed to be elected by those people through the ballot box, so he is accountable to the people who put him in office.

On David Cameron's statement, he is entitled to his own opinion, I do not think Nigeria is as bad as Afghanistan and I think it is unfair to put Nigeria on the same plane with Afghanistan. Yes, granted that we are not perfect, we are still in the process of perfecting the democratic process, but that is not to say we scored zero. I think we have done quite well and there is still a lot of room for improvement.

On INEC departments, I must confess I have never been to INEC, I do not know what the structure is, but on getting there, we will find out. I do not think I have the power to decide which department I want to work. As a Civil Service, I started my career as an Administrative Officer, and you could be

posted anywhere to work, you are supposed to go there and make a success of what you are doing and that is the training I had.

Actually, I went to the Law School after I retired in 2005. I was called to the Nigerian Bar in 2007, so 2008, 2009 I was not doing much, but occasionally I was invited by the Head of Service to deliver papers at workshops or something; otherwise, I have been very busy with my grand children.

The Chairman: Is it the wish of the Senate to ask her to take a bow and go.

Several distinguished Senators: Yes.

The Chairman: Madam, take a bow.

(Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren accordingly took a bow and withdrew from the Chamber)

(Prof. Olayiwola Olurode Appeared Before the Senate)

The Chairman: The next person is Professor Olayiwola Olurode. Prof. Olayiwola, quickly tell us few things that you want us to know about you if they are not already in your Curriculum Vitae.

Professor Olayiwole Olurode: Mr. Senate President, the Principal Officers, other distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic, I was born 58 years ago. I had my University education at the University of Lagos. I made a Second Class Upper, but importantly, I will like to say that I am one person that stands very firm on the side of justice and I try to display transparency in all I do.

Senator Ibrahim Mohammed Ida (Katsina Central): Professor, my question is a very simple one. You know when people criticize INEC, they usually zero on the Chairman, forgetting that the Chairman really served along with National Commissioners who are supposed to be part and parcel of all the affairs and activities of that Commission.

My question is, what extent really would you go or would you be prepared to go in your relationship with the Chairman and the other National Commissioners in such a way as to bring to bear your ability and capability in the affairs of the Commission so as to influence it to reflect what should be the right thing rather than what the Chairman or the leader would like it to be.

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Senator Garba Yakubu Lado (Katsina South): Professor Olurode, knowing the fact that conducting the most credible and fair election is your major challenge, do you think the provisions of the amended 1999 Constitution, which is undergoing process as far as the conduct of election is concerned, that the time frame would be practicable? If your answer is negative, what do you think would be the way forward?

Senator George Thompson Sekibo (Rivers East): Professor Olurode, I bring a very short question on few considerations. Considering the time we are now, which is June; and considering the time of your screening and perhaps your inauguration which may likely come up in few weeks; considering the Constitutional Amendments that we are carrying out which is still in process, considering the Electoral Act that would also predicate on the amended Constitution; and considering the update of the Voters' Register, and finally, considering the fact that the June elections and inauguration should be between 120 and perhaps 150 days. Do you think that it is feasible to swear in elected officers especially, the President, on May 29th because of this time frame?

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamowora (Lagos East): Professor Olayiwola Olurode, my first question for you is in your area of distinction in academics, and that is sociology; poverty and the electoral system. As a Sociologist, what role has poverty played in the electoral system of this country?

Secondly, I remember that during the various Public Hearings by the Senate Committee on Constitutional Amendment, both here at the national and at zonal levels, the physically challenged community made representation to the effect that they have been disenfranchised. What do you think can be done to make our electoral system more friendly to the physically challenged?

The Chairman: Professor Olurode, answer these ones first.

Professor Olayiwola Olurode: The President of this distinguished Senate, the Principal Officers and all the other distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, let me take the questions in orders in which they had arisen.

On the first question by Distinguished Senator Ida, one of the fundamental problems that we have had in the country with regard to INEC, is that the

focus has been unnecessarily on the Chairman of INEC. The Chairman of INEC is just one person. It is an institutional matter and I think the Chairman of INEC and myself share a lot in common in terms of our background. We are both University professors and the other members of the Commission who have been nominated, if finally approved by this distinguished Senate, I am sure they all have experiences and reputation. They are all distinguished people in their own professions. There would be differences, there is no doubt about that it, but at the end of the day, we should be able to address the differences and be able to come to a conclusion that would be a collective decision.

As an individual, I have taught in the University for more twenty-nine years. I am always very eager and very ready to submit to logic when I am confronted with facts. I would try as much as possible to push my case across without any commitment or dogma at all. I am not a dogmatic person and I think we should be able to moderate our differences and be able to come to a conclusion that would be in the best interest of this country and that can empower our people and prompt best practices in the electoral matters.

The second question by distinguished Senator Garba Yakubu Lado with regard to the proposed Constitutional amendment pending presently, my view about the way forward is to have free and fair election. I would say that there are no perfect constitutions all over the world. The American Constitution, the British Constitution, which have been thrown up to be the best in the world are not perfect. They have their own imperfections. You would recall this from the last election even in America. There were a lot of conflicts.

On what we have been trying to do, we have celebrated a decade of democratization in this country. In the next ten years, we would be celebrating two decades of democratization. I believe strongly that we would come up with the best Constitution that anybody can be very proud of. There are no perfections about life, there are no perfections about human activities. We learn from our mistakes and put it into the Constitution which is what this distinguished Senate has been able to do. They come up with some amendments which I think would enhance the Constitution that we had in 1999. By the time we spend another ten years, it is going to be a different Constitution completely. As far as I can say, the recent amendments that have been proposed would go a long way to prompt fair and free elections in this country, the time frame notwithstanding.

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On the third question by Distinguished Senator Thompson Sekibo from Rivers State, when you look at time, of course, there can never be enough time for anything you want to accomplish. The most important thing in life is commitment to do whatever you want to do. I am sure that by the time that this Body is finally inaugurated, there might be a need to even declare a state of emergency regarding the need to have a free and fair election; and mobilize all resources that we have, the police, the civil organizations, civil societies, the political parties, the politicians, all the stake holders. There should be a way by which it would be possible for all of us to relate with the coming election in a matter of emergency so that time notwithstanding, we would still be able to have a successful election.

On the question raised by Senator Mamora, when you look at the issue of poverty between 1999 and now all over the globe, countries of the world that are poor have the most difficulty in organizing free and fair elections because it is quite easy for people that are poor to compromise on their conscience. It is much easier for them to be dissuaded by money in exchange for their voters cards. But I am sure that with all the efforts of the Federal Government of this country in terms of trying to alleviate poverty and people becoming more conscious, it should be possible for people to believe and to be convinced that their ballot is their power to alleviate suffering and poverty and not by exchanging their ballot papers in exchange for money.

On the issue of the physically challenged people, I would like to assure you that when we get on board, if eventually this Senate approves of our nominations, we would sit down and see how we can incorporate people that are being disadvantaged electorally into the system because they are also citizens and should not on the basis that they are physically challenged be denied their rights to participate in electoral activities. We will extend the frontiers of electoral participation.

Thank you very much.

Senator Mohammed Mana (Adamawa North): Prof. Olayiwola Olurode, we are just about few months, in fact, less than a year to the end of this term and we still have many cases pending before the courts relating to elections.

As someone who is vast in Sociology and in Research matters, I want to know what advice you can give to the Commission to ameliorate this

situation where after three years people are still in court trying to solve the problems before them.

Senator Anthony G. Manzo (Taraba North): Professor, I have three questions. Firstly, yesterday, my Colleague here showed me the *Tribune* of yesterday where there was a publication saying that you are a member of Action Congress. I do not have any problem with that at all because the Constitution allows you freedom of association. I just want you to tell us whether that publication is true. Are you a member of any political party at all?

Secondly, on your area of research, I know that you have ongoing research interest on Nigeria Middle Class, Sexual Harassment and *Madrasers*; in corroboration with Political Nigeria's past Election Violence. Would you want to brief this distinguished Senate on any bit of detail of these areas of research?

Thirdly, as you know, we have many Professors now, some are in the Senate while some are in the Federal Executive Council. Do you think that people should be professing outside the Universities?

Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan (Yobe North): Professor, I have two questions for you. In my opinion unity in diversity has failed in Nigeria. Perhaps one way of uniting Nigeria is through inter-marriages. What other ways can you suggest as a Sociologist on how to unite Nigeria so that when in a State there is a contest of Governorship of the State, electorates will vote for someone who will conquer poverty, diseases, provide education and eliminate illiteracy and so on and so forth so that when you come to Presidential Elections in Nigeria, regardless of where that person comes from, regardless of his ethnic background, regardless of his religious background, people will see reasons in going for the best; someone that has the competence, someone that has the capacity and ability to deliver. In my view, poverty is not regional. Give us your take on this.

The second question is on what you have already written in your book: *Democracy, Money Culture and Citizenship Rights in Nigeria*. What we are after in Nigeria is good governance, yet we may not have good governance if we have bad leaders. Do you think that we have other ways that we can get the best?

Let me give an instance; there could be a bad person but because he has so much wealth, so much money, he could use money to influence elections and when he gets to the office he cannot perform - *(Interruptions)*

The Chairman: Please just be direct with your questions. If you ask him whether there is another way of electing good people other than elections; I think that is what your questioning is. If you put it directly to him, then he would answer.

Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan (Yobe North): Mr. Chairman, I thank you for protecting me.

Prof. please tell us some of the ways that we can have good leaders to provide good governance in Nigeria for Nigeria's development.

Senator Nkechi Nwaogu (Abia Central): Professor Olurode, I have two questions for you. Firstly, as a social elite, somebody who has written so many books on Social Sciences especially in areas of gender, how would you want to be remembered during your tenure as a Federal Commissioner in Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) with regards to electoral violence that have been experienced over the years that affects women's success in elections?

Secondly, the present Electoral Act has not given the Senate the opportunity to screen the State Resident Electoral Commissions and these are the arrowheads during elections. As we sit today and you are coming on board, blames will be placed on INEC generally. How would you relate with and mitigate in order to provide Nigerians what you have promised - free and fair elections without knowing the backgrounds of these Resident Electoral Commissioners that would be posted. How would you handle the issue of Resident Electoral Commissioners as you go in the Commission?

Senator Ike Ekweremadu (Enugu West): Prof. Olurode, if you look at page 5 of your CV, you have undertaken a number of Researches and in paragraph 17 of that same page, the first was funded by the Ford Foundation, paragraph 18 was funded by the University of Lagos and paragraph 24 was also funded by the Ford Foundation. What would happen to these projects because I need to remind you that the work that you are going to undertake is a full time work more so, where moneys have been made available for these very important projects?

Secondly, you have been around and I am sure you have met a number of students, some grew up with you and some would be rejoicing that you have

been appointed. Assuming any of these people decides to contest any election and approaches you to either return in favour or to help out as someone close to him, what would be your reaction?

Finally, as a Sociologist, do you think Nigeria is ripe for electronic voting? Will you advocate for electronics voting in the next election as a way of ensuring credible election?

The Chairman: Prof., answer these ones.

Professor Olayiwola Olurode: On the question relating to the advice I would give to the Commission on pending matters before the courts and the time it has taken to adjudicate over these cases, these are not matters within my competence to answer. They are judicial matters and they are statutorily governed. I am sure, in one of the amendments that have been proposed by this Senate, you had suggested the need for amending the time within which a court would have to deliver judgment. I think we should leave that to court and see to the pending amendment to the Constitution and see what the outcome would be.

The question on whether I am a member of Action Congress (AC), the speculation in that paper is rather unfortunate. Honestly speaking, when I read that publication, I realized a number of times that falsified publications have been published about distinguished Members of this Senate. I do not know how you manage sleep at all. Before God and man, my wife and I were crying because it has no basis at all. I relate with both the PDP and AC. I am a University Professor, I am a Scholar and in my primary assignment, I enjoyed the Commonwealth Scholarship. I am a full time Fellow. I have been to places. Freedom of opinion is sacrosanct in this country. Of course, I express my opinion but the opinion that I expressed are not speculations. They are based on facts, data and they are negotiable. If facts change, I will change my opinion. I am not a dogmatic person in any respect. I want to say emphatically, that I am not a member of any registered Political Party but I am a social Critic. I criticize the society, I criticize our politics; even I criticize myself, otherwise, I would not be a Scholar at all. (*Laughter*)

I must say this, in some years back in University of Lagos, I was not a University Professor but I was the only person that stood on the side of right. I

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stood very firm on the side of justice. The Chairman of Council at that time, Chief Afe Babalola, could not believe that I was not a university professor. He sent for me. He said that he would like to meet with me and that I was very rare in the Cadre and that I stood very firm; and though I was not a professor but I was not afraid. Even if there is any problem between my wife and another person and my wife is guilty, I will tell her. Sometimes she would come back from work and tell me what happened in her office and I will tell her that she is guilty. She would then tell me, I am not the kind of husband that would follow her to places. I am a very firm person and stand for justice; I am not a dogmatic person.

On the issue of some of my Research work, in fact, you will feel more fulfilled as a University Professor if you have this kind of calling. You will see that all the things you have written in the past that the political terrain is completely different. But I must say that this is not even a political appointment. It is more of a Constitutional appointment and I am likely to be shielded from pressures. I am likely to get some pressures but I can assure you that I would respond to those pressures frankly, honestly and transparently. I would not compromise; there would be no basis for me. I would prefer death than compromising. It is not even possible. I am 50 years old, so why would I compromise at this point? I can assure you that I would be a friend to all the distinguished Senators of this Republic. If you ask me anything I would offer, I would not show any bias to anybody at all. I can give that assurance.

On the question on intermarriage, let me say this, all the measures that are in the Section 14 of the Constitution about Federal Character, Nigeria is a young country. Even America did not start from where it is today. America had problems initially. The first immigrants to America were not allowed to contest elections. They had to spend so many years before they could contest Presidential Election. So, every country fashions out ways of incorporating areas that feel marginalized, to incorporate the diversity of culture and in our own case, the Principles of Federal Character happens to be one of this.

The problem of indigeneship/citizenship is a problem all over the world not only in Nigeria. I do not feel comfortable when people stay or born in a State but when it comes to payment of school fees, they will discover that they will be asked to pay much higher than other citizens of this country. I think it is an experience and we are growing.

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Citizenship is becoming enlarged and with time, I am very sure that things would definitely get better.

For instance, if we look at the diversity that exist in this Chamber, look at the background you are coming from - religiously, geographically, but all of you sitting down were able to come to a conclusion as to what kind of amendment to propose to the Constitution. That shows that there is a lot of richness in diversity. No matter how diverse we are, at the end of the day, we should be able to negotiate our differences and come up with the best practices for the country so that we can make progress.

On the issue of democracy, money culture and citizenship, of course, there is not doubt, even in America, I was reading a book some days back on the corruption of the American system. You know that the lobby system in the USA gulps a lot of money and it is all over the world. You cannot remove money from politics. Of course, it is the responsibility of the INEC Commission to monitor campaign finances, how much is spent but I would advocate for a situation where it should be possible to make sure that we have Audited Accounts of Political Parties so that they do not spend beyond the approved sum when it comes to electioneering campaign.

Throughout the word, Democracy is very expensive, it cost money and people have to invest. If you look at the topography of this country, it can be very expensive. Democracy is money driven. If it is finance-driven all the time some people will never be able to have the opportunity of being given leadership.

The question raised by Distinguished Nkechi Nwaogu on Social Science and gender, for instance, if you look through this Chamber, you can count the number of women Senators in your hand. Not that there are not more women who are potentially qualified to be members of this distinguished body but are not because of the issue of marginalization. This is so not only in this country but in all over the world. Australia is celebrating the first Woman Prime Minister just recently. So, with time as we grow, more and more women with improvement in education will come on board.

I want to assure you that there are internal politics in all institutions. The Resident Electoral Commissioners (REC), I have been thinking about this, the internal dynamics and politics. I looked at the Constitution, with the Chairman of INEC, how much control can we exercise? In the past, we have

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situations where there are conflicting announcements of results. This I am sure, the new INEC Chairman, if finally approved, is a very competent person and I am sure, he is up to the challenge and we will all sit together and see how we can make sure that we have just one INEC, so that we cannot be speaking differently.

On my research work, I want to assure the distinguished Senator that all the research works that were listed on page 17 of my Curriculum Vitae have been completed. Of course, I have some pending research but I have competent hands; I have my junior Colleague that I can handover because I will not want to see the demise of this research efforts. It took time to put the proposal together and if they are finally approved, I would like to encourage my junior ones as a way of mentoring them to continue the research even if I cannot be able to participate actively in the research.

On the question of electronic voting, it is not a question frankly speaking that I can respond to. When Prof. Jega was here yesterday, some questions were put to him. These are questions that you have to look at what is on the table in INEC. I have not even been to the INEC office and I do not know what even exists now. We all have to sit down and see what is going to be the best for this country. What matters in all these is the credibility and integrity of our electoral body. I want to assure you that whatever decision INEC is going to come up with is going to be best for this country and I am sure all of you will be happy at the end of the day.

Thank you Sir.

The Chairman: Thank you very much. You can take a bow and go.

(Prof. Olayiwola Olurode took a bow and withdrew from the Chamber)

(Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor Appeared Before the Senate)

The Chairman: The next nominee is Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor. Dame Gladys Nwafor, we want you to tell us if there is anything outside or within your Curriculum Vitae that you want to emphasize to us? If there is not, you do not need to border because we have your CV.

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Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor: Mr. Senate President, the Deputy Senate President, all Principal Officers of the Senate, distinguished Senators, I stand here today to seek for confirmation as a Commissioner in INEC. I am Gladys Nne Nwafor from Abia State. I was born on the 11th August 1949 to the family of Mr. and Mrs. Hemoka. I am married to Late Dr. Clement Chima Nwafor. The marriage is blessed with six children and eight ground children.

I attended my primary school at All Saints Primary School, Aba Emocham. I had my Standard Six Certificate, that is, the First School Leaving Certificate in 1961. I proceeded to a Secondary school at Ihe High School. After my school certificate, I went to Women Training College, Enugu where I did my teacher training. On completion of that course, I was posted to teach in a primary school. I taught there for about eight years before I proceeded to University at Port Harcourt where I did my B. Sc (Hons) in Education (Political Science).

On graduation in 1988, I could not get a job immediately. I stayed for three years before I secured a job with Obioma Ngwa Local Education Authority as Education Officer.

The Chairman: Dame Gladys, that is all right.

Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor: It is all right, Sir.

Senator Sahabi Ya'u (Zamfara North): Nominee, as a Nigerian, an elite of the nation for that matter, I believe that you must have known that most of our electoral problems are associated with INEC. You are about to be handed with a surgical knife to work on sick INEC, may we please share the opinion you must have formed; even before your nomination you must have formed an opinion about INEC. May we please know what problems you think INEC has and how you intend to go about solving them?

Senator Dahiru A. Kuta (Niger East): I have a very short question. In your Secondary school days, you used to undergo examinations where they will say *this is a statement, discuss*. I had an encounter with two people; a British and a Nigerian; they were discussing the effectiveness of elections in their areas. So, the British said because they were so efficient, the results are announced just a few hours after the elections. Then, the Nigerian said no, we

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have gone beyond that. The results of elections are normally heard before the election is held. Can you comment on that?

Senator Ayodele Sylvester Arise (Ekiti North): Madam Gladys Nwafor, my question to you is a very simple one. Probably you have listened to Professor Attahiru Jega and Professor Olayiwola Olurode. Those people belong to a radical scope. Can you tell us your lineage and how you intend to tackle some of these very radical views if you are to be confirmed as Commissioner?

Senator Chris N. D. Anyanwu (Imo East): Mr. Chairman, first of all let me compliment the candidate, a very pretty woman at her age. This is a question I would have actually wanted to ask the previous candidate who did so much research on the issue of women, and I have wanted to get his special leaning as to what are the problems militating against women's progress in the area of politics, and how he would have wanted to use his vantage point, experience and research to watch out for those front lines where they start working against women in the election process.

With the candidate now, I would like to ask you, everyone says our electoral process is faulty and bad; people have said that it does not really matter if you bring saints to run INEC that at the end of the day, INEC would be working with thousands of officials including non-INEC personnel during the election and that is where the problem is. They talked about a systematic rigging process; that the more you look, the less you see. Now you are going into INEC as a Commissioner, and it will be your job to look out for these fault lines and tricks that men play in the process of election and I use the word emphatically, *men play*, not women.

Can you give me your insight as to what are these tricks that they play during the process of election that cause us to have the wrong result that affects the overall result of what comes out of the election process?

The Chairman: Dame Gladys, answer these ones. I hope you got the questions?

Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor: Yes, I did. The first question is from Senator Ya'u and he was asking to know the problems associated with INEC and my opinion in solving them. We all know that INEC is a body that conducts election and election is posed with a lot of challenges. These challenges cannot be handled alone by INEC, they require collective

participation of all and sundry. These problems can be handled if we abide by the rules of our Constitution and Electoral Act.

The next question was from Senator Dahiru Kuta. He wants to know the effectiveness of the elections in Nigeria. He told us a story about two people who compared the elections we have in Nigeria and the elections in Britain. He said that in Nigeria results are heard even before the elections. In fact, if we take that to be true, it is one of the reasons why we want that reform and that is why we said that all hands must be on deck to check all these anomalies.

The third question was from Senator Arise. It bothers on how I intend to tackle the radical views if I am confirmed. If I am confirmed we will tackle all these problems being guided by the Constitution and the Electoral Act. I will get to the bridge before I cross it. We have to identify these problems and know how to tackle them accordingly.

Senator Chris Anyanwu really spoke at length stating that there are powers militating against women in politics and that it seems to be that our electoral process, as people say is bad and that even if you bring angels that the more you look, the less you see and that she will like to know these tricks play by men.

As far as election is concerned, there is no discrimination. INEC works with whatever candidate it is given. If there are tricks men play, we will make them know to you. If there are tricks men play, when the Commission starts its work, we will identify those problems and then tackle them.

The Chairman: Is it the wish of the Senate that she should take a bow and go?

Several distinguished Senators: Yes.

The Chairman: Dame Gladys Nwafor, take a bow and go.

(Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor accordingly takes a bow and withdrew from the Chamber)

(Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd. Appears before the Senate)

The Chairman: Distinguish Colleagues, the next gentleman is one of your own, Colonel Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.). Colonel, what we want you to do is to tell us those things that you want us to know that are not already in your Curriculum Vitae, or if there

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is anything in your Curriculum Vitae that will help us in your screening. We have all been given the Curriculum Vitae, and we can go through it. Do not bother going through the whole Curriculum Vitae again. If questions are put to you, answer them, be frank and sincere and go direct to the question.

Colonel Hammanga M. Kurmi: Mr. President, other Principal Officers, distinguish Senators, I was born in 1956 in Gombe, Adamawa State. I attended Gombe Primary School between 1963 and 1969. I attended Government Secondary School Yola, between 1970 and 1974; and proceeded to the North East College of Arts and Science Maiduguri, between 1974 and 1976. I gained admission into Ahmadu Bello University Zaria to read Architecture. I read B. Sc Degree in Architecture and graduated in 1979 and with Masters Degree in Architecture in 1981.

I was commissioned into the Nigerian Army on 3rd December, 1979. After graduation from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, I was posted to the Nigerian Army Engineers. I served briefly in the headquarters, 82 Division was created in 1982 and I moved to Enugu. In short, I spent 28 years in the service and was promoted Colonel that was my last rank in the army in 1999. I retired voluntarily from active service on 31st December, 2007.

After leaving the service, I engaged myself in private practice. Shortly after that, I was engaged into consultancy services with the military. That is my occupation presently.

Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba (Cross River Central): Colonel Hammanga, I know as a fact and you have confirmed it here that you have a very illustrious career in the respected institution called the military. But Colonel, respected as the military is, it has been perceived in Nigeria as the major impediment to democracy, at least in the past. Coming from that background, straight to INEC, INEC is the institution that is responsible for entrenching credible democracy. Coming from an institution that has been seen to be a major impediment to democratic growth, how would you add value, how would you adapt (*Interruption*)

Senator Mohammed Mana (Adamawa North): Point of Order.

The Chairman: Senator Mana, what is the Point of Order? That is all right, I will not rule on your Point of Order now. Senator Victor, concentrate on now and the future

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Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba: Colonel Hammanga, how would you adapt now and in the future giving your background in enthroning genuine democracy in Nigeria?

Senator Munirudeen Adekunle Muse (Lagos Central): We have received assurances here from the previous nominees that they were going to deliver credible, free and fair election. If you are confirmed, you are going to be exposed to so many temptations. As a man of integrity I want you to tell us if you are unnecessarily lured into granting undue favour, would you be able to speak out to Nigerians?

Senator Idris Audu (Gombe Central): Colonel Hammanga, one of the major challenges of our electoral processes in Nigeria is conducting free and fair election which is acceptable not only to Nigeria and Nigerians, but in the international community. Today, the results of the nation and indeed, the entire mood of the nation is queued in favour of having free and credible election. In fact, the entire politicians are resolved to ensure that INEC conducts free and fair elections.

You are coming to join an institution which is entirely strange to your background in terms of your training and the profession you later found yourself as a Military Officer. What resolve do you have in mind in working with the spectre of people from various disciplines coming to work together as Commissioners in INEC in ensuring free and credible election in this country?

Senator Adamu Garba Talba (Yobe South): Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.), I have only one and very short question. I believe the most important aspect of peace in democracy is the free and fair and even credible election in all its ramifications. Now, you are confronted with the challenge of being one of the conductors of these elections or exercise; how prepared are you?

The Chairman: Col. Hammanga Kurmi, answer these ones first.

Col. Hammanga Kurmi: Distinguished Senator Victor Ndoma-Egba wants to confirm how I would add value to democracy in Nigeria? Already, the Nigerian Army has given me foundation by giving me the discipline and the training. I am loyal to Nigeria and I have integrity. With this, I think I am fit for the job.

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Senator Munirudeen Adekunle Muse asked if I am tempted would I speak to Nigerians. I do not think I would be tempted, I would remain honest, loyal and I would maintain my integrity.

Senator Idris Audu asked how I would conduct myself in team work. By my training in Architecture, it is team work because it is an honourable industry which gives leadership to all the professionals. We work and operate in team work and I believe that this will help me. We all know that the Military believes in team work; from the Parade Ground to the Uniform is always team work. I have got that foundation already.

Senator Adamu Garba Talba asked about my level of preparation. I am already prepared. The Army and the profession have prepared me.

Senator Grace Folashade J. Bent (Adamawa South): Col. M. K. Hammanga (Rtd.), one of the very good seasoned Military Officers. I want you to enumerate to us here how you would apply your military precision, your professionalism and tactics to bear on the Commission in their quest to having a free and fair elections in Nigeria. In a few words that the military are known for, can you explain to us how you would apply the military professionalism, the precision and the tactics which you have gathered in the past years to making us have a free, fair and credible election in Nigeria?

Senator Umar Abubakar Argungu (Kebbi North): Col. M. K. Hammanga, as an INEC Commissioner, would you prefer using Ad-Hoc Staffing arrangement to INEC permanent staffing during elections, taking into account that greater percentage of electoral malpractices are being perpetrated by the Ad-Hoc Staff?

Senator Sola Akinyede (Ekiti South): Col. M. K. Hammanga, I was in a place about three weeks ago and somebody said in Yoruba, *Se Jega lo maa so nkan ti mo mas se ni polling booth mi?* Let me translate it to you: Is it Professor Jega that will tell me what I would do in my Polling Booth? My question is this; what is your reaction to that kind of statement and what would be your response to the challenges posed by that question?

Senator Lee Maeba (Rivers South East): Col. Hammanga, from the CV you presented to me, I have an observation that you have very quick intent to retirement. You were enlisted to Nigeria Army in 1979 Commission and soon after about 1999 you threw in the towel - (retired) at a very young age of 45 years. You were born in 1956 and when you retire in 1999 you were 45 years.

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The Army spent so much money in training you in several formations and you served the Army for just 20 years and you threw in the towel. At a very young age, you see Generals in the Army, some in the US who are 70 years, but you threw in the towel. When the Army needed your services much, you disappointed them and walked away.

Are you sure that after confirmation, bearing in mind that you have a four-year tenure, you are not going to retire again? I can see that you not tired. You are not tired when you retired; and you are not still tired because you are coming for another job.

My second question is on the issue of the Army rolling out their drums obeying which authority I did not know on every election day restricting people from movement. On every election day, even the last one that was done at the Municipal Area Council here, people were not moving, people were stopped to move and the Constitution did not give that permission to the Electoral Commission neither the Electoral Act. Will you give your opinion on why people should not move on election day when it is a violation of the Constitution.

Senator Kanti Bello (Katsina North): Col. Hammanga, I was just thinking that each time we have an election, and it is happening in the Army. As a Professional, I am sure you are fully aware of what is called *berry-bridge* that they construct weekly in some sections by the Army. Would you in your capacity as INEC member in charge of logistics and the River-rine area where Senator Ndoma-Egba comes from, concentrate sending Army there to take charge of security or will you with your Professional background think of constructing so many *berry-bridges* so that elections materials can be there on time? Which one will you do based on your professional knowledge and the fact that Army sometimes do what they are not supposed to do during elections.

The Chairman: Col., please answer these questions.

Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd): Distinguished Senator Bent wants to know how I would conduct free, fair and credible election with my experience in the Army and make it transparent. What is important here is transparency, sincerity, integrity and loyalty to the nation. The rest would be guided by the law.

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Distinguished Senator Argungu asked about Ad-hoc Staff. We would still work on the provisions of Rules and Regulations of the law. If it involves training or whatever it involves, it would be guided by the law.

Distinguished Senator Lee Maeba talked about early retirement in the service. I joined the service in 1979 and retired in 2007 that is 28 years of service. In the Army we have what is called Career Review. Apart from that we have different Commissions in the Army. We have Regular Combatant, Direct Regular, Short Service Commission and we have Quarter Master Commission, all of them have terms and conditions of service. The terms and conditions of service for my Commission into the Nigerian Army is appropriately applied. In my CV you will see that I have voluntary retirement and you will see all the citation there which summarizes all my life in the military. It is acceptable and I am still in the Army. It remains my Constituency and I am out of active service.

On the question relating to movement during election, I cannot make my opinion now but we will be guided by the law.

The last question is on how I can influence the Nigerian Army to construct bridges to make movement possible and that one too depends on the situation on the ground and it would also be guided by the law.

The Chairman: Is it the wish of distinguished Senators that Col. Hammanga should bow and go?

Several Senators: Yes.

The Chairman: Col. Hammanga, before you go, you are on the reserved list. Are you not?

Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd): Yes, Sir.
(Laughter)

The Chairman: It is all right. Even Shagaya, Mana and Akaagerger are on the reserved list. I joined politics in 1999.

(Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani appeared before the Senate)

The Chairman: The last person is Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani. He is for re-appointment. Dr. Igbani, you are already a National Commissioner in INEC but your tenure expired and you are re-appointed. Tell us anything you want to tell us in few words.

Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani: Mr. President, Principal Officers, distinguished Senators, most of what I have are in my Curriculum Vitae but I would just bring out one or two.

I was once a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I served in the last Commission. I have held a number of jobs, teaching in the United States of America before I came back to the U.S. I hold P.hd Degree (*interruption*)

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Point of Order, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman: Point of Order, Senate Leader.

Extension of Time

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin: Pursuant to Order 13 of our Standing Orders, I move that this Distinguished Senate do sit beyond 2:00 p.m.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Mr. Chairman, I rise to second the motion that this Senate should sit beyond 2:00 p.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Senate do extend sitting beyond 2:00 p.m.

Dr. Ismail Jikiri Igbani: Mr. President, I said I served in various capacities in Nigeria and I am still willing to serve by the grace of this Senate. I was a teacher and my specialty was in Research Methods. I was Minister of Works and Housing under President Shehu Shagari. I was also reappointed in that government. It seems I am the link between the old and the new and therefore I think I have the experience to handle any matter brought before me with wisdom.

Senator Mujitaba Mohammed (Jigawa South-West): Mr. Nominee, I want to address your mind to certain fundamental issue that has to do with the conduct of free and fair election in Nigeria and indeed in the entire West Africa Sub-region. I want to ask you this question because I can see you have gathered a lot of experience in the conduct of election especially under the INEC from 2003 till date.

These are the questions. Incumbency factor remains to be the greatest threat to the conduct of free and fair election. Hitherto, military coup-de-tat used to be the only major threat to democracy in Africa but nowadays, incumbency factor is becoming the

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greatest threat. It is either an incumbent trying to rig an election in his favour or an incumbent trying to perpetuate himself in power.

What do you think the entire polity should do to curb the abuse of incumbency when it comes to the conduct of election in Nigeria?

Senator Mohammed Mana (Adamawa North): Dr. Igbani, you have been the link between the old and the new, between Iwu and Jega. You are going to be the link man of INEC if you are confirmed. Specifically, what are the major areas that you have observed during your tenure under Iwu that you think can be amended in your new tenure?

Senator Wilson Asinobi Ake (Rivers West): Mr. Chairman, the question I had had been asked before this time.

Senator Ibrahim Saminu Turaki (Jigawa North-West): Mr. Nominee, on election day, when you go to the polling unit, you see some people putting green leaves on their head that their vote is for sale. What do you do about that? This is because that is their own vote and we are talking of free and fair election.

Secondly, after voting, when votes have been counted, in some units some people would asked for the results not to be announced at the polling unit at the expense of maybe changing the results for somebody. Because if you do not announce the result and you have to bring it to the headquarter, anything can happen. We have an example here in the Senate where somebody's result was changed at State level; where somebody announced different result from what was announced at the secretariat level. How do we guide against that? Is it not better to announce and collate results as it is done everywhere in the world?

The third issue is delay in announcing results so that it can be tampered with. What can you do about it? These are my questions.

Senator Ikechukwu John Obiorah (Anambra South): Mr. Nominee, the June 12 election was reputedly the fairest election conducted in Nigeria. Would you give us a brief assessment of the political, socio-economic impact it has on Nigeria as a polity and how do you think it has impacted on the psyche of Nigerians *vis-a-vis* our popular democracy?

Secondly, all parties including my own party have been run autocratically without internal democracy and yet INEC has had powers to monitor and

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supervise congresses including elective congresses of those parties. As a bridge builder, the link between the past and the future, what attitude do you think INEC has adopted in fulfillment of its responsibility to ensure internal democracy in the political parties? Do you agree with me that it would be safe to say that the failure of INEC to insist on internal democracy in the parties has led to the failure of elections as an exercise in the nation?

Senator Otaru Salihu Ohize (Kogi Central): Dr. Igbani, you were one of those that conducted the election in 2003 and in 2007 you conducted the election as well and yet these two elections were condemned. Can you tell us what you think was wrong in the elections you conducted and what are the remedies for them.

In the 1980s, you were a Minister appointed by a political party and you have been on appointment since 2003, which party did you vote for in 1980, 1999, 2003 and 2007?

The Chairman: Please, do not bother about the parties you voted for because nobody would ask anybody who he voted for. So, do not address that one.

Senator Festus Ola Olabode (Ekiti Central): Dr. Igbani, it is good to know that you are a link between the old and the new. My question is going to be on election petition. Your new INEC Chairman said a lot here yesterday and promised to conduct free, fair and credible election, to follow Due Process, uphold the rule of law and to be fair to all concerned. I mean that he would not take any doctored result from any god father.

While we do not doubt him, the question I want to ask is that most election Petitioners always have problems in obtaining the right documents required for them to prove and maintain their petitions. What would you do if you are confirmed to make sure that the petitioners obtain the relevant documents needed for them to maintain and prove their petitions so that they receive fair judgment?

Senator Mahmud Kanti Bello (Katsina North): Mr. Nominee, you have been a National Commissioner and I have seen that one of your jobs within 2004 to 2008 is that you are the Chairman for Political Parties Monitoring Committee. Referring to the Third Schedule of the Constitution, the Constitution is very clear on what your job is supposed to be, that your organization is to monitor the organisation and operation of political parties

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including their finances. You are supposed to also arrange for annual examination and auditing of the funds and accounts of political parties and publish the report on such examination for public information. Thirdly, the Constitution empowers you to monitor political activities, provide rules and regulations which shall govern the political parties.

Sir, you have been there and you are even the Chairman, supposed to enshrine this aspect of the Constitution with all honesty and sincerity, can you evaluate your performance with that aspect as enshrined in the Nigeria Constitution of 1999?

Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani: Mr. Chairman. I would like to start with the last question. I was the Chairman of the Political Parties Monitoring Committee of the Commission and I am being asked to evaluate myself. As the Chairman of the Political Parties Monitoring Committee, I had occasions to interact with all the Political Parties. I think that all the Parties themselves would attest to the fact that I was very open, transparent and fair in my dealings with all the Political Parties. I think that should cover that aspect of the question.

In addition, under my leadership of Political Parties Monitoring Committee of the Commission, the Commission published the first handbook and the first manual on Political Party Financing in Africa. Under my leadership of that Committee we tried as much as possible not to be policemen, but rather to see if we can educate and plead with the Political Parties to do the right thing; and I think that is the only mature way to deal with the mature people. I think I can rate myself A+.

On the issue of incumbency, I think that it has been a problem particularly on election days. There should be a law preventing the use of government facilities during election on behalf of those who are still in office. If we are going to have a free and fair election, that is only right.

As for the people who carry green leaves, I hope they are not trying to sell *okro*. If they are asking for their votes to be sold I think they are disobeying the Electoral Laws and they should be dealt with by the law. After voting, people should be allowed to stay some distance away from the voting point. I also believe that result should be announced at the Polling Unit before being transmitted so that everybody would see that nobody changed the result midway.

Distinguished Senator John Obiorah, you referred to June 12 as being the fairest. In evaluation of any

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event or election depends on where you are standing. It is like looking at an elephant by seven blind men. What you see is how far you can see. If it is judged as the best, then so be it; and I think we would try our best to reach that goal.

Internal democracy has been a big problem. I do not see why that cannot be solved because from the way you distinguished Senators are handling your matters here, if you extend it to your parties, I do not see any problem. Internal democracy is perhaps, one of the bedrocks of democracy and free and fair election. If you do not have proper candidates, the election cannot be free and fair. When the people judge, if you pick the wrong candidate the person would lose.

Mr. Chairman, you said I should not answer the question on what party I voted for. I thank you very much for that because one of the tenets of international standards recognised by the United Nations is the secrecy of ballot. Even if I voted for you, I probably would not be willing to tell you here.

I was told that the Chairman promised free and fair election, obeying the rule of law; and that he will be fair to all. I am very prepared to assist him in that goal. As for petitioners not getting access to relevant documents, those of you who run elections before and who made petitions, I think you will be my witnesses that whenever you brought a case to me, I made sure that you had access to the relevant documents. If you did not get access to the relevant documents that meant you did not run into me, if you did, you will get it.

Thank you very much, Sir.

The Chairman: Is it the wish of the Senate that he should take a bow and go?

Several distinguished Senators: Yes.

(Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani accordingly take a bow and withdrawn from the Chamber)

Approvals

The Chairman: These are all the CVs that we have and when we get the others we can also screen them.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Professor Mohammadu Attahiru Jega, as the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

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Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the confirmation of the nomination of Engineer. (Dr) Nuru A. Yakubu, as a member of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren, as a National Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Professor Olayiwola Olurode as a National Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor, as a National Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Colonel Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.), as a National Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Would the Senate approve the nomination of Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani, as a National Electoral Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to.

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Mr. Chairman, I move that the Chair do now report progress.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Mr. Chairman, I second the Motion ably moved by the Leader that the Chair do now report progress.

Question put and agreed to

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(The President resumed the Chair)

The President: The Senate in the Committee of the Whole considered in an Open Session the Request of Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief for the confirmation of nominees for appointments as Chairman and National Commissioners of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and approved as follows:

Prof. Attahiru Muhammadu Jega as Chairman

Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu as National Commissioner

Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren as National Commissioner

Prof. Olayiwola Olurode as National Commissioner

Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor as National Commissioner

Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.) as National Commissioner

Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani as National Commissioner

Is this a true reflection of what transpired in the Committee of the Whole?

Several distinguished Senators: Yes

Confirmation of Nominations

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Prof. Attahiru Muhammadu Jega as the Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Prof. Olayiwola Olurode as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Col. Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.) as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission?

Question put and agreed to

The President: The nomination of Prof. Attahiru Muhammadu Jega is hereby confirmed as Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Engr. (Dr.) Nuru A. Yakubu is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Mrs. Thelma Amata Iremiren is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Prof. Olayiwola Olurode is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Dame Gladys Nne Nwafor is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Col Hammanga M. Kurmi (Rtd.) is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

The nomination of Dr. Ismael Jikiri Igbani is hereby confirmed as a National Commissioner of the Independent National Electoral Commission.

I would like to, on behalf of all us, congratulate the Chairman and the National Commissioners that we have confirmed today. Like we asked them repeatedly in the course of the screening, that they go strictly by the Constitution and whatever the laws say. They need to be transparent, fair and above all, they must ensure that they conduct a credible, free and fair election in 2011.

Thank you very much, distinguished Colleagues.

Suspension of other Items on the Order Paper

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin: Mr. President, I move that we step down all other items on the Order Paper till another legislative day.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora: Mr. President, I second the Motion as moved by the Leader that other items on the Order Paper be stood down till another legislative day.

Question put and agreed to.

(By leave of the Senate, all other items on the Order Paper stood down till another legislative day)

ADJOURNMENT

And it being 2.20 p.m., the President adjourned the Senate till Tuesday, 29th June, 2010 at 10.00 a.m. without Question put pursuant to Order 13(8) of the Senate Standing Orders.

The Senate adjourned accordingly at 2.20 p.m.