

1293

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Thursday, 5th November 2009

The House met at 11.00 a.m.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the House is called to order. I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 4th November, 2009.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Meeting of the Committee on Pension

The Speaker: Please, listen to this announcement. Hon. Rasak Adewusi, Chairman of the Committee on Pension is informing his Members that there will be a meeting today in House Committee Room 3.12, New Building at 2.00 p.m.

Constitution Review Committee Meeting

There will be a meeting of the Constitution Review Committee immediately after sitting today.

(Signed)

*Hon. Usman Bayero Nafada
Deputy Speaker*

ANNOUNCEMENT

Meeting of the House Standing Committees on Finance

The Speaker: *All Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of Standing Committees on Finance are invited to a briefing and interactive session with the Hon. Minister of Finance on Tuesday, 10th November, 2009 by 1:00 p.m.*

The venue is the New Conference Hall in the House of Representative Building.

(Signed)

Hon. John Enoh

1294

Chairman

Meeting of the Committee on Environment

The House Committee on Environment will also hold a meeting today 5th November 2009 by 2:00 p.m. in House Committee Room 07 of the White House.

Visit of Students of Hallmark Secondary School

The Speaker: We have in the Gallery Staff and Students of Hallmark Secondary School, Itanla, Ondo State.

Could you, please, stand up for recognition?

(Students rose for recognition)

PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC PETITIONS

Wrongful Dismissal from Service

The Speaker: Any Member who has a Petition to present to the House may, please, rise to do so now.

Alleged Wrongful Termination of Appointment

Hon. Andrew I. Uchendu (Ikwerre/Emohua): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition from one of my constituents, Mr. Kenneth Adiele. He was employed by the Nigeria Customs Service in 1981 and six years later he was irregularly dismissed from service.

He contested that in the law Court in 1991 and the Court in 1995 gave judgement in his favour. The Nigeria Customs has refused to comply with the order of the court. Ten years later he went back to Court seeking a consequential Order. The Customs then approached him for out-of-Court settlement. Ever since they have thrown him to the streets to suffer and he has written pleading with the House of Representatives to, please, look into this matter and ensure that the Nigeria Customs comply with the Court order.

May I have your permission to lay the Petition on the Table?

Petition laid.

Wrongful Dismissal from the Nigerian Prisons Service

Hon. H. S. Dickson (Ekeremor/Sagbama): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a Petition from my constituent whose name is Jack Afamukoro from Ekeremor Local Government Area.

1295

He is alleging wrongful dismissal from the Nigerian Prisons Service. If I have your permission, may I lay the Petition on the Table?

Petition laid.

Petition against Nigeria Air Force and Nigeria Civil Service

Hon. Emmanuel Bello (Gombi/Hong): Mr. Speaker, my Petition is written by twenty Nigerians; one of whom is Mrs. Abdul Zainab, a constituent of mine. The others are Mrs. Osoforo, Grace Ufor, Mr. Jegede and Mrs. M.C. Okoye on behalf of 15 others who have all signed the Petition.

The Petition is against the Nigeria Air Force and the Nigeria Civil Service. These twenty Nigerians were employed about fifteen years ago in the Nigeria Air Force Secondary School and they were given temporary appointment. Up till now in what I term as slave labour, they have not been confirmed and they are still being paid a meagre fee of ₦25,000.00. Some of them are Masters Degree holders while some are NCE holders.

I believe and they also believe that this House, as the last court of resort, will be able to address this issue and ensure that they are appropriately placed in the Federal Civil Service and appropriate remunerations are paid to them.

May I now lay the Petition on the Table?

Petition laid.

Unlawful Disengagement of Staff of Jos North Local Government Branch Council

Hon. Sama'ila A. Mohammed (Bassa/Jos North): Mr. Speaker, this Petition is written by the Nigerian Union of Local Government Employees, Jos North Local Government Branch. It is titled: Unlawful Disengagement of Staff of Jos North Local Government Council.

This Petition is in respect of 1,200 staff that have been unlawfully disengaged by a Verification Committee which the Chairman of the Local Government says he is ignorant of. The Local Government Civil Service Commission is also claiming ignorance. The staff are asking, among other prayers, that they should all be reinstated unconditionally.

With your permission, may I lay the Petition on the Table?

The Speaker: Please go ahead.

1296

Petition laid.

Wrongful Dismissal from the Nigerian Air Force

Hon. Muhammad Asema Sadiq (Ajaokuta): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition from one of my constituent who worked with the Nigeria Air Force. He was wrongfully dismissed sometime in October 1999. He is urging this House to kindly look into this matter so that he can be reinstated.

May I lay the Petition on the Table please?

Petition laid.

Wrongful and Invidious Termination of Employment

Hon. Ogbuefi Ora Ozomgbachi (Ezeagu/Udi): Mr. Speaker, I have with me two petitions, one of which is written by three constituents of mine. They are petitioning against their wrongful and invidious termination of employment by the Nigerian Agricultural Cooperative and Rural Development Bank. They are appealing for redress and reinstatement.

The second Petition is from Mr. R. O. Ime, titled: *Case with NTA - Study Leave*. He is asking for his terminal rights.

With the kind permission of Mr. Speaker, may I lay the Petitions on the Table?

Petition laid.

The Speaker: All the Petitions are referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

(All Petitions referred to the Committee on Public Petitions)

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Report of the Conference Committee on the Public Procurement (Amendment) Bill, 2009

The Speaker: The only Business of the Day is presentation of the Report of the Conference Committee on the Public Procurement (Amendment) Bill, 2009 on a Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Procurement Act, 2007 and for Matters Connected Therewith, 2009 standing in the name of Hon. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar. Hon. Maitama Tuggar, where are you? *(No response)*

Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business, please could you approach the Chair?

1297

(Hon. Ita Enang, Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business confers with Mr. Speaker)

The Speaker: My dear Colleagues, this report is exceedingly important to the performance of government as far as Capital Expenditure is concerned. We need that report laid.

Therefore, Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business, I am not going to stand this Bill down to another day. I am going to stand it down for the time being while you look for that Report and lay it on the Floor today.

Hon. Ita Enang (Itu/Ibiono Ibom): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Where is Hon. Abdullahi, your Deputy? *(No response)* A Member has to deputise for you while you go and look for the report.

Hon. Ita Enang: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Will you pick a Member of your Committee to stand in for you.

Hon. Ita Enang: I call on Hon. Sam Tsokwa to stand in for me.

The Speaker: Hon. Sam Tsokwa, can you take the seat while the Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business proceeds to find that very important Report for us.

(Hon. Ita Enang departs)

Hon. Sam Tsokwa, are you ready for today's sitting?

Hon. Albert Sam-Tsokwa (Donga/Ussa/Takum): I am ready, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I do not doubt your capacity whatsoever.

Hon. Albert Sam-Tsokwa: I am sure that there will be no problem today at all.

The Speaker: Excellent. Please, sit down.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Report of the Conference Committee on the Public Procurement Act (Amendment) Bill 2007 and for Matters Connected Therewith, 2009

1298

The Speaker: My hon. Colleagues, the Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business, Hon. Ita Enang, has managed to work some magic. Let us listen to him.

Hon. Ita Enang: Mr. Speaker, I must apologise for my Colleague, Hon. Tuggar, because he was on assignment to represent this House.

If I have your leave the Report is ready and it is here. Therefore, I will take your leave to move that this House do receive and adopt the Report of the Conference Committee on the Public Procurement Amendment Bill, 2009 as harmonised between the House and the Senate.

Hon. Yusuf Maitama Tuggar (Gamawa): I rise to second the Motion as moved.

Question put and agreed to.

Report laid.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues and particularly Members of the Committee on Public Procurement and Members of that Conference Committee, I take it that that was a job well done and it has the capacity of shortening the timeframe for jobs to be awarded and executed, as we have issues with the Due Process Office.

Well done for reducing that time and for allowing the possibility of jobs being executed on time.

Hon. Sama'ila Mohammed: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: What is the Point of Order?

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Hon. Sama'ila Mohammed: Mr. Speaker, my Point of Order is predicated on Order VIII, Rule 4 of our Standing Orders at page 25 dealing with Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

The Speaker: My dear Colleague, if it was that urgent, you would have raised it before the Business of the Day.

Hon. Sama'ila Mohammed: It is very urgent, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead. Let us see whether or not it is urgent.

1299

Rapid Spread of Swine Flu in Lagos, Nigeria

Hon. Sama'ila Mohammed: This Motion is on the reported cases of Swine Flu AH1N1 in Lagos which

has afflicted two people. The spread of influenza is so rapid that before we know it, it is likely to affect all the generality of Nigerians.

The Speaker: It is all right. Apparently, we have reported cases of Swine Flu. I will put the question that we consider this as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance?

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the reported cases of Swine Flu in Nigeria be considered as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance to be taken on the next Legislative Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTIONS

State of the Nation

The Speaker: The first Order of the Day is a Motion on the State of the Nation standing in the name of Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir. Hon. Minjibir, please, move your Motion.

Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir (Minjibir/Ungogo): Mr. Speaker, my hon. Colleagues, I rise to move that the House:

Notes with surprise the negative, uncomplimentary and unpatriotic cover story of the Tell Magazine of 5th October, 2009, titled: The Making of a Failed State.

Aware that Nigeria, like other developing countries, is grappling with myriads of problems like lack of adequate power supply, youth unemployment, poverty, hunger and general insecurity, etc;

Concerned that the said cover story concluded that Nigeria as a state is racing into a complete eclipse and not alluding that much reforms could still be achieved;

Worried that there are problems like sectarian violence, civil crises, communal clashes, kidnappings, cultism, killings and robberies, vandalism, etc but we should not create the impression that these problems are insurmountable and would last forever for it is often said; where there is a will, there is a way.

Further aware that a successful Nigeria can help transform the fortunes of the African Continent in the 21st Century.

Resolves to:

(a) Constitute an Ad-hoc Committee to:

- (i) Identify factors that create the impression that Nigeria is a failed State and to recommend ways of addressing them within a reasonable period; and*
- (ii) Identify those elements that contribute to the making of a failed State and report back to the House within seven legislative days;*

(b) Assert that Nigeria, our dear country, is not a failed State and it is unpatriotic for any Nigerian to say so.

Mr. Speaker, hon. Colleagues, I so move.

Hon. Shehu Garba Matazu (Matazu/Musawa): Mr. Speaker, hon. Colleagues, I do sincerely second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Minjibir.

Question Proposed.

Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir: Mr. Speaker, hon. Colleagues, some time in 2005 you would recall that this House received a communication from the then President of this country, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo about an advisory that was given by the American Government predicting that Nigeria will be a failed state by 2015. That letter stimulated so many debates in the hallowed Chambers of this House and at that time I can remember that an *Ad hoc* Committee was constituted to look into it but I am not aware of what the outcome of the deliberations of the *Ad hoc* Committee was.

This issue of Nigeria being a failed state has been gaining so much prominence recently as evidenced by the publication in *Tell Magazine* and also in the Mass Media in other countries and as a responsible and responsive Parliament I think that we should take more than a cursory glance at this issue.

What exactly is a failed state? What are the indicators of state vulnerability that would warrant Nigeria to be addressed in such derogatory term? Permit me, Mr. Speaker, to quote extensively from encyclopaedia which defines the term failed state as used by political commentators and journalists to describe a state perceived as having failed as some of

1300

1301

the basic conditions and responsibilities of a sovereign government.

In order to make this definition more precise, the following attributes has been proposed by the Fund for Peace; a body that advises the American Government on such issues. The characteristics often used to characterise a failed state are:

1. Loss of physical control of its territory or of the monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force therein.
2. Erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, and

3. Inability to provide reasonable public services and an inability to interact with other States as a full Member of the international community.

Now, there are indicators of State vulnerability and they are twelve in number. We have four social, two economic and six political. Mr. Speaker, I urge you to, please, bear with me so that I can go through these things extensively so that we understand exactly what we are talking about.

The Speaker: You have to go through it as quickly as you can because other members want to contribute.

Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The social indicators are:

Demographic pressure including the pressure derived from high population density relative to food security and other life sustaining resources, the pressure from a population settlement pattern and physical settings include border disputes, ownership or occupancy of land, access to transportation outlets, control of religious or historical sites and proximity to environmental hazards.

- (1) Massive movement of refugees and internally displaced people, forced uprooting of large communities as a result of random or targeted violence and so on.
- (2) Legacy of vengeance-seeking group grievance based on recent or past injustices which could date back centuries; including atrocities committed with impunity against communal groups.
- (3) Chronic and sustained human flight both the brain drain of professionals, intellectuals and political dissidents. (economic indicators)
- (4) Economic indicators: uneven economic development along group lines.

1302

- (5) Sharp and/or severe economic decline measured by progressive economic decline of the society as a whole.
- (6) Criminalization and/or de-legitimisation of the State, progressive deterioration of public properties, widespread violation of Human Rights, security apparatus as State within a State, rise of fictionalised elites, intervention of other States or external factors.

These are the factors that indicate the vulnerability of a State and I hasten now to at least address some of those issues as it concerns our country, Nigeria. We have the issue of chronic and sustained human flight. There is no point in us trying to mislead each other. We should come out and tell ourselves exactly what the situation is so that we will understand what we need to do in order to take care of our weaklings.

Chronic and Sustained Human Flight

The brain drain syndrome has been going on for quite some time. This is an issue that we need to approach holistically to ensure that it is addressed. There is the issue of human trafficking especially of the youths. These are supposed to be pivotal to our success as a nation and to our future plans and future developments.

Sharp and/or Severe Economic Decline

Poverty is the greatest assault on human dignity and human dignity is the cornerstone of democracy. It is so important that it is included in our Constitution that we should take whatever means we could to ensure that we promote and safeguard human dignity.

A situation where the majority of Nigerians are living in abject poverty despite the huge resources accruing to this country is totally unacceptable to this House.

The Speaker: Hon. Sani Minjibir, can you conclude, please?

Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir: Mr. Speaker, I am the mover of this all-important Motion.

The Speaker: You may get the right of reply at the end but you need to conclude at the end.

Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir: It is all right. I agree that we are facing so many challenges and this country is so important to all of us. In fact, it is the most important possession that we have. Despite all these challenges, Nigeria is not a failed State.

1303

I agreed that we do have our problems; we are at a critical stage but we have to understand that nationals of other countries have experienced critical turning points in their histories and with creativity and patriotism seized the moment and made their mark. To safeguard the integrity of this country is a sacrosanct duty upon all of us.

We need to break out of a mould which constrained us and stultified us and move into a mould that would allow us the necessary objectivity and dynamism to do what is proper by promoting the common good. We would be earning the same paternal blessings of all our people carrying with it a priceless reward if we would take the necessary action that will propel this country to a level where we would be looked at with more respect.

At the end of the day, finally, I would like to conclude by quoting a part of President Obama's inaugural address where he said:

Our challenges may be new. The instruments with which we seek to confront them may be new but those values upon which our success depends are old; those values are true. They have been the driving force of our progress throughout history. What is demanded is a return to those values. We have them; we know they have worked for us.

Let us return to those values.

Hon Abdul Ahmed Ningi (Ningi/Warji): I am delighted this afternoon with the Motion sponsored by Hon. Saleh Minjibir. I read the article in question and I read many articles that are associated with that characterisation. It behoves one's imagination that a Nigerian who is healthy, sound, who can sit down, write an article, produce a magazine, sell the magazine and take care of his family in Nigeria will sit down here and begin to write that this country is a failed State. What are the elements of a failed State and what are the elements of a successful State?

Hon. Saleh Minjibir copiously reeled out conditions of a failed State and the question that would be asked is; which country in this world that has no one characterisation of what he has said? Which country on this earth is not facing problems of unemployment, poverty and human trafficking? We go out to other nations in search for greener pasture. Other citizens of the world also come to Nigeria to seek for greener pasture.

In Africa, the statistics say that we have more than thirteen million other Africans that are living in Nigeria looking for greener pasture. If you make a comparative

1304

analysis of how many Nigerians have left the shores of this country and how many other Africans, European and Asian citizens are here we have to take into consideration our history and background. This is the only nation on the face of the earth that has over two thousand, five hundred ethnic groups put together to form this nation, yet we are surviving it. This is the only nation of well over one hundred and fifty million people put together, yet we are moving on. A lot of people say Ghana and Botswana have made great strides in recent times. How many people are in Ghana and Botswana? You begin to make comparisons to such countries because they have done one thing or the other right.

This is a nation that produced the great Awolowo, Azikiwe, Ahmadu Bello, Tafawa Balewa, Obasanjo and Gowon. This is a nation that has produced great minds, Professor Chinua Achebe, Professor Wole Soyinka, Professor Jubril Aminu and so on. This is a nation that produced great entrepreneurs; the Dantata's, Dangote's and the Otedola's; these are Nigerians.

Within the African context, we are the only country that has 100 per cent indigenous entrepreneurship that controls its economy. South Africa's economy is controlled by white people; the Egyptian economy is controlled by the Americans. Tell me any other country that has its economy being controlled by their indigenous people? Go to Ghana and Botswana; it is the Asians are there controlling their economies. We are the only country, yet people do not look at that angle. When you are making a comparison, you make a comparison on two stands. The first is the African perspective and then the world perspective.

I have been to all G8 countries who have claimed to be the developed economies and yet if you go there, you will see myriad of problems. Japan had a ruling party that ruled for fifty years being turned over just this year. We would always face challenges and that is why the Parliament is here. If we do not have hope in the future, there should not be a Parliament. We have said this time and time again that we need results; we need to drive the nation forward. That does not mean that we are failed State. We have looked at ourselves in a mirror and said we are not doing enough and we must do enough in order for our lives to prosper. Somebody somewhere in Nigeria sits here or elsewhere and says we are a failed State. If you consider us a failed State, then check out!

I have looked at the prayers and recommendations and I think this House has no business taking prayer (a) sub (i).

The Speaker: When it comes to amendment you will be allowed to do that.

1305

Hon. Sada Soli Jibia (Jibia/Kaita): This write-up in this magazine is a lazy job. We have already passed that write up. By the grace of the Civil Service of this country, I served on a sub-Committee of the Senate to investigate this issue between 2004 and 2005 and went to the most important places that have something to do with that Report and there is a follow-up Report on this.

We went to National Intelligence Council where this Report originated. We met with the people that wrote this Report; it is just a scenario. The most amazing thing when we went to the US Congress is that in every corridor that we met with these people they would say that they do not know anything about this Report. We then went to the Director of the National Intelligence Council and they said it is normal that they use to gather experts around the world and come out with any scenario on any country or on anything, and they came out with this scenario.

The most important thing about that Report is that at the front cover of the Report it was boldly written: *This is not US Government views*. So, it is not any government views. It is a view of an individual like this *Tell Magazine* thing that is writing something that has been going on for about five years just because they want to sell. At that time, President Obasanjo wrote a letter to the two Chambers forwarding this Report. I was at that time in the Public Service of the National Assembly. I was made the Secretary of the sub-Committee. We investigated this and called all the security chiefs in this country.

The Speaker: You need to go straight to the point.

Hon. Sada Soli Jibia: If this country has any indication or any element of becoming a failed State, there is no way the international community would elect us into the United Nations Security Council; it is not possible. Every Member of this Chamber knows that this Government is decisive on national issues. One point is the Niger Delta. Today Niger Delta that is causing a threat to the national security of this country is quiet and this country is moving and promising to fulfil its role on the international banner.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume (Damboa/Gwoza/Chibok): Mr. Speaker, with your permission, I want to read our Prayers again.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: Just as a reminder, it says:

Almighty God, Ruler of Heaven and Earth, we

1306

beseech thee to inspire and guide all our counsels and actions so that we may always work in the path of Justice, Love and Charity to one another. Help us with thy Grace to do only those things that will promote the Unity, Happiness and Prosperity of Nigeria, Amen.

My Presidential Candidate who was one time the Head of State of this country said: *This generation and the generation yet to come has no other country but this Nigeria. So we must stay together and salvage it.*

This is our country. For somebody to say that Nigeria is a failed State is not acceptable to me. That is not to say that the glaring challenges that we have currently which is our collective responsibility as elected representative of our people can never and should not be ignored.

Mr. Speaker, you have said it several times that we should not rely on newspaper publications. This is a magazine publication that has become an issue on the Floor of the House. However, there are certain facts that we cannot run away from and we must look at it as Parliament with a view to suggesting to the Executive or whoever how to move this country forward.

For example, the recent rating for leadership of the M. Ibrahim is a credible rating of leadership; Nigeria came 34 in Africa. Another example is the recent United Nations Development Programme of which Nigeria is part.

The Speaker: What is his name?

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: The name is Mau Ibrahim.

The Speaker: I do not even know him. Which country is he from?

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: He is from Sudan.

The Speaker: Where Nigerians are keeping peace and rescuing the government there. Is that not where Darfur is?

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: Yes.

The Speaker: I do not understand; where there are five thousand Nigerian troops sitting, defending the integrity of that nation.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: As I said, the Mau Ibrahim's Leadership for Africa donates US\$5 million US dollars - *(Interruptions)*

1307

The Speaker: You have two minutes to go.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: Again, the World Economic Council reports Nigeria as - (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Abdul Ningi (Ningi/Warji): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Please go ahead.

Hon. Abdul Ningi: I am raising Order IX, Rule 3(2) of our Standing Orders at page 33 dealing with Time Limit and Sequence of Speeches. It says:

A Member may speak for or against when it is a Motion, but during consideration of Bills, Reports and other measures, a Member can speak on the Bill, pointing out the merits and demerits of the Bill, including Statutory and Constitutional issues for and against such measure. He is not to speak for or against, because the debate is on the general principles.

If you are in favour of this Motion; speak for it. If you are against it, you speak against it. However, you cannot dance left and right and come to the middle. That is the law.

The Speaker: Stop dancing and speak.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: We are Nigerians; we are representatives of the people. We cannot deny the fact that we have more challenges than we ever had before. The World Economic Council here rates Nigeria as 94 out of 134. A new report released by the World Economic Forum indicates that Nigeria's infrastructure is one of the worst in the world. We all know that; we travel on our roads, we know our infrastructures, we know the type of security we have in this country. We are not a failed State but we are failing and we have to do something quickly.

The Speaker: Let me rule on the Order please. Before I can rule on the Order, I must ask you a question? Are in support or against this Motion?

Hon. Mohammed Ali Ndume: I am in support of the Motion that Nigeria is not a failed State but it is failing.

Hon. H. S. Dickson (Ekeremor/Sagbama): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker! Considering the nature of this Motion, a Presiding Officer should be sensitive to the tendencies that are assembled here. This is Parliament of Nigeria - (*Interruptions*)

The Speaker: Hold on. Please, you cannot altercate with me. Remain standing, please.

1308

Now Hon. Henry Dickson, which Order are you referring to?

Hon. Henry Dickson: I am quoting Order VIII of our Standing Orders.

The Speaker: Hon. Dickson, which Rule of Order VIII are you referring to so that Members can be well informed?

Hon. Henry S. Dickson: I am referring to your obligation as the Presiding Officer of this honourable House.

The Speaker: Good. Which Rule? (*No response*) You have made a Point of Order. Which Order in our Standing Orders are you referring to for the benefit of your Colleagues?

Hon. Henry Dickson: I have made my points.

The Speaker: You have not made your point because you have referred to the Presiding Officer with such audacity and you must be able to back it up with authority from the Standing Orders of this House. That it is all.

Hon. Henry Dickson: I have referred you to the Standing Orders of this honourable House.

The Speaker: You can sit down now and I rule you out of Order.

Hon. Ita Enang (Itu/Ibiono Ibom): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker! I refer to Order IX, Rule 2 of the Standing Orders on page 32. It says;

Any Member deviating from the provisions of these rules or the Constitution may be immediately called to order by the Speaker or the Chairman, or by a Member rising to a point of order. A Member rising to a point of order shall simply direct attention to the point he desires to bring to notice and submit it to the Speaker or to Chairman for decision.

My brother ought to direct the attention of Mr. Speaker to the particular Order that is breached which has affected him but he did not. I thank you for ruling him out of Order.

The Speaker: It is all right. We have moved on from that. Thank you very much.

Hon. C.I.D Maduabum (Nnewi North/Nnewi South/Ekwusigo): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker! I am

1309

coming on Order IX, Rule 3 of our Standing Orders which the hon. Member had already cited. With your permission, I read: *A member may speak for or against the Motion.*

The problem is that the Motion speaks for and against itself. If you look at the Resolution, it is complete confusion. You cannot stand up and speak for and against the Motion. Anything you say here is within the Motion. We either delete (a) or (b) so that we know what you are speaking against.

The Speaker: Hon. Chairman of the Committee on Public Petitions, please, let me rule on that. It is very simple really. You still have the freedom to speak for or against; you must decide. In this case, the Minority Leader seemed to be neither here nor there but he did conclude.

Please, we need to get through this; I can understand the passion for it. I can understand the patriotism in all of us but he is free to speak in the way that he wishes to; but the Floor will decide.

Hon. Samson Ihiabe Positive (Dekina/Bassa): Mr. Speaker, I am here to clearly make a statement that Nigeria is not a failed State in support of the Mover of the Motion. The challenges you are mentioning that traces us to be a failed State; where are those challenges not found?

What is a State? Simply put, it is a group of people living together that has a territory with government. In Nigeria, there is a government; we have a place demarcated and called Nigeria. In our government, we know that we have the three arms of government; the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary. They are in place here and working fine. Nigeria is not a failed State.

In the second instance, this is a country we live in; it is our own. In the same country where these papers and magazines are being published; you are publishing it for these people to buy; you live here; you survive here; your work and take your remunerations here; all the salaries and wages of all the people working who are Nigerians are being paid as at when due.

Where there are problems, the government takes a direct step. Where they do not take a direct step, the Parliament checks them and this is why we are here. Nigeria is not a failed State. We are recognised by other nationals and other countries. The Under-17 World Cup is already taking place in Nigeria. Nigeria is not a failed State.

Mr. Speaker, I want you to join me and do one simple thing today in the interest of our country and for

1310

other Nigerians who are not privileged to be here so that we give a Vote of Confidence to the State called Nigeria and deny that it is not a failed State. All the things we are supposed to do are the things that are present here.

As regards other challenges, the Federal Government is taking steps to correct them and that is why we are here.

Hon. Patricia Olubunmi Etteh (Ayedaade/Irewole/Isokan): This Motion we are debating today is a challenge to all of us to look seriously into what is happening. Some of my Colleagues have contributed for or against this Motion. I agree with the mover of the Motion that the way the Motion has been written in the Order Paper is in order.

Beyond that, I think we need to look at so many issues. We cannot say categorically that Nigeria is failing and we cannot say that we do not have challenges but we cannot close our eyes as a Parliament and believe that all is well. Do not let us deceive ourselves; there are lots of indices we need to look into.

We have to tackle the issue of Electoral Bill before the next election. As a Party person, I belong to Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and I am proud to say that but I think the Mover of this Motion was making reference to America.

I am privileged to watch the last election without anybody sending me out of this country to go and watch it. I visited over twenty Polling Booths yet I did not see one Police Officer there. Can anybody here this morning beat his chest and say he can go to the Poll without the Police?

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. Patricia Olubunmi Etteh: It is a lie. We have all passed through elections and we are still going to pass through elections. Let me emphasise that we have to pass the Electoral Act into law before the next elections. The Mover of the Motion made reference to so many things. I quite agree with him that all the points that he raised are salient but they are not only peculiar to Nigeria; they are peculiar to the entire nations in the world. That does not mean that we do not have it.

We also have to look at the issue of insecurity decisively. There are so many issues pointing to the fact that we are having problems in this country; if we do not look at it as a Parliament; I want to believe that we are drifting to becoming a failed nation. I would not want that. As a Member of the ruling Party, we should not fold our arms and believe that all is well. We should not wait until when the opposition Parties tell us

1311

what to do. We should hold the bull by the horn and resolve the issues that are on ground before we go to the next elections. That is not the only issue; we have to look at all the issues the mover of this Motion raised and see how we can make corrections.

For example, the conduct of the forthcoming elections in Anambra State, I must say, will be very crucial. If things are not done appropriately, I do not know - (*Interruptions*)

Hon. Patrick A. Ikhariale (Esan Central/Esan West/Igueben): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: What is your Point of Order, please?

Hon. Patrick A. Ikhariale: My Point of Order is Order V, Rule 1 of our Standing Orders dealing with Privileges: I read:

Privileges are the rights enjoyed by the House collectively and by the Members of the House individually conferred by the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, LFN 2004 and other statutes, practices, precedents, usages and customs.

I am standing to say that the subject matter for debate this morning is, to the best of my knowledge, absolutely irrelevant. What we are discussing is journalistic activism.

The Speaker: Which privilege of yours is being breached by the contribution of Rt. Hon. Olubunmi Etteh?

Hon. Patrick Ikhariale: By the Motion itself from all indications.

The Speaker: It is all right. You will be given the opportunity to contribute.

The Speaker: Rt. Hon. Etteh, you have less than a minute to conclude.

Hon. Patricia Etteh: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We cannot continue to postpone the evil day. There are lots of issues one of which is the issue of gender. We must face the issue of gender decisively as far as this country is concerned. We all belong to this country; we both own this country; we must share everything equitably.

There is nothing a man is doing in this country that a woman cannot stand and achieve. I am a victim of that substance; that is why I am raising the issue this

1312

morning. I want to raise it anywhere to let them know that things are not being done equitably. It is time Nigerians sit up and understand that this country called Nigeria belongs to all of us. No nation, no group, no Party and zone can stay in one place and start dictating the pace for this country.

The Speaker: Before I call on the next Member, I want to make reference to just one point about Policemen and elections. I was in Canada earlier this year and in the University environment, Policemen were paid extra money to secure the votes during a Local Government election. That is a fact of what happened in Canada; in a Local Government Election in an intellectual environment.

Hon. Igochukwu Aguma (Port Harcourt I): Point of Order

The Speaker: What is the Point of Order, Hon. Aguma?

Hon. Igochukwu Aguma: I am raising Order IX, Rule 6 of our Standing Orders at page 35. It says: *No Dilatory Motion shall be entertained by the Speaker.*

I am bringing the observation properly now as specified by the House Rules. This Motion is dilatory; it speaks for and against itself. That is why we are having a problem. I believe that the mover of this Motion should be asked to observe the House Rules, withdraw this Motion and put it in perspective. Let us know what he is talking about so that we can properly debate on it.

The Speaker: The way the Motion has been put, I do not think Members have been denied the opportunity to present their opinion on it.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor (Isoko North/Isoko South): Mr. Speaker, let me first state very clearly that as other Members have observed, this Motion is neither here nor there.

The publishers of this so-called issue are there to do their own business. You will all agree with me that in any State that has some elements of failure, the manner in which this publication was circulated would become totally impossible. Looking at the whole situation, we agree that as Parliamentarians we are bound to have our challenges.

Our purpose here is clearly enshrined under Section 4(2) of the Constitution which provides that we should make good laws for the good governance of our great nation. It therefore means that the Constitution has declared very clearly that there are bound to be

1313

some challenges. As lawmakers, it is our responsibility to address these challenges as they come on a day-to-day basis. There is no nation in this world that does not have its own challenges. Do you want to talk about America, Canada, Ghana or any nation? Every nation has its own challenges but because the electorate has given us the responsibility to represent them, it therefore means that as these challenges come in, it is our responsibility to make those laws to address them.

It is important to know that today as a nation we have some challenges bordering on militants. I am proud to say as government the issue of militancy has been addressed by an administration that we are all part of. The Government has already looked into the issue and has sent us a Supplementary Budget to address the Post-Amnesty issue. Do you call that a failed State or do you see any element of failed State in this situation? I believe that there are some kinds of Motions that should be confined to the thrash can.

It is important that we must take a critical look at our nation; we have diplomatic ties with every country in the world. Recently as a credit to us we have been elected as a member of the UN Security Council. This is a credit to all of us. If these people do believe in the tenets and the opportunity that are there for us as a nation, why would we be elected?

I am appealing to everybody that there is no nation that does not have its challenges. It is your responsibility to address what is yours. The electorate has given us a major responsibility and we should not give the impression to anybody that we are not up to the task. The task before us is a major task and because they believe that we are capable, that is why they elected us.

I would appeal to all of us that because some people may also say that Section 39 of the Constitution has given me the freedom of opinion to express and to say any kind of rubbish but it is important for us sometimes to look at this kind of Motions and just dump them in the thrash can, move on to and carry out legislative responsibilities. I do not want us to be distracted.

Let all of us agree that we have challenges as a nation but nobody should ever say that Nigeria is a failed State.

Hon. Patrick Ikhariale (Esan Central/Esan West): Point of Order Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: What Point of Order, Hon. Patrick Ikhariale?

1314

Hon. Patrick Ikhariale: My Order is Order IX (4) of our Standing Orders. It says:

A member must confine his contributions to the subject under discussion and may not introduce matter irrelevant thereto.

I am forced to think that we have been passing issues on failed State all along except if the paper I have is different from what I have heard.

The Speaker: You are overruled.

Hon. Patrick Obahiagbon (Oredo): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Obahiagbon, I will address your Point of Order immediately I conclude with our Members.

Hon. Bala Ibn Na'Allah (Zuru/Fakai/Sakaba/D-Wasagu): Mr. Speaker, let me respectfully say that if there is any other day that rekindles my hope in this Parliament, it is today. As I speak to you, the entire world is in this country playing the Under 17 World Cup. I was thinking that the basis of determining parameters of a failed State has already been cleaned completely.

As I speak to you, I am pained and I have to carry the burden on my head today in recognition of the fact that we have sworn to discharge our duties without fear or favour, affection or ill-will. For any Nigerian registered Media to look at the circumstances of our present time and describe this country as a failed State is the most irresponsible exhibition of unpatriotism. I want my Colleagues to be comforted with one fact: who is deceiving who?

In this country, from Monday to Friday, papers will write that the government is bad. On Saturday big halls in NICON are decorated giving excellent Leadership Award to all the Governors in this country by the same newspapers. So who is deceiving who?

Nigeria has the misfortune and unfortunately so that the moment people who have immensely benefited from the system are out of the system, they fight the country. This is particularly our own situation and with the greatest respect to my sister and Colleague, Hon Olubunmi Etteh, former Speaker; a person I have immensely respected in my entire Parliamentary career, she raised some very valid points on several issues including the Electoral laws. But you see, with the greatest respect, she deserves sympathy in the sense that in this House, the same Party she is accusing of not

1315

promoting internal democracy coerced us here into accepting her as Speaker in this House.

So people should begin to understand the fact that you cannot fight the system when you are out of the system; it is unacceptable. *(Prolonged Interruptions)*

Hon Mohammed Ali Ndume
(Monguno/Marte/Nganzai): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Before the Minority Leader takes his Point of Order, may I advise us that as passionate and patriotic as all of us are, let us try not to be personal about this.

The Leader has the Floor, let us take his Point of Order but may I just advise and appeal to all of us to calm down and be objective about these issues.

Hon Mohammed Ali Ndume
(Monguno/Marte/Nganzai): Mr. Speaker, my Point of Order is Order IX, Rule 5(1) of our Standing Orders at page 35. With your permission, I read:

Debate upon Motion, Bill or Amendment shall be relevant to such Motion being an Amendment except in the cases of a substantial Motion for the Adjournment of the House.

Hon. Bala Ibn Na'Allah, our honourable Colleague, has not only deviated from the issue but he has gone personal which is not fair. In this House on the 4th of June, I was privileged to be a Member and when Hon. Patricia Etteh was nominated by Hon. Farouk, the Clerk of the National Assembly then asked: Is there any other nomination? All of us were here. Nobody nominated another person from the PDP, not even from the ANPP. Hon. Etteh deserves apology from Hon. Bala Ibn Na'Allah.

The Speaker: Hon. Minority Leader, I was of the opinion that you were about to calm nerves. Hon. Ibn Na'Allah also mentioned that he has the highest respect for Hon. Patricia Etteh. Therefore, hon. Colleagues, I have advised that we do not personalise issues.

However, Hon. Na'Allah, in view of the Order raised by the Minority Leader, Hon. Mohammed Ndume, what will be your response which I believe should calm nerves?

Hon. Bala Ibn Na'Allah: I will still reiterate the fact that I, Hon. Bala Ibn Na'Allah, has the highest respect for Hon. Patricia Olubunmi Etteh but again I will say that - *(Interruptions)*

1316

Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa
(Oguta/Ohaji/Egbema/Oru West): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: I hope it is not on what we have ruled on?

Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa: No.

The Speaker: Which Point of Order are you raising?

Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa: It is a constitutional Point of Order. I am the Leader of All Progressive Grand Alliance (APGA) in the National Assembly.

The Speaker: Before you continue, I sincerely hope it is not on what we have ruled on.

Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa: No, Mr. Speaker. My Point of Order is premised on Section 39 of the Constitution and with your permission, I read:

1. *Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference.*
2. *Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1) of this section, every person shall be entitled to own, establish and operate any medium for the dissemination of information, ideas and opinions.*

Mr. Speaker, the entire - *(Interruptions)*

A hon. Member: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Will you let me rule on Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa's Order before you raise another one?

A hon. Member: Hon. Chuka Ama-Nwauwa is not properly dressed.

The Speaker: It is all right. I rule you out of Order.

Hon. Shehu Garba Matazu (Matazu/Musawa): First of all, on a very sincere note, I commend Hon. Sani Saleh Minjibir for sponsoring this very important Motion. Let me also say that Nigeria; our own Nigeria and motherland is never a failed State and will never be a failed State.

1317

A number of my Colleagues have highlighted some of the very important prerequisites, ingredients, qualities and many important aspects to prove that Nigeria is not a failed State and Nigeria is never even close to a failed State. Hon. Ibn Na'Allah mentioned a very typical example. I believe my Colleagues are aware that the whole World is gathered today in Nigeria playing the under 17 FIFA World Cup. If this gathering is taken to Iraq or it is taken to Afghanistan, I am sure nobody will be there. Therefore, Nigeria is not a failed State.

Let me also add that just yesterday the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Alhaji Umaru Musa Yar'Adua presented to this honourable House a Supplementary Budget for the development of the Niger-Delta Region, which has hitherto been neglected. By the Grace of Almighty God, we are going to pass that Supplementary Budget without any amendment so that the Niger-Delta can be developed.

On the issue of militancy in the Niger-Delta Region, even the United State of American wants to know the magic Mr. President used in solving the problem of militancy in the Niger-Delta without the influence of any other country apart from Nigeria and Nigerians. Then somebody will go and sit down somewhere and say that Nigeria is a failed State. Nigeria is not a failed State.

With respect to the developmental projects, look at what is happening now. In the last forty-three years, we have been trying to dredge the River Niger but we could not. This administration has taken the bull by the horn by having River Niger dredged once and for all. We are going to have new ports in Nigeria.

Look at the massive development in the Rail subsector; look at the development of the Agricultural Sector that will provide employment to the teeming Nigerian people. Therefore, I want to conclude my contribution to this debate by saying that may Almighty God turn whoever calls Nigeria a failed State into a cockroach. *(Laughter)*

The Speaker: My dear Colleagues, I think we have heard enough. Now former Leader of the House, Hon. Abdul Ningi, can you bring your Amendment please?

Hon Abdul Ningi (Ningi/Warji): Mr. Speaker, my Amendment is that we delete Prayer (a) (i) and (ii) as follows:

(a) Constitute an Ad-hoc Committee to:

(i) Identify factors that create the impression that Nigeria is a failed State and to

1318

recommend ways of addressing them within a reasonable period; and

(ii) Identify those elements that contribute to the making of a failed State and report back to the House within 7 legislative days:

The only prayer that should remain is the following:

Assert that Nigeria our dear country is not a failed State and it is unpatriotic for any Nigerian to say so. That is just my singular prayer.

The Speaker: Is any Member seconding the Amendment?

Hon. Andrew Uchendu (Ikwerre/Emohua): I rise to second the Amendment as moved.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Main Question as amended put and agreed to.

Resolved:

The House:

Noted with surprise the negative, uncomplimentary and unpatriotic cover story of the Tell Magazine of 5th October, 2009, titled: The Making of a Failed State.

Aware that Nigeria, like other developing countries, is grappling with myriads of problems like lack of adequate power supply, youth unemployment, poverty, hunger and general insecurity, etc;

Concerned that the said cover story concluded that Nigeria as a state is racing into a complete eclipse and not alluding that much reforms could still be achieved;

Worried that there are problems like sectarian violence, civil crises, communal clashes, kidnappings, cultism, killings and robberies, vandalism, etc but we should not create the impression that these problems are insurmountable and would last forever for it is often said; where there is a will, there is a way.

Further aware that a successful Nigeria can help transform the fortunes of the African Continent in the 21st Century.

Resolves to:

1319

Assert that Nigeria, our dear country, is not a failed State and it is unpatriotic for any Nigerian to say so.

The President: My dear Colleagues, the beauty about democracy is that we have the Right to Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Association and right here a number of us even made intention to speak against but it is also clear that when the Question was put only a Member indicated.

It was a very interesting topic and we have come out with a position on it. Now let us move forward as a nation.

Hon. Bitrus Kaze (Jos South/Jos East): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Hon. Bitrus Kaze, what is your Point of Order against the Speaker?

Hon. Bitrus Kaze: My Point of Order is Order V Rule 2 of our Standing Orders.

The Speaker: Can you read it, please?

Hon. Bitrus Kaze: It says:

Any Member may rise at any time to speak upon a matter of privilege suddenly arising, and he shall be prepared to move, without notice, a motion declaring that a contempt or breach of privilege has been committed, or referring the matter to the Committee on Ethics and Privileges, but if the matter is raised in Committee of the Whole House, the Chairman shall leave the Chair on an order to report progress.

In my opinion, you were right when you ruled that in debating a Motion there are two sides to it; those for and those against. Notwithstanding the ruling, it is only fair that those who have statements to make against a Motion or a Bill be given the Floor to speak. The ruling will be made by Mr. Speaker as far as our Rules are concerned but to give us the opportunity to speak for or against is our privilege and I am of the opinion that my privilege has been suppressed.

The Speaker: Hon. Bitrus Kaze, that was well said but for your information, that debate went on for one and half hours and this House has taken a position on that. So, next time if you raise up your hand for a Point of Order and I have the impression that you will be referring us to something that we have ruled upon, you may not be recognised.

1320

Partial and Non-Implementation of the 2008/2009 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Quick-win Projects

The Speaker: The next is a Motion on the Partial and Non-implementation of the 2008/2009 Millennium Development Goals, Quick-win Projects standing in the name of Hon. Dino Melaye.

Hon. Melaye is invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Dino Melaye (Kabba/Bunu/Ijumu): Mr. Speaker, this House:

Notes that the partial and non-implementation for the 2008/2009 Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) Quick-win projects is not only disturbing but calls for immediate attention;

Further notes that since the 2008 projects are either yet to be completed or even started in some areas, it is necessary to ask questions on the 2009 projects.

Aware that since the 2009 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) projects has been budgeted for as provided in the 2009 Appropriation Act, it becomes worrisome why the projects are yet to be started;

Acknowledges that since we are now in the eleventh month of the year, monies meant for these projects be released, accessed and contract awarded;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Office to immediately award contracts in strict compliance with the provisions of the law as stipulated in the 2009 Appropriation Act;
- (ii) Further urge the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Office to complete all outstanding 2008 projects as funds for them have been provided in the 2009 Supplementary Budget.

I so move.

Hon. Nkiruka Onyejeocha (Isuikwuato/Umunneochi): Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion as moved by Hon. Dino Melaye.

Question proposed.

Hon. Dino Melaye: The Millennium

1321

Development Goal Projects is a multilateral agreement globally and the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 is in consonance with the principles of the Millennium Development Goals.

If I have your permission, I want to read Section 14(2)(b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It reads thus:

It is hereby, accordingly, declared that - the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government.

The projects in question are projects for the masses of this country. You would recall that in my earlier presentation I spoke about a multilateral agreement with the United Nations of which Nigeria is a member and signatory. The Millennium Development Goal Project is one of the pre-conditions that Nigeria signed to in order for the country to enjoy debt relief. That means it becomes imperative, mandatory, pertinent, compulsory and a bitter necessity that the projects be executed and completed because it is one of the conditions that warranted the debt relief that Nigeria got and we agreed that we were going to implement the Millennium Development Goal projects. It is on that account that we got the debt relief.

It is very sad that a provision has been provided in the 2009 projects of the Millennium Development Goals for these Quick-win Projects. What are we talking about? We are talking about potable water for rural communities, equipping our hospitals for medical services, upgrading our schools; these are projects in the 2008 and 2009 Millennium Development Goals.

For the 2008 project, even by the assessment of the Office of the Millennium Development Goals, their performance as recorded by them, not assessed by this House, is a beautiful nonsense. If by their own assessments, they said that performance is low and the 2008 projects have not been completed; today is the 5th of November, 2009 and the 2009 project is yet to kick-start, then the situation is outrageously calamitous; it is begging for attention and it is only this honourable House that is the voice of the voiceless; that is the last bus stop of the masses of this country and the masses in our various Constituencies and indeed Nigeria at large are the beneficiaries of these projects.

Every Wednesday the Federal Executive Council sits and approves tens of billions of Naira on projects in the Federal Capital and other urban cities of this country. Just yesterday, the Federal Executive Council approved over ₦2.0 billion and projects are going on. Then I want to say that a man in *Iluke* in my own Federal Constituency, a man from a village in *Ningi*; a man or a woman from the remotest part of *Nafada*, will

1322

not benefit from the Abuja Boulevard contract. What they would benefit from is this Quick-win projects that are sited in the remotest part of the rural areas of this country. I want this House today to unravel the magical, celestial or whatever reason that is responsible for the delay of these projects and for the kick-off of the execution.

If you are talking about Due Process, I begin to wonder that all these other multibillion Naira projects also go through the same Due Process. And if they can pass through Due Process, then why not these projects that have direct concomitant effect on the lives of the masses of this country? I will not want to belabour us with unnecessary commentaries or rhetoric.

I want to conclude that on behalf of the masses of this country, every Member of this House; from the Speaker to the sweeper of this exalted Chamber! (*Interruptions*)

The Speaker: The sweeper is not a Member of this House.

Hon. Dino Melaye: Mr. Speaker, I am speaking on behalf of the masses.

The Speaker: You said every Member from the Speaker to the sweeper.

Hon. Dino Melaye: It is all right. I call on every one of us - Members or Sweepers, that we must decide either to work in the light of creative altruism or we perish in the darkness of destructive selfishness.

The Speaker: The Chairman, Committee on MDGs, you are not raising up your hands? Any way, you have to talk, please. The Chairman, Committee on MDGs, you have the Floor.

Hon. Saudatu A. Sani (Lere): Mr. Speaker, I was thinking that I would allow other people to speak after which I will speak. As a matter of fact, I want to speak against the Motion.

The Speaker: It is all right.

Hon. Solomon U. Agidani (Apa/Agatu): I am a Member of the Millennium Development Goals Committee. The issue of the non-implementation of MDGs projects is a very serious one. It is serious because, as the mover of the Motion has succinctly put it, we got into this because the United Nations agreed that there was poverty in our land and a few other challenges that we are facing as nations in the Third World. They came in with the programme of the Millennium Development Goals terminating in 2015.

1323

How many years are we away? On account of this, part of our debt was forgiven us. Prior to debt forgiveness, we were servicing the interest on our foreign debts with \$2 billion annually from 1999 to about 2005 or so. Now, 50 percent of the amount that we would have required to service debts which is \$1 billion has been dedicated to funding MGDs.

A few issues are wrong; firstly, the figure has been pegged at ₦110 billion annually; I disagreed with that figure. The figure in the MOU says \$1 billion. So as the value of Naira to Dollar continues to move the amount gets adjusted. The adjustment has not been reflected.

Secondly, the implementation of the MDGs started in 2007. In 2007, out of ₦110 billion ₦75 billion was spent. There was a balance of ₦35 billion. We requested to know why the balance of ₦35 billion was carried over into another year's Budget outside MDG.

The point being made here is that MDG is such a severe thing that deals with poverty; maternal health; education and all of that and these issues continued to confront us. Why do we take unspent monies of the MDG into other sectors? It is wrong.

Now, we are in 2009; precisely 5th of October, 2009, but we are still implementing 2008 budget. Indeed this is inexcusable that 2009 projects have not started and you will discover that even 2008 has not enjoyed up to 50 per cent implementation.

This state of affairs requires a holistic, very dynamic and strong condemnation from the Parliament and that something urgent be done about the 2009 projects and the completion of 2008 projects.

Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno (Monguno/Marte/Nganzai): First and foremost, I associate myself fully with all the submissions made by the mover of the Motion and submit further that this Motion is timely. I will give an example with my constituency.

In the 2008 budget, of all the projects that were meant to be executed in my constituency, only one of them is ongoing but it is not yet completed. One of them was completely cancelled. With respect to projects in the 2009 Budget as they affect my constituency, up till now they have not been implemented.

There is a serious problem about this Millennium Development Goals. Even this morning some people in my constituency called me and asked me about the status of these projects. In fact, my opponents are now making heavy weather out of it. They are going round and saying that I have pocketed the money; that this

1324

money has been released and that I hijacked the money and pocketed it for my own personal use.

This issue of MDGs, if you want to stop the issue of non-return of majority of Members to Parliament by 2011, should be seriously tackled because it is going to cost us a lot. Our opponents are making heavy weather out of it. This Motion is timely and I urge all hon. Members to support it in the interest of the development of our rural constituencies.

Hon. Yacoob E.B. Alebiosu (Kosofe): Mr. Speaker, yesterday in this Chamber a statement was made where it was said that two people were discussing and wondered what the Constitution meant and that one of them said it is a book being read at the National Assembly in Abuja. This is an understanding of the grassroots, with all due respect. It is only the elites I assume that understand what the job of the National Assembly is. The MDG project is a bridge between us Members of the National Assembly and the people at home.

A week ago, I got a telephone call from a Principal stating that one of the projects that commenced about six or seven months ago was still at the floor slab level. They went on holidays, came back and it was still at the same level. I was told to submit a list of projects that I wanted done in my constituency for 2009; despite the fact that we do not need water in my constituency at this point in time.

The Speaker: Hold on, there is water in your constituency?

Hon. Yacoob E.B. Alebiosu: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I had asked for transformers because across the twenty-one wards, this is the major problem confronting us but I was restricted to certain projects. As we speak now, they say half bread is better than none; we still have not got any project completed in 2008 not to talk of 2009. I wonder how it will look when I go back in another month as we start to discuss or deliberate on the budget for next year and I ask them to bring another project for me to do; I will now become a liar. I am happy that this Motion has come at this point in time.

Hon. Gbenga Aremo Oduwaiye (Ijebu-Ode/Ijebu North East/Odogbolu): Mr. Speaker if you permit me, I would like to put more interesting dimension to this. The mover of this Motion I must say has given us an aggregate amount of the performance of the MDGs but I want to put it to this House that further analysis has shown that even this number that we are saying is dismal is largely those that were put in there by the ministries and the MDAs themselves. The truth of the matter is that as at today, the part that is largely undone are the ones that are recommended by the elected

1325

representatives of the people. Why this is important is that this year we passed a budget of about ₦2.3 trillion while we passed a budget of trillions of Naira last year. In my constituency, I make bold to say that of all those trillions, the only projects that are uncompleted are the ones that were initiated into the MDG budget.

Now, the tragedy of this is that Committees of this House have been going out to investigate the problems with this country. The Committee on Works just came back after inspecting all the roads. Most of the roads that are in the most deplorable state are not in the budget. The ministry put roads that they feel are important but we the elected representatives of the people that relate with them every day, we put in projects and these projects are the ones that are not done.

For this year we have passed a budget of over ₦2 trillion. As I am speaking to you the people of Ijebu Central Federal Constituency only have the MDG Quick-win project which in itself is supposed to be a quick-win. For 2008, we have only achieved less than 50 per cent; now we are talking about 2009. We are saying that the President is going to submit the Appropriation estimate for 2010.

We need to make up our minds; are we making budgets just to fulfil righteousness or we are making budget to serve the people of this country? This House is the only House that can answer that question and I call all of us to speak firmly and clearly on this issue.

Hon. Patrick A. Ikhariale (Esan Central/ Esan West/Igueben): I rise to support in very clear terms the Motion that has been ably moved by my Colleague, Hon. Dino Melaye.

The beauty of this Motion is that virtually every Member of this House is directly or otherwise affected by the poor performance of the Millennium Development Goal projects. It is painful to imagine that the reason for the government taking these projects to a particular office known as MDGs Office today was to bring about efficiency and uniformity in the nature of jobs and projects across the constituencies but that is a far cry from the truth. The fact remains very clearly that they are contributing in no small measure to giving us particularly Members of this House very bad names before our various constituents. The spirit with which the budget of 2008 and 2009 were passed had in mind that the MDGs projects were to be given a very good account of each and every one of us here but the reverse is the case.

As Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno mentioned earlier, I am beginning to wonder whether this office is working in tandem with the enemies of the government

1326

or the enemies of this honourable House. We do not have to beat about the bush over this subject matter. I pray Members of this House to support *in toto* the prayers of this Motion. Before I take my humble seat, may I add that Prayers (i) and (ii) of this Motion be taken care of clearly before 2010 Budget is presented to this august Chamber.

Hon Emmanuel N. Deeyah (Gokana/Khana): Mr. Speaker, this Motion is coming up at an auspicious time. It is auspicious because we are just getting to the end of the year and we are looking forward to a new budget of the year 2010.

Now we are talking about MDGs. I would like to expand this Motion to look at this as just a tip of the iceberg because what we have seen here is spread all over the system. It is so in most of our ministries, departments and agencies.

The question to ask is who is responsible? We are politicians; our period is tenured. These MDAs have leadership but there is the machine room that stays over the period. The question we have to ask ourselves is; are they in the right frame of mind? Are they doing the job? There was a time the issue was non-release of funds but today the issue is no longer non-release of funds; the funds are there but they are not being utilised. What is the problem?

I believe that if we stand here and talk, so long as we do not have the Special Adviser or the Ministers here we may not find a solution to these problems. I would suggest that we expand it to involve a Public Hearing where key stakeholders on these projects would be invited.

Let me take you back to what happened recently when the issue of tenure for Directors and Permanent Secretaries in the Ministry was an issue. I took up the new Head of Service and I said to him; we are stakeholders. What are you doing? He sat down with me and gave me a picture of somebody sitting on a seat for seventeen years for as long as he wishes; would there be moral?

The Speaker: Hold on. Are you saying somebody has been sitting on one seat for seventeen years?

Hon Emmanuel Deeyah: Yes, like a Director or a Permanent Secretary in an office.

The Speaker: For seventeen years?

Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah: Yes.

1327

The Speaker: How do we develop?

Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah: What he has just done was to say that based on the calculation if you got into

Service as a fresh graduate on Grade Level 08 by your progression to the point of a Director you should not serve for more than sixteen years. So, if you become a Director, you should do it for four years and another four years and no more. Beyond that you have to either be a Permanent Secretary or you move on so that people will have a sense of belonging. What was happening was; no matter what I do, the Director is not going to retire since I will retire before him. Therefore, I will not attend to any paper that does not have any direct benefit to me.

What happened? When an examination was conducted to replace the present batch of the Permanent Secretaries and Directors that were to be retired, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to say it; the cut-off mark had to be lowered for the normal spread to be achieved.

What does that tell you?

The Speaker: I would like you to explain that?

Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah: What I am saying is that promotion examination was conducted for those who had been identified and qualified to become Directors and Permanent Secretaries. When the result was published, a lot of them fell below the cut-off mark. To achieve the spread to take care of all the States and reflect Federal Character, the cut-off mark had to be lowered. What does that tell you? It means that we have a workforce that is weak and that is not at the moment ready to do the job.

I believe that we would get more facts on this matter if we subject this issue to Public Hearing and ask questions because we had an issue in the past that monies were not being released but now there is money. Like the Niger Delta, in spite of the fact that all the monies have been released, they have only awarded contracts to consultants and we are getting a supplementary budget for that Ministry; there is Permanent Secretary and other workers.

The Public Hearing is another way of asking both the public and us to interface and chart a course. If we do not do this and we go into the next budget, we will arrive at the same thing. I know you have some figures, Mr. Speaker, of almost N600 billion from what was appropriated that has been released to the Central Bank but not yet accessed. What is the procedure leading to those funds being accessed? There was a time Due Process was the problem here and why did it encounter problem? This is because that office was opened to

1328

contractors in suitcases and we now said no; you must open your doors and let everybody get it. When that was done it became a problem. Today we do not need to belabour this issue; we need to open up and do a Public Hearing and give opportunity to every Nigerian and even ourselves.

Talking about these projects; they will do a project of N5 million and give it to somebody who is residing in Abuja to go to my village to execute it. What is the cost of coming from Abuja to execute a contract worth N5 million in my village? I do not expect much to be done.

Hon. Leonard W. W. Dilkon (Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam): Mr. Speaker, Hon. Deeyah has already spoken. As a rider, we had received complaints from contractors handling the quick-win projects as a Committee. They were awarded these jobs but they were not paid. So we conducted an investigation and submitted a report.

Two things were responsible. One, the delay in the award was because of the Procurement Act and the long process caused by the Civil Servants or whatever. The second one was the Director of Finance in the Due Process Office at the State House that is handling the payment. I have to be straightforward on this; there is no need going round it. You do not give a job to a contractor and you do not pay him.

E-payment was introduced so that it would reduce the interface between people and contractors. They were awarded these jobs; they executed them but they were not paid. In cases where they were even paid when they go to the office they will tell them to go to their banks. The first banks that were given the cheques will say; there is no interface between us and your bankers. Therefore, you should come and open an account in our bank.

So, it is not only the issue of quick-wins, it is the budget as a whole. As Hon. Dino Melaye said, they were given billions of Naira worth of contracts but did they execute those jobs?

The Speaker: Why would the DFS not pay?

Hon. Dilkon: They were looking for one thing or the other. So, we are already inviting the Accountant-General to appear before our Committee to explain that to us.

I want to add something to what the Chairman of the Public Service Committee has just stated. We went for training on Public Service under the MDG Committee in London. What they told us was that before you are promoted in the Nigerian Army, you

1329

must either go to Defence College, National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and so on. In the Civil Service nobody wants to go for training; nobody wants to go to NIPSS. People pay bribe so that they will not be sent to NIPSS. So why do we not introduce sending Civil Servants to NIPSS, Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) as the criteria because if you do not go for capacity building you will not understand a lot of things.

My case is a good example. Since I got elected into the House, I have undergone several training courses on Finance. My approach to issues is now different from when I came in. Just as a Member said, there is still a lot to be done in the Civil Service. If we continue to talk on issues relating to quick-win projects or whatever, if we do not tackle them squarely, we will continue to encounter problems.

The Speaker: Before I call on the Chairman, MDG and Constituency Outreach, let me ask the Chairman, Public Service Committee this question. Is there any law backing the Civil Service to make sure that these things do not happen?

Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah: No, Mr. Speaker. Right now, one is being worked on.

The Speaker: So we do not have any law?

Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah: No. What is in operation are Rules but a law is being worked on at the moment. That law that is being worked on is narrowed down to just Civil Service. Now we want to expand it by applying it to Public Service so that it would involve both the civil servants and those who work in the Agencies. So I believe that something is being done.

The Speaker: It is all right. Due to time constraint, I will give the Floor to the Chairman of the Committee on MDGs.

Hon. Saudatu Sani (Lere): Mr. Speaker, I align myself with Members that are yearning for their constituency projects to be completed in our various Constituencies. Let me make it very clear that the submission of Hon. Dino Melaye has two phases; the quick-wins and MDG projects. As far as MDGs are concerned, the projects which have health, education, water being implemented by the Office of the MDGs, specifically MDG (Nigeria) are going on properly. *(Interruptions)*

Some hon. Members: No.

1330

Hon. Saudatu Sani: I did not say quick-wins please. Let me emphasise that I am talking about two things. Quick wins is different from MDG (Nigeria).

We went on oversight with my Committee and there is a report of the oversight on our website nassmdgcommittee.org. It is there written clearly on our Oversight Report unedited. When Hon. Dino Melaye spoke, he said MDG is not working; that is general. MDG is working but quick-win has a problem and I agree with it. In fact even in my Constituency it has a problem.

However, let me say something about the capacity of the Civil Service. This year, MDGs appropriated ₦3.8 billion to the Office of the Head of Service to build the capacity of the civil servants to be able to do so many good things. Last week, the Head of Service was in our Committee talking to us about how he set up a task force that will fast track the attainment of that capacity building. I am sure that the Committee that he has formed is going to work very well.

Mr. Speaker, on the 6th of October, 2009 you directed that the Committee on MDG and Due Process should ensure that Members get their works completed. We did not see it as a take over by our Committee of Constituency Projects Committee. We looked at it as working together and we announced when the Deputy Chairman was in chair as Speaker that Members of the House should, please, give us in writing the level of their projects with pictures if possible. To my greatest surprise my Colleague wrote to me – I have the letter – that I am entering his jurisdiction and I do not have any right and I should not do it. If the Constituency Projects Committee has been telling us what the whole thing is about that directive would not have come.

I am not complaining; I align myself with every Member that the Constituency Projects in our various Constituencies including mine is not as we expect it to be. It is not working. In some places they neither dug a hole nor tilled the ground. So I thought that, arising from your directive, my Colleagues from the Constituency Projects will now work with me to find out what is happening.

I am saying that this Motion is not important. The Committee on Constituency Projects should have been asked to brief this House in an Executive Session as to the situation of Constituency Projects in Nigeria rather than bring it as a Motion.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, since Hon. Dino Melaye has

1331

mentioned that MDG is not working; let me say that right now some 2,500 midwives are undergoing training to be posted to our Primary Healthcare Centres all over the country. We have 10,000 teachers - (*Prolonged interruptions*)

The Speaker: Hon. Saudatu Sani, Hon. Dino Melaye was only referring and clearly so to quick-wins which affects Members.

Hon. Saudatu Sani: It is all right. As far as quick-wins are concerned, there is a Committee responsible for these projects and they should report to this House as to the situation in the country.

The Speaker: Chairman, Committee on Constituency Projects, you have the Floor.

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa (Ibi/Wukari): Actually we agree with all what the Members have said about the quick-wins. All the intents of the House and the Committee are to ensure that the projects are completed by August; that was our projection. Unfortunately, when we took over from the Chief Whip when he was a Leader about thirty-nine Members of the Committee sat and looked at the *modus operandi* of the 2008 projects. A sum of ₦14.4 billion was appropriated for the purpose of executing projects in 360 Constituencies. Before we came on board the contract was awarded to over 2,500 companies to execute projects in about 6,500 locations across the 360 constituencies. I agree with Members; all our hope has been dashed because before the commencement of 2009 we had thought that we must have completed the 2008 considering the fact that release of money is not a problem as at now. All the monies are being kept in the MDGs office where we warehoused the ₦14.5 billion to execute the projects on behalf of the 360 constituencies. Mr. Speaker, these are the only projects for now that the rural people will benefit. There are no other projects that they will be direct beneficiaries in the 2008 and 2009 Appropriation Acts.

The Speaker: We know that; it has been established. Hon. Saudatu Sani said some fundamental things. We want you to address them. I will remind you and I will make a summary of the contributions of the Chairman of the Public Service and Finance Committees as well that monies have been released. Secondly, they seem to lack the capacity to implement; and third, the coordination of the activities has not yet been reported to the House accordingly.

Therefore, what solution has the Committee?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Mr. Speaker, the impediment to the realisation of all these projects lies, first of all, with the E-Payment method, which one

1332

of the Members said. The contractors are being frustrated by civil servants in one way or the other in getting paid. Our findings have shown that it is deliberate.

The Speaker: Why would it be deliberate? Why would the Civil Service deliberately make sure that projects are not executed?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Mr. Speaker, you will find out that after reaching some stages most of the consultants including some of the State consultants in the 36 States also contributed to this problem. Most of the Consultants live in Kaduna, Abuja and other States of the Federation.

The Speaker: No, you have just made an allegation. Why would the Civil Service deliberately make sure that MDG projects in Nigeria do not work?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Mr. Speaker, you will find out that after Evaluation Certificates have been sent to the international consultants and then to the Office of the Senior Special Assistant to the President, it takes about a month or two for a contractor's certificate to be issued.

The Speaker: I know. I am asking you why should it be so?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Mr. Speaker that is what we are trying to find out.

The Speaker: It is all right. Can you conclude, please?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the mover of the Motion; as far as 2008 Budget is concerned we cannot shy away from the fact that there is problem. I have said that the problems range from the E-Payment method, the State Consultants and the then militancy in the Niger-Delta Region. This is because most of the contractors were not able to get there.

Some hon. Members: No.

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: Yes, that is the fact of the matter. We have 6,400 locations across Nigeria including those in the creeks.

The Speaker: Hold on, Hon. Bawa. There are no militants in Ijebu-Ode. Are there?

Hon. Isiaka Mohammed Bawa: That is why I said it is one of the problems; it is not the only problem.

1333

1334

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum (Nnewi North-South/Ekwusigo): Mr. Speaker, I want to let you know that I come from one of the States where the Quick-Wins projects have also not worked. It is a very peaceful place but the Quick-Wins projects have not worked. (*Laughter*)

The fate of Quick-Wins projects can be likened to what has been happening with our national budget and it is time we call a spade a spade. We have those that have political responsibilities. I do not subscribe to this demonization of civil servants and consultants. Who appointed the consultants? Consultants are not civil servants.

The political heads of those places appointed the contractors. It is the political heads that are responsible and we do not award contracts. In my constituency, I even pleaded that I be allowed to borrow money.

The Speaker: Hon. Maduabum, you have to be careful; try to make a distinction.

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum: Let me make a distinction that these contracts are not awarded by Members of the House

The Speaker: Nobody has said that legislators award contracts. We also know that we have an Executive Arm of Government but they also have an engine room that will make the processes. The problem some hon. Members are saying is that when it comes to processes the political head which is the Minister or the Director General is not the person who is going to carry papers from one table to the other.

We are talking about the Director of Finance. Job has been awarded by the political head, as you claimed, and monies are not released. Therefore, it is not the political head that will do the job of the Director of Finance whose duty it is to pay.

Where we are now is that the contract has been awarded; the money is there but it is not being released.

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum: Mr. Speaker, my contribution may not be the way you want it. It is simple. You have given me a job and the Director of Finance is preventing me from working. My duty is to fire him or look for somebody that will fire him.

If we do not get to that stage, these things will never work.

The Speaker: I understand where you are going now.

Hon. Emmanuel Nwiika Deeyah: Mr. Speaker, let me inform us. The Office of the Head of Service is responsible for the transfer or posting of civil servants. The civil servants are employed and promoted by the Civil Service Commission. Therefore, control is in another hand.

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum: Mr. Speaker, my submission is simple and I say it with due respect because we keep running round these things and hearing it everyday. We must find a radical solution. If there is budget to be implemented and it is not implemented, somebody must pay the price for the non-implementation. It is the head of the Agency that should pay the price and if the pressure is on him to pay the price then he must find a solution.

If the head of an Agency is told that if this thing is not implemented he would be sacked, I believe he will make sure that it works. If it means going to the Office of the Head of Civil Service and getting somebody who will work, he will do it. Somebody must take responsibility, Sir. We cannot continue this way.

The Speaker: Hon. Maduabum, you need to calm down.

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum: We make budgets here and they are never implemented. We end up fooling ourselves here with due respect. Somebody must be fired.

Several hon. Members: Yes!

Hon. C.I.D. Maduabum: Mr. Speaker, people must be fired and if we do not do it then we will fire the President, I am sorry and serious. The President should fire them or we will fire Mr. President. I am so sorry about it but we cannot continue like this every year; we cannot.

Hon. Olaka J. Nwogu (Eleme/Oyigbo/Tai): Mr. Speaker, the Special Assistant to the President told the nation not too long ago that so far in the last four years MDG has spent ~~N~~430 billion. Now, we have 774 local governments. If you did a very simple calculation, you would find that you could have spent ~~N~~500 million in each local government and you would have a lot of money left.

I am going to ask if there is any Member here whose constituency or more importantly because I represent three local government areas in my constituency whose constituency has received value for money to the tune of ~~N~~500 million from the programme whether quick-wins or MDG?

1335

My attitude here is that we have a constitutional duty to ensure that this money even though it was for debt relief is still Nigerian money; money that we would have paid elsewhere, we are told that because we have deficiencies in basic things we should spend this money to deal with those basic things. The framework for this programme is faulty.

While I acknowledge that the lady in charge may be working very hard, I do not think that the amount of money and the responsibility should be on the shoulders of an individual.

I therefore think that we should have a Commission where there will be representatives from the various States to ensure that things that should happen in States do happen in those States. We should stop the current situation where a hardworking woman is overburdened and over saddled.

Let us have representatives so that they can follow up.

The Speaker: What happens if the DFS of that Commission refuses to release the money too?

Hon. Olaka J. Nwogu: I do not accept the argument that there is the problem of non-release of money. I am on all fours with Hon. CID Maduabum when he said contract is awarded and executed. You approved and ordered for payment but somebody refuses just because they want to keep the money or what? That argument is weak.

The Speaker: It is the reality; about ₦600 billion is in the Central Bank but it is not being accessed.

Hon. Olaka J. Nwogu: There are administrative machineries for dealing with that but there are more fundamental issues I want to bring out. Looking at the programme, you will find that while in some States monies are spent, in some other States because of the current framework of partnership, not one kobo is spent.

For instance, in River State where I come from, till date not a kobo has been spent. Till date not a kobo has been spent in Katsina State where the President is from. Besides, you will find some programmes that are difficult to justify. I would wonder if the Members from Bayelsa State here would tell us, for instance, that the problem of Bayelsa State would be the provision of VIP toilets to the tune of ₦600 million but that is what is in the programme. Our job as Members of Parliament is to ensure that money is spent in the way that is best for this country.

1336

With respect to our constituency projects, this notion that constituency projects belong to Members has to be dealt with. A constituency project which covers the whole nation is tapping into the knowledge of Members based on the needs of their constituents to say this would be the priority of these people at this point in time. If we understand that, then this notion that constituency projects belong to Members and, therefore, they should not be done or the concept that ₦40 million per constituency is cannot hold water.

We are talking of a situation where we are spending \$1 billion a year. Ideally, such funds should be dedicated between the Presidency and the Parliament. We should not have anything to do with the contractors. We do not want to have anything to do with the jobs themselves but the nomination and driving force because the concept of those who created this fund is that through democratic processes Nigeria would spend on basic things all across the nation. We are not having that impact; we are failing in that direction and when MDGs fund is literally being dissipated in every Ministry; you cannot put a hold on it.

I urge, therefore, that a Commission be set up to allow for more robust role by the MDG Committee into the framing of the concept of programmes for MDG beyond the kind of concept that we are having now. You are asked to construct a library for ₦3 million. What kind of library will you get? You are asked to build a Computer Centre for ₦1 million. There are programmes under MDG that we are doing for just a million. You award a contractor from Abuja for a contract of ₦1 million; that money is as good as gone.

Let us review this programme; let us charge our Committees and strengthen them; let us have a Commission that would drive this in a way where there is equity across the nation such that every State and Local Government can benefit almost on equal terms.

The Speaker: I think I will put the question.

Hon. Patrick A. Ikhariale (Esan Central/West/Igubeben): I want to propose an Amendment, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Patrick A. Ikhariale: My amendment is that Prayers (i) and (ii) of the Motion be met before further consideration of budgets particularly from the MDG's and Quick-Win Offices.

Hon. Ekperikpe Ekpo (Abak/Etim Ekpo/Ika): I

1337

rise to second the Motion for Amendment as moved by Hon. Patrick Ikhariale.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The Speaker: Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah, do you have an Amendment?

Hon. Emmanuel N. Deeyah: Yes, Mr. Speaker. My Amendment is that the House do conduct a Public Hearing to ascertain the capacity and capability of the Public Service in the delivery of this project. What I mean is that it is not just the MDG; it is a thing that affects the whole service.

Hon. Bitrus B. Kaze (Jos South/East): I rise to second the Motion for Amendment as moved by the Chairman, Public Service Committee.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Hon. Vitalis Okafor (Ihiala): I have further amendment to make, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Go ahead.

Hon. Vitalis Okafor: My Amendment is in the form of addendum that we invite the DG Finance and the Senior Special Assistant to the President to come before this Green House.

The Speaker: That privilege is only reserved for the President.

Hon. Vitalis Okafor: With respect, I take the correction. My Amendment is that we invite the DG Finance and Senior Special Assistant to the President to appear before the Committee to explain the non-payment and non-implementation of the MDG's projects.

I so move.

The Speaker: I think the amendment moved by Hon. Emmanuel Deeyah covers all that, maybe you should withdraw it.

Hon. Vitalis Okafor: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, with the leave of the House, withdrawn.

Main Question as amended, put and agreed to.

The House:

1338

Noted that the partial and non-implementation for the 2008/2009 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Quick-win projects is not only distributing but calls for immediate attention;

Further noted that since the 2008 projects are either yet to be completed or even started in some areas, it is necessary to ask questions on the 2009 projects.

Aware that since the 2009 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) projects has been budgeted for as provided in the 2009 Appropriation Act, it becomes worrisome why the projects are yet to be started;

Acknowledged that since we are now in the eleventh month of the year, monies meant for these projects be released, accessed and contract awarded;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Office to immediately award contracts in strict compliance with the provisions of the law as stipulated in the 2009 Appropriation Act;
- (ii) Further urge the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Office to complete all outstanding 2008 projects as funds for them have been provided in the 2009 Supplementary Budget;
- (iii) Also urge that Prayers (i) and (ii) of the Motion be complied with before consideration of Quick-win Projects with the MDG's 2010 budget by the House;
- (iv) Mandate the relevant Committee to conduct a Public Hearing to ascertain the capacity and capability of the Public Service and/or their role in the non/partial implementation of the Federal Budget.

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria (Establishment) Bill, 2009

A Bill for an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a Corporate body and to Empower the Council, *inter alia* to determine Persons, what Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons, and for Related Matters 2009 -

Order for Third Reading.

1339

The Speaker: The next Order of the Day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a corporate body and to -empower the Council, *inter alia* to determine Persons, what Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons, and for Related Matters 2009.

Members would recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of Whole on the Bill on Monday, 13th July, 2009. Clean copies have been circulated to Members to enable them peruse its content.

I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move for the Bill to be read for the Third Time.

Hon. Baba Shehu Agaie (Agaie/Lapai): Mr. Speaker, I rise to move that a Bill for an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a Corporate body and to Empower the Council, *inter alia* to determine Persons, what Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons, and for Related Matters 2009 be now read the Third Time.

I so move.

Hon. Bala Adamu Kuta (Shiroro/Rafi/Munyan): I rise to second the Motion as moved by the House Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

The Speaker: Chairman, Rules and Business Committee please?

1340

Adoption of the Votes and Proceedings

Hon. Ita Enang: Mr. Speaker, in view of the need for this honourable House to urgently communicate the Amendment to the Public Procurement Bill to Mr. President for assent, may I with your leave move that the Votes and Proceedings of today up till this moment be adopted so that the Amendment Bill as passed could be communicated.

Hon. Abdullahi Hashimu (Awe/Doma/Keana): I rise to second the Motion as moved by Hon. Ita Enang.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Votes and Proceedings of today Thursday, 5th November, 2009 up till this moment be adopted so that the Amendment Bill as passed could be communicated.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Baba Shehu Agaie: I rise to move that this Hon. House do adjourn till next week, Tuesday, 10th November, 2009 at 10:00 a. m.

I so move.

Hon. Ita Enang: Mr. Chairman, I second the Motion for adjournment as moved by the Leader of the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till next week, Tuesday 10th November 2009 at 10:00 a.m.

The House adjourned accordingly at 1:50 p.m.