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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

*Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2009*

*The House met at 10.52 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 Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2009.

**MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF  
THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, I have before me a Message from the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It reads:

**Bill for an Act to Amend the Electric Power  
Sector Reform Act, 2005 to Repeal the  
Rural Electrification Agency and for  
Matters Connected Thereto**

*I forward herewith for your kind consideration and passage into law the attached draft Bill for an Act to Amend the Electric Sector Reform Act, 2005 to Repeal the Rural Electrification Agency and for Matters Connected Thereto.*

*Pursuant to the above, therefore, and in line with the powers vested in the National Assembly, I hereby present the said Bill for the kind consideration of the hon. Members of the House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

*It is my hope that the honourable House will consider and pass the Amendment Bill in your usual expeditious manner. Please accept, Mr. Speaker, the assurances of my highest consideration.*

*Yours Sincerely,*

*(Signed)*  
**UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA**

**The Speaker:** The second communication is also from Mr. President. It reads:

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**VIREMENT OF FUNDS FROM THE FCT  
2009 STATUTORY BUDGET TO FUND  
CONSTRUCTION OF ADDITIONAL LANES  
ON EACH CARRIAGE WAY OF THE OUTER  
NORTHERN EXPRESSWAY (ONEX),  
INCLUDING TWO FLY-OVER BRIDGES  
AND REHABILITATION OF AIRPORT  
ROAD FLY-OVER**

*Pursuant to Section 289 of the 1999 Constitution which vests legislative powers over the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja on the National Assembly, I hereby present for the kind consideration and approval of the House of Representatives of the Federal Republic of Nigeria a request for the virement of ₦25,791,449,579.00 (Twenty-Five Billion, Seven Hundred and Ninety-One Million, Four Hundred and Forty-Nine Thousand, Five Hundred and Seventy-Nine Naira) from the FCT 2009 Statutory Budget.*

*This request is to enable the Federal Capital Territory Administration (FCTA) fund the construction of additional lanes on each carriageway of the Outer Northern Expressway also known as ONEX including two Fly-over Bridges and Rehabilitation of the Airport Road Fly-Over.*

*A detailed virement and augmentation proposal is attached for your guidance and ease of reference.*

*While hoping that this virement request will receive the usual expeditious consideration and passage by the hon. Members, please accept, Mr. Speaker, the assurances of my highest esteem.*

*Your sincerely,*

*(Signed)*  
**UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA**

**ANNOUNCEMENT**

**Visits of Councillors from Surulere  
Local Government**

**The Speaker:** We have in the Gallery Councillors from Surulere Local Government.

Could you, please, stand up for recognition?

*(Hon. Councillors stood up for recognition)*

**Hon. Emeka Nkem Ihedioha** (Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

**The Speaker:** Which point of Order?

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**Hon. Emeka Nkem Ihedioha:** Order V of our Standing Orders as amended 2007 dealing with Privileges. It is on page 11.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

### PRIVILEGES

**Hon. Emeka Nkem Ihedioha:** Mr. Speaker, over the past ten or eleven days my name has been associated with the Press. I am been projected very negatively and being accused of having misappropriated and been involved - *(Interruptions)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, please, we will have to rule on the Whip's Order before we consider any other point of Order. So Hon. Chief Whip, please, proceed.

**Hon. Emeka Nkem Ihedioha:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Order V, Rule (1)(a) reads:

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

I am convinced that my Privileges as a Member of this House have been breached. In a number of editions in newspapers I will cite *The Punch* of Wednesday, 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 with screaming Headlines *Fresh Crisis brews in House of Representatives over Expenses on Democracy Day Celebration - Chief Whip in Trouble.*

Again *The Leadership* of Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 reads: *Reps Chief Whip in ₦150 million Scam.*

At page 6 of *The Tribune* of Friday, 12<sup>th</sup> June 2009 it read: *Reps Set to Remove House Leader/Whip.*

Mr. Speaker, there had been several publications in several newspapers on this issue. Since 10<sup>th</sup> June 2009 till date, I have been getting disturbing calls from my constituents, my family, friends and associates of mine over allegation of misappropriation of funds.

Indeed, an hon. Member of this House, a Colleague of mine, has undoubtedly been spearheading this barrage of attacks against my person and putting to question my several years of service to this nation in different capacities.

In view of the avalanche of these attacks that are unwarranted, except for the fact that by the courtesy of this honourable House, I was given a responsibility to

serve as Chairman of a Committee to organise the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations of sustained democracy in the country, I do not think I have, by any means, provoked anybody as to deserve such avalanche of attacks to misrepresent and cast aspersions on my person.

When this House gave us this assignment, our charge was clear; it was certain to me that we were supposed to facilitate the enhancement, growth and development of the Legislature. The House was worried that after several years of legislative practice that the Nigerian Legislature had not had its rightful place. We went ahead to perform our function believing that by bringing together our past Leaders and Members to come and celebrate with us that what we shall be achieving would be to institutionalise 4<sup>th</sup> June as Legislative Day in this Country. We went ahead to discharge our responsibilities on 4<sup>th</sup> June which climaxed with the Special Session which was indeed the last day this House sat and we adjourned to reconvene today, June 23<sup>rd</sup> 2009.

Mr. Speaker, I am aware that, that night we rounded off the celebrations with a dinner at Nicon Hilton Hotel and of course invitation was extended to Members.

Our perception and our desire was indeed that we would try to give the House of Representatives a positive image; that we must take advantage of where we are to get to the next level because one day we all hope to leave this Chamber to continue our lives elsewhere. It is, therefore, disturbing to me that rather than getting commendation for a good initiative, what the House has benefited from this has been negative publicity.

I feel most comfortable, but as a law abiding citizen of this country, as the Chief Whip of the House of Representatives, as a Member conscious of the Rules of this House, I withdraw back my feeling; I have taken the pain to swallow the pill and allowed the public to begin to question what exactly happened. I feel that this House is an appropriate court to look at the matters before it to see how my name has been disparaged and by extension portraying the House of Representatives in negative light.

My Report is ready for presentation and when requested to do that, we shall present the Report to this House. We were not given opportunity to even present the Report before being adjudged as having mismanaged funds.

Mismanagement of funds and the issue of fraud indeed are weighty. They are not allegations that can be wished away. I feel pained because I am a politician. All I have done in my life has been politics. My career

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cannot be put to question based on allegation that I considered not to be in good faith.

I rest my case and I urged my colleagues to deliberate on this matter and see whether I deserve such treatment. *(Applause)*

**Hon. Aminu Tambuwal Waziri** (Kebbe/Tambuwal): Mr. Speaker, it is no doubt a matter of public knowledge that what has been brought to the Floor by the Chief Whip is in public domain. As an institution, the House of Representative is governed by the Rules that we have given ourselves. We have also a Code of Conduct which is supposed to guide our conduct as Members of this respectable institution.

Over the years, the House has built a reputation of working assiduously for and in the interest and benefit of Nigerians. This House all through the years has established without doubt that this is the conscience of democracy. This is the home of democracy. This is the driving engine behind democracy in the last ten years. Unfortunately, and most disheartening, our colleagues, despite the fact that we have these rules governing our conduct and our business, chose to go outside the rays of the Rules of this House and took what ordinarily was supposed to be the business of the House to the Press without properly channelling those issues to the right quarters.

We have rules by which we are guided and governed; and these rules were not given to us by any other institution, it was we here that gave ourselves the law. Those of us who chose to go against these rules must be brought to book. *(Applause)* Those of us who chose to go against the integrity of the House of Representatives and concluded without any establishment of fact that this institution is immersed in corrupt practices to the extent that while one is coming at the gate members of the public are already assembled out there, condemning the institution the House of Representatives, and this cannot be condoned by this institution.

We cannot wish this matter away. This matter deserves all the attention that we must give to it and we must do it assiduously and right now. I so submit.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, I rule that we take on this matter right now. I am going to give the Floor to Hon. Emmanuel Jime to speak first.

**Hon. Emmanuel Jime** (Makurdi/Guma): Let me quickly seek your kind indulgence and your permission to raise the combined effect of Order VIII Rule 7(1) and Order X Rules 5 (3) and (4) of our Standing Orders to very humbly request for the suspension of these two

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Rules so that we will initiate a Motion on the Floor of the House to deal with the situation that has arisen.

**The Speaker:** The meaning is to suspend the Rules of the House to initiate a Motion in situation. Do we have any seconder please? Yes, Hon. Hembe has the Floor. *(Interruptions)*

In observation of the Rules, that is the Point of Order being made by Hon. Jime, we are now going to consider whether we should take it or not.

**Several Hon. Members:** That is not the rule. *(Prolonged Interruptions)*

**The Speaker:** I believe I have ruled on the Order raised by the Chief Whip of the House. A point of Order has also been raised by Hon. Jime. In the light of the situation, Hon Jime is offering to stand his point of Order down to allow Hon. Dino Melaye to make his point of Order.

Now, Hon. Dino Melaye, which point of Order are you raising, please?

**Hon. Dino Melaye** (Kabba/Bunu/Ijumu): My point is Order V of our Standing Orders dealing with Privileges. It is on page 11.

Mr. Speaker, I stand as a true democrat and as a duly elected Member of this Parliament, I deserve to be heard just as I have listened to others. I do believe I am addressing a mature House of Representatives Members. So I solicit to be heard.

Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, the Chief Whip of the House raised some very germane and fundamental issues and it was responded to by Hon. Tambuwal, the Deputy Chief Whip of the House.

The position is that Mr. Speaker, with due respect, ruled on the matter raised by Hon. Tambuwal and it was neither seconded nor put to vote before the ruling was made. We are in a Parliament where respect for the Rules and the Constitution we swore to uphold is very important.

Hon. Tambuwal, in his assertion and submission, said I had contravened the Rules of the House but he did not mention any specific provision in the Constitution and which Rule I had contravened.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Dino Melaye, before you proceed please, it is a point of Privilege. So, go to the point and tell us how your Privilege has been breached.

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**Hon. Dino Melaye:** Mr. Speaker, others were not agitated like this when they were speaking; I should be allowed to speak.

Hon. Emeka Ihedioha said I accused him of fraud and he called my name. I am now addressing my respected Colleagues that I will want Hon. Emeka

Ihedioha or any Member of this House or any Member of the public to, please, produce evidence in tape or in video where I, Hon. Dino Melaye, accused Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of fraud. (*Prolonged Interruptions*)

I accused Hon. Emeka Ihedioha on social sins and grounds and on those accusations, I have tapes and newspaper cuts. I am not saying that I did not accuse him; I did accuse him but not on fraud. (*Interruptions*)

I have with me here *The Sun* newspapers, *The Nation* newspapers and *Vanguard* newspapers. What I said there was that we accused Hon. Emeka Ihedioha of highhandedness, arrogance and his unwillingness to carry the Members along. I particularly said in all my publications that issues of fraud, if there be, could only be investigated by the Ethics and Privileges Committee. I still remain on those grounds that Hon. Emeka Ihedioha is not only guilty of that but he is guilty of tampering with our MDG projects in 2008.

I want to conclude by saying that I will remain firm in my request for accountability and transparency in this House. If, as a House, we have oversight function over the public and the Executive, there is no crime and I do not need the permission of Mr. Speaker or any Member of the Leadership to address the Media. I have my Fundamental Human Rights as a citizen of this country to speak to the Press.

On this ground, I want to submit that I am still pursuing that same accusation.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe** (Ahiazu Mbaise/Ezinihitte): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

**The Speaker:** You are not recognised yet. Please, switch off your microphone. I believe that our Colleague, Hon. Dino Melaye, raised a Point of Order which we have not ruled on. So, you have to allow us to rule on this point before we move on to another Point of Order.

Hon. Colleagues, before I allow one or two Members to contribute to what Hon. Dino Melaye has said, I just want to make a quick clarification. I do not remember any one of the Principal Officers mentioning your name; nobody mentioned your name. I just thought I should let you know that.

In any case, you have mentioned your name yourself.

**Hon. C. I. D. Maduabum** (Nnewi North-South/Ekwusigo): The issue of Privilege that Hon. Dino talked about for which, if I understand, he seeks

that it be referred to the Ethics and Privileges Committee are as follows: arrogance, highhandedness and social sins.

These are the three issues I understand Hon. Melaye would want referred to Ethics and Privileges Committee. I do not know where to start because these are not issues that pertain to the Office of Chief Whip or any Principal Officer or any Member of the House.

You do not need to like anybody's face. If the Chief Whip does not genuflect when he is greeting you, that does not amount to an offence. If you do not like somebody's way of walking; that is not a crime.

Is this really why this House has been disparaged, maligned and almost destroyed on the pages of newspapers? Was it because of arrogance and social sins? Is it fair to this House and every Member of this House?

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Hon. C. I. D. Maduabum:** If you go outside, we are now called the House of Thieves and the House of Scandals because people are not able to separate social sins from official sins.

In conclusion, there is no relationship between the sins enumerated and official conduct. Therefore, this is not a proper matter that can go to Ethics and Privileges Committee.

**The Speaker:** I am going to rule on this matter. Hon. Independence, put your hands down and switch off your microphone.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** Can I not contribute? It is absolutely wrong because you cannot shut me out of the House.

**The Speaker:** You are not recognised.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** You should allow me to speak.

**The Speaker:** It is my privilege to recognise you or not.

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**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** No. That is what I am saying.

**The Speaker:** You are ruled out of order. Now, to move to the next point of Order, Hon. Jime had to stand his Point of Order down to enable Hon. Dino Melaye move his Point of Order.

Hon. Jime, please, take the Floor.

**Hon. Emmanuel Jime** (Makurdi/Guma): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. (*Interruptions*)

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

**The Speaker:** Hon. Independence, your Colleague is raising a Point of Order.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** No. You should allow me to speak because it is already obvious that you have decided not to allow me to speak. (*Interruptions*)

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, Hon. Independence wants to raise a Point of Order. However, he will get his opportunity but Hon. Jime has the Floor before you. I have recognised Hon. Jime to speak. Immediately after him, Hon. Independence will have the Floor.

Hon. Jime, please proceed.

**Hon. Emmanuel Jime:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I come before this august Assembly to move my Motion. I seek the combined effect of Order X, Rule 5 of our Standing Orders.

The House:

*Notes that the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives - (Prolonged Interruptions)*

**The Speaker:** Members, take your seats, please. Hon. Jime has again volunteered to allow Hon. Independence Point of Order to be raised. (*Applause*)

Hon. Independence, you have the Floor please.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe** (Ahiazu Mbaise/Ezinihitte): I have a point of Privilege, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** When the Chief

Whip raised the issue of Privileges bothering on allegations that has impacted negatively perhaps on his person and when he further deposed that such allegation also impacted negatively on the image of the House, I was touched because I am also a Member of this honourable House.

While Hon. Dino Melaye pointed out that at no time did he raise allegation of financial misappropriation or malpractice on the part of the Chief

Whip, I would also want to draw the attention of this honourable House to the fact that from the 11th of June till this day, the Media; Print and the Electronic, have been awash with these allegations. There were allegations of non-accountability and openness in the handling of the Afro-Arab Conference.

Secondly, there were also allegations in the Print and Electronic Media of lack of openness, non-accountability and shabbiness in the handling of the just concluded Capacity Building Retreat for hon. Members.

Thirdly, there were also allegations against my dear brother, the Chief Whip, concerning the handling of the 10th Anniversary of Uninterrupted Legislative Sitting in Nigeria and these things generated a lot of concerns that I agree no less with the Chief Whip when he said that not only his own image but the image of the House of which I am a Member has been negatively impacted upon.

As I sit in this Chamber and look at the reactions of my Colleagues, honourable men and women who represent constituencies, I begin to wonder if the appropriate approach to handling these issues as dotted the pages of our newspapers would just be shouting and moving from one place to the other. (*Interruption*)

Please Mr. Speaker, if there are any of my Colleagues who my submissions might be made angry, I plead with such colleagues for understanding. They should please allow me this privilege to speak my mind and they can also thereafter react to my submission.

So, the issue of the privilege that I address is that the allegations were against the House; I am part and parcel of this House. As I was driving into this Complex this morning, I was greeted at the entrance gate by young men and women who I do not know whether or not they were mobilised or hired. They were carrying placards describing me and the House I belong to, as a House of Corruption. All the magazines have carried editorials, features, reports. It has even gotten to the ridiculous level of newspapers carrying cartoons about this honourable House. This is a cartoon of the 18th instant by *The Nation*.

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While one would have thought that the inbuilt mechanism of the House for investigating such outlandish and outrageous allegations would have been employed, I, Hon. Chiedozie Monuchukwuka Chukwudi Ogunewe, would want to state that some of these institutionalised mechanisms, having been so corrupted at least in the perception of most of us that you, Mr. Speaker, having concern for the image of the House you lead, should at this point in time set up, if you consider it necessary, an independent Ad-hoc Committee drawn by you to look into this matter. *(Interruptions)*

**Hon. Speaker:** Let him finish. Hon. Ogunewe, you have ten seconds to conclude.

**Hon. Independence Ogunewe:** Mr. Speaker, I would rather advise that we set up an Ad-hoc Committee to look into these very weighty allegations of corruption that has marred the image of the House.

Secondly, I do know that every leadership is either supported or pulled down by the hawks around him. As I speak, I can prophetically say that there are some influence around you that says: *Suspend him*.

However, I would like to crave the attention of the House to say that while the House may decide on which path to follow I want to let you know that you do not leap for the hawks to perch around you; *(Interruptions)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, Hon. Independence has raised a Point of Order on Privileges and I see very little difference in what he said from what Hon. Aminu Tambuwal has said. So Hon. Independence, you are ruled out of Order.

Hon Jime, please proceed.

**Hon Emmanuel Jime (Makurdi/Guma):** Mr. Speaker, I crave the indulgence of this honourable House to come, with all due humility, under Order VIII, Rule 7(1) and Order X, Rule 5(3) and (4) of our Standing Orders.

With your kind indulgence and permission, Mr. Speaker, I move a Motion in the following terms:

The House:

*Notes* that the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives afford ample opportunity for aggrieved Members to seek redress;

*Further notes* that recent Press statements made to the Press by Hon. Dino Melaye, Chairman, House Committee on Information alleging financial

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malpractices against some Principal Officers of this House constitute an abuse of the Privilege of Members of this House;

*Further notes* that the reputation of this House has been called to question by the said Press statements;

*Resolves:*

- (i) To redeem the image of this House by ensuring henceforth that discipline and proper conduct is observed and maintained by all in accordance with the Rules of this House;
- (ii) To suspend Hon. Dino Melaye for three months and to remove him as the Chairman of the House Committee on Information.

I so move. *(Prolonged Interruption)*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Dino Melaye has the Floor, please.

**Hon. Dino Melaye:** I would like to address my respected Colleagues that the institution of the House of Representatives of which I am a *bona fide* Member is greater than Dino Melaye as an individual. *(Applause)* I want to assure my Colleagues that the issues that I had raised were not personal issues but at the same time I will not want to be held responsible for the kind of brouhaha situation of higgledy-piggledy that we experienced some few minutes ago.

If my actions or inactions, by commission or omission, deliberately or otherwise, intentionally or unintentionally or both, have generated the kind of acrimony it has generated, I want to strongly say that while I will subject myself to this institution of which I am a Member, I will not in anyway want to drag the House of which I am a member and I intend to come back to, into a mess.

I therefore see myself as a friend to all irrespective of Party affiliations and states, gender, religion, culture, tradition, ethnic, belief and age. I strongly apologise to the sensibility and senses of the Members. *(Applause)*

While I thank Mr. Speaker for this opportunity, once again my beloved Colleagues, I say one love.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Colleagues, I want to make a ruling but before I do that I want Hon. Jime to, please, stand down his Motion for now.

Chairman, Rules and Business, I believe this is in order?

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**Hon. Ita Enang:** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Before my ruling, Hon. Jime, can you stand down the Motion please?

**A Hon. Member:** It has not been seconded yet; it was a proposed Motion.

**The Speaker:** It is all right; it has not been seconded yet. I have a few things to say.

My dear Colleagues, I will start first by saying that I am exceedingly proud of every single Member of this House. Secondly, this House is bigger than any individual.

Thirdly, Hon. Dino Melaye's apology to the whole world shows a lot of courage in his character. *(Applause)*

We have had situations in this House where some of us, for some reasons, concluded in their minds that their personal agenda is bigger than that of the House of Representatives but this is a clear deviation from that sort of attitude. That is why I commend Hon. Dino Melaye.

However, we still have a responsibility. We have rules and procedure. First, I would accept Hon. Dino Melaye's resignation. *(Applause)* Please, this is nothing to clap about.

I will accept Hon. Dino Melaye's resignation as Chairman of Committee on Information for now. That means there is a window. However, that would be determined after full investigation of these issues by the Ethics and Privileges Committee. *(Applause)*

Unless we are all geniuses or fools, will we agree all the time? We cannot agree all the time but we can always agree to disagree. That is why the minority would always have their say and the majority will always have their way. We have rules. We have serious issues that we are supposed to attend to and we are going to attend to them in the next five to six weeks. We have serious issues to do with Electoral Reform and Constitution Amendment. The decision we take on that agenda alone may determine how this country is ruled, governed or run for hundreds of years to come. That responsibility is on all of us.

Those are things that we cannot allow internal bickerings and misunderstandings to come into its way.

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We must not give the public the opportunity to see us as not being serious and responsible to those things that they need us to do. The government is making announcement of 19 to 20 *per cent* implementation. This is the end of twenty four months and we need to have an assessment on the performance of Government.

Please, these are the things we should log into now, without fear or favour. Those are the things that are important to members of the public. Those are the things we need to make clear that this Budget performance may determine the Elections of 2011. Those are the things we need to focus on - electoral reform and budget performance.

Irrelevant to some of the perceptions that some of us have given to the public wrongly, I make bold to say on record that on oversight and Bills this House has done more than any.

To determine representation, Electoral Reform and Constitutional Amendment will give you the answers to that; whether or not we have truly represented our people, your people and my people. The Electoral Reform is what we are all waiting for.

I plead with you to zero in; to log in to those three points over the next five to six weeks. May God help us!

**Several hon. Members:** Amen!

**The Speaker:** Leader of the House, please, move for Adjournment.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**Hon. Tunde Akogun:** Mr. Speaker, I move that this House do adjourn till tomorrow Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

**Hon. Baba Shehu Agaie:** Mr. Speaker, I do second the Motion that this House do stand adjourned till tomorrow Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

*Question put and agreed to.*

*Resolved:* That the House do stand adjourned till tomorrow Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> June, 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

*The House adjourned accordingly at 12.40 p.m.*