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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

Wednesday 27th May, 2009

The House met at 2:45 p.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 Tuesday, 26th May, 2009.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bills Published in the National Assembly Journal

The Speaker: Hon. Members are, please, informed that the following Bills on Constitutional Review and Electoral Reforms have been published in the National Assembly Journal No. 16, Vol. 6; dated 13th May, 2009.

- (1) *HB.233 – A Bill for an Act to amend the Independent National Electoral Commission Act.*
- (2) *HB.234 – A Bill for an Act to further amend the Police Act, CAP. P19, Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004).*
- (3) *HB.235 – A Bill for an Act to Establish the Centre for Democratic Studies and Other Related Matters.*
- (4) *HB.236 – A Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) and for Other Matters Connected Thereto.*
- (5) *HB.237 – A Bill for an Act to Establish the Political Parties (Registration and Regulatory) Commission and for Other Matters Connected Thereto.*

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- (6) *HB.238 – A Bill for an Act to Establish the Electoral Offences Commission and for Other Matters Connected Therewith.*

This Journal was availed Hon. Members earlier. However, Members who wish to be availed extra copies of these Bills should, please, contact the Office of the Clerk or the Rules and Business Committee of the House.

(Signed)

*Hon. Ita Enang,
Chairman, Rules and Business Committee*

The Speaker: Hon. Ita Enang, can we also get copies of the Uwais Report?

Hon. Ita Solomom J. Enang (Ita/Ibiono Ibom):
Yes.

The Speaker: Thank you.

**Meeting of the Ad-hoc Committee on Niger Delta
with all the Service Chiefs and Heads of Other
Relevant Security Agencies on the Security
Situation in the Niger Delta**

The Speaker: Hon. Members will recall that last week Hon. Halims Agoda brought a Motion on behalf of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Niger Delta seeking the leave of the House to have audience with all the Service Chiefs and Heads of other relevant security agencies on the situation of the operations in the Niger Delta. It will be held at the Committee level.

Hon. Halims Agoda, you will not be given the Floor in respect of that Motion.

**Meeting of the Hon. Speaker with some
Chairmen of Committees**

The following Chairmen should, please, meet with the Speaker:

1. Chairman of the Committee on Education.
2. Hon. Baba Bukar Machinawa
3. Hon. Saleh Yusuf Dinare
4. Hon. Jibril Adamu (Kaduna State)
5. Hon. Kayode Amusan
6. Hon. Esem Sunday Eyiboh
7. Hon. Abiodun Adesina (Ondo State)

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8. Hon. Peter Linus Umoh
9. Hon. Patty Etete (Akwa Ibom)
10. Hon. Stanley Ohajiruka
11. Hon. Ojomo (Chairman Committee on Health)
12. Chairman Committee on Interior
13. Hon. Sabo Nakudu

SESSION WITH CHILDREN'S PARLIAMENT

Hon. Tunde A. Akogun (Akoko Edo): Mr. Speaker, as a mark of support and solidarity for the Children Parliament, I rise to move that this House do suspend Order XV, Rule 9 of the House to enable the House admit to its Chamber Members of the Children's Parliament in commemoration of the International Children's Day.

I so move.

Hon. Shehu Baba Agaie (Agaie/Lapai): I rise to second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do suspend Order XV, Rule 9 of the House to enable the House admit to its Chamber Members of the Children Parliament in commemoration of the International Children's Day.

The Speaker: Today we have partners in this House. Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business, raise that point in our Standing Orders that we may need to suspend to allow some unparliamentary dressing. I can spot one or two dress codes that are not being observed today.

Hon Ita Solomon J. Enang (Itu/Ibiono Ibom): Mr. Speaker, today being Children's Day, I rise to move that this honourable House do suspend the applicable rule in our Standing Orders.

We are all in joyous goodwill with our children and I pray that you exercise inherent powers of the Chair in favour of all the Members of this honourable House including our children.

Hon Binta Masi Garba (Madagali/Machika): I rise to second the Motion moved by the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Business.

Question put and agreed to.

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Resolved: That this honourable House do suspend the applicable rule in the House Standing Orders to allow some unparliamentary dressing codes that are being observed and that the Chair do exercise the inherent powers of the Chair in favour of all the Members of this honourable House including our children.

The Speaker: I am going to allow a few of us to comment on Children's Day. I will start with the Chairman, Committee on Women Affairs.

Hon. Binta Masi Garba: Today marks a day in the life of a child which has been earmarked for their celebration worldwide.

On the 27th of May 2008, if Mr. Speaker could recall, there was a Motion on the National Children's Day celebration and Resolutions were adopted. One of the Resolutions was to propose an appropriate strategy to deal with the three key issues confronting the Nigerian child namely: Nutrition, Education and Health; and update the House on the level of implementation of the Child's Right Act. Presently about 23 States have domesticated the Act leaving thirteen States yet to do so. The House also resolved to organise and adopt a Child Campaign Programme to support the education of the child of the poor. This year's theme for the Children's Day talked about Exposing Violence and Sexual Exploitations of children and upholding the right of the child.

Yesterday, the children had their day in this National Assembly where they deliberated on this subject matter. Statistics were enumerated by some of these children who said we have fifteen million children that are into Child Labour. They also talked about sexual harassment that some of them are being subjected to and that the Media needs to come to the aid of the Nigerian child.

Some of them made reference to Sections 28 and 31 of the Child's Right Act. Subjecting a child to labour is now an offence under Section 28 of the Act while Section 31 of the Act makes it an offence to sexually harass a child. The most important thing is that we are here discussing about the Nigerian child.

One of the children from Imo State made a submission that touched my heart when he said that today's elders were children yesterday. He went further to say that a child that was exploited yesterday will grow to become an adult today and wondered whether that adult will not exploit another child?

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I think it is a clarion call from the children to us parents that we should say; no to child's violence, labour and sexual harassment. The children today are the leaders of tomorrow. Here they are in this Parliament believing that in the next twenty years some of them might be here representing Nigerians.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Saudatu Sani (Lere): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate this House for allowing young Nigerians to come into our Chamber and for putting a vision of hope for themselves.

In September 2003, the former President signed the Child Rights Act into law. We have gone round various States in this country to campaign for the adoption of this Act. What we discovered is that most State are suspicious of the provisions contained in the Act and have refused to implement it.

Last year, about 64 children were packed in a vehicle from Kiru in Kano State to Suleja in Niger State. The age range of these children is four years to twelve years.

The Speaker: Hold on. You said 64 children were packed in a bus. How many seater bus was it?

Hon. Saudatu Sani: It was a truck; sixty four children were packed in it.

The Speaker: A truck?

Hon. Saudatu Sani: Yes. To be specific, they were packed in a Mitsubishi Canter truck which can carry up to fifty cartons of milk. Some of these children were put under the bench and squeezed like chicken. The culprits were arrested. We went to the Police station and at the end of the day nothing happened.

With the leave of this House, I will read Section 30 of the Child Right Act. It says:

No person shall buy, sell, hire, let on hire, dispose of or obtain possession of other child for the purpose of begging for alms, guiding beggars, prostitution, domestic or sexual labour for any unlawful or immoral purposes.

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The sanction for violating this Section of the Act is 10 years imprisonment. These people were caught on their way to Suleja. They said they were taking these children from Kano to an Islamic School in Suleja.

The men were arrested but at the end of the day even though we followed up the matter nothing happened to these people.

As long as we fail to punish the perpetrators of child trafficking, they will continue to abuse children. This is a responsible Parliament and we must be seen to be responsible.

The Speaker: How long ago was that incident?

Hon. Saudatu Sani: It happened last year.

The Speaker: Is the Chairman, Committee on Police Affairs here? *(No response)* What about the Deputy Chairman, Committee on Police Affairs? *(No response)*

A hon. Member: They are at a meeting.

The Speaker: Hon. Saudatu Sani, could you, please, inform them to meet me afterwards.

Hon. Saudatu Sani: It is all right, Mr. Speaker. Let me conclude by saying that this country is being viewed as a country that abuses her children. We ride in beautiful cars yet our children are begging for food on the street. We must go back to reflect soberly; we must put in place things that will protect the Nigerian child.

Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa (Ikorodu): Mr Speaker, hon. Members, Mother's Day is tied to Children's Day because we gave birth to everyone of you and we thank God for the privilege of being mothers.

Taking the clue from what my hon. Colleagues have said, in fact, the case cited by Hon. Saudatu is one of the cases that got public attention. There are many that did not even get public attention.

I know of a case of a 10 year-old child that was raped by two men in the same apartment and when they went to court, it became embarrassing because nothing would happen; the case had to be stopped. That is why

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we are saying that if people are not punished for these crimes, we are going to continue talking and we hope that as a Parliament we would do something positive.

Even this morning, somebody was in my office to talk about some cases of child trafficking. Some children are just going to be sent back and it turned out that they are between 14 and 17 years old; most of them have no formal education. Somebody somewhere just played on their intelligence and they are being sent back to Nigeria. I told him to give us more information that we would look into it.

As we celebrate Children's Day every year, I hope that as a Parliament, we will go beyond just talking and do something for these children. As one of them said

yesterday, we were all children before and we are adults today and some day, those children will become fathers and *vice versa*. When we take care of these children, we are actually taking care of ourselves because it is about our tomorrow.

Hon. Jumoke Okoya Thomas (Lagos Island I): Mr Speaker, I am really moved to see these children in this Parliament today. Some of us listened to them painstakingly yesterday when they were debating and I am sure we were impressed from what we heard. What a lot of us went through the years to understand these children are living through history and Nigeria can actually boast of future leaders in our nation.

I am happy to say that the Senate President of the Children Parliament is from Lagos State. It shows the amount of work we are putting into the education of our children in Lagos. I thank you very much for allowing these children to be in our midst today.

Hon. Elizabeth O. Ogbaga (Ebonyi/Ohaukwu): Today we are talking about children in Parliament and the question for us is how far or what attitude or steps are we the adults showing these children that they will take? Are we showing or leading them in the right steps to take and to avoid corruption? What hope does Nigeria have on these our young dynamic children who are going to be the future leaders of Nigeria?

For instance, if you visit one of our prisons, you will see women carrying children in prison and what hope do we have for these children?

The Speaker: Women carrying children in Prison?

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Hon Elizabeth O. Ogbaga: Yes, Mr. Speaker. Some of these detainees are with their children in the Prison Yard.

The Speaker: Chairman, Committee on Interior?

Hon. Jerimon S. Manwe (Lau/K/Lamido/Ardo Kola): Yes, Mr. Speaker. It happens in some cases and we are looking at ways and means of curtailing it.

The Speaker: We cannot be looking at it now?

Hon. Jerimon S. Manwe: What I mean is that we are looking at it and putting all measures in place to make sure it does not happen again.

The Speaker: It is all right. Go ahead, Hon. Ogbaga.

Hon. Elizabeth O. Ogbaga: I am still saying that we have to lay a solid foundation for these children. Today they are children; tomorrow they will be leaders of this country. If we refer to our Constitution which guides all our rules, you will find that the fundamental human rights apply to children as well. We have Child's Right Act which so many States have refused to domesticate and we keep on referring to Children Act and Fundamental Human Rights.

We are pleading with our hon. Colleagues to go back to their various States so that this Child's Right Act should be domesticated and implemented in all the States of the Federation. We should not stop at inviting children on a yearly basis to celebrate Children's Day with us; we should give them that full right to belong to Nigeria so that in future we would have good hope for our Nigerian children.

Hon. Melodia T. Akindahunsi (Ekiti South West/Ikere/Orun/Ise): Mr. Speaker, we thank you for giving the children the opportunity of being with us today. They are our heirs. They inherit whatever we leave for today but one important thing is the issue of virtues in the family.

In the family set-up a lot of things have gone wrong and this is why many children go to the streets. Parents have very little or no time for their children. Children now make friends with their peers who teach them lessons that negate other things that parents should have taught them at home. A lot of children who misbehave in the society are product of broken homes.

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What are we doing to strengthen the family system? It is important that we, who represent the people, should set a good example. We should bring our families together no matter how many members make up that family and we should influence our constituents as well because charity they say begins at home.

In those days values that were taught at home hardly exist now. We have to re-assess the values by setting good examples ourselves. If we cheat in our various places it is normal that our children will cheat. If we are full of backbiting they will emulate us and do the same thing. If we want easy way out of things, of course, they will cheat in the school. They will cheat during their examinations. If we are honest in our offices, then our children would be honest. I think the family will do a lot to give our children a better legacy.

Hon. Nkiruka Onyejeocha (Isuikwuato/Umunneochi): I thank God for today. Today is Children's Day and for me it is an important

day. Why? We have to reflect on certain issues. As a nation if we train the children the way they should go when they are of age, they will not depart from it and that is what my Bible says.

Secondly, for the children I know that if you obey your mother and your father your days will be long on earth. My Bible also tells me that and I know that this is the only commandment that goes with a blessing. If you obey your parents your days would be long.

The Speaker: There is an exception to that. Part of the problem is that some children are abused by their parents.

Hon. Nkiruka Onyejeocha: I am coming to that, Mr. Speaker. I know that as a Parliament we should try to do laws that will protect the children. As I speak today I know of many children in the streets. It is not that they do not have parents. As Hon. Akindahunsi said, we should take care of our children irrespective of whether the families are separated or not but we know that today most men do not take care of their children on account of the strained relationship with their mothers. Sometimes, you will see men who go about impregnating women, having children and throwing them into the street. When you ask them, they will say they do not like that woman but you have given the woman a child; the next day the child stays in the street hawking. We should help ourselves please.

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The belief in most customs is that the women are supposed to take care of their children. Therefore, you will see men going out without caring and you will see these women carrying load and taking care of their children. There is a limit to what they can do. So, I plead with the Nigerian State that taking care of children is paramount to anything we do because we cannot get a better people tomorrow if we do not take care of them.

Lastly, for the children, there is an adage that says: *how you make your bed is how you are going to lie on it*. Do not join cult groups; let the girl child get close to her mother; let your mother be your role model.

The Speaker: Let their parents be their role model.

Hon. Nkiruka Onyejeocha: Exactly.

Hon. Juliet Akano (Nkwere/Isu/Nwangele/Njaba): If I have your great indulgence may I wish the children Happy Children's Day.

When the issue of children is being discussed it goes beyond the female; it is a general and collective effort. No child, no future. Based on that I see beyond the women affairs and I see beyond the Committee.

When we discuss this it goes beyond the peers, it goes to the houses, schools in different areas. I want to plead with my male Colleagues to contribute to this wonderful discussion. I do not want to call it Motion because it is a special day for everybody. This is the first time I am seeing some Members of the Children Parliament in this Chamber and I welcome the idea because it is going to be a continuous process that will bring about a better tomorrow and a better future.

Let me say that there is a growing rate of child abuse which needs to be worked on. In our various homes and in the streets, children are being used for hawking, trading and housemaids.

Secondly, my heart is filled with joy today because it is a special day for me and my children and the entire Nigerian children.

Hon. Adaji Maimunat Usman (Baruten/Kaima): I am very happy and delighted to see these children for the first time in our Chamber. I thank you for that and I

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thank those people that arranged this meeting in order to honour these children.

Most of these children are like my grandchildren. By the time they return home after being to this House today, they will want to be like us; to come to the Chamber to be Speakers and elders in the society. We are now telling the whole world that the Child's Right Act should be implemented in all the States in Nigeria.

I would advise that we should stop these children from hawking or selling things in the streets because it is a bad omen. There is a saying that charity begins at home. We parents have a lot to do to teach our children to believe in our societal norms and values; have respect for our culture and elders. We should also teach them the mode of dressing. It is not English dressing that matters; they should also project our culture through dressing. So, parents have a lot to do. They should not just allow children to dress any how or talk any how.

In our former days you gather them at night and give them stories that are peculiar to your religion or to your area. Nowadays, so many parents do not have time for that. Those that were given the opportunity to go to a better school do not even have concern for their parents. Parents should try and do that. Schooling is just one aspect of learning; the parents should teach them all those things that will prepare them for the future.

We cannot go to London and start wearing all these dresses. We often see the white men maintaining their coat and other wears but as soon as our children get there they will be wearing unnecessary dresses. So they should try and emulate the diverse Nigerian culture.

Hon. Mulikat Akande Adeola (Ogbomosh North/South Oire): First of all, I would like to congratulate our children for their day today, which is the National Children's Day.

Secondly, from all what my Colleagues have said, it is important that we domesticate the Child's Right Act in all States of the Federation. As parents and leaders we know that some of these children are even capable of fighting for themselves but where do they draw the legality from? I am surprised that up till today some States have not implemented or adopted the Child's Right Act; it is very important. I would like to urge my Colleagues from the various States where this Act has not been domesticated to, please, liaise with their State Houses of Assembly to ensure that Child's

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Right Act is passed into law in their respective States. All we have said here today is based on the Child's Right Act and I want every State of the Federation to domesticate it.

Hon. Doris Uboh (Ika North East/Ika South): First, I want to start by congratulating the children. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to attend the Children's Parliament. They had the Senate President, the Speaker and they actually presented a Motion. I was very impressed as to how articulate they were; their points of view and the confidence they displayed in discharging their duties. So children, I say congratulations!

And to us honourable Members in the House, I am calling on the men to be more responsible towards our children. This is because so far only women have spoken and it is like women affairs and views.

Hon. Khadija Buka A. Ibrahim (Damaturu/Gujba/Gulani/Tarmuwa): Mine is a very straight forward view. A great singer of our time, Whitney Huston encapsulates what a child stands for. If Mr. Speaker will permit, I will just sing a few verses and if you look into the words, you will know what I mean.

The Speaker: Chairman, Rules and Business Committee, is she permitted to do that?

Hon. Ita Solomon J. Enang (Itu/Ibiono Ibom): She can communicate in songs.

The Speaker: You may proceed.

Hon. Khadijat Buka A. Ibrahim: It goes thus:

*I believe the children are our future;
Teach them well and let them lead the way;
Show them all the beauty they possess inside;
Give them a sense of bright to make it easier;
Let the children laugh after;
Remind us how we used to be. (Applause)*

The Speaker: That is all right. Hon. Colleagues, should we close it?

Some hon. Members: No!

Hon. Shehu Garba Matazu (Matazu/Musawa): Mr. Speaker, let me say on a very serious note that I have been a very proud Member of this respected Chamber. Today, I am more proud of belonging to this

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Green Chamber of the National Assembly. This is because in my ten years stay in this honourable Chamber, this is the first time we are celebrating Children's Day together with our sons and daughters. (Applause)

Therefore, I have to thank my hon. Colleagues especially the leadership of this House for doing us a favour because this is the first time and it is a historic occasion. Today we are here with our very loving sons and daughters sharing and sitting in this same Chamber. Some of them may only have the opportunity of being here in 2020 but because of this great honour and opportunity that is being bestowed on them today, they are here in this very important Chamber.

Let us then see this day as a very important education to all of us. I know that many hon. Members in this Chamber, if not all of us, have introduced many important programmes which have to do with the upliftment of the living standard of the Nigerian children in our various constituencies. Let us double our efforts and continue to do that.

As we are celebrating the Children's Day today, many children even within the Federal Capital Territory in Abuja are in the streets hawking. Let us try and do something as Parliamentarians. Let us continue to do what we have been doing in uplifting the living standard of Nigerians.

Everywhere around the world today people are celebrating the children. The First Lady of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Hajia Turai Umaru Musa Ya'Adua, is right now hosting the children of the less privileged families in the State House. Let us continue to celebrate with these children.

To the children, our dear sons and daughters, I want to advise you to, please, continue to be good sons and daughters. God willing, you will take over from us.

I salute you.

Hon. Tunde Akogun (Akoko-Edo): It is Wordsworth who said that *the Child is the Father of the Man*. This may sound like a negation of biology or standing nature on its head but at least very few of us can doubt and indeed certainly many of us do accept the dictum that the future belongs to the youths. That is why I am particularly happy today to have my grandchildren sitting with us in this hallowed Chamber.

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What we should all do is to expose them to the good and positive things that they would have to do, experience and participate as they become adults. That is why I particularly enjoyed the very nice manner the Hon. Speaker sent a message about the dress code in this hallowed Chamber when he said; I believe that some hon. Members of this Parliament at that time; he probably was also referring to my grandchildren some of whom did not quite adhere to the acceptable code of dressing. That is to let them know that as you grow up there should be some order in terms of dress code.

I want to commend the children and ask them to improve on what we experienced. When we were students, what we used to have was Mock Parliament. Today, it has gone a little beyond Mock Parliament they have been exposed to real parliamentarians, governors and presidents. So, they have had a touch with reality, not acting it out in their hostels or boarding houses. All of us owe it a duty to ensure that these young children grow up in the right way by exposing them to what is right, good and proper because tomorrow belongs to them.

Hon. Ita Solomon J. Enang: I use this opportunity again to congratulate Nigerian Children and to congratulate this Chamber. Let me stress, however, that we should do more. Our educational system in this country has collapsed and this is not fair to the future of our children. Even in the Federal Capital Territory, there is a secondary school at Apo, which I pass everyday. If you pass there; children sit in the garage to learn because there are not enough classrooms. This thing is happening daily. Some sit under a tree even in a place as good as that. That we can experience this rot in Abuja is an indication that it is worse in other areas.

In my State and my Constituency, the issue of quota in terms of provision of schools does not allow large Local Governments to have good schools and facilities. When they are sharing things among schools and Local Governments, it does not go round.

I also want us to talk about the Universal Basic Education. The Bill we passed in this House says: *Universal Compulsory Free Education*. On paper, the universality of the education and the free component is universal and applicable all over Nigeria. The reality, however, is that education is not free. I want us from our different States to ensure that education is made free. As I have always said, the greatest gift that we can give to our children is to make sure that we the privilege should ensure that the children of others are educated.

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Otherwise, they will constitute a danger to our children and it would be a reversal of love.

I congratulate Nigerian children and wish them well. I bow to you! Thank you.

Hon. Samson Osagie (Orhionmwon/Uhunmwode): Mr Speaker, while we celebrate the Children's Day, I believe there should be sober reflection especially if one borrows from Reverend Martin Luther King Jnr. when he said he had a dream that his two little children in the future will live in a country where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character.

We have all spoken glowingly of the need for our children to have a better future but I dare say that as we speak given the level of our national development, the current generation of Nigerian leaders owe these beautiful children a very great apology.

If we are not to continue to give excuses as to why our various sectors are failing, then our conduct as public officers today must change. Our approach to issues of governance and development of our nation for the security of a better life for our children must change.

I must say that the future of these children cannot be guaranteed unless something serious is done. I thank God that opportunity like this has arisen for us to have a sober reflection. We are discussing the Nigerian future right now because the Nigerian future is epitomised by the presence of the Nigerian children seated here in the Parliament today. Let me on behalf of Members of the Children Parliament who are here today congratulate the Nigerian children and wish them a happy Children's Day celebration.

Hon. Onyekweli Charles (Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani): Mr. Speaker, I see today as a special day for the children and to draw the attention of my Colleagues to the suffering children in Niger-Delta.

As we talk, homes are being bombed and children are being rendered homeless. We have made an attempt to get this to the notice of all so that a kind of ceasefire would ensue for the protection of our children. I want us to use today to say that the hostility should stop.

In my State, Delta State there is no celebration because we have nothing to celebrate. We are also confronted by the issue of overpopulation. If we cannot provide for the future of the children, then creating family is an exercise in futility. So, we should look at

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the problem of education, overpopulation and the crisis in the Niger-Delta. Please, let it stop.

Hon. Ike Chinwo (Obio/Akpor): I think that Nigeria as a whole should be proud and happy for this coincidence that at the 10th year of our continued democracy, we find it worthy to allow our children to come into this hallowed Chamber to celebrate with us. I want to say that because of this event today, every Nigerian should work steadfastly to ensure that we protect our democracy. I said so because if it were under the military era, the children may have been hearing of Parliament, they may never have seen or had the opportunity of not only seeing on the television but coming into the Chamber to see the operations of Parliament. As some of us said in this Chamber, I believe that in the near future some or even most of these children will populate the national or the State Assemblies in Nigeria; it is a clarion call for us.

In guarding this democracy, it is important that we heed very seriously to the issues that are of common concern even to the children. When the Chairman of the Committee on Women Affairs was telling us about the Resolution the children reached last year, she talked about bringing strategies to deal with the three key issues affecting them namely; nutrition, education and health. Today, we are talking about food security in Nigeria. Year in year out, we budget large sums of money aimed at dealing with that issue but as we speak, what is the result? What are the Ministries and its Agencies doing? Can we say today that with the appropriated sums of money into that sector that in the next one or two years Nigerians can feed themselves? Failure to do that will impact negatively on the issue of nutrition that the children have talked about.

Take the case of education, it is now common knowledge that on a daily basis unknown schools and institutions beyond the shores of this country come to our hotels, halls and everywhere advertising and recruiting students to come and study in their country thereby depleting our scarce foreign reserves and what have you. This shows that even in their home countries they are not recognised. Sometimes, our children travel overseas to discover that the schools they have been admitted into are not recognised. That is the tragedy of our situation today.

On this occasion of our Children's Day celebration, it is necessary that we revamp our education sector. Some of them are good but they will do more and many will do better if our educational system is refined in a way that everybody can be very happy.

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Take the case of Health; it is the same thing. What is happening to our health institutions? Why is it that for every ailment we think about traveling overseas? Can we not do better?

While congratulating our children on this occasion, I want to use it as a clarion call to institutions and government especially the MDG Office. The other day we got papers to talk about the levels of implementation of last year's MDG projects. As we speak, most projects have not taken off and which projects are these? We are talking about water, health institutions, libraries, computers *et cetera*. These are common things that are necessary for our children to know what is happening in the world but as we speak, this budget is not implemented. We are talking about last year. On the MDG projects as captured in this year's budget, nobody has talked about pre-qualification and what have you. If the projects in last year's budget have not been implemented, when will this year's own be implemented?

I believe that Nigeria should not make itself a laughing stock in the international community. The year 2015 is by the corner; we are talking about fulfillment or achieving the MDG goals. MDG goals, as far as most of us are concerned, are dear to the children because if we achieve those goals then the basic problems of our society would have been eradicated and solved. So, let us do more to ensure that Nigeria is a better place for all of us and especially for the children.

Hon. Emmanuel Bello (Gombi/Hong): I would like to recognise the Senate President and Speaker of the Children Parliament. You are welcome to this Parliament.

(Members of the Children's Parliament rose)

I would also like to pay tribute to the Children's Parliament and to my children because I am a father. In doing so, the question I want to ask is; what will be the future of Nigerian children? There are millions of children hanging on the streets of Nigeria. Are the current crop of leaders catering for the future of Nigerian children? Let today, the 27th of May, 2009 be a special day and a beginning for the children of Nigeria because the future of this nation lies in the hands of these children.

The question I asked as to whether or not we are catering for the future of this children can easily be achieved. I carried out a research yesterday when I

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heard that a special session in honour of our children would hold today. My research covered three years of Nigeria Budget in Education, Child Health, Child Development and Youth and Development. My findings will surprise this Parliament.

In 2009, the sum of ~~₦~~8,454,950 (Eight million, Four hundred and Fifty-four Thousand, Nine hundred and Fifty Naira) was budgeted for Child Health. This money is to be shared among the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LUTH), University of Benin Teaching Hospital (UBTH), University College Hospital (UCH) Ibadan, Ahmadu Bello University Teaching Hospital, Zaria (ABUTH) and University of Nigeria Teaching Hospital, Nsukka (UNTH). Each of this institution is to get ~~₦~~1,690,990 (One million, Six Hundred and Ninety thousand, Nine Hundred and Ninety Naira) for Child Health Centre in the 2009 budget.

The Speaker: Our dear Colleague is saying that only ~~₦~~8,454, 950 (Eight million, Four Hundred and Fifty Four Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty Naira) was budgeted in 2009 for Child Health Centre.

Please, Chairman, Committee on Appropriation speak on this.

Hon. Ayoade Ademola Adeseun (Oluyole): Mr. Speaker, that sounds very ridiculous to me. I heard Hon. Emmanuel Bello say millions of naira and I do not have the papers to verify this figure now. That does not sound right to me at all.

The Speaker: Can the Chairman, Committee on Finance speak on this issue of Child Health in Nigeria?

Hon. John Enoch Owan Enoch (Obubra/Etung): Mr. Speaker, the appropriate Chairman, that is, the Chairman, Committee on Appropriation has answered this.

The Speaker: Can the Chairman, Millennium Development Goal (MDG) speak on this?

Hon. Saudatu Sani (Lere): Mr. Speaker, there is a bit of a mix up here. I know that under MDG, ~~₦~~5.9 billion (Five billion, Nine hundred million naira) was given to the Federal Ministry of Health for immunisation.

The Speaker: Did you say ~~₦~~5.9 billion was given to the Federal Ministry of Health for immunisation?

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Hon. Saudatu Sani: Yes.

Hon. Emmanuel Bello: This money was given to specialised institutes to establish Child Care Centres. I am talking about Child Care Centres, hospital that you can take children to for treatment.

The Speaker: Chairman, Committee on Appropriation, do you want to clarify something?

Hon. Ayoade Ademola Adeseun: Yes. If it was for institutes to take care of their operational needs, it has nothing to do with the amount of money voted for Child Care.

The Speaker: It is all right. We have got the clarification. We just want to make sure that the figure for Child Health Care was not ₦8.4 million.

Hon. Mohammed Sani Abdu (Alkalari/Kirfi): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker! My point of Order is Order V on Privileges. I am privileged to be a father of *ten and half children*. (Laughter)

The Speaker: Which of your privilege has been breached?

Hon. Mohammed Sani Abdu: The privilege that is being breached is that we have Members of Parliament in this House sleeping while we are debating long figures; whereas we are here to celebrate our children. I think we need to do what is right.

The Speaker: Your point of Order is overruled. (Laughter)

Hon. Abdu, please continue with the debate.

Hon. Mohammed Sani Abdu: On Community Health, a sum of ₦54,646,000 (Fifty-four million, Six Hundred and Forty-six thousand Naira) was budgeted. Unfortunately, half of this money is meant for training and not for Child Health.

One would have expected that 10 *per cent* of the Annual Budget should go to Child Health Care. Unfortunately, what we have for Child Health Care in the 2009 Budget is 0.006 *per cent*; that is what has been allocated.

The Speaker: Chairman, Committee on Health, you have to talk on this issue now.

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Hon. Alaba Oladoyinbo Ojomo (Owo/Ose): Mr. Speaker, there is no particular Column in the Budget for 2009 that says that money has been voted strictly for Child Health. This is the first time that about ₦5 billion has been voted for pregnant women and children under five years of age.

Hon. Olajumoke Okoya Thomas (Lagos Island): Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Yes, which point of Order, Hon. Olajumoke Okoya Thomas?

Hon. Olajumoke Okeya Thomas: My Point of Order is raised from Order IX, Rule 4 of our Standing Orders which says:

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

Mr. Speaker, I believe we are going out of scope and we are boring the children. We are here to celebrate them. (Interruptions)

The Speaker: I am sorry; I totally disagree with you. We are talking about children and their health. An hon. Member has raised an alarm that we need to authenticate some figures that are supposed to be for the health of children and if we have issues with that we will begin to deal with them.

Chairman, Committee on Health, what our Colleague is saying is that there is negligible percentage in Health Sector for Child Care.

Hon. Ojomo-Alaba Oladoyinbo: Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with that particular position. The position as obtained in the budget is what I have stated.

The Speaker: In your view, for example, what percentage of Healthcare is on children?

Hon. Ojomo-Alaba Oladoyinbo: The total budget for the Health Ministry as regards Capital is about ₦50 billion. We are spending about ₦5 billion for pregnant women and children under five years. We are building Primary Health Centres for children all over the place. There is no separation in the budget that will state specifically that this is for gynecological cases; this one is for surgical cases and that is for the children.

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Hon. Emmanuel Bello (Gombi/Hong): In rounding up, let me quickly move to the issue of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and also the Ministry of Youth Development.

I have done a detailed research. I know what I am talking about but I will not bother you too much with figures. In all the budgets that we have had in 2007, 2008 and 2009, the sustainable child development scheme is absent; it has zero budget. What do I mean by that?

If you look at the world all over, children are developing very fast; they no longer wait for five years to be eligible for primary education. The responsibility of the Government on education when we talk about UBE is to catch them early because a well educated child is the future of this country. What is happening is that most of this early education is left in the hands of private entrepreneurs who do not follow any curriculum.

I was looking at the curriculum for education this morning and I discovered that it is faulty in that the Universal Basic Education has not taken care of what they call kindergarten. Kindergarten is left for the individual schools to form a curriculum and that is very dangerous for the future of this country.

The Speaker: A child is four, five and six years old in the kindergarten.

Hon. Emmanuel Bello: Yes, but their development these days are very fast because they are exposed to information and we need to take care as we are celebrating their day.

In conclusion, let me say that the Youth Data Bank Policy is also faulty. If you look at it ~~N~~50 million was allocated to it in this year's Budget. What is it supposed to do? It is supposed to collect data of graduating students at all levels of education; primary school, secondary school and the university. The idea of Youth Data Bank is to keep data of youths at all levels and all strata. They were allocated ~~N~~50 million for this.

The Speaker: However, before we carry on, I must just say that those figures are what we need to authenticate. It may be unfair to be picking Subheads that were not funded properly and leaving Subheads that were well funded.

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So, we may not be accurate in guarding ourselves on that but the issue of funding should be looked into for the Health sector.

Hon. Austin Nwachukwu (Ehime Mbano/Ihitte Uboma/Obowo): I want to lend my voice to the various speakers in saying a big congratulation to our children in Parliament who are here today. I want to also say that even in the Bible as a Christian; children are the inheritance of God.

You know that the reason for marriage is procreation and when you procreate, these are what you have and because you are the children of your parents, you must learn to be their good children. But I am also reminding you that they say that a bad child is that of the mother while the good child is that of the father.

The Speaker: Can you say that again? Hon. Colleagues, let Hon. Austin Nwachukwu say what he needs to say but remember that you are in front of children.

Hon. Austin Nwachukwu: Mr. Speaker, I am a Bible student. I know that it is contained in the Bible that I read in the book of Proverbs that *a good child maketh a good father while a bad child is the mother's reproach.* (Laughter)

The Speaker: I will just advise the children to ignore that part of the Bible. (Laughter)

Hon. Austin Nwachukwu: I am giving the children advice because I am eminently qualified as a father to advise them and that is exactly what I am doing here today.

Children; obey your fathers and mothers so that your days on earth will be long. If you do that, someday you will be like all of us today standing in our various constituencies as Representatives.

The Speaker: Or better than us.

Hon. Austin Nwachukwu: Yes, because two good heads are better than one but not when two mad heads are put together. My father told me that a bachelor can never attend the funeral of a father-in-law. (Laughter)

So, you must grow to be responsible men and women. If you do this, you would have made your

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parents and this country proud and you would have made this nation better for all of us.

May God bless you all.

The Speaker: If you had said that a year ago (*that a bachelor can never attend the funeral of a father-in-law*) I would have ruled you out of Order. (*Laughter*)

Hon. Joseph Jaiyeola Ajatta (Oshodi/Isolo II): Mr. Speaker, thank you for permitting me to say a word or two (*Interruptions*)

The Speaker: Hon. Ajatta, there are plenty of good children in Oshodi.

Hon. Joseph Jaiyeola Ajatta: Yes, if you go there now, you will be surprised that all of them are good children.

I congratulate the children during this period of their Children's Day activities. Again, I thank Mr. Speaker and the whole House for allowing them to come here and see what we are doing. This is a good example for them to achieve more than what they are thinking by seeing us speaking to ourselves here and will not see us as those men and women who have made up the population without caring for the children. This is because sometimes you will see a family that is not strong enough to have many children but they keep on having them and these children are allowed to suffer in the streets; this is not advisable. We have been out of Nigeria to many other countries and we have seen that they are doing well; we can do better. I do not say that every person coming should be from a wealthy family. For you children, I want you to be focused. Even the children of a very poor family can end up being great men and women after serious hardship but it requires being focused.

When Mr. Speaker invited me to speak, there was applause everywhere. Yes, I am quite old; I am not only a father of children but grandfather too. I worked very hard to achieve what I am. I do not spoon-feed my children just because I have the money. I allow them to work hard too. So I will say that the children and the parents must be focused to be able to direct this nation. This nation belongs to you tomorrow. We are having our own now. We are proud that you have come to see us debating, discussing and accusing ourselves because of you.

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What will you be tomorrow? How will you handle this country tomorrow? That is left for you. I want to say definitely that I am very happy.

I am a Member of the Committee of MDG. In the course of our oversight, we visited several States of the Federation. We have even been to the bush. We have been to the very hidden areas in a bid to ensure that Nigeria becomes a developed nation. It is only when we are here that we can abuse ourselves. Yes, if we do not criticise ourselves, we will never get anywhere. I will say that MDG is one of the best programmes that had ever been made because they go to the hinterland to see what is going on.

For Nigeria, we have a lot of work to do. Other countries are watching us and I believe that what we are teaching our children, which is the right thing, will make this country grow faster.

Hon. Chukwumaeze N. Nzeribe (Ihiala): While honouring the youths of Nigeria today, I want to draw the attention of this Chamber to the deplorable condition of primary schools across the country. In Ihiala where I came from, pupils still take teaching instructions under what they call umbrella trees.

I plead that in next year's budget, we should make substantial provisions for MDG's towards transfer programmes to the States and direct constituency project allocation for Members to renovate and build primary schools across the country.

History might not be too kind with us if we continue to enjoy the facilities in Abuja without caring much about the bad state of schools, especially primary schools in Nigeria. Even the United States Stimulus Package passed early this year contain huge provisions for renovation of public schools and I will plead that we do something to improve on the state of primary schools in Nigeria.

Hon. Solomon U. Agidani (Apa/Agatu): I want to join fathers and mothers all over the world to congratulate the child on the occasion of Children's Day today, the 27th day of May 2009. I do so particularly because I was part of this Parliament when Children's Day was celebrated in this country and this issue of the Children's Day was debated extensively on the Floor of this honourable House.

Rising from that discussion, we identified four major items of child necessity which include food and

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nutrition, education, primary health and exposure to child abuse as the key issues that had been tackled in the Child Rights Act. The Child Rights Act was passed into law in 2003 but six years after, a visitor to Nigeria may still be confused as to whether there is a law on the right of children in this country because not much has happened since this law was passed.

At a period like this, I would like to suggest to Parliament that it is a period to take stock because if we continue to blow out all the rhetorics year in year out without looking at the score sheet, we will continue to do things haphazardly. I believe that the score sheet of our journey from last year to this year is in front of us and at the end of this discussion, I am going to move a Motion, with the leave of this honourable House, that we allow the Children to partake in our Parliamentary proceedings in future, having had their Session one day before our Session on this day, with resolutions regarding the level of implementation of every parameter that was listed in the Child's Right Act.

For instance, we heard that 640 children were abducted from somewhere and we must know how many people had been prosecuted in accordance with this Child Rights because there are sanctions that had been listed there. We must know what progress had been made with regard to MDG and the welfare of children, the level of implementation of the UBE Scheme and so on. If we can help to give the children consultants that will work with them at the end of every year, they will give us the score sheet as to the performance of these various parameters in the economy. On that note, I like to move my Motion that this House - (*Interruptions*)

The Speaker: No, we are already discussing now. You can discuss with Chairman, Committee on Women Affairs on that and we take it from there.

Hon Solomon Agidani: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Henry M. Shawulu (Jalingo/Yorro/Zing): I want to appreciate the opportunity given me to congratulate the Nigerian Children on this very important day. Each time the children celebrate Children's Day, it also reminds me of my birthday and the fact that Mr. Speaker has always been congratulating and wishing me the best. The Speaker does that every year on the Floor of this Chamber until this year when he was unable to wish me happy birthday.

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On a day like this, it reminds us to reflect back on the indices of human development in the world. One of the keys indices of human development is child enrolment in school. The percentage of child enrolment in school in Nigeria is still very low according to World Bank Report, which I believe that in a day like this, it is important for us to begin to appreciate the fact that Nigerian children are striving very well to excel under very hash conditions they find themselves.

Poverty is still on the increase; Nigerian children are still striving to be able to succeed in the midst of poverty. I think it is time for us to celebrate these children and congratulate them for doing well in the midst of these hard conditions. I thank God that this year's Children's Day has been celebrated in a very grand way. It is also an opportunity for us to begin to put more effort through NAPEP in a bid to reduce poverty in the country because it is the bane behind the child abuse we keep having among our children in the streets and so on.

So I submit that poverty reduction process should be enhanced with a view to reducing child abuse in our country.

The Speaker: Now, I will now give the Floor to the Chairman, Committee on Inter-Parliamentary and see what the Nigerian Parliament has been doing with the Children's Inter-Parliamentary Union.

Hon. Soli Sada Jibia (Jibia/Kaita): Mr. Speaker, there are three things I would like to stress; if you go to the West they are very important. The first is the Child; the second is the Woman and the third is an animal.

The Speaker: I beg your pardon; where do we fit in?

Hon. Soli Sada Jibia: That shows you the significance of a Child in a society. I can say without any iota of doubt that the future of this country lies in the hands of these young people. This country is yearning for a light to flash to look for a corridor so that we can move forward but that is the light; there is no doubt about that. If we do not pay much attention to this children we would continue to search endlessly. That is the way and we have to follow it.

Wherever children are, they will always lead a nation into the future because of the endowment they have. They have no bias, sentiment and they are always

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honest. A child will tell you *daddy you are wrong* and absolutely, it is true.

The Speaker: Are you sure there is no consequence for saying those things?

Hon. Soli Jibia: I am a father of four.

The Speaker: No, you may speak for yourself but remember this is Africa. When you look at your daddy and say daddy, you are wrong.

Children, be careful.

Hon. Soli Jibia: This country is a signatory to a Treaty; a Treaty that domesticated the Child Rights Act. Up till today, I challenge the Federal Ministry of Information or any agency that is in charge of Youth Development to tell us how much attention and publicity it has given to that in order to pave way for its easy implementation or even educate the Nigerian societies. That is one of the difficulties we are encountering in having this Treaty endorsed by some State Houses of Assembly. It is not that they are ignorant about it but they are manifesting their innocent ignorance about it because of lack of information on it.

In this country, we are talking about re-branding; the key thing that will re-brand this country for it to move forward are these young people.

The Speaker: I think that is enough. I am going to give the Floor to the Deputy Speaker to give some form of advice to the children.

Before the Deputy Speaker takes the Floor, let me give the Floor to Madam Senate President of the Children's Parliament.

Presentation of the Senate President of the Children's Parliament

The Senate President of the Children's Parliament: Thank you, Mr. Speaker and other hon. Members of this great House. I am Senator Afolayan Esther, the Senate President of the Nigerian Children's Parliament representing Lagos State Constituency.

I would like to thank you for this great opportunity that you have given us, the small Parliament, to witness the sitting of the bigger Parliament. We appreciate your effort and support in improving the situation of the Nigerian Child. We understand that you are working

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very hard towards improving the situation of the Nigerian child and we really appreciate it.

I would just like to express my displeasure about those States that have not passed the Child Rights Act. This is the major problem.

The Speaker: Do you know these States?

The Senate President of the Children's Parliament: Yes. There are about 22 States that are yet to pass the Child Rights Act into law.

The Speaker: No. Can you name them?

The Senate President of the Children's Parliament: I do not want to name them. I am just happy that I have the opportunity to speak with you and hon. Members from various States and constituencies; the people that I know can help to improve the situation.

Those States that have not passed the Child Rights Act are the ones contributing largely to the problems of the Nigerian Child. Apart from the fact that the Child's Right Act is a safe haven for the Nigerian Child, it is like the Guardian Angel and without it, there is no way the future can be bright. I urge those States that have not passed the Child Right Act into law to do so. As regards those States that have passed this Act into law, it would be highly appreciated if this law is fully implemented.

Another major issue I would like to talk about is education; free education. I do not mean education where I will only have to pay examination fees or uniform fees; I mean free education where everything is free - exercise books, sandals, socks, uniforms *et cetera*.

Apart from the fact that education is not free, it is unfortunate that in some cases, it is the children that make available the chalk that the teacher will use to write and the red biro with which he will use to mark our notebooks. They also learn under the trees, this is so disheartening.

The Speaker: Hold on. Madam President, you are telling us that in some schools, it is the children that provide the red biro for the teachers to write with?

The Senate President of the Children's Parliament: This is true, Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Please, proceed Madam President.

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The Senate President of the Children's Parliament: I understand that we have all played our part; we are trying to improve the situation but has it made any great impact? What are we doing to improve the situation of the Nigerian Child?

Another point is the idea of re-branding Nigeria to be good people; great nation. I actually think that the people are the ones that are supposed to be re-branded. I do not mean adult because they will eventually go one day and Nigeria will be left with the children that will lead in the future. I think the survival of the Nigerian Child now is what will actually make this nation great.

On the theme of this year's Children's Day; *Violence against Children and Sexual Exploitation*, I understand that there is a House Committee on Police Affairs. I heard Mr. Speaker mention it today.

The non-implementation of the Child Rights Act (CRA) is what is causing the increase in violence. The Nigeria Police and other relevant institutions have not been able to give the accurate punishment. According to the Child Rights Act, anyone that sexually exploits a child is, on conviction, liable to life imprisonment.

Right now, we see so many people that are actually doing these things and they go scot-free because they are able to persuade the Police officer not to prosecute the case or convince the judge to strike the case out. It is so disheartening that so many people do this all the time and it is obvious that the future of Nigeria is definitely going to be bleak.

I am begging you, fathers and mothers, that anything you possibly can do to improve the situation of the Nigerian Child; please, in the name of God, do these things because this is the only way that Nigeria can be a great nation.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: I will now give the Floor to the Speaker of the Children's Parliament.

Presentation of Hon. Emmanuel Atta, Speaker of the Children's Parliament

The Speaker of the Children's Parliament: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I am Emmanuel Atta, Speaker, Nigerian Children's Parliament. I am representing Taraba State.

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Let me seize this opportunity to thank Mr. Speaker and all the honourable Members for the love, concern and respect they have for the Nigerian child as we have amply seen in your deliberations today.

The theme of this year's children celebration centres on the various forms in which children are exposed to violence and sexual exploitation in the country which has imposed a threat to the survival of children.

On the survival of the Nigerian child based on the deliberation we had yesterday, a Colleague of mine from Borno State gave us a vivid explanation that the immunisation in her State is being paid for. I do not know what the Senior Parliament is doing about that. Perhaps, it has not been brought to the notice of this Senior Parliament that some people in Borno State are actually paying for being immunised in the State.

The Speaker: Hold on. Chairman, Committee on Health, you are from Ondo State?

Some hon. Member: Borno State.
(Interruptions)

The Speaker: I hope the Leader of the Minority is around. *(No response)* Go ahead, Speaker of the Children's Parliament.

The Speaker of the Children's Parliament: The Senate President of the Children's Parliament has said it all. Nevertheless, I would like to plead that the Child Rights Act which is the foundation of the Nigerian Child should be domesticated and implemented in all the States of the Federation. For instance, in the North East Zone where I come from, it is only Taraba State that has passed the Child Rights Act and there is nothing to show for the implementation of it.

This is to ensure the development, participation, protection and even the survival of the children in the country. I believe that with this, the right of the Nigerian child will not only become a natural due but a moral claim and a legal entitlement.

Thank you and God bless you all as you continue to legislate and deliberate and fight for the rights of a Nigerian child.

The Speaker: Deputy Speaker, please?

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Hon. Usman Bayero Nafada (Dukkuy/Nafada): Mr. Speaker, Madam Senate President and the Speaker of the Children Parliament, my Colleagues, first of all, I congratulate the children for having the opportunity to join us today in this Chamber. Let me also thank my Colleagues for the fatherly advice and comments they have given the children.

I can remember when I was a child between the ages of 14 and 20, we used to say that if we want Nigeria to be good, then all these old people must be eliminated. We are still in the same situation. We speak good; make good comments and we talk as if we are ready to change the situation but unfortunately we are only saying it for saying sake.

Some hon. Members: Yes.

Hon. Usman Bayero Nafada: This country belongs to us all. Two days ago, the Minister of National Planning came to your (The Speaker's) office and you invited the Principal Officers to your office. We have seen the statistics of the development of various countries. We have seen how low in number we are but we have the most opportunity to be on the higher pedestal unfortunately we are not utilising these opportunities.

Nobody will come from anywhere to correct these issues for us. It has to be Nigerians and ourselves that will do this job. We are talking now that our time is going and that it is time for the children; it is not like that. We still have the time to correct our mistakes. So, for the children to enjoy better, I am calling on our Colleagues; not only the Parliaments but including the Civil Servants who do most of the technical work of the country to let us put our heads together and know that this country is ours.

Many of us here mentioned the issue of taking our children abroad for medical care, schooling and so many other things. At a point, I want to believe that many of us do not even like their children to spend their holidays in Nigeria just because they know the children will have a better holiday time outside Nigeria. We have the opportunity to create this conducive environment in Nigeria that we can take our children to. Why are we taking our resources outside this country? It is very painful. We should be serious. We should not only say it; we should do it.

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If you look at countries like India, Pakistan and our neighboring country, Ghana; they are doing better. They do not have better people and brains than

Nigerians. So, as one of the speakers said, the re-branding should be of our people, not re-branding of the country. We need to re-brand ourselves and start thinking about our country. This is my piece of advice to my fellow Nigerians so that the future of the child will be a better one.

As some of us have said, a child is the father and I want to believe that he is the father. If he sees good examples from the present father, he will be a better father but if what he can see from the present father is bad deeds, bad examples and behaviours, that is how the child will grow.

Therefore, I am calling on fathers and mothers, not only here in the Parliament but throughout the country that we should teach our children good behaviour. We should teach our children how to accommodate others and how to have the interest of their nation in their heart. I am saying this deep from my heart that it is not too late for all of us that are here. With just two years left to serve in this Assembly, we Members of this honourable House, have ample opportunity to correct so many mistakes of this country.

The Speaker: Madam President, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Principal Officers, my hon. Colleagues, this started off in a manner that no one expected it would finish like this.

There is not much for me to say other than the fact that we have all spoken to ourselves today. We have listened to ourselves, our children and our fathers, like Hon. (Baba) Ajatta and we managed to strike a cord of emotion and passion in everyone sitting here. It is food for thought for us, the leaders, as we have been advised by the children. May God bless Nigeria and the children.

Can the Leader, please, move for adjournment?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Tunde Akogun (Akoko): Mr. Speaker, to enable Members of the Children's Parliament leave, I

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move that this House do adjourn sitting till tomorrow Thursday, 28th May, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. Emeka Ihedioha (Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala): I second the Motion moved by the House Leader that the House do stand adjourned till Thursday, 28th May 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

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Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Thursday, 28th May, 2009 at 10.00 a.m.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4.45 p.m.