

National Assembly Debates (House of Representatives)

Friday, 18th June, 1999

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[Votes and Proceedings]

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Friday, 18th June, 1999

The House met at /0.20 a.m.

Prayers

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Mr. **Speaker** Good morning, hon. Members. I have examined and approved the Voles and Proceedings of Thursday, 17th June, 1999.

OATHS

I want to call on Members that have not taken their Oaths to please come forward. *(No Response)*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Meeting of all hon. Members from Anambra State

There is an announcement. All Members from Anambra State should please wait behind for an urgent meeting after the day's sitting. This information was signed by Dr. Jerry Sonny Ugbokwe.

Constitution of Ad-hoc committee on Protection of Lives and property in the North-East and North-West Zones of the Coountry.

Hon. Members, based on the resolution passed yesterday by this honourable House with regard to the Protection of Lives and Property in the North-East and North-West Zones of this country, an Ad-hoc Committee has been constituted as follows:

Hon. Bello Mohammed	- Chairman
Hon. J.I. Nwala	- Member
Hon. Ahmed Lawan	- Member
Hon. Mohammed Damcida	- Member

Hon. M. Oluabunwa	- Member
Hon. Lawai Ibrahim	- Member
Hon. Mrs. J. F. Adeyemi	- Member
Hon. Abdullahi Matori	- Member

These are Members of the Ad-hoc Committee. We wish them the best in discharging their duties to Nigeria and, in particular, to the people of the North-East and North-West zones of this country.

Significance of Motion on Adjoomment

Hon. Members, it is necessary to inform Members on the significance of Motion on Adjournment. When a Motion for Adjournment is moved at the end of the day's business, it only gives the Members the opportunity to speak on matters affecting the body polity. It enables Members to draw the attention of the House and the government to any issue affecting the citizenry. It will neither be debated nor discussed by the House. They are usually reflected in the Hansard. Not more than t\0 Members will be allowed to speak on the Motion on Adjournment on each sitting day and such Members would have cleared with me before the beginning of the sitting.

Thank you.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS

There are five Motions on Notice on the Order Paper. Those Motions will no. be debated until they mature.

I am pleased to inform this honourable House that the Ad-hoc Committee this House set up on the Standing Rules of this honourable House have completed its job. The Chairman of the Committee will move a Motion for the House to receive consider and adopt the recommendations of the Ad-hoc Committee.

Is there any Member that has not received a copy of the Draft Rules?

HON. Esio Oquong (Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udu NgnkolUrue Offong Oriko): Mr. Speaker. Sir. I have an observation to make.

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Mr. **Speaker:** Yes, Han. Oquong, what is the observation?

Han. Opong Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has become a consistent development that when the Order Paper is being distributed, some Members will have and some Members will not have. Today is the third day I have noticed this. Please, can we resolve in this House and inform the Secretariat that they must produce enough copies to go round Members of this House before the start of day's sitting? Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much for the observation. I am hereby directing the Clerk of this honourable House to ensure that this oversight never happens again, please.

PRESENTATION OF REPORT

Ad-Hoc Committee on the Draft Rules of the House

Hon. Eliogje Wat-Idahou (Ovia North East/Ovia South); Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am the Chairman of the House Review Committee on the Standing Rules. Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to move:

that the House do receive the report of the ad-hoc Committee on the Draft Rules of the House of Representatives consider and approve the recommendations contained therein.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to humbly move.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Second?

Hon. Abdullahi Idris Umar (Yamaltu/ Deba): Mr. Speaker, Sir, my Colleagues, I do hereby second the Motion that this honourable House do receive the Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Draft Rules of the House of Representatives, consider and approve the recommendations contained therein.

Thank you.

Question put and agreed to.

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Resolved, That the House do receive the Report of the Ad-hoc Committee on the Draft Rules of the House of Representatives, consider and approve the recommendation contained therein.

Hon. **Wm-Idahou:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, before I proceed to give a succinct summary of the Report of the Committee, I wish to lay on the Table the Draft Rules as recommended by the Standing Committee Review order.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if I have your permission, let me quickly do that.

Mr. Speaker: Go ahead.

(Draft Rules laid)

Hon. **West-Idahou:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, on Friday, the 11th day of June, 1999, an Ad-hoc Committee was set up to review the Standing Rules of the House of Representatives and to submit the Report to the House in that regard. of the Committee was constituted as follows

Hon. Ehiogje West-Idahou	- Chairman
Hon. Abdullahi Idris Umar	- Member
Hon. Tony Anyanwu	- Member
Hon. Ned Munir Nwoko	- Member
Hon. Awwal Tukur	- Member
Hon. Lumumba Adeh	- Member
Hon. Bala B. Kaoje	- Member
Hon. Ita Solomon Enang	- Member
Hon. Okeke F. U.	- Member
Hon. Musa Elayo	- Member
Hon. Sanusi Dagash	- Member
Hon. Abubakar G. Sheba	- Member
Hon. Tony Okere Eze	- Member
Hon. Sole Yari Gandi	- Member
Hon. Emmaolle Aguariavwodo	- Member
Hon. Itaka Frank Ineke	- Member
Hon. Abubakar Kyari	- Member
Hon. Oladapo Olaitan	- Member
Hon. Patricia Obi	- Member
Hon. Sheikh	- Member
Hon. T.F.	- Member

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Mr. Agada Rawlings **Emmanuel is to service the** committee as Secretary.

The Committee's **deliberations were guided by the** following practice and **working documents**: -

The Constitution of **the Federal** Republic of Nigeria (1999)

1993 approved Standing Rules **for** the House of Representatives

Decrees establishing Government Agencies and Institutions

1999 Draft Rules for the House of Representatives

Consultations with Members of the Committee as well as their **contribution at various meetings**.

Various authorities on legislative practice and procedure

As part of its business, the Committee sat **for long** hours on a daily basis from Friday, 1 **1th June**, 1999 to Monday, 14th June, 1999, and **thereafter made the** following observation in the 1993 approved Standing Rules now under review.

OSERVATIONS

- (I) That there was no opening prayer before **the** commencement of every silting of the House
- (II) That the procedure for electing the Speaker **and** deputy speaker was not spelt out.
- (iii) That the method by **which oaths were** administered to the Speaker **and Deputy Speaker** was not stated in the 1993 **Rules**.
- (iv) Tbat the **Party** Leaders were **still referred to as** Majority Leader **and Minority Leader** respectively in **contemplation of the Two Party System** which existed in **the Third Republic**

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(v) **That the sitting of the House were to end at this time at 1.00 p.m,**

(vi) **That the House does not sit on Fridays despite the possibility of running into ditJk:ulties in meeting the Constitutional requirement to sit for a period not less than 181 days in a year as required by Section 63 of the Constitution of the Federal republic of Nigeria.**

(vii) **That the Quorum of the House is one-half of the Members of the House against the background of one-third required by the 1999 constitution.**

(viii) **That the Membership strength of the various Committees were no longer plOportional to the present realities of the House vis-a-viz its numerical composition.**

(ix) **That the National Security and Intelligence Committee recognised all over the world as a Special Committee in legislative practice was not included in the said 1993 Standing Rules as such.**

(x) **That the composition of the various Committees was fixed instead of being within a given range as the duties of such Committee may determine.**

(xi) **That the name, number and jurisdiction of the various Standing Committees no longer represent the realities of today's Nigeria and what ought to be the relevance of the legislature in modern day governments.**

(xii) **That there were no provisions for the position of Deputy Party Leaders and Whip, as well as their functions in the Standing Rules of 1993.**

(xiii) **That Members of the honourable House were to belong to not more than two Committees.**

(xiv) **That there was no specific provision for the appointment of Sub-Committee Chairmen.**

(xv) **That Committee Chairmen were reserved for the majority party alone.**

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- (xvi) That the Rules were not elegantly amended as they ought to be.

On the basis of these observations, therefore, the Committee proposed various amendments which are hereinafter stated to the 1993 Revised Rules.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS:

- (i) That an opening prayer before any sitting is proposed for the first page of the standing rules in recognition of the Almighty powers of God, the Creator and Ruler of Heaven and Earth.
- (ii) That the procedure for the mode of electing the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker, as well as the method of administering their Oaths of Office have been clearly spelt out and should be included in the Rules.
- (iii) That the Majority Leader is now to be known as the House Leader while the other parties are to have their respective leaders in view of the multi-partisan nature of the composition of the Membership of the House.
- (iv) That the sitting of the House should start at 10.00 a.m., while breaking at 1.30 p.m. to resume at 3.30 p.m., before rising at 6.00 p.m. in order to give ample time to our Members to concentrate on the task of restoring democracy and justice to all Nigerians.
- (v) That the Quorum of the House should be one-third of the Membership, pursuant to Section 54 (1) of the 1999 Constitution.
- (vi) That the House should continue to use Fridays as Members' constituency consultation days with the proviso that the Speaker may summon a meeting of the House on Fridays, if necessary.
- (vii) That the Membership strength of each Committee should range between 15 to 30, depending on the scope of duties of such committees and such sub-Committees that may be required instead of being static.

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- (viii) That the various Party Committees ought to be Members of the Rules Committee to enable them participate in the management of the business of the House and lead the debate or discussion in respect of such bills.
- (ix) That the position for Deputy Party Leaders and Whips and their functions be created to avoid a vacuum in the House and to guarantee the orderly nature of the business of the House in the event of the absence, or any reason, of the respective leaders of the Political Parties.
- (x) That Members should not belong to more than three Committees in view of the reduced Membership strength of the House to 360 and increase in the proposed number of Committees which this Committee is putting forward.
- (xi) That there should be definite provision for the creation of the position of Sub-Committee Chairmen, where necessary in the Rules.
- (xii) That the names, jurisdiction and Membership strength of the Committees should be re-ordered as follows:

A. SPECIAL COMMITTEES

- 1. The Committee on National Security and Intelligence is hereby proposed as 3 Special Committees in consonance with worldwide legislative practice and ought to be included in the Rules.

B. STANDING COMMITTEES

- 1. The Committee on Finance and Economic Development should be split into two with Finance and Economic Development while Economic Development should be merged with National Planning and, therefore, known as Committee on National Planning and Economic Development.

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2. The Committee on Labour and Productivity should now be increased to include Employment and become known as Committee on Labour, Employment and Productivity.
3. That the Committee on Mines, Power and Steel should now simply be known as Committee on Power and Steel while that on Petroleum and Mineral Resources should simply be referred to as Committee on Petroleum Resources.
4. The Committee on Commissions and Councils should be scrapped while its functions can conveniently be merged and ought to be merged with the Committee on Public Service Matters.
5. The Committee on National Ethics and Values should now be known as Committee on Anti -Corruption, National Ethics and Values.
6. The Committee on Youth Development and Sports be split with Youths Development being joined to Women Affairs and become known as Committee on Women Affairs and Youths Development. Sports is to be added to Social Development and known as Committee on Sports and Social Development. to reflect the new Ministries recently created by the President. Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. General Olusegun Obasanjo.
7. The Committee on Information and Culture, as well as that on Commerce and Tourism should be split respectively. They will now become known as-

- (1) Committee on Information
- (2) Committee on Aviation
- (2) Committee on Tourism and Culture.
8. In the light of the aBLM; it doca appear and it should be proposed that the newly created Millistries and the exigencies of the time, should now require the following new Committees in our Rules:-
 - a. Committee on Transport
 - b. Committee on Aviation
 - c. Committee on Women Affilirs and youths Development
 - d. Committee on Drop and Nan:otics
 - e. Committee on Privatisation and Commercialisation
 - f. Committee on Peace and National Reconciliation
 - g. Committee on Tourism and Culture
 - h. Committee on Sports and Social Development.
9. The proposed number of Standi"8 Committees will now come to 37 instead of the 30 created by the Standing Rules under review in view of the recent development which the legjslator ought to respond to adequately.
10. It is proposed that Section 57(2) of 1993 Rules relating to the appointment of Committee Chairmen from the Majority Party and aU Deputy Chairmen from the Minority Party be ClqlWged as it was premised on the two party system.

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11. I wish to profoundly commend all the Members of the Committee, including the Secretary of the Committee, for their wonderful commitment to duty which they demonstrated by

sitting day and night to ensure that our assignment was accomplished.

12. I have no hesitation in recommending the proposed amendments to this honourable House for adoption.

13. Finally, on behalf of myself and all Members of the Committee, I wish to thank our respected Speaker and this respected House for the opportunity given to us to serve. May God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria. *(Applause)*

Mr. Speaker: I will call on anybody that has any comments to make them.

Hon. Esio Oquong Udoh (Oron/Mho/Okobol/Uda Nguko Urue Offong Oriko): Mr. Speaker, I will make one observation without any prejudice to the Members of this honourable House. In setting up the various *Ad-hoc* Committees so far mentioned by you, I saw that some names appeared twice in just about three or four Committees you have set up already. This honourable House has capable and articulate Members that should be given the opportunity to serve in the various Committees you are setting up. I think it is a bit unwieldy. Let us be given the opportunity to serve as well.

Mr. Speaker: We are discussing and I want comments on the report and not on other matters. Can you have your seat, please. I call on Hon. Waila to give us his comments.

Hon. Mohammed Wakil (Damboa Gwoza): Mr. Speaker, Sir, in view of the fact that the Chairman of this Draft Committee has presented his draft to this House and for the fact that both parties are being represented at that committee level and also for the fact that this House is waiting for these Rules so that we can move forward, it is through these Rules that we are going to appoint Committees and swing into action. May I humbly request this honourable gathering that instead of wasting all our

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time, I request that this honourable House adopt these Rules. I know that it is a fact that some of us are anxious to see that we differ from the Rules, but I believe that all hon. Members here are representatives of Nigerians. For the fact that Members of the various parties are represented in the Draft Rules Committee and for the fact that we believe that they represent our interest, I appeal to this honourable House to accept it. I call upon all of us to maturely handle this issue and adopt the Rules.

May I then, Mr. Speaker, hon. Members, beg to move that the proposed Draft Rules be adopted *(Interruptions)*

Mr. Speaker: I hereby suspend sitting of this House for 30 minutes.

Sitting Suspended: 10:50

Sitting Resumed: 11:35

Mr. Speaker: This House is now back in Session. May I call on the House Leader to come forth and move a Motion for the adoption of the Draft Rules?

Hon. Mohammed Wakil: Mr. Speaker Sir, Members. I stand before you to move the Motion that this House do adopt the Draft Rules.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any Second? I call on Hon. Kumalia.

Hon. Mohammed Kumalia (Maiduguri Metropolitan): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Colleagues, I intend to second the Motion by the House Leader that this House do adopt the Draft Rules of the House of Representatives. In doing that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to place on record our gratitude to the Chairman and the Members of the Harmonisation Committee who, I am aware, worked day and night tirelessly to see that the positions of the three parties in the House have been harmonised without any rancour. Please, accept the Draft Rules. *'Applause'*

Mr. Speaker, I beg to second. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: I call on one or two people to comment on this Motion. I call on the AD Leader, please.

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Hon. Oladipo Olaitan (Alimosho): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, this is a rare opportunity, a unique one indeed and also a historic one. I was opportnne to serve on the review committee for this Draft Rules both at the partv level and at the House level. I want to commend the efforts of Members of this Committee who evinced unequivocal sense of nationality, patriotism and commitment to the success of this House. Hon. Members, it is an arduous task; an historical task that could make or mar the Members. We had this at the back of our minds when we undertook this assignment. It **was** through bargaining and trying to ensure that we carried it out well. Members evinced partisan traits in the best way one could. Consequently, we were able to come and trade ideas in the interest of this nation. The Speaker evinced attributes of him which we have recognised all along, a true patriotic detrihalised Nigerian, a very humble person. *(Applause)*

MYSelf, as leader of the AD Party in this House, with mv Brothers, shall continue to support ideas that will pro.note the unity of this country. *(Applause)*. Like I humourously said to one person the other day: I said: *If we are put to task, we will make the air-conditioners in this lhouse h/ow red hot atr. We are capable of doing it. M e (Ire known' for doing it. We believe in principle. We stand on it. It does not matter whose ox is gored.*

But all the same, we do give credit to where it belongs. This time, credit belongs to all the Members of this i louse. We are men of honour. We have evinced it. We have showed it and I am glad we are here today. I urge all Members (0 give this Draft Rules the support it needs and we carry it home.

Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

Mr. Speaker: I call on Hon. Nduka Irabor.

Hon. Nduka Irabor (Ika North East/Ika South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, hon. Members, I urge this House to take note of the brilliant work done bY the Committee on the amendment of these Rules. I also urge this House to take cognisance of the fact that at any point in time in the life of this House, we can take recourse **to the adopted Rule**

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which is also incorporated in these new RuJes being presented to us. That we could amend, or any Member could bring forward a Motion to amead any portion of the Rules Book that inqwles or makes it diflicult fur this House to function properly. Having said that, I also urge you to take note of the fact that this is our tenth Session. By implication of the provisions of the adopted Rules, we ought to set in motion the Committees of this House after the tenth Session. In the light of this, I beg that we proceed immediately to adopt it.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I call on Hon. Obioma Ibeanacho.

HOD. Obioma Ibeanacbo (IkwuanoI Unruahia North! Umuahia South): **Mr. Speaker, Sir, bon. Members,** having listened to the last **four speakers and taking cognisance of the calibre of people who have made comments, the Leader of the House, the API' Leader, the AD Leader; I think they are representing our general opinion. Mr. Speaker, it is my view that we should stop further comments on this and go bY the popular views.**

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: There has been a Motion moved by the House Leader and **duly seconded bY Hon. Kumalia.** I now put the question **that this House do consider, approve and adopt the Draft Rules which will guide this honourable House throughout our Session.**

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House **do adopt and approve the Draft Rules which will guide this honourable House throughout the Session.**

Hon. Sule Yari Gandi (WornolRabah): Mr. Speaker, Sir, point of order. My point of order is Order 4(2) which reads: Members of the House shall use Fridays as their Constituency consultation days prrwided that the Speaker may summon a meeting of the House on Fridays if necessary.

Please **I crave the indulgence of this lhouse to alijoum sitting, Sir. (Applause).**

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Mr. Speaker: My hon. Colleague, the Speaker deems it necessary that we meet today and it is in those Rules too. So, we move on to the next item.

I call on Hon. Lar Victor.

Hoa. Obioma Iheudlo (Ikwuano/Umuahia North/Umuahia South): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have an observation, which is that since we started our sitting, you will find out that everyday we come here with series of Motions from different parts of this country. I am aware that Mr. President gave us an Address copies of which we all have. We are supposed, within ten days, to review these copies and make our comments. But, up till now, I am sure, one quarter of the Members of this House have not made their comments. I am pleading with this House that we should go into some more serious issues by commenting on the President's speech so that we will get done with it. Thereafter, we can take the Motions. Some of us have come from areas where we have enormous problems. No area will say that it has more problems than the other, and everyday people are coming here with series of Motions. We all have Motions to present to this House, and I also know that we have a term of four years to stay in this House. So, Mr. Speaker, we should be able to discourage Members at this point so that we go into more serious issues; talk about the President's speech and then we will be able to move forward.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: My comments on that is that this House has been operating without any Committees. All the burden has been placed on the Speaker, and I want to assure the whole House that by Monday or Tuesday

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morning, the whole Committees will be duly constituted, it will then be up to the Business and Rules Committee to put this honourable House into more of our business.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have just been informed that because of our Muslim Brothers who will have to go and get ready for the Mosque and some Members who may want to travel, that we adjourn. I will now call on the House Leader to move the Motion for Adjournment until Tuesday, 22nd June, 1999, at 10 O'clock.

Hoa. Mohammed Waki! (Damboua) Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do stand to move that this honourable House stands adjourned till Tuesday, 22 June, 1999 at 10 o'clock.

Hon. M. Obabunwa (Arochuku) Mr. Speaker, Sir, Members, I stand here to second the Motion moved by the Leader of this House and in view of the fact that our Muslim Brothers have to go and prepare for the Mosque and some Members to travel, I second the Motion that this House do adjourn till Tuesday, 22nd June, 1999 at 10 a.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Tuesday, 22nd June, 1999 at 10.00 a.

The House adjourned accordingly at 1.55 a.m.