



SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 24th July, 2007

1. The Senate met at 10: 20 a.m. The Senate President read prayers.
2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
The Senate President announced that he had examined the Votes and Proceedings of Thursday, 19th July, 2007 and approved same.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings were approved.
3. **Message from Mr. President:**
The Senate President announced that he had received a letter from Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria which he read as follows:



PRESIDENT,
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

PRES/134

July 23, 2007

*The President of the Senate,
Senate Chambers,
National Assembly Complex,
Abuja.*

Dear Brother,

CONFIRMATION OF MINISTERIAL NOMINEES

In accordance with Section 147(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I hereby submit the names of:

- (i) *Alhaji Alhassan Bako Zaku as the ministerial nominee replacing Mallam Ibrahim Tukur EI-Sudi for Taraba State; and*
- (ii) *Mr Felix Hassan Hyet as ministerial nominee replacing Dr. Adamu Ahmed for Kaduna State respectively.*

Copies of their CVs are attached herewith.

Please accept, as usual, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours Most Sincerely,

Signed:

UMARU MUSA YAR'ADUA

4. Announcement:

The Senate President acknowledged the presence of the Students of the Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, Adamawa State University, Mubi, Adamawa State, in the gallery to observe Senate proceedings.

5. Personal Explanation:

Rising on Rule 43, Senator Adeleke O. Mamora invited the attention of the Senate to the release of the withheld funds of the Lagos State Local Government Councils. He commended the President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Federal Republic of Nigeria, for this bold gesture. He equally commended the Senate President and other Senate Leaders for the role they have played in ensuring that the funds were released at this time. He observed that the gesture will greatly ameliorate the suffering of the people of these Local Governments in the State.

6. Matter of Urgent Public Importance:

Rising on Rule 42, Senator Iyiola Omisore invited the attention of the Senate to the Fire Disaster at the Palace of Owa Obokun of Ijeshaland, His Royal Majesty, Oba (Dr) Adekunle Aromolaran. He sought and obtained the leave of the Senate for the matter to be debated next legislative day.

7. Presentation of Bills:

- (i) National Inland Waterways Authority Act (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill 2007 (SB. 02) — *Read the First Time.*
- (ii) Hydroelectric Power Producing Areas Development Commission (Establishment, etc) Bill 2007 (SB. 03) — *Read the First Time.*
- (iii) Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (Establishment, etc) Bill 2007 (SB. 04) — *Read the First Time.*

8. Confirmation of Nominations:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do resolve into the Committee of the Whole to consider and approve or otherwise, the nominees for appointment as Ministers of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria" (*Senate Majority Leader*).

Question put and agreed to.

(SENATE IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)

Recommendation:

- (1) Abba Sayyadi Ruma (Katsina State) — *Agreed to.*
- (2) Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi (Osun State) — *Agreed to.*
- (3) Mrs. Ekpiwhre Grace (Delta State) — *Agreed to.*
- (4) Aishatu Jibril Dukku (Gombe State) — *Agreed to.*
- (5) John Ogar Odey (Cross River State) — *Agreed to.*
- (6) Bode Augusto (Lagos State) — *Negatived.*
- (7) Fidelia Akubata Njeze (Mrs) (Enugu State) — *Agreed to.*
- (8) Mahmud Yayale Ahmed (Bauchi State) — *Agreed to.*

- (9) Ojo Maduekwe (Abia State) — *Agreed to.*
- (10) Amb. Bagudu M. Hirse (Plateau State) — *Agreed to.*
- (11) Aderemi W. Babalola (Oyo State) — *Agreed to.*
- (12) Senator John James Akpanudoedehe (Akwa-Ibom State) — *Agreed to.*
- (13) Halima Tayo Alao (Kwara State) — *Agreed to.*
- (14) Arc. Gabriel Yakubu Aduku (Kogi State) — *Agreed to.*
- (15) Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu (Ebonyi State) — *Agreed to.*
- (16) H. Odein Ajumogobia (SAN) (Rivers State) — *Agreed to.*
- (17) Major-Gen. Godwin Abbe (Rtd.) (Edo State) — *Agreed to.*
- (18) Senator Sanusi Mohammed Daggash (Borno State) — *Agreed to.*
- (19) Shamsudeen Usman (Kano State) — *Agreed to.*
- (20) Kayode Adetokunbo Adeyinka (Ondo State)
- (21) Adamu Maina Waziri (Yobe State) — *Agreed to.*
- (22) Hassan Mohammed Lawal (Nasarawa State) — *Agreed to.*
- (23) Fatima Balaraba Ibrahim (Kebbi State) — *Agreed to.*
- (24) Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar (Gombe State) — *Agreed to.*
- (25) Dr. Idi Aliyu Hong (Adamawa State) — *Agreed to.*
- (26) Ahmed Garba Bichi (Kano State) — *Agreed to.*
- (27) Mohammed Ahmed Gusau (Sokoto State) — *Agreed to.*
- (28) Abdulrahman Hassan Gimba (Niger State) — *Agreed to.*
- (29) Sharafa Tunji Ishola (Ogun State) — *Agreed to.*
- (30) Emeka John Okechukwu (Anambra State) — *Agreed to.*
- (31) Tijjani Yahaya Kaura (Zamfara State) — *Agreed to.*
- (32) Mrs. Diezani K. Alison-Madueke (Bayelsa State) — *Agreed to.*
- (33) Chief Charles Chukwuemeka Ugwuh (Imo State) — *Agreed to.*
- (34) Agada Anthony Jerry (Benue State) — *Agreed to.*
- (35) Mrs. Saudatu Usman Bungudu (ANPP) (Zamfara State) — *Agreed to.*
- (36) Hassan Alhaji Haruna (Jigawa State) — *Agreed to.*
- (37) Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande (ANPP) (Plateau State) — *Agreed to.*
- (38) Michael Kaase Aondoakaa (SAN) (Benue State) — *Agreed to.*
- (39) Mr. Olatunde Emmanuel Odusina (Ekiti State) — *Agreed to.*
- (40) Mrs. Adenike Grange (Lagos State) — *Agreed to.*

Chairman to report progress.

(SENATE IN PLENARY)

The Senate President reported that the Senate in the Committee of the Whole approved the underlisted Ministerial nominees for confirmation:

- | | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|---|---------------|
| (1) | Abba Sayyadi Ruma | — | Katsina State |
| (2) | Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi | — | Osun State |
| (3) | Mrs. Ekpiwhre Grace | — | Delta State |

(4)	Aishatu Jibril Dukku	—	Gombe State
(5)	John Ogar Odey	—	Cross River State
(6)	Fidelia Akubata Njeze (Mrs)	—	Enugu State
(7)	Mahmud Yayale Ahmed	—	Bauchi State
(8)	Ojo Maduekwe	—	Abia State
(9)	Amb. Bagudu M. Hirse	—	Plateau State
(10)	Aderemi W. Babalola	—	Oyo State
(11)	Senator John James Akpanudoedehe	—	Akwa-Ibom State
(12)	Halima Tayo Alao	—	Kwara State
(13)	Arc. Gabriel Yakubu Aduku	—	Kogi State
(14)	Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu	—	Ebonyi State
(15)	H. Odein Ajumogobia (SAN)	—	Rivers State
(16)	Major-Gen. Godwin Abbe (Rtd.)	—	Edo State
(17)	Senator Sanusi Mohammed Daggash	—	Borno State
(18)	Shamsudeen Usman	—	Kano State
(19)	Kayode Adetokunbo Adeyinka	—	Ondo State
(20)	Adamu Maina Waziri	—	Yobe State
(21)	Hassan Mohammed Lawal	—	Nasarawa State
(22)	Fatima Balaraba Ibrahim	—	Kebbi State
(23)	Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar	—	Gombe State
(24)	Dr. Idi Aliyu Hong	—	Adamawa State
(25)	Ahmed Garba Bichi	—	Kano State
(26)	Mohammed Ahmed Gusau	—	Sokoto State
(27)	Abdulrahman Hassan Gimba	—	Niger State
(28)	Sharafa Tunji Ishola	—	Ogun State
(29)	Emeka John Okechukwu	—	Anambra State
(30)	Tijjani Yahaya Kaura	—	Zamfara State
(31)	Mrs. Diezani K. Alison-Madueke	—	Bayelsa State
(32)	Chief Charles Chukwuemeka Ugwu	—	Imo State
(33)	Agada Anthony Jerry	—	Benue State
(34)	Mrs. Saudatu Usman Bungudu	—	ANPP (Zamfara State)
(35)	Hassan Alhaji Haruna	—	Jigawa State
(36)	Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande	—	ANPP (Plateau State)
(37)	Michael Kaase Aondoakaa (SAN)	—	Benue State
(38)	Mr. Olatunde Emmanuel Odusina	—	Ekiti State
(39)	Mrs. Adenike Grange	—	Lagos State

Nominee not recommended for confirmation:

- (1) Bode Augusto — Lagos State

Question, that the Report of the Committee of the Whole be approved — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Confirmation of Nominees:*Question:*

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Abba Sayyadi Ruma as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Abba Sayyadi Ruma as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Senator Akinlabi Olasunkanmi as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mrs. Ekpiwhre Grace as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Mrs. Ekpiwhre Grace as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Aishatu Jibril Dukku as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Aishatu Jibril Dukku as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of John Ogar Odey as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of John Ogar Odey as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Bode Augusto as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Negated.*

Nomination of Bode Augusto as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly rejected.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Fidelia Akubata Njeze (Mrs) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Fidelia Akubata Njeze (Mrs) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mahmud Yayale Ahmed as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Mahmud Yayale Ahmed as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Ojo Maduekwe as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Ojo Maduekwe as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Amb. Bagudu M. Hirse as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Amb. Bagudu M. Hirse as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Aderemi W. Babalola as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Aderemi W. Babalola as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Senator John James Akpanudoedehe as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Senator John James Akpanudoedehe as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Halima Tayo Alao as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Halima Tayo Alao as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Arc. Gabriel Yakubu Aduku as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Arc. Gabriel Yakubu Aduku as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Igwe Aja-Nwachukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of H. Odein Ajumogobia (SAN) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of H. Odein Ajumogobia (SAN) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Major-Gen. Godwin Abbe (Rtd.) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Major-Gen. Godwin Abbe (Rtd.) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Senator Sanusi Mohammed Daggash as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Senator Sanusi Mohammed Daggash as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Shamsudeen Usman as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Shamsudeen Usman as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Kayode Adetokunbo Adeyinka as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Kayode Adetokunbo Adeyinka as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Adamu Maina Waziri as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Adamu Maina Waziri as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Hassan Mohammed Lawal as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Hassan Mohammed Lawal as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Fatima Balaraba Ibrahim as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Fatima Balaraba Ibrahim as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Dr. Aliyu Modibbo Umar as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Dr. Idi Aliyu Hong as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Dr. Idi Aliyu Hong as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Ahmed Garba Bichi as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Ahmed Garba Bichi as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mohammed Ahmed Gusau as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Mohammed Ahmed Gusau as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Abdulrahman Hassan Gimba as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Abdulrahman Hassan Gimba as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Sharafa Tunji Ishola as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Sharafa Tunji Ishola as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Emeka John Okechukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Emeka John Okechukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Tijjani Yahaya Kaura as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Tijjani Yahaya Kaura as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mrs. Diezani K. Alison-Madueke as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Mrs. Diezani K. Alison-Madueke as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Chief Charles Chukwuemeka Ugwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Chief Charles Chukwuemeka Ugwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Agada Anthony Jerry as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Agada Anthony Jerry as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mrs. Saudatu Usman Bungudu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — Resolved in the Affirmative.

Nomination of Mrs. Saudatu Usman Bungudu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Hassan Alhaji Haruna as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Hassan Alhaji Haruna as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Ibrahim Dasuki Nakande as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Michael Kaase Aondoakaa (SAN) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Michael Kaase Aondoakaa (SAN) as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mr. Olatunde Emmanuel Odusina as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Mr. Olatunde Emmanuel Odusina as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

Question:

"Will the Senate confirm the nomination of Mrs. Adenike Grange as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?" — *Resolved in the Affirmative.*

Nomination of Mrs. Adenike Grange as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria accordingly confirmed.

9. **Senate President's Remark:**



**The President,
Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria**

**STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE,
HIS EXCELLENCY, SENATOR DAVID MARK AT THE
CONCLUSION OF THE CONFIRMATION HEARINGS FOR
MINISTERIAL NOMINEES; ON TUESDAY JULY 24, 2007**

*The Deputy President of the Senate,
The Senate Leader,
Other Distinguished Principal Officers,
Distinguished colleagues,*

TITLE: THE CHALLENGES BEFORE US

Over the past fortnight, we have been engaged in the public screening of the nominees for appointment as Ministers and Members of the Federal Executive Council. The exercise is now concluded. It is a test not just for the ministerial candidates but also for us as their public examiners.

I am sure that the millions of viewers at home and abroad that watched the live telecast of the screening exercise must have come away with their own impressions both of the Senate and of the nominees. Let me express my full satisfaction with the screening process. The candour, conduct and responses of the nominees during the screening were a pointer, once more, to Nigeria's rich and diverse capital resource base. In particular, by demonstrating that they could hold their own, the female nominees showed proof that gender sensitivity, especially in political appointments, is not misplaced.

We opted for a live broadcast of the screening as a further manifestation of our commitment to transparency. With the transaction carried out in the open and beamed simultaneously to viewers, no one was left in doubt that we had nothing to hide, and that indeed, we mean business. The media deserves commendation for their professionalism in the coverage of the proceedings. The various producers, cameramen, sound engineers, reporters and editors, a total of 120 in all did a sterling job of conveying, accurately, the proceedings on the floor of the Senate. Equally worthy of praise are the print journalists, for the accuracy and fairness of their reporting and commentary. All stakeholders, I believe, benefited immensely from the media accounts. This buttresses the significant role of the media as a relevant factor for our democracy to survive and to thrive.

It is our desire that, in the days ahead, many more topical national issues, even at the Committee level, will be broadcast live, to give Nigerians and other stakeholders some measure of participatory following in the shaping of policy and laws by those whom they have elected to represent them in the upper legislative Chamber. The caveat, though, is that we shall draw the line where national security considerations warrant that we sit in camera or restrict public access to our deliberations.

Yet, Nigerians must be assured at all times of our openness. We believe that greater access to the course of our legislative business, especially on the Floor of the Senate, will provide additional information for Nigerians who are thereby better placed to understand the issues, make increased contributions and more constructive criticism.

I am delighted that, while the screening lasted, there was not a whiff of suspicion of any attempt to compromise a Senator, or Senators, or indeed the entire Senate, in order to ratify the nomination of any particular candidate. I can assure Nigerians that there will be no story of any such scandal. I praise you Distinguished Senators for being above board. We are distinguished Senators and the premium on our integrity is very high.

All petitions against some of the nominees were thoroughly scrutinized, considered and treated on their merit. The result is that none of the petitions provided a basis for the non-confirmation of any of the ministerial nominees.

I am aware of the views expressed by some Nigerians that the nominations should have disclosed the portfolios of the candidates. I agree. This is so because it would have allowed for a more focused and direct evaluation of the suitability or otherwise of a nominee for the proposed portfolio. Instead of the current practice of a fairly general aptitude test, we would have, been more pointed in our questioning and interaction with the nominee. This is all the more important in such critical aspects of our national life which today have the status of an emergency. These include infrastructure, education, health and energy.

However there is no provision in the 1999 Constitution that compels the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to forward to the Senate, ministerial nominations with assigned portfolios. Since the advent of the Fourth Republic eight years ago, nominations for ministerial appointment had always been sent to the Senate with no indication of the portfolios. This had tended to invest the practice with a toga of custom.

To the nominees who have just been confirmed, I offer my congratulations but I don't envy your position. Out of 140million Nigerians, you have been found worthy to render services to our fatherland at this crucial period of its developmental pursuit. Let me assure you that it is a herculean task ahead. Nigerians are desirous of improved and qualitative service delivery, so that we can make more rapid progress on the road to greatness and development.

On our part, we shall exercise our oversight functions rigorously. In doing so, we shall be binded by patriotism and uncommon determination to succeed. We owe a great debt to our country and all her citizenry by the opportunity granted us to serve. This opportunity must not be betrayed.

Distinguished colleagues, the exercise we have just undertaken is in conformity with our Constitution and the Standing Rules of the Senate. I am particularly glad that the Senate, throughout the duration of this exercise, acted as one united family sewn together by a common purpose of service to our fatherland.

I have no iota of doubt in my mind that as accomplished men and women in our own respective rights, this Senate, under our humble leadership, will make Nigeria proud. That is our resolve. You have shown in your contributions and debates so far that you are determined to make a difference in the lives of ordinary Nigerians. This resolution has also emboldened me at every opportunity to tell Nigerians that this Senate will do only those things that will make life more meaningful to the ordinary people.

To this end, at an opportuned time, we shall set in motion machinery to correct the imperfections inherent in the 1999 Constitution. This process of constitutional amendment, I promise, would be open and transparent, as all Nigerians would have the opportunity of participation.

Distinguished colleagues, the challenges before us are enormous but not insurmountable. As individuals, we have found ourselves in similar stormy circumstances and swam across those rough tides to success. Again, as we rise to the challenges of our legislative responsibilities, we must remain determined to bring honour to our land. We must continue to work in the collective interest of our people, so that at the end of our tenure, history will record for us those things that will enable us stand tall. For this to happen, transparency should always be our guide, and our integrity must remain above board.

May God continue to bless our efforts.

Signed:

SENATOR DAVID A. B. MARK

*President of the Senate,
Federal Republic of Nigeria*

10. Adjournment:

Motion made and Question Proposed: That the Senate do adjourn till Wednesday, 25th July, 2007 at 10:00 a. m. (Senate Majority Leader).

Adjourned accordingly at 1:25 p.m.

David A. B. Mark
President of the Senate