

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

Thursday, 28th April, 2016

The House met at 11.19 am

PRAYERS

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Honourable Members, I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 27th April, 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visitors in the Gallery

**Members of Law Students Association: North
American University, Benin City**

The Speaker: We have in the Gallery members of Law Students Association from the North American University, Benin City.

Students stood up for recognition (Applause)

You are highly welcome kindly take your seats.

Notice of Meeting of the North-East Caucus

There will be the meeting of North-East Caucus with the Hon. Speaker today, Thursday the 28th April, 2016 by 3.00 p.m. at Speaker's Conference Room 414.

Hon. Tahir Monguno
Chairman

PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC PETITIONS

The Speaker: Any member who has a petition to present to the House may please, rise to do so.

**Africa Regional Center for Engineering Design
and Manufacturing**

Hon. Olatoye Temitope Sugar (Akinyele/Lagelu): This petition is being sent in by the Africa Regional Center for Engineering Design and

Manufacturing (ARCEDM). They are directly under the Federal Ministry of Trade and Investment.

The main issue of the petition is that since 2014, the Federal Government has stopped paying their salaries and they have over 100 personnel. This is 2016. They have families, and they have people. They are taking good care of their office which occupies over 100 acres of land owned by the Federal Government. It is situated in my Constituency.

I beg to lay the Petition.

Petition laid and referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

**MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

**Unfortunate Fire Incident that Gulfed the
Historical Kurmi Market, Kano**

Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu (Municipal): I am coming under Standing Order VIII, Rule 46 of the House - Matter is of Urgent Public Importance - on the Unfortunate Fire Incident that engulfed the Historical Market in Kano Municipal.

Hon. Lawal Muazu (Gummu/Bukkuyum): I second the Motion ably moved by Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki (Dala): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion ably moved by Hon. Danburam.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: You may move your Motion, please.

Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move:

The House:

Notes the role played by the historic market as an international market, being patronised by traders from many parts of the North, Niger Republic, Chad, Ghana, Cameroon, Central Republic and Europe.

Also notes the role the market plays as the tourism

attraction sight because of its history and a place where you can find traditional attires, apparels and goods.

Further notes that the market is the oldest market in Kano, dating back to 1000 years;

Notes again that with sorrow the unfortunate fire incident at that historic market, Kano which occurred at the late hours of Tuesday, 26th April, 2016;

Highly disturbed that the fire outbreak which is the second in Kano this year (in this particular market) has unleashed havoc on traders and marketers in Kano as it destroyed about a hundred shops with various goods worth millions of naira;

Regrets that the cause of the fire incident was not known or yet to be ascertained;

Also regrets that it took fire fighters a lot of time to bring the fire under control because of the quantum of the inferno;

Worried that the resultant effect of the fire incident rendered many families and traders out of business as their capital base was destroyed;

Convinced of the strong need for the Federal Government, Kano State Government, and well-spirited individuals to come to the rescue of the victims affected by the inferno.

Resolves to:

- (i) Commiserate with the traders, people and government of Kano State; and
- (ii) Urge the Federal Government to liaise with the State Government to come with adequate compensation to ameliorate the losses incurred by the victims of the fire incidence
- (iii) Check or investigate as it poses some issues that is related to security challenges.

Hon. Igariwey Iduma Enwo (Afikpo North/Afikpo South): I second the motion as moved by my Colleague.

The Speaker: Hon. Danburam, you have a few minutes to debate the motion, then we proceed.

Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu: I am sure hon. Colleagues that you are well aware that just recently, a Motion came before the Floor of this House by my good ho. Colleague from Kano, Hon. Aliyu Madaki that had to do with fire incident at Asinga. After that there was another fire incident at Sabon Gari Market. Now we are having for the second time a fire incident at the Kurmi Market, which is the oldest market in Kano. It is a market that has been there for many years dating back to over 1000 years.

My worry is that we are yet to ascertain the cause of it in our market, and I am also aware that similar fire incident has happened in other States, for example, the last one that happened in Kebbi. So, I am urging this House, apart from supporting those who have lost their goods in the incident, this House should investigate it well. I am worried as other Nigerians are worried that this fire incident is not related to security issues.

Hon. Magaji Dau Aliyu (Birnin Kudu/Buji): I find it expedient to say something on this issue. My mind is really bogging down on the issue or position of fire services in the context of Nigerian nation. In all of these fire outbreaks that we have had, there is little or nothing that fire service organisation could do. We have to take a holistic view on the need to have a functional fire service both at the federal and state levels. Most of the fire services in this country lack equipment to quench fire whenever it arises.

So, I urge my honourable Friend to include in the prayers the issue of fire service on the current outbreaks of fire we have been having in this country.

Hon. Chris Emeka Azubogu (Nnewi North/South/Ekwusigo): I support the motion that calls for the urgent public importance concerning the fire outbreak in Kano Market. In recent time, we have been talking about fire outbreak all over the country; it is not only in Kano Market. But when we listened to what has been happening about fire, we are compelled to ask question concerning the status of the Fire Service as it concerns all the States of the Federation.

My support to this Motion is purely on the fact that there is a great need for us to review entirely the emergency response system in the country as regards to fire and other emergencies. I am also trying to bring up an amendment to include the fact that there is need for us to renew the position of Federal Fire Service and the National Emergency Management Agency as regard relationship with the State Fire Service and a State Emergency Management. The

costs to the nation are very enormous. Annually We lost so much billions of naira to fire outbreaks and other emergencies. As a nation, we would not continue if we do not take necessary action to check this colossal amount of money or lives associated with it and the source of livelihood.

I am supporting this Motion because it is very important that we look deep into the causes of fire and find a way to mitigate the losses we incur annually.

Hon. Mohammad Sani Abdu (Alkaleri/Kirfi): I feel responsible to stand up to support this Motion and also add my voice, principally because of the two privileges that I have, combined together. First, I am here as a Member of the House of Representatives where can make law for the good governance of the federation; second as a town planner.

There are many town planning issues that are not adhered to not only in our markets but also in many of our neighbourhood. So, these incidents are just disaster waiting to be happening. For me as a professional town planner, I am not surprised that we are having incessant occurrence of fire this time around. There are natural factors – the dry season when we are having the highest temperature; the heat waves and so on. This is the time when inflammable materials are bound to even explode on themselves except if you pull them down deliberately. That is one factor.

Secondly, all our markets even those that were deliberately planned have been abused totally. There is total disregard to the master plan of our markets. Markets like our homes and beds have capacity. If you have a bed that will carry a husband and wife and you keep on having children and all of you are sleeping on one bed, it is bound to break down. This is what we are having in our markets; we design a market for a capacity of five thousand locked-stores, about ten thousand-open stores. We have zoned them into compatible and non-compatible uses; that means things are kept where they are supposed to be kept accordingly. But just like Nigeria of today, we have jumbled everything around. There is no way we cannot have fire.

Thank you for putting me in the Committee that went to the Singer market, we saw the despair and losses. Immediately we came back, Sabon Gari happened in the far North and it was even bigger than what happened in Singer market, now Kurmi market. Again, Aba happened just after! Only three days ago, a shopping Centre in Bauchi was on fire. Yola was

there about three months ago. We are not adhering to the simple planning principles of zoning regulation, land use, separation of uses, putting fire hydrants and so on. Fire Service is not only to have a fire trucks and engines ready to come. You have to deliberately have reservoirs within the market with connected hydrants and power forces and you also have fire extinguishers and all other things. Again, we need also to have fire drills, warning systems and sensitization. There is failure of local governments and we must have to resort to it if we want to protect these incessant fire occurrences.

Finally, on construction issues, we are using substandard with impunity. Everybody is doing what he wants. There are no adherence to build, planning, architectural codes etc. It is not only the authorities that are faulty but it is a behavioural problem which we must change. We have to go back to the basics and make sure that when market is full, there should not be attachments or detachments or all those people who flood the streets. Even if you have the fire service, they cannot enter the market and therefore the scale of the losses.

I advise and I will seek for amendment that planning, building and architectural codes should be adhered to strictly and once the capacity of market is filled up then we have to build another one.

Markets are in hierarchy; we have convenient shops at the local centers, there are the neighbourhood centres, district centres and the CBD. If we follow all these rules, then we would have spread the needs. There are things you need today; there are things you need monthly, there are things you need annually and there are things even for ten years you do not need them when you buy them once.

I will reiterate that planning and building codes must always be followed, adhered to and enforced; then we will really see the mitigation of fire besides the emergency issues which has been raised. Thank you for this opportunity.

Hon. Isiaka Ayokunle Ibrahim (Ifọ/Ewekoro): Fire safety is one out of one million safety issues we have in this country. It is not only in our markets, it is even in our homes, companies, factories, public and private places.

The import of this is about our attitude as a country to safety. In safety parlance there is what we call *hazard identification*, which the last speaker tried to talk about. All of us when we go to our various areas

even in the market, we see a lot of things that we keep our eyes off and these are potential risks, dangers, hazards waiting to consume just anybody. That is why in safety they talk about intervention.

I am sure if somebody had raised alarm initially when it was said that most likely what they were seeing around the market, around homes or in companies, factories were potential risks that could consume one or many people; a lot would have been arrested. That is why personally, I have equally posted and set in issues about public safety which is almost 5 to 100 safety issues that we have identified in this country. Fire is just one and I want to appeal to the hon. Members that let us put our weight behind the hon. Member that brought this matter forward and let all of us be safety conscious in our homes.

Again, one thing that we should note about fire is that freely three things must happen; out of this three, two are readily available in our environment. That is oxygen and fuel. Ordinary dry leaf and sheet of paper, which is called fuel and oxygen is freely available anywhere. It is just waiting for spark for three of them to come together and there is fire. This is just a tip for all of us; let us not keep our eyes one side; if you are passing by intervene where necessary. You do not know which life you are going to save.

Thank you very much, the promoter of this Motion and thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me the floor.

The Speaker: The last contributor would be Hon. Abbas Tajudeen.

Hon. Abbas Tajudeen (Zaria): I lend my voice in support of this very important Motion in the sense that there is the need for Kano State government and by extension the Federal Government to really investigate the incessant incidence of fire outbreaks in Kano markets.

We all know that Kano market remains the most important market in the northern part of this country and the rate at which we are having fire incidents, about three in number within a span of six months, is very suspicious. We want to strongly recommend that state government should investigate the root causes of these incidences.

Secondly, I also want us to urge the state government that minimum level of safety should be maintained, particularly in our urban markets. Most of

these markets when you go there, one single fire extinguisher you will not find. I know that in all certified companies, there are minimum standard they are expected to maintain to ensure that lives and properties within the company premises are secured. Why is it not so in our markets? So, there is the need for us to ensure that all minimum health and safety gadgets that are supposed to protect lives and properties are put in place in all our markets.

Finally, I urge this House to use our various Committees to ensure that enough legislation is made to ensure that all these markets are insured. Because what is happening today is that at the end of any fire incident in any market, the traders in that market are made to lose all their assets, they do not have any fall back. There is nowhere they will be able to recover what they have lost. So, there is the need for this kind of market to be insured so that in the event of any eventuality like this, at least the insurance company will be there to really compensate them.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, even though I must not be seen or heard to be contributing to any debate, in case the brief remarks that I will make you will think it amounts to contributing to the debate; just pretend that you did not hear me.

But I am even amplifying what Hon. Abass raised against about this frequent incidence of fire outbreaks in the market. It is becoming a crisis and like in every crisis there is an element we are missing. There are crisis that are regarded as routine and there are some that come with elements of novelty. Now, whether it is the fire outbreaks in markets in Adamawa State or Kano, it has become a recurring decimal. So that means that there is that element very novelty that is introduced to this crisis and that is the element that the security agencies must follow. We cannot rule out the possibility of economic terrorism.

If it were just routine crisis, then there is no problem if the problems were just the building materials at the market, some of these markets have existed for decades without experiencing the problems that they are not experiencing. It means that there is just some kind of novelty being introduced to the crisis and that is the element that the security agencies must follow.

There are some amendments here, one is from Hon. Abubakar Hassan Fulata, can you move you amendment please?

Hon. Abubakar Hassan Fulata (Birninwa/

Guri/Kiri): My amendment is that our local markets are choked up and overcrowded, such that it is very difficult in the event of fire outbreak for the Fire Service personnel to get access to this market. My amendment is that our local market should be modernised and access roads be made within those market so that in the event of fire outbreaks there will be easy access to those fire points.

Hon. Ibrahim Garba Mohammed (Gwale): I second the amendment as proposed by Hon. Fulata.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The Speaker: The next amendment is from Hon. M. S. Abdul, do you want to move it or I should read it?

Mohammed Sani Abdul: My amendment is an additional prayer that local authorities and market management agencies should ensure strict adherence to planning and building in markets in order to mitigate the incessant occurrence and scale of fire incidences in our markets.

Hon. Mohammed Musa Soba (Soba): I second the amendment proposed by my Hon. Colleague, Hon. M. S. Abdul.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The Speaker: The last amendment before me is from Hon. Chris Azubuogu. He wants the joint Committee on Interior, and National Emergency to conduct an Investigative Hearing on the frequent fire outbreak in the country, and suggest ways to eliminate or reduce it.

Hon. Ehiozwa Johnson Agbonayinman (Egor Ikpoba Okha): I second the amendment ably moved by Hon. Chris Azubuogu.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Main Question as amended put and agreed to.

Motion referred to the Committees on Interior, National Emergency and Disaster Preparedness.

The Speaker: Hon. Aliyu Madaki, your point of Order?

Hon. Aliyu Madaki: Mr. Speaker, I want to come

under Order XIII, Rule 92 with your permission.

The Speaker: Is it a Matter of Urgent Public Importance? It is all right, let us exhaust this Order first, and then we can take your point of Order immediately. We still have one or two Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

Detention of the President of the National Youth Council of Nigeria

Hon. Goodluck Nannah Opia (Ohaji/ Egbema/ Oguta/Oru West): Mr. Speaker, I come under Order VIII, Rule 46 on Matter of Urgent Public Importance on a matter that is connected with the arrest and detention of the President of the National Youth Council of Nigeria, Barr. Ugo Chinyere Micheal, also known as Ikengi Imo.

He has been arrested for many days without bail or trial. I will be requesting the House to call for his release from the detention by the Directorate of the State Security Services (SSS). Therefore, I urge the House to see this as urgent and that relevant Rules of the house be suspended to enable us take the Motion now.

Hon. Solomon Bulus Maren (Mangu/Bokkos): I second this Motion as it affects the Youths of Nigeria and myself.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Abdurazak Sa'ad Namdas (Mayo Belwa/ Ganye/Jada/Toungo): I second the Motion that our relevant Rules be suspended to enable us discuss this very important matter.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Goodluck Opiah: My Motion is on Detention of President of National Youth Council of Nigeria.

The House:

Notes with great concern the arrest of Mr. Ugochinyere Ikenga Imo Micheal, President of National Youth Council of Nigeria by men of the State Security Service;

Worried that his arrest is alleged to be because of opinions he expressed in a television interview on the

trial of Senate President;

Also worried that he has been harassed and intimidated for supporting the Senate President and taking the Hon. Minister of Youth and Sports to court in protection of this office as President of National Youth Council of Nigeria;

Also notes that Section 39 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria guarantees the freedom of opinion of all Nigerians including Mr. Ugochinyere, Ikenga Imo Michael;

Further notes that Section 35 of the Constitution further guarantees right to personal liberty of Mr. Ugochinyere, Ikenga Imo Michael and worried that he has been held for more than forty-eight hours by the men of DSS;

Concerned that if no action is taken, the right of Nigeria citizens will continue to be infringed upon by our security agencies, on an act which further reduces rights of Nigerians and tenets of democracy;

Resolved to:

Call on the State Security Service to release the said President of Youth Council of Nigeria or come out public with the offence(s) committed by him. I so move.

Hon. Peter O. Akpatason (Akoko Edo): I second the Motion ably moved by my Colleague.

The Speaker: This is a straightforward Motion. It dwells on the provisions of the Constitution. I also want to uphold the provision of the Constitution. I guess there is no need for us to belabour the matter. I would therefore put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

(Motion accordingly referred to the Committee on National Intelligence and Public Safety)

Hon. Chinda, in view of the urgency of your Motion, you may wish to appeal to Members if they would accept, so that we can take your Motion.

Hon. Chinda Kingsley Ogundu (Obi/Akpor): My order is hinged on Order VIII, Rule 49 of the Rules of the House, urging this House to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (4), to enable me take the third Matter of

Urgent Public Importance today. And the clang of the matter is that the National Association of Resident Doctors has issued a 21 day notice of strike and that notice would run out this week. Unfortunately for us as a nation, nothing has happened. If we sit back and allow the situation the way it is, perhaps by next week, most of our General Hospitals would not be functional. Members of this association are the bedrock of the General Hospitals across this country.

It is a matter that we need to set aside our Rules to enable us look at this issue and take a decision to enable this country, particularly the health sector, to move forward. I therefore urge us to please allow us set aside the relevant provisions of our rules to take this as a third Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

The Speaker: There are three Motions. First of all is that we set aside the provisions of our rules that says only two Matters of Urgent Public Importance can be taken per sitting. And then thereafter, to consider the Matter as Urgent and suspend our Rules to enable him take it. There are three issues.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor (Etsako West/Etsako East): In respect of the urgency of this matter, I second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Aminu Suleiman (Fagge): Due to the urgency as raised by Hon. Chinda, I stand to second this all important Motion for consideration by the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai (Ndukwa/Ukwuani): I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Chinda.

Question put and agreed to.

21-Day Notice of Strike Action by the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD)

Hon. Chinda Kingsley Ogundu: Mr. Speaker, I move that:

The House:

Notes with great concern and dismay incidence of strike action in various sectors of our nation and particularly the 21-day notice of strike issued on April,

5th, 2016 by the National Association of Resident Doctors to the Federal Government of Nigeria;

Also notes that the recurring strikes in Nigeria have in recent times assumed an alarming dimension, resulting in low productivity and poor quality service delivery by various public institutions; by extension it is affecting the socio-economic development of the country;

Further notes that health is of great importance in the well-being and development of any nation, including Nigeria thus Section 17 (3) (d) of the CFRN, 1999 states that:

The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are adequate medical and health facilities for all persons;

Aware of the provision of the Section 14 (2) (b) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, (CFRN), 1999 which states that:

The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government;

Also aware of the Section 17 (3) (b) of the CFRN, 1999 which provided that:

The state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that conditions of work are just and humane, and that there are adequate facilities for leisure and for social, religious, and cultural life;

Observes that in recent times, there has been numerous nation-wide strike actions in the health sector by bodies like the Joint Health Workers Union of Nigeria, and the National Association of the Resident Doctors, among the other bodies that operate in that sector;

Also observes that the proposed strike by Resident Doctors borders on issues of payment of salaries and wages of their members, particularly in States like Aba, Abia Ekiti Imo, Kogi and Osun among others. Other issues include better conditions of service appropriate placement of their members in Federal and State Tertiary Hospitals across the country, reversal of sack of their members in some hospitals, adequate funding of residency programme and upgrading of

public health facilities;

Concerned that the re-occurring nature of this strikes in our nation's health sector has continued unabated and government efforts so far in addressing the problem has been mere palliatives, and for the most parts, very ineffective as it does not seem to have a sustainable solution on how best to curb or deal with the problems;

Worried that unless and until positive and permanent or sustainable steps and efforts are taken to curb the incessant crisis in the health sector, achieving the health component or objective of the Millennium Development Goal to DSDG would be unrealisable and the health and wellbeing of Nigerians will continue to be eroded and negatively affected;

Also worried that the proposed strike action by Resident Doctors if not immediately checked or nipped in the bud will again grand health activities indefinitely across the country and further compound the sufferings faced by teeming Nigerian masses.

Resolves to:

- (i) Mandate the House Committee on House, Labour and Productivity to urgently intervene in the matter and ensure immediate resolution of the problems and report to the House within fourteen days for further Legislative action.
- (ii) Urge the Resident Doctors to rescind its decision to embark on the planned nationwide strike in the interest of Nigerians and allow for the intervention of the National Assembly.

Hon. Dasuki Abdussamad (Kebbe/ Tambunwal):
I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Chinda Kingsley.

The Speaker: Hon. Munir has information that he want to pass to the House in regards the threat of strike.

Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi (Kumbotso):
Mr. Speaker, this issue has been discussed by the Committee on Labour and Employment with all the stakeholders and also the Committee Health Institutions. What we found out some of the contentious issue. When the Resident Doctors had an agreement with the Federal Ministry of Health, they

started implementing some of the issues raised but they were not informed at that time. We invited both the Ministry of Labour and Federal Ministry of Health and we agreed they should be given all the copies of what had so far been implemented and come back to the House for feedback. I am sure from what we have discussed with them, they are ready to give more time for discussions.

The only issue that we were not able to resolve was the issue of Osun State, whereby some of the Resident Doctors were claiming that the State Government did not pay them their salary and we cannot legislate on State affairs. These are some of the issues but they agreed and they were coming to terms with what the National Assembly wants to lead them in terms of resolving these crises. I am sure the Committee on Health also sat with them. I am not sure if the Chairman, Betty is here, she will be able to say something. But they are confident that the National Assembly, especially the Green Chamber, would do something on this matter. This is the information I want to give.

The Speaker: The Deputy Chairman of the Committee is there.

Hon. Muhammed Umar Jega (Aliero/Gwandu/Jega): Mr. Speaker, as pointed out by the Deputy Chairman Labour, on your authority, we engaged the Resident Doctors with all other stakeholders at a joint meeting. It was agreed that the Resident Doctors should go back to consult their Members based on the intervention of the National Assembly, particularly the House of Representatives. They are going to engage their members and give us feedback on the position they have taken since the House of Representatives has intervened and showed its readiness to solve their problems.

On most of the issues raised, there is an understanding with Ministry of Health; the Minister has equally intervened in most of the issues raised as pointed out by the Deputy Chairman, Labour. The only issue is on the salary slashed by Ogun State Government, which is paying only forty six *per cent* of their salaries. A Committee was equally appointed to look into that matter. We are going to have another meeting to continue engaging them to resolve all the grey areas.

The Speaker: In view of the information, we can as well pass the Motion as a formal authority for them to continue to act on behalf of the House and I will put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion accordingly referred to the Committee on Health Institutions to continue further engagement with the relevant Associations and Stakeholders.

The Speaker: Hon. Aliyu Madaki your point of Order.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki: Mr. Speaker, we have discussed when he comes to raise the issue at the appropriate time then I will talk.

PRESENTATION OF BILL

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the first Business of the day is the Presentation of one Bill. The Clerk is now invited to read the Short Title of the Bill.

Office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government (Establishment) Bill, 2016

Office of the Accountant General of the Federal Government (Establishment) Bill, 2016 (HB. 506) – Sponsored by Hon. Yakubu Dogara and Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok – *read the First Time.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Independent National Electoral Institute (Establishment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Establish the Independent National Electoral Institute; and for Other Matters Related Thereto –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The first Order of the day is the commencement of Debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Establish the Independent National Electoral Institute; and for Other Matters Related Thereto. Honourable Members will recall that the Bill was read for the time on Tuesday, 24th November, 2015.

I now invite Hon. Chukwuka Onyema to move that Bill be read for the Second Time.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred (Ogbaru): Mr. Speaker, with the leave of the House, I would like to

step down the Bill for further consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, because he gave me some new information's as I was coming in which will make the Bill a bit more robust.

Bill with the leave of the House stood down.

**National Universities Commission Act, Cap. N81
(Amendment) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to make it Mandatory for immediate issuance and Release of Certificates to Graduating Students in all Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: Hon Colleagues, the second Order of the day are commencement of debates on a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Universities Commission Act, Cap. N81; and a Bill for an Act to make it Mandatory for immediate issuance and Release of Certificates to Graduating Students in all Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria and for Other Related Matters. Hon Members would recall that the Bills were consolidated on Thursday 21st April, 2016.

I now invite Hon Musa Sarkin Ada to move that the Bill be now read the second time.

Hon. Sarkin Adar Musa (Goronyo/Gada): Mr Speaker and Hon colleagues. I present the Bill for an Act to Amend the National Universities Commission Act, Cap. N81 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to empower the Commission to set out Code of Conduct for Assessment of Universities Students Characters alongside Academic Performances as Condition precedent to award of Degrees to deserving Students and a Bill for an Act to make it Mandatory for immediate issuance and Release of Certificates to Graduating Students in all Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria and for Other Related Matters co-sponsored by Hon Prestige.

Hon. Daniel Ofongo Henry (Southern/Ijaw): I second the Motion to present the Bill as moved by Hon. Sarkin.

Question proposed.

Hon. Sarkin Adar Musa: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is very straightforward and simple, and believes by the time I finish my lead debate and my co-sponsor makes his contribution, there will be many

who are patriotic enough to give support to the Bill for Second Reading.

The concern of this Bill is about the character of our youth. Most of us here have been to the University and we have all passed these stages of academic learning. We can recall that during graduation, at any time in all the universities during citation of presentation of awards of degrees, it will be said:

Having been found worthy in learning and character you are hereby awarded a degree ... in whatever discipline

I keep asking myself in honour as we write examinations and have continuous assessment on all courses - discipline we took throughout the three or four years degree programmes but further asked on how our character is being assessed. This was because there was no formal assessment of the character.

I want to believe it is on assumption that once you have not been found misbehaving, and no issue of misdemeanor comes to the knowledge of your colleagues then you are being found worthy in that character. I compare also with the training in Military Institutions, especially the Nigerian Defence Academy. Some of us that has been privileged to attend the Nigerian Defence Academy and other Military Institutions are quite aware that there is a provision of regimentation and this, to my understanding, is a process whereby your character is being shaped and you are expected to behave within certain limit and norms.

For example you cannot move out of the academy above 6.00 p.m. that is on days you are allowed to go out to town. In the University this cannot happen because these are civil society and Institutions but meanwhile we expect the National University Commission to provide guidance for assessment of character. Nobody will pay because there have not been cases of prevalence of misbehaviours in the universities of recent and even in the past.

Today, there are issues of rape, examination malpractice, absenteeism, alcoholism and cultism happening in the university and you will find out that most of those students engaged in these activities are not caught or given punishment when they are caught. So the amendment we are bringing is to make the reverse and enable the National University Commission to set out criteria for the assessment of the characters of any student in the university before he graduates and such character will be given and

engraved; that is If you are found worthy in your character and you have gotten a good grade. In your third or fourth year and at the end of the year we will know your character have been fully assessed and also know whatever grade you have or you are found worthy of.

This is the clause we are trying to insert in the National University Commission Act. I therefore urge all of us to help this Bill to pass for Second Reading in strengthening the moral character of our youths.

Hon. Aminu Suleiman: In contributing to the debate on this all important Bill I am in a little quagmire. While supporting it I will say that there is the need for us to continuously crosscheck the morale of our young ones. I have also been wondering and asking myself over time that, yes it is true, but if in each passing out of graduating students, this traits is not found, how do we justify that *you are found worthy in both learning and in character*, I have not been able to find answers to some of the questions as to how we arrive at a conclusion that a graduating student is found worthy in character.

So many things abound and I agree with the intents and content of the Bill but also believe we must be very careful so that we do not hand over power again to authorities in the universities or in the Commission for them to continue to perpetrate process of witch-hunt on the student. Except we can establish a waterproof evidence on how to access and confirm whether a student is found worthy in character, we would only be given out opportunities for authorities to witch-hunt those they want to.

It is a very nice Bill and I am sure if we are able to pass it through this stage at committee we will benefit from wisdom of stakeholders that may appear before the Committee to give us more insight. At the interim, I give my support for the passage of this Bill for Second Reading

Hon. Nasiru Ali Ahmed (Nassarawa): I will be very brief in giving my submission. My advice on or input to this Bill is the need for the assessment of the character of students is very important, because it is not only academic performances that should be used for students after graduating. While looking for job, your character is very important and like the presenter of the bill has said, we have a situation in the university where students are involved in cultism, drug abuse and rape. Looking at the insecurity in the country today, we know that there are situations where students have had first class in the university and have

joined part of this insurgency that is happening.

I believe character is very important and like I said, I will be very brief, I support this Bill and I urge Members to support this Bill.

Hon. Omidiran Ayo Hulayat (Ayodaade/Irewole/Isokan): Mr. Speaker, I want everybody without much ado to support this Bill, and the reasons are not far-fetched. We have all been to university at one time or the other in our formative years. We know the age grade that we were passing through the university. We know how things are now.

University students are getting younger and younger and most of our children spent better part of their formative years going through schools. It is very pertinent to allow the authority that is taking care of the learning to also be given more responsibility of watching over the character.

Most of the time when students go to school, especially the university, they believe they have arrived. Children brought up by good homes with good character from home get to school and due to peer pressure belongs to one organization or the other because they want to show that they are now free; they are big boys and big girls. There is nothing to deter them, and all we need are certificate. If they know that if they even make First Class in studies but because of their character, they will not be allowed to graduate, every child will make conscious effort to try and behave in such a way as to make the regulatory authority, the university authority to allow him to graduate.

Apart from this, we have seen that many of the people we have now as graduates have not been able to go through the normal process of outside education. Before you graduate from the university, you must be able to have this new orientation of what the outside life is going to be. You must be able to start planning ahead for your life after school, when you are no longer supposed to be under your parents care and you are going to meet freely with others in the society. You are supposed to by then chart a life for yourself, a path that you want to follow. It should not just be a matter of just going to school, studying in one way or the other, getting certificate and then you are useless to the society and useless to even your family just because you have imbibed the culture of *I can do anything and get away with it*.

Many of us know that in other climes before you graduate, even before you get admission to higher

institution, you must be able to show that you have some trait that they can accept from you so that you don't come to their own institution and corrupt other students there. You have to write something like testimonial, your experience, you have to go through interview to show the kind of life you have been living and the exposures that you have had and what you think should be the norm.

Anybody that does not fit that standard that they set for their own institution will not be admitted, no matter how brilliant you are. The same thing should apply here, if you get admitted and the set standard says you cannot sag when you are going around in the university; if they catch you sagging it is minus for you. You cannot wear earring when you are not a girl, if there is something by the time we have all these and students who really want to go to such a university know what to do. When you graduate from such a university, already people believe that, having gone through there, you have met some minimum standard of good character, and the university authority can vouch for you anywhere. Others will believe that this person has gone through this institution and must have imbibed some good character, and you are now ready to come to the world and practise as a normal human being, not as a cultist or an armed robber etc.

Mr. Speaker, my dear Colleagues as parents ourselves we want now to start turning out students who are true leaders of tomorrow whom we can vouch for that they will not kill, that they will not commit other crimes that we have seen. Right now, whether educated or not educated many of our young ones are committing crimes and engaged in drug addiction, rape and all sorts of bad things that, ordinarily, you would never see an educated youth go through before.

Now is the time to put an end to it. I believe by the time this Bill is acceded to we would be able to put strategies in place to ensure that those who are supposed to regulate do not witch-hunt as the Chairman of the Tertiary Education is concerned. It is left to us to draft it in such a way that there will be these clauses that will restrict these fears from coming to pass.

Hon. Bashir Baballe (Minjibir/Ungogo): Mr. Speaker, it is no more news that our universities are battling with issue of social vices. If you traverse from University of Maiduguri to UNIPORT, from Dan Fodio, to Gombe State University the first thing you see is a great huge billboard at the gate of every institution with the inscription:

Say no to social vices,

Say no to indecent dressing,

Say no to sex abuse,

Say no to cultism,

Say no to examination malpractices

This shows you the extent to which this issue of social vices has eaten deep into our student character. Learning with hard characters is just a failure in disguise.

Take it or leave it, today our universities have turned into a grooming ground for cultists, even in secondary schools. Today in our universities or our tertiary institutions you will find out students are dressing in what we call *have ass down*; whereby a male student will dress in his trousers and he is half naked. It is in Nigeria tertiary institutions today you will see what ladies call spaghetti, a lady will dress and you will be seeing her bra. It is in Nigeria universities today we witness what we call show me your boobs whereby the female students are intimidating the male lecturers with what God has blessed them with.

Let us be open to ourselves, this Bill is timely and I think having a Code of Conduct to assess the character of every student who undergo this tertiary institution is timely. It is at the right time because day in, day out, when you read our newspapers today, you would see cultism, cult crises in one university, Axe versus blacky, black horse versus black cat etc. This Bill is timely.

I also reason with the concern of Hon. Aminu Goro who mentioned that we should not allow the Universities Commission to use it as tool to intimidate people to harass students. The Bill belongs to us and by the time they come with their suggestion, we are the one to say, yes, this one is right and this one is not right. At the tail end, we would have a tool at least to checkmate the extent to which these social vices are growing in our campuses.

The Speaker: Time is far gone and I would put the question and the question is that the Bill be now read the Second Time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time and referred to the Committee on Tertiary Education and Services.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Sectorial Debate

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, listen to this announcement on Sectorial Debates:

The House of Representatives rolled out Legislative Agenda and Standing Orders show that we will commence debates on aspects of the Nigerian economy.

The first sectorial debate shall cover Diversification of the Nigerian Economy, Real Sector Development. The following Ministers have been invited to address the House on their perspective and proposals on the above-stated subject matter and to kick-start the debate as follows:

Hon. Minister of Agriculture - Wednesday, 4th May, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. Minister of Finance - Wednesday, 4th May, 2016 at 1.00 p.m.

Hon. Minister of Solid Minerals - Thursday, 5th May, 2016 at 11.a.m.

Hon. Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism - Thursday, 5th May, 2016

Hon. Minister of Industry, Trade & Investment - Tuesday, 10th May, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

The Hon. Ministers' presentation would be at the Plenary Session of the House in the Chamber. We shall announce further presentation by other honourable Ministers concerned with the topics as soon as we conclude arrangement for them.

Hon. Members are advised to note the above and prepare to pose questions to the honourable Ministers after their presentations, thereafter the House would schedule another dates for honourable Members to discuss the presentations of the honourable Ministers on the subject matter of Diversification of the Economy. This would amount to setting the agenda for oversights so that we know specifically what we intend to achieve as a government – the areas of

diversification of the economy which is critical to the survival of our nation.

Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, Cap. (Amendment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, Cap. C52, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Increase the Functions of the Commission; and a Bill for an Act to Introduce Peace Studies as part of the Basic National Curricular in both the Junior and Secondary Schools in Nigeria; and for Other Related Matters –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The third Order of the day, hon. Colleagues is commencement of debates on the general principle of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, Cap. C52.

Hon. Members, you would recall that the Bills were consolidated on Tuesday 12th April, 2016. I now invite Hon. Usman Muhammad to move that the Bills be read the Second Time.

Hon. Mohammed Usman (Makarfi/Kudan): I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Compulsory, Free Universal Basic Education Act, Cap. C52, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Increase the Functions of the Commission; and a Bill for an Act to introduce Peace Studies as part of the Basic National Curricular in both the Junior and Secondary Schools in Nigeria; and for Other Related Matters, be read a Second Time.

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa (Buruku): I am not standing up to second the Bill for Second Reading. Rather I saw Hon. Goni's name as chief sponsor of the Bill and my attention was drawn to the fact that Hon. Beni Lar's Bill is on similar subject matter and was indeed gazette.

Now by our Rules (Order 12 Rule 92) if we allow the Second Reading of this Bill, it means that we would be shutting out Hon. Beni Lar after her Bill had already been gazette. So I pleaded with Hon. Goni, actually I did not know that Hon. Usman was around, so I pleaded with Hon. Goni and he agreed that we step it down so that consolidation would take place for the three Bills to come together for Second Reading. So I still move and apply that we step down the Second Reading of this Bill.

As a matter of fact, because of what I said, Hon. Goni had left the Floor because the understanding was that we would step it down. So I would plead with Hon. Usman to allow this Bill to be stepped down so that Hon. Beni Lar's Bill would be consolidated and we would take the three on a given date. I so move Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Hon. Mohammed Usman?

Hon. Mohammed Usman: Agreed Sir.

Bill by the leave of the House stood down.

**Nigerian Communications Act, Cap. N97
(Amendment) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Nigerian Communications Act, Cap. N97, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide for Regulation of Unsolicited Telephone Communications from all Communication Industries in Nigeria and to make Provision for the Promotion of online safety that will require Internet Service Providers and Mobile Phone Operators to Provide a Service that excludes Adult Content; and a Bill for an Act to Prohibit Sales of Pre-Registered and falsely or illegally Registered SIM Cards; and for Other Matters Related Thereto –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The fourth Order of the day, honourable Colleagues is commencement of debates on the general principle of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Nigerian Communications Act, Cap N97

Hon. Members, you would recall that the Bills were consolidated on Thursday, 14th April, 2016. I now invite Hon. Nicholas Ossai to move that the Bills be read the Second Time.

Chairman Rules and Business Committee, is it this Bill that Hon. Aliyu Madaki wanted to raise a point of order on?

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa: Exactly so, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai: Mr. Speaker, I intend to step this Bill down for further consultation. All parties have agreed for us to step it down.

Bill by leave of the House stood down.

**Urban Development Bank of Nigeria, Act, Cap.
U16, LFN, 2004 (Repeal) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to Repeal the Urban Development Bank of Nigeria, Act, Cap. U16, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and Enact the Infrastructure Bank of Nigeria Act, 2016 for the purposes of Encouraging Infrastructural Development through the provision of Financial Assistance on qualified Infrastructure Projects selected by the Bank; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 470) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The fifth Order of the day is commencement of debates on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Urban Development Bank of Nigeria, Act, Cap. U16.

Hon. Members will recall that the Bill was read the First Time on Wednesday, 13 April, 2016. I now invite Hon. Isiaka Ibrahim to move that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Isiaka Ibrahim (Ogun): Mr. Speaker, with due respect and apologies to the House and your good self, after the First Reading of this Bill a lot of things still came up, which we will have to accommodate. For this reason, I want to apply that the Bill be stepped down to another day.

Bill by leave of the House stood down.

**National Agricultural Seeds Act, Cap. N5, LFN,
2004 (Repeal) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to Repeal the National Agricultural Seeds Act, Cap. N5, LFN, 2004 and Re-enact the National Agricultural Seeds Council, 2016; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 472) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The sixth Order of the day is commencement of debates on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Repeal the National Agricultural Seeds Act, Cap. N5, LFN, 2004 and Re-enact the National Agricultural Seeds Council, 2016; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 472).

Hon. Members will recall that the Bill was read the First Time on Wednesday, 13 April, 2016. I now invite Hon. Munir Dan Agundi to move that the Bill

be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi: Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill A Bill for an Act Repeal the National Agricultural Seeds Act, Cap. N5, LFN, 2004 and Re-enact the National Agricultural Seeds Council, 2016; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 472).

Hon. Mani Ashiru (Katsina): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Munir Dan Ashiru.

The Speaker: Hon. Munir, please lead the debate.

Question proposed.

Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi: Mr. Speaker, it is rather unfortunate that the Bill is coming at this time. This should have come at the advent of this democracy because we said Agriculture is paramount to our economy.

The first Seed Act was enacted 200 years in Switzerland and in 1992, an Act was enacted by Decree No. 72 of 1992; that was under the military regime. It was in 2007 that the Decree was brought to limelight. What we are trying to do now is agriculture.

Before you do anything, seed is the most important input. If you solve the issue of seeds in terms of quality, then you are solving 50 *per cent* of the problem. Any other thing in terms of fertilizer and other agricultural produce carries another 50 *per cent*. So, you can see that the importance of this Bill cannot be over-emphasized. Once we have this Bill, I am sure there will be window for many people to invest in agriculture especially in terms of productivity.

We know that some of our Research Institutes have developed some varieties of seeds that are of good quality, and also the yield has increased between two tons per hectare, some to 6 tons per hectare, even some hybrid to 9 tons per hectare. But still these technologies are on the short in some of our Research Institutes. What the Seed Council is trying to do is just a regulatory institution/body to make sure that the Research Institutes, the marketing, and processing of seed is regulated like what we have in other advanced societies and also our sister countries in West Africa. The African Sub-region countries like Kenya, Ethiopia have gone far by making sure that seed quality is regulated in their countries and the agricultural productivity in Kenya, Ethiopia and even some countries like Sudan is more than what we have in this

country.

This Bill as I said, on a general sense, is something we have to do, if we want agriculture to develop in this country. Then I want to say even in West African Sub-region, the window we have, if we have a system that regulates our seed system, we are opening a market of more than 1.5 billion Dollars in seed production. What we currently have in Nigeria alone or in the sub-region is just less than 200 million Naira. So, there is a window of opportunity for many investors whether you are from the Parliament or from the Executive, agriculture is the only thing that you can do which the Constitution allows you to do without any issue in it. This is what the Bill is all about and by establishing this regulatory body, I am sure they are on the right track.

The Speaker: We have to cut the deal first, if you must contribute to this debate, you will have to tell us where your farm is located; otherwise you put your hands down (*laughter*).

Hon. Monguno, you want to take that challenge? For my Leader, I have been to Zaria so many times; I have never seen a farm there belonging to you. I am going this weekend; if you are serious I will go in and check (*laughter*).

Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno (Monguno/Marte/Nganzai): I have a very big farm in Monguno. Unfortunately, for the last five years or so I could not even in the widest of my dream venture or go into that farm because of Boko Haram insurgency. For now, I do not have farm. But now that our communities have been liberated as a result of the gallantry of the Nigerian Arm Forces, we are now returning to our communities, I will soon go back to my farm.

The importance of this Bill that is sponsored by Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi cannot be over emphasised, especially against the back drop of the fact that seed plays a very pivotal role in the agricultural sector. As rightly pointed out by the sponsor of the Bill, if you solve the problem of the quality of seed you have solved the problem of farm yield by 50 *per cent*. For now, the National Agricultural Seed Council is not autonomous in nature. It is subjected to the whims and caprices of the Federal Ministry of Agriculture. It is not autonomous and therefore, it cannot effectively play its regulatory role of controlling the quality and marketing of seeds in Nigeria.

What this Bill seeks to do is to give teeth and more

powers as well as legal framework for the National Agricultural Seed Council to function effectively without necessarily subjecting it to the whims and caprices of the Ministry so that it can operate as an independent agency that cannot only bark but can bite and effectively enforce the regulations with regards to production as well as marketing of seeds in Nigeria. So, it is very pivotal and germane, especially against the back drop of the fact that in Nigeria today we are craving for diversification of our economy away from oil.

I sincerely support the Second Reading of this Bill and urge my Colleagues to also whole heartedly support the Second Reading of this Bill so that the much talked about diversification of the Nigerian economy away from oil will see the light of the day.

Hon. Chris Emeka Ifeanyi Azubogu: I stand to thank the mover of this Bill. For me, I am an Agricultural Engineer by training and I have worked extensively in different farms. Today we are talking about making agriculture a serious business; we are talking about diversification of the economy and productivity. Farming has gone out of the issue of poor man's business. Farming cannot be subsistence anymore, it is a serious business. We want to get more out of land. If we put in seeds we get better output that will count it as a productive measure.

The only way that we could do it well is for us to have a proper regulator that will determine the quality of seeds we apply. Regulators who can take control of the basic inputs, which is the seed before you talk of chemicals, fertilizer or even land creation. If the quality of seeds that we are applying in the farm is controlled and regulated, one it will affect our health; if you understand the quality it will affect productivity; it will increase output. We need agricultural seeds to produce food for us and our animals and basic agricultural raw materials that we need for processing by our industries.

This is how to build a strong and reliable economy like in other advance nation where you have quality products and quality seeds. If you make proper inputs what you will get out is going to help our economy.

We are talking about diversification. The first Minister that is going to come here is the Minister of Agriculture and we are going to discuss extensively on this. This bill is coming at the right time, it is not late yet. I will you support this Bill solely because we need a regulator in the industry that will give us what is needed as a primary inputs, which will even

encourage youths who will embark on agriculture to see how productive it is.

Take for instance, before now in one hectare of rice farming you can get about 3 or 4 tons but if you use improve seedlings, you can get between 11 and 12 tons. The same thing with maize, before now you get like 7 tons but with the improved seedlings and quality seeds you can get up to 40 tons in a hectare. That will increase the income of the farmer. When we make it a business many people will see farming as a serious business and they will not be looking for white collar job.

We need a standard regulator that understands the times we are in and we are supporting that this Bill go for Second Reading. At the level of the Committee, a lot of inputs will be made so that Nigeria as a nation will play in the big business of seed business.

We are talking about \$1.5billion dollar business and we are ensuring that Nigeria being the most populous Black Africa nation, that we will benefit and control the seed market. We have the land mass, we have geo-political advantage, we have other advantages on our side that we can control the business of seeds in Africa and Sahara and this will help us if we have a good regulator that is acclaimed globally.

I support this Bill that it has to go for Second reading.

Hon. Garba Datti Muhammed (Sabon Gari): As requested, I want to assure you that I have a farmland in my Constituency, I am a farmer. I have to commend the mover of this Bill because the Bill is coming at a very right time, especially now that the price of oil is going down. The need for diversification of our economy is now.

In Nigeria we do not need to be importing food, we are so endowed with good diversified climate, large expands of land, almost there is no type of crop that cannot grow within Nigeria but because there is no good policy in place that will make this to work, we keep on importing foods.

As the mover of the Bill rightly said, the importance of seed cannot be over-emphasised. He said 50 *per cent* but I will tell you that importance of seed in agricultural production is over 75 *per cent* because if you have a very good seed, your productivity will increase drastically. Mr. Speaker,

with your permission, I will cite an example. When the pioneer seeds of the United States of America came to this country in the mid-80s and up to early 90s, the production level of our farmers was just between 2 to 3 tons per hectare but with the introduction of high breed seeds, you will find out that our farmers start getting up to 10 to 12 metric tons per hectare.

The biggest challenge is because there is no good regulation on these seeds, and so you will find out that there is a lot of fake seeds in the market. People are selling grains in the name of seeds so our farmers are being swindled. They do not know the difference; they will just go and colour some of these grains and call it seeds and start selling it at exorbitant prices. We have excellent breeders in this country, scientists who have developed different varieties of hybrid seed and open pollinated seed. We also have seeds that are disease resistant but most of our farmers are not aware. And some of the out-growers that were employed to grow these seeds, after growing the seeds for the companies, they would hide part of it and sell it through the back door to other seed companies. This is adversely affecting their agricultural production.

This is the right time and the Bill is coming at the right moment where this National Agricultural Seed Council has to regulate the activities of seed companies, and check people cheating our farmers by giving them fake seeds and grains. With this Bill there would be penalty for everybody that is doing that type of bad practice. I call on my Colleagues to please support this Bill to pass for the Second Reading.

Hon. Saleh Hassan Anthony (Ado/Ogbadibo/Okpokwu): I have been guided by the Minority Leader as you put the question. I am sorry am saying it because this debate has been over flogged and everybody has spoken in favour of having the Seed Council in the country. I would like to also lend my support for this Bill to pass for Second Reading because I am also a farmer. I have my farmland somewhere in Niger and Benue State. We are all hoping that with the passage of this Bill, we would get the right seed that we would plant and would germinate to ensure large productions of crops.

About two weeks ago, I was privileged to be part of ministerial delegation to Denmark to look at their farms in the areas of animal production. There is a seed company in Denmark that is proposing to come to this country to grow grass for cattle farmers. Essentially what he is saying is that we can have the right grass-seeds. I realised then that even grass has seeds; that this was the kind of grass that our cattle

need to eat to be able to produce large quantity of milk. Gown grass-seed is better than grazing all over the place and at the end of the day, the animals do not have the necessary nutrients to be able to produce milk.

It is essential that we have companies that are producing genuine seeds for our farmers. With the establishment of Seed Council, it would enhance the quality of seed production and allow us to export seeds to other countries. Nigeria agricultural produce is highly questionable by other countries because of the issue of quality assurance and quality control. I want to lend my support and appeal to my colleagues to support this Bill to be read the Second Time, so that the campaign for diversification of the economy into agriculture can be sustained. I so submit.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time and referred to the Committee on Agricultural Production and Services.

MOTION

Need to Ascertain the Status of Recovered Public Funds

The Speaker: The seventh Order of the day is a Motion on the Need to Ascertain the Status of Recovered Public Funds, standing in the name of Hon. Segun Adekola, Hon. Adekola is now invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Segun Adekola (Ekiti South West/Ikere/Ise/Orun): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

The House:

Notes with concern the recent statement by the Hon. Minister of Justice and Attorney-General of the Federation that the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), has so far recovered more than \$2 trillion (over ₦400 trillion at the current rate) looted from the national treasury, in its twelve years of existence;

Also notes that further recoveries have been made by the Independent Corrupt Practices Commission (ICPC), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), National Drugs Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) and Department of State Services (DSS), in addition to the huge amounts of money returned by those who, at various times,

entered into plea-bargain with the EFCC;

Further notes the present government's assertion that some former officials of the previous government have been returning unspecified sums to the treasury;

Aware that for many years now, successive Governments have continued to take possession of billions of dollars of looted public funds returned from various parts of the world, with Switzerland returning a higher percentage of the amounts;

Concerned about the persistent confusion as to the exact amount that had been recovered, and what happened to it;

Also concerned that successive governments have not been transparent regarding their management or spending of recovered public assets, giving vent to the allegations that some of the recovered funds may have been spent, mismanaged or simply disappeared;

Resolves to:

- (i) Mandate the Committee on Public Accounts to carry out a comprehensive investigation of public funds and assets recovered from 1999 till date, particularly but not limited to the uses to which such funds had been put, with a view to reporting to the House within three months on the status of the funds;
- (ii) Urge the government to set out clear rules on how recovered funds should be utilized and ensure strict accountability in its disbursement in line with extant laws and national priorities; and
- (iii) Also mandate the Committee on Financial Crimes to investigate whether any crimes may have been committed in the course of the management and disbursements of the recovered funds in the last 12 years. I so move.

Hon. Ibrahim Murtala Danmazari (Matazu/Musawa): I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Adekola.

Hon. Segun Adekola: We are all aware of the situation in our country. Many states were not able to pay salaries; electricity supply is epileptic and the state of unemployment in our country is worrisome. The unemployment is ravaging this country with our

youths leaving them with no job.

Over time Nigeria experienced Oil boom but the monies from the booms were mismanaged, most of the monies were looted with huge amount syphoned to foreign countries because we do not have Joseph or Pharaoh in the biblical term, whom God showed a vision on how to conserve the boom in the land of Egypt in those days. Most of our gains were stolen, looted and taken to foreign land. We do not know maybe God wants to help Nigeria that is why we are able to recover so much loot, like I have asserted, and going by what the Hon. Minister of Justices said, that over two trillion dollars had been recovered.

You all remember Abacha loot, so many billion, Baba Balogun, Alamesaye, Ibori from whom loots were recovered. But what have Nigerians benefited from these recovered loots? Recently we were told that a lot of public officials in the past administration have been returning looted funds, Nigerians want to know how much has been recovered so far. We cannot have so much money being recovered and Nigerians are still wallowing in abject poverty. There is infrastructure decay in Nigeria, so we need those monies to take care of all these things.

I move this Motion for us to know the true state of the recovered loots. I am not unaware that sometimes we were told that some of the monies were domiciled in CBN to serve as evidence. What evidence are we waiting when Nigerians cannot even eat three square meals, when an average Nigerian is going to bed without eating anything?

I believe that we need to know the status of our recovered loots and to ascertain if they have been spending these monies, and who appropriated it for spending. The Constitution, especially Section 80 (3) says:

Every money should be paid into the consolidated account and should be appropriated for by this House before anybody can spend such money.

We want to know all the recovered loots since 1999, how they have been spending it, Nigerians are hungry, infrastructural decay is all over the country. I am of the opinion that this honourable House will support his Motion and the prayers will be accepted.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor: This particular Motion clearly as you know is a very important

Motion vis-à-vis the Economic and Financial Crime Commissions' functions for us as a nation. I state with all emphasis that you can look at the Motion vis-a-vis the position taken by the Attorney General of the Federation, he told the whole world that \$2 trillion, not naira, has been recovered so far.

I am aware of the Budget of this great nation for the past twelve years and I do not even think that the Budget itself is even up to ₦60 trillion, because averagely our Budget has been running at a rate of about ₦4 trillion. As our number one law officer giving us this huge offensive amount of funds that has been recovered, I think it should be of major interest to this great Chamber; it should be of major interest to this august House to find out specifically, and I state specifically, where these funds are. I am saying this because by the provision of the EFCC Act, looted funds recovered are supposed to be paid into the consolidated account of the Federation.

I am not aware in my all years of experience on this Floor where the EFCC, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has paid any specific amount during the budgetary provisions into the consolidated account of the Federation. If my one number Officer is telling me that we have ₦400 trillion laying down somewhere and we are going out there to look for money to borrow, then it becomes something of concern to us.

You will remember vividly that our President went to seek infrastructure facility of about six billion dollars and here the Attorney General is telling us that we have recovered six trillion for the past twelve years? I think as a House vis-a-vis what the Committee should do is to go straight and find out specifically where these monies are kept, who actually is holding these monies, and whether the monies have been utilized for something else. The Committee on Public Account should be able do justice to it. But my only concern is just the second prayer, which says that:

Urge the government to set out clear rules on how recovered funds should be utilized and ensure strict accountability in its disbursement in line with extant laws and national priorities;

I believe this is totally unnecessary because by the clear provisions of Section 80(4) of the Constitution that responsibility is on this House and I believe that the author and mover of this Motion quoted that section clearly where he said, we are the ones that appropriate these funds. EFCC Act authorises that these funds should be paid into the consolidated

account, so the responsible falls on the National Assembly.

The third prayer says:

Also mandate the Committee on Financial Crimes to investigate whether any crimes may have been committed in the course of the management and disbursements of the recovered funds in the last 12 years.

I believe that it is based on the investigation when the Committee comes out with its investigation, the Committee should be able to tell us whether these monies are either laying down in the Central Bank or whether they are still with the Economic and Financial Crime Commission and on the basis of that, we can draw our own conclusion.

I appeal that we give this Motion all the necessary support because where we have four hundred trillion pending, I do not see why we should go and look for money somewhere else. We should probably be looking for that four hundred trillion and I believe that the Attorney General would be able to tell us specifically where some of these funds are vis-a-vis the Economic and Financial Crime Commission. I support this Motion wholeheartedly.

The Speaker: The Motion is investigative one and I will put the question

Question put and agreed to.

Motion referred to the Committee on Public Accounts and Finance.

Hon. Namdas Abdulrazak Sa'ad: Point of Order!

The Speaker: Hon. Namdas, what is your Point of Order?

PRIVILEGES

Alleged Sharing of ₦100 Million to Members of National Assembly

Hon. Namdas Abdulrazak Sa'ad: My Point of Order is Order VI, Rule 20 it is the issue of Privilege.

A Member of this honourable House, Hon Faruk of Niger State actually granted press interview, particularly with the VOA, where he alleged that the

sum of one ₦100 million was shared to all Members of the National Assembly. In view of this there have been a lot of phone calls from our constituencies, asking us to bring their own share and we all know for a fact that we have not received any kobo.

However, I approached the Member and he said he actually granted that interview but he did not understand Hausa very well; he did not mean what he said. The hon. Member is here, I will plead that he may be allowed to shed more light on that interview that he granted.

The Speaker: Yes Hon. Farouk?

Hon. Faruk Muhammadu Bala (Katcha/Gbako/Bida): Mr. Speaker actually it was a sort of misinformation, misinterpretation and misrepresentation of my submission by the gentlemen of the press. What I was referring to was just the issue of the Constituency Intervention Project but he misquoted me by saying they have already given us these cash all over the place.

Mr. Speaker, I am very sorry for this and by the grace of God I am going to make further clarification to clear the air. I sincerely apologise for this inconvenience.

The Speaker: But Hon. Farouk even if you are talking about the constituency on zonal intervention it is not one hundred per Member, some Members go for forty or less than that and this goes to the constituency. For example Members from Kano do not have forty. Yes Hon. Salame, you want to say something.

Hon. Balarabe Abdullahi Salame (Illela/Gwadabawa): Mr. Speaker, what I want to say here is that, though I am just hearing Hon. Farouk apologising to all hon. Members. Normally, taken into consideration our status as Members of the Chamber and he being our Colleague, I think whatever he has committed, since he has apologised we should accept his apology and pardon him. This is my submission.

Hon. Muhammad Sani Abdu: Mr. Speaker, I went out and as I was coming I received a text message from my constituent and would read it to the House to hear the threat we are under:

'Asalam ailekun Honourable! My name is Mohamud Yondo from Alkalari. We hear in Voice of America one of your Member from Niger State said all of you, government gave you money ₦100 million to

go and conduct work in your area, Mr. Hon Alkalari/Kirfi we are waiting for you.

The text went further:

'Because you are in APC and a strong leader among the cabinet of Baba Buhari you must give account of this one hundred million.

This is the text I got and showed a few hon. Members, even though I did not know it would be brought before the House. The point I am making is; we are endangered species but responsible public officers. We must be very careful and cherish whatever comes out of our mouth. More often I prefer that this Chamber has given us all the immunity, opportunity and space to express ourselves on national and personal and privilege issue; let us use it. Going to the press as such will amount to blackmailing and we would be digging hole or going into an unwholesome thing.

Now we need to take this seriously because presently I am under threat!

Hon. Agbo Dennis Nnamdi (Igbo-eze North/Udenu): Mr. Speaker, indeed I want to use the word endangered species because that is what we have become. I felt pity for us in the House of Representatives when I watched an interview granted by one of us on AIT. It was almost a conspiracy, they were coming with a made up mind.

To cut my presentation very short, I suggest, since the mistake has been made, that we need to go back to our media people. The hon. Member had clarified and apologised and there is no other way to go other than to go back with an equally strong campaign to counter that. The press people are here and have heard him apologised and that that was not what he meant. Let the Press organise to counter this negative report, which I think is the most important thing.

Let us appreciate the fact that a lot of misinformation is going on out there to Nigerians concerning what is happening here and when we are put on air we should also provide information and stand our ground. We should not waver or prevaricate to let people know that many people who are here in the House did not just come to the limelight in this Chamber. These are people who have held their own in various areas of callings. We must go back and counter this persecution, as I may say, from the people of our constituencies and Nigerians.

Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba (Doguwa/Tudun Wada): This is a very critical issue though it was raised quite lightly; it is not a matter we should take lightly. It is critical in the sense that it borders not only on the integrity of the individual Members but also the institution of the National Assembly, specifically the House of Representatives.

Let us cast our mind back to what is really happening now outside there. For two or three days we have been kept here captives and could not access our offices and the Chamber through the right gate. We have had to be maneuvering our ways to get into our offices to undertake our constitutional responsibilities and these are issues that I believe are borne out of this kind of cynicism. In most cases being caused by the Press, and in this case for instance, being caused by fellow Member of this House - one of us exposing us to a lot of threat.

So, many things could come up out of these insinuations and is not only when Election approaches that it can be a problem. If these early hours of this dispensation Members of the National Assembly or the House could now be so exposed even in the discharge of our constitutional responsibilities then who knows what will happen when the election comes up.

My advice, while I appreciate most of the contributions made by other people who have spoken, is that we need now to take a proactive measure and look inward because this is an issue that has happened not once or twice. I recall sometime last two months whereby a Member granted a similar kind of interview that indicted not only members but himself as well and we keep taking the matter as light as just being content with a n apology. We must tell ourselves the truth and it is no other than Members restricting their communication channel to what they can succinctly depend.

As a House we have a normal and formal channel through the Media Committee of the House and we have the competent person handling that, and who do not go out to speak to the Press until briefed by the leadership and has taken enough communication and consultation among members. No Member should have any cause whatsoever to go and speak on matter that is institutional whether he understands Hausa or otherwise. If he talks about zonal intervention which has been a conventional budgetary provision which everybody knows and Nigerian should be able to understand that nobody takes such money to implement such projects. These are monies that are

provided in sectorial agencies and sectorial agency provision for the agency of government to implement and why will someone go ahead and mispresent us or speak out of context.

With due respect to my Colleague and this institution where we all have served and are serving our father land with selfless service, nobody could claim to be more Nigerian than anyone else. We are all Nigerians and are stakeholders in Nation building and must have to protect our personal integrity and individual reputation by doing exactly what we are supposed to do.

I want to believe that taken a mere apology from this Member may not be sufficient because this case can continue linking up, so I want to suggest that this Motion should be given sufficient consideration. A ruling must be taken on it. And the Member, after giving the apology to the House, have to go the extra mile to speak to the same medium refuting what he has said and also expressing similar apology to the public; that may clear the air to some extent.

The point I am trying to make is for Members to watch out what they say so that at the end of the day we would not be speaking out of context.

Hon. Mojeed Alabi (Ede North/South /Egebore/Ejigbo): Mr. Speaker, Hon. Bala is my very good Friend but unfortunately on this occasion I do not know what to say because he has violated the rules of the House. On this issue of budget, there are many of us who have a lot to say but we defer to our decision that we should leave the issue of relating with the media with our media team. Apart from that he has violated the rule of engagement with the press, those of us who speak to the press know that you do not just say something because once you release it people can interpret it in whatever way they can.

Nonetheless, I would support the position of Hon. Salami that we should take the apology. But before we take the apology, all the previous contributors have spoken against it but none have denied it but on my honour, I hereby state categorically that whether hundred million or one million, I Mojeed Alabi, representing my good people have not and I am not aware of any Member of this House who have received any such money whether in cash or by way of whatever project from the government as I am standing here today. Even the issue of student intervene is still a subject of discussion between the Executive and the Legislature so we have not, that is a denial total.

Secondly, we should ask ourselves; would a regime of Mohammadu Buhari that we know give anybody one kobo not to talk of hundred million. This is Mohammadu Buhari that hosted us to a dinner and we left like that, No! We need to appeal to the conscience of Nigerians that even when they hear such issues they should not believe it. Let us say the National Assembly has a variant status among Nigerian does the President also have? No! is the answer. This particular statement is patently false; it is impossible and unrealisable under this current regime of Muhammad Buhari.

My prescription, hon. Members, is that our Media team has to intervene because if we leave the issue of retraction to my Colleague alone he might not be able to do sufficient justice to it. So, I want the House Media team to organise Press briefing so that the Chairman, House Committee on media, will speak and then the hon. Member concerned will also speak. That way Nigerians they would know that he is actually making the retraction in a proper way.

Lastly, I appeal to hon. Members that when we want to speak outside we should be clear in what we want to say, because you know have the right that you want to speak, the person also hearing it has the right of interpretation. When you are making a speech please let us make it clear and unambiguously.

Hon. Chinda Kingsley Ogundu: Mr. Speaker, while I will not want to repeat some of the things that have been said, I just want to emphasise that there is a clear misunderstanding of what this zonal intervention projects are and the nature of zonal intervention project. Because even among Members, you hear people say oh, state A is getting twenty million, state B is getting thirty million as if that money is coming to Members. People need to understand that zonal intervention project is an international accepted practice in legislature, it is not peculiar to Nigeria and it is not peculiar to us. All we do is to suggest project that is important and relevant to our constituencies. That project can be of the value of twenty, or thirty million as the case may be.

The fact that Members are given money, I think that we need to enlighten the public on what zonal intervention project is. So I will want our Committee to take this up and ensure that Nigerians are properly informed. They have the right to be informed anyway, if they keep misinterpreting what Constituency project is; we will not sit back and keep blaming them. It is our responsibility to enlighten them and let the relevant Committee takes this up so that people will be

properly informed on what zonal intervention project is.

Hon. Sadiq Ibrahim (Fufore/Song): Mr. Speaker, I also receive a similar message as the one received by my Colleague Hon. Sani Abdu. My own says:

*salam aleku, yaya aiki kasa, Allah ta waka,
kada amamsa adamu agolotunban, savu demunga
suba duma nkudi, nararazapu, inama fada alheri,
once I was a youth leader goro tuban.*

Mohammed Bashir is a youth leader from my own constituency. He said something like good morning Sir, honourable how are you doing, I have heard that a lot of money has been given to you for development of your constituency. I hope you will not forget about us here.

Ordinarily, one could definitely be enraged by issues like this but I think this is a reflection of what is happening in this country. People have been pushed to the wall because unemployment has been more than double; there is no money in this country. People that you see with big cars and big houses go to people's workplace and ask for ₦20,000. The people just have no money to spend but all the same, there is an issue of integrity here. If hon. Member can say such a thing, then it became indefensible, there is no way we can go and defend ourselves on such issues.

However, the person who is alleged to have made this statement have confessed and in his confession he said, he had been misquoted and I am not surprised that he has been misquoted. This morning the Chairman, Rules and Business, was on air live on AIT, if you see the kind of molestation that he suffered, the kind of questions and answers that he got! I see generally we are on defensive.

I am happy that Hon. Namda has raised this issue, what am I talking about here, this is an issue where an hon. Member done something wrong and he has been accosted and given the right of fair hearing to ventilate what have happened. The Chairman, Rules and Business, was on air and from what he had been misquoted too. I am of the view that he was actually misquoted because ordinarily, this is a man who does not even talk. If it was somebody like me such thing was said of perhaps I might have agreed that I said so. But for somebody who is such a quite person I do not think he must have this mischief; I do not think he did it intentionally to malign the hon. Members of this House. I do not think he is going to malign this institution.

Therefore, I beg to submit that there is nothing to gain if we punish him for this and the public has nothing to gain if we punish him because they had already made up their minds against us. Perhaps he did not even have the money to give to the Press. So, I think it is better to accept his apology.

Sir, just like the way God Almighty did to Adam. He already instructed Adam and Eve not to eat the forbidden fruit; they went ahead and ate the forbidden fruit before he sent them out, he gave them a fair hearing as to; *why did you do it?* Adam said that he did it, and God forgave him. So, please, Mr. Speaker, I am begging in the name of all there is to us that we should forgive our Colleague and believe that he was misquoted.

The Speaker: I think it was a matter of privilege I would rule on this. We have always said that it is important that any time we are speaking to the outside world, we should bear in mind, first of all, that we have the duty as leaders to present information that is balanced, information that is truthful. That is the duty we owe. And in all cases we are not hundred *per cent* convinced even you are 99.9 *per cent* convinced, if you are not 100 *per cent* convinced do not issue a statement, because you are even misleading the people that would listen to you ; as leaders you do not want to mislead your audience.

In this case, I believe the hon. Member involved has listened to contributions from the Floor, what was stated was extremely far from the truth and I sincerely believe that in Niger State, knowing the number of Members in that State, there is no way each Member in Niger State would get from the Zonal Intervention a ₦100 million. Even from the neighbour of Niger State it is impossible that each of the Members from Niger State gets a ₦100 million each. We are twelve in Bauchi State and we do not have half of a ₦100 million. Those from Kano, Lagos, we know what is due to them. So this information do not only affects the House, it affects the entity of Nigeria, the whole world that have heard this which is not only misleading but it is not even the truth.

For me I think the right apology would be not only to the hon. Members but to the audience that listened to the hon. Member who had now been fed with information that is not true. So the right apology would be for the hon. Member to go back there to the same medium and tell the whole audience he did not get it right, but this is the true position. The truth is what heals, like the late Saudana who said conscience is an open wound; it is only the truth that would heal

it. So now that open wound is there it is the truth that would come from your mouth that is going to heal that wound.

There is nothing that we are going to say here that would make sense to the outside world as long as the same hon. Member does not tell them that, look the information I gave was not truthful, that this is the correct information, that I was misquoted but this is the correct information. As long as you do that I do not think that, as a House, we would have problem with that. It is only when you do not do it that there would be an issue, because it would mean that you sincerely believe and you are sustaining the statement that you gave.

If you do that you will report progress next week and that would be helpful to the House.

Need to initiate Measures to address the Menace of Overloading of Commercial Vehicles

The Speaker: The eighth Order of the day is a Motion on the Need to initiate Measures to address the Menace of Overloading of Commercial Vehicles, standing in the name of Hon. Abbas Tajudeen. Hon. Tajudeen is invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Abbas Tajudeen: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move.

The House:

Aware of the prevalent practice of overloading of commercial vehicles plying the nation's roads, given the attendant risks to passengers;

Also aware that the additional loads being carried by the vehicles accelerate the deterioration of the road network, leading to rutting, fatigue, cracking, and in certain cases, structural failure, which undoubtedly contribute to the plethora of accidents on the highways, not to mention reduced performance of the vehicles while trying to cope with the excess load;

Concerned about the damage to the roads arising from overloading of vehicles which result in higher maintenance costs and in turn, place an additional burden on the country, as well as to other road users who, ultimately suffer the consequences of the menace;

Also concerned that agencies like the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) and the Vehicle

Inspection Offices (VIO) charged with the responsibility of managing the uses of the Road network appear to have been overwhelmed by the menace.

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) to initiate measures to address the menace; and
- (ii) Mandate the Committee on FRSC to ensure compliance.

Hon. Akinade-Fijabi Saheed (Ibadan South West/Ibadan North West): I second the motion as moved by Hon. AbbasTajudeen.

Hon. Akinade-Fijabi Saheed: From empirical studies on cases of accidents in Nigeria, you would find that six out of every ten accidents that happened on our roads are as a result of overloading, which ultimately affect not only the capacity of the vehicle but even the tires which lead to accidents. At this time when fuel scarcity has become the order of the day, a lot of commercial vehicles try to maximize the cost, probably they are unable to increase the fares of their buses or taxes; they resolve to putting too many passengers to make up for the additional cost of fuel. And it is so prevalent now, wherever you go, to find those buses taking extra loads.

If you look at our commercial trailers and trucks, you see that the same thing is happening. A commercial truck that is supposed to take at least 500 kg is made to take over 750 kg in some cases to 1000 kg just in an effort to make up additional money. The implication of all those kind of things is affecting the lives and security of our people. When a vehicle takes too much load, first of all, it compromises the lives of those who are using those roads. Anything that happens to that road would not only affect the driver but any other person around that area could be an unfortunate victim.

In actual sense, most of our roads are built to last for 10 to 15 years, but if you look at what is happening because of the additional loads our roads, hardly will you see our roads lasting up to five years at most. So, we can also begin to talk about economic consequences of what happens when this overloading continues to occur unabated.

It is my view that for us to have an inroad into this

big menace, we need to borrow a leaf from other advanced countries. If you go to Niger here, you will find that truck will not be allowed to take off and ply the road until it is subjected to weighing at designated bases. Such designated bases are scattered within fifty kilometers interval; which means if you carry load in a truck from Abuja, for example, before the truck reaches Kaduna, there will be two to three inspection bases where the load of that particular truck will be weighed. Just to make sure that it is in compliance with the acceptable load of that kind of vehicle.

I am calling on Members to support this Motion because it is a very important one. By supporting it, we will be saving the lives of our drivers, commuters, passengers and every other user of the road and at the same time we will be able to preserve the life span of our roads. I so submit.

Hon. Rufa'I Ahmed Chanchangi (Kaduna South): The issue of overload has become a menace to our roads. We have a situation whereby you see lorries that are configured to carry a maximum weight of 40 tons would be reconfigured to carry as much as 60 tons. All what the Road Safety Marshal does is to collect stipends and behind you see them stopping people not wearing their seatbelts.

We also have a situation whereby we have people delivering animals as heavy and big as cows, camels in such a small car as Starlet car. This does not only limit itself to overload, it also amounts to animal cruelty.

When it comes to discipline, where we see indiscipline, it is on our roads. If we really want to talk about and implement change, this is where we are going to start from. We should support our Colleague in this very important Motion.

Hon. Ahwinahwi Solomon (Ughelli North/Ughelli South/Udu): This Motion is quite timely and very important, because those that ply our roads can agree with me that with what is going on today, we need to do something because these trucks that carry so much load, that were meant to carry about 40 tons, now carry about 80 tons; thereby causing accidents for other road users.

I am of the opinion, like the last speaker said; we need to call the Federal Road Safety to order or have them address those other people on the road. You will find out that these vehicles are still doing this because it has become a tradition that when they ply the road, no matter what they do, Road Safety is going to allow

them go by the time they give them small amounts of money.

I am here not only to support this Motion but to say also call on Corps Marshall Boboye Oyeyemi to address his men to take action when they see anything, and once they hold trucks or vehicles that are overloaded they should overlook stipends and ask them to pay the stipulated fines. Ask offenders to pay about fifty or one hundred thousand Naira fine, I can categorically tell you that nobody will want to carry overload or ply the road to cause menace on the road again.

I urge all my Colleagues to support this Motion, it is very good because it will save the risk of endangering our roads, and save lives.

Hon. Bashir Baballe: I quite agree that the issue of overloading has become a menace in Nigeria, but we need to be mindful when we talk of Federal Road Safety. We are only restricting ourselves to Federal Road Safety to highways. The number of Federal Road Safety men we have in Nigeria is insufficient to cater for this menace we are talking about. The laws are there but the problem we are having is that of enforcement.

It can even be recalled that sometime during the era of Governor Sule Lamido of Jigawa State, the Jigawa State Government came with initiatives with regards to addressing this issue of overloading. If you are travelling from Nkaba motor park in Kano to any part of Jigawa State, if you are going by Peugeot or Starlet, for Peugeot there is no way you can carry more than five passengers and for Starlet, it is only five. From Kano, you will see them loading like seven or eight. Immediately they reach Jigawa State border, they parked and dropped the passengers. There are '*kabu kabu* or '*achaba* men, who will just transport them via the bush and bypass checkpoint; and they will reach their final destination.

Even today, if you are travelling from Abuja to Kano, when you reach Zaria in the past when we had road blocks, you would see like fifty '*kabu kabu* or '*achaba* people along the way before entering Kaduna waiting for those drivers who have this case of overload. On reaching the Road Safety, the passengers will just come down, use motor cycle, cross the checkpoint and join the cars again.

Apart from addressing the people of Road Safety, there is need for us to engage in what we call a social-cultural revolution. The attitude of our people, even

the passengers, lives much to be desired, and it starts from the motor parks. If today the National Union of Road Transport Workers and all other unions related to transportation key into this government project and from the motor park, they do not encourage this issue of overloading, even if you come with your car, they will tell you this is the capacity of your car, you cannot go beyond it. I am sure we would have addressed this issue by fifty *per cent*.

My position is that it goes beyond Federal Road Safety; it is beyond the V.I.O. We need to change the psyche of our people. We need to bring in the transport unions into this project so that, at the end, we can succeed. I am sure this issue has been causing a lot of havoc for Nigerians. We are losing lives and properties. There are people who do not want to join overloaded vehicles but because they have no option, they do. If you go to the motor park, they will tell you this one is for four passengers from Abuja to Kano, and it is ₦2,600. The one conveying six passengers, two in front, four behind, is ₦2,000. Even in some cases it is ₦1,800. At times, people because of economic situation, they normally key in for that where they will squeeze themselves rather than to key into where they can reach safely. I think this is a holistic project which every Nigerian need to key in so that we can have a brighter future.

Hon. Akinade-Fijabi Saheed: Mr. Speaker in supporting this Motion I will start by saying that the Nigerian Road Safety Corp should be able to engage other road users like Nigerian Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and other unions, which is very important. I can remember, sometimes ago, that the NURTW have some laws within their park that there are some vehicles you cannot be able to fix in certain amount of people, which they have been following, but for now everybody is going against it.

Secondly, while we were growing up, I understand there is something they called *weighbridge*. Most of the trucks plying our road will definitely go on to that bridge. So I am imploring the Road Safety Corps to also introduce the *weighbridge* again because most of these overloaded vehicles are destroying our infrastructure; most of them cannot even go under the bridge so they are causing a lot of menace on our load.

In supporting this Motion, I will call on the Road Safety to work with other road users, all the unions to make more orientations and even our National Orientation Agency (NOA) to come out in creating more awareness on how to use more of our road for the benefit of all users.

Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi: Mr. Speaker my Brother Baballe has spoken and it is like he is trying to protect the Road Safety. Road Safety are supposed to do a lot, we expect a lot from them and he said that when people get to the check point they drop and get *achaba*, what of cows and animals that are overloaded, do they also get to ride *achaba*. I know these people, they collect some stipend and allow people both animals and cows, endangering also the lives of the animals. You can see they will carry twenty animals and people on the same vehicle.

I remember there was a time one of the animals overpowers those inside and drop on the road, only God saved us on that day. It is something that the Road Safety has to do its own work first and make sure that they do the right thing so that other agencies can copy from them. I am sure some of these things we can see. As far back as 10 year ago, in Niger Republic only one accident that claimed 20 lives due to overloading. They banned the use of commercial vehicles for almost one year. So, it is something that they have to look inward and do what they are supposed to do.

You can see a truck of Dangote vehicles carrying more than 100 people on top and only God knows what will happen if there is an accident. These are some of the things they should look at and take remedy so that we know that they are serious with their work.

The Speaker: I have two notices of amendments; one is from Hon. Chris Azubogu. He is recommending an additional prayer:

Mandate Ministry of Work to ensure that Weighbridges are repaired and reactivated to ensure their use for the enforcement of regulations on our roads.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred: I second the amendment ably moved by Hon. Chris Azubuogu that Weight Bridge re-introduced on our major highways.

Amendment put and agreed to.

The Speaker: The last amendment is from Hon. Umar Jega. He is proposing an additional prayer as follows:

Urge the National Orientation Agency NOA to enlighten the public on the dangers of overloading to our roads, lives of commuters and other road users.

Hon. Aishatu Jibril Dukku (Dukku/Nafada): I second the amendment as moved by Hon. Jega.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Main Question, as amended, put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

- (i) Urge the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) to initiate measures to address the menace;
- (ii) Mandate the Committee on FRSC to ensure compliance;
- (iii) Also urge the Ministry of Works to ensure that weigh bridges across the country are repaired and reactivated to ensure their use for the enforcement of approved weights on the road; and
- (iv) Further urge the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to enlighten the public on the danger of overloading vehicles on the lives of road users and destruction of road infrastructure.

Motion accordingly referred to the Committees on Road Safety Commission, Information, and National Orientation, Ethics and Values, and Works.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT

Report of the Committee on Interior Alleged Criminal Act of Assault and Battery against Hon. Onyemaechi Joan Mrakpor

The Speaker: The 9th Order of the day is consideration of Report of the Committee on Interior on Criminal Act of Assault and Battery Allegedly committed on Hon. Onyemaechi Joan Mrakpor by Men and Officers of the Nigerian Prison Service.

Hon. Members would recall the Report was laid on Tuesday, 26th April, 2016. I now invite Hon. Jagaba Adams Jagaba to move for its consideration.

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa: Hon. Jagaba is not on the Floor. The Report of the Committee was circulated on Tuesday and we have gone through the Report. It is my candid opinion that instead of consideration of the Report, we should direct the Committee to go and take a second look at it.

If you look at the Rules under which this Motion was made, the case before us is tantamount to criminal trial. The Report said that one of the persons accused never appear to testify. The House is empowered both constitutionally and by the House Rules to -

The Speaker: Chairman Rules and Business, I think you should move that we resolve into the Committee of the Whole first and then you can provide that information, and take a ruling on it.

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa: I move that the House do resolve into the Committee of the Whole for the purpose of consideration of the Report.

Hon. Mohammed Umar Jega: I second the Motion ably moved by Hon. Orker-Jev.

Question put and agreed to.

(The Hon. Speaker in the Chair)

Report of the Committee on Interior on Criminal Act of Assault and Battery Allegedly committed on Hon. Onyemaechi Joan Mrakpor by Men and Officers of the Nigerian Prison Service – CONSIDERED IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE.

The Chairman: Hon. Orker-Jev may proceed.

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa: One of the cornerstones of the legal system is that you must hear the other side, no matter how persuasive one side is. We have the powers to summon somebody, if he does not appear; we have the powers to order for the arrest of that person to appear before the Committee. The Constitution in Section 89 empowers us to do that.

If you take a look at the Report, you will see where it says the man was summoned and he never appeared and the Committee went ahead and recommended punishment against the same person. It is our candid opinion that the Committee should be asked to take a second look at the Report and do the right thing before they come back for consideration. Otherwise if we act on sentiments and emotions even if the final decision would not be depart from the decision they brought here, the person could go to court and we will be ridiculed in the eyes of the law.

It is my humble opinion that we give the Committee a little more time to go re-work and bring it back for consideration. I so move.

The Chairman: I think we better state the facts as they are. This hearing was held and one of the officers who were involved in this incident was not at the hearing. The CG then told the Committee of the House that he was on official assignment. It would appear that he took the responsibility for the absence of that particular officer. Nonetheless, it was the wisdom of the Committee to say that he refused to avail himself the opportunity to come and defend himself. If you look at the recommendations, they are applying the provision of the legislative Houses Powers and Privileges Act to say that *it is dishonour to refuse to honour the invitation of Parliament*. That invitation was not extended to him in person. He was on official duty.

Since the provision of the Constitution is very clear with the rights of individuals of fair hearing, which is a cardinal requirement of the principles of natural justice and he has agreed that he would turn himself in if he is invited. It is only natural that we give him the right accorded to him by the Constitution to make himself available to defend himself before the Committee.

We cannot just break the Report into two. It is better that the Committee does a holistic job and then make a presentation so that we can move forward on this matter. That is the reason why the Chairman Rules and Business moved the Motion that we should defer the consideration of the Report and refer the matter back to the Committee. Specifically, they are to invite the officer who has agreed willingly to submit himself to the jurisdiction of the Committee. That way the Committee can then report to us and we can then take a decision. That is the basis of the Motion the Chairman Rules and Business moved.

Hon. Abubakar Hussaini Moriki (Shinkafi/Zurmi): I second the Motion ably moved by the Chairman Rules and Business.

Question put and agreed to.

Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno: I move that the House do revert back to Plenary.

Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba: I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Monguno, I so second.

(The Speaker resumed the Chair)

Adoption of Report

The Speaker: Hon Colleagues, the House in the Committee of the Whole considered the Report of the Committee on Interior on Criminal Act of Assault and Battery Allegedly committed on Hon. Onyemaechi Joan Mrakpor by Men and Officers of the Nigerian Prison Service and deferred consideration of the Report.

Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do adopt the Report of the House in the Committee of the Whole.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do adopt the Report of the Committee of the Whole.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno: Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do adjourn till Tuesday, 3rd May, 2016 at 11: 00 a.m.

Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba: I second that the House adjourn till Tuesday, 3rd May, 2016 at 11:00 am.

Question put and agreed.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Tuesday, 3rd May, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

The House adjourned accordingly at 2:32 p.m.