

4335 [Votes and Proceedings/Announcements]

[Announcements]

4336

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

The House met at 11:29 a.m.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Thursday, 28th January, 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Visitors in the Gallery:

**Students of Tropical International
Academy, Bida, Niger State**

The Speaker: We have in the Gallery Students of Tropical International Academy from Bida, Niger State.

Could you please, rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

**Students of Saint Louis Secondary
School, Bompai Kano**

The Speaker: Also in the Gallery are Students of Saint Louis Secondary School Bompai Kano.

Could you please rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

**Members of National Association of Delta State
Students, University of Abuja Chapter**

The Speaker: Also in the Gallery are Members of the National Association of Delta State Students, University of Abuja Chapter.

Could you please, rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

**Students of Spring Kings and Queens
Academy, Keffi, Nasarawa State**

The Speaker: Also in the Gallery are Students of Spring Kings and Queens Academy Keffi, Nasarawa State.

Could you please rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

**Notice of Meeting of Ad-hoc Committee
to Investigate Electricity Distribution
Companies**

The Speaker: *There will be a meeting of Ad-Hoc Committee to investigate the activities of the electricity distribution companies discuss as follows:*

Date: Tuesday, 16th February, 2016

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Venue: Room 3.31 New Building

Signed
Hon. Babajimi Adegoke Benson

The Speaker: This announcement is very important and I guess it will lead to the Committee Chairmen.

4337 [Announcements/Presentation of Public Petitions]

[Presentation of Public Petitions]

4338

Reminder about Submission of Committees Reports to the House Committee on Appropriations

The Speaker: This announcement is from the House Committee on Appropriations.

All Committees are reminded to submit their Reports and appear before the Appropriations Committee to defend same not later than Friday, 19th February, 2016 when all defense sessions are expected to have been concluded.

All standing Committees should therefore adhere strictly to their allotted dates and time for their various defense sessions before the Appropriations Committee.

This reminder has become very necessary in view of the fact that no extension time for Budget Defence before the Appropriations Committee will be granted.

Signed
Hon. Abdulmumini Jibrin
Chairman, Appropriations Committee

The Speaker: With regards to this announcement, it should be noted that we already have a schedule that we are working on, if the Chairmen are able to appear before the Appropriations Committee and defend what they have done, we will keep to the stipulated time lines in the schedule.

PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC PETITIONS

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

Death of Mr. Nwadike Steven Chukwuemeka in Malaysia

Hon. Chukwukere Austine Ikechukwu O. (Ideato North/Ideato South): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition signed by Mr. Chukwudi Nwadike and his lawyer Moses E. Agbolonu Esq, his Petition is hinged on the death of Nwadike Steven Chukwuemeka, who died in Malaysia on the 25th of January, 2016.

They are petitioning the Nigerian High Commission in Malaysia for mishandling the health of this young man and causing his death, even after they

sent money that he should be deported so that he can be adequately taken care of.

They are asking this House to look into the matter and asking for justice on behalf of the family and for the corpse of this young man which is still lying in Malaysia to be brought back so that the family can give him his last respects.

With your kind permission, I would like to lay the Petition on the Table.

The Speaker: Please, proceed and lay the Petition.

(Petition laid)

List of Petitions Submitted by Nigerians

Hon. Oluwarotimi Ojo Agunsoye (Kosofe): Mr. Speaker, I have a list of Petitions here submitted by Nigerians. I seek the permission of the Hon. Speaker to lay the Petitions so that we can attend to it in the Committee.

(Petitions laid)

**Forceful Retirement of Engr. Okeke Amaechi;
Former Assistant Comptroller-General
of Federal Fire Service**

Hon. Ferdinand Dozie Nwankwo (Anaocha/Njikoka/Dunukofia): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition before us from my constituent; Engr. Okeke Amaechi, he was a former Asst. Comptroller-General of the Federal Fire Service who was forcefully retired against his will.

He was retired prematurely under unjustifiable circumstances to suggest impunity and abuse of executive powers. He was born on the 9th of December, 1965 and his age was less than the statutory retirement age of 60 years. He therefore wishes this honourable House to intervene in his matter.

I hereby plead for the intervention of this House and to present the Petition.

(Petition laid)

4339

[Personal Explanation]

The Speaker: Proceed to lay the Petition please.
Any more Petitions? *(No response)*.

I guess there is none.

(All Petitions accordingly referred to the House Committee on Public Petitions)

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. Yussuff Sulaimon Lasun (Irepodun/Olorunda/Osogbo/Orolu): Mr. Speaker, on February 5th, 2016, I was elected as Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament. This was made possible by the support of the leadership of the National Assembly because it was a consensus arrangement and I was nominated for that position.

I want to use this opportunity to inform my Colleagues that, if you will recall, the last Speaker of that Parliament was distinguished Senator Ike Ekweremadu and today we are occupying the position of First Deputy Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament.

Though still at consultative level, the last Speaker struggled very hard to see if they can approve legislative powers for the Parliament and I am assuring you that the newly constituted Bureau of the Speaker and four Deputy Speakers; and other Colleagues about 150 of us that made up the Parliament, are going to struggle very hard to make sure that the ECOWAS Parliament has legislative powers with the sub-region.

I want to use this opportunity to thank the leadership of the two Houses, the National Assembly and my Colleagues for the support that has been given to me in the last two weeks that I have been sitting and I promise that I am going to do my utmost best to elevate the image of Nigeria through that Parliament and to make sure that I do not disappoint you all.

Thank you for the support and I still crave for your indulgence to make sure that you support me for the next four years so that I will be able to bring something back home within the context of that office. *(Applause)*

The Speaker: A very big congratulations to you.

[Presentation of Reports]

4340

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the first Business of the day is presentation of Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on Sundry Subject Matters standing in the name of Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta.

Hon. Members, you will recall that the Petitions were referred to the Committee on various dates, the Reports are ready for presentation and Hon. Abonta is invited to present the seven Reports so that we do not take them one after the other.

Report on the Petition by George Temidara Akinfolarin on Wrongful Disengagement from the Services of NPA

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta (Ukwa East/West): I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by George Temidara Akinfolarin against the Nigerian Ports Authority on Wrongful Disengagement from Service.

Report on the Petition by Usaini Garba Yakasai against the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by Usaini Garba Yakasai against the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN).

Report on the Petition by Mr. Lawal Ayodele on Unlawful Termination of Appointment by the Federal Road Safety Commission

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by Mr. Lawal Ayodele against the Federal Road Safety Commission for Unlawful Termination of his Appointment without Benefits.

4341

[Presentation of Reports]

Report on the Petition by Moses Ebi and Seventy-Eight (78) Others on Wrongful Disengagement by the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by Moses Ebi and Seventy-Eight (78) Others on the Alleged Wrongful Disengagement from the Service of the Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) through the Subsidy Re-Investment Programme (Sure-P).

Report on the Petition by L/CPLC Olayiwola Latilo on Denial of Benefits by the Nigerian Army

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by L/CPLC Olayiwola Latilo against the Nigerian Army on Denial of his Benefits.

Report on the Petition by Kaine & Co. on Non-payment of Death Benefit and Other Entitlements by former Chief of Army Staff

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by Kaine & Co. for Mrs Mary Yusuf on the non-payment of death benefit and other entitlements of her late husband, former Chief of Army Staff, Lt-Gen. L.N. Yusuf.

Report on the Petition by Nwachukwu Loretta Chinwe and Four (4) Others the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency

Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta: I move that the House do receive the Report of the House Committee on Public Petitions on the Petition by Nwachukwu Loretta Chinwe and Four Others, against the Petroleum Products Pricing Regulatory Agency (PPPRA).

May I lay the Reports Mr. Speaker?

Hon. Albert Abiodun Adeogun (Ife Central/Ife East/Ife North/Ife South): I second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Nkem-Abonta.

The Speaker: Hon. Nkem-Abonta please, lay the Reports.

[Consideration of Bills]

4342

(Reports laid on the Table).

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Consolidation of Bills:

River Basin Development Authorities, 2004 (Amendment) Bill, 2015

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, we will start from Bills before we go to Motions and then Point of Orders and Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

The first Order of the day is consolidation of a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, to make Provisions for Proper Utilization of Nigeria Dams under the Control of a given River Basin Development Authority; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 58), and a Bill for an Act to Amend the First Schedule to the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 235) and a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities (Establishment) of the Lower Anambra and Upper River Basin Development Authorities and list them in the First Schedule to the Act; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 350).

Hon. Members you may wish to know that the Bills are on the same subject-matter, I now invite the Chairman, Rules and Business to move that the Bills be consolidated.

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa (Buruku): I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, to make Provisions for Proper Utilization of Nigeria Dams under the Control of a given River Basin Development Authority; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 58), and a Bill for an Act to Amend the First Schedule to the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 235) and a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities (Establishment) of the Lower Anambra and Upper River Basin Development Authorities and list them in the First Schedule to the Act; and for Other

4343

[Consideration of Bills]

Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 350) be consolidated as one Bill.

Hon. Ali Isa JC (Balanga/Biliri): I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Orker-Jev.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consolidate the three Bills.

The Speaker: Committee on Rules and Business please schedule a date for debate on the general principles of the Bill.

National Roads Fund (Establishment) Bill, 2015

A Bill for an Act to Establish the National Roads Fund for the Purpose of Financing the Rehabilitation and Maintenance of National Roads and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 49) and a Bill for an Act to Establish a Fund known as the Federal Road Fund; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 163) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the second Order of the day is commencement of debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Establish the National Roads Fund for the Purpose of Financing the Rehabilitation and Maintenance of National Roads and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 49) and a Bill for an Act to Establish a Fund known as the Federal Road Fund; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 163).

Hon. Members will recall that the Bill was consolidated on Wednesday, 13th January, 2016. I now invite Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai to move that the Bills be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai (Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani): I move that a Bill for an Act to Establish the National Roads Fund for the Purpose of Financing the Rehabilitation and Maintenance of National Roads and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 49) and a Bill for an Act to Establish a Fund known as the Federal Road Fund; and

[Consideration of Bills]

4344

for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 163) be read a Second Time.

The Speaker: Hon. Sunday Karimi who sponsored the second Bill should second please.

Hon. Hon. Karimi Sunday Steve (Yagba East/Yagba West/Mopamuro): I second that the Bill be read a Second Time.

Question proposed.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai: Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the issue of road maintenance and construction started in 1925, when the then Colonial Masters tried as much as possible to convey goods and in that regard a board was formed in 1925 on the issue of constructions and maintenance of our roads. In 1971 due to the poor aspects of our roads, a commission was formed. The commission is to look at how best our roads can be treated. In 1971 the Federal Highways Act was enacted. At the same time Nigeria was still having problem on issue of road constructions because of lack of fund. In 1999 the Federal Government through the presidential policy a committee was formed to look at issues on how best we can tackle our roads. That commission led to the issue of FERMA which was formed in 2004. The issue of also infrastructure regulating commission was also formed. The purpose of that agency is to advice Federal Government on concession. Federal Highway Act was also enacted, Minister of Works have the power through the Federal Highway to construct new roads and charge toll gates as initiated in the Act of 1973. FERMA was also created but this has not solved the problem of road construction in Nigeria.

In 2013 report of national integrated infrastructure master plan says that about 68.9 *per cent* of our roads are in total disrepair. Another master plan research was also done on our roads and Nigeria needs ~~N~~888 billion to do critical road infrastructure in our country. What is the Budget of Ministry of Works? It is less than ~~N~~200 billion and even the Budget cannot address the issues of our total roads and their maintenance. That is why the need of National Roads Fund is being advanced.

You will agree with me today that the United States of America have the best road network. Why is it like that? It is because the National Roads Fund of the

4345

[Consideration of Bills]

United States of America was enacted in 1956 to connect virtually all the roads in America. Same happens to China. China today has one of the best road networks starting from Beijing to Shanghai, from Shanghai to Guangxi. This is as result of National Roads Fund that is enacted in China. Canada is another country that has a very fine network for those of you who passed from Montreal to Klemtu and other suburb. You will see that the National Roads Fund has added a total value into the construction, maintenance and concessions of road infrastructure in those countries.

But today, this is a template given in 2013 that ~~N888~~ billion is required. Today the Minister of Power during his Budget defense the other day, was in total support of this Bill and even advancing further by saying that toll gates should also be added, because his Bill does not contain a toll gate. This Bill contains the issue of road fund, sources of road fund on the issues of housing loans. A research has been done on how bridges should be built on our roads. Now he needed an Act of the National Assembly to authorise that. Most of our roads today are in deplorable condition because of the heavy loads and heavy duty vehicles passing through our roads without being taxed. Taxing even two million articulated vehicles in a day will give a total good fund to fund our road infrastructures. We also have 5 *per cent* of the user charges on pump price of petroleum and diesel which are meant for FERMA. FERMA collects 60 *per cent* of the 100 *per cent* of the petroleum and diesel charges, leaving the remaining 40 *per cent* out of which only 5 *per cent* user charges that are being put in road fund.

It is a Public/Private driven process because majority of the people that were voted into the committee of the board are majorly private sector driven. It shows that the private sector is coming into discussion in terms of concession and funding the roads for our country. This is what we need. It is disincentive for somebody that is doing business in Nigeria because you cannot connect to the roads. The access of bringing crops from the roads to the markets places, you will find out that a lot of charges are being built to the masses. How do we correct this impression and advance the technology in road construction? This committee with experts knowledge in different fields as itemised in the Bill would really advance a lot in terms of the issues of addressing our roads construction in this country.

[Consideration of Bills]

4346

It happens that it is one of the policies of the APC led government today and that is why we are advancing the road fund. Today this Bill does not only emanate from a private member's Bill but even the government of the day is in total support of this Bill by even making sure toll gates are added into the National Roads Fund as advanced by the Hon. Minister of Power, Works and Housing, Hon. Babatunde Fashola who came during the defense of his Budget, advocated for this strong Bill. This Bill is in total support of the government of the day.

I urge every Member to support this Bill with the speed of light it requires so that our roads can be corrected, put in shape and people can access them completely.

Hon. Karimi Sunday Steve: Hon. Ossai's Bill and mine are almost the same but there little differences. We cannot overemphasize the fact that we have problems with our roads all over the country. Most of our roads are death traps all over the country and day in day out, you see our Colleagues bringing in Motions here asking for intervention on their roads. The problem we have is abandoned road projects all over the country because of lack of financing and we have to start doing something different from what we have been doing. We cannot leave everything for the Federal Government and that brought about the need for Road Fund Bill we are talking about today.

What is Road Fund Bill? It is just warehousing funds that are meant for road construction and maintenance, creating a Road Fund Agency. But somebody would say that the FERMA Act has gotten to do with financing of roads. My Bill recognizes the fact that FERMA is playing its part. They are doing a special work on road maintenance and construction all over the country. We cannot take away FERMA from performing their functions but on the aspect of financing, FERMA is doing nothing about it though it is in their Act.

My Bill is suggesting that Section 8 and 14 of FERMA Act that had gotten to do with financing be deleted from FERMA Act; because that section will now be taken over by Roads Fund Agency. So what are the funds that will go into this Roads Fund Agency? Funds like the user's charges which my Colleague has talked about, the vehicle import taxes, we are going to bring back the toll gates all over the

4347

[Consideration of Bills]

country to collect toll fees. A lot of people who are using this road pay nothing. You can imagine people plying the road with loads of cement and loads of iron rods which are affecting our roads every day and they are not paying for using it extraordinarily. We are going to bring back the toll gates all over the country so that we will be collecting toll fee.

All these funds will be managed by the Roads Fund Agency, so that the Federal Ministry of Works will only be concerned with policy issues, policy formulation and policy management. FERMA will be concerned with maintenance and construction, which is what they are doing now. They will continue their work and they will do it better because they are going to be better funded. The Roads Fund Agency will be responsible for managing funds that are meant for our roads. This is even done in some African countries and they are getting over the problems of their roads; like in Uganda and Tanzania, that is what they are doing there presently.

Do we continue to cry day-in-day-out that our roads are bad or do we take the bull by the horn and cause this Bill to pass through so that we will have an Agency that is responsible for funding our roads; we have to make a choice.

Just like my Colleague said, the Minister of Works in his Budget defence talked about this Bill. In these days of dwindling revenue for government, we have to start thinking of doing things in another way. We have to start thinking of generating funds to fund our roads. Therefore, my Colleagues, I beg of you to reduce the problems on our roads, let this Bill go through and our people will be better for it.

Hon. Saleh Hassan Anthony (Ado/Ogbadibo/Okpokwu): Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill in its entirety and also align myself with the arguments of Hon. Nicholas Ossai as well as Sunday Karimi. I also want to reiterate and to add that nothing in life is free. We cannot say we want the government of the day to provide roads, hospitals, education and all of that for free. Everything in this life is at a cost and it also applies to the roads that we use.

Even the feeder roads in our villages, if they are not maintained, at times they go bad and become impassable. So the issue that we are debating today that has to do with the road fund is very important.

[Consideration of Bills]

4348

I also think that the time has come for us if we are saying that we want to be tolling our highways and our roads, we need to look at a tolling policy for this country. We thank God and we should appreciate the fact that today we have the Minister of Power, Works and Housing that has been so tested and trusted. This is a man that knows very well how to create infrastructure for the betterment of the people.

I give an instance that the road from Victoria Island in Lagos to Lekki was reconstructed by the administration of former Governor Fashola and it was tolled and the policy that I am sure is still in place is that money that come from this toll gates are used to maintain the roads; not only maintaining the roads, where there are accidents on the highway the company that is maintaining that road has concession on the road has towing trucks, have ambulances and everything, that should there be an accident on the highway, it is the responsibility of that company to ensure that the road is cleared and all of that.

So there is already an example we can take from. They have a tolling policy and I want to believe that if this Bill goes through, the Minister or that Ministry would come up and make sure that this policy is brought to the national level. At the end of the day, all the roads in this country, would be tolled because like we said, the articulated trucks in this country are over a million. You can imagine none of them has gone through any weigh-bridge from beginning of the Port to the destination where they are carrying their cargo. A truck that has 30 tons capacity is carrying cargo of 60 to 70 tons on an asphalt surface; definitely there will be compression and the road will go bad.

If we must toll our roads of course it is important that this fund be properly put in place. What the Bill is seeking to do is to make sure that this fund is put in place so that all the monies that will be gotten from the tolling and any other thing that will come will go into that fund and then they will now use it to maintain our roads.

FERMA as we speak do not collect what they are supposed to collect by law that certain percentage of the pump price should go to FERMA for road maintenance. I have had the privilege of sitting on that Committee in the last Assembly and FERMA had always found it difficult to collect those funds for the betterment of our roads.

4349

[Consideration of Bills]

I urge this honourable House to please support this Bill so that our roads and our country will be better for it. I so submit.

Hon. Sunday Adeyemi Adepoju (Ibarapa East/Ido): Mr. Speaker, I speak in support of the passage of the Bill as earlier mentioned by my fellow Colleagues.

This is the time for us now than any other time when the revenue of the country cannot meet the expectation of the masses. How do we maintain our roads? That road is very important like power; it is a key infrastructure to development of this country. Without having good roads, your vehicles will be in bad position. We have lost so many good people, intellectuals on roads in Nigeria, simply because of lack of maintenance.

We are talking about FERMA and Federal Government; how much money is available to the Federal Government? What the Federal Government needs today to put Nigerian roads in place is even more than the Budget of the nation. How do we get this money? Anybody that has the opportunity of buying a car should be able to provide if it is just ₦50 as toll fee on the roads we are plying. By the time we have this money together it will go a long way in the maintenance of our roads.

You can see that people are now using more of their labour hours on the road. If you are going from Lagos to Ibadan, you will notice that you spend more hours and the amount of money that you are spending on repair and maintenance of your vehicle is colossal; by the time you add it together, in a year as a result of bad road that we have. If we construct a road today, it needs maintenance in the next five years. If we are not setting this money aside, it will not be good. Gone are the days when the people in the toll gate will take away the money and there will not be account for it. We have government of change and everybody is conscious of his or her actions.

I believe if this Bill is passed, people that will manage it will be people of integrity and impeccable characters.

On the basis of this, I ask my honourable Colleagues to kindly support the passage of this Bill.

[Consideration of Bills]

4350

Hon. Sani Umar Bala (Tsanyawa/Kunchi): I am in support of this Bill. It is a common ideology that the transportation sector in Nigeria has great value to contribute in the economy of this country. Enactment of this Bill will reveal that the provision of more roads and repair of the over 70 *per cent* of these roads that are dilapidated and under disrepair will come into being once this Bill is passed.

It is also worthy to note that if this Bill is enacted and approved by this House, it will go a long way in ensuring that accidents are reduced drastically in this country.

I would also like the sponsor of the Bill and this House to also consider including rural roads into the Bill. That is the observation that I would want the mover of the Bill to put into consideration because there are also rural roads that require inclusion into this Bill so that it will help in rural/urban migration. It will also increase the mode of transportation of agricultural products from rural dwellers to urban centres.

Therefore this Bill is very worthy and I urge that this House should please consider it for Second Reading.

Hon. Mojeed Olujinmi Alabi (Ede North/Ede South/Egbedore/Ejigbo): Mr. Speaker, no one in his right sense would want to disagree with the tenor of this particular Bill, knowing fully well the deplorable situation of not only roads, but infrastructure generally in Nigeria.

I support that this Bill be passed to the Committee but I have some courteous optimism. Having looked at the details, I am concerned about the cost implication of setting up a new agency to look into our roads. We have the Ministry, we have FERMA, we have people to which we have concessioned our roads to and now we are adding a fund agency at a time when the revenue of the country is dwindling. Whenever the Bill reaches the stage of Committee, we need to look at it again. Do we need to overburden the Federal bureaucracy again? I am concerned about that.

I am concern about the management of the fund itself. One thing I have discovered in our approach to issues in Nigeria is that when we have problem, we act with such haste that we fail to put in place, things that will be long lasting. So whenever this Bill reaches the

4351

[Consideration of Bills]

Committee Stage, we should ask ourselves, are we looking for a private management agency or another contraption where government will say we are getting involved? We are encouraging the Private Sector to come in but at the same time they will not allow them to manage the fund? We must ask ourselves, what has happened to such funds in the past?

In this our country, what has happened to SURE-P? What has happened to trillions of dollars which we sunk into the modernization of our railway? For me a private initiative that does not allow full private control may end up in the same way in which such previous efforts have gone and that is why I support Hon. Sunday Adepaju, when he was emphasizing the aspect of management of the fund. It does not take much to ask people to contribute, but it takes much for such funds to be administered for the purpose for which they are meant, particularly when it is going to evolve setting up such high number of bureaucracy.

We are considering Bills now, we see some agencies where the Overhead Costs are even higher than the Capital Expenditure and you want to ask yourself, what are these particular people managing? The question we have to ask ourselves is if we want to go private, let it be full private. It is not a novel situation.

Through the Federal Government I was in Morocco for three years whose economy is not as buoyant as that of Nigeria in terms of GDP, yet they have a set of public roads and a set of private roads. When the government in Nigeria decided to dismantle toll gates, we are now realising that it is now not a very good idea. If we are going private then we must give those people who are going to sink their money into the private venture such legal instrument to be able to realise the import of their funds.

Why do we have problem with the Lagos-Ibadan expressway? It is because we concessioned to some private agencies at the same time the government does not want to remove its own hand because they are seeing it as a source of fund. What guarantee do we have that such a fund cannot be an easy way where a President can come in future and dip his hands for some other purposes? These are issues that we need to look into critically when we get to the Committee stage to be able to make sure that if we are going private then the management of the money must be very well strengthened to make sure that if it is a road fund, in

[Consideration of Bills]

4352

actual fact, within a couple of years after establishing the agency, we are going to be seeing good roads in Nigeria.

But if such management and legal instruments are not put in place, I am afraid and I am praying my Colleagues who are in the various Committees to which this Bill will be referred to, pay special attention to those areas so that eventually the purpose of setting the Fund would be achieved, rather than allow whatever billions of dollars that come in to go into the drains and we start thinking of how to solve our problems again.

Hon. Agbonayinman Johnson Ehiozwa (Egor/Ikpoba/Okha): My Hon. Colleagues today every one of us is affected going by road to your State you have experienced the deteriorated condition of our roads. I thank and appreciate Mr. Speaker for taking the initiative to travel to my State in Edo from Abuja. I asked him to go by air but he said no, he will go by road at least to see the situation of the road. While travelling he thought it will take about four hours to get to Benin and I expected him to arrive at about 3.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. but because of the condition of the road where he lost two tyres without injuring because God was with him and his entourage arrived Benin at about 8.00 p.m. This is a road travel that would have taken three to four hours but took almost eight Hours. I thank and appreciate you Mr. Speaker when you made a statement on the national television when asked by various journalists on what can be said about the Federal roads you answered that you are highly disappointed.

For me I do not need to convince some of our Colleagues who have not travelled on that road or various ones. It is not only Abuja-Benin road but there are so many roads in the whole nation that affects us all. I think the bone of contention today is the issue that all honourable Members of the House will yield and adhere to the cry of our people by supporting this Motion. We have no reason not to stand-by what we are debating for today; but how do we get the Money? Some have said there is a need for road to be funded, how do we fund it? Let me give an instance for many years I happened to have lived in Houston for many years. They have used the money realised from toll gates to not only maintain the roads, but even to develop other roads. When you go to Houston you will see all kinds of snake roads and flyovers done with the taxpayers' money, those that have contributed their

4353

[Consideration of Bills]

little quota paying that little dollar which amounted enough to not only construct a new road but also to maintain the existing ones.

Government are there to make an enabling environment for everyone to live, not only to secure lives and property but also to make sure when you are travelling to various States you should drive freely with serious comfort but what we have found ourselves in this nation, is that nobody cares. This issue affects every one of us. We must partake in it and support it because we are all together in in this game. This is the last hope for ordinary Nigerians. The Members of the 8th Session have resolved and committed to adhere to the three principal tenets of democratic doctrine; loyalty, participation and commitment to your dear nation and how can you do that by not supporting this Bill.

I thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me the opportunity and for the bold initiative that you took to drive from Abuja to Benin. That was serious pain but you wanted to show to us when you visited the IDP's in Edo State that is Ovia the constituency of my sister, Hon. Omosede. This House knows you are committed. You have resolved that we must support this Bill with all ramifications. God bless you. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Speaker: I will now put the Question. The question is that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Question put and agreed to.

(Bill read a Second Time and referred to the House Committees on Works and FERMA)

**Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria,
1999 (Amendment) Bill, 2015**

A Bill for an Act to Alter Section 147 (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) to require that a Minister be appointed from the Federal Capital Territory; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2016 (HB. 342) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The third Order of the day is commencement of debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Alter Section 147 (3) of the

[Consideration of Bills]

4354

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) to require that a Minister be appointed from the Federal Capital Territory; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2016 (HB. 342).

Hon. Members will recall that the Bill was read the First Time on Wednesday 20th January, 2016. I now invite Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo to move that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo (Abuja Municipal/Bwari): Mr. Speaker I Move that a Bill for an Act to Alter Section 147 (3) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) to require that a Minister be appointed from the Federal Capital Territory; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2016 (HB. 342) be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Ayuba Mohammed Bello (Jere): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Jisalo that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

The Speaker: Hon Jisalo, please lead the debate.

Question proposed.

Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo: Mr. Speaker, I will say Abuja is the nation's Capital and Centre of Unity that has administrative structure through democratic process. Section 299 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) clearly states that Abuja shall be treated as if it is one of the States of the federation. The FCT has one democratically elected Senator and two Members of House of Representatives for which I am one of the 360 Members in this great Chamber.

We have six Area Councils and elected 62 Councillors, Chapter III of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; Section 14 (4) states that:

The composition of a State, a Local Government Council, or any Agencies of such Government or Council, and the conduct of the affairs of the Government or Council or such Agencies shall be carried out in such a manner as to recognise the diversity of the people within its area of authority and the need to promote a sense of belonging and

4355

[Consideration of Bills]

loyalty among all the people of the Federation.

In line with the above submission, Mr. Speaker, we call to alter the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) and for Other Related Matter. Section 147 (3) of the Principal Act, shall be altered by deleting the comma in line with the provision and insert immediately after the words: *each State* to add: *and the Federal Capital Territory.*

Mr. Speaker and Hon. Members of this Chambers, I urge you to support this amendment for the purpose of unity and progress of our great country.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor (Isoko North/Isoko South): Mr. Speaker, I want to commend our brother Hon. Jisalo for bringing forward a major issue that has affected especially the indigenes and people of Abuja. As it stands today, clearly as you are all aware, we are indigenes of Abuja and those that live here must be given their constitutional rights and opportunity. There is a clear need that we look at the provision that my Colleague intends amending and it states there that:

There shall be such office of Ministers of the Government of the Federation as may be established by the President.

He went further to state that:

Any appointment under sub-section 2 of this Section that is by the President shall be in conformity with the provision of Section 14 (3) of this Constitution.

There is a major provision that states that:

Provided in giving effect to the provision of afore said, the President shall... which makes it very compulsory appoint at least one Minister from each State who shall be indigene of such State.

It is important again that we look at the provision of Section 299 of Constitution and it says:

The provisions of this Constitution shall apply to the Federal Capital

[Consideration of Bills]

4356

Territory, Abuja as if it were one of the States of the Federation and accordingly, all the Legislatives powers, the Executive powers and the Judicial powers vested in the House of Assembly, the Governors of a State and in the courts of a State shall, respectively vest in the National Assembly, the President of the Federation and in the courts which by virtue of the foregoing provisions are courts established for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja.

I appreciate my Colleague's position and I state that this is one amendment which I may probably want to call some level of surpluses, I believe that the present scenario and the situation that we have found ourselves in line with why the Federal Capital Territory, have not been given a ministerial appointment clearly violates even the Constitution, it negates the spirit and intent of the Constitution and it clearly offends the provisions of the Constitution. But much as it is, I think this is one Bill that should be given the opportunity and privilege to go to the Constitution Amendment Committee to look at it again and so we must appreciate that every Nigerian should be treated equally in line with the provisions of the Constitution.

I therefore appeal that we give this Bill all the necessary support and I will keep saying God bless my great nation, and God bless this great country.

Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok (Jos South/Jos East): Mr. Speaker, I support this Bill but I will start from where the Minority Leader left and that is Section 299 of the Constitution. I do not want us to confuse Section 299 because it says:

All the Executive powers are vested in the President that is for the FCT, and all the Legislatives powers are vested in the National Assembly for the FCT...

The sponsor of this Bill himself has said that he and one other and a Senator represent the people of Abuja in the National Assembly. When the Bill says: *the National Assembly shall exercise power on behalf of the FCT* but then there are people from the FCT elected to represent the FCT, what about in the Executive Arm? The President cannot be said to cover the Executive Arm, therefore it is only right to have a

4357

[Consideration of Bills]

separate Minister just as we have separate Members in FCT to represent the interest of the FCT.

If you go to the Schedules of the Constitution that is the Third Schedule, there is the Federal Character Commission, Revenue Mobilisation Commission, in those Commissions, in order to promote a sense of belonging that we are Nigerians, in the Federal Character Commission it says that:

The Commission shall be made up of Chairman and one person from each State of the Federation and somebody from the FCT and the same too for the Revenue Mobilisation Commission.

I submit that the drafters of the Constitution omitted to add *and the FCT* when they were drafting Section 147 (3) and that is why Hon. Jisalo in his wisdom, he is not coming too late has brought this Bill now to cure that omission, to me it is an omission. Let us give the people of the FCT a sense of belonging because in the Federal Executive Council, if a State is not there, it means their people may not be represented when key decisions that may affect them are being taken. How will the people of Abuja feel that they are also being carried along when monumental decisions are being taken at the Federal Executive Council?

I lend my voice in support of this Bill. It ought to have come a long time ago, but thank God, He is using Hon. Jisalo to present this Bill here now.

The Speaker: I think I will put the question; since it is a straightforward Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

(Bill read a Second Time and Referred to the Ad-hoc Committee on the Review of the 1999 Constitution).

Federal Capital Territory University of Science and Technology, Abaji (Establishment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Federal Capital Territory University of Science and Technology, Abaji; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2016 (HB. 145) -

[Consideration of Bills]

4358

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: The fourth Order of the day is the commencement of debate on the general principles of a Bill for Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Federal Capital Territory University of Science and Technology, Abaji; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2016 (HB. 145).

Honourable Members will recall that the Bill was read the First Time on Wednesday, 20th January, 2016. I now invite Hon. Zephaniah Jisalo to move that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo: Mr. Speaker and honourable Colleagues, I move that a Bill for Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Federal Capital Territory University of Science and Technology, Abaji; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2016 (HB. 145) be read a Second Time.

Hon. Sunday Adeyemi Adepoju: I second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Jisalo.

Question proposed.

Hon. Zephaniah Bitrus Jisalo: Mr. Speaker, the University of Science and Technology, Abaji, Abuja has since been approved and established by the Federal Government. However, the institution needs an Executive backing to enable it function properly and commence full academic activities.

I urge you to support the passage of this Bill so that the school will resume accordingly. The school is for everybody not only for people from the FCT. This is the Centre of Unity.

Hon. Sunday Adeyemi Adepoju: Mr. Speaker, every one of us knows the importance of education in our life and we are all aware that the population of students in the universities we have in Nigeria is very high. Why? We have limited number of universities in Nigeria established by the Federal Government and most of the institutions that we have today that our children are going to, are privately owned and most of our children especially the under-privileged cannot afford the fees of these institutions. Even some of the parents who can afford the fees to send their children outside the country to study science and technology have challenges with the issue of foreign exchange

4359

[Consideration of Bills /Motions]

which has bastardised the situation. By having a university of science and technology that will accommodate more people at the Federal Capital, will help us to limit the number of students roaming the streets of Abuja. Abuja being the Centre of Unity where many of us are staying to make our daily income, it is better for us to have as many universities as possible so that our children will not suffer the problems that many of them have suffered in the past. I want you to know that the by the fact that we have this university, it is going to be a university for all. You will see people from Nasarawa, Ogun, Oyo, Kaduna and other States applying to this university and make it more national.

On the basis of this, I want my Colleagues to please support the passage of the Bill so that it can be given the legal backing and have more people going out of the road and be in the school.

The Speaker: On this note, I will put the question because this Bill is straightforward as well and the question is that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Question put and agreed to.

(Bill referred to the House Committee on Federal Capital Territory)

MOTIONS

Call for Resumption of Work on the New Itawure-Ado Ekiti Road

The Speaker: The fifth Order of the day is a Motion on the Call for Resumption of Work on the New Itawure-Ado Ekiti Road standing in the name of Hon. Ayodele Oladimeji.

Hon. Oladimeji is now invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Ayodele Oladimeji (Ado-Ekiti/Irepodun): I move a Motion on the Call for Resumption of Work on the New Itawure-Ado Ekiti Road.

The House:

Notes that a contract was awarded to ELSAN NIG. LTD. sometime in March 1981 for the construction of the 34 kilometres Itawure-Ado-Ekiti Road, at the cost

[Motions]

4360

of ₦22,703,049.03 with a proposed completion date of May, 1984;

Recalls that soon after the award, the contractor mobilized to site and commenced construction work on the road to the level of about 46.4 *per cent* when the contract was determined in 1988 after the expenditure of the sum of ₦10,627,980.86;

Worried that arising from the stoppage of work on the road, the entire length has now been overgrown with vegetation and the earthwork done has been washed away by erosion;

Aware that several lives have been lost in accidents at Erio Valley and Akanleso slope/bend, among other dangerous spots on the old and narrow road between Itawure and Ado-Ekiti which the abandoned road was meant to replace.

Resolves to:

Mandate the House Committee on Works to liaise with the Federal Ministry of Power, Works and Housing to include money in the 2016 Budget Proposal for the resumption of construction of the Itawure/Ado-Ekiti Road.

Hon. Goodluck Opiah (Ohaji/Egbema/Oguta/Oru West): I second the Motion as ably moved by Hon. Oladimeji.

The Speaker: The Motion is infrastructure related so in line with our Standing Orders, I will put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

Mandate the House Committee on Works to liaise with the Federal Ministry of Power, Works and Housing to include money in the 2016 Budget Proposal for the resumption of construction of the Itawure/Ado-Ekiti Road.

(Pursuant to Order VIII, Rule 51(5) Motion accordingly referred to the House Committee on Works).

4361

[Motions]

Threat to the Continuation of the Contributory Pensions Scheme by Non-Remittance of Workers Contributions by Employers

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the sixth Order of the day is a Motion on Threat to the Continuation of the Contributory Pensions Scheme by Non-Remittance of Workers' Contributions by Employers standing in the name of Hon. Joseph Edionwele.

Hon. Joseph is now invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Joseph Edionwele (Esan West/Esan Central/Igubeen): My Motion is on the Threat to the Continuation of the Contributory Pensions Scheme by Non-Remittance of Workers' Contributions by Employers.

The House:

Notes that the Pension Reform Act of 2004 established a Contributory Pension Scheme for the payment of retirement benefits of employees in both the public service and the private sector to avoid the sufferings of retirees under the old scheme;

Also notes that the Scheme required both the employers and the employees to contribute equally to the total 15 per cent in the Principal Act of 2004 and 10 per cent and 8 per cent respectively to the 18 per cent increased total in the 2014 Pensions Reform Act;

Aware that it is the responsibility of employers to remit both the employers and employees contributions to the Pension Assets Custodian specified by Pension Fund Administrator (PFA) of the employee within seven days that the deduction is made from the salary of the employee, failure of which the National Pension Commission may impose a penalty of not less than 2 per cent of the contribution remaining unpaid on the employer and such penalty shall be recoverable as a debt owed to the employee's retirement savings account;

Also aware that the Pension Scheme appears to have run into a headwind as the Pension Act is observed more in the breach by both the employers and the Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs), which necessitated the 2014 amendment stipulating more and stiffer sanctions;

[Motions]

4362

Concerned about the billions of Naira already deducted from the salaries of employees, but not remitted by employers, coupled with the cases of many other employers who are yet to open retirement savings accounts for their employees which may precipitate a debt crisis that could jeopardize the smooth and successful operation of the Scheme, thus leading to even more suffering for Pensioners under the Scheme, more than happened under the old one it replaced.

Resolves to:

Mandate the House Committee on Pensions to investigate the allegations of non-remittance of contributions to the Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) and obtain a comprehensive report on the operations of the Scheme so far, including a list of defaulting employers, and the amount involved and report back to the House within six (6) weeks for further legislative action.

Hon. Oluwole Oke (Obokun/Oriade): I second the Motion as ably moved by my Colleague.

The Speaker: Hon. Joseph could you lead the debate please?

Hon. Joseph Edionwele: Mr. Speaker, this Motion borders on the non-remittance of workers' contributions to the Pension Fund. You will recall that this Pension Act was a child of necessity because when a worker retires they do not get their gratuity and Pensions or are not received as at when due so there was the need to reform the Pension Scheme. Hence the introduction of this Act in 2004 and re-amended in 2014. This brought about transparency, probity and accountability to the Scheme. But it is sad to note that 11 years into this Scheme that Ministries, Departments and Parastatals are not remitting this fund to this Pension Scheme to PENCOM and thereby going back to what was cured by the Pension Reform Act of 2004. We are saying in this Motion that the spirit and letter of the new Pension Scheme is being threatened and that we should investigate and list defaulters because the Act is respected more in breach.

So we are saying the we should investigate and sanction those Ministries, Departments, Parastatals and even private sectors like the small scale private sectors should be sanctioned because people are being encouraged not to remit this fund because there is

4363

[Motions]

nobody that has been so far been sanctioned and a lot of our pensioners are not being paid their retirement benefits. There is delay in this pension payment, so we are saying that it should be investigated so that we will not go back to the old days where a lot of them died as a result of waiting for their pensions or some of them who were even lucky have to spend years to receive their own pension.

Hon. Joseph Iranola Akinlaja (Ondo East/Ondo West): I support this Motion which is social in nature. I know as a fact that our pensioners have suffered so much in this country that having you saying that youths and live blood to serve the country, they retired into penury because the Pension Act before the reformation was subject to the vagaries of Budget and any year that there is downturn in the economy, it affects Budget allocations to Ministries, Departments and Agencies workers.

Therefore I was one of the people in Nigerian Labour Congress in TUC at that time that joined hands with the Executive to establish this Pension Scheme in the nature and as it is. This was so that it will be contributory as it used to be in the private sector where you have Contributory Pension Scheme. They called it National Provident Fund and at the end of the day, they used part of it as gratuity to take home and part of it to pay their live pension until they answer the call of nature. But now we are pooling this money together and some people are either tampering with it or not remitting at all. I begin to wonder why we are like this. We are no more looking at ourselves as brother's keepers, an employer that deducts employees' money for their pensions ought to remit it within 7 – 14 days as the case may be. What we are experiencing now is that they are accumulating the money again in their coffers either to use it for other things. In case anything happens to the company, may be it goes bankrupt, that money goes away and contributor loses his pension and gratuity.

I am supporting this investigation before it is too late. The later the worst it will become. I want to support wholeheartedly the investigation by this people oriented House representing 360 constituencies to intervene.

Hon. Pally Isumafe Obokhuiame Iriase (Owan East/West): I thank the mover of this Motion because it is not only timely but it is a very humane duty that he is calling on us to perform. Every now and then we

[Motions]

4364

complain about corruption. We do not look at the root cause of corruption in this country. The root cause is that when people work and they have no hope of what their lives will become when they exit by way of retirement. Every senior citizen in this country that we see in the street suffering, tends to send the wrong signal to us who are still working, to find a way however crooked it may be to provide for the future. That is why we must take the issue of pension particularly this Contributory Pension Scheme very serious. No worst crime that can be perpetrated against humanity than for an employer to deduct the contributions that will assure those working hard that they will have future and will not take them to streets when they finish and then become beggars.

I am also happy that it is not only to look at those what those who are withdrawing contributions are doing that this investigation will look at. It is also to obtain a comprehensive report on the operation of the Scheme so far and I can assure you that when this Report is out, you will be saddened to know that all those who should have gotten into this Contributory Pension Scheme, are shirking their responsibility, they have not done so and yet they will never find the money to take care of the pension requirement of their employees.

There are several State Governments that have refused to buy into this Scheme that would ensure that we are out of the woods when it comes to problems of pensioners in this nation. We need to be very serious about how we treat our senior citizens and I urge that we all give our support to this Motion so that we stem the tide of self-help which results in corruption while we are still working.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

Mandate the House Committee on Pensions to investigate the allegations of non-remittance of contributions to the Pension Fund Administrators (PFAs) and obtain a comprehensive report on the operations of the Scheme so far, including a list of defaulting employers, and the amount involved and report back to the House within six (6) weeks for further legislative action.

4365

[Motions]

(Motion accordingly referred to the House Committee on).

Call for lifting of Suspension on the Emirates Airlines from Operating the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano Route

The Speaker: The seventh Order of the day is Motion on Call for lifting of Suspension on the Emirates Airlines from Operating the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano Route, standing in the name of Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki.

Hon. Madaki is now invited to move the Motion.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki (Dala): Call for lifting of Suspension on the Emirates Airlines from Operating the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano Route.

The House:

Notes that Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport, Kano is the oldest and a vital International Airport in Nigeria, operating both commercial passenger and cargo businesses;

Recalls that the first flight operation to Nigeria was in 1925 by a British Royal Air Force plane which landed on the Race Course, Kano;

Also recalls that by 1936, formal commercial operations had started at the Kano Airport and in the first decade of operation, the Airport became an important refuelling stop for airlines flying long-haul services between Europe and Africa;

Aware of the Bilateral Air Service Agreement (BASA) entered into between Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates in 2013 granting permission to Emirates Airlines to operate the Abuja - Kano route;

Also aware that when Emirates Airlines was about to commence full business operations in August 2014, after tickets were sold to customers, the Federal Ministry of Aviation suspended the landing rights earlier granted to the Emirates Airlines on the Kano Wing with the assurance that the suspension would only be for a short time;

[Motions]

4366

Further aware that Emirates Airlines has already commenced cargo business to Kano based on the (BASA) signed between the two countries;

Concerned that the delay in lifting the suspension on passenger operations is causing untold hardships to passengers from Kano and other neighbouring States that fly Emirates Airlines to other parts of the world;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the Federal Ministry of Aviation to lift the suspension placed on commercial operations of Emirates Airlines from Kano Wing of the route as earlier granted; and
- (ii) Mandate the House Committee on Aviation to ensure compliance.

Hon. David Emmanuel Ombugadu (Akwanga/Nasarawa Eggon/Wamba): I second the Motion as ably moved by my Colleague, Hon. Madaki.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki: We are all aware of the importance of the Aviation Industry to the growth of commerce and Industry of any country in the world. I would like to seize this opportunity to thank Members of this House especially those who were in the 7th Assembly.

If we recall way back that time, I brought so many Motions that had to do with Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport in the 7th Assembly. When we came in 2011, if you go to Mallam Aminu Kano Airport at that time, it has turned into like a deserted airport; but because of the efforts of the 7th Assembly and I am sure the 8th Assembly will build on that, if you go to the airport now, as a Member of this House in the 7th Assembly, you will be proud of yourself. This is because not only is there massive development in terms of infrastructure, but the movement of goods and services into the airport.

If you go to the airport now, it is a market of itself. I was so happy the last time I went to the airport, because anytime I go to Lagos, when I see the traffic of people conducting various businesses in the airport, has drastically now changed the face of Aminu Kano International Airport.

4367

[Motions]

We are all aware that coming of this airlines will not only bring employment and business development, but it will bring much more to the economy of not only Northern Nigeria but the whole of Nigeria.

Mr. Speaker, you are aware because of our efforts, the Federal Government in 2003 signed a Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) with the government of United Arab Emirates through which they gave permission to Emirates Airline to land in Kano. Two weeks to the kick-off date after Emirates Airline have opened their office in Kano, inside the Aminu Kano International Airport and sold tickets to passengers, a letter was written to them asking them to suspend operations into Aminu Kano International Airport. I was pursuing the issue; they were assured that it will be for a very short period of time. We all know what happened and that government left.

What I am only asking now is that, that suspension be lifted so that people from Katsina, Bauchi, Jigawa and Sokoto can easily pass through Kano, they do not necessarily have to come to Abuja or go to Lagos; it will assist both passengers and business development in the whole of Northern Nigeria.

I am therefore appealing to this Honourable House which is the House of the Nigerian people to help see that this issue comes to fruition.

Hon. Sadiq Ibrahim (Fufore/Song): Mr. Speaker, I lend my voice to this Motion ably moved by Hon. Madaki. Kano is one city that I am emotionally attached to, and for all practical purposes, this is a city that is the Centre of Commerce in Northern Nigeria. As it is today, three airlines; Sudan, Ethiopian and Turkish Airlines go to Aminu Kano International Airport. At the same time, this same Emirates Airline goes to Kano but cargo only; the flow of traffic in the Aminu Kano International Airport therefore supports this Motion.

We need to be cautious in the way we open up our airports to international airlines; Abuja, Lagos, Kano, Enugu and Port Harcourt. By the time we allow all manner of aircrafts to these airports, by the time we have one or two international airlines from Nigeria or eventually as the President has alluded for Nigeria to have its own national carrier, by the time it comes into Nigeria it will be very difficult for us to compete from

[Motions]

4368

these airports where we allow international aircrafts to fly into.

That is not to say that I am going to oppose this Motion, I am going to as I said support it that we should allow that agreement entered into between Nigeria and the Emirates to fly into Kano because the number of passengers and the business attendant to it bringing in of that aircraft to Kano will improve.

Finally, I want to correct one historical impression created by this Motion; that Aminu Kano International Airport is the first airport in Nigeria in 1925; that is far from the truth. Students of history know that the first airport in Nigeria is Yola International Airport. With all sense of responsibility, this is where in 1918 when that part of the country was part of the German territory an aircraft landed from Germany in defence of the German territory that we were in that part of the country and Cameroun. I hope my Colleagues will support this Motion.

The Speaker: I was just about saying Hon. Sadiq that that issue was not relevant to the debate. Hon. Chika.

Hon. Adamu Abubakar Chika (Shiroro/Rafi/Munya): Mr. Speaker, the Motion earlier read by my dear Colleague, Hon. Ali Madaki in respect of Emirates Airline that the suspension should be lifted is a very valid argument.

As he said, the same time Abuja and Kano were given the approval at various times to take passengers from Nigeria to Dubai; this approval was given. At the time it came for Abuja, they started. When it came for Kano, they flight was suspended for a very short period of time. Again, what do we mean by short period of time? It is taking longer than necessary for the Federal Government to lift the suspension. We have Emirates in Abuja, Lagos, in fact two flights leave Lagos for Dubai. Then if we can have this flight from the far side to the middle, I think the back side needed also to have flights so that passengers must not necessarily travel from the North-West particularly I think the flight is meant to meet the demands of passengers from such zones.

Now, they have been subjected to using local flights from their various destinations to either Abuja or Lagos and this is causing untold hardship for the

4369

[Motions]

people of such zone. I believe that we should look at the Motion passionately and allow this Motion to see the light of the day because I believe the people of North-West particularly and even the North-East because most of the people of the North-East enjoy flying from Kano and by having this, I believe the North-East where Mr. Speaker comes from will also benefit from such gestures.

The Speaker: Hon. Chika is speaking for us from the North-East. (*laughter*) Hon. Nasiru.

Hon. Nasiru Ali Ahmed (Nassarawa): Mr. Speaker, I will first of all like to commend the mover of this Motion for bringing it to the attention of this honourable House.

We all know that Kano is the centre of trade and commerce within Nigeria and with the population of over 10.5 million people, the Mallam Aminu Kano International Airport not only services these people but it also services the other 50 million people that are living within the North-West. Then an extra of maybe two or three million people that come in from the neighbouring towns from Niger, Mali and Chad. The Aminu Kano International Airport is a very important part of Kano State and of course Nigeria.

I was in the Aviation Committee in the 7th Assembly, I am also in the Aviation Committee in the 8th Assembly; this same issue came up and it was given to the Aviation to investigate and we investigated it. The Minister came with all the Directors in the different agencies that had to do with this issue and in that same investigation, we did at the end of the day agree and the Minister was directed to ensure that Emirates Airlines should automatically, immediately start flying from Kano. We were very happy because we know that it is the only Airline that flies directly from Nigeria to Dubai and Dubai it is a very important business partner with Nigeria. The amount of traffic and business that flow between Dubai and Nigeria is enormous. So Emirates Airlines is a very important Airline and we believe that lifting the suspension of Emirates Airlines will not only contribute to the economy of Kano State as a whole and the country in general, but also increase employment within that area.

So I believe this Motion is a very important one and I urge my Colleagues to please support this Motion and

[Motions]

4370

ensure that the suspension of Emirates Airlines is lifted.

Hon. Ahmad Usman Babba Kaita (Kankia/Ingawa/Kusada): I want to lend my voice to this Motion as ably moved by Hon. Madaki because of not only its economic importance but also the political one.

We need to get this Airline back to Kano to be able to at least move some of the activities to the northern part of Nigeria not on selfish ground but even the infrastructure that we have in both Lagos and Abuja are always overstretched because of the deficit we have at Aminu Kano International Airport. So it is important that we look at this Motion dispassionately so as to support the spread we have in this political zone for ease of transport and also for getting the other part of the country involved in economic activities that are associated with aviation as a whole.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila (Surulere D): Let me first of all commend Hon. Ali Madaki for a very good and effective representation and for bringing what I consider very important economic and social issue and commercial to the forefront.

I have tried to think objectively as to why anyone or any government would want to cancel or stop passenger air traffic from the most populous State in Nigeria and I have come up short with no reason. But I do not want to look at this from the State reason but from a Regional reason. It is not about Kano, it is not even about the North-West. It goes beyond that. Let us limit it to the North that is a good chunk of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see any reason or rationale why you will allow cargo flights and not allow passenger flights. Surely if their cargo and their goods are good enough for you, then their people must be good enough for you to carry.

I think there are many facets to this Motion. We are looking for revenue and we are short-changing ourselves of major revenue because all you need to do is to think of the multiplier effect once you lift this like what is going to be paid to government, the fees, landing charges, parking charges, fuelling and all of those things. So we are really short-changing ourselves in this period when there is scarcity of revenue.

4371

[Motions]

Finally, I believe in the sanctity of agreements. It does not help us as a nation when you have Bilateral Agreements or Multi-lateral Agreements that are supposed to conform with 100 *per cent* not 99 *per cent* and then you unilaterally decide to breach or violate the Agreement, I think is something that we need to look at. It has been since 2013 that we have lost about three years revenue, I think we need to be up and doing, we need to bring it back to the original position as per the Agreement. Once again, I commend Hon. Madaki and all other Members who are also supporting this Motion.

Hon. Sylvester Ogbaga (Abakaliki/Izzi): This Motion as it is has nothing to do with the population of Kano or its environments. In the body of the Motion, the mover did not tell us what caused the suspension and what has been done to necessitate the lifting of the suspension. We are aware that the issue connected to this suspension is all about security and we you will agree with me that in beginning and part of the reasons why matters of tribunals in the same area were shifted to Abuja was because of security.

I feel that we should tread with caution on asking for the lifting of the suspension as the lives of people is involved. In as much as we talk about the economy of the country, about the revenue we expect to make, we should also be thinking about salvation of the lives of the people. So my own submission is that this Motion should not be allowed to fly because of the security implication of lifting this suspension.

The Speaker: Hon. Aliyu Madaki, you have right of reply.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki: Mr. Speaker, the issue he talked about, I actually did not want to say anything about it. The purported reasons for the suspension of Emirates Airlines passenger flights because the reasons we all know that time were purely political. I do not want to go into details but if my friend wants me to go into details, I will but all I can say is that the reasons given were purely political. I went to Emirates Airlines, they even gave me a copy of the letter which directed them to suspend passenger flights to Aminu Kano International Airport.

At that time some political bigwigs from Kano went to the then President Jonathan and informed him that if Emirates Airline passenger flights was allowed

[Motions]

4372

to land in Kano during that political era, it will give more clout to APC as a party.

The Speaker: Hon. Aliyu, I want you to speak to the number of international flights that fly into Kano.

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki: As we speak now, we have Egypt Air, Ethiopian Air, Turkish Air and Sudan Air. So if you are talking of security, I do not know the reason why these other Airlines will land in Kano and Emirates will not be allowed to fly in passengers. Not only that, as I speak to you know, Emirates do cargo business into Kano so if you are talking of security, where you should even be careful is cargo. Emirates have cargo flights to Kano three times weekly as we speak based on that agreement. The reasons were purely political.

The Speaker: I will now put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

- (i) Urge the Federal Ministry of Aviation to lift the suspension placed on commercial operations of Emirates Airlines from Kano wing of the route as earlier granted; and
- (ii) Mandate the House Committee on Aviation to ensure compliance.

The Speaker: In view of the urgency of the situation, I do not think we can wait too long for this matter to be resolved. In line with the prayers of the Motion I will direct the House Committee on Aviation to ensure that this matter is resolved within a week and the report should be given to the House next week Tuesday.

(Motion accordingly referred to the House Committee on Aviation).

The Speaker: Leader, please move that the House do adjourn.

4373

[Adjournment]

[Adjournment]

4374

ADJOURNMENT

Question put and agreed to.

Hon Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: Mr Speaker, I move that the House do adjourn Plenary till tomorrow Wednesday, 17th February 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Wednesday, 17th February, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. Pally Isumafe Obokhuiame Iriase: I second the Motion ably moved by the House Leader.

The House adjourned accordingly at 1.42 p.m.