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[Announcements]

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**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Tuesday, 26th January, 2016

The House met at 11:12 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, 21st January, 2016.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Acknowledgement of Visitors in the Gallery:

**Members of National Association of Okun Students,
University of Abuja Chapter**

The Speaker: We have in the Gallery, Members of the National Association of Okun Students from the University of Abuja Chapter. Could you please, rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

Students from Queens Science Academy, Kano

The Speaker: Also in the Gallery are Students from Queens Science Academy, Maiduguri Road, Kano. Could you please, rise for recognition?

(Students stood for recognition)

You are welcome, kindly take your seats.

House Plenary Calendar

The Speaker: This is to inform Hon. Members of the House of Representatives that the House Plenary Sitting Calendar is ready for collection at Room 0.6, House Committee on Rules and Business, House of Representatives, National Assembly. Hon. Members may wish to send their PAs or SLAs to collect them on their behalf.

Announcer

*Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa
Chairman, House Committee on Rules and Business*

**Meeting of House Leadership
of all Standing Committees.**

The Speaker: In line with the tradition of the House, there will be a meeting of the House Leadership with the Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of all Standing Committees and the Committee on Appropriations on the 2016 Budget:

Date: Wednesday, 27th January, 2016

Venue: Conference Room 028, House of Representatives

Time: 9.30 a.m. prompt

All concerned should please, endeavour to attend.

*Hon. Abdulmumini Jibrin
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations*

**Submission of all Honourable Members' Names
to the Committee on Constituency**

The Speaker: All Hon. Members, Chairmen, Committee on Constitution, Constituency Outreach, pursuant to Order XVIII, all Hon. Members are to submit the following information on or before 10th February, 2016 to the Office of the Chairman, Committee on Constituency Outreach at Room 1.31, House of Representatives New Building.

Names of all Hon. Members, Constituencies, Location and Address of Constituency Offices, Telephone Numbers, Name and Telephone numbers of Staff in charge of Constituency offices.

Signed

*Hon. Lawal Abubakar Garba
Chairman, House Committee on
Constituency Outreach*

Submission of Details of Contact Persons

The Speaker: Members who have not submitted details of their contact persons in their respective

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constituencies should please, do so on or before Wednesday this week.

Kindly submit the details to Room 306. It is very important that this is submitted, please.

Signed

*Hon Tijjani Jobe
Chairman SDGs*

PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC PETITIONS

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

Unlawful Indefinite Suspension of Mrs. Juliet Obiageli by Zenith Bank Plc

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred (Ogbaru): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition from Mrs. Juliet Obiageli Jim Nwachukwu, *Nee* Osemeka and it is a Petition against Zenith Bank Plc. She was a staff of the Bank who was unlawfully suspended since 2006 even after a court of competent jurisdiction had given judgment that she should be called back.

May I lay the Petition before the House?

The Speaker: Please, proceed and lay the Petition.

Petition laid on the Table.

Removal of name from Nominal Roll and Stoppage of Salary by Ministry of Niger-Delta Affairs

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai (Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani): Mr Speaker, I have two Petitions to present, one is from Mr. Ozegbe David Anioboh, Principal Executive Officer II, Ministry of Niger-Delta Affairs, 29 Musa Alege Road, Kwale. The Petition is on removal of name from nominal roll and stoppage of salary.

The petitioner is praying that his name be re-instated for him to get his salary.

Appeal for Reinstatement of Job

The second one is from Mrs. Asan Blessing, she is appealing for reinstatement of her job. I crave your indulgence to lay the Petitions before the House.

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The Speaker: Please, proceed and lay the Petitions.

Petitions laid on the Table.

Memorandum of Understanding with a Lebanese

Hon. Adekola Segun Alexander (Ekiti South West/Ikere/Ise/Orun): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition from one of my constituents, Mr. Enoch Ade Ojo who had a Memorandum of Understanding with a Lebanese whom he assisted to source a contract to the tune of over ₦2.4 billion, with the understanding that he is going to be given one *per cent* of the sum after the whole money have been paid.

When the Lebanese collected the money for the contract, he reneged on his promise and vamoosed with the whole money. The name of the Lebanese is Mr. Sassine Sayegh and all efforts to collect his own share of the money from the Lebanese has proved abortive, hence he petitioned this responsible and responsive House to help him apprehend Mr. Sassine Sayegh to collect his share of the money.

I seek your indulgence to lay the Petition.

The Speaker: Please, proceed to do so.

Petition laid on the Table.

Alleged Extra Judicial Killing by men of the Nigerian Navy in Ibaka Community, Mbo LGA, Akwa Ibom State

Hon. Ekpenyong Nse Bassey (Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udung Uko/Urue Offong/Oruko): Mr. Speaker, I have a Petition here from one of my immediate constituents, Ibaka Community on alleged extra judicial killing by men of the Nigerian Navy, Ibaka Command in Mbo Local Government Area.

It is very obvious that the presence of Security Officers all over the world is for the protection of lives and properties of the citizens. I wonder why that of Ibaka Command has turned to be much negative to the plight of the people.

The Petition before the National Assembly is seeking for justice and the rights of innocent citizens to be protected; I therefore, seek your consent and the

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permission of this honourable House to lay this Petition.

The Speaker: Please, proceed to lay the Petition.

Petition laid on the Table.

The Speaker: Is there any other Petition? (*No response*)

(Petitions accordingly referred to the Committee on Public Petitions)

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Consolidation of Bills

Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, 2004

The Speaker: The first Order of the day is the Consolidation of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap P36, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 275); and a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap P36, Laws of the Federal of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 340).

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

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa (Buruku): Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap. P36, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 275) and a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap P36, Laws of the Federal of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 340), be consolidated as one Bill.

Hon. Aminu Suleiman (Fagge): Mr. Speaker, I second that the Bills under reference be consolidated as moved by the Chairman, House Committee on Rules and Business.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consolidate as one Bill, a Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap. P36, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 275); and a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Public Accounts Implementation Tribunal Act, Cap P36, Laws of the Federal of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 340).

The Speaker: Chairman, Committee on Rules and Business should please, scheduled a date for commencement of debate on the general principles of the Bill.

Medical and Dental Practitioners Act, 2004

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the second Order of the day is the Consolidation of a Bill for an Act to amend the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Cap N8 LFN 2004 to make provision for Compensation for Medical Malpractice and Negligence and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 141) and a Bill for an Act to amend Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Cap N8 LFN 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 35).

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

Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa: Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill for an Act to amend the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Cap N8 LFN 2004 to make provisions for compensation for Medical Malpractice and Negligence and for Other Matters Connected. Therewith, 2015 (HB. 141) and a Bill for an Act to amend Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Chap N8 LFN 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 35), be consolidated as one Bill.

Hon. Joseph Ayodeji Adebayo (Apapa): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion that the Bills be consolidated as one Bill.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consolidate as one Bill, a Bill for an Act to amend the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Cap N8 LFN 2004 to make provisions for compensation for Medical Malpractice and Negligence and for Other Matters Connected

Therewith, 2015 (HB. 141) and a Bill for an Act to amend Medical and Dental Practitioners Act Chap N8 LFN 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 35).

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

Appropriation Bill, 2016

Hon. Colleagues, the third Order of the day is resumption of debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to authorize the issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, the total sum of ₦6,077,680,000,000 (Six Trillion, and Seventy-Seven Billion, Six Hundred and Eighty Billion Naira) only of which ₦351,270,000,000 (Three Hundred and Fifty-One Billion, Two Hundred and Seventy Million Naira) only is for Statutory Transfers, ₦1,475,320,000,000 (One Trillion, Four Hundred and Seventy-Five Billion, Three Hundred and Twenty Million Naira) only, is for Debt Service, ₦2,648,600,000,000 (Two Trillion, Six Hundred and Forty-Eight Billion, Six-Hundred Million Naira) only, is for Recurrent (Non-Debt) Expenditure while the Sum of ₦1,845,540,000,000 (One Trillion, Eight Hundred and Forty-Five Billion, Five Hundred and Forty Million Naira) only, inclusive of ₦157,150,000,000 (One Hundred and Fifty-Seven Billion, One Hundred and Fifty Million Naira) only, is for Statutory Transfers and ₦86,000,000,000 (Eighty-Six Billion Naira) only, as Interest on Capitalized Loans, is for Contribution to the Development Fund for Capital Expenditure for the Year Ending on the 31st Day of December, 2016 (HB. 337).

Hon. Members will recall that further debate on the general principles of the Bill was adjourned to Tuesday, 26th January, 2016 and today is the third allotted day.

I now invite Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, the House Leader, to move that debate on the Bill do now resume.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila (Surulere I): Mr. Speaker, may I move that the House do resume debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to authorize the issue from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Federation, the total sum of ₦6,077,680,000,000 (Six Trillion, and Seventy-Seven Billion, Six Hundred and Eighty Billion Naira) only of

which ₦351,270,000,000 (Three Hundred and Fifty-One Billion, Two Hundred and Seventy Million Naira) only is for Statutory Transfers, ₦1,475,320,000,000 (One Trillion, Four Hundred and Seventy-Five Billion, Three Hundred and Twenty Million Naira) only, is for Debt Service, ₦2,648,600,000,000 (Two Trillion, Six Hundred and Forty-Eight Billion, Six-Hundred Million Naira) only, is for Recurrent (Non-Debt) Expenditure while the Sum of ₦1,845,540,000,000 (One Trillion, Eight Hundred and Forty-Five Billion, Five Hundred and Forty Million Naira) only, inclusive of ₦157,150,000,000 (One Hundred and Fifty-Seven Billion, One Hundred and Fifty Million Naira) only, is for Statutory Transfers and ₦86,000,000,000 (Eighty-Six Billion Naira) only, as Interest on Capitalized Loans, is for Contribution to the Development Fund for Capital Expenditure for the Year Ending on the 31st Day of December, 2016 (HB. 337).

Hon. Umar Buba Jibril (Lokoja/Kogi/KK): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion that debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2016 as copiously read out by the Leader do resume today.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, today is the third allotted day and it is the final day on the debate on the general principles of the 2016 Appropriation Bill, which is before the House. So, we will continue in the order in which we stopped. I want to recognize the Hon. Minority Leader to bring his perspectives on the Bill.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor (Isoko North/Isoko South): Mr. Speaker, let me first and foremost commend the President in fulfilling a major constitutional responsibility *vis-a-vis* the provision of Section 81.

Mr. Speaker and my Colleagues, clearly as you can see, this is one Budget that probably; you may want to call an incomplete document. It is an incomplete document because when you look at the document before us *vis-a-vis* the document that has been presented before us, the figures do not tally. We have a Budget that tells the whole nations that the Budget is ₦6.077 trillion but when you add the figures, when you take the figures clearly as listed there, what you have is about ₦6.3 trillion. So, the question I ask is; where is that particular remaining almost ₦300 billion? I expect the Majority Leader of the House to help us so that we will be able to know precisely where we are going.

I state with all emphasis that Budget covers almost all expenditures and incomes, there is a lot of issues lacking in this Budget and I want to draw the attention of the House; specifically to our laws.

Like I said already, when you look at the provisions of Section 21 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, it states with all emphasis that the Government Corporations and Agencies and government-owned companies listed in the Schedule of which I will point out to you, shall and it goes there to Section 2 of it that:

Each of these bodies referred to in Sub-section one of this Schedule shall submit to the Minister not later than the end of August in each financial year:

(a) an annual budget derived from the estimates submitted in pursuant to Sub-section one of this Section.

The most important item here, Mr. Speaker is that:

The Minister shall cause the estimate submitted in pursuant to Sub-section two of this Section to be attached as part of the Draft Appropriation Bill to be submitted to the National Assembly.

Mr. Speaker, you know Mr. President *vis-a-vis* our Oath of Allegiance, which I try as much as possible to be very nationalistic about, but looking at the whole Budget, I have not even seen the Budget of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation; the Budget of Central Bank is not even there; the Budget of Federal Inland ... *(interruptions)*

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: Point of Order, Mr. Speaker!

The Speaker: Yes Leader, your Point of Order.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: My Point of Order is on the Constitution, Section (81) which the Minority Leader referred to. As we all know and also Section 1, that any law that is inferior to the Constitution shall be subservient to it. What we are debating here and what the Budget is about is Section 81(1) of the Constitution which says that, *The President shall submit his estimate Budget proposal.* If he is citing the Fiscal Responsibility Act, I think what we need to look at is the Constitution. The President is

not under any obligation, under the Constitution. He talks about the Constitution and the Budget estimates and that is what he has done and that is what we have been doing in this House in the last two years. I do not believe that we should stick to the relevance of Budget proposals.

Hon. Ogor Leonard Okuweh: Let me not bother you Mr. Speaker. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, my Colleague is part and parcel of this Fiscal Responsibility Act. This Act was passed in 2007 and he was a Member of the House then.

Let me refer you again to Section 18 of the Act and I read:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act or any other law, the medium term framework ...
(interruptions)

Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba (Doguwa/Tudun Wada): Point of Order!

The Speaker: Yes, what is your Point of Order?

Hon. Alhassan Ado Garba: Mr. Speaker, I do not know may be out of oversight, I am relying on the relevant Rule that there was a Point of Order raised validly by the Majority Leader and without you ruling, the Minority Leader now went on with his debate. I feel there should be a ruling on the Order raised by the Majority Leader.

The Speaker: My ruling is that the Minority Leader should continue with his debate, please.

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor: Let me seek your protection again and read again Section 18 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act. It says that:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary contained in this Act or any other law, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework shall be the basis for the preparation of the estimates of revenue and expenditure required to be prepared and lay before the National Assembly under Section 81(1) of the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, the law is very clear and the standard procedure has been laid. Here, we have a scenario or a

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situation where we must try to be very nationalistic and in being nationalistic, we have before us a Budget of ~~₦~~6.077 trillion but the figure itself, when calculated and I am putting it before you, the Leader of the House; you are the one that leads Government's Bills, that Bill before you like I stated, ~~₦~~6.33 trillion and I stand to be corrected and I will give you my calculator and everything; you can work it out.

I think there is the need for us to balance these figures. These upscale corporations carry Budget or rather, expenditure that runs into trillions of Naira and if we do not have this specific request before us because the law states very clearly that Budget should be laid before this House. Like you know, this is not the first time we are doing budgeting.

In 2014, it was clearly laid before this House. I have no problem with the fact that we must do the right thing and there is the important need that we get close to almost about 15 Agencies that might be spending close to another ~~₦~~3 or ~~₦~~4 trillion to bring their Budgets so that we can be able to know precisely what we are giving to the nation. You told me categorically that this is an era of change and I want to identify with it. The policy clearly like you know Mr. Speaker is extremely important and we look at the situation we have in our country.

If you look at what we are facing today, you will agree with me that the Stock Exchange today is running into a major problem, where the value of the Stock Exchange is depreciating on a continuous basis, the Naira is almost going on a free-fall basis, the sinking situation of the economy has become very worrisome and I think what we need to do from the patriotic angle is to look at this Budget clearly. There are figures in the Budget that are very alarming and why am I saying this? I thank God today that the National Assembly is saddled with the responsibility of being the custodian of the peoples' resources. It is clearly stated under the provisions of Section 80(4) of the Constitution.

What we need to do my brothers and sisters is to give to Nigerians a Budget which will be of utmost important to this great nation, not this hurriedly prepared document that the figures do not tally. If you do not do that, you will be failing in your responsibility. It is extremely important that we give to this nation, a Budget that will be able to stand the test of time. Look at the revenue framework, the benchmark price of oil was \$38 per barrel but as of today, the price of oil is almost \$28 per barrel. Based

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on that, are these figures realistic? Can we achieve them? What should we do? I think this is the patriotic zeal that calls for our attention.

I will appeal Mr. Speaker that, we avoid this party interest and look at this Budget in a very holistic manner and find a lasting solution to it. I am of the opinion that national interest calls at this particular minute and we should do everything possible to give to these people, our brothers and sisters, a Budget that will serve its purpose.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, because today is the final day, we have 84 hon. Members who have indicated interest to speak on the Budget today and if we are allotting just two minutes per speaker, we are taking more than 164 minutes and my elementary mathematics tells me that that is almost two hours, thirty minutes of debate. So, I want to appeal that we restrict ourselves to issues that have not been canvassed on the Floor of the House. If any matter has been canvassed, we should just avoid those areas and just hit the nail on the head on those matters that we think have not been brought to our attention.

Please, I will strictly monitor the enforcement of the rule of maximum of two minutes. Once you get up to speak, you just go direct to the point, make your point and take your seat, please. Having said that, I would like to recognise Hon. Kayode Oladele, at least he has saved us two minutes, then Hon. Odeneye Kehinde

Hon. Odeneye Kehinde Olusegun (Ijebu-Ode/Ijebu North-East/Odogbolu): Let me first say that what I have with me is a complete Budget on which I want to talk upon. So, I am not aware of an incomplete Budget that was brought to this House.

For the first time in the history of this country, we are having a Budget at this particular moment that is focusing on infrastructural development and that it is also looking at the welfare of Nigerians in the provision of employment opportunities. Taking cognizant of the fact that creation of employment opportunities will increase spending capacity, which invariably will result into increment in Value Added Tax (VAT) collection. So, if our focus is to shift from oil revenue to other revenue, I think this is one Budget that is giving opportunity for that. Again, this is the first time in the history of this country in the preparation of Budget where critical areas such as Education and Health have been considered favourably.

If you look at it again, it is also the first time in the history of this country where the Government is very sensitive to its unemployed youths. A provision of about ₦300 Billion has been made as social fund to take care of our unemployed youths. I think we have to give kudos to the President for making this important provision in the Budget. As I said earlier, it is the first time that a President is sensitive to the plight of the unemployed youths in this country.

If you look at it critically, you will see that in the Budget, Taxes, Duties and Levies will contribute about ₦1.45 Trillion to fund this Budget. That means the President has tried as much as possible to take concentration away from oil revenue. So, the issue of the benchmark has been taken care of because the President is aware that it is possible that the benchmark may be and may not be more than \$38 per barrel. In shifting the focus from oil, the President is already aware of this particular problem we are talking about here.

If you look at the Budget critically, you will see that the contribution from oil is just about ₦820 Billion; whereas the non-oil revenue is projected at ₦1.45 Trillion. Therefore, you will see that this is the first time we are having a shift from our dependence on oil revenue. As I said earlier, there will be improvement in the remuneration and welfare of teachers as highlighted by the President in the Budget presentation he made to this House. I think we have to give kudos to the President for looking at these areas that I have highlighted.

However, there are areas that the Government has to look at critically and the National Assembly also has a very critical responsibility in considering this Budget. One challenge I see is that the Office of the Auditor-General of the Federation has been under-funded not by this Government alone but even by the past Governments rather than relying on EFCC, ICPC and other anti-corruption Agencies to do what they are doing. I think the Office of the Auditor-General has a very good responsibility if it is well funded, to tackle some of the problems that the Agencies are tackling presently. It is better for us to prevent fraud than start looking for money that has been lost.

Hon. Samson Okwu (Obi/Oju): Mr. Speaker, I just want to thank you for allowing us to debate this Budget, and I want to thank my Hon. Colleagues for taking their time to look at this Budget because of the interest of this country. We are all aware of our laws;

especially our Fiscal Responsibility Act that has caused Mr. Speaker to bring the MTEF three months before the end of the year. Mr. Speaker, we are here and we can see that even though we are deliberating this Budget today, we have not been able to agree on the MTEF Report with both Houses; but because of the interest of this country, we have decided to overlook this aspect.

I want us to look at the Budget carefully and look at the projection of ₦3.8 Trillion which was oil related revenue to contribute ₦820 Billion or 20 *per cent* of the total Budget while the tax collection from the public expenditure reform and the Ministries, Departments and Agencies amounted to the rest. What is important here is that the deficit of the Budget of the Appropriation Bill, which is ₦1.84 Trillion is to be financed through borrowing. This raised a lot of fear in the minds of Nigerians because Budget that is supposed to raise hope of the poor masses and how to sustain the Budget with drop of oil prices is actually what is the problem of Nigeria in this Budget.

You will agree with me that at the presentation of this Budget by Mr. President, the exchange rate then was ₦295 per one Dollar; whereas the benchmark for the crude oil was \$38 per barrel. Now, we can see that even in the Medium Term Expenditure, the drop to \$28 per barrel has caused a lot of fear in the eyes of Nigerians. As a result of dwindling crude oil price, it is clear that Nigerians cannot rely on oil revenue to sustain this Budget. So, there is need to diversify their budget which I agree on this Budget that Mr. President has proposed.

Mr. Speaker, the African infrastructure country diagnostic Report of 2011 estimated that Nigeria requires to suspend \$1.2 Billion per annum in the next decade in order to address the infrastructure challenges and because of that the borrowing has become a problem. If we look at the true nature of both domestic and external debt profile of Nigeria which stands at ₦12.11 Trillion which is 14 *per cent* of Gross Domestic Product ratio, which is relatively low hence but Nigeria believes that it is better to borrow and fund the Budget now, which is the Budget that Mr. President has submitted.

However, I disagree with this view, the proposed Budget of 2016 appear mainly elegant and focused but the true position is that, the Budget is not realistic considering the economic variables in place. It is one thing for a country to have the capacity to borrow and

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another to have a correspondence capacity to pay back. So, we do not have that capacity due to Nigeria's stand now to borrow such amount of money to fund this Budget.

The Speaker: Time is up Hon. Samson Okwu, you promised two minutes but you have taking close to four minutes.

Hon. Nnenna Ijeoma Elendu-Ukeje (Bende): Thank you very much Mr. Speaker for yielding the Floor to me. Due to time constrain, I will compress very quickly all my observations on the Budget because a lot of things that I would like to say have already been taken care of by the very erudite submission of the Minority Leader and most of the people who have spoken before me. I will also add my voice to raise the concern that has been raised but I will confine myself to the foreign policy component of the Budget.

Right from the size of the Budget, the cost of oil etcetera, the House will recall that in the twilight of the last administration, Nigeria's foreign policy was at its lowest ebb and a lot of things were responsible for it. Mr. President in his inaugural speech said that Nigeria would be willing to serve in any leadership position that she finds herself to a very excited audience. He came up with a foreign policy objective and spoke to foreign direct investment, citizen's diplomacy, security at home and anti-corruption.

My concern is that, the foreign policy component of this Budget is only 0.52 *per cent* of the national Budget. It does not speak to the policy objectives of this administration and we realise that where we are today, will require increased funding in our foreign policy if we are going to live up to the expectations of Mr. President of making Nigeria the country that he dreams of or country that is strong and tall and has a lot of influence on the international space. Where I would like to see some more funding is on the security of our Missions as we have seen that certain events at home have challenged the security of our Missions around the world. We want to increase funding in Consular matters because vast diaspora population seeks legitimately that our Missions take care of them even better and of course; we also depend on diaspora remittances which constitute a significant part of our foreign exchange inflow.

I would also like to see increased funding because as Government seeks to diversify, we need these

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Missions to be able to help us to engage with other countries so that the opportunities that would exist in Nigeria would be harnessed by our friends. We would also want to increase funding on our multilateral aspirations and Nigeria would position herself for opportunities that would open up on the global stage. What I am saying in essence is that as we recognize the nexus between our Budget defense, diplomacy and development, the funding in this Sector should reflect Mr. President's dream and the collective aspirations of Nigeria and it does not.

Hon. Olatunbosun Olajide Boladale (Atisbo/Saki East/Saki West): Let me start by commending our President for the bold initiatives contained in the 2016 Appropriation Bill. According to the draft document, areas of strategic priorities include Human and Infrastructure Development, Agriculture, Education, Health, Road Maintenance, Job Creation, Social Inclusion and emphasis on allocating efficiency by adopting zero-based budgeting. Those are things that if well implemented are capable of moving the nation forward. However, I am going straight to some areas that we need to tinker with as a House. The issue of deficit financing is a major issue. According to the draft Budget, we are going to have ₦2.22 Trillion deficit financing, which is 37 *per cent* of the Budget. If you look at the fact that the Capital Budget is 30 *per cent* of the entire budget, it means we would be financing part of the recurrent expenditure by borrowing. That means we are consuming our tomorrow today. I think that kind of Budget needs critical assessment by this House. We should never borrow to finance recurrent expenditure and consumption.

Furthermore, it is projected that oil revenues are going to come down and deficit may go to about ₦3 Trillion, God forbid. That means the size of the deficit to the Budget is going to be like 50 *per cent* and if you calculate that, recurrent expenditure may be financed up to 35 *per cent* through borrowing; both domestic and foreign. Hon. Colleagues, I would like to appeal to us at the Committee level while looking at this Budget, we should ensure that we do a balancing in such a way that if we are going to borrow money, it is going to be for development, Road Infrastructure, Health Infrastructure, Energy and Power but not borrowing money to finance consumption.

Lastly, looking at the 3 years revenue and expenditure projections, I think ultimately what we should go for is a private sector driven economy so that the pressure on the Government in terms of providing

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money for Agencies or Parastatals, that will more or less be waste pipes is going to reduce. God bless Nigeria, God bless the President and God bless the House of Representatives.

Hon. Soyinka Olatunji (Surulere II): Many people have spoken about the Budget and many are still going to speak about it. I am on my feet not to add or subtract, praise or condemn the Budget but to say that no matter how good or perfect a Budget is, implementation is the key. In that wise, I want to say that whatever we are saying or doing on this Floor or at our Committee levels, we should put the country at heart. It should be Nigeria first, not personal or political affiliation; let us think Nigeria. Whatever we are going to do or say on this Budget, let us be realistic and face the real thing about development of Nigeria.

Hon. Sopuluchukwu E. Ezeonwuka (Orumba North/South): Mr. Speaker, thank you for permitting me to speak on this great national interest of a matter. This is because of time constraint, there are some other imbalances and discrepancies but let me speak on the Agricultural sector; in other words, aligning myself with the submission of the Minority Leader.

Mr. Speaker, a cursory look into the 2016 Budget proposal indicates that Agriculture receives a paltry sum of 7 to 8 Billion Naira in a total Budget estimate of about ₦6 Trillion. It is my calculated observation that if the allocation to the Agriculture sector is not stepped up, I am afraid that more Nigerians; especially the youths will experience more hardship in this financial year.

I urge all of us to rise up in solidarity with this my humble submission to ensure that the Agricultural sector is heavily funded.

The Speaker: Thank you Hon. Sopuluchukwu, talking about Agriculture, I cannot agree with you any less.

Hon. Owoidighe Ime Ekpoattai (Eket/Onna/Esit Eket/Ibendo): Mr. Speaker, as we know about this Budget that Nigerians are looking up to and some people have tagged it Budget of change, Budget of social and whatever name that we may want to tag this Budget. What I know about this Budget which I have seen and I want to encourage all of us as we get into our different Committee levels, we should work on the Budget that will be realistic and people-oriented

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Budget for our people. Also, with the current market reality of oil benchmark and exchange rate, we know that what was presented to us last year may not be what will be achievable. So, we should all work together to see that we have a Budget that is realistic.

I am also lending my voice to Agriculture. In the Maputo Declaration, agriculture should have about 10 per cent of the Budget but we see that it has only 2.6 per cent of the Budget and if we are going away from the oil revenue, we should know that agriculture will be another mainstay of our economy.

Please, as we get into our different places, let us know that we should work to increase the Budget for agriculture so that we will have the economy base for this country. As leaders of this country, let us also know that as the Budget comes, it will not go back with the same wish. We should tinker on areas that are not necessary and we should restructure the Budget to meet the realities of the people of Nigeria.

The Speaker: Thank you Hon. Ekpoattai for talking about agriculture. Next speaker will be Hon. Pally Iriase, Deputy Whip of the House.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred: Mr. Speaker, you said when you started that things that have already been taken by other Members because of time should not be repeated, I will adopt the Minority Leader's position; but at the same time, while talking about diversification, we should also look into the Solid Minerals Sector, which only got about ₦9 billion, I think that is a little bit too small for that Sector.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai (Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani): Mr. Speaker, I want to ride on the submission of the Minority Leader to say that this Budget has failed all known litmus test. The essence of this is simple.

When you look at the Budget, you will see that Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) is being positioned under Statutory Transfer. You will also see that Transport is also positioned on the Statutory Transfer. We all know that it is clearly written in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, in the Third Alteration; so many aspects of this Budget are unconstitutional.

The constitutional aspect of it is that the three items which is National Assembly, the Judiciary and

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Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) are the only ones recognised by our statutory book, in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to be among the Statutory Transfer. But in this Budget as prepared, UBEC was included under Statutory Transfer; you will also see the issues of Transport under Statutory Transfer. It becomes an infraction on the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria but because we are nationalistic in nature and because we try to build national consensus ... *(interruptions)*

The Speaker: Hon. Ossai, somebody has a Point of Order. Who has a Point of Order, please?

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Hon. Aliyu Sani Madaki (Dala): Mr. Speaker, I am coming under Personal Explanation.

The Speaker: Personal Explanation? Are you sure? No, you may better look for another Point of Order; there is no Personal Explanation on this. Just take time and check the Rules, I am sure you will get a Point of Order.

Hon. Ossai; please, conclude your debate.

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai: Secondly, Mr. Speaker, you will know why I said that it has failed all known litmus tests, it is simple; when you look at the capital projections which this Budget is predicated upon and which the Majority Leader of this great House emphasised greatly as a departure. He raised the issue of ₦1.8 Trillion but when you calculate this Budget within the capital as provided to us is ₦1.6 Trillion. There is a shortfall.

The essence of raising this issue is for the National Assembly to make corrections at the Committee. If we do not raise this issue, we cannot lay a better foundation upon which we are going to climb. When you also look at this Budget, why it has failed all known litmus tests is very simple; this House passed a Budget of \$38 per barrel but upon the reality of time now, you will realise as of last week, the price has fallen to \$27 per barrel but as of today, it is \$32 per barrel. You can now know that the projection is going to be \$40 per barrel.

Another addition of it is this, for the CBN to come into this matter by bringing the issue of Stamp Duties,

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which will provide ₦2.5 billion on daily basis ... *(interruptions)*

The Speaker: It is not in the Budget. Is the Stamp Duty issue in the Budget?

Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai: They are coming from the backdoor on tax regime, which this House has the potential and capacity to be able to do tax regime in Nigeria. If CBN is going to unknown contrary law to our status book, it then means that we are shying away from our own responsibility. Our responsibility is to be able to direct on tax regime, but currently now you will agree with me that the CBN has delved into physical and monetary policy, which is abnormal ... *(interruptions)*

The Speaker: Hon. Ossai, we are not debating the issue of Stamp Duties, you know there is a law that provides for it.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: Point of Order!

The Speaker: Leader, go ahead with your Point of Order, please.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: My Point of Order is Rule Order IX, 61 (1) which is Relevancy in Debate.

He is debating the issue of Stamp Duties that have no relevance whatsoever to the issue of the Budget. Let him restrict his debate and argument to the Budget estimates as presented by Mr. President.

The Speaker: On this point, I agree with the Leader because the issue of the Stamp Duties is provided for by law passed by this Parliament or deems to be an Act of the Parliament. So, if you disagree with them, propose an Amendment to the law. Do you understand? I rule that it is irrelevant to the debate we are conducting.

Hon. Prestige Chinedu Ehiriudu Ossy (Aba North/South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to further draw the attention of the House that the revenue performance of 2015 was very abysmal due to poor collection of Customs Duties, falling crude oil prices in international front, non-remittance of unspent funds and weak generating capacity of the MDAs. It is quite apparent that 2015 had serious fiscal Budget

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challenges. Therefore, the real growth proposed for 2016 for the economy may not be realistic in this first half of 2016 going by the international and domestic realities and development.

This presupposes that there should be need to be a significant reduction in the non-debt recurrent expenditure. This would be a veritable strategy to lessen fiscal deficit in subsequent years, mainly unproductive overheads and personnel costs.

The 2016 Federal Government of Nigeria Appropriation Bill aims to ensure micro-economic stability by targeting the real GDP growth rate at 3.37 *per cent* in managing inflation. This is practically impossible. Given the economic pointers, the current Appropriation Bill does not show a clear strategy on how to maintain micro-economic stability and manage the oil prices that shocks the entire country at the moment.

The proposed gross federally collected revenue of ₦9.7 billion is higher than the estimated for 2014 and 2015 but came close to 2013, which came to ₦9.8 billion. Since both periods defer in economic fundamental; it is therefore, doubtful if the proposed amount can be realized. This estimate is required to be revisited due to economic fundamentals.

The 2016 Appropriation Bill is not different from previous Budget proposals. This is because it lacks the needed drive aimed at diversifying the economy away from oil. This particular Budget as presented would have about 7 *per cent* of this current expenditure borrowed. The implication is that 7 *per cent* of borrowed funds are actually going into recurrent. So, we are still borrowing for current as we have been doing in the previous Governments.

Finally, as much as possible, there is need to avoid borrowing to finance consumption. I am from the banking system, capital markets funds are preferable. Borrowing can be targeted at fixing the existing refineries, building new ones or rehabilitating productive infrastructure.

There is no reason why refineries that are devoid of corruption cannot be self-liquidating. The planned use of foreign borrowing to finance the deficit of 2016 Budget was hardly the case in previous years. First, it becomes imperative to detail out how external borrowing would be utilised. In this connection, it may

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be imperative to revisit the policies of 1980's stipulating the external borrowing should be used to finance projects that would generate foreign exchange large enough to meet debt servicing and repayment of our obligation. I will stop at this point because of time constraint.

Hon. Amadi Oguerinwa Dennis (Ezeagu/Udi): Mr. Speaker the Budget on the Table is one that has a lot of challenges for the economy in this trying time. I heard my Colleagues mentioned the extent of borrowing to support the Budget; Nigeria is a country existing with a lot of weak control on our revenue generating Agencies. This is a time we are looking at low hanging fruits to support the internal processes of our economy to ensure that we make up the gap from the Oil Sector. Therefore, we need to focus seriously on our weak border control. The nature of border control we have in Nigeria today is such that unstable policies on exchange control normally favour neighbouring countries and any policies that have to stiffen our border favours nearby countries within our shores. Therefore, I believe that we have the capacity to generate more than 50 *per cent* of anticipated borrowing by trapping our revenues that are due to the customs and the Federal MDA's. I think for this Budget as well, on Sectors that have to do with Agriculture which my Colleague have spoken about, we need to free the Land Use Act to enable potential farmers that want to deepen on Agriculture have access to agricultural land. We cannot implement this Budget without putting in place a framework that will support people who have the drive to venture into Agriculture to have access to land in various parts of Nigeria. Therefore, I make my little submission centred mainly on the internal revamping of our economy through Steel Industry, in which we have opportunity and comparative advantage as a nation. I do not see any reason why spare parts and various components or machinery that ordinarily will filter as a value chain on development of our Steel Industry are still being imported into Nigeria. Based on our Legislative Agenda to support Sectors in the cause of the year, we will be able to support the Budget.

Hon. Yakubu Umar Barde (Kajuru/Chikun): Mr Speaker, let me start on the premise that as Members representing people of Nigeria in this hallowed Chamber and have the responsibility to make sure that things are done rightly, not only rightly but at the end of the day, programmes are implemented that will benefit the entire Nigeria. This Budget is for the entire Nigerians, there is no partisanship about it. In as much

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as this Budget is highly ambitious but with the current realities, I think it is not practicable.

I base my argument on first the issue of revenue accrued to the Government. Let us start with the oil benchmark, which we know has fallen below the benchmark given in the Budget. Apart from that, the projection of 2.2 million barrels per day in the Budget is also not realistic. The issues are these; if the oil price continues to go down below \$28 per barrel, I am reliably informed that the cost of production of one barrel of crude oil is \$28 per barrel. It means therefore, that if the prices go down below \$28 per barrel, most of the oil wells will close and will not be able to meet our targeted production of 2.2 million barrels per day. That is very important because Budgets are estimates and this estimates are supposed to fuel or implement the programmes that the Government intends to do.

Secondly, you will agree with me that the financing of the Budget is based on domestic borrowing of about ~~N~~900 Billion and external borrowing, which is ~~N~~984 Billion. If you sum up this total amount of money that the Government is going to borrow, you will agree with me that it is more than the Capital Expenditure. It means that we are borrowing to finance Recurrent Expenditure which is against the Debt Management Act of this very country. It is important that the relevant Committee should look at this so that we do not violate the Debt Management Act. We should not be borrowing to finance Recurrent Expenditure and we should make sure that our capital project is high above the money we are borrowing. This is because it will not speak well for the economy.

Apart from that, we are borrowing nearly ~~N~~984 Billion and that is domestic borrowing. The implication of this is that, most banks today are holding their money knowing that the Government is coming to borrow and that makes it very difficult for the Private Sector to borrow money from the banks. This is because it has more risk and high interest rate which discourage production. But the Government has lower risk and lower interest rates and the banks are willing to catch up with this opening whereby they will borrow to Government at lower risk and this means the Private Sector are deprived from financing loanable funds which is not good.

Our change mantra is that we should deviate from Public Sector and make sure that the Private Sector is encouraged; whereby most of these companies will open up and have access to loanable funds at very

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minimal interest rate, which is not the case. I am talking about the principles of this Budget. If you look at the Budget again, we are thinking of financing the alternative source of revenue. The two alternative sources of revenue Nigeria is endowed with are the Solid Minerals and Agriculture. If you look at the percentage of solid minerals, it is less than one *per cent* of the entire Budget and the Capital Expenditure of the Solid Mineral Sector. This is the time for the Government and all of us in the country to look at alternative sources of generating revenue. If we are not focusing on Agriculture and Solid Minerals, what else? I think it is important that the relevant Committees should make sure that we give a direction to this Budget and make sure that the Solid Minerals Sector and Agricultural Sector are boosted so that we will have alternative to the dwindling oil prices.

Hon. Agbedi Y. Fredrick (Ekeremor/Sagbama):
Mr. Speaker, this Budget that is before us needs the commitment of Members of National Assembly to be critical about the estimates and ensure that we come out with a Budget that is going to benefit Nigerians.

A number of issues can be raised out of this Budget and the responsibility is on us to ensure that we are able to craft a Budget that will largely address the needs of Nigerians and the economy, especially the issue of revenue. Of course, we are all aware that we cannot do anything with the present oil price if production cost is between \$10 and \$15 then of course clearly, we cannot use more than \$12 as benchmark for our budgeting. I feel that we as National Assembly should look at that very critically and ensure that we do not use figures that will not help in bringing out a Budget that will assuage the yearnings and aspirations of our people.

The changes in oil price rates and the Medium Term Expenditure Framework is unreliable and the revenue profile for that is undependable as at today. We are looking at ~~N~~197 as official rate but as at today, the Dollar is over ~~N~~300 in exchange. You cannot import because how do you sell what you import with the present exchange rate? So, If we are looking at importation levies, taxes on importation of course, what we are going to get will be very minimal because a lot of international business people have reduced their importation of goods and services.

My recommendation is that the House Committee on Finance and the Budget Office should review the MTEF to be able to come out with a reality with what is on ground.

Hon. James Abiodun Faleke (Ikeja): Mr. Speaker, I wish to commend the Budget as has been done by others and of course, to re-emphasis on the issue of employment of over 500,000 teachers which is specified in the Budget. My take is that, by the time this is implemented, if the 500,000 is done equally according to the States which means, my State would be benefiting over 12,000 or 13,000 people to be employed and if about 13,000 people are employed in one sweep, that will seriously reduce the level of unemployment in the States.

I want to appeal to my Colleagues to please, give this Budget a very good motivation that it deserves. In other words, if we look at the Budget and compare it to the previous ones we have had, I want a situation that after the implementation of it, it is not going to be a situation of you win, you lose programme. I hope that it will be implemented accordingly.

Hon. Onyemaechi Joan Mrakpor (Aniocha North/Aniocha South/ Oshimili North/Oshimili South): Mr. Speaker, I would like to stand by the submission of the Minority Leader and to add quickly that I believe that this very distinguished 8th Assembly will do justice to the Appropriation Bill. But I want to add that having done that, the Executive should live up to what Nigerians expect and what would Nigerians want to see; Budget performance. It is one thing to pass a Budget, but it is another thing to bring a Budget as a document to the House. It would not be palatable to Nigerians if at the end of the year, we begin to hear 10 *per cent* Budget performance, one *per cent* Budget performance. This is a Budget performance that will change the economy and the situation of this country when put in place.

I want to implore the Executive and add my voice to say that the implementation of this Budget will do great deal for this nation.

The Speaker: Thank you for being disciplined enough to keep within two minutes.

Hon. Abdulrazak Sa'ad Namdas (Mayo Belwa/ Ganye/Jada/Toungo): Mr. Speaker, I join my Hon. Colleagues in commending this Budget, it is in line with the promises that Mr. President made during his campaign and we all know that the Budget is not a Holy Book, it is subject to dotting the *i's* and crossing the *t's*.

I will plead with my Colleagues that this Budget is realisable when we come to the Committee level, we should submit. I am particularly elated that under the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing, a construction of 1,973 blocks of 7,000 units is been proposed in the six geo-political zones at the rate of about ~~N44~~ billion. Coming from the North-East zone, I just pray that we will also get a very good share of it considering the fact that my people have been under serious attacks, so we will like rehabilitation.

I will not bore you with so much details, a lot of things have been said. Attention should also be given to the Judiciary as an Arm of Government; this is because they have been saying that the National Assembly should look into that and a lot of things should be said so that some of their Budget should be increased at the appropriate places when we come to Committee stages, so also is the National Assembly and that also should be touched.

Truly speaking, if these three Arms of Government; the Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are on the same page, I am sure that this change that we are clamouring for will actually come to pass, thank you and this is my contribution.

Hon. Hussaini Abubakar Moriki (Shinkafi/ Zurmi): Hon. Colleagues, my intervention is anchored on the issue of Mr. President's speech, where he made a number of assurances, confessional statements and his resolved to tackle certain issues contained in the Budget. Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I want to acknowledge the issue of the state of the Nigerian economy, which was acknowledged by Mr. President and he summarized it by saying, it is worrisome and a source of concern. It is worsened by the high level of corruption, insecurity challenges and the trend in respect of falling government revenue arising from the unprecedented fall in the revenue drive from oil.

Mr. President identified three major problems of this country to include corruption, insecurity and dwindling revenue. If you are faced with a situation where you already know your problem, I think presumably, the problem is half solved. So, we have to acknowledge the resolve of Mr. President who wants to secure this country, to rebuild the economy, safeguard lives and property and his display of political will to fight corruption.

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Mr. President came to this hallowed House and by extension, he wanted to speak to Nigerians; he also drew our attention to the uniqueness of this year 2016. It is a year when we witnessed the first Budget of this administration; it is a year when we witnessed a Budget of transition from one outgoing government to another. It is a year we also witnessed a Budget of change with all its attendant consequences ... (*interruptions*)

The Speaker: Hon. Moriki, thank you very much, you have taken your two minutes; next will be Hon. Golu Timothy Simon.

Hon. Golu Timothy Simon (Pankshin/Kanke/Kanam): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all commend honourable Colleagues for their rich contributions on the 2016 Appropriation Bill. They have done justice to it towards helping the nation address the problems of poverty and unemployment.

I believe strongly that it is this Hon. House of the Nigerian people that will constructively do justice to this document, to redirect it from being a Budget of change to that of reality.

As a point of emphasis, on the issues raised by my Colleagues, I want to talk on the need for the immediate diversification of the economy of this country, to give due attention to critical Sectors of Agriculture, Solid Minerals Development and Science and Technology.

We are talking about Agriculture here and only about one *per cent* of the total Budget is allocated to it. We are talking about Solid Minerals development, and we have less than one *per cent* of the Budget allocated to it. Even the Ministry of Science and Technology has only about one *per cent* of this allocation.

Every successful nation adds value to its products and encourages innovation and design products for its own consumption and export. The driving force of this should be the Technology Sector, these three important Sectors that I have enumerated have the capacity and potentials to provide the largest chunk to create employment for the youths and reduce poverty for the nation.

Concerning the Social Welfare Scheme, that is another issue; I have not seen a clear direction of where the Federal Government intends to disburse this ₦500 Billion. I do not know whether it is going to be direct

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distribution to the beneficiaries as it used to happen, that it is not tied to any productive activity and whether there would be any benefit achieved at the end of that distribution. Let us not waste the ₦500 Billion just because we want to give, but let it be tied to something so that at the end of the day, skills can also be acquired.

The 2016 Budget is based on a crude oil benchmark of price of \$38 per barrel, how realistic is this considering the occurrences in the international market, where prices are falling every day?

Lastly, the nation was informed of the Federal Government's desire to adopt a new system of budgeting from the envelope system that we were used to, to the present zero based budgeting. Well, for me personally, I am yet to see any paradigm shift between the two systems. May be during the process of Budget defence, the Executive can enlighten us more on it.

Hon. Joseph E. Edionwele (Esan Central/Esan West/Igueben): Mr. Speaker, the Appropriation Bill is good in size and with beautiful headings but my worry is on the funding. We are told that we are going to fund this ₦6.08 Trillion from the Oil Sector, Non-oil Sector, IGR and Loan and we are putting the oil benchmark at \$38 on a production of 2.2 million barrels.

My worry is that, whether we can meet the 2.2 million barrel target with all the militant attacks on our pipelines? Even if we meet the 2.2 million barrels, do we have a ready market to sell all the 2.2 million barrels? That leads us to the Non-oil Sector. It is sad to note that nothing in the Budget shows that we are serious in stimulating the economy. The Science and Technology that will help to drive the economy is poorly funded in this Budget; that is also the same with the Solid Minerals. Solid Mineral has the potential to contribute substantially for our economic re-bounce but in this Budget, it is poorly funded.

I want to appeal to the various Committees to look at the figures allocated to various the Ministries and do a serious virement to place priorities on these Sectors such as Agriculture, Science and Technology and Solid Minerals.

Hon. Olatoye Temitope Sugar (Akinyele/Lagelu): I thank Mr. President for remembering the salary earners in the Budget proposal and giving good opportunity to the unemployed. I give him good kudos for that. However, I think the essence of Budget debate

is for the whole House to amend where it is necessary and add value to whatever the Executive must have brought.

In the area of capital expenditure, I want to lay emphasis on two aspects, which are power supply and roads. In this Budget proposal, we can see vividly that it is only ₦50 Billion that is being allocated to power supply. I know that the Executive might be relying on the issue of the PPP. I want us to learn from the mistake that the last administration made. When they privatized the Power Sector, they only privatized the distribution sector but failed to privatize the so-called generation sector. It is only when you have something to offer, that is when you can distribute or supply.

I want us to look at the MTN. When they started their price of registration was high. Then on the issue of economic diversification that we are agitating for, everybody is clamouring for agricultural aspect of it. The only success that we can have on the level of diversification is when we have a stable power supply and how do we achieve this one? It is by privatizing the whole Sector; the generation and distribution Sectors and this is when we can achieve our aim. This will attract investors to come to our country and invest. Some investors are already on ground, some have left and at the same time some are preparing to go. Over 7,000 people that are working with British-American Tobacco are also willing to go because of the cost of production. In the area of power supply that they are having problem, they are using over £4 million every year on it, not only on the British-American Tobacco but also on most companies that remain in Nigeria. So, I want us to really verify this aspect. The ₦50 Billion allocated to that power supply aspect is at the level of Committee, is it on the area of support or on the area of PPP? At the same time, on the area of roads, they have tested it in Lagos through Former Governor Fashola. We do not need to put our money to build roads again. There are a lot of investors that want to come to Nigeria to invest on roads. When they invest on these roads, either within five or ten years, it is now only then that they will get back their money. It will serve as a source of IGR for us as well where the government and the investors will be sharing whatever that is coming up. If given this opportunity of the BDR to the investors, Nigeria does not need to borrow much as we intend to do.

Hon. Kayode Oladele (Egbado North/Imeko Afon): Last year before the Budget was presented to us, we discussed the Medium Term Expenditure

Framework; wherein after a very thorough debate on the Floor of the House, we all adopted it and it was approved. Looking at the entire Budget, there is absolutely no difference between what we approved last year that is the Medium Term Expenditure Framework and the Budget that has been presented before us. Of particular interest is the area of revenue and people have been talking about the dwindling revenue in terms of the price of crude oil, that when the Budget was presented, the benchmark was \$38 per barrel and at the time the President was presenting his speech to us, it had fallen to \$32 per barrel and now, we have it even much below. The good thing is that there should be no cause for alarm because under Section 81 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria; we have a provision that even if what the President had proposed is insufficient, he can come before this honourable Chambers to ask for a review in terms of another expenditure to be approved for him.

I want to commend this Budget and Mr. President for introducing social welfare projects/programmes, where we have our youths who will be employed as well. Of course, no Budget is sacrosanct, at the Committee level, we shall look at every area and we shall be able to come out during the Third Reading, to work out the details because as we can see, the Budget is an estimate for something that can happen in future. It is highly futuristic and because of that, a lot of variables and interplay are there. Definitely, we know that certain things are so dynamic that we are not in control of it and as time goes on, we would be looking at it and that is exactly what I said when I mentioned the issue of the price of crude.

I would also urge the Government to work towards improving the Non-oil Sector because we have the Agriculture, the Custom and Excise, the Corporate Affairs, VATs as well as Corporate Taxes. These are the areas that Government needs to do something this year and the coming fiscal year to put much pressure on; then we will be able to cushion the negative effect from the dwindling oil prices.

A lot of things have been said, and I do not want to repeat the same thing that has been said by my Colleagues, I would enjoin us to during the Committee stage, critically look at all the areas that have been proposed with a view to approving this Budget for the welfare of our people knowing fully well that under Section 14 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the welfare and the security of the people shall be the primary responsibility of government.

Hon. Shaibu Philip (Etsako East/West/Central): On behalf of my constituency, I support the Budget and believe that this Budget is a Budget of the people with social conscience. I also believe that the Budget will address a lot of issues; more so that for the first time, we have seen a Budget that is gradually addressing the issue of capital projects and downsizing the issue of recurrent. This is because basically for any economy to succeed and grow, the basic thing is that infrastructure, security and social activities must take place for that economy to grow. An economy that is not Private Sector driven; obviously will not see the light of the day.

I see this Budget as a Budget that is gradually addressing the issue of policies that will drive the economy. That will bring social infrastructures in place to the extent that governance would be there just to supervise while the Private Sector is encouraged to drive the economy; especially the monetary policies that are on-going presently.

Obviously, we know that for the Private Sector to succeed, the banks are the major catalyst to make them succeed. Today, the banks are being re-organised and monetary policies are gradually been a focus of this government. I believe that if this Budget is sustained and certain issues are addressed; obviously, Nigeria will bounce back to the large economy that we are. If you check out of the ₦2.2 Trillion on personnel cost, the question I want to ask is that, how many staff do we have in the establishment of government and what is the productivity level of these staff? The question is, do they also give value? And the services they give are they commensurate with the ₦2.2 Trillion on personnel and another one-third of the overhead of these personnel? These are questions that I am sure, when we get to the Committee stage, have to be addressed because I feel that this Budget is a Budget of the people and we are the people. For the Budget to sail through, we must look at the Budget with the people's eye. What I mean by looking at it with the people's eye is that, there are certain factors that have to be addressed in the Budget *vis-a-vis* the inputs and the outputs that are produced. For me, the basic principle of this Budget is for change and that change is for the sustainability of our government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to draw our attention to National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), every one of us here is aware that there is no year that natural disasters will not happen; one disaster or the other which we do not pray for. That is why they are

called natural disasters. The allocation given to NEMA for instance, are issues we have to look at when we get to the Budget because as far as I am concerned, looking at it from what the personnel cost is and looking at what is allocated from the Presidency or from the Executive to NEMA, it is not acceptable by me. I feel that a lot needs to be done to this Sector for the Sector to do its rightful work because we know the impact that they do to our various constituencies. I support the general principles of this Budget and I believe that as it is always said, Budget does not go the way it comes.

Hon. Agbo Dennis Nnamdi (Ezeagu/Udi): Mr. Speaker, those who have spoken glowingly in support of this Budget want us to pass the Budget through the Second Reading; eventually, we will have to pass the Budget through the Second Reading. So, I will quickly restrict myself to make comments on those aspects of the Budget that will need urgent attention so as to return our government and our economy to a good stead. I believed that Nigerians expect us as Lawyers, Accountants and people who have had banking background to guide this House and our country on the right path; especially when certain indices in the Budget do not add up.

I believe that neither this Budget nor the MTEF are cast in stone. Our revenue projections are challenged in many ways. There is oil glut in the international oil market and there is prevailing bearish oil demand due to economic slowdown in China, India and other major consumers of oil. There is reduction in oil production in Nigeria because of the resumption of hostilities even in the Niger-Delta. Consequently, there is a sharp drop in the price of crude oil as low as \$30 as at today. Of course, there is also a negative impact on revenue projections from import duty and other taxes that depend on importation and economic activities. Most of our projections from MTEF have regrettably been abolished and overtaken by current realities. It is therefore, surprising that in these circumstances, the government seems to carry on as if they are oblivious of these realities.

First of all, I want to dwell on the issue of our exchange rate. It is for no fault of the government that our foreign exchange earnings have reduced drastically. It is all a fall out of the developments in the global oil arena. However, it becomes the problem of government to insist on keeping the exchange rate at an inexplicit amount of ₦197 to a Dollar. Whether by purchasing power parity, the money supply against the foreign exchange supply or else the money supply

against the domestic output in Dollar terms, none can justify the exchange rate at ₦197 to a Dollar. When the government promised the nation exchange rate parity between the Naira and the Dollar, they probably spoke too soon. Well, this is the time to properly guide the people of this country unto the truth and the reality of the time.

Mr. Speaker, this over-valuation of Naira has created the widest spread between the official rate and the parallel market up to ₦108 per Dollar. This situation has done nothing but encourage arbitraging and round tripping. It encourages corruption by enriching only those who hold the power to make Forex allocations at the expense of the economy and the Nigerian people. We are inadvertently subsidizing foreign exchange uses by up to ₦108 per Dollar. Why should the country subsidize importation? Who benefits from subsidy of importation? Is it the masses of the Nigerian people or the privileged few in the society?

Certainly, there is a great number of our people who conduct their livelihood without needing foreign exchange. I believe that government is also about this people. Indeed, government is more about this vulnerable groups; the down trodden, the masses, the *Talakawas* and the ordinary people of Nigeria. Subsidizing foreign exchange is a policy summersault. Let the exchange rate find its level at between ₦250 and ₦300 and let those who can afford it buy or else tame their appetite for imported goods.

In addition, at this time of severe foreign exchange shortfalls, we need to diversify our economy, encourage export and implement a regime of import substitution. It is a contradiction to overvalue our local currency while trying to discourage imports. Foreign exchange subsidy directly encourages import and removes incentives for substitution or for exports. Other jurisdictions have directly intervened in their foreign exchange market to devalue their local currency so as to encourage export. Furthermore, the artificial exchange rate has ensured that all independent and private sources of foreign exchange are lost from official line of sight. The implication is that the basket of foreign exchange supply continues to shrink. The strain on our foreign exchange reserves continue to be strained more and more. In all of this, we have equally tended to ignore the fact that a guided floatation of the Naira will greatly assist in shoring up the revenue strain on government. It will help to reduce the Budget deficit

and stabilize the Budget from Naira denoted expenditure.

A shift in the exchange rate to ₦250 for instance, will increase revenue by ₦53 on every Dollar earning. It will bring incremental revenue of up to ₦800 Billion, which will reduce the Budget deficit, reduce our revenue shortfall or reduce the debt burden on government. Moreover, the over valuation of the Naira has caused massive disinvestment from Nigeria within the last six months. It has also resulted in diversion of needed Foreign Direct Investment to other neighbouring African countries and greatly diminished investors' confidence in Nigeria.

The Speaker: Hon. Dennis, thank you very much. You have taken more than two minutes.

Hon. Lovette Idisi (Ethiopo East/Ethiopo West): A lot has been said about this Budget but I would like to lend my voice to one or two issues that may have not been touched by my Hon. Colleagues.

First of all, I want to draw our attention to the issues surrounding this Budget by virtue of Section 21(3) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act that clearly talks about attached estimates by some of the government parastatals. I know this issue has been clearly enumerated before but there is nowhere in the length and breadth of these two documents that such attachment would be found.

The essence of deliberating on an incomplete Budget is still a mirage to me. Besides the clear violation of three provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which has to do with Amendment of this Budget, this House was thrown into some form of acrimony whereby the issue of missing Budget in the guise of alteration was brought to the Floor. With a clear provision as that prescribed in Section 16 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, we need not have issues about missing Budget. This provision clearly tells us that the President himself has the *locus-standi* to be able to amend this Budget without us going through the drama that this House underwent.

Another clear violation is that of Section 12 of the same Fiscal Responsibility Act that clearly talks about the actual percentage for the deficit. Without saying so much, this entire deliberation on this Budget is a mere academic exercise that runs in futility.

Hon. Obinna Chidoka (Idemili North/Idemili South): I will go straight to the point being that this House is a responsive House that understands that the Budget does not understand party or what area of the country we come from. The submission from the Executive has a provision of about ~~₦~~6.7 Trillion for a total aggregate spending out of which ~~₦~~1.6 Trillion is for capital spending and ~~₦~~4.4 Trillion is for recurrent spending. The 2016 Budget proposal as we know is predicated on the assumption of crude price of \$38 per barrel, oil production of 2.2 million barrels per day and an exchange rate of ~~₦~~197. On this assumption, looking at the interplay of economic variables today, these assumptions are not realistic anymore. The international crude oil price is below \$30 per barrel and is still going down. The exchange rate at the black market is about ~~₦~~300 per Dollar, a variation of about ~~₦~~103 from the official exchange rate. The truth is that we must pass a Budget that is workable and implementable for the benefit of all Nigerians, then, we must rework the Budget with realistic assumptions so that we do not run into the murky waters midway in its implementation.

Secondly, the provision of ~~₦~~4 Trillion for recurrent is the highest ever spent on the recurrent aggregate terms in the history of this country. If we must progress as a country, recurrent spending must not necessarily increase at the level it did in 2016 proposal as total spending increases. Perhaps, a cursory look analysis of previous total expenditure, recurrent spending which has never been above ~~₦~~3.5 Trillion for any given year, could guide us to make some useful savings for the benefit of Nigerian citizens who do not know any party or part of the country you come from.

Thirdly, the importance of the environment in the course of national development cannot be over-emphasised. This underscored the reason of Mr. President's personal participation at the Global Conference on Climate Change and the World Energy Summit when Nigeria made key commitments. Surprisingly, out of the ~~₦~~1.6 Trillion earmarked for capital spending in 2016, the Ministry of Environment and all its 7 parastatals got a paltry ~~₦~~5 Billion representing about 0.28 *per cent* of the total proposed capital spending.

Also, out of the proposed ~~₦~~2.2 Trillion for overhead spending of all the MDAs, the Ministry of Environment and all its 7 Parastatals got only ~~₦~~1.6 Billion. As I speak, all the Agencies of the Ministry operate from rented offices including NOSDRA and

NESREA. There is no provision of overhead spending for National Agency for the Great Green Wall, which will work in the North-East and some parts of the North-West and the National Biosafety Agency, which is the new Agency that is under the Ministry of Environment that will also help us in attainment of our levels in the Ministry of Environment. Yet, Nigeria is committed to ending gas flaring, reducing incidences of pollution, check desert encroachment, flooding, deforestation, clean up impacted communities etcetera.

Finally, we need to take a comprehensive look on habitat issues, the health and safety of status of our environment where we live, our habitat and make adequate provisions to upgrade our cities and make them compliant to the national and global greenhouse emission regulations. We need to look at this aspect of the Budget so that we can move our Nigeria of today and the Nigeria of tomorrow forward. Whatever we do today will have impact on our cities, environment, spending and all that we want to understand from this Budget, moving forward for tomorrow. We need to take a very good look at it, especially at the Committee level.

Hon. Bede Uchenna Eke (Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala): I want to thank my Colleagues and Mr. Speaker for this rare opportunity given to me to talk on the Budget. I also want to align myself to the submissions of the Minority Leader on this Budget but just to add that looking at the content of the Budget, it shows that the plight of the South-East in terms of road construction and ecological problems, which have been publicized by various Committees of the National Assembly, has once again received a very significant neglect by the authors of this document before us. Another aspect is that there should be a major basis for continuity. Most of our projects that are on-going are not captured at all and some are captured as new projects. For example, the Okpala/Igwuta Road and the Mbaise Ring Road, these two roads are of very economic importance to the people of my constituency, the people of Imo State and Nigeria at large.

Talking about the Owerri/Elele Road that is on-going, that road is now captured as Elele/Owerri Road instead of Owerri/Elele road and these roads are on-going projects. But if you look at the Budget, it is captured as new project.

Finally, I urge this honourable House to really work on this Budget at the Committee level, where we shall look at those areas that have fallen short of our

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Constitution and laws of this country to make sure that we give Nigerians a good Budget that they ask for.

Hon. Olabode O. Ayorinde (Owo/Ose): Mr. Speaker, my contribution on this Budget; one, is on the issue of miscalculated errors here and there. I want to say that the Budget itself is an estimate; it is not perfect until we approve it. I think those things should be played down and could be classified as typographical errors.

I want to observe that the area of revenue, I do not know why the over ~~₦~~1 Billion contingent fine on MTN is not captured. It should be captured in the Budget; that is my view because looking at it; we should look at every area that can increase the revenue, more so that the borrowing, the debt assets side of that Budget is very high. We should be thinking of how to cut our coat according to our cloth and de-emphasize on borrowing. Every Agency of Government Parastatal that play the role on the other side, should be fined and we should generate more revenue from such fines rather than borrowing.

I look forward to a year that we will prepare our Budget without reckoning with crude oil, it is possible. What happens tomorrow if this oil dries up? We are talking about low pricing; what happens to \$10 per barrel? Are we not going to survive as a country? It is better we de-emphasize this income from crude oil and look at other areas so that we can prepare a Budget if possible exclude the crude oil income entirely and we will survive in this country.

I want to also observe that as we go into the details of the Budget in the Committees, we should provide adequate funding for education in this country. Our Universities and Polytechnics need funding; this is because that is the one that is provided for the future generation of this country.

Hon. Tajudeen Ayo Yusuf (Ijumu/Kabba-Bunu): Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about this proposal before us. I just want to lend my voice to my Colleagues' position that the crafters of the Constitution deliberately gave the power of Appropriation to the National Assembly; especially the House of Representatives, realizing that Budget will come as mere proposals that require us to dot the 'i's and cross the 't's.

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I will speak basically on just two items on the Budget; one, the social welfare part of the Budget, noble as it is, I want to appeal that at the Committee level, we should do a bit of tinkering; ~~₦~~500 Billion for the social welfare package of ~~₦~~5,000 to aged people. What I heard from the Minister is that, we are targeting about 25 million people. For 25 million people, ~~₦~~5,000 is ~~₦~~125 Billion in a month; so ~~₦~~500 Billion will cater for only four months. What happens after four months? I have on record that in the year 1999/2000, there was a Poverty Alleviation Programme of ~~₦~~10,000 that died a natural death. I hope we will not have a recurrence of the same thing. I feel that if we are borrowing about ~~₦~~2 Trillion, we should focus on more productive projects that will add value to this country.

Mr. Speaker, borrowing will put pressure on domestic borrowing, business then naturally will have to compete with government in borrowing and it is natural that the banks will go for government borrowing. When you borrow internationally, it will further tie your hands to certain policies and conditions will be given. If we are taking this risk to borrow, I will advise that we borrow to finance capital projects.

I want to appeal to the Committees that will be looking at this Budget to be dispassionate to look beyond party lines and do what is needful because in this occasion, the time we are in calls for a more nationalistic approach to the economy of Nigeria. I will give an example; the stock market as it is today, is scary to go near. Naturally, that is where we should have gone to get resources to do most of our capital projects today, but that is not the case, why? This is because confidence is low; most investors cannot come in because certain policies are not in place.

I will not bore us with stories but I want to appeal that at the Committee level, what is required of all of us is to rise up to the responsibility of what Nigerians have invested in us to be on this Floor to do the needful and give a Budget that will indeed meet the yearnings of Nigerians.

Hon. Muhammed Umar Jega (Aliero/Gwandu/Jega): Mr. Speaker, this Budget of 2016 is a turning point from a bleak economic fortune of unemployment, epileptic power supply to a Budget of hope. Policies and programmes lined up in the 2016 Budget are geared towards rescuing this economy to create jobs, to give hope so that this country can overcome this predicament.

Mr. President has brought discipline, order and integrity back to the government. Corruption unbarred, diversification of the economy and improvement in the Non-oil revenue for the first time in our planning to give it a boost so that Agriculture, Solid Minerals, Custom, Taxation and Tourism can be given a lift.

Mr. Speaker, for the first time, 30 *per cent* of the Budget is dedicated to capital projects. This means more jobs will be created, more power, more infrastructures will be rejuvenated so that the economy will be better. I call on all of you to support this Budget irrespective of your party affiliation so that this country can move to a greater level.

Hon. Diri Douye (Yenagoa/Kolokuma/Opokuma): Mr. Speaker, budgets as we all know are annual rituals of income and expenditure for a fiscal year and this hallowed Chambers is not a spectator. It is the Parliament that has the authority to amend, add and or to subtract, to cross the *t's* and to dot the *i's*. Therefore, I do not think that I am standing up here to actually criticize the Budget in terms of its performance or not. I am standing up to add that we have the duty to monitor the implementation of this Budget, which is critical towards the success of the Budget and its performance in this fiscal year.

We ought to note that there are challenges and issues in the Budget that has been so presented, taking one for example, we have a budgetary allocation to the Federal Medical Centre in Yenagoa for ₦2,572,138,777, which does not cover for the salaries of that Federal Medical Centre and its affiliate hospital at Otuoke. Therefore, there is already an industrial crisis created by this Budget on that and I am sure that when it gets to the Committee stage, things like this will be looked at and be corrected.

I crave the indulgence of the Hon. Colleagues for us to be very critical at the next stage of the reading of this Bill that we can dot the *i's* and cross *t's* that is necessary and follow up using our duties as the watchdog of the Executive Arm of Government, checks and balances to monitor every Ministry, Department and Agencies in the implementation so that at the end of the day, we actually can have a success story to tell in the implementation of the 2016 Budget.

Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu (Municipal): Mr. Speaker, let me congratulate Mr. President, this 8th Assembly and the entire people of the Federal Republic

of Nigeria for the presentation of the Budget, which has made immediate prospect to create enormous impact given the magnitude of the 30 *per cent* Capital and 70 *per cent* Recurrent Expenditure.

This is a Budget of history, change, transformation and hope for all Nigerians no matter what some people will say. In this Budget, Mr. President has tried as much as possible to create employment and what we are going to see is direct employment into the economy of Nigeria.

This Budget will provide employment for 500,000 teachers that will be done in order to facilitate learning environment for our children, and the 300,000 micro-credit programme that will be done to support women.

The fiscal document which is a zero-based budgeting and the Budget discipline of Mr. President, especially that for the first time, Nigerians are having hope that with the kind of President that we have, who is a public figure, a patriot who loves Nigerians, we are likely to see 100 *per cent* implementation of this Budget, if not, certainly 60 to 70 *per cent*.

I want to call on my Hon. Colleagues to please, support this Budget. I know we might have differences but certainly, this Budget is not sacrosanct. We will always disagree to agree but because we are here for the people of Nigeria, at the end of the day, we will support this Budget and ensure its passage.

In view of the competent hands Mr. President has to turn around the socio-economic fortunes of this country; I would like to solicit the cooperation of this Assembly to be part of the epoch reinvigoration of Nigeria by Mr. President; especially in the area of diversifying our economy, in improving the security situation of the country, in the prudent management of the available resources and the on-going fight against corruption.

Let me advice my Hon. Colleagues that when we break out into Committees, there are key areas which we need to look at that will help this Budget; especially what I heard from my Colleagues who have spoken earlier on, that they are concerned on the issue of borrowing. There is nothing wrong in borrowing. The only thing that is wrong is putting the borrowed funds into areas that are not productive.

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I know there are areas that we can look at Committee level, especially areas that have to do with the reduction of cost of governance. I want us to look at the ministries in terms of overheads and the operation cost which is being spent. I am sure these are areas where we can save some money so that we can reduce the cost of our borrowing.

I also want to add that we need to also look at the issue of River Basins and Agriculture; especially now that we want to diversify the economy. The money being allocated to this area will be for the betterment of Nigeria.

Finally, I urge all Nigerians to trust and believe in the present administration led by President Muhammadu Buhari for a better tomorrow for all of us.

Hon. Abbas Tajudeen (Zaria): Let me start by commending the President and Commander-in-Chief of the Federal Republic of Nigeria for presenting a Budget that is far reaching, which if significantly implemented, could transform the lives of so many ordinary Nigerians. I also commend the National Assembly; specifically House of Representatives for the matured approach, bi-partisan in style that we are adopting in seeing this Budget through.

I would like to point out areas in this Budget that need to be re-addressed in light of the dwindling fortunes of this country, particularly in the crude oil where we all know the price has been plummeting between \$31 to \$27, which is still far below the agreed benchmark of \$38 per barrel. This price if not handled properly, it will lead to additional deficits of more than 50 *per cent* of the proposed Budget which I am sure the House and ordinary Nigerians would not want to see it happening.

If we want to really address the issue of plummeting oil prices and ensure that the deficit that may accrue at the end of the year, would be such that it will be manageable or within the limits of the proposed Budget, we should look at the issue of the internally generated revenue by Agencies of Government who are vested with the responsibility of generating revenue. As a member of the Finance Committee in the 7th Assembly, I know that most of them are under performing and are not generating to their required capacity. It is an area where this House through its legislative oversight can be able to significantly improve and at the same time, the Government should

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pay more attention in the recovery of looted monies to help it augment whatever deficits it will record from the area of crude oil.

The Speaker: Thank you Hon Abbas. Our rule on two minutes is still on.

Hon. Emmanuel M. Egwu (Idah/Igalamela/Ibaji/Ofu): Mr. Speaker, the 2016 Budget is zero based and by accounting globally, zero based budgeting is introduced when there is the need to save cost, achieve gains from unnecessary expenditure and create diversion from gains of cost cut to the area of necessity of expenditure. From the X-ray of the 2016 Budget, it is clear that it is not in compliance with the accounting theory globally accepted where there is the need for the zero based budgeting. From the analysis of the Budget, it tends to give a pictorial view of the line item of budgets just like the normal traditional approach of budgeting. From the Budget, we could see there is a sharp increase from ~~N~~4.4 Trillion in the previous year to about ~~N~~6.08 Trillion in this accounting year, 2016. I can see vividly that cost have not been saved from the pictorial view of the Budget.

Furthermore, from the revenue that we intend to use to incur this expenditure, there are lot of challenges and the foreseeable revenue; for instance, oil price is dwindling and there are challenges from the buyers and sellers. What this means is that, we may not have hope on the revenue we get from oil. The Budget tends to divert the revenue base to the likes of Agriculture and mineral resources but unfortunately, from the analysis of the Budget, we could see that it takes about 1.24 *per cent* of Agriculture that have been earmarked for 2016 Budget and this is very low. I want to commend this Budget and add that there is the need to review upwards the funds that have been earmarked for Agriculture.

Equally, if we must divert the economy like the Solid Minerals, which we are naturally endowed with, we must maximize the potential from there; whereby income that could be earned could be used for further expenditure but I equally want to see from the analysis the Budget made for Solid Minerals is very low.

Hon. Lazarus N. Ogbie (Ikwo/Ezza South): I want to lend my voice to all that my Colleagues have been discussing about the Budget. The Budget has been described in many manners as Budget of change, historic and hope. I want to believe as I have been

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praying since I got hold of the Budget, I went through it to see that most regions; especially where I come from, that is the South-East is still being criminally marginalized in the area of infrastructure like my Colleague from that area said. Talking about roads, for instance, Enugu-Port Harcourt road where we have up to 226 kilometres had ₦10 Billion was allocated to it. We have 137 kilometre road; Lagos-Ibadan allocated ₦15 Billion. You can see such discrepancies as you go through the Budget that the South-East in most areas both in FERMA, ecological and road infrastructure are badly marginalized and I do hope that the change as I pray will grow up so strong to swallow marginalization, kill discrimination and finally put to rest the issue of allotting better percentage of the funds to some regions.

I want to lend my voice also to the area of diversification. One would expect to see sectorial allocations reflect the gospel of this administration; most especially, in the area of diversification of sectorial economy, which indeed is what the country needs at this point considering that even the benchmark on which the Budget estimate is predicated upon, no longer holds water.

The Speaker: Hon. Lazarus, thank you, you have taken three minutes.

Hon. Igariwey Iduma Enwo (Afikpo North/Afikpo South): Mr. Speaker, so much have been said about this Budget, it has been variously described as a Budget of change, a democratic Budget but for me, the litmus test for this Budget rather lies with the first stage of the Budget process, which is the planning and the formulation stage.

If you look at this Budget, you will still see that the 2016 Budget is a baby of the Budget Office of the Federal Ministry of Finance; there was little or no input from critical sectors of the Nigerian environment. It is very clear if you listen to analysis from international financial organisations like the IMF, World Bank and OECD, these financial institutions emphasised the need for an open Budget, a participatory Budget. It is only when you have an open Budget where critical sectors of the Nigerian people make input, that you can say you have a Budget of change.

I am looking at areas like the Civil Society Organisations, even our humble selves who are Members of the Parliament and the media, all these

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critical sectors made no input whatsoever into this Budget and it is very difficult to convince me that a Budget that did not incorporate inputs from some of these critical sectors can be described as a Budget of change.

My contribution is that going forward, since there will be other opportunities for this administration to bring a Budget before this Parliament, our Budget must first have input from critical sectors of the Nigerian people which I have mentioned. It is only when we have this kind of inputs that you can talk of a Budget that represents the interest of the Nigerian people. I am talking of a Budget that should be bottom up and not from top to bottom, a Budget that is less elitists. As far as I am concern, this is a fundamentally elitists Budget which does not take into or does not incorporate the interest of critical sectors of the Nigerian people.

The Speaker: I think to address your concerns, the Parliament which is the immediate representative House of the people will open it to the people and that is why we will be committing the Budget to Committees, so that the MDAs will appear before the Committees and defend whatever they have. So, in the course of that defence, you may wish to bring in all these stakeholders that you are talking about. We protect the interest of the people and that is our job and that is what we are here for.

Hon. Mohammed Usman (Makarfi/Kudan): Mr. Speaker, the 2016 Appropriation Bill is people based. This is because it is based on the aspiration and expectations of Nigerians as well as the promises made to Nigerians by Mr. President.

Secondly, the concept of the zero budgeting is a positive development in the budgeting process of the country which is also a clear departure from the past.

Thirdly, the Capital Expenditure of projects which is about 30 *per cent* as enshrined and captured in this Budget is also a clear departure from the past. This is because definitely, if implemented, it will ensure the growth and development of our dear nation and this is expected like our Majority Leader mentioned to be improved upon within the next three years. Also, the social components of the Budget, the employment generation, the cash transfers and other things would also assist Nigerians positively.

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Fourthly, the issue of the diversification of the revenue base of the economy from oil to Non-oil Sector is also an area which we must really appreciate the President for focusing on. To that extent, one may argue that the current oil glut in the world might even be a blessing to Nigeria. This is because whether we like it or not, we must look inwards to diversify the revenue base of the country.

Finally, like our Colleagues have earlier mentioned and stressed, the issue of implementation is key to the success of this Budget; I would therefore, urge the Executive to ensure the implementation of the Budget while we as Members must do our oversight very effectively and I would want to suggest that ... (*interruptions*).

Hon. Yusuf Yakubu Buba (Gombi/Hong): Mr. Speaker, to me, the 2016 Budget proposal is a Budget of hope and restoration, a hope that is anchored on the knowledge that though our nation may be down today, we are certainly not out. A hope that is anchored on the reality that though the price of oil may be falling in the international market today, it is certainly not the end of our nation, but in fact, it is an opportunity for us to look elsewhere to finance our development agenda and all the laudable dreams for a better Nigeria.

As I have said elsewhere, never in the history of our fiscal proposal has our nation demonstrated a clear departure from what has been regarded as the bedrock of our so called monolithic economy; the oil, to embrace other sources of potential revenue received as we have seen in the 2016 Budget Proposal.

This is a Budget of restoration because it is a Budget that will restore our Agricultural Sector that has been abandoned. It is a Budget that will restore our Mineral Sector that has been abandoned and it is a Budget for the first time in a long history of Nigeria that is budgeting 30 *per cent* for Capital Expenditure; that means food on the table of Nigerians, Electricity, Water, Roads, Rails and etcetera.

I want to thank the President and his team for this beautiful Budget and also want to assure our Colleagues that this is a Budget for PDP, APC, APGA and a Budget for all Nigerians.

Hon. Isiaka Ayokunle Ibrahim (Ifọ/Ewekoro): Mr. Speaker, I want to sincerely thank the President of this country for giving us this wonderful Budget to

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debate on. The fiesta that it has opened on this debate is that the economy of this country has been hitherto surviving on what I would say oxygen and that is why we have this so much privilege to talk about this.

To make my points as quickly as possible, the provision made on social security, I want to appeal that when it gets to the relevant Committee, I would love it if the ₦5,000 being proposed can be increased to ₦10,000 or more and should be directed towards functional skill acquisition programme and vocational training for our teaming youths in the country.

Secondly, on the feeding programme, maybe because we do not know the direction at which the Federal Government wants to gear this towards; otherwise by mere calculation, I am using my state as a yardstick. I can see that if we are feeding 600,000 pupils, the Government is going to spend ₦60 million in a day; I do not know how realistic that will be in the Budget.

Again, we still have the opportunity to turn this economy round midnight, the Government should unbundle the utilization of gas resources in this country. By this the international oil companies would have the opportunity to use this gas. Nigeria has more gas reserve than oil but because it is monopolistic in nature and that is why we are suffering from the idea on how to fund this Budget as people are complaining.

Nigerians consume large quantities of beverages, foods and wines more than any other persons in the world and these are imported products. I want to appeal that Government should see how tariff, tax and duties be heavily imposed on these types of commodities and heavy penalties for those who are smuggling them into the country ... (*interruptions*)

The Speaker: Thank you very much Hon. Isiaka, you have taken more than two minutes. Next is Hon. Nkeiruka.

Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha (Isuikwuato/Umunneochi): Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said and I agree with most people but for me, it is a wakeup call for diversification of our resources. The President came here and addressed the two Chambers and he told us that the office of the Vice President would work with development partners to design an implementable and transparent conditional cash transfer programme for the poorest and most vulnerable. I want this House to

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know that the MDG Office over the past years, had not targeted these most vulnerable people and so it is important for us to note that when they appear before us, they are going to tell us how they are going to achieve this. This is because most times, it is the rich that the MDG targets.

I am of the opinion that it is not time to politicize this Budget, I am of the PDP extraction and I know that Government is a continuum and I also note that this 2016 Budget that the personnel cost of ₦2.19 Trillion is very high. It has never happened in the history of this nation over the last 16 years that we have ruled. So, it is worrisome if we are preaching change mantra and here we are increasing personnel cost.

I agree that the Budget will go to Second Reading but if you look at the Presidency Budget, I do not understand how at this critical time we are preaching change, that somebody will be appropriating ₦39.8 Million to purchase unspecified number of 200 amps, 100 amps, 60 amps for Mercedes Benz battery for bullet-proof cars. It is worrisome because honestly speaking, if we want change, we must start from ourselves and if we are talking of buying BMW cars, does it mean that this Government that had just left did not leave any cars? The money they appropriated for those cars are very high. I know that when we get the Committees that will be there before us; we are going to ask them questions between the lines to make sure that Nigerians get the best out of this.

I will conclude by saying that the Executive should do everything humanly possible to see that they give Nigerians the Budget that they deserve and not the one that cannot be implemented.

The Speaker: Thank you very much, you have concluded, next will be Hon. Munir

Hon. Munir Babba Dan'Agundi (Kumbotso): Mr. Speaker, I want to align myself with the last speaker that it is not yet time to politicize the Budget. What I have seen in the Agricultural Policy that has just been submitted to some of our Committees are totally in line with the last administration and we are just continuing with what has transpired in the last dispensation.

My only concern is the robust growth of about 7 per cent for the first decade is threatened by the macro-economic challenges, particularly the exchange rate volatility and the falling oil prices that impact public

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sector spending; and the Senate had already invited the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor because CBN has a role to play before we decide on this Budget and we are yet to invite him to this hallowed Chamber to throw more light on what we are going to decide on. I am just calling on Mr. Speaker to make sure that the CBN Governor is called upon to give us some information before we decide on this Budget.

Hon. Aishatu Jibril Dukku (Dukku/Nafada): Mr. Speaker, the whole Budget as presented is commendable in view of some positive changes it promises to bring in the key sectors of the economy. Of particular interest to me is the intention to employ 500,000 graduate teachers as well as provide free tuition for Science Technology and Education students.

I am also happy that the Budget gave education the second highest amount but like Oliver Twist, education should be given more; that is the only Sector that will take in and absorb all our teeming youths and that is the only way we can keep them engaged and give them a sound footing for them to become leaders of tomorrow.

In the light of dwindling revenue, it is certain that there will be many challenges in the year 2016. Consequently, it has become expedient that revenue generating Agencies should ensure timely remittances to government coffers and we on our part; it means more work on oversight functions. We need to carefully scrutinize the Budget and pay close attention to the different sectorial allocations in view of present economic realities. It will not be in the best interest of the country to just rubber-stamp the Budget. Nigeria undoubtedly faces daunting challenges; therefore, to meet the objectives of the Budget, its effective implementation is crucial. One of the drawbacks of previous Budgets is poor implementation. Let the 2016 Budget be different.

The present administration needs to keep to its promise of laying a solid foundation for sustainable growth; therefore, full implementation of the Budget is key. Our economy needs to move away from over-dependence on the Oil Sector and its growth must be inclusive. For the 2016 Budget to be adjudged successful, it must deliver on its major thrusts; security, job creation and infrastructure development. It must improve the well-being of Nigerians and rekindle hope in democratic governance. That is the minimum that Nigerians require from this administration. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Linus Okorie (Ivo/Ohaozara/Onicha): Today, I am going to speak for the House, I would apply that you give me extra minute. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I start by commending Mr. President. I am not commending him for a robust Budget but I am commending him because he promised a zero-based Budget and gave us a zero Budget. I am commending him because for the first time in our history, he has given the National Assembly the opportunity to prepare a people oriented Budget for Nigerians. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to give a few reasons why I feel that that commendation goes to him for giving us the opportunity.

First, is that this Budget has an imbedded corruption of not less than ₦330 Billion and I will tell you where. If you look at the total budgeted figure of ₦6.1 Trillion, it is an increment over the last Government's Budget of ₦4.5 Trillion by ₦1.6 Trillion. Within that Budget of ₦4.5 Trillion, we have capital provision of ₦0.6 Trillion. Out of that we are having only ₦1.8 Trillion of which if you take the difference for you to achieve the same efficiency of ₦4.5 Trillion at ₦500 Billion, you must achieve ₦1.6 Trillion difference plus the capital we have provided at ₦4.5 which is ₦2.1 Trillion; then what we have is ₦1.8 Trillion. The difference already is about ₦310 Million.

When you go to some Agencies like the Presidency, you have over a billion Naira inside Overheads which is an excess. If you go further to the Ministry of Power, Works and Housing; if you go to Ministry of Planning and Budget; if you go to Ministry of Finance. Within those capitals there, there are consultancies and excesses of over ₦20 Billion. There you find this House must correct.

Again, the preparation of the Budget itself; the problems we had before was that the Budget was not implemented. What we have now is that the Budget is not properly prepared. You have errors and corrections; this opportunity allows this House to make corrections.

Hon. Legor Idagbo Ochiglegor (Obanliku/Obudu/Bekwarra): So much has been said about the 2016 Budget; so I am not going to bore us with too many details. A few issues I would like to point out; particularly the issue of borrowing. The Government proposes to borrow close to ₦1.8 Trillion to fund this

Budget and they are borrowing money; domestic and foreign debts. As a responsible House looking at the needs of Nigerians, it is important for us to find out exactly where the Government intends to borrow this money from; especially the foreign debt. This is the only way we can ensure that the generations coming behind us and their future is not being mortgaged.

Secondly, the issue of diversifying the economy, I do agree that the provisions for Solid Minerals need to be beefed up, ₦9 Billion is not sufficient for that Sector, considering the fact that we have over 34 untapped Solid Minerals, there is need for us to beef up the money sent to that Sector.

Let me also lend my voice in asking that the provision for Agriculture be also beefed up. Before the oil boom, Nigeria was known to be one of the highest exporter of groundnut, cocoa, rubber and the rest of them, but today because of oil, we have decline in those Sectors. Now that the oil boom is over, more money needs to be committed to Agriculture to bring us back to where we were in the 70s.

The Speaker: I totally agree with you, thank you very much Hon. Idagbo. Next would be Hon. Sani Bala.

Hon. Sani Umar Bala (Tsanyawa/Kunchi): I want to first of all commend Mr. President for bringing up a Budget that will enhance the lives of Nigerians due to the misrule of the former Government. You can see for the first time that only 13 *per cent* is being appropriated from the Oil Sector and it can be seen that 30 *per cent* of this Budget is meant for Capital Expenditure against the previous budgeting system. There are so many provisions that have to do with provision of employment, micro-finance for women and security. So, I would like to urge the House Members to ensure the smooth passage of this Bill.

Hon. Sergius Oseasochie Ogun (Esan North East/South East): This Budget is not a complete document no matter how faulty it is, I think we as mere mortal also have the opportunity to work on it and make the relevant corrections but I will be speaking on the implementation. If we have a bad Budget that we cannot achieve at least 70 *per cent* implementation, the Nigerian people will suffer for this. So, I will advise that we should get the MDAs to come with their work projections quarterly. With that, we could oversight whatever they have presented properly. After every

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three months, they should keep performance indicator to know what they have told us and what they have done. If we do this, I am very positive that we will achieve 90 *per cent* implementation of the Budget.

I also think we missed the opportunity to diversify the economy based on the price of oil today. I think we should have budgeted more for Agriculture and even medical; to stop this medical tourism in India. This is because we will save a whole lot of money instead of allowing our people to go out. Again, I think we should decongest NNPC and let them privatize so that we deregulate so many things. Mr. Speaker, you are already looking at me, I will try to anchor whatever I have said here.

Hon. Samuel Okon Ikon (Etinan/Nsit Ibom/Nsit Ubium): Mr. Speaker, in line with all that has been said, I think I will look at it from two perspectives very quickly. One is the formative framework of the Budget. We are finding a lot of faults; we are looking at loopholes and all that is in the Budget, it starts from the formation. I think it is important that our policy makers and those handling the Budget should stick to the generally and internationally accepted international Public Sector accounting standards data, which some of our States have used for some time now and it clearly states and exposes some of these things and allow for corrections and very limited corruption.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we understand like others have said, there is need right now for the Non-oil Sector development and that this Budget clearly does not show that direction as you can see. Agriculture is less than two *per cent*, Solid Minerals is less than 0.4 *per cent* and all of these estimates do not march the rhetoric that we are hearing. I am very happy that this gives the opportunity more than ever before to this National Assembly, to fine-tune this Budget for the good of Nigerians.

I want to urge my Colleagues to critically look at the Budget at the Committee stage. This is because that is the only way we can be sure of the document we will be sending out. What we are working on now, we must be partisan about it. It is not a good document but we have the opportunity as a Legislature to fine-tune it for the general good of our people. You will find a lot of repetitions, a lot of embedded figures. A typical example is the presidency Budget where you find somebody putting more than ₦213 Million for just laying of cable from the main house to the boys' quarters. What is the value of the cable? So, more than

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ever before, there is need for strong oversight for us to be able to ensure that the Nigerian people have the best that they can have. We might just look at the interpretations but we have the opportunity to make corrections and we do not need to waste too much time on it.

Hon. Kwewum Rimamnde Shawulu (Donga/Ussa/Takum): Hon. Speaker, I have just three points to make. The first one is that we are borrowing 37 *per cent* of the money that we need and we are spending only 30 *per cent* on Capital Projects, it means that we are borrowing money to spend on things that we should not be spending money on. I think we have to check that. Our borrowed money should not be used on Recurrent Expenditure.

The second thing is that, if you look at the proper reading of MTEF as we approved and the three booklets of the Budget proposals that they have brought, you will notice that not all proposed expenditures of Government and its Agencies have been captured in the Bill. There are other expenditures of over ₦3 Trillion in the MTEF has not been captured in the 2016 Appropriation Bill and if you add that ₦3 Trillion to the ₦6 Trillion, it means that the actual expenditure of Government in the coming year is ₦9 Trillion. I think we need to sort these things out properly.

Hon. Mayowa Samuel Akinfolarin (Ile-Oluji/Oke-Igbo/Odigbo): Mr. Speaker, what we are discussing is the constitutional matter. The President has succeeded in laying this Budget proposal before the House and the power of approval lies with this House. I want to urge all Members and Mr. Speaker that this is an opportunity to demonstrate to the people of Nigeria that House of Representatives is not an appendage of the Executive and as Members, we carry the needs and aspirations of the electorates.

Many things have been said about the Budget, people talked about borrowing; when you borrow to finance domestic spending, you know what it means. There are so many problems within the economy; we have the unemployment, insecurity and so many things. The question we need to ask ourselves is that, is this Budget made in a manner that it will solve all these problems? The Naira is gradually crashing, the oil price is going down, the stock market is crashing on daily basis, nobody has succeeded in coming up to tell us what were responsible for all these shocks.

Mr. Speaker, as direct representatives of our people, we owe it a duty to protect the investments of Nigerians and I want to urge our Members while the President has his own constitutional right of pursuing his own vision, we must stand with the people of this country by protecting their properties and their investments.

The Speaker: On this issue of Budget of Ministries, Departments and Agencies that was supposed to be annexed or attached to the main Budget as raised by the Minority Leader and amplified by Hon. Shawulu, we have drawn the attention of the Executive; specifically Mr. President to it and he has given assurance that the Budget will come and that the only reason why it was not attached to the main Budget was because having reviewed it, it was discovered that they did not tally with the vision of change that he is pursuing. It was more of the same and he had directed that they should rework this document but with the assurance that that relevant Section of the law must be obeyed by the Executive. As soon as work is finished on the Budget, they will be transmitted to the National Assembly. That is a commitment on the Executive; I thought maybe if I provide this information, it will help us. So, nobody is hiding anything. The Budget will come before us and there will not be any expenditure on the part of the Government outside what the National Assembly will appropriate for it.

Hon. Istifanus Dung Gyang (Barinkin-Ladi/Riyom): On this 2016 Appropriation Bill, there are facts that are already established before this hon. House. The Budget size of over ₦6 Trillion predicated on an oil benchmark of ₦38 Dollars per barrel and indeed, a debt profile of ₦1.8 Trillion. I believe that financing and funding concerns arising as a result of the volatility and unpredictability of the global oil pricing, which is currently characterized by an increasing downward trend in the market. The consequential effect is the high deficit margin that the debt option has been adopted by Government to take care of.

My suggestion is a call for diversification, which many of our Colleagues have spoken about and particularly as it has to do with the area of Agriculture and Solid Minerals, which I believe at the Committee level, this House should raise the funding for these Sectors so that we can heal and cure our over dependence on this oil, which has provided a basis for mono-economy of which we are suffering today.

Hon. Goodluck Nanah Opiah (Ohaji/Egbema/Oguta/Oru West): I want to align myself with previous speakers; especially my friend, Hon. Linus Okorie and I would like to say that so much have been talked about on the deficiencies in the Budget and I get worried somehow when I am inclined to believe that there was no Budget before us.

As a Parliament, we have the opportunity to give Nigerians a workable Budget that is a Budget of reality, a Budget that can give Nigerians the desired change. I want to go straight to an area of interest. I get worried that in the face of renewed militancy in the Niger-Delta region, the provision in the current Budget for NDDC has drastically been brought down to as low as ₦41 Billion. I think that this is unrealistic. It is unfair and just not proper for the people of the Niger-Delta. I come from an oil producing federal constituency in Imo State and so much is relied on by my people from the NDDC. I would expect that this House would do a good job by looking into the Budget of the NDDC and the Niger-Delta Ministry, which put together have about ₦67 Billion which is grossly inadequate.

Hon. Oladipupo O. Adebute (Ikenne/Sagamu/Remo North): For the purpose of balance Mr. Speaker, I first want to acknowledge and cite the fact that this time around, Agriculture has been given a prominence and in the capital Budget for agriculture, we have seen an increase of about ₦37 Billion. However, it has come to me as a surprise that despite the mantra of change, it seems very germane portions of the cost of governance has not changed. The Judiciary in this Budget will suffer a loss of over ₦3 Billion in funding; the National Assembly will suffer a further loss of about ₦5 Billion in funding but interestingly, the Presidency gets an additional ₦15 Billion. I do not see that as being consistent with what we are talking about, if truly sacrifices must be made, it should go all round.

Similarly, I have observed as well that in a department that the whole nation is watching now, some funny things are still happening. The Office of the National Security Adviser, I noticed that now, the Budget has been increased by another ₦2 Billion overall, despite the fact that the current Budget compared to last year decreased by ₦5 Billion, we are still getting an increase. I am wondering with the history we have of that office of extensive mismanagement, why should this office still be endowed with so much money and a continued increase. I hope that we are not laying foundations for problems we should have learnt from and we are going

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back to again. I wish us happy deliberations on this to the betterment of the nation.

Hon. Jarigbe Agom Jarigbe (Ogoja/Yala): I want to talk about Education. You will discover that so much has been allotted to Education on this Budget. It has been like that in the past but the progress made so far is not synonymous with the funds provided. That is because people who are charged with public financial management are not doing what they are supposed to do.

The non-altruistic action of these people makes it become an exercise in futility in spite of all we do. That calls for the Legislature to exercise its power as enshrined in Section 88 of the Constitution. That also calls for the funding of the National Assembly for oversight function. I totally disagree with the reduction in our allocation.

Secondly, it is the Defence Sector, it will be self-delusion if we say our Defence is all right, we are home and dry. I was opportune to go for an oversight function last week and we went to one barrack, what we saw there in the name of newly supplied ammunitions, guns and all of that are obsolete equipment that were produced in the 60s. I think we should declare a state of emergency in the Defence Sector and make sure that we take all out and give to Paramilitary and not people who will stand for us when there is external aggression.

With regard to poverty alleviation, ₦5,000 has been allocated to our unemployed graduates but we need a data base. We must have some forms of statistics; otherwise, it will be another drain pipe. With all of these, we can see that the National Assembly has so much work to do, otherwise this Budget would remain a mirage taking into consideration the contemporary realities in terms of oil benchmark and the rest. Thank you very much.

Hon. Jerry Alagbaoso (Orlu/Orsu/Oru East): Mr. Speaker, a lot of us have subjected this Budget to a lot of test. The Minority Leader subjected it to fiscal responsibility test and the Majority Leader subjected it to constitutional test while Hon. Ossai subjected it to chemistry or litmus test. In spite of that, my federal constituents informed me to advise that this is Federal Government Budget and not APC, PDP, APGA or Labour Party Budget. In other words, the Budget is not

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painting a picture of doom or gloom but it has good intentions.

Mr. Speaker, no single Budget solves the economic problems of any nation and this 2016 Budget is not going to be an exception. The important thing is for us to embark on serious implementation and then quality over-sight in order to checkmate some of these errors we are finding today.

I cannot complete without thinking of the problem I have as the Chairman of FERMA. 5 per cent of all the passengers and airfreight movers in Nigeria are by road and according to the Engineers from the Nigerian Institute of Highway Engineers; they said 80 per cent of the roads are maintained by Federal Government, so we need funds. As far as we are concerned, some Sectors of this Budget are under-funded; especially FERMA.

With what the President said when he was talking to the Senators on 25th November, 2015; he said all the Nigerian roads are dead and those who travel from Lagos to Ibadan will tell the stories. Those who travel from Kaduna to Jebba will tell more stories and it is the same thing with East-West roads. So, on the whole, I think we need more funds for FERMA. The Budget has a human face, it is welfare-driven and secondly, I think it is going to improve the standard of living of the masses, reduce poverty and unemployment.

I therefore, urge all of us to support this Budget and approve it so that Nigerians will endorse what we are doing here irrespective of our party affiliations.

The Speaker: I guess we have done justice to this debate; Hon. Maren, you are next.

Hon. Solomon Bulus Maren (Mangu/Bokkos): Mr. Speaker, thank you for this time for me to also lend my voice on this Budget. I have so many things to say but for want of time, I may not be able to say much.

One thing I want to observe is that funding is largely coming from the Non-oil Sector and the provisions that have been made in sectorial allocation of the Budget; you will see that the areas where you are going to encourage some of these Non-oil revenues to come from are being under-funded. A very clear example is Agriculture, where you have over 70 per cent of the Nigerian populace who are farmers in that area and as at today, based on the economic hardship

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and the high rise of the exchange rate, many farmers cannot get fertilizers and many have withdrawn their children from school and upon that, we are still gathering a lot money up to ~~₦~~6 Trillion and we are budgeting just ~~₦~~78 Billion for Agriculture. I think that is highly unfair.

If you go to the streets of China, you will see that in every house, there is a mini-factory inside. This is as a result of development of medium scale technology and if you look at their allocation for Science and Technology, you will almost weep and say where are we heading to? We are talking of creating employment and we are not talking of developing the infrastructure that will drive this employment and that is very worrisome.

The third issue I would like to also look at is if you are talking of Non-oil, you talk of Agriculture, Science and Technology, you must talk of Solid Minerals and if you look at the Solid Minerals Sector, just about ~~₦~~18 Billion is provided at an era where you are talking of Non-oil revenue. I think this also is unfair and we should look at it very well because this is the area where a lot of illegal mining is taking place in Nigeria and unless we deploy so much funds into this Sector so that we can develop the Sector, definitely we will continue to go through the same system and this so-called non-oil revenue may hardly be achieved.

Hon. Mark Terseer Gbillah (Gwer East/Gwer West): Mr. Speaker, I thank Mr. President and this administration for this Budget. The ideals and the intentions are lofty and commendable, but the actual intricate details of the document leave a lot to be desired. It once again reveals the fact that the budgetary process of this country is not yet *Uhuru*.

What I am saying is reference to what my Colleague, Hon. Igariwey said earlier, how do we get the details that are imputed in our Budget? I think that the President needs to look critically at the need to set up a budgeting team of his own who should ordinarily have looked through this Budget before even presenting it before the House. Either by commission or omission, the bureaucrats have embarrassed this administration by the Budget that they have presented because in FERMA for instance, you will see duplications of the same projects. Is that intentional or is it really a mistake?

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These are things that Mr. President needs to critically look at because Nigerians are looking at the fact that we are at the threshold of history here. One of the sources of income we are looking at apart from the Non-oil Sector is the fact that we would still depend on some oil revenue. There is no provision for the pipelines in this Budget. Are we going to continue the oil swap that we have discovered a lot of atrocities in? Or what are we looking at to implement that will curtail the losses of revenue which have been put at over ~~₦~~400 daily.

Mr. Speaker, this has once again brought us to the critical point of the fact that this House will need a critical look on item by item and I appeal to my Colleagues; this is not a Budget we will go to sleep on. We need to look at it critically, that means there will be more need for oversight and with what is allocated to the House, we cannot perform oversight like my Colleague, Hon. Rita will say, '*with donkeys*'. There needs to be adequate provision of resources because we are going to need to look through this Budget if it is going to meet what the Nigerian people expect from us.

Hon. Olemija Stephen Friday (Akoko North East/West): Mr. Speaker, I would not want to take much of our time, I want to go straight to the point I want to raise, which is on Agriculture.

In the 2015 Budget, about ~~₦~~31.8 Billion was appropriated for that Sector; whereas in 2016 Appropriation, ~~₦~~76.7 Billion was budgeted. One will say this is a substantial provision for that Sector but because of what Mr. President earlier said, that he wants to diversify the economy and that he wants to concentrate on Agriculture and Mining. I would like to suggest that we should increase the amount budgeted for Agriculture. It is a good incentive for our farmers which will surely keep our youths off the streets.

Secondly, if we enhance the Agricultural Sector, definitely aside from provision for food, there is going to be provision for raw materials for our small scale industries. If our small scale industries are functional, definitely there is going to be job creation for our teeming youths.

Hon. Ayodele Oladimeji (Ado Ekiti/Irepodun/Ifelodun): My contribution to the Budget debate will be very brief as time is fast spent. It should have been a level set from the beginning anyway.

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I want to let us know that we are entering into a challenging period, a period of deficit budgeting is not a time to go and be partying. It is an unhealthy period when an economy has to spend more than it is generating and what are the implications? Yes, there will be economic growth immediately because infrastructure will be developed, labour will be employed; however, there are challenges ahead. It is a period when there will be no saving for instance, our reserve is going down. In finance, it is always a problematic period because if there is emergency in the future, there is nothing to fall back on.

Secondly, we are going to experience rising costs, parties will go up, inflation will go up, exchange rate will worsen, interest rate will also go up. Therefore, there is going to be a drop in the standard of living. Ultimately, this will result in a sorry state if care is not taken.

In foreign expenditure, we are going to spend more on these borrowings that we are going to undertake. For instance, in the current Budget, we have ₦86 Billion for interest on capitalized loans, meaning that there are loans not paid that are being capitalized.

Then, when we are borrowing to fund the economy, we should avoid increasing our taxes. When taxes are increased, inflation goes up and so on. We should know that there is much for the electorate to suffer. We have to really address that.

I want to advise us under this condition that; firstly, we should not hurriedly approve this Budget; secondly, there should be serious oversight; thirdly, there is need for us to reverse this Budget downwards.

If it went from ₦4.4 Trillion to ₦6 Trillion in this period when our resources are dwindling, then we are spelling doom for the future. The case of Greece is at hand for us to review. If we continue to borrow year upon year, it will lead into crisis.

Hon. Ibora Asuquo Ekanem (Ini/Ikono): Mr. Speaker, a lot has been said about the 2016 Budget and I want to lend my voice in support of all that has been said, particularly the issue of Non-oil Sector. Is it Agricultural development that has been mentioned? I am not going into it as it has been said. Is it Solid Minerals? It has been said.

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I just want to add that although, the Committees will look into the details of the budget, but in this House, we can also tip in something to assist them. Looking into the Defence Budget for example, there is inspection of accounts and arrangement of meetings where ₦120 Million has been budgeted for, while rehabilitation of barracks is only ₦700 Million. I wonder how we can balance this. The Committees and sub-Committees should look into this. Are they going to buy microscopes to look into books of account to warrant such amount?

In addition to that, we should strengthen our oversight activities of this House. That will help in order to implement this Budget so that Nigerians will benefit from the Budget.

My advice is that the implementation should be seriously looked into and also, the advisory team, financial team or policy making machinery of the Federal Government should quarterly assess this Budget and see how it is being implemented.

The Speaker: I think we have about eight Members who have not yet spoken. In view of the fact that time has gone and you have the constitutional right to speak on the Budget, if we can keep to the two minutes rule, it means that in the next 16 minutes, we should be done. I will enforce one and half minute now so that we finish on time.

Hon. Adamu A. Gurai (Shira/Giade): Let me first and foremost define what a Budget means. A Budget is a statement of all cash inflows and cash outflows for a given period of time, usually one year. Now, the Budget before us is a national Budget and it is a Budget of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and it is for a period of one year.

We all know what a statement means because we all have bank accounts. What I mean by estimate of inflows is all revenue accruing to the Government from all Sectors of the economy, what I mean by outflows is all expenditures, be it Capital, Recurrent or Overhead of the Government for a period of one year. In other words, from 1st January, 2016 to 31st December, 2016; that is a period of 12 calendar months.

Budget under any philosophy is not hard, fast or constant. It provides room for improvement and amendments. You will all remember during the last quarter of last year, Mr. President provided us with a

supplementary Budget, which the National Assembly scrutinized and approved.

Another thing is in December last year, the National Assembly sat down and extended the year 2015 Budget or a period to 31st of March this year. So, this shows that Budget provides room for amendment and improvement through supplementary and extension.

Hon. Samuel Ifeanyi Onuigbo (Ikunano/Umuahia North/South): Mr. Speaker, I know that my Colleagues who spoke before me have addressed a few issues; so I am going to summarize.

By way of position and advice, I am saying that as we go forward in implementing policies in the country, it is important that we reduce to the barest minimum, issues of policy summersault. We have noticed that when we go through policy summersault, we lose money and we create doubts in the minds of investors.

Looking through this Budget and particularly its implementation, we should take issues concerning education to be high on our agenda. We have talked about diversifying the economy and in this case, I want to say that in this issue of diversification of the economy, we should look at the human resource that is available to the people of this country and use it to manage our resources well. To be within time in doing all this, we have to take into cognizance the issue of security.

Hon. Jones Chukwudi Victor Onyereri (Nkwere/Isu/Nwangele/Njaba): On the one hand, the Budget as presented by Mr. President looks good on the face value and on the other hand, there seems to be a little bit of challenge and it stems from the fact that I understand clearly that there is the need to be on the high speed, but if you are to be on the high speed, it is incumbent on you to also check your break system. What is the break system? The break system is provided for us by the wisdom of this great House in Section 42 (1) of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, which provides the need to set an overall limit for the consolidated debts of Federal, States and Local Governments in pursuant to the provision of Items 7 and 50 of Part 1 of the Second Schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The Budget is predicated on three things; the oil revenue, non-oil revenue and loan provision. The first and second are controllable variables, which depends

on the limit of the inflow but the third portends a great danger and the danger would have been solved on the advice of the Minister of Finance. In discussing with Mr. President, the Minister would have brought the attention of the President to the fact that the loan provision is in excess of the capital projection, which means invariably that it is intended to deal with the Recurrent Expenditure and between you and I, you know that this is in complete variance with the very skeleton of our Constitution, which is the Chapter 2 of the Constitution; the fundamental objective and directive principles of state policy that behoves on everyone to look at the welfare and security of the people. The real meaning and intendment of welfare is creating productive middle class and the middle class in Nigeria is almost extinct, so the success of this Budget should really be to make sure that we recreate the middle class by providing for the real sector of the economy.

To round this up and going forward, we should also begin to look at codifying the establishment of the Financial Services Commission, which will help us to bring the monitoring and the fiscal authorities to converge so that we can get out of our economic quagmire.

Hon. Mohammed Nur Sheriff (Bama/Ngala/Kalabaje): Budget is a statement of fact and perhaps, a statement of expectations. It may turn out to be deficit, surplus or balanced. That is what the Budget is all about. It is projected revenue and therefore, this change government has put measures that the projected revenue can be sourced in many ways. To source for loan anywhere is acceptable because it is part of the component of Budget anywhere in the world; therefore, this Budget will be realized. We usually source loans externally and internally to finance it but most often sourced finances are being diverted, cornered or perhaps stolen. We have a regime that is very careful, honest, and sincere and the Budget is based on integrity.

I therefore, believe this Budget will be implemented to the letter because all leakages of stealing of public funds will be stopped. This Budget should be supported rightly and be given a smooth passage so that we can start action on the change government immediately.

The Speaker: I have noticed that Members are keeping us here, once they spoke, they will pack their things and leave us here. So, I am of the opinion that we should avoid that temptation. If I see any Member

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taking his things and leaving the Floor, I will just put the question. The rule is that you should speak and take your seat until we adjourn.

Hon. Abubakar Hassan Fulata (Birmiwa/Guri/Kiri-Kasamma): The point has been made that the 2016 Appropriation Bill is challenged. It is challenged because the premise upon which it is based no longer exists and therefore, a lot of the Budget expectation, especially its implementation no longer exists. Part of the problem that we may face is that, already the Britain Wood Institutions are already hovering around Nigeria looking for lacuna upon which to coerce the country into accepting facility and by the grace of God, they will not get the lacuna. The happiest thing is that the so called shared revolution, which precipitated the current global crisis that started from the USA by flooding the international market with oil is already abating. Predictions are that by the end of this first quarter, oil prices will rally around \$50 to \$60 per barrel.

I therefore, urge Members not to give in to the despondency and panic analysis and approve this Budget unanimously. This is because it is the most revolutionary Budget ever presented to the National Assembly in Nigeria.

The Speaker: Hon. Fulata, you have given me serious hope and I hope that your prophecy does not fail.

Hon. Jisalo Bitrus Zephaniah (Abuja Municipal/Bwari): Mr. Speaker, so many things have been said about this Budget and so many good things have been said but nobody in my hearing talk of the issue of FCT. You are Speaker for FCT and I so much believe that this Parliament is for FCT. By extension of the Constitution, FCT is the Centre of Unity and I have gone through the Budget of which ₦37 Billion allocated to the FCT is very inadequate.

You are all living witnesses of the rapid development of the city and having gone through the proposed 2016 Appropriation Bill; I consider the amount as inadequate and fall short of the present reality on ground. Going through the provisions of infrastructural development in the Federal Capital Territory, I found that we do not have water in Asokoro, Maitama and some many other districts in FCT. People have gone unto their own way by making boreholes for themselves. I have the opportunity to

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serve in the Committee for Water Resources and the issue there is this, in FCT, we have tank four, five and six, the Ministry of Water Resources have not allowed the FCT to get this water because they have not settled their bill and that is why they cannot give FCT water. Today, so many districts have no water just because of that.

Going by road construction, traffic has become a different thing. Please, for the cause of traffic control, we need more roads. I am happy with the way my Colleagues have applauded this Budget and by the grace of God, I am asking the whole House to give it a speedy passage.

The Speaker: Thank you, we are all residence of FCT, I guess that is a wakeup call on all of us.

Hon. Ajisafe Olowookere (Akure North/South): Mr. Speaker, I want to join other speakers that have spoken in commending Mr. President for presenting this document to the House. We have seen that the document reflects a lot of departure from the past but my major contribution is that, this hon. House, particularly the Committee on Appropriations should have the courage to look critically at this document because this is just a mere Budget proposal and it is not an exclusive document of the Executive.

We should be courageous enough to look at these areas where we have identified some shortcomings and make necessary corrections or adjustment; particularly in the area of Agriculture where we feel that it should be the major concern and major focus of the Government now. That is my own contribution that the House should play its own role, the document has been laid before us, we now have a duty and responsibility to look critically at this Sectors and emphasise by our own provision, areas where we feel should be the priority for the good people of Nigeria.

Hon. Rita Orji (Ajeromi Ifelodun): Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me to lend my voice to this trending issue, I would not want to go too much into the debate. I definitely know that I am not an Economist, but based on the fact that I am looking at this Budget with the eye of Ajeromi Ifelodun Federal Constituency; the electorates. I want to believe that we should take note that the revenue sources that are predicted on import and economic activities; namely that of FIRS taxes and customs duties will negatively affect the global trend.

I do not want to align with the issues that this is the first time we are sponsoring our Budget on Non-oil, no. Previously, during the military era, there were situations when the oil was \$8 per barrel. Nigeria had variables and indicators of making sure that the electorates are well taken care of. I am looking at some of the indicators here that are going to make this Budget to have an impact on policies which will lead to summersault. Take for instance, this January, Nigerians welcomed the issue of non-COT for current account with banks and we were rejoicing. Now, may be because of tax, look at what we are facing, there is another service charge that is coming to replace the COT now, ₦1 for each ₦1,000 transaction and ₦50 for each bank transaction, this is policy summersault. If the electorates that are to be protected are the ones that will die in this taxation, if these policies that are here will not favour the electorates, I plead to the House to use the eye of the representatives of the electorates to look at this Budget.

Secondly, during our school days, I remember when we were faced with the austerity measure, we adopted situation of Structural Adjustment Programme. At that age, you take your dish one-zero-one or one-zero-zero in order to manage the money you have. But on the issues where you are supposed to manage the money, the money you are giving off on feeding is too much. I do not really know if we are really facing austerity and the Judiciary and Legislature should not be the ones that will always bear the brunt of any reduction in allocations.

The Speaker: Chairman Appropriations will have the last word; last word can be one minute.

Hon. Abdulumuni Jibrin (Bebeji/Kiru): Mr. Speaker, in the last few days of course, we have taken a lot of contributions from Members and a very wide range of inputs, perspectives from our Colleagues and I am sure that will serve as enough ingredients for us by the time we commence our work at the level of Appropriation Committee.

Also very important, in the last few years, we have had a lot of Budgets, it is not that this Budgets are that bad, but one of the major constrain of our budgets is the problem of implementation. I will urge the Government to try as much as possible to see that this Budget is implemented. Of course, we know that there are a bit of issues with finance, but the deficit is going to be financed through borrowing, the various authorities, especially the Ministry of Finance must

step up action to ensure that the processes of getting these funds or borrowing both local and foreign are done in good time so that we will not have excuse in the process of Budget implementation. We all also have confidence that our President and of course, the party and its slogan of change and getting things done in a proper way will ensure that this Budget is implemented to the letter.

In similar vein, I am calling on all the various Committees to the House to ensure that they oversight the various Agencies and see that by the time releases are made, they are made properly and follow ups are done to ensure that this Budget is implemented. It is only when this Budget is implemented that we can all say the good things that are imbedded in the Budget itself.

On this note, I bring this debate to a logical conclusion.

The Speaker: I am happy that honourable Colleagues have taken their turns to provide perspective on the Budget estimates. I must say really that it was a very robust debate and this should guide us as we move forward. The most important work on the Budget will commence, that is the process of turning the estimates into law.

Some Members have spoken about imperfections in the document and it is expected of us as a Parliament to cure these imperfections in the Bill that will ultimately transform into an Act, which becomes a law that must be implemented. But I want us to keep in view our commitment to the people, which is that as representatives of the people, we must always put the interest of the people first.

As we put these estimates into a Bill that will finally crystallize into a law, my appeal is that we put the interest of the people first not our own interests. On that note, I will put the question and 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 Committee on Appropriations and all other Standing Committees and Sub-Committees of the Committee on Appropriations).

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The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, I am tempted to say we should adjourn but we have been very patient and we still have one or two other straightforward businesses and I remember that on this Floor, there was a time we even adjourned at 10.00 p.m. or is it 11.00 p.m.? So, I enjoin some of us that have been very patient to extend our patience so that we can take these two or three Bills that are more or less very straightforward.

In view of the fact that we may be adjourning Plenary against next week, at least a minimum of two weeks to enable Committees work on the Appropriation Bill. So, all Bills and important Motions that we need to get passed before then, has to be done between now, tomorrow and next tomorrow. In view of that, I appeal to us to once more remain patient until we adjourn.

**Federal Highways Act, 2004 (Amendment)
Bill, 2015**

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make further Provisions for the safety of Nigerian Highways; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 96) and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make driving against Traffic or One Way an Offence; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 162) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the fourth Order of the day is commencement of debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make further Provisions for the safety of Nigerian Highways; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 96); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make driving against Traffic or One Way an Offence; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 Bill, (HB. 162).

Hon. Members will recall that the Bills were consolidated on Tuesday, 19th January, 2016. I will now invite the Leader to move that the Bill be now read a Second Time

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Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: Mr. Speaker, I move for the Second Reading of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make further Provisions for the safety of Nigerian Highways; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 96) and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Highways Act, Cap. F13, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to make driving against Traffic or One Way an Offence; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 162), be read a Second Time.

Hon. Mohammed Ali Wudil (Wudil/Garko): Mr. Speaker, I second the Second Reading of the Bill as moved by my amiable Leader, Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila.

Question proposed.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: Mr. Speaker, like you said earlier, it is very straightforward and I am not sure I will take much of your time. This Bill is motivated by several fatal accidents that occurred throughout the length and breadth of Nigeria in recent times with incredible statistics provided from the Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC), on the number of accidents and fatalities.

We are inundated with cases of trucks; they carry containers and these containers falling off these trucks either on bridges, overhead bridges and killing several road users. The issue of trucks breaking down on our highways and occasioning the death of oncoming vehicles are there for all of us to see. It is our solemn responsibilities in this House to ensure the safety of Nigerians.

The Bill seeks two things: One, to increase penalties for those who go against the Federal Highway Act. The Act as it is, imposes penalty of ₦100, ₦200 which goes to nothing and it is a little bit archaic and this Bill seeks to increase these penalties to ₦100,000 and to ₦200,000 respectively reflecting the year 2016 that we are in.

Second and most importantly, to address the issue of fatality and accidents. This Bill seeks to ensure the safety on our roads:

- (i) To make it mandatory that containers are latched on trucks and bolted down because what happens really in most cases is that these

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trucks are driving and they go over bumps or they are climbing up hills and because the containers are not stable, they fall off and God forbid that you are driving next to the container, it crushes you to death. This happens several times even in my own constituency, it happened just a few months ago. So, the Bill amends the Act and provides that you must latch and bolt your container to the truck;

- (ii) The Bill also seeks to stop the driving and the plying on our roads of containers and petrol tankers between traffic hours from 6.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. In more advance democracies or other countries, most of these trucks are hazards to the roads, so they ply the roads at midnights – 10:00 p.m. to 4:00 a.m. in the morning when there are fewer people on the roads.

Mr. Speaker, you know most people in Nigeria; you and I would go to bed at 9:00 p.m. normal or regular hours, we are not found on the streets at 2:00 a.m. or 3:00 a.m. So, it is important that we restrict the time that we use these roads. If you are driving at 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon and something happens, chances are that there would be a lot of people or road users that would be affected.

The Bill also seeks to make provisions to put cross barriers on overhead bridges. So, even if you are not aware of the law, by the time you come as a container or petrol tanker, you cannot even access that bridge because the height does not allow you to access the bridge and this is found in other countries as well.

Finally, the Bill also mandates the Minister to delegate or personally certify trucks that use our roads. Those trucks must have an age limit of fifteen (15) years because sometimes, these trucks are imported and dumped into Nigeria like over 20 years old and they break down from wear and tear at night and you have oncoming cars without a sign that there is a truck ahead and you ram into them and cause fatality. So, these are the few provisions to ensure safety of our citizens, thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: It is a straightforward Bill, and the arguments are also straightforward as well. We are talking about the 'new normal'. So, I will put the question and the question is that the Bill be now read the Second Time.

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Question put and agreed to.

(Bill read a Second Time and referred to the Committee on Federal Road Safety Commission).

Price Control Act, 2004 (Amendment) Bill, 2015

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide for concessions, waivers and stiffer penalties; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 264); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of the Nigeria, 2004 to prescribe stiffer penalties and to make better provisions for its implementation; and for other Matter Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 311) –

Order for Second Reading.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the fifth Order of the day is commencement of debate on the general principles of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Provide for concessions, waivers and stiffer penalties; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 264); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of the Nigeria, 2004 to prescribe stiffer penalties and to make better provisions for its implementation; and for Other Matter Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 311).

Hon. Members will recall that the Bills were consolidated on Tuesday, 19th January, 2016. I now invite Hon. Chukwuka Wilfred Onyema to move that the Bill be now read a Second Time.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred: I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Provide for concessions, waivers and stiffer penalties; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith, 2015 (HB. 264); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, Laws of the Federation of the Nigeria, 2004 to prescribe stiffer penalties and to make better provisions for its implementation; and for Other Matter Related Thereto, 2015 (HB. 311), be read a Second Time.

Hon. Onyenwfe Gabriel (Ayamelum/Oyi): Mr. Speaker, I second that the Bill be read a Second Time.

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The Speaker: The Bill is a consolidated Bill, the Deputy Minority Leader, you may take two minutes to present your argument and Hon. Gabriel too will take two minutes to present his own side of the argument. So please, lead the debate.

Question proposed.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred: It is a straightforward Bill to amend the Price Control Act and all this Bill seeks to do is to introduce the discretionary practice of granting all manner of indiscriminate waivers of tariffs and duties, which in the long run, lead to major revenue loss to the government for example, between 2011 and 2013, the Federal Government lost ₦170 Million on waivers, tax concessions to individuals and these were done indiscriminately, not with certain laws, set down rules and regulations.

The Bill also seeks to amend the penalties for the criminal sale of certain goods at prices above which exceed the controlled price. This has become exigent as the penalties as contained in the Act are now obsolete. This Act was enacted in 1977; 39 years ago when the penalty as you can see is ₦200, ₦100 and thereabout. So, basically, I want to keep it like this since I said I will take one minute to explain.

Hon. Onyenwufe Gabriel: Part of the Amendment as proposed is substitution of the Membership of the Board on Price Control. In the existing Board Membership, there is no representative of Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN). The D.G., Consumer Protection Council is not a member and the Statistician-General of the country is not a member. There is also intended and included in the Bill, no tenure in the existing law for members of the Board and this lacuna is proposed to be cured by provision of tenure of four (4) years.

In the existing Act as it were, there is no appropriate definition or functions of the Board and it is intended that by this Amendment, the functions of the Board will specifically be identified.

The remunerations and the allowances of Board members that were not Public Officers were left at the discretion of the Minister. As it is, the accurate and legal practice today, remunerations and allowances are to be determined by the Revenue Mobilisation and Allocation and Fiscal Commission.

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Mr. Speaker, there is vicarious liability in the case of a retailer selling products above control price, then the wholesaler, the distributor or the manufacturer is vicariously reliable whether he ratified, whether his approval was obtained or whether he consented to, there is no proviso for defence. So, the Amendment is intended to bring the defence assuming he did not ratify.

Like the Deputy Minority Leader say, others are financial and imprisonment terms that were barely ₦200, ₦500 that has to be increased to ₦100,000 and in terms of companies to about ₦500,000. Mr. Speaker, the list as in the First Schedule has been very minimal and considering essential commodities that the price are controlled all over the world, this has to be amended. Mr. Speaker, Hon. Colleagues, we solicit your support that the Bill be read a Second Time.

Question put and agreed to.

(Bill read a Second Time and referred to the Committee on Commerce).

MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Urgent Need to Investigate the Reported Cancellation of the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri-South Local Government Council Area, Delta State by the Federal Government

Hon. Daniel Oritsegbubemi Reyenieju (Warri South/Warri/West): Point of Order!

The Speaker: Hon. Daniel Oritsegbubemi Reyenieju, your Point of Order, please?

Hon. Daniel Oritsegbubemi Reyenieju: Mr. Speaker, my Point of Order is predicated on Order VIII, Rule 46; Matters of Urgent Public Importance.

I move that the House consider the Urgent Need to Investigate the Reported Cancellation of the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri-South Local Government Council Area, Delta State by the Federal Government.

I also urge the House to suspend all relevant Rules to enable us take the matter immediately.

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The Speaker: The first leg of the Motion is that the matter be considered as Urgent.

Hon. Kwewum Rimamnde Shawulu: I second the Motion that the matter is urgent enough to be taken.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consider the Urgent Need to Investigate the Reported Cancellation of the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri-South Local Government Council Area, Delta State by the Federal Government as Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

The Speaker: It seems to be an alliance between the North-East and the South-South because I could see that the Deputy Minority Whip wanted to second the Motion. So, I now invite you to second that we suspend our relevant Rules to enable us debate the matter.

Hon. Binta Bello (Kaltungo/Shongom): I second that our relevant Rules be suspended so that the matter can be taken immediately.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That Order VIII, Rule 46(3) be suspended to enable the House consider the matter immediately.

Hon. Daniel Oritsegbubemi Reyenieju: Mr. Speaker, my Motion is on the Urgent Need to Investigate the Reported Cancellation of the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri-South Local Government Council Area, Delta State by the Federal Government.

The House:

Notes that the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri South-West Local Government Council Area, Delta State was established by the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency (NIMASA) to produce high level manpower for marine related industry's needs;

Also Notes that it is the establishment of the Nigerian Maritime University Okerenkoko as approved by the Federal Executive Council in 2015 that necessitated the Federal Government of Nigeria to

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constitute a Governing Council for the University and also effected the appointment of a pioneer Vice-Chancellor;

Further Notes that the Nigerian Maritime University is the only Federal Government funded establishment and thus the only indicator of the presence of the Federal Government of Nigeria in the whole of the Warri South-West Local Government Area of Delta State;

Aware that the Nigerian Maritime University is the first of its type in the country even though there are other Non-University Marine institutions in the manner for example, whereby the Federal Government remain the proprietor of Universities of Agriculture, and other Non-University institutions of Agriculture including agriculture related research centres;

Also aware that the Federal Government of Nigeria retains its proprietorship of the Petroleum Institute, Petroleum Polytechnic, and also the same time the University of Petroleum Resources by virtue of the fact that Universities and Non-University institutions respectively train and produce different cadres/levels of manpower;

Concerned that the Federal Government of Nigeria has consistently been funding and maintaining these respective specialized Universities, and also the Non-University Agriculture institutions including research institutes and not being oblivious of the fact that Universities, and Non-University tertiary institutions could be established for the same disciplines, for example, petroleum of agriculture, technology, etcetera; but the academic programs and thrusts of the Universities are not the same with those of the Non-University institutions including the qualities of certificates issued;

Also concerned that the Federal Government has never for example considered obliterating any of the Universities of Agriculture (for example) simply because they are concurrently in existence Non-University tertiary institutions and research institutes of agriculture;

Further concerned that all the existing maritime academic institutions can only award the Higher National Diploma, Ordinary National Level Certificates, etcetera and thus established to produce at

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best middle level manpower for the marine related industries;

Worried that the Maritime University by virtue of its academic status will of necessity produce first degree (Bachelor) holders in marine related disciplines; with the inherent potentials to develop its academic manpower and programs to such level where it can produce holders of second and terminal degrees;

Conscious that the Maritime University (like other Nigerian Universities) will remain as the academic centre for producing eminently qualified manpower to meet the manpower needs of any marine related academic institutions, including itself and other Universities anywhere in the globe that offers marine related courses;

Also conscious that the presence of the Maritime University will naturally stimulate the interests of many qualified youths in its catchment areas particularly in the Ilaje (Ondo State), Ijaw and Itsekiri areas (all of whom are naturally aquatic), to show interests in marine related disciplines; many of whom on graduation could move to any part of the world to practice their acquired skill and put Nigeria on the global map of manpower exporters in the marine related disciplines;

Further conscious that the Maritime University will be located in the area where transnational oil corporations are operating, and will thus benefit from the usual sophisticated marine-related facilities and equipment usually in possession of these oil industries; and synergies between the University and the oil industries would expose students to such sophisticated and high calibre equipment; such that are not available in any currently existing marine related institutions in Nigeria;

Perturbed that the close proximity of the Maritime University to some of Nigeria's major oil installations and industries (for example, Chevron, Shell, Nigeria's National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), etcetera) of which marine related movements and activities remain an integral aspect of the totality of their operations which as at now (i.e. marine activities) are majorly handled by foreign experts and sub-contracting marine companies; and thus resulting into capital flight and consequent economic haemorrhage experienced by the Nigerian State; and this will be reduced and finally

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obliterated with a well-established Marine University fulfilling its mandate;

Also perturbed that the presence of the Marine University will open the area to different forms of external influences and consequently expose the youths of the areas to different world views, knowledge, interpersonal/group relationships; and thus imbibing the ethos of fair competition, oneness of mankind and the desire to seek for peace so as to ensure the flourishing of the institution;

Further perturbed that cartographic space of the Warri South Local Government Area remain the highest oil bearing and producing area in Nigeria and hosts to thousands of workers that are prospecting and producing crude oil, and neither the Federal Government, nor the oil companies has considered stoppage of oil prospecting and oil production simply because of the aquatic terrain;

Apprised that the Federal Government of Nigeria through the Niger Delta Development Commission is constructing a motorable road from Omadino in the Warri South Local Government Council Area through Okerenkoko to Ughorodo located in the Escravos estuary of the Atlantic Ocean whereby the Maritime University, Okerenkoko, will in due course be accessible by road;

Also apprised that the non-accessibility by road has not prevented the establishment of the multi-billion Dollars Liquefied Natural Gas Plant, Bonny, which is host to experts from various parts of the world;

Further apprised that the current democratic dispensation, the reported 'cancellation' of the Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko (if true), will be the first time such an action in terms of cancelling a University already established by the Federal Government will be embarked upon;

Worried that a lot of public funds have so far been expended since the announcement of the establishment of the Maritime University, Okerenkoko by the Federal Government and it behoves the Parliament to investigate the rationale behind such action which will result in the unnecessary wastage of public funds;

Acquainted with the fact that this honourable House has the constitutional and moral responsibility to

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investigate the reported cancellation of the Maritime University and possibly halt the cancellation;

Resolves to:

Mandate the House Committees on Maritime Safety Education and Administration, and Education to investigate the circumstances surrounding the reported 'cancellation' of the Maritime University, Okerenkoko, Warri South Local Government Area, Delta State and report back to the House within two (2) weeks for further legislative action.

Hon. Agbo Dennis Nnamdi (Igbo-Eze North/Udenu): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion ably moved by Hon. Daniel.

The Speaker: It is a Motion on closure of a University. I guess we are battling with illiteracy in this country and I wonder the rationale for such a decision if any. I hardly think it is impossible but in any case, since it is a complaint before the Parliament, we have to find a way of dealing with it.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

Mandate the House Committees on Maritime Safety Education and Administration, and Education to investigate the circumstances surrounding the reported 'cancellation' of the Maritime University, Okerenkoko Warri South Local Government Area, Delta State and report back to the House within two (2) weeks for further legislative action.

(Motion accordingly referred to the Committees on Maritime Safety and Administration, and Tertiary Education for further legislative input).

A Call for Rehabilitation of Nsit Ibom-Etinan Express Road, Akwa Ibom State

Hon. Ikon Samuel Okon (Etinan/Nsit Ibom/Nsit Ubium): Point of Order! Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: Order what?

Hon. Ikon Samuel Okon (Etinan/Nsit Ibom/Nsit Ubium): I come under Order VIII, Rule 46 and 49. It is an issue that leads to the death of 15 people already. I

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wish to be given the opportunity to discuss it in the House.

Hon. Chukwuka Onyema Wilfred: Mr. Speaker, I second the first leg of the Motion that the matter be taken as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consider the Call for Rehabilitation of Nsit Ibom-Etinan Express Road, Akwa Ibom State as urgent and important enough to discuss.

Hon. Aishatu Jibril Dukku (Dukku/Nafada): I second the second leg of the Motion that the matter is urgent and should be taken immediately.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That Order VIII, Rule 46(3) be suspended to enable the House consider the matter immediately.

Hon. Ikon Samuel Okon: The Motion is on a Call for Rehabilitation of Nsit-Ibom, Etinan Express Road, Akwa Ibom State

The House:

Notes that Nsit-Ibom, Etinan Express Road is an Expressway connecting the Local Governments Headquarters of Etinan and Nsit-Ibom;

Also notes that despite the socio-economic importance of Nsit-Ibom and Etinan Expressway to the people of Akwa Ibom (South-South) Zone, the total negligence of issues faced by this road has resulted in geographical denudation and the highway has been replete with potholes coupled with a collapsed bridge;

Disturbed that the deplorable state of this road has resulted in several avoidable accidents, frequent robbery attacks and resulting in the loss of large number of lives over time. For instance, over 15 persons died at the spot on the 25th December, 2015 due to a collapse of Ikon Ekang Bridge located at a central point connecting both Local Government Areas;

Aware that the rehabilitation of this road and bridge will definitely ease movement of people, farm produce and social activities amongst the communities around

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the said zone, noting also that this singular act will curb robbery attacks and reduce the high rate of the accidents.

Resolves to:

- (i) Call on the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) to carry out an immediate and temporary rehabilitation of Ikot Ekang Bridge to enable fluidity of movement amongst the connecting communities;
- (ii) Also call on the Federal Government through the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for a proper rehabilitation of the Express road;
- (iii) Ensure that the relevant cost of construction of the bridge/road is captured in the 2016 Appropriation Bill; and
- (iv) Observe a minute silence in honour of the deceased.

Hon. Pondi Julius G. (Burutu): I second the Motion ably moved by my Colleague.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

- (i) Call on the Federal Road Maintenance Agency (FERMA) to carry out an immediate and temporary rehabilitation of Ikot Ekang Bridge to enable fluidity of movement amongst the connecting communities;
- (ii) Also call on the Federal Government through the Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for a proper rehabilitation of the Express road;

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- (iii) Ensure that the relevant cost of construction of the bridge/road is captured in 2016 Appropriation Bill; and

- (iv) Observe a minute silence in honour of the deceased.

(Motion accordingly referred to the Committees on Federal Roads Maintenance Agency (FERMA) and Niger-Delta Development Commission (NDDC) for further legislative input).

The Speaker: There was a Prayer for one minute silence in honour of those who lost their lives on the road.

(A minute silence accordingly observed)

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues thank you very much for your patience. I do not think we have any other business to be considered today. So, I will invite the Leader to move for adjournment.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila: I move that this House do stand adjourned till Wednesday, 27th of January, 2016 at 11:00 a.m.

Hon. Iriase Pally Isumafe Obokhuame (Owan East/West): I second the Motion ably moved by the Leader of the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Wednesday, 27th January, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

The House adjourned accordingly at 4:05 p.m.