

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Thursday, 9th June, 2016

The House met at 11.16 a.m.

PRAYER

(The Speaker in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, I have examined and approved the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday 8th June, 2016.

OATHS

Oath of Allegiance

And

Oath of Membership

The Speaker: Hon. Member-elect who is meant to be sworn in today may please, come forward for the administration of Oaths.

Thereupon the Member-elect took the Oaths and subscribed to the Affirmation required by law:

Name: Hon. Mohammed Jafaru Ibrahim

Federal Constituency: Nasarawa/Toto

(Hon. Member-elect from Nassarawa congratulated and ushered to his seat accordingly)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Visitors in the Gallery

**Students of Kogab High School, Mangu,
Plateau State**

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, we have in the Gallery, students of Kogab High School, Mangu, Plateau State. They are here to observe our proceedings. You may please rise for recognition.

(Students rose for recognition).

You are welcome. Thank you for coming; you may please, take your seats.

**Kingdom Heritage Model Schools, Durumi
Phase II, Abuja**

Also in the Gallery are students of Kingdom Heritage Model Schools, Durumi Phase II, Abuja. You may please rise for recognition. You are welcome.

(Students rose for recognition)

**Students of SOS Children's Villages Nigeria,
Gwagwalada, Abuja**

Also in the Gallery are students from SOS Children's Villages Nigeria. You may please rise for recognition.

(Students rose for recognition).

You are welcome; please, kindly take your seats.

Collection of the 2016 Budget

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, before we proceed, please listen to this announcement:

All Hon. Members are hereby requested to send their Aides to collect copies of the 2016 Budget from the Appropriations Committee Secretariat in Room 16, First Floor, White House.

(Announcer)

**Hon. Abdulmumin Jubril
Chairman**

PRESENTATION OF PUBLIC PETITIONS

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

Rape of an Eight Year old Child

Hon. Odebunmi Olusegun Dokun (Ogo-Oluwa/Surulere): I have a Petition from a Non-governmental Organisation called the Reclaim Godly Values Foundation against Treasure House Montessori School, Asokoro, Abuja and one Mr. Paul Opala, a teacher for a complicity in the rape of an eight year old with a special mild autism.

According to the Petition, it was alleged that the minor girl was raped in the school premises by Mr. Paul Opala who also doubles as the husband of the school proprietress. To worsen the case, the Petition also stated that the molested baby and her parent are

also being intimidated in spite of the medical investigation that confirmed the incidence.

The Petition sought several prayers for justice based on their belief that the House of Representatives is the hope of the common men in Nigeria.

I therefore crave the leave of the House and the permission of Mr. Speaker to lay the Petition.

The Speaker: Please, proceed and lay the Petition.

(Petition laid)

Boundary Demarcation by the National Boundary Commission

Hon. Tony Imoye (Anambra East/ West): I have a Petition from the good people of Anambra West Local Government and the Igala speaking people of Anambra West Local Government. The Petition is seeking for the indulgence of the House as it concerns the Tripartite Agreement of the Edo, Kogi and Anambra people of the NBC Act of 1927.

Their prayer is that they want the issue of the Tripartite Agreement of 1927 not to be violated, so that the Igala speaking people of Anambra West Local Government and the Igala speaking people of Kogi State can live together without hostilities.

I seek the indulgence of Mr. Speaker for me to lay this Petition.

The Speaker: Please, go ahead and lay the Petition.

(Petition laid).

Petition from Ibrahim Luga a Staff of National Population Commission

Hon. Shehu Aliyu Musa (Bauchi): Mr. Speaker, I present a Petition from one of my Constituents by name Ibrahim Luga who has been a staff of the National Population Commission. He worked as a Store Officer under the supervision of the Chief Store Officer where he was alleged of carting away of some store documents. However, his case was referred to the DSS and in the event of the investigation, he was not found wanting.

The Petitioner was suspended since 2002; he is neither retired nor dismissed; no salaries, and no

allowances since 2002. He therefore seeks for the intervention of the House.

With your kind permission Mr. Speaker, I will like to lay this Petition before you.

The Speaker: Please proceed and lay the Petition.

(Petition laid)

Is there any other Petition? *(No response)*

All Petitions accordingly referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

CONSIDERATION OF BILLS

Independent National Assembly Budget and Research Office (Establishment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Establish the Independent National Assembly Budget and Research Office which shall provide the National Assembly with the Objective, Timely and Non-Partisan, Analysis Needed for Economic and Budget Decisions; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 377) –

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the first Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Establish the Independent National Assembly Budget and Research Office which shall provide the National Assembly with the Objective, Timely and Non-Partisan, Analysis Needed for Economic and Budget Decisions; and for Other Related Matters.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 18th May, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba (Lokoja/Kogi/KK): Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill for an Act to Establish the Independent National Assembly Budget and Research Office which shall provide the National Assembly with the Objective, Timely and Non-Partisan, Analysis Needed for Economic and Budget Decisions; and for Other Related Matters be read the Third Time.

Hon. Raphael Igbokwe Nnanna (Ahiazu Mbaise/Ezinihitte): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion that this Bill be read the Third Time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria (Establishment) Bill, 2016

A Bill an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a Body Corporate and to Empower the Council, inter alia to Determine Persons, What Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons; and for Other Related Matters (HB.17) –

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the second Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a Body Corporate and to Empower the Council, inter alia to Determine Persons, What Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons; and for Other Related Matters.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee on the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I invite the Leader to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: Mr. Speaker, I move that a Bill an Act to Establish the Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria as a Body Corporate and to empower the Council, inter alia to Determine Persons, What Standard of Knowledge and Skill to be attained by such Persons; and for Other Related Matters be read the Third Time.

Hon. Shuaibu Abdulrahman Abubakar (Miaha/Mubi North/Mubi South): Mr. Speaker, I second the Motion moved by the Deputy Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2004 (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Repeal the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, Cap. L12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and Re-enact the Legislative Powers and Privileges Act, 2016 to give

the Legislature the desired Powers and Immunity to be able to carry out its Legislative Responsibility; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 382) –

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: Third Order of the Day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, Cap. L12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and Re-enact the Legislative Powers and Privileges Act, 2016 to give the Legislature the desired Powers and Immunity to be able to carry out its Legislative Responsibility; and for Other Related Matters.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I move that a Bill for an Act to Repeal the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, Cap. L12, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and Re-enact the Legislative Powers and Privileges Act, 2016 to give the Legislature the desired Powers and Immunity to be able to carry out its Legislative Responsibility; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 382), be read the Third Time. I so move.

Hon. Akinade-Fijabi Saheed (Ibadan South West/Ibadan North West): I second the Motion as ably moved by the Deputy Leader.

Question put and agreed.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

Official Secrets Act, 2004 (Amendment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Official Secrets Act, Cap. 03, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters (HBs 317 and 426) –

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: The fourth Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Official Secrets Act, Cap. 03, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the

Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Official Secrets Act, Cap. 03, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters be read the Third Time.

Hon. Goni Bukar Lawan (Bursari/Geidam/Yunusari): I second the Motion ably moved by the Deputy Leader of the House.

Question put and agreed.

Bill Read the Third Time and passed.

**River Basin Development Authorities Act, 2004
(Amendment) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; And For Other Matters Related Thereto (HBs 58, 235 and 350) -

Oder for Third Reading

The Speaker: Hon. Members, the fifth Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Matters Related Thereto.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read a Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the River Basin Development Authorities Act, Cap. R9, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Matters Related Thereto, be read a Third Time.

Hon. Albert Abiodun Adeogun (Ife Central/East/North/South): I second the motion ably moved by the Deputy Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill Read the Third Time and passed.

Nigerians with Disability (Integration) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to ensure full Integration of Nigerians with Disability into the Society and

Eliminate all forms of Discrimination against them; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 47) -

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: The sixth Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to ensure full Integration of Nigerians with Disability into the Society and Eliminate all forms of Discrimination against them; and for Other Related Matters.

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I move that a Bill for an Act to ensure full Integration of Nigerians with Disability into the Society and Eliminate all forms of Discrimination against them; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 476) be read the Third Time.

The Speaker: Minority Whip, please second the Motion.

Hon. Yakub Abiodun Akanni Balogun (Lagos Island II): I second the Motion as moved by the Deputy Majority Leader.

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the question is that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

**Federal Capital Territory District Courts Act,
2004 (Amendment) Bill, 2016**

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Capital Territory District Courts Act, Cap. F495, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Purposes Relating to the Administration of Civil Justice (HB. 07) -

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: The seventh Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Capital Territory District Courts Act, Cap. F495, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Purposes Relating to the Administration of Civil Justice (HB. 07).

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill

on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila (Surulere I): I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Federal Capital Territory District Courts Act, Cap. F495, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Purposes Relating to the Administration of Civil Justice (HB. 07) be read the Third Time.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader, please second the Motion.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I second the Motion as moved by the Leader of the House.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

Pensions Rights of Judges Act, 2004 (Amendment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Amend the Pensions Rights of Judges Act, Cap. P5, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 06) –

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: The eighth Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Amend the Pensions Rights of Judges Act, Cap. P5, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 06).

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: I move that a Bill for an Act to Amend the Pensions Rights of Judges Act, Cap. P5, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 06) be read the Third Time.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader, please second.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I second the Motion as ably moved by the Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) (Establishment) Bill, 2016

A Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) to Empower, Develop and Provide Alternative Employment for the Youths, to Facilitate Peace, Volunteerism, Community Services, Nation-Building; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 89) -

Order for Third Reading.

The Speaker: The ninth Order of the day is the Third Reading of a Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) to Empower, Develop and Provide Alternative Employment for the Youths, to Facilitate Peace, Volunteerism, Community Services, Nation-Building; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 89).

Hon. Members will recall that the House adopted the Report of the Committee of the Whole on the Bill on Wednesday, 8th June, 2016. I therefore call on the Leader of the House to move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Hon. Femi Hakeem Gbajabiamila: I move that a Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian Peace Corps (NPC) to Empower, Develop and Provide Alternative Employment for the Youths, to Facilitate Peace, Volunteerism, Community Services, Nation Building; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 89) be read the Third Time.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: I second the Motion ably moved by the Leader.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read the Third Time and passed.

END OF THE FIRST SEESION OF THE 8TH ASSEMBLY

Address by the Rt. Hon. Speaker

The Speaker: Principal Officers of the House, my very distinguished and highly respected honourable Colleagues, permit me to congratulate you on the one year anniversary. It is a day we have chosen not to mark with fanfare, but to modestly remind us of the achievements that we have made in the last one year. I crave your indulgence to permit me to address you on the following terms:

Honourable Colleagues, today, 9th June, 2016, marks one year anniversary of the inauguration of the 8th House of Representatives.

Permit me to request that we cast our minds back to the historic day when we were sworn in as Members of the House of Representatives in this hallowed Chambers. That event was greeted with a lot of hope and expectations from Nigerians after a common sense revolution swept aside the ruling party and ushered in the opposition into office for the first time in Nigeria's modern political history. There was not just a change of guards at the Executive level, but also at the Legislature as well. The change involved both political parties and personnel.

Hon. Colleagues, as we look back to that day, it remains for me a great honour and exceptional privilege to serve as your Speaker. I still tremble when I recall or reflect on the trust and confidence you reposed in us to lead this great Chamber. By the grace of God we shall not let you down.

The House of Representatives is a platform with different, diverse ideologies, interests, languages, religions, cultures, political persuasions, philosophies, diversity of opinions contend for attention and relevance. It is a great tribute to the men and women who belong to this Chamber that it has always maintained a tradition of common purpose, patriotism and non-partisanship in taking crucial decisions on matters of state. Therefore, I salute you all.

You will recall that we took off on a very democratic note with the transparent election of the Presiding Officers. This was followed by the controversy surrounding appointment of some principal officers for both majority and minority parties.

I am highly pleased that honourable Members have worked as a family since then and legislative activities were pursued in this legislative session with so much vigour, dynamism and commitment. It can be argued correctly that one legislative year out of a four-year Assembly is rather short for successes or failures to be appraised. Rather, as the foundation year, an appropriate legislative framework is expected to be put in place. Nevertheless, in our own case, in the course of one legislative session, we have put in place appropriate legislative frameworks, reform operations and processes and have recorded notable accomplishments especially in relation to our great Legislative Agenda. The 8th House of Representatives has adequately prepared the grounds for effective contribution to the Change Agenda of the present government through the legislation.

The question today is how far have we fared? Have we met the expectation of Nigerians? These

questions are themselves imprecise and can only be imprecisely addressed.

The Leadership drafted a Legislative Agenda (2015 – 2019) to guide our legislative activities for four years. The proposed Agenda was thoroughly debated by the honourable Members and approved. Since we unfolded our Agenda, a lot of effort has been made towards its implementation. There is no gainsaying the fact that we have made some quantum leap in that direction. Therefore, permit to present the highlights of our scorecard in the past legislative year.

- (i) In the first place, we set up a Committee of Experts to undertake the **Legislative Needs Assessment** of the National Assembly on August 14, 2015. The final Report is awaited.
- (ii) **With respect to Committees**, we successfully carried out the selection and placement of Members into various Committees, which were inaugurated on 9th November, 2015:
 - Many Committees have worked very hard, but we have had to take measures to enforce timeliness for delivery of Committee Reports by divesting some Committees of jurisdiction where there has been undue or unwarranted delay in reporting.
 - Many Ad-hoc Committees were set up in this Session to deal with various subjects. Some have submitted their Reports, while some reports are awaited.
- (iii) The House made good its commitment to 'implementing the use of templates, manuals and standardised formats for Committee activities', by appointing an Ad-hoc Committee, headed by the Chair Committee on Federal Judiciary to carry out this all important assignment. Its report is also awaited.
- (iv) The House has also **reviewed its Standard Orders** twice on 17th October, 2015 and 23rd March, 2016 in fulfilment of our Agenda.
- (v) An Ad-hoc Committee on Code of Conduct for honourable Members was set up. The Committee produced a comprehensive Code of Conduct for honourable Members, which has since been adopted.

(vi) Consistent with our Legislative Agenda, the House set up **Standing Committee on Delegated Legislation** with a mandate to ensure that the process of Rulemaking, Regulations and other subsidiary legislations by MDAs are properly followed.

(vii) The House Agenda committed to making **e-voting** a regular feature of House proceedings. The introduction of electronic voting by the House is still in progress. And the use of e-mails to send copies of the Notice Paper and Order Papers to Hon. Members has been achieved.

(viii) The House is working hard to establish the **National Assembly/House of Representatives Radio and Television Station** for better access to Legislature as we committed.

(ix) **On budgetary matters**, we are happy to report that the commencement clause of the 2016 Budget reflects suggestions we made in furtherance of our Agenda to aid budget implementation by the Executive. It says:

“In line with the provisions of Section 318 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 as amended, this Bill would run for a course of 12 months starting from the date it is assented to into law”.

(x) **On our commitment to plug revenue leakages**, the House set up an Ad-hoc Committee to investigate the alleged misuse, under-remittance/non-remittance and expenditure of Internally Generated Revenues by Ministries, Departments and Agencies. The report of the Ad-hoc Committee is awaited with great impatience.

(xi) **On Legislative initiative on the North-East**, the House constituted a **Standing Committee on Refugees, Migrants, Internally Displaced Persons and Initiatives on the North-East Zone**. Furthermore, the House passed a Resolution on Rehabilitation, Reconstruction, Recovery and Development of the North-East Zone of Nigeria.

(xii) To request Mr. President to set up machinery for the establishment of the **NORTH-EAST DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**, and also to facilitate the convening of an International Donor Conference or Summit as soon as possible for the Rehabilitation, Reconstruction,

Recovery and Development of the North-East Zone of Nigeria. In addition, Public Hearing on establishment of a North-East Development Commission has been concluded. The outcome/Report is awaited.

(xiii) **We have made giant strides in the law making:** Law making has continued to be dominant among our three primary functions of law making, representation and oversight. We believe that for the Change Agenda of the Government to be achieved, the legislature must complement government policies and programmes with legislation such as introduction of new laws, review and amendments of existing archaic and obsolete laws.

(xiv) The past legislative session of the House can be considered as one of very high legislative activism compared to earlier periods. During the legislative session – June 9, 2015 – June 9, 2016, a total of **685 Bills** were received **in the House**. The bulk of these Bills, indeed, about 98 per cent, **675** were **Members Bills**, and **10 Executive Bills**. Out of the Bills, **416 are awaiting Second Reading**, **130 Bills have been referred to the Committees**; **3 Bills are awaiting consideration**. It is instructive to observe that **85 of these Bills have been passed by the House** so far. Therefore, I wish to congratulate all of us on this feat that has never been attained.

- The number of Bills introduced in the last one year represents the highest annual consideration of Bills by the House since the return to democratic governance in 1999; therefore, congratulations! All the Bills presented to the House have passed through First Reading. Thanks to the dedication of all of you who realise the urgency of change and are more than prepared to sit in the Chambers from 11: 00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. most legislative days. By this achievement, we have demonstrated to the country and indeed the world out there, that change can only be achieved by positive actions and not by mere talk.

- A major factor in the heightened Bills introduction in the House led to the implementation of one of the elements of our Legislative

Agenda: namely, **Review of the Laws of the Federation**. Early in Session, I inaugurated a Committee comprising renowned experts, jurists, lawyers, civil society advocates and other stakeholders with the DG, National Institute of Legislative Studies as Chairperson. This Committee was charged with the responsibility of reviewing current laws of the country with a view to updating them, and recommending repeal of obnoxious and out dated laws, etc. After exhaustive review of the country's laws and statutes, the Committee submitted two interim reports, with over two hundred and fifty (250) laws reviewed. This has resulted in the unprecedented introduction of 130 Bills, which scaled First Reading on a single day in 2015. And only yesterday, 8th June, 2016, 100 Bills were introduced for First Reading also.

- Let me seize this opportunity to thank all Member of that Committee for their uncommon commitment and patriotism.
- **On the issue of House Resolutions**, the House has done very well in the initiation and consideration of Motions. More Motions were processed in the 2015/2016 Legislative year than the Motions proposed in any other Legislative year since 1999. By June 8, 2016, 530 Motions were introduced, out of which 15 were withdrawn. Significantly also, the bulk of the Motions moved were considered and Resolutions passed accordingly. **Public Petitions** have remained a major tool for citizen's access to the Legislature. **306** Petitions, of course, excluding the ones we received today, were introduced in this Legislative Session and many have been processed.

(xv) **On Sectorial Debates:** In the context of the House Agenda, Sectorial Debates were introduced on various aspects of the Nigerian economies as part of Legislative Initiative to address national problems. The first phase dealt with the Diversification of

the Economy and has been largely concluded.

The House has already begun the novel debate beginning with diversification of the economy. I had explained during the commencement of the debates that the broad objective of the Sectorial Debates is to deepen engagement of honourable Members and the Executive on national development policy issues, and to promote the enactment of appropriate laws to enhance Nigeria's economic growth and development. At the inaugural debate, six Ministers made presentations on the sectors they are overseeing.

The following Ministers made presentations:

Hon. Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism; Hon. Minister of Agriculture; Hon. Minister of Solid Minerals Development; Hon. Minister of Communications; Hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce; and finally, Hon. Minister of Finance. Not only has the prospects of crafting new laws improved, the debates will lead to better oversight performance. And very importantly, they have helped to improve Executive/Legislature relations. Subsequently, other themes will be examined in the course of the debate. The Sectorial Debates, being the first of its kind in Nigeria where specific time is being allocated to debates on various sectors of the economy will be sustained.

(xvi) **E-Parliament: Digitisation and E-Voting, Archiving:**
The House Agenda committed to making E-voting a regular feature of House proceedings.

This is a very important feature of the Legislative Agenda aimed at modernizing the work of the House and creating a paperless and more efficient Parliament. Some progress has been made on the e-Parliament initiative, which will operate on the platform of modern, up-to-date digital technology.

An Advisory Committee on e-Parliament has been set up and it is expected to make recommendations in the implementation of all aspects of e-Parliament in the Second Session of the House. And on May 26th, 2016; the House commenced the process of introducing electronic voting. Forms have

been distributed to individual Members to collate their data ahead of production of e-voting cards to all the 360 Members of the House.

The implication of the new system, hon. Colleagues, let me warn, is that records of each Member's punctuality and voting patterns can easily be accessed by his or her constituents and members of the public. Greater responsibility and accountability is therefore called for on the part of all honourable Members in the discharge of their constitutional responsibilities. Besides, we have also introduced the use of e-mails, as I have said earlier, to send copies of the Notice Paper and Order Paper to honourable Members. Our expectation is that in the Second Legislative Session, electronic methods will be used to send Votes and Proceedings, Reports, Hansards and other Parliamentary documents, to the Members of this House.

No doubt, significant progress has been made on the implementation of the Agenda of improving internal operations and processes. Notwithstanding, some areas remain to be effectively addressed in the Second Session and perhaps beyond.

(xvii) The House commitment is being robustly implemented by the Special Ad-hoc Committee on Constitution Review of the House, headed by the Deputy Speaker. They are currently processing many Bills on alteration of the Constitution, which were referred to it by the House.

(xviii) The 2016 Budget was controversial from the onset but the House handled the controversy with maturity, employing the democratic tools of dialogue, compromise and consensus by which an implementable 2016 Budget was passed and assented to.

(xix) **House's Intervention to Stabilise the Polity:**

(i) The House summoned an emergency meeting on Monday, 16th May, 2016 which is a non-plenary sitting day to discuss deregulation of Petroleum Downstream Sector, with the Hon. Minister of State for Petroleum, Dr. Ibe Kachikwu, who briefed the House on the rationale for

the decision. The House proceedings served to enlighten both the Hon. Members and the entire nation on the contentious issues involved.

(ii) Furthermore, the House invited the leadership of the NLC to a meeting, two days into the strike action embarked upon by the NLC and pleaded for the strike to be called off, which was heeded.

(iii) Only yesterday, June 8, 2016 we met with the leadership of the National Association of Resident Doctors (NARD) in an attempt to force a resolution with relevant executive organs in order to obviate the need for the Association to embark on indefinite national strike capable of causing untold pains and hardship to our constituents.

(iv) Other interventions include our visits to the Internally-Displaced Persons (IDPS) Camps in many parts of Nigeria including Abuja, Adamawa and Edo States.

(v) The House actively participated in several Inter-Parliamentary activities.

(vi) The House is also organising a National Stakeholders Workshop on Legislative Framework for Petroleum Industry Reform in Nigeria to bring all the players in the industry together in order to resolve, one and for all the legislative quagmire and undo the chains that have tied the PIB to legislative darkness.

(vii) **Constituency Matters:** Apart from budgetary support, Members of the House have been very active in constituency relations, which is a critical aspect of our

representative function. The is because of the importance attached to Constituency outreach matters, the House is organizing a National Conference on Political Representation and Constituency Relations to aid effective representation. It is hoped that this conference will proffer legislative and policy solutions on cooperative federalism model and practices. Constituency and zonal intervention programmes and projects require synergy between the Federal State and Local Government Councils in the Federation to ensure sustainability in Nigeria.

9. **Conclusion:** It is clear, that the House has performed creditably in the implementation of its legislative Agenda in the First Session. We must collectively ensure that in the remaining Sessions of our tenure, greater attention is paid to implementing those aspects of the Agenda that are not fully or yet to be implemented. A strong foundation has been laid in the First Session and we have three more Sessions to make a positive impact on the lives of Nigerians through relevant and effective legislation.

The fact that we have started very strong is not enough. We have to finish as strong if not stronger than we have started. As it is said; “the end of a matter is better than the beginning thereof”. That is what is right and that is what we must do. Doing anything less or else would amount to abdication of our sacred mandate as representatives of our people and that of the House as the bastion of democracy.

Hon. Colleagues, on behalf of the Leadership of the House, let me say that we deeply thank you and that the work of change always comes with the urgency that it demands. I want to plead with us that though, as I have earlier said that we have begun very well, but the beginning of a matter is not as important as the end of it. Once again, we have begun very strong and we must end very strong or even stronger than we began, and that can only come with the commitment of all honourable Members. I enjoin you to continue to give us the Leadership your support, and together we will set records that will endure to generations.

On this note, I wholeheartedly thank all of you for your support, solidarity and sacrifices made to achieve effective representation for our people.

May God bless you and the Federal Republic of Nigeria! (Applause)

Hon. Ossy Prestige Chinedu Ehiriodu (Aba North/South): Point of Order!

The Speaker: Who has a Point of Order? Yes; Hon Prestige.

Privileges

Hon. Ossy Prestige Chinedu Ehiriodu: My Point of Order is under Privilege. We have listened to you very attentively and we need to find out if after all this very sweet and wonderful presentation of our one year in this Hallowed Chambers, Members are expecting to hear that at the end of the day we are going to relax our heads haven worked very hard for the past one year (Laughter).

The Speaker: Hon. Olajide, come up with your Point of Order, please.

MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Urgent call on the Federal Government to Investigate the Persistent Earth Tremor Currently been Experienced in Saki, Headquarters of Saki West Local Government in Oyo State

Hon. Olatubosun Olajide Boladale (Atisbo/Saki East/Saki West): My Point of Order is under Order VIII, Rule 46 of the House Rules - Matter of Urgent Public Importance; to call on the Federal Government to Investigate the Persistent Earth Tremor Currently been Experiences in Saki, Headquarters of Saki West Local Government in Oyo State. I move that this matter be considered as a matter of Urgent Public Importance.

I also move that our Rules be suspended for this matter to be considered by the House immediately.

The Speaker: Is there any seconder to the first part of his Motion that we consider the matter as of urgent public importance?

Hon. Bede Eke Uchenna (Aboh Mbaise/Ngor Okpala): I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Olatubosun.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consider the Motion on the Urgent call on the Federal Government to

Investigate the Persistent Earth Tremor Currently been Experienced in Saki, Headquarters of Saki West Local Government in Oyo State, as Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

The Speaker: Is there any seconder to the second leg of the Motion that we suspend our relevant Rules to enable the House consider it immediately?

Hon. Pondi Julius G. (Burutu): I second the Motion that our relevant Rules be suspended in order to take the Motion immediately.

Question put and agreed to.

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

The Speaker: Hon. Olajide, you can now move your Motion.

Hon. Olatubosun Olajide Boladale: The Motion is on the Urgent call on the Federal Government to Investigate the Persistent Earth Tremor Currently been Experienced in Saki, Headquarters of Saki West Local Government in Oyo State.

The House:

Notes that there has been reported case of persistent earth tremor in Saki, the headquarters of Saki –West Local Government Areas of Oyo State;

Also notes that this has been widely reported in the media and the most recent report was by Vanguard Newspaper of Monday, June 6th, 2016;

Aware that anytime the earth vibration occurs, the buildings and other physical structures in the affected areas will shake violently;

Worried that the earth vibration has created a large army of internally displaced persons (IDPs) whom have vacated their homes, farmlands and their places of business;

Also worried that the attendant social dislocation has brought untold hardship on y people as thousands of people are already cut-off from their homes and source of livelihood;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to urgently provide Camps

and reliefs materials for the internally displaced persons so as to ameliorate their suffering;

- (ii) Mandate the Committees on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Environment and Habitat to liaise with Federal Ministry of Environment and other relevant Agencies to investigate the immediate and remote cause(s) of the earth tremor and conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment in the areas affected by the tremor and report back to the House within one week for further legislative action; and

- (iii) Also mandate the Committee on Legislative Compliance to ensure that the above resolution (s) of the House is compiled with.

I so move.

Hon. Bamgbose Joseph H. (Badagry): I second the Motion as moved by Hon. Olatubosun.

The Speaker: I think this Motion is straight forward, so I will put the question.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved to:

- (i) Urge the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) to urgently provide Camps and reliefs materials for the internally displaced persons so as to ameliorate their suffering;
- (ii) Mandate the Committees on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness and Environment and Habitat to liaise with Federal Ministry of Environment and other relevant Agencies to investigate the immediate and remote cause(s) of the earth tremor and conduct an Environmental Impact Assessment in the areas affected by the tremor and report back to the House within one week for further legislative action; and
- (iii) Also mandate the Committee on Legislative Compliance to ensure that the above resolution (s) of the House is compiled with.

(Motion accordingly referred to the Committees on Emergency and Disaster Preparedness, and Environmental and Habitat).

**Need for the Banks to Halt the Retrenchment of
its Staff and for an Immediate Recall of all
those already Sacked**

Hon. Onyereri Chukwudi Victor Jones (Nkwerre/Isu/Nwangele/Njaba): I come under Order VIII, Rules 46 and 48 - *Matters of Urgent Public Importance* on the Need for the Banks to urgently halt further retrenchment of its Staff in Nigeria. I move that this matter be considered as a matter of urgent public importance.

I also seek the leave of the House to set aside relevant Rules in order for me to take this Motion immediately.

Hon. Onyejeocha Nkeiruka (Isuikwuato/Umunneochi): I second the Motion as moved by the Chairman Committee on Banking, Hon. Onyereri.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do consider the Motion on the urgent need for the Banks to halt the retrenchment of its staff and for an immediate recall of all those already sacked as a Matter of Urgent Public Importance.

Hon. Gololo Mohammed (Gamawa): I second the Motion that relevant Rules of the House be suspended to enable the House to consider the Motion immediately.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That Order VIII, Rule 46 be suspended to enable the House consider the Motion immediately.

Hon. Jones Chukwudi V. Onyereri: The Motion is on the urgent need for the Banks to halt the retrenchment of its staff and for an immediate recall of all those already sacked.

The House:

Notes the reports in various Newspapers and in the electronic media of the retrenchment of hundreds of staff by various Banks in the country;

Also notes that one of the reasons given by the Banks was to cut operational costs, but believes that the overall interests of the nation ought to be taken into consideration on issues of retrenchment of staff;

Conscious of the provisions of Section 20 of the Labour Act, Cap L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 that in the event of redundancy;

- (a) The employer shall inform the trade union or workers' representative concerned of the reasons for and extent of the anticipated redundancy;
- (b) The principle of "last in, first out" shall be adopted in the discharge of the particular category of workers affected, subject to all factors of relative merit, including skill, ability and reliability; and
- (c) The employer shall use his best endeavours to negotiate redundancy payments to any discharged workers who are not protected by regulations made under subsection (2) of this section;

Aware that most of the retrenched staff received their letters of retrenchment upon reporting for work on the days they were retrenched;

Believes that despite the acknowledged operational business environment in the country at the moment, resort to retrenchment of staff will only worsen the hardships of the staff and their dependents;

Acknowledges the call by the Federal Government on Banks and other organisations to halt the current gale of retrenchments to allow negotiations on ways to ameliorate the operational difficulties they are faced with;

Resolves to:

- (i) Urge Banks and other organisations that had either retrenched their staff or are planning to do so to halt the plan and recall all staff who had so far been retrenched;
- (ii) Mandate the Committees on Banking and Currency, and Labour, Employment and Productivity and Federal Character to intervene in the matter and report back to the House within two (2) weeks for further legislative action.

I so move.

The Speaker: The Deputy Chairman, Rules and Business Committee.

Hon. Olabode Ayorinde (Owo/Ose): I second the Motion ably moved by the Chairman, Banking and Currency Committee.

Hon. Jones Chukwudi V. Onyereri: Mr. Speaker, our workers are confronting the wave of lay-offs in the Banking Sector with their devastating social implication. Giving the current economic situation in the country, we are urging the banks to stop further lay-off of staff so as not to worsen their already bad financial situation.

I am aware that some may be tempted to argue that government has no business in directing the banks on how to treat their workers, but I beg to differ. It is my view that it is the government's responsibility to protect the interest of her citizens anywhere in the country, including the work force.

It is the responsibility of government to step into any situation where the rights of workers are adversely affected, especially in this current situation as it affects the bank. No responsible government will fold her hands while the citizens are subjected to undue hardship. Mr. Speaker, this is also enshrined in our Constitution - the fundamental objective of directive principles of State policy.

It is the responsibility of government to defend the security and the welfare of its citizens. The security also includes job security. The welfare also includes the packages that this people receive even in their various places of work. Sovereignty, I know belongs to the people and if sovereignty belongs to the people from which government through the Constitution derives all its powers and authority.

You will recall that we have found ourselves in economic crisis where these same banks for the sake of argument that people now say that these are private entities, had to do a quick rush to a government agency set up by government - the Central Bank of Nigeria and the same people received Tax payers money, received public funds in order to bail their private entity.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall for purposes of argument that this has also occurred in other climes. You will recall that even in America when they had crisis, these same banks resulted to sacking of the staff. I recall that the Chairman of the Federal Reserves stepped in quickly to say that this is wrong. You are enjoying bail-out funds. The essence of giving you bail-out fund, is that two things come into play. On the one hand is to safeguard depositors' fund, and on the other hand is to make funds available so that they will not retrench people and to make credit accessible even to the private sector. These same banks used this bail out to also improve

their luxury lives and the American government stepped in to say no; this was not the essence of the bail out.

Here we are in this Hallowed Chambers; we supported the government in order to give out public funds to bail out these private entities as it where, in order to safeguard these same people they are about to retrench. The argument is that even the processes of retrenchment are wrong. Why would you retrench people at conflict variance with an extant provision of the Labour Act? That cannot be sustained.

What we are saying as a responsible House is that let us first put a halt to this further retrenchment of staff of these banks, considering the situation that we have all found ourselves in. We are in a major economic quagmire and we cannot continue to have very adverse social implication as a result of this retrenchment.

I believe this Motion should be passed, so that it will authorise them to first put a halt to it and then allow the relevant Committees to look into the matter.

Hon Leonard Okuweh Ogor (Isoko North/Isoko South): Let me thank the Mover and author of this Motion for coming up with a Motion that affects the workers of this great nation. Unfortunately, he has discussed the symptoms, rather than to look into the main issue, which is the ailment.

I state with all emphasis that I sympathise with the labour unions, workers and the Nigerian people. We must first and foremost appreciate that the primary responsibility of every government *vis-à-vis* the provision of Section 14 (2) is the security and welfare of the citizens. I find myself in a situation where we have to plan from day one, so that we can secure employment for our people, put in policies that will guide and make sure we rejuvenate and reactivate the economy, but unfortunately today, we are unable to plan in the interest of the Nigerian populace.

I say this because I sit here on a daily basis and will be going into a sectorial debate, as much as I will not want to put the cart before the horse, it is important as a government that we must have an economic policies that will guide the nation, labour market and the employment sector, so that at the end, when you are planning you know definitely that you are planning to succeed. Here my Colleague having the interest of the Nigerian workers at heart is saying that the banking institutions are firing people. It is not only the banking institutions; it goes far beyond the banking institutions. The whole economy is in a comatose.

The economic itself clearly as you know is going into a major recession. I say this clearly because you can see the exchange rate dropping on a daily basis. As I speak, the exchange rate is already three hundred and seventy one naira, and by tomorrow, I do not know what is going to be. The government must wake up and come out with a policy and have some level of economic policies that will salvage us and this is the essence of everything about the government. This fire brigade approach will not solve any problem because what we are going to say is; take money and throw into the market. No; this is not governance.

I therefore challenge the government that it is their core responsibility to come out with basic economic policies that will salvage our situation. If by tomorrow we will go to another sector and the next day to another sector, probably we will start coming to the National Assembly and people will be calling and asking us why we are sacking people in the National Assembly because he that pays the piper dictates the tone. Go into your investigation and I give you the privilege and all the support, but the taste of the pudding is clearly in the eating. The government must wake up to its responsibility. I charge this government to wake up and come out with economic policies that will bring us out of this situation.

Hon. Olabode Ayorinde: I support this Motion because by the time the banks will come and face the Committees, they should come with their first quarter profits. You will see that what each of these banks has made as profits in the first quarter of this year should be enough for them to sustain the shock of the second quarter. If you go to the website of most of these banks now, as they are retrenching, there is advertisement for contract staff - bringing graduates in as slaves in these banks.

When we join the banks in those days as School Certificate holders, we grew with the banks; we wrote professional examinations, but now, they are sacking people and instantly recruiting and giving them condition that they will work for two years and be sacked.

We have a duty to protect our children. If we are going to work in an economic environment and you are not ready to finance production that can give a sustainable development to the economy, you are only ready to finance marketing. When you are financing buying and selling, as our banks are doing today, you are financing employment in foreign nations and bringing in goods within ninety-days and you want them to pay back. There is much to do in the banking industry. The retrenchment must be halted as we are not in *banana republic* and the

Central Bank should explain to us. If banks have made so much within the first quarter and their profit margin in the second quarter, why are they rushing to sack? Only this week, the Federal government has directed after the Federal Executive Council (FEC) that capital project be released and when these capital monies are released to the contractors, it goes through the banking industry again. So, why are they in a hurry to sack their employees?

It is on this note that I am in full support that this Motion be passed with the speed of light.

The Speaker: It sounds so much that we will address the sanctity of contracts and the requirement in law that you cannot force a servant on an unwilling master. Hon Atunwa maybe you can help us out.

Hon. Atunwa Razak Olatunde (Ilorin West/Asa): I take the heed of your last comment and let us begin from the legal aspect. As far as the banks are concerned, the contract between the Bank and its employees has a certain degree of legal sanctity. It is a contract between one person to another. It is not a public contract between the government and the employee. The government is not the employer and not privy to that contract. Therefore, the government cannot determine their contract one way or the other.

Secondly, let us be clear that this country operates a free market economy. It is not a managed one and not an economy where the government dictates to the private sector what it can or cannot do.

Thirdly, if we are serious about those who sadly are losing their job on a daily basis, then we must be serious about our economy and our micro-economic policy as a whole. This Parliament passed a Budget a few months ago – An Appropriation Act, which is a commendable Act and a good one. It was signed over a month ago, but till today, there is little or no injection of funds into our economy.

When you have stagnant economy, it grows to recession on a quarterly basis. A month after the Budget has been signed; and a month to recourse to one third of a quarter, which means that this quarter already, has been wasted. If there is no intentional fund into the economy, then the multiplying effect cannot arise. If there is multiplying effect, there can be no trickle down into the economy. Let us be serious in this country.

I say this with all molecules of honesty and integrity. Let us be serious. Let us not go back at the bank who finds it unsustainable to hold on to employees who cannot be paid; who are not generating income for the banks. How on earth does the Minister sit in his office and then begins to dictate

to free market banks to say that they cannot retrench people who are not being productive? Why does the Minister sit in his office and not deal with the economic policies of his government but now interfering with the operations of the bank? Let this government be serious about the plight of the people of this country. Let this government be very serious about the intolerable cost of living and the skyrocketing inflation in this country. Let this government be serious about the recession that we are in and come up with a very viable economic policy that will ensure growth in our system. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Abdulmumin Jibrin (Bebeji/Kiru): Mr. Speaker, I am also going to speak in line with what Hon. Atunwa just tried to explain to the House but again while making a point about this issue we need to show a bit of sensitivity to those that are losing their jobs at this time. The point is that few years ago until this moment that the banks started retrenching they were employing staff; months after months their employments were taking place.

As far as I can recall there has not been any time in this House that the Chairman Banking and Currency has commended the banks and asked one simple question; why are they employing massively in that order? Now that they have started retrenchment, common sense implies that we engage the banks and ask them why they are retrenching.

By bringing it to the Floor of the House we are escalating the issue and we are being judgemental. I think the Chairman on Banking or the Banking Committee has the responsibility to go at the level of the Committee, engage the banks and understand why at this point they are retrenching their staff. On this ground, I will not support this Motion and I am calling on our Colleagues to please trade carefully on this matter.

The Banking Chairman can withdraw this Motion, go to the level of his Committee and engage them and let us know. It is important that you hear from them and know why they are dropping their staff, and then you will understand where the problem is coming from.

Hon. Ahmad Usman Baba Kaita (Kankia/Ingawa/Kusada): Mr. Speaker, I will like to align with what Hon. Abdulmumini has just said that we should trade carefully on this issue. It is very easy to just sit down and start criticizing that the government has not done this and that. We all know where we are from. We all know what this particular government met on ground (*Interruptions*).

We all know the mess that this current government has inherited. Furthermore, we know that even within the banking system that there were a lot of corrupt practices then that were sustaining massive employment and are no longer realistic today. For example, we had over 25,000 workers that were paid through the bank when they practically do not exist. They were not there; the government officials and the banks connived and were making profits out of these money.

Again, just like what Hon. Atunwa has said, we cannot determine here who they employ, when and how. Also, we cannot again that we can put a caveat on when they employ or when not employing. I think we should be very careful. I align with the submission of Hon. Abdulmumini that we invite them first of all, and have a complete appraisal of the situation. If it is something that we can sympathize with the bank, then we will take it.

The fact is that we will be living in self-denial here if we just sit down knowing fully well the economic reality of this country, and start asking them to employ or not to employ; that is not true and we cannot do that. Let us be very careful of what we do here especially as regards to this current government. We are trying to salvage the mess that we inherited in this office, so nobody should politicize this issue. Let us see this issue in the light of the current realities.

Hon. Jagaba Adams Jagaba (Kachia/Kagarko): Mr. Speaker, the truth of the matter is that there is hunger in this nation; the people that we are representing are wallowing in hunger and poverty. When we come to sensitive issues like this, I would not like party sentiments to be attached to the issues. Yes, the banking sector is sacking and I sympathize because these people are from our Constituencies, we have to sympathize with them.

The fact still remains that the environment that was conducive for them to employ; do they still operate under the same environment? We are all aware that the Treasury Single Account (TSA) issue has brought issues in the banks. Now most of the banks do not even warehouse the revenue being generated by government. You will discover that their financial standard has virtually loosened and I am happy by the quotation made by Mr. Speaker. You quoted a section of law that I am not quite aware of until now.

You cannot enforce a staff on employer when he has no capacity to pay. Mr. Speaker, we agree that the economy is bad and that the revenue that is coming in has reduced drastically, but the fact remains that it is the duty of the government to inject

life into these banks. It is also the duty of the government to inject life into Nigerians because that is number one duty of government. So, I am urging the government to do whatever it takes to revamp the economy to make our banks strong, so that they can employ. If the banks employ, it is the government that can provide environment for that employment.

On this note, I encourage my Colleagues to please look at this issue critically to make sure that this Motion either needs to be readdressed or withdrawn or we kill it. I want to conclude by saying that there is an adage in Hausa that says; *Mberai de saita, dawa-dawa de wai*; meaning that, if you accuse the domestic rat for stealing your local *maggi*, you have to accuse the local *maggi* for smelling too much to attract the rat. So, government needs to do more to reduce these crises that we are facing.

Hon. Onyejeocha Nkeiruka: I agree with the submissions from most of the Members. I also agree totally with the submission of the Chairman of Justice. But I got interested when the mover of the Motion is the Chairman of Banking and Financial Institutions Committee. So for me, I sat back here saying for him to move this Motion, it means that there are some issues to be addressed, so I am coming from that angle to plead with my hon. Colleagues to allow this Motion to pass.

First, he has the power to invite people, but he is asking for certain resolutions from this House, and of course, all of us know what the Rules are. I also know that few days ago, the Senate invited the Minister for Labour because of his comments that the banks that retrench or are retrenching people should be sanctioned or their licenses might be withdrawn. So, what he simply means is that from the government's angle, they are taking it seriously and then in the Green Chambers here, the Chairman of Banking Committee is bringing a Motion to that effect. So, I believe that the way to go is for us to allow this Motion pass for obvious reasons.

This is because for the Minister of Labour to make some comments or issue some statements, it means that there are issues, and to every issue that we have, we should ask critical questions. If you are retrenching people, are you following due process? Is due process being followed? So, it is not issue about, oh yes, we know that banking is a private institution, and that it is privately owned. I agree to that. I agree that we cannot regulate for them. We cannot ask them to employ or retrench.

I believe that we are all adults and where a child is crying and pointing his or her finger to a direction, it means that something is there. For Minister of Labour to say something and then the Chairman of

Banking Committee is raising issues, there must be something there. So, he needs the backing of this House to pass a resolution on the prayers that he has asked, so that at the end of the day, Nigerians would know that we are rational. We are neither saying that you cannot operate your business nor are we saying that you can do whatever you have to do. I believe that all of us here are adults and so we should look at issues critically and there should be no sentiment.

I therefore support this Motion and I believe that my hon. Colleagues would support it. This is because there are some silent issues to be addressed when it gets to that Committee with the backing of this House.

Hon. Olayonu Olarinoye Tope (Ifelodun/Offa/Oyun): I actually appreciate my brother Hon. Jagaba but towards the tail end in his own contributions become something else that I would not use any proverb relating to that again. Let us face reality. Some people changed party because of their principles and some people changed their principles because of their party. If you changed your party because of your principle that means you are going to play the game beyond party levels. (*Interruption*)

We should say the reality. We should go beyond party sentiment. There are some things that need to be looked into that the principle and the policy of the government of the day that is actually bringing the economy to the level in which we find ourselves should be properly looked into. Money in circulation and circulation in money and life in banks comes from the government itself – this is reality. Why are we now talking issue of banking retrenching? Is the government policy itself that is bringing life into the banks? Are they well looked into?

In a situation in which some of the banks are folding up because of the principle of the TSA in which there is no life in those banks and the circulation of those monies are not there for the common Nigerians to survive, is what we Nigerians are passing through at this time. Where banks are not well reckoned with, and the circulation of the economy itself is being kept, and the Central Bank becomes the commercial bank in the policy of Nigeria of today, how do we go by it?

Retrenchment will surely come on board and it is now that the House must take the bull by the horn and let us go beyond party levels. We should all have our principle either change because of the policy of the party or change your party because of their principle?

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate you seriously for this wonderful opportunity given to me to say my mind

that we need to address issues in this Chamber. As said by Mr. Speaker 'I am the Speaker of the Eighth Assembly, but then, I am a party man of APC but a principled Speaker of the entire Eighth Assembly of all the Members', in which that is his principle and policy! Thank you very much.

The Speaker: I am already intimidated by Hon. Tope. I do not think any Member would want to speak after that brilliant presentation. We will take amendments. The first is from Hon. Danburam.

Hon. Danburam Abubakar Nuhu (Municipal): I would not have moved this amendment and I would not have been standing here to be seen to oppose the Chairman of the Committee, which I belong. I also stand to support him, but the honest thing is that in this Chamber, we need to know that for the people of Nigeria, the last resort that they have is the House.

For banks, if they are in trouble, what they have as their last resort is the Central Bank of Nigeria whom they go to as the lender of last resort and Central Bank of Nigeria will support and bail them out. I am sure that it is given that background that the mover of the Motion who is the Chairman of the Committee decided to bring this Motion before the House.

I share with Members who have spoken before especially on the issue of the economy; about what needs to be done and on the issue that banks are under the private sector. (*Interruption*)

The Speaker: Hon. Danburam, please just move your amendment or I will help you to move it. Hon. Danburam's amendment is that the referral to the Committee on Federal Character should be expunged as banks, institution and private entities are not public entities. Is there any seconder? Is it part of the prayers? It is not even part of the prayers; he cleverly used this one to enable him make contributions as a former banker. The next amendment is from Hon. Simon Arabo.

Hon. Simon Yakubu Arabo (Kauru): Mr. Speaker, I urge that we amend the prayers by an additional prayer. The prayer that I want to add to the prayers in the Motion read thus:

Urge the Federal Government to review its economic and monetary policies so as to free funds for economic activities.

The Speaker: Hon. Chris Azubogu, please second.

Hon. Chris Emeka Ifeanyi Azubogu (Nnewi North-South/Ekwusigo): I second the amendment ably proposed by Hon. Arabo.

Amendment put and negated.

The Speaker: The next amendment is from Hon. Henry Nwawuba. Hon. Henry, move your amendment.

Hon. Nwawuba Henry Ndochukwu (Mbaitoli/Ikeduru): Mr. Speaker, as a practitioner in this industry, I wish that I had been given time to contribute to the debate myself, but be that as it may, my amendment is that we should urge banks to focus on the mass market. They should de-emphasize the big ticket transactions of corporate banking and public sector banking to retail banking, which is the mass market banking.

Indeed, if banks were to refocus in retail market, they would be employing more people today than sacking of staff. Therefore, my amendment is that banks should refocus from public sector banking to retail banking, so that they can expand their work base. I so submit.

The Speaker: Any seconder? Hon. Nasiru Ali Ahmed.

Hon. Nasiru Ali Ahmed (Nassarawa): I second the amendment proposed by Hon. Henry Nwawuba.

Amendment put and negated.

The Speaker: The last amendment is from Hon. Samson.

Hon. Okwu Samson (Obi/Oju): Mr. Speaker, I support the Motion but I move an amendment that the Motion be referred to the Committees on Labour and Productivity, and Finance in order to ascertain the labour policy in this country.

The Speaker: Any seconder? Hon. Kingsley.

Hon. Ebenyi Kingsley Sunny (Enugu East/Isi-Uzo): I second the amendment as proposed by Hon. Samson.

Amendment put and negated.

Main Question on the Motion put and negated.

SECTORAL DEBATES

Diversification of the Nigerian Economy: Real Sector Development

The Speaker: Hon. Colleagues, the tenth Order of the day is commencement of Sectoral Debates on the Diversification of the Nigerian Economy: Real Sector Development, Pursuant to Order XVI of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives.

Hon. Members may wish to recall that various Ministers had earlier briefed the House on the activities of their Ministries on the diversification of the economy. I now invite the Leader of the House to move that the Sectoral Debates do commence.

Hon. Jibril Umar Buba: Mr. Speaker, Pursuant to Order XVI of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives, I move that the House do commence Sectoral Debates on the Diversification of the Nigerian Economy with reference to real sector development.

Hon. Goni Bukar Lawan: I second the Motion ably moved that the House do commence Sectoral Debates on the Diversification of the Nigerian Economy, Real Sector Development, pursuant to Order XVI of the Standing Orders of the House of Representatives.

The Speaker: In the absence of any Principal Officer who wanted to take the first shot, I would start recognizing Members in the order which their names appeared in the Register. The first contributor will be Hon. Abubakar Chika Adamu.

Hon. Adamu Abubakar Chika (Shiroro/Rafi/Munya): We have listened with keen interest to the presentations by the various Ministers of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. I am disturbed by one issue and it is the issue of social investment programme. None of all the Ministers that came here briefed us on the issue of social investment programme.

You may wish to recall that this House based on the faith that we have on Mr. President approved ₦500 billion, which is about 7.5 *per cent* of the total annual budget of 2016 for social investment. We all did this because we trust Mr. President. But as I am speaking today, we do not have framework to spend 7.5 *per cent* of our total budget. We hear a lot. For example, it was said that we would have what is called N-power teach; it is expected to recruit about 500,000 *Ad-hoc* teachers for two years. These teachers would be paid ₦23,000 each. We knew that there are a lot of gaps in the teaching profession, but most of these schools are in the States.

I knew that the President appointed SSA on Social Protection and the process is domiciled in the office of the Vice President. The first problem is that there was not any Need Assessment from the various States so as to know the teachers gap that existed in every State.

Secondly, part of what they would use the ₦500 billion for is conditional cash transfer. Conditional cash transfer as the name implies is money given to people based on certain conditions. In the conditional cash transfer, we have what is called the demand and supply sides. The supply side is provided by the government, be it school or hospital. This is because on the school side, you must ensure that the children of those you want to give that money to go to school. On the hospital side of it, all the pregnant women and their children must accept all the various kinds of immunizations and the married women should go to antenatal in our basic Health Centers. We have not seen that framework too.

Thirdly, we have what is called N-power knowledge. N-power knowledge is expected to train about 25,000 people on various jobs and so many of them. Here we are, allowing our budget to go; 7.5 *per cent* without framework. What is supposed to be done? I expected that the Executive from the beginning of this legislative year should have provided us with a law so as to use that money under a particular agency. I was among the architect of public works in SURE-P and you can see today, despite the fact that public work at the end of the Sure-P was domiciled with the National Directorate on Employment it has gone down the drain.

I expect that we should not allow this to go like that. We have started in Nigeria from what we called laptop technocrat, now it is imagined we are going to have I-pod technocrat. We all know these. A lot of us here have cognate experience in administration and management. Sometimes, the Executive see Legislators as just mere people who are opportunists. We have come through the power of the people because we can convince them on other things. No! We know these jobs. We all have track records.

I want to tell you that even the school feeding programme has started in Kaduna State. You engage in school feeding programme only when there are two variables. First is that you have enough facility but you do not have enrollment. Secondly, when there is malnutrition in the children, you will then engage in the school feeding programme. But here we are in a country where the facilities are not available and we are injecting public fund into school feeding. Go to Kaduna State, after introduction of the school feeding, if you go to a class where you

have about 100 pupils, they now have about 200 pupils in a class. They eat only and sleep or go home. We have to look at this intervention critically and pally as Legislators with the Executive to ensure that this is done properly. Where we did not do this and refuse to get it right, we are creating job for EFCC in the future because that money may end up being wasted.

The second issue I want to talk on is the agricultural sector. When the Minister of Agriculture came here, he talked about agricultural extension workers, and that also needs to be revived critically.

The third is the issue of power sector. Today, we invest in companies. Now, power generation has fallen at an average of 3,590 megawatts as presented. We now have a gap of 28,000 megawatts. No investor would come to a nation where we do not have adequate electricity. Nobody would site his industry in a nation that does not have adequate electricity. Our power generation has been sold but those that bought it as I am speaking to you have not added a single megawatt to the power generation. We are left as legislators with financing transformers in our various Local Governments. When a transformer blows up, the company cannot replace it, but they collect their tariff from the citizens. Then, it is the politicians that would be called upon from the local community to replace this transformer. We need to do something! If these people cannot take care of power generation and distribution, the government should not waste time in taking it over.

The Speaker: Please, we should be mindful of time. The next speaker will be Hon. Rotimi Agunsoye. (*No response*)

The next speaker will be followed by Hon. D. C. Hosea.

Hon. Hosea Danasabe Charles (Gashaka/Kurmi/Sardauna): Mr. Speaker, I commend your effort for this laudable initiative and I wish to contribute to this Sectorial Debate on diversification of the economy. We have been talking about diversification of the economy. The phrase *diversification of the economy* has become a household name in this administration. It sounds like a National Anthem that we sing every day or the morning prayers we observe before commencement of our sittings. However, if you have a critical look at the 2016 Appropriation Act, you will discover that not much has been done in these areas that have been earmarked by the government in the 2016 Appropriation.

Let me talk about Power. Power is one of the resources that we can explore to generate more revenue for this country; but we have been depending

much on gas, which also related to the crude oil and we all know that the crude oil has really failed us. We need to also diversify into other sources of energy like the hydropower Dams.

We have Dams such as Dandikowa Dam and Mambila Hydropower Dam. These are Dams that can contribute positively to our economy; but yet, not much has been appropriated into these areas. Talking of Mambila Hydropower Dam that is capable of generating about 3,050 Megawatts alone, it has only ₦400 million in the 2016 Appropriation. There are many other areas that need to be looked into. We have also Karshimbila multi-purpose Dam, which has already been completed but yet to be commissioned. It is in Takum in Taraba State. If this Dam is commissioned, obviously, it will contribute positively to our economy.

Other area that I also want to talk about is the area of Solid Minerals. Not much has been appropriated to the Solid Minerals and there are a lot of illegal miners mining our Solid Minerals in this country that are not being checked. There is need for us to map out strategies to ensure that we arrest the situation, and adequate fund should be provided for mining in this country.

I also want to talk about Tourism. There are many countries today in the world that are depending only on Tourism as their main source of income and they are doing very well. We have a lot of tourism potentials in this country that are yet to be explored. For example, we have the Gasaka Gunti Park, which is the largest Park in Africa, and nothing has been done to bring it to an international standard; we need to look into this area too. We have Mambila Plateau with good serene and good tourism facilities that can attract investors, yet, nothing is being done to bring this into limelight.

Also Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about Agriculture. The problem that we have in this country as regard to agriculture is that most farmers do not have access to or do not have the facilities to mechanized farming. Most of our farmlands have a lot of trees that need to be cleared, but all these involve finance. I want to remind us or take us back to the era of General Babangida's administration, where he introduced what we call NALDA, i.e. (National Agricultural Land Development Authority). Land were acquired for farmers, cleared and prepared, ready for planting and were leased out to Farmers at subsidised rates. Also, farm inputs were provided for farmers at subsidised rates and that made many people to go into farming. I want to crave the indulgence of this House to advise the government to look into these areas, clear land for the farmers, provide seedlings, provide farm inputs at

subsidised rates and that will actually boost our agricultural production.

Therefore, I crave the indulgence of this House to encourage the government as a matter of urgency, declare a state emergency in the areas of Power, Tourism, Solid Minerals and Agriculture. The House should also encourage the President to submit a Supplementary Budget in these areas in order to spur the economy.

Hon. Pwajok Edward Gyang (Jos South/Jos East): Mr. Speaker, I will speak on only a few areas, starting with Solid Minerals. We listened to the presentation of the Minister of Solid Minerals Development and I was surprised because I am from Plateau State, that he did not mention the issue of reclamation of our abandoned mining combs, which have become a death trap to both people and animals. I think the Ministry will do well, if they should go back and revisit that issue. This is because land that was agriculturally viable has now been rendered waste because of mining activities that sustained the economy of this nation years back. So, the Ministry of Solid Minerals Development should go back and factor in the issue of reclamation of abandoned mining fields in its programme.

Also, the Minister mentioned that only 300,000 Dollars equivalent was spent last year or is it this year in the budget for mining exploration. This is scandalous when we compare with the examples that he gave of Ghana, Senegal and other countries that spent over 120 million Dollars on exploration. The buck stops at the Ministers table. They will present the budget to the National Assembly, if we increase the budget, they will say we are doing budget padding. So, we think that in engaging the Executive, they ought to know that this is a very important aspect of Solid Minerals; that exploration must be given the importance that it deserves.

Then, on the issue of the economy, let us look at the figures. The Minister of Finance told us that government spends about ₦165 billion monthly on wage bills. We just went through a Motion that was thrown out, where the banks are threatening to lay off workers. This is because they cannot sustain the payment of their salaries and other expenditures that they meet. With the way we are going in this country, one day, government will also be faced with the problem of not being able to pay its own workers, because if we are paying ₦165 billion monthly on wage bill how sustainable is that and what are we earning as a country to be able to sustain that kind of wage bill?

We should be very vigilant as a Parliament. When the Ministers come back either to defend their

Budget or the President lays the Budget on the Table in line with the Fiscal Responsibility Act and other enabling laws that we have, let us look at the target that they set this year and also in the Medium Term Framework interrogating them to see whether they have performed or they have not performed. This is because the Minister of Finance told us that last year the Federal Government spent about ₦64 billion on travelling, but that this year they will try their best to ensure that they save ₦23 billion from travelling. Let us take them up on that to see truly whether they have been able to save ₦23 billion or any money at all from the savings. In that way, we would know whether we are achieving or not achieving.

Also, I thought the Minister of Finance would have given more emphasis on growth. If you see page 16 of her presentation on the issue of growth, they only mentioned boosting the quality and scope of government infrastructure, removing the opportunity and incentive for corruption in the balancing government finances to stabilise the fiscal picture. How will they reflect the economy? Everybody that spoke here on a Motion of the Banks laying-off workers spoke about the need for government to do the needful, and for government to reflect the economy. The Minister told us that the problem of Nigeria is that, more money is in the hands of the rich and the rich only save the money, but if you empower the poor, the poor spend money and it is when he spends money that the economy will become more richer and vibrant, but she did not tell us any road map or any plan by government to spend money to empower poor Nigerians, so that the economy will become rich.

In other countries, people, Ministers and Government have made names in how they spend money. We have heard of the Marshal plan in the US. It was one Minister called George Marshal that brought about an economic policy to spend money on the poor and that was how the American economy was revived after the Second World War. Joe Mina Kings the economist brought about reflective known economy; all these arm chair economy, this is the time for them to talk about empowering the poor masses of Nigerians, those that have been pauperised because we have a very powerful economic ingredient; that is our population; we are almost 180 million. If we can empower Nigerians, the economy will grow and we would be able to sustain not only our economy but Africa.

Lastly, one other thing that was missing in the entire six presentations was lack of statistics. We have the Bureau of Statistics, and Office of Accountant General of the Federation but nobody gave us any statistics. We are saying that we employ people; do we really know how many people are unemployed in Nigeria? If government says that they

are going to do like the Speaker said, feeding programme or pay the unemployed some stipends of ₦5,000, how many people are unemployed? Would we not be short-changing so many millions of Nigerians? Let us look at these polices again and ensure that we have statistics fathomed in our economic planning so that no Nigerian should be left behind in planning for the economy of this country. Thank you for the opportunity to contribute in this Sectoral Debate.

Hon. Namdas Abdulrazak Sa'ad (Mayo Belwa/Ganye/Jada/Toungo): I will not take much of our time here. I will only re-echo what the previous speaker said about Solid Minerals. It is indeed known that Solid Minerals are rivals only by Agricultural Products in importance to our ways of life, but certainly even when the Minister came here, he pointed out that Solid Minerals is largely deposited in Nigeria, but the problem is that in 2015, it contributed only 0.33% to Nigerian's GDP compared to what happened in 4.5% GDP in the 60s. It means that as we are moving forward, we are contributing less and we are not doing much. We need the diversification more because countries like South Africa actually relied on Solid Minerals and their economy is getting stronger and stronger by the day.

I want to suggest that this government should pay serious attention on Solid Minerals because in the North Central and North East, we have large deposit of these Solid Minerals all over, and once we take our attention to that, I think this country will move forward. In any case, I think it is even time for Members of the Legislature to pay much attention to Solid Minerals during appropriation. Let us sit down and appropriate funds to them and see how we can legislate in order to move the Solid Minerals Sector very well. This is because it is the only one that rivals on Agricultural. This is my little contribution. Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

The Speaker: Hon. Raji. (No response)
Minority Leader, are you set for your contribution?

Hon. Leonard Okuweh Ogor: No; it is on Tuesday.

The Speaker: It is all right, you will talk on Tuesday.

Hon. Ayodeji Joseph? Hon. Yakubu Abiodun?
Hon. Sadiq Ibrahim: Hon. Yusuf Buba? (No response)

Hon. Festus Omoni, please.

Hon. Sodaguno A. Festus Omoni (Ogbia): I am here to contribute my little quota to this Sectoral Debate on the area of Tourism and Trade Investment into Nigeria. When we are talking about Tourism, a lot of people do not understand the importance of Tourism in any country. Somebody has spoken about Tourism here, but I want to say that if we are to go into Tourism proper, the area of power; that is infrastructure; everything that has to do with infrastructure of a country has to be taken into consideration, and what we are having today is not much to be reckoned with.

Somebody said that oil is a curse. I believe oil is a blessing to this country and we still have that resource to be able to use it to launch every other thing in Nigeria to where we want to be. The Ministers of Power and Transport have to be up and doing to do the needful and ensure that Tourism is taken seriously in this country.

Also, the National Assembly should rise to the occasion of looking into foreign travels in the area of going outside to attract investors. Why am I saying this? In our Budget, a lot of MDAs put into their Budget about Foreign travels and we have to ensure that we ask them at the next Budget defence for them to show how successful these Foreign Missions are to Nigeria in the area of Foreign Direct Investments. Why I am saying this? We are talking of diversification, and if we go outside to attract investors, how successful are they? How many investors come into Nigeria from this Foreign Travels, especially today that our economy needs all the Foreign Exchange that we need to boost it?

Also, we should look into the area of our partnership with China. Today, Nigeria and I am quoting from what we have here: *Nigeria import dependence has grown significantly over the years, total trade merchandise import increased from 8.7billion in 2000 to 48 billion in 2015 and it is only fuel that constitutes about 94% of total export.* That is what we are doing. If we take the other aspect of it, we will find out that we are losing. We take our partnership with China. China for us is 23.8 per cent, India 6.5 per cent and we find out that China has more trade into Nigeria than we have; that is imports.

We have to make sure that we guard against all these dumping into Nigeria. We have a responsibility to Nigerians to make sure that we boost what is happening in Nigeria Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs) to make sure that we help them to grow our economy.

Hon. Amuda Abubakar Garba Kannike (Ilorin East/Ilorin South): Mr. Speaker, it is paradoxical that agriculture that was the pioneer sector that developed

the economy of this country is down there now in the rating of what they contribute to the GDP of this nation. In the 60s, agriculture was contributing about 60 *per cent* to our Gross Domestic Products (GDP). As far back as 2012, this went down as low as 30 *per cent* and it slides down further every subsequent year. It is the real reason we have found ourselves in this situation.

We all know that the situation with the global oil market is what has caught up with us. The mistake of this nation and I dare say that the mistake of our past leaders is that we did not sustain agriculture and we did not move agriculture from subsistence level to commercial level. Now we do not want to blame people; we are in a situation right now. We must diversify this economy. Agriculture still remains the *nomi*ro uno option to where we are right now. So, I want to speak to agriculture.

The problem with agriculture in this nation was well elucidated by the Hon. Minister when he came. He talked about a lot of things, but the most important thing that he did not talk about and we must look at in agriculture is the fact that as a nation, we must do a geochemical analysis of our peripheral soil. The basic ingredient in agriculture is the soil that we have. Any nation that is serious about agriculture must have a mapping that is well researched of the profile of the nutrient across the geo-political zones.

What this does for us is that first, it tells us the crops that will do well in these geo-political zones. Secondly, it will tell us the necessary fertilizer protocol that will be needed to augment the deficit in the nutrient profile of the soil in these geo-political zones. We need to have that as a nation. So, I think that is one important tool that the Ministry of Agriculture must liaise with the relevant Ministry maybe Ministry of Environment, where the expertise domiciles, so that they can have a mapping of the geo-chemical analysis of our soil.

The next thing is that we have an issue, which the Minister rightly said about extension service. He talked about the ratio; that the ratio of the extension services to one extension worker to 10,000 farmers. I am even more concern that even with the one to 10,000 ratio; we have extension workers who are obsolete in knowledge; that further compromises the situation. They have not been retrained. The last time most of these extension workers had any training at all was probably decades ago. So, what they keep selling really is obsolete ideas in farming.

So, we need to first of all retrain our very small number of extension workers, so that they can be in tune with contemporary skills in modern agriculture

that can galvanise us into very successful commercial farming. We can then increase the number, so that the ratio will not be that small because these extension workers are the presumed change agents, and if you do not send the well skilled change agents in their right number to the field, there will not be any change at all. And we so much need this agricultural change to galvanise this economy.

The next thing we must talk to under agriculture is agricultural financing. This is the serious mitigant against diversification of our economy. On agricultural financing right now, the Commercial Banks in this nation are just doing a bare 3 to 4 *per cent* of their loan portfolio, giving it to agriculture. Agriculture - the industry that employs 60 *per cent* of Nigerians and above is benefiting only 3 to 4 *per cent* of the loan portfolio of Commercial Banks.

And I dare say that some of these Commercial Banks do not even have Agricultural Desk. If you do not have functional Agricultural Desk and you do not understand agriculture, then, tell me, how do you fund agriculture? So, if we have an Agricultural Desk who does not understand the dynamics and the technicalities of agriculture but sees agriculture as risky and adopts the risk averts protocol and runs to buying and selling at oil and gas industry, then as a nation, we are just paying lip service. It means that we are not ready to diversify this economy.

What I believe the government must do is that they must mandate the banks to lend a minimum of say 25 *per cent* of their loan portfolio to finance agriculture. Also, they must force them to set up Agriculture Desk, which must be effectively monitored to ensure that they apply the money appropriately, and where they err, the Central Bank of Nigeria must sanction them. Then, we must isolate the funding. Somebody talked about land clearing and money to acquire land particularly in places where you do not have traditionally owned land.

In other climes, you have Banks that fund only land acquisition, because land is a major asset, and it is a very capital intensive acquisition in agriculture. So, you must have the Bank that will fund land acquisition and that kind of loan must be a long term loan of say 20 to 30 years with very single digit. We need to put that straight for us to be able to succeed. Then, the other problem that we must talk to is that a lot of people talked about the Commodity Bank, Commodity Market and Board, etc.

What we need to ensure that we have a successful diversification in agriculture is to have an off-taker driven system, where the farmers will know the buyers of their finished products, and there is a

guaranteed market. If you do not have guaranteed market that will take the produce of our farmers, there will be no confidence in investing in agriculture. What we will have is this tipsy-topsy situation that we experienced. This year there is a bumper harvest in soya beans and there is a lot of loss, because people do not have market. Next year, the farmers will run away from soya beans to maize that sold last year, and that does not help us. But if you have an off-taker driven programme, where you know that as a farmer either for your produce or for your animal produce, you have somebody who has committed and has agreed on pricing, it encourages you to delve into that production and sell to the assured market.

We talk a lot in this country, but we do not drive out to solve these problems. We are all experts in analysing the problems, but we are not strategic about how to modulate measurable deliverables. We need to breakdown our problems and make them measurable deliverables and take the first set of problems and solve them, and go to the next problem and solve them, until we are able to crystallise the revolution in Agriculture and other diversification of the economy. We need to take deliberate steps to diversify into agriculture.

The other thing that I want to talk about that I mentioned when the Minister was here is that of Tourism. Again, we must have a tourism map in this country and develop tourism sites for attractions. What we must do is to develop them into products that you can sell to private sector development. I want to re-echo that I said this when the Minister was here which is the only way Tourism can also be something that is a diversification of our economy. If we do not take these steps as quickly as possible, we are going to have the problems of the lay-off of people in Banks and in other real sector.

It is not just the banks that are laying-off, the producers that depend on import of raw materials are also laying-off and so we need to address these problems in the interest of this nation and our tomorrow.

The Speaker: We will take two more contributions and then adjourn debate till next week Tuesday. From the Register here, the next is Hon. Mark Gbillah and after him is Hon Emmanuel Egwu.

Hon. Gbillah Mark Terseer (Gwer East/West): I will very quickly highlight some cardinal points that I think we should consider as a nation and a Legislature, our drive towards diversification.

First and foremost, this administration needs to change our overly nationalistic approach towards our

infrastructure and our economy. A lot of that is why today we have issues with the development of sectors like the petroleum industry, which we have focused so much on, but not allowed to perform effectively. It is also critical to point out here that even in the pursuit towards diversification, that sector is still critical to provide the necessary resources to inject into other sectors and that whole toga of thinking everything has to be nationalised is something as a nation we should re-think to be able to provide the public private partnerships that are required to enhance the different sector of the economy.

Secondly, our appropriation is a fundamental tool in diversification of our economy. A situation where bureaucrats in the Ministry choose where funds will be injected and the National Assembly that is saddled with the appropriation responsibility now has to fiddle with figures after the fact. I commend the idea of the Independent National Assembly Budget Research Office, but it is important to note here that at what stage would we get involved in the appropriation process, because that is a fundamental area where we are getting it wrong as a nation. If we are diversifying, where are we channeling resources to? Is it in the educational sector?

There are percentage requirements to be invested in different sectors of the economy. In solid mineral there are critical areas we should look at. We should as a National Assembly start to look at the involvement of stakeholders at the very beginning of the appropriation process. This is because from there is where a lot of what we are doing wrong starts to happen in our nation with regards to the development of our economy. These are some critical points that I want to highlight before I quickly touch on one or two Ministries.

In the area of communications, security and safety is critical to the development of our economy. The Minister did not highlight what measures they are taking in that area. It is funny to note that in Nigeria we stop Telecommunication operators from providing services when there are issues of security. To the contrary in other nations, telecommunication is used to apprehend terrorists and other culprits. We need to get that right in our communication's Ministry. The fact is that we are not using communication properly in terms of providing the security that is necessary for the development of our economy. Also in terms of that issue, there are several other aspects of communications required to drive the economy broadband, which is the future of the world. How much investment are we giving to the several initiatives that have gone down the drain? The farmers need to go online immediately to find buyers, and communicate and know new technology. What are we doing in that regard? A lot of our

economy will be driven by broadband in terms of solid minerals, health, and education.

In the area of education, what are we doing about our curriculum? The world is changing. What are we teaching our children? We do not always need to wait to buy technology. The world is going robotic in a lot of areas and there are a lot of things that will soon be obsolete the way we know them. Are we educating our children to be ready and be the future in this regard? We have a large population of young people from the statistics provided and what are they learning in our schools? Are they being taught in the direction of where the world is going - the digital age which we are in?

In terms of finance, are our banks being encouraged to actually participate in the development of our economy? The area I am referring to has to do with high level of interest and the fact that there are so many conditions before you can access funding. While in developed climes, the banks are partners with you because they could also provide some employments because they need resource people who are going to be tutored in every place or sector they are investing in, so as to be part of the business from the onset till when it becomes profitable. These are areas where our finance Ministry should be looking at.

Finally, in the area of infrastructure, it is obvious that our country does not have the resources to develop the level of infrastructure that we need and that is where public private partnership and outright privatization is critical. This brings me back to my initial point that we should stop this whole nationalistic approach. The world has gone beyond that. We are not a socialist republic. We must realise that a lot of economic development has to be dependent on private public partnership for outright privatisation. These are areas I think are critical to our country.

Hon. Egwu Emmanuel M. (Idah/Igalamela/Ibaji/Ofu): I will be very brief in my submission and will start with the comment of the Minister for Industry, Trade and Investment. He made us realise on our Gross Domestic Product; I think the national income which is falling.

I want us to realise that GDP is one of the criteria that foreign investors use to determine whether to go into foreign investment or not. This is because there is no foreign investor that will go into a country whereby their GDP is falling. It is a signal of a failing economy and with that we need to work seriously to ensure on how we can improve on our GDP. It may be interesting to note that the oil industry does not contribute majorly to the GDP in

our country. So, all the facets - the small and medium scale industries and other sectors can be improved upon. Like we are talking of diversification our economy now, let us work seriously in all sincerity and take more action than talks to diversify and ensure that we maximize our potentials and improve on our Gross Domestic Products. This is very important.

I also want to talk about the strategies - the pillars that the Federal government tends to rely upon on diversifying the economy. In the words of the Minister for Trade and Industry, he mentioned the creation of an enabling environment. I am worried about the policy on our foreign exchange. Today, we have up to about three prices to exchange dollar. I do not think it is a consistent approach. There must be a deliberate attempt to have a unified exchange policy whereby predictions and decisions can be made by investors.

In a situation whereby an investor cannot predict on how much he can exchange dollar for naira, there is a tendency for the investors to have a negative plan and that is a negative multiplying effect where investment is not encouraging in the country. We are talking about employment, and government alone cannot employ. The private sectors are supposed to employ more than the public sector, but unfortunately, we tend to depend on government's appointment alone. That the government may make a policy whereby they employ as many as possible, it would not be enough, but there have been an attempt to drive the economic privately and I think this is the approach we need to consolidate upon. And if we must consolidate on private driven economy, we must promote investment. The necessary ingredients that will promote investment must be encouraged.

I equally want to talk on the pillars that Minister for Trade and Industry made us to understand, which is to promote manufacturing industry. Yes, it is a good strategy, but these manufacturing industries need a lot of encouragement. First, how do they seek for their funds? Is it at minimal interest rates? The interest rates of Nigeria have increased; unfortunately, it will discourage our local manufacturers.

So, there must be a deliberate monetary policy for that matter through the Central Bank of Nigeria. This is because by economic parlance, it is the Central Bank that has its supervisory power over banks. So, every monetary policy must pass through the Central Bank. The Central Bank must be directed, being the bank of government to ensure that funds or loans for manufacturing should be special; that will encourage manufacturing in our country. That is one of the ways that will ensure that because when you

encourage manufacturing, the multiplying effect is high. It will create employment, it will make products available in large quantity in our country, and of course, it will minimize scarcity.

We cannot lie in this country that there is no inflation; we are in galloping inflation system in the country today, whereby the prices of goods and services are increasing everyday at multiplying level. What it means is that it is negative on the people because the real value of money, the quantity of goods which people can buy with their money has fallen. When the real value has fallen, it makes our naira or our money useless; I am sorry to use that word. What it means is that we must work hard as much as possible to minimize the high rate of inflation in the country.

There must be a deliberate policy, be it a monetary policy or fiscal policy; the fiscal policy that is introduced by the federal government, I think the Minister for Finance is the one who is supposed to monitor that. I think enough effort has not been put in place for us to check the high level of inflation. The price of commodity today will not be that tomorrow. It creates room for un-prediction and it is very dangerous for an economy. I think the Executive ought to be advised to really concentrate on this hub of our development - that is, the economic strategy, and this is very necessary. This is because when we do not strategize on economic hub, it has a multiplier effect on other sectors.

I want to encourage the Minister of Finance, and Minister of Trade and Industry to really go back to their drawing boards to ensure that they work on the economic dynamics of our country to ensure maximum result and optimize our resources.

I equally want to talk on the interest rates. The interest rates like one of our Members at a time moved a Motion that we need single interest rates in this country. I think it was a very good point he brought. The Motion was passed, and I do not think that was properly followed-up. There are some salient Motions that were passed on this Floor. *(Interruption)*

The Speaker: Hon. Colleague, be brief, please.

Hon. Egwu Emmanuel M.: All right, salient Motions that were passed and not followed like that on Single Digit Interest Rate, we need to really work on it; it will help to minimize the level of inflation.

I equally want to talk on the issue of security.

There cannot be diversification when we do not ensure peace and harmony in the country. As much as possible, we should downplay force and encourage morale-suasion in the country. *(Interruption)*

The Speaker: Hon. Colleague, please round-up.

Hon. Egwu Emmanuel M.: We should encourage moral suasion, whereby as much as possible where there is crisis, let us see how negotiation can take its course. For instance, in the Niger Delta, I am in support of the federal government that has taken this recent initiative to negotiate with the militants, to see that there is peace.

Finally, the upstream sector was not properly discussed by the Minister for Petroleum. Whatever affects the upstream sector affects the downstream sector of the oil industry. There must be a deliberate strategy by the petroleum industry to ensure that mining explorations and exploitations are properly strategized to ensure that we do not waste our time and our costs.

There are some places that are not volatile for now that the oil there are not explored. I must use the case of Kogi and Anambra States. We have oil deposits there, but the exploration there has not been maximized. I think the Executive have to look into that to ensure that our resources are not left idle. Our resources must as much as possible be maximized.

The Speaker: I think on this note, we are drawing the curtains on Sectoral Debate. We are adjourning the debate till Tuesday, next week. Let me recognise the Acting Leader to move that the House do adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Ali Wudil Mohammed (Wudil/Garko): Mr. Speaker, I move that the House do adjourn till Tuesday, 14th June, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. Goni Bukar Lawan: I second the Motion that the House do adjourn till Tuesday, 14th June, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the House do stand adjourned till Tuesday, 14th June, 2016 at 11.00 a.m.

The House accordingly adjourned at 02.21 p.m.