



Legislative Digest

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NASS Ends First Legislative Year on a Low Key, Rates Self High

By Balogun Babatunde Kehinde

Both the upper and lower chambers of the seventh national assembly on June 6, 2012 mark its first legislative year on a low key as sign of last respect and commemoration to the victims of Dana plane crash in Lagos recently.

The leadership of the national assembly who visited the site of the crash in Lagos shortly after the incident call off its earlier plans to mark the end of its first legislative year respectively in other to mourn the nation's loss and pay homage to the dead.

The two highest lawmaking body in the country rates self high in terms of performance evaluation and sees its first legislative year as remarkable, eventful, engaging and fruitful respectively; in the area of bill's passage, oversight engagements, monitoring and execution of its other

constitutional mandates.

For the red house, which is the upper chamber of the national assembly (the senate), it rate itself very high compared to the sixth national assembly. This was contained

in the words of the Senate's Rules and Business Committee, headed by Senator Ita Enang, who summed up the record of performance of the chamber. In his analysis of the first

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Senate President David Mark



Speaker Aminu Tambuwal

House set to Override President's Veto on Bills

The House of Representatives is set to invoke its constitutional powers to pass into law any bill vetoed by the President which is considered to be in the overriding interest of majority of Nigerians.

This was made known by the Chairman, House committee on Rules and Business, Hon. Albert Sam-Tsokwa while recounting the

achievements of the lower chambers of the national assembly in the last one year. He refutes allegations that the members have abandoned the essence of the oversight function to fraternise with agencies and parastatals.

Speaking about bills the present House inherited from the 6th Assembly, Tsokwa said about 10 bills were returned un-accented to at the

end of the last National Assembly to the lower Chamber for reconsideration. These bills according to him are geared towards improving the living standard of the people.

In his words, "The constitution gives us the mandate to override Presidential veto but the moment we do that people will see the National

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW:

CISLAC is a non-governmental, non-profit legislative advocacy, accountability, anti-corruption, human rights (gender equality, lobbying, information sharing and research organization. (CISLAC) works towards bridging the gap between the legislature and the electorate; by enhancing lobbying strategies; engagement of bills before their passage into law; manpower development for lawmakers, legislative aides, politicians and the civil society, as well as civic education on the tenets of democracy and human rights. It was integrated as a corporate body (CAC/IT/NO22738) with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) on 28th December 2006.

CISLAC's issues of focus include; budget monitoring, transparency, accountability, anti-corruption, human rights (gender equality, educational equity and improvement, sexuality and reproductive health, children and other vulnerable groups including beggars, pensioners, refugees, and internally displaced persons), trade policy and intervention, security/conflict management, and environment and livelihood. CISLAC's engagement with Federal Ministries, National and State Assemblies, Local Government Administrations, private sector interests, the media, non-government and civil society organisations, and communities across Nigeria has opened a window through which public and policy officials can interact and corroborate.

GOAL

"To make legislature accessible and responsive to all".

VISION

"A Nigeria in which citizens are participating in governance; the government is safeguarding the rights and welfare of the people; and non-state actors are providing space for citizens to demand accountability".

MISSION/PURPOSE

"To increase the legislature and CSOs' impact in the legislative process".

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CISLAC in its efforts to deepen its engagement on issues and impact positively by ensuring that civil society views are adequately inputted in public policies, has defined governance structure. At foundation, some key allies who are well grounded in development issues and are currently at the decision making level in their organisations were consulted and accepted to serve on both the Board and Advisory Council of the organisation.

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CONSTITUTION REVIEW: INTERVENTION POINT FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE MEDIA

Due to the hasty transition programme of General Abdulsalam Abubarka in 1998 to usher in democracy, he through military fiat prepares a non inclusive legal document called the 1999 federal republic of Nigeria constitution today. The making of the 1999 Constitution is largely seen as lacking in inclusivity, participation, and autonomy among other basic principles and tenets of making of democratic constitutions. The Constitution was thought to have been a product of military fiat, leaving us with a legal document whose legitimacy is controversial.

It has till date been faced with several criticism on some of its contents which is believed to be lacking democratic and power decentralization system that can encourage smooth practice of federal system of government in Nigeria.

In spite of the several amendments carried out by successive government between 1999 and 2011 to tackle this, there are still several gray areas in the contents of the constitution that are calling and begging for legislative intervention.

In view of this, concerned Nigerians, politicians, activists, civil society organizations, the media, educationists, international critiques and observers identified the flaws in the 1999 constitution and urge the national assembly to intervene in a bid to save the nation's crawling democracy by strengthening its institutions.

The seventh national assembly in order to yield to this popular demand and provide the nation's citizens with a strong and an all inclusive constitution at the inception of its legislative year in June 2011 set up constitution review committee with the mandate of identifying the gray areas in the constitution, organise public hearing, receive inputs from the citizens, organizations and all concerned.

With this development, the civil society organizations and the media have a huge role to play in this regard by identifying the gray areas in the 1999 constitution, propose amendments where necessary, orientate the larger populace on the gray areas and the need for review, mobilize for public hearing on constitution amendment and strengthen the nations' democracy.

In our research, we identified the following gray areas in the 1999 constitution:

Immunity Clause: Section 308 of the 1999 Constitution popularly known as Immunity Clause is one of the most contentious provisions of the 1999 Constitution. This immunity from prosecution for the President, Vice President, Governors and Deputy Governors is seen as a blank cheque liable to abuses by the beneficiaries. Those who make the case for the expunging of this clause from the Constitution readily point to many high profile corruption cases involving former beneficiaries of the immunity provision.

Lack of independence for critical institutions of democracy: Institutions such as the legislature, the states judiciary, the Independent National Electoral Commission, INEC, as well as the States Independent Electoral Commissions are totally dependent on the executive arm of government administratively and or financially. This does not allow for checks and balance in the case of the legislature and states judiciary. And, it is not a good arrangement by any standards for electoral bodies.

Resource Control: The 1999 constitution is deemed to have grossly contradicted the basic principles of fiscal federalism. It reposes substantial resources of the state on the government at the centre. The issue of resource control has ballooned into a very contentious issue, especially in the Niger Delta. The region which is the major source of Nigeria's national income, had degenerated to grievous agitations on this account, giving birth to militancy which badly threatens the security, economic and social life of the nation. Others include *Electoral Reform/Issues, Structural Imbalances, Guarantee of Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and Inelegant drafting to mention just a few.*

Indeed, the list is long. But even beyond these shortfalls, it is imperative we know that modern constitutions are meant to be amended to meet fresh and unforeseen challenges as they arise.

So we urge the media organisations and the civil society organisations to conscientise the people and prepare them for this huge task of repositioning the nation's political system to the right part.

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CONTACT ADDRESS:

No. 7 Mahatma Gandhi Street,
Off Shehu Shagari Way
By Bulet Garden, Asokoro
Abuja - Nigeria
Tel: 234-08033844646

Website: www.cislacnigeria.org
Email: cislac@cislac.kabissa.org
cislacnationalassembly@yahoo.com



Regional Office: Kano
No. 110 Alyuma House
Maiduguri Road, Kano
Kano State, Nigeria
Tel: 234-07064016626

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NASS Ends First Legislative Year on a Low Key ...

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year, a total of 178 bills were introduced to the chamber in the last one year. He said out of that number, 127 had passed the First Reading, while 19 have passed the Second Reading and is now at Committee stage. 26 other bills are awaiting publication in the National Assembly Journal, while 21 bills were passed into law by the Senators. Nine of the introduced bills were withdrawn by the sponsors.

A total of 48 major motions were also passed by the Senate, including the motion for the probe of the management of fuel subsidy regime, the probe of Bureau of Public Enterprises (BPE) and its privatisation exercises; the Pension probe; the probe of new drivers' licenses and number plates, as well as the recent crash of Dana plane in Lagos, among others. Besides its statutory roles of passing annual budget estimates, the Senate has also confirmed 42 ministers, ambassadorial nominees as well as other heads of government agencies and institutions.

In the same vein, the green house, which is the lower chamber of the national assembly (the House of Representatives), also score itself very high in terms of performance evaluation. For the House of

Representatives, it passed 32 bills, 278 motions and received 172 petitions in its first legislative year, which according to the chamber is remarkably high compared to the sixth assembly.

According to the Chairman, House Committee on Rules and Business, Hon. Albert Sam – Tsokwa, 273 bills were introduced to the House out of which 32 were passed while 11 bills were withdrawn.

“In the last one year, the House introduced 273 bills all of which have gone through first reading, 33 of these bills seek to alter the Constitution of 1999 as amended.

“The seventh Assembly was one year on June 6, and an elaborate programme for a special session anniversary was planned but programme was aborted because of the unfortunate Dana air carnage which threw the country into mourning.”

The legislator said the aborted anniversary was to allow Nigerians assess the performance of the assembly on certain issues.

On oversight function, Tsokwa said there was an improvement in the oversight functions of the lawmakers. He said the seventh Assembly came with all seriousness and took off with a clear vision. The lawmakers have lived up to their constitutional responsibility of

exposing corruption and passing laws for good governance of the nation.

As both chambers of the national assembly is claiming to be discharging its duties diligently in the last one year, the continuous salacious stories of fraud and scandals that has greeted the most important committee of the national assembly, particularly the house of representative is a call for concern. Of all the standing and adhoc committees set up by the chamber so far, the capital market committee, pension funds committee and the subsidy probe committee appeared at loggerheads with its stakeholders over bribery allegations.

These allegations have so far dented the good image this important arm of the nation's democracy wear before the people, as it is seen as the hope of the common man and has in the other hand dashed its legislative agenda of enthroning good governance in Nigeria.

Many would say that the space of 365 days would be too narrow to assess institutions of democracy, especially the legislature, whose most important task as guaranteed by the constitution is very tangible. But corruption allegation of different kinds that surround the seventh national assembly is huge stain on the institution.

House Set To Override President's Veto on Bills

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Assembly as confrontational to the executive. So what we are saying is that henceforth, any bill that is in the interest of Nigerians that is not accented to within the constitutionally provided 30 days may be passed into law by the National Assembly through a two-third majority vote,” he said.

He however assured Nigerians that the House would not rush to assert such constitutional powers unless as a last resort, stating that the beauty of any power was how

sparingly it was used.

He noted that the three arms of government, the executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary together form the government of the country and the earlier they cooperate and work with each other, the better in the interest of this country.

Since the inception of the uninterrupted civil rule in 1999 till date (2012), separation of power has been one of the clogs affecting the wheel of progress of the nation's democracy. The legislative arm of the government whose obligation is to

make law and monitor its implementation to ensure compliance and enforcement has initiated and passed into law over 140 bills, which include well thought out bills that are masses oriented and can promote good governance and cater for the needs of the Nigerian people, but this laws has so far, have little or no impact in governance or the life of the people due to lack of political will of successive government to sign these bills into law and effect it for the overall good of Nigeria and Nigerians.

Tambuwal Commissioned New Lagos Ultra – Modern Assembly Complex

In what seem a landmark occasion and a result of healthy collaboration and synergy between the executive and the legislative arm of government, the Lagos State House of Assembly

recently hosted its colleagues from other part of the country including the speaker of House of Representatives, Aminu Tambuwal during the commissioning of its new ultra-modern chambers which would henceforth host plenary activities of the House.

The event was chaired and commissioned by the speaker House of Representative.

In his speech, the Lagos speaker, Hon. Adeyemi Kuforiji said the idea of the complex was conceived during the administration of Asiwaju Bola Ahmed Tinubu but the construction of the complex actually commenced during the present administration of Babatunde Fashola in May, 2009.

The complex which according to the speaker has 54 seats for the lawmakers, 177 seats for dignitaries, speaker's guest rostrum, a lounge, conveniences, committee rooms, press gallery, executive office for the speaker and other facilities will put an end to the challenges of space for lawmakers and members of the public especially during plenary sessions.

In attendance during the official commissioning of the Assembly complex are Asiwaju Bola Tinubu, Governor Babatunde Fashola, former governor of the State in the second republic Alhaji Lateef Jakande, Osun State Governor, Mr. Rauf Aregbesola who had earlier been honoured as a member of the House, Senators of the federal republic of Nigeria, members of the House of representatives, top government officials, ACN party stalwarts including the party's National publicity Secretary Alhaji Lai Mohammed.



*Hon. Adeyemi Kuforiji
Speaker, Lagos State House of Assembly*

Conference of Speakers Seeks Financial Autonomy for State Assemblies

In a related development, the conference of speakers in Nigeria through its chairman and speaker of Gombe State House of Assembly, Inuwa Mohammed has advocated financial autonomy for the States House of Assembly. The speaker during the commissioning of the new Assembly complex at Alausa Ikeja, said everything should be done to get the various State House of Assembly to be financially independent of the executives. Inuwa who spoke at a press conference inside the new chambers of Lagos State House of Assembly with the majority of the speakers of other State Houses of Assembly in attendance praised the

Lagos experiment and enjoined other States executives to borrow a leaf from Lagos State.

According to him, "what the Lagos State House of Assembly and the State government have done is a testimony that democracy has come to stay and that we have people who have the vision and courage to make enormous sacrifices to bring about the development of democratic governance in Nigeria through building a formidable force". Concluding, he said the conference is now encouraged to agitate and move for the legislatures to attain their rightful place in the scheme of things.



*Inuwa Mohammed, Chairman
Conference of Speakers*

DANA AIR CRASH

A Clarion Call On The Legislature For A More Decisive Oversight Functions

By Kamal Badamasi

The Sunday 3rd of June, 2012 air crash in Iju-Ishaga area of Lagos State which claimed hundreds of lives both on ground and on board the ill-fated Dana Aircraft brought to the fore the imperative need to overhaul the country's monitoring and regulatory agencies in all facet of our National life.

Importantly, the various agencies in our airports, FAAN, NCAA and others need to be awakened to their responsibilities of ascertaining at all times the air worthiness of both the local and international aircraft flying our air spaces. For once, the federal government of Nigeria should make some scape-goats out of the various agencies officials' saddle with the responsibility of ensuring that it is only the air worthy planes that fly our airspace.

The frequent air accidents in our country especially on the local route call to question the functionality of the various regulatory agencies in our airports, it is doubtful if the

administration of the airports have not been overwhelm with the same cankerworm that has eating so deep into the fabrics of our nation, not minding what this portends for the safety of lives of Nigerians and Nationals of other countries in the course of moving about with their daily legitimate businesses.

As businessmen whose main aim is to make profit and to maximise same for that matter, it is obvious that airline operators may want to cut corners in an attempt to reduce operational cost with the aim of maximising profits, it is the responsibility of the various government regulatory agencies to stand their grounds and do the work they have been paid with the tax payers' money to do by ensuring that standard is not compromise at all time.

What we are seeing now is a situation where the operators are doing the wrong thing and the regulators are looking the other way and the lives and safety of innocent travellers are expose to risk avoidable deaths.

But in all of these, since the regulatory agencies seems to have failed woefully in its responsibility of maintaining safety on air, the National Assembly through its relevant committee should rise to the occasion and compel these agencies to do the very needful at all times. It is part of the oversight function of the legislative arm of government to ensure that any government agencies perform to expectation and where any of them is performing below expectation leading to loss of lives, resources and even creating avoidable embarrassment to the government to the extent of portraying the country as unsafe then the legislative should not waste time in wedging the big stick.

By now some government officials should have been questioned and sanctioned for slacking in their responsibilities, until officials of government start losing their jobs and going to jail for negligence of duty, government business will remain nobody's business.

The National Assembly should as a matter of urgency come up with a policy on the age of aircraft that will henceforth operate in Nigeria to avoid aged and nearly unserviceable aircraft operating in Nigeria, again the legislative should ensure regular visit to the airports especially unscheduled visits to see things by themselves, they can also have a dedicated lines or have a platform where stakeholders can give them information on the activities of the airlines and the agencies especially where standard is being compromised.

The legislative remains the only viable check and balance on government enterprise and they should intensify efforts to live up to the peoples' expectation.



Wreckage of Dana Plane that Crashed in Lagos recently.

Lawmakers Urge Fg To Name June 12 Democracy Day

Some members of both the upper and lower chambers of the National Assembly on June 12, 2012 urge President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan led national leadership in Nigeria to declare the day as democracy day in honour of late Chief MKO Abiola.

In the word of the leader of the lawmakers, Senator Smart Adeyemi (PDP- Kogi), late Chief MKO Abiola deserves all the commendation for playing a leading role in the restoration of democracy in the country. He urged the President to declare June 12 a national holiday in commemoration of MKO.

He noted that June 12 remains "a very historic day in the nation's political history."

He commended President Goodluck Jonathan for being the first leader to honour MKO's contribution to return democratic governance in the country.

"I must commend the President for appreciating the role MKO played in the restoration of democracy. A man who laid down his life for democracy deserves all the commendation.

'Jonathan deserves commendation, but we urge him to take a final step to make June 12 a public holiday.

'Since the first step has been taken, I don't think it will be difficult to take this final step to immortalize MKO," Adeyemi added.

Sen. Ayogu Eze also urged Nigerians to be supportive of government's effort to immortalise the memory of the late politician and renowned philanthropist.

Eze urged Nigerians to appreciate current efforts by the government to recognise the contributions of MKO to the restoration of democratic government in the country.

He observed that in spite government's action to immortalise MKO, many people would still condemn government as not doing

enough.

"Nothing that's done to immortalise Abiola's name will be said to be grand or enough for his contributions to democracy.

'Our people should stop being hypocrites and start to be realistic. Government renamed Unilag after Abiola but the same people rose up against the action.

'Let's accept the current efforts to immortalise Abiola before we start making further demands.

The lawmaker urged politicians to



Chief MKO Abiola

emulate the democratic disposition of the late MKO and bring it to bear in their utterances and actions for the wellbeing of the citizens.

The late MKO Abiola won the June 12, 1993 presidential election on the platform of the Social Democratic Party (SDP).

However, the election was annulled by Ibrahim Babangida, causing a political crisis which led to Gen. Sani Abacha seizing power from the interim government headed by Chief Ernest Shonekan.

MKO died on July 7, 1998, shortly after the death of Abacha.

The lawmakers said the June 12 1993 election marked a turning point in the history of democracy in the country.

The election of June 12, acclaimed to have been won by Chief MKO Abiola, was annulled by former Military President Ibrahim Babangida.

Rep. Abiodun Balogun said that June 12 was significant because it marked the turning point in the history of democracy in Nigeria.

He suggested that June 12 be celebrated as democracy day in Nigeria rather than May 29.

"June 12 like we always say is a turning point in the history of democracy, we all know what led to June 12, election won by late MKO Abiola and in all the events that happened there after that led to the death of MKO.

"As far as we are concerned when you talk of real democracy in Nigeria it should be June 12 some of us have always been clamouring that when you talk about democracy in Nigeria it is not and should not be May 29.

"It is June 12 that gave birth to May 29, we have been saying that if we want to celebrate real democracy it

should be celebrated on June 12, so as far as we are concerned June 12 with all its significance should be marked as democracy day."

Rep. Arua Arunsi agreed with Balogun that June 12 was a turning point in the political journey in the history of Nigeria. "I would say that today (June 12) is a watershed in our political journey."

According to the lawmaker, the June 12 should be called democracy day because Nigerians benefited from the struggle which MKO Abiola died for.

ALLEGED \$3 MILLION BRIBE SCANDAL: NEED FOR DISPASSIONATE PROBE

A civil society organisation, Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has called for dispassionate probe into the allegation of \$600,000 bribe against a key member of the House of Representatives Ad Hoc committee on Fuel Subsidy.

A statement issued to the media signed by the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani, called on the National Assembly and the executive arm of government to not to let the current scandal serve as a straw to bury the probe report under the carpet.

“We are sad to note that all what government is mouthing on war against corruption has not gone beyond mere rhetoric. We are aware of a thousand and one cases including the Halliburton scandal, the pension fraud, and the BPE scam, among others that government has literally swept under the carpet. This accounts for our poor ranking in yearly Transparent International's Corruption Perception Index.

“in this latest case which is a squeal to the gargantuan fuel subsidy fraud, we are not unmindful of the possibility of a hand of a fifth columnist especially from those indicted by the report who may go to their wit's end in order to rubbish an exercise that was widely applauded by Nigerians in view of the nasty dealings it uncovered.” The statement reads in part.

The CSO therefore admonished the leadership of the House to “urgently institute thorough investigation into the

alleged bribe and involve anti-graft agencies to also probe the circumstances and veracity of all claims and counter-claims. There should be no sacred cow”

CISLAC however warned that the outcome of the probe panel should not be tampered with and should be implemented to the latter by the federal government as “there was nothing fishy to suggest that the report was doctored in any way.”

The pro-democracy CSO cautioned that “any attempt to feet-drag in implementing the report as endorsed by the larger House would be viewed by us in the civil society and the larger public as a lame excuse being sponsored by the government to thwart the entire report.

“It should be noted that the 7th Session of the House of Representatives enjoys tremendous respect and goodwill from the public thus far. It should therefore shun sentiment and do all that needed to be done to clear its name from this odious allegation.

“The two should be treated independently and dispassionately. Probe into the allegation of this current scandal should not in any way be used as excuse to let those who looted the country in the name of subsidy to go scout free.” The statement emphasized.

Signed by:

Auwal Ibrahim Musa Rafsanjani, ED, CISLAC

... Uncovers Plan To Remove House Of Representative Speaker

The Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has raised alarm over an alleged plot to use the alleged bribery scandal involving the chairman of the House of Representatives Ad Hoc committee on Fuel Subsidy, Hon. Faruk Lawan, as an excuse to oust the current leadership of the House of Representatives.

CISLAC, in a statement issued to the media pointed accusing fingers at both the executive arm of government and some fuel importers which, according to the CISLAC was never comfortable with the way the present leadership of the House of Representatives conducts its legislative business.

The statement which was signed by the Executive Director of CISLAC, Auwal Musa Rafsanjani maintained that “An offence allegedly committed by an individual member should not be used as an excuse to create another crisis in the House of Representatives.

“And if indeed those agitating for the use of an individual's alleged misdeed to oust the present set of leadership of the House are sincere, they should as well call for the resignation of President Goodluck Jonathan for overseeing a regime in which trillions of naira was siphoned in various scams, including the N1.7 trillion subsidy fraud.”

CISLAC suspects complicity on the part of the Presidency in the current move to remove the current leadership by sponsoring some faceless groups to call for the resignation of the Speaker. This move, the organization suspects is aimed at achieving a twofold agenda of discarding the recommendations emanating from the fuel subsidy probe committee's report as well as remove the leadership of the

lower chamber which the executive had considered too independent and assertive.

“The 7th session of the House of Representatives is arguably the best session of the National Assembly since 1999. The leadership has been honest and meticulous while the House has always sided with the position of the larger population.

“We are witnesses to how the House handled the probe into the collapse of the capital market and quickly disbanded the earlier committee when it emerged that there was dishonesty and bribe allegations on the committee”, the statement reads in part.

The House leadership, according CISLAC, should remain firm, committed and should not allow any intimidation and blackmail to deter it from performing its constitutional role.

“Lawmaking, representation, constituency outreach and oversight/ probe are functions of the National Assembly as enshrined in the constitution. Therefore, no amount of threat and intimidation should blackmail credible lawmakers from exercising their legislative duties” CISLAC charged.

CISLAC however called on the House leadership to categorically come out and dissociate itself from any wrongdoing and let any member involved in any unethical conduct face wrath of the law as it has done in the case of Hon Hembe former chairman of the capital market probe.

Signed by:

Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), ED, CISLAC

NASS Oversight in the last year: **How Effective?**

By Stefan Neumann

In any democracy, 'Legislative oversight' refers to the legislature's review and evaluation of selected activities of the executive. In the case of Nigeria, the National Assembly is supposed to play this role. Specifically Section 88 of the 1999 Constitution empowers the legislators to perform oversight functions over the arms of the government – MDAs. The legislative has to ensure that existing programs are implemented and administered efficiently, effectively, and in a manner consistent with legislative intent. The elected officials are charged to oversee how public funds are spent and keep the executive establishment responsible and accountable to the electorate. The legislature uses investigating committees – appropriation committee, standing committees, ad hoc committees and various other committees – to collect and analyse information concerning the performance of the administration and the implementation of governmental policies.

As Nigerians seek an end to the scourge of corruption in public sector, which has impeded the nation's development for so long, expectations are that the federal legislators would be more proactive, rather than reactionary in the discharge of their oversight functions. Unfortunately, those who are supposed to be the legislative watchdog of the executive branch are by themselves enmeshed in corruption scandals.

CISLAC supports how the House of Reps handled the probe into the collapse of the capital market and quickly disbanded the earlier Committee on Capital Market under Hon. Hembe when it emerged that there was dishonesty and bribe allegations. It is commendable that

Nigeria's House of Reps set up a committee to probe the mismanagement of the fuel subsidy regime, but instead of implementing the report of the committee, the man who presided over the probe, Farouk Lawan, was slammed with corruption charges. The former chairman is accused of having demanded the sum of \$3 million – \$620,000 were allegedly paid – to clear the companies of the chairman of Zenon Oil, Femi Otedola, over the fuel subsidy scandal. If these allegations prove true, the involved actors have to be prosecuted. CISLAC demands, that despite the revelations on Farouk Lawan, recommendations emanating from the report of the probe panel, which uncovered fraud in subsidy management amounting to about N2 trillion, must be implemented.

**“
In this context CISLAC's Executive Director, Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), clarifies that, “An offence allegedly committed by an individual member should not be used as an excuse to create another crisis in the House of Representatives.”
”**

In this context CISLAC's Executive Director, Auwal Ibrahim Musa (Rafsanjani), clarifies that, “An offence allegedly committed by an individual member should not be used as an excuse to create another crisis in the House of Representatives.” He contradicts plans to link the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, with the bribery scandal: “And if indeed those agitating for the use of an individual's alleged misdeed to oust the present set of leadership of the House are sincere, they should as

well call for the resignation of President Goodluck Jonathan for overseeing a regime in which trillions of naira were siphoned in various scams, including the N1.7 trillion subsidy fraud.”

Moreover, a cadre of bureaucrats had created dummy accounts for thousand of 'ghost' pensioners and pilfered about N39,6 billion annually and has caused serious fraud and mismanagement in the Pension system. The Pension Reform Task Team was established to investigate the Pension Scam and has so far saved the country N159 billion. Nonetheless, a Senate Committee was set up to look into the methods used by the Pension Reform Task Team and to question the investigation. Ignoring the need for transparency, the committee is calling for closed door sessions.

Furthermore, the co-chair of the committee, Senator Kabiru Gaya, is reported being a cousin to one of the accused officials. CISLAC, thus, calls to dissolve the committee and replace the members with more honourable and impartial Senators.

Nigerians have become weary of the several probes by the National Assembly, which have not produced any meaningful results since the return of democratic regime in Nigeria. It seems likely, that anytime there is a probe, it tends to expose the committee that is supervising the particular agency revealing that it has not done its job because the issues that warranted the inquiry should have been addressed through proper oversight. The National Assembly should realise that beyond probes and public hearings, it has a constitutional duty to take preventive action and to investigate executive activity on an ongoing basis. And this should be done through continuous watch over federal agencies.

Report of a Roundtable on Anti Corruption Landscape in Nigeria organized by Zero Corruption Coalition [ZCC] Held on Monday 30th April, 2012 at Denis Hotel, Abuja

By Elope Okonime Victor

The roundtable talk started at about 10.05 am with a welcome speech by the National Secretary of Zero Corruption Coalition, Mr. Babatunde Oluajo who spoke on the present perilous situation in Nigeria. In his speech, he reviewed the activities of the dreaded Sect. Boko Haram on Nigerians and the aftermath effect on the society at large. Furthermore, that the country is ours and we have to remain here to savage it. One of such activities to rescue the country from its present situation is this coming together of CSOs to rub minds, appraise and criticise the different components and emerging issues on the national polity on the campaign against corruption.

Participants were drawn from different sectors of the society including the civil society organizations. These include Mr. Otsemaye Newton of Justice For All, the Anti Corruption Officer for J4A Projects, Representative from Economic and Financial Crime Commission [EFCC], Mr. Olisa Nwaja, Barr. Segun Sango, Sec. Gen. Democratic Socialist Movement, Prof. Femi Odekunle who was the chairman of the conference, Lagos based human right activist, Femi Falana Lead Dir. Centre for Social Justice Barr. Eze Onyekpere, UNDP representative Mrs. Folake Oluokun, Representative of America Embassy and former staff of Transparency International Ms Diakun Sa'adatu Mahdi, Chido Onumah, Mohammed Attah, John Patrick Ngoyi from JDPC Ijebu Ode and CSOs among which was representatives from CISLAC.

Mr. Otsemaye Newton in his remark said that Justice for All [J4A] is a component of the British Council, aimed at policing corruption, strengthening the capacity of the police force and CSOs in Nigeria.

In a related development, Mr. Nwaja Olisa representative of EFCC said that the EFCC cannot cope with the enormity of task before Nigerians and he said all hands must be on deck since it does not serve any purpose to fold hands and watch from a distance for miracle to happen.

During discussion, there were three major issues that participants identified has been very important, this includes;

- Presidential directive on the Stephen Oronsaye report especially in regards to the fate of anti corruption agencies (ACAs)
- Position of CSOs on the recommendations from the above Committee
- An assessment of the judiciary, structure and performance of the ACAs in the past 10 years

The activities of the day were done and grouped into 4

technical sections.

The first section dwells on the Assessment and performance of Anti Corruption Agencies in tackling impunity and corruption in the public service in the past 10 years. Barr. Segun Sango, who led this section said corruption pays in Nigeria as those institutions with the task of investigation and prosecution are deliberately cut off from the system. He cited the instance of commercialization and privatization process in Nigeria which is on its own a case of corruption, where most government properties dated from the colonial time were balkanised and sold off to government cronies.

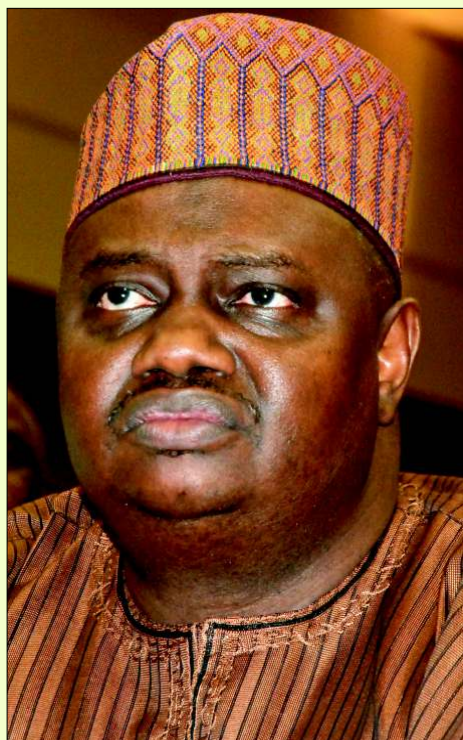
Barr. Segun Sango rated the judicial institution very low as the prosecutors have not done much to arrest corrupt practices. He noted that since 2003 of the existence of the EFCC, only 4 persons put together were convicted out of 10 and 16 high profile cases charged to court under the leadership of Mr. Nuhu Ribadu and Madam Waziri. The corrupt cases that involved million of Naira and dollars, convicted persons walked to their house from court through a court instrument called plea bargain. Former IGP Tafa Balogun and Lucky Igbinedion were sentenced to 6 months each for stealing 17 billion Naira and 185 million dollars respectively. Former Bayelsa state governor Alamesiegha did not spend a day eventually, given the time he spent in police custody, though he was sentenced to 2½ years imprisonment.

The ICPC have charged 520 persons, secured 25 convictions 7 of whom died during trial. Only 1 accused person went through trial. Most of the convictions are lower grade criminals and were not governmental officers. The real crooks are in government and the bourgeois laws in the country always seek to protect them. Anti Corruption Agencies must be made to target and prosecute defaulters in government.

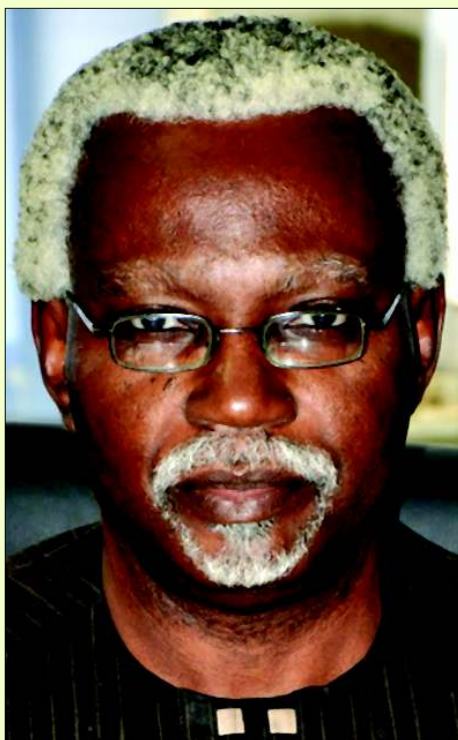
He noted that the bourgeois legal framework on which the Nigerian Judiciary functions is designed by the rich to protect the rich.

Barr. Segun Sango concluded that Nigerians should make corruption undesirable, fight impunity by diligent prosecution, activate process of recall of any elected person when indicted of corruption and lastly, tackle the imbalances in the system.

Barr. Eze Onyekpere who led the second section that dwells on the Judicial adjudication of corruption and money laundering cases in Nigeria, said that though the judiciary has been given all the powers to fight money laundering and corruption issues, yet numerous challenges truncates their efforts; lack of vision and mission of leaders, highly placed judicial officers are cut off from the people who are greatly impacted by their



Ibrahim Lamorde
EFCC Chairman



Ekpo Nta
ICPC Chairman



Dahiru Musdapher
Chief Justice of the Federation

decisions, Judicial officers conduct themselves as civil servants working to earn salary not as custodians of the law, the legal profession in Nigeria, including senior lawyers see themselves as accountable to the demands of their clients and not to the ultimate value: justice and lastly, Our docility as a people fuels corruption.

Eze Onyekpere recommended the increased scrutiny of appointment procedure of judicial officers, strict discipline of officers even after appointment, immediate comprehensive appraisal of the quality of judges on the bench, increased engagement with the people, activism amongst lawyers who have to protest against judicial pronouncements that make no sense and lastly, extra investigation be conducted whenever there is judicial foul play.

Femi Falana led the third section on assessment and performance of ACAs in tackling impunity and corruption in the public service. He examined the status of Code of Conduct Bureau and praised the establishment, said ICPC failed right from the Act that established the formation and gave kudos to the EFCC. He highlighted the achievement of the EFCC citing instance of Tafa Balogun's case, the case of the defrauding the Brazilian bank were each convicts received 5 years in imprisonment and forfeited their assets, the standing trail of three EFCC officials for corruption and the outstanding case of Bode George who went to jailing among others.

Femi Falana opined that to strengthened these institutions, Code of Conduct Bureau be detached from the Presidency, the EFCC should not be solely police officers,

but pool officers from the general public who meet the requirement, INGO should help in sending and training these new recruits abroad and brought back to Nigeria (EFCC), the NASS should be a structure of intervention especially through the relevant committees, the anti corruption agencies should merge and put effort with the EFCC which remain the hope for justice, on corruption reports, we must assemble a team of lawyers to investigate and rationalise the legal aspect of the report, on persons, institutions and agencies indicted and a follow up should be in place on any indicted foreign bank that aid and abet corrupt activities in Nigeria.

The fourth and last section discussed the response and appraisal by CSOs to the Presidential task force on harmonization of MDAs. Lead presenter, Mr. Chido Onumah said though he hasn't lay hands on the Oransaye's report yet, in his opinion, the institutions are not the problem but lack of political wills to achieve targets since these institutions were set up as jobs for the boys. He further explained that Nigeria is better off with these agencies, which CSOs should champion security of tenure of ACAs, liaise with NASS and be proactive in media campaign and ACAs should try existing on independent source of funds [Consolidated Revenue Fund].

On a final note, Femi Falana stated that in the fight against corruption, we need institutions that will continue to work for the people, the people need to be aware that they are being fought for, action have to be taken, but not without the people.



CISLAC team in a group photograph with the media, cameroon during an advocacy visit.



CISLAC team on an advocacy visit to the Executive Secretary of NEITI Secretariat



CISLAC team on an advocacy visit to the Leadership Newspapers



Group Photograph With The Coordinator, Technical Committee Secretariat, Cameroon



CISLAC team on an advocacy visit to World Dynamics of Young People, Cameroon

CONSTITUENCY OUTREACH: Measuring The National Assembly In The Last One Year

By Elope Okanime Victor

The system of government in Nigeria is constitutionally tailored along the principle of separation of power. This principle has made definite distinction in the functions of each arm of government; making laws, implementation and interpretation of the laws respectively. The legislators are sent from their respective constituencies through the popular ballot box [votes] into both the state and National Assembly to represent the people in the formulation of policies. The lawmakers are expected to enact policies that would transform the lives and well-being of the citizens of Nigerians, while the Judiciary is saddled with the constitutional mandate of interpreting laws.

In all these, the executive arm is saddled with the responsibility of carrying out the direct functions of governance through the execution of programmes and projects. The essence of power separation in the system is to entrench transparency and stem corruption. Today, the administrative structure has constitutionally made provision in the budget for our legislators to take back to their respective constituencies' developmental and infrastructural projects allowance as a way to render stewardship. But it seems that the line of separation between the executive and the legislature has become blurred with the execution of projects by the legislature through the constituency project scheme.

Beside the formulation of policy and oversight functions of the legislators on the Executive and the Judiciary, the exercise of constituency projects implementation based on the constitutional provision have increased the responsibilities of the law makers both at the state and National levels. Since this provision is constitutional, can Nigeria on the basis of assessment give kudos to their representatives based on projects already implemented across the country? On the surface, the idea is to enable lawmakers' impact positively on their constituents by bringing the dividends of democracy closer to the people.

If we take a critical look at the constituencies in Nigeria today, it is the same old cry of lack of functional basic facilities, with all pointing accusing fingers at the federal executive council without mention of the lawmakers in spite of the constitutional quarterly provision of resources for the development of the areas through their representatives. This is due to the low awareness, interest and participation of the people in governance.

It is on record that the 360 members of the House of Representatives receive N40 million each as the amount due to them as quarterly allocation for constituency development projects, while 109 Senators receive N60 million each for the same purpose.

In Nigeria, only few representatives both at the lower and upper chambers of the national assembly can boast of skeletal projects in their constituencies and senatorial districts. Many House of Reps members and Senators have no functional office in their constituencies and Senatorial districts as provided. These offices function mostly when Honourable want to visit home to attend to family issues.

To many of them, sinking of borehole for portable water in communities with N 500,000.00 is a big project. Provision of transformer to enhance stable power supply in villages and communities they represent in the House will reduce respect accorded to them as big men. In reality, constituency outreach is far beyond member of the National Assembly buying and distributing bicycles, handsets, wheel chairs, hairdressing equipments, pepper grinding mills and even coolers, open and equip computer training centres or other skill acquisition centres. A number of legislators have also been known for philanthropic gestures such as paying school fees of children, buy GCE and JAMB forms for students in their constituencies, settling medical bills of the underprivileged and other forms of financial help. They do this with comprehensive press coverage to cover up the reality and to score political points and gain more popularity on the pages of newspapers in order to enhance their "electoral value", as the ordinary people tend to consider what they have benefitted from politicians when elections are near. Those who describe the nation's legislature as the hotbed of corruption may not be totally wrong. It is obvious that most "projects" put in place are not commensurate with what they get as constituency project allocation.

Ideally, any true representative of the people should run the office in his constituency, meet with the people he or she represents in the House of Assembly or National Assembly in the community hall, interact and listen to the people and know areas of needs [advocacy visit], build consensus projects based on their needs, build project teams for implementation, raised an independent bodies to monitor and evaluate projects executed in line with project value and established structure for sustainability.

Furthermore, in areas of bigger projects, the Representatives in the House of Assembly build argument based on community consensus projects [needs] in the process of formulating policies at the Federal level. These policies should embrace a frame work that will reflect the desires/needs of the people they represents and also ensure transformation and proper implementation into physical structures on ground.

Our Representatives both at State and National levels are guilty of wastage and diversion of funds meant for constituency development as provided by the administrative structure. For the lawmakers to confront the challenges of corruption in Nigeria, they must start by sanitizing their house, because he who wants equity must have come with clean hands.

Lots of Civil Society Organizations have on several occasion advocate for and stressed the need for constituency outreach by members of the National Assembly to bridge communication gap with the people they represents at National level as it will enable the people of Nigeria understand who truly represent them. Genuine community outreach is a way of moving the government closer to the people as it will encourage participatory democracy, which will subsequently enthrone transparency, accountability and project delivery to Nigerians and will also help check-mate the rate of corruption ravaging the entire system.

Report of a 2 Day Strategy Meeting on Constitutional Amendment Organised by Gender and Development Action (GADA) Between 3rd to 5th June 2012 at Excel Oriental Hotel, Lagos

By Abdulkareem Tijani

Introduction:

The meeting started with a minute silence for the people that died in the Dana Plane crash, followed by a welcome remark by the programme coordinator Olajumoke Itebe. She welcome the entire participant and gave an overview on the essence and important of the meeting. She noted that women groups and Gender-friendly CSOs need to come together to be part of the amendments of the constitution especially sections/areas where women have been marginalized, stigmatized and psychologically demoralized.

Activity Day 1:

During the morning session the first paper on Gender issues and Constitution Making in Nigeria was presented by Mrs. Kekefi, who represented Barr Abiola A. Afolabi, the Executive Director GECORN. In her paper, she looked into the 1999 constitution of the FRN while making comparison with the constitutions of other African countries such as Uganda, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Liberia and South Africa. She pointed out the rights and affirmative action in favour of women in the various constitutions and reflected on the need for Nigeria to come up with a constitution that strongly identifies the right of women, equality and non discrimination. She looked at areas where the rights of women were directly impinged upon by the constitutional provisions from citizenship, political party, federal character and proportional representative.

She noted that women are under represented in parliament, elective and appointive positions in government and that the rules of engagement in politics are by and larger gender Neutral and emphasis on structural limitations to women participation.

In her conclusion she said that Nigeria as a member state of the UN should ensure that The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted in 1979 by the UN General Assembly which she described as an international bill of rights for women and an agenda for global action to end discrimination should be mainstream into the constitution while urging that the outcome of this meeting should be comprehensively drafted and presented to the national assembly during the constitutional amendment process.

The afternoon section started with a paper presented by Barr Olasupo Ojo Executive Director CDHR, the paper looked into the loopholes in the Nigeria Constitution and best practices from other countries, he identified loopholes and gaps in the 1999 constitution noting that the language in which the constitution is written betrays its seeming desire to continue with the patriarchal tradition of our society. In his opinion, it is necessary to divest the constitution of its masculinity and make it gender sensitive, The pronoun "he" appears in the 1999 Constitution 235 times and the word woman was used only two times (See Sections 26 (2) (a) and 29 (4) (b).



*Sen. Ike Ekweremadu, Chairman
Constitution Review Committee*

Secondly on the issue citizenship he said that the Section 26 of the 1999 Constitution defines who is a Nigerian citizen and how same may be acquired by naturalization and by registration. The Constitution makes no provision for the process by which non-Nigerian men married to Nigerian women and who are so desirous, may become Nigerian citizens. The silence here has continued to wreck untold hardship on the stability of many marriages.

He also emphasis on the issue of indigenship which he said women have been denied their rights to appointive or political positions due to the fact that they can no longer claim their original place of origin or that of their husbands.

He concluded that Nigerian Government has ratified several instruments that frown at inequality and discrimination, and aim at protecting women's rights as human rights. Nevertheless, the right of the woman to freedom from discrimination has been specifically derogated from by the Constitution itself in the very section guaranteeing the right. Thus, section 42(3) has precluded the right to freedom from discrimination as conferred in section 42(1) from applying with respect to any public office, including military or police appointments.

Activity Day 2:

The second day of the meeting started with an interactive session anchored by Olajumoke and followed by the group work by participants on three thematic areas; Affirmative Action (political parties, legislatures, local government and gender equality clause), Women: Candidature & voting, (proportional representation, residency/citizenship, independent candidates, composition of INEC), Women & political parties, (registration of political parties internal party democracy)

Barr Femi Falana came in as a guest speaker to speak briefly on the issue of gender and the Nigeria constitution he explained that It is an incontestable fact that women constitute about half of the projected national population of Nigeria. Unfortunately, this numerical strength has never found a corresponding expression or representation in Nigeria's public life, the problem is beyond the usual position that "there are no suitable women to fill vacancies or even take appointments to "gender balance" a string of appointments. The fundamental Issue remains that there are institutional reasons obstructing the possibility of full public advancement of women.

He cited that African Countries such as Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa, Eritrea, Malawi etc has used constitutional measures to enhance women's active participation in power and in decision making. Today, Rwanda parliament has almost 50% representation of women that the Barriers to improve women's health are often rooted in social economic, legal, cultural and religious belief. Thus, women in Nigeria become vulnerable to increased risks of sexual and other abuse, in and out of marriage affecting women's bodily integrity and autonomy.

On the enforcement of socio-economic rights, Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution makes provision for the Fundamental Objectives and Directives Principles of State Policy of Nigeria. Many of these rights are the most laudable objectives for which any state can set for itself. In particular, when weighed against the economic, social and political situation in the country. However, as laudable as these objectives are, they remain non justifiable in the court of justice. He cited Section 14(3) entrenching the federal character principle without affirming the principle of equality and non discrimination.

He spoke on harmful traditional practices which includes widowhood practices, female genital mutilation, force a marriage and others which have constituted a continuing threat to the lives of women in Nigeria and contravene Section 34 1999 Constitution.

He concluded by urging women to rise up and unite and pledge to always be ready to defend the cause of women freely through his law firm.

Summary of the Memorandum

The participants agreed to the proposed amendment of the constitution with emphasis on the issues of gender in the constitution and outlined areas for amendment as follows;

Political Parties:

- Section 225 to be amended to include making it compulsory for all political parties to set aside certain percentage of fund for the office of the party's women leader
- Section 223 should include that political party shall provide facilities and opportunity necessary to improve or realize women's potential and political advancement.
- On the power of INEC, section 228 should be amended to provide for INEC to sanction political parties that breach

their own internal democracy and carry out action that are not gender sensitive.

Proportional Representation:

- Insert a new provision to read- composition of local state and federal legislatures shall be composed of directly elected representative and representative of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

Independent Candidates:

- Section 221 to be amended to read an individual (male or female), an association or a political party shall canvass for votes as an independent or as a member of a political party at any election

Citizenship:

- Amend section 26 to read "any man or woman who is or has been married to a citizen of Nigeria shall have a right to citizenship.

Residency:

- Amend section 147 sub section 3 to read: provided that in giving effect to the provision aforesaid the president shall appoint at least one minister from each state of which half shall be women and resident of the state having lived there for a period of 5 years and above.
- Since appointment are made in conformity with section 143, it should be amended to read "the constitution of the government of the federal or any of its agencies and conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner to reflect the federal character and gender,...thereby ensuring that there is no predominance of one sex over the other.

Federal Character Commission:

- To be changed to gender, deferral character and social justice commission.

Responsibility of INEC:

- Schedule F- to be amended so that INEC shall have power only to organize, undertake and supervise election
- The power to register political parties in accordance with the provision of the constitution shall be vested in the political party regulatory commission(PPRC) and shall have the power to
 - 1 monitor of organizational and operations of the political parties including their finances
 - 2 Arrange for the annual examination and audit of funds
 - 3 Arrange and conduct the registration of persons qualified to vote

And finally the position of chairman of INEC should be zone on gender basis where by a woman can be INEC chairman while a man can be deputy chairman or the other way round.

The meeting ended with the adoption of the above proposed amendments to the constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria at about 1.20pm on 5th June 2012.

A TEXT OF THE PRESS BRIEFING DEMANDING FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS REPORTS ON CORRUPTION AND INDEPENDENT PUBLIC JUDICIARY OF INQUIRY INTO THE FUELSUBSIDY SCANDAL, THE MALABU OIL DEAL AND THE ALLEGATION OF \$3 MILLION BRIBE

Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC) and other Civil Society Organizations working to promote transparency, accountability and the fight against corruption in Nigeria have been following closely the flagrant continuation of corrupt practices in Nigeria.

We are worried with the rising profile of official corruption in Nigeria under this administration. The systematic system failure has its root in the manifestation of corruption at all level which undermines development and promotes insecurity and poverty in our country.

In the first instance , incessant probes that do not yield public reports rob Nigerian citizens of their commonwealth and scarce resources. In spite of this, many well documented reports on corruption suggest there is laxity and lack of interest to deal with corruption in Nigeria .The following reports confirm our concerns:

1. The KPMG report in which the Nigeria National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) was indicted for corrupt practices and short charging Nigerians,
2. The Nigeria Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (NEITI) audit report exposing 10 years of corruption in the upstream and downstream sectors of the oil and gas industry.
3. The uncalled for reconciliation of justice on the Malabu Oil Deal with juicy payment of \$1,092,040,000 to the other party by Shell on the order of Mr. President, is clearly fraudulent, misappropriation of public fund and abuse of office
4. The probe of the Pension Fund Management by the Senate Joint Committee on Public Service and Establishment, State and Local Government Administration
5. The case of corruption and money laundering trial against ex-Delta State Governor James Ibori in the UK for which he has reportedly pleaded guilty despite the acquittal granted him by a Nigerian court
6. The SEC probe and the alarming revelations of corruption in the capital market
7. The probe of the oil subsidy regime by an Ad hoc committee of the House of Representatives
8. The bribe scandal against Hon. Faruk Lawan, chairman of the House Adhoc Committee on Petroleum Subsidy.
9. The impunity by some state governors in their refusal to allow for local government area council elections
10. The non-prosecution of those indicted in the Haliburton LNG bribery scandal the same where the Americans involved had be prosecuted and charged in their country.
11. The integrity of the legislature has come under serious suspicion with the too frequent accusation of the probe committees members of bribery.
12. The revelation by Shell Petroleum Development Company that Nigeria has since 2009 lost \$1.5 billion yearly to crude oil theft
13. The recent revelation that authorities in the USA have frozen the bank accounts of Nigeria missions in both New York and Washington D. C. on suspicion of being used for money laundering,
14. The perpetual injunction against prosecution granted by a superior count in favour of the former governor of Rivers State Dr. Peter Odili

The corruption war must be waged by more committed crop of

public officers as well as by ordinary citizens. The EFCC, CCB, and ICPC alone can only be creating occasional drama, while avid corruption makes nonsense of every good policy of any agency, including the present administration.

We are aware that some people in their desperation to keep corruption in the fuel subsidy they want to divert the attention of the public from the real issues of large scale fraud in high places established in the subsidy probe report

OUR DEMAND:

1. That the Federal Government should set up an Independent panel of inquiry to investigate these allegations and prosecute those found guilty
2. That the President Goodluck Jonathan should not only take note, but also take a stand and live by example on the fight against corruption.
3. That government must take strong measures to prevent political corruption
4. That government must cut down waste and duplication of resources as contained in the current budget
5. That judiciary must raise up to restore its integrity and punish any judge who gives judgment that promotes or exonerates corrupt officials
6. That the legislature must carry out its constitutional role without fear, intimidation or favour and sanction any member involved in Legislative extortion and corruption.
7. That the Farouk Lawan-led panel on subsidy probe is valid and must not be undermined to free those looters.
8. That there must be effort to strengthen and support anti-corruption agencies
9. That the National Strategy on Anticorruption must be put to use
10. That the recent ban on private media covering Villa should be lifted.
11. The AGF initiate criminal proceedings in a court of law against all those that have so far been indicated of various corrupt practices
12. That the President should as a matter of urgency and in order to reassure the public of the commitment of his government to transparency and accountability release to the public his asset declaration and that of his deputy.

Signed by:

1. Zero Corruption Coalition (ZCC)
2. Public What You Pay (PWYP).
3. Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC)
4. Centre for Information Technology & Development (CITAD)
5. National Public Procurement Watch Platform (NPWP)
6. West African Civil Society Forum –Nigeria (WACSOF)
7. Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)
8. Centre for the Development of Civil Society
9. African Centre for Media & Information Literacy
10. Public and Private Development Centre (PPDC)
11. Koyenum Immalah Foundation
12. Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP)
13. African Centre for Leadership, Strategy and Development (Centre LSD)
14. Alliance for Credible Election (ACE)

REPORT OF A ONE DAY ROUND TABLE TALK ON THE ENFORCEMENT OF RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON PETROLEUM SUBSIDY ORGANISED BY ANEEJ ON THE 23rd OF MAY 2012 AT DENIS HOTEL, ABUJA

The roundtable talk which was supported by the department for international development (DFID) started at about 10:25 am with the presence of Mr. Newton of British Council, representative of Nigeria Medical Association, Dr. Nicolas Banith, Mr. Aremu, deputy president of NLC, Jaye Gaskia of Occupy Nigeria, Uyoyo Oghene of Centre for Democracy, Barr. Eze Oyekpere, Centre for Social Justice, Yinka Lawal of Pact Nigeria, the Executive Director, Centre LSD, Dr. Otive Igbuzor, Peter Isele, president of Trade Union Congress who was duly represented by Mr. Aliyu Musa, comrade Nuhu Toro, [NLC], members of the press and representatives of the Civil Society Organizations [CSOs] in attendance.

The event that was facilitated by Barr. Dayo Ayoade and Mr. Leo Ataku have the lead guest speaker Dr. Otive Igbuzor outlined the objectives of the workshop which include; to carry out detailed analysis of the house of representative ad-hoc committee report on fuel subsidy, identify specific issues in the report, the recommendations in the report and development of CSOs option of action on the implementation of the recommendation.

In a detailed analysis of the Farouk Lawal led committee report based on the public hearing held between 16th January to February 9th, 2012, Dr. Otive in his presentation re-opened the fraudulent activities associated with the NNPC as an umpire unaccountable to anybody or authority in the management of oil subsidy. The subsidy regime was characterised with endemic corruption through the manipulation of figures/amount paid to marketers and gross inefficiency in the entire management. He buttressed his point as reported by the Farouk Lawal committee that some of the marketers claimed subsidy on products not supplied and lots of officials in the government environment were deceptive in their activities.

In another development, Mohammed Attah in his presentation developed identifiable ways in which the recommendations in the Hon. Farouk Lawal committee could be implemented. In his submission, he said that the application of the basic provisions of the law through independent organs will go a long way in achieving positive results in the Farouk Lawal House Committee recommendations. The BPP, Federal High Court, the Federal Civil Service Commission, the EFCC and the ICPC, The Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply Management of Nigeria, National Assembly, The Code of Conduct Bureau, the Federal Character Commission, ETC are bodies created by law [1999 constitution] to act without permission EXCEPT the ICPC that can act based on petition submitted.

In addition, Mr. Attah suggested that the fuel subsidy report requires deep understanding and interpretation by elite for the common man to understand. For onward transmission to the general public, organizers should engage experts or seasoned administrators to simplify and

summarize the bulk report in pamphlet form for easy reading and application, design messages for paper and hand bills, develop pull outs from the Report that could be used in newspaper articles, media release, translate the summary report into local dialects for local and grass roots consumption.

The NGOs should embark on extensive advocacy campaign through the engagement of media articles and press release, advocacy visits to Chief Executives across the arms of governments which will serve as pressure on the government in ensuring that the recommendations in the report are considered.

The Civil Society Organizations should encourage the anti-corruption institution agencies and other independent organs to development the political will to take action against persons of high authority that are indicted in the report. In the implementation process of the subsidy report, adequate monitoring and evaluation structures by the NGOSs will help expose some hidden issues.

Many other participants raised various suggestions as the way forward in the implementation of the subsidy report as submitted by the Farouk Lawal led committee. It was acknowledged that fight against corruption and corrupt practices should be taken to the grass root in diverse languages and CSOs should employ ICT technology to track money paid to institutions and individuals. They also said that as the implementation of these subsidy reports is on-going, refineries should be put in place so that subsequent subsidy should not be import dependant rather, we should refine locally, and export and subsidy will be local dependant without foreign interest or exploitation.

To crown it all, Dr. Otive Igbuzor opined that as far as the fight against corruption must be comprehensive, engagement of all stakeholders in the struggle is imperative. He therefore submitted that:

The legislators must insist on the implementation of the subsidy report and should judiciously follow up the implementation of the Farouk Lawal committee report.

The CSOs should continue advocacy and campaign on the implementation of the report through awareness creation and consciousness raising, capacity building of members and stakeholders on the operation of the oil sector to enhance transparency and accountability.

The Executive should respect the compact between the people and government and implement the report of the committee, the judiciary must ensure that justice is done, seen to be done and done expeditiously on matter of the subsidy report without personality or class intimidation, The media must maintain a long term attention on this issue and clear focus on it, while the citizens must continue the pressure and maintain their anger and indignation as citizens and not as subjects. These will help transform the prevailing situation to a better and enviable society.

Communiqué Issued at the National Stakeholders Summit on Enhancing Citizens' Participation in the EITI Process organised by Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Nigeria on 22nd-23rd May 2012 Held at Bolton White Hotel, Abuja.

Preamble:

Publish What You Pay (PWYP) Nigeria on 22nd-23rd May 2012 organised a National Stakeholders Summit on NEITI with the theme 'Enhancing Participation of Citizens in the EITI Process'. PWYP is a global coalition positioned as the voice of the people demanding for transparency and accountability from the extractive sector at all levels for the benefit of all Nigerians. The summit attracted participants from civil society organisations, faith-based organisations, host communities, media, women groups, students, government representatives from relevant agencies, PACT/USAID and other international development partners as well as NEITI secretariat. The summit featured presentations including: Perspectives of Host Communities: NEITI Audit, a Tool for Extractive Industries Host Community's Galvanisation and Mobilisation, Overview and Update on PWYP'S Programs, overview of NEITI's Operation: Ten Years of NEITI Audit Report and several others. The following observations were made.

Key Observations:

1. Corruption in extractive industries has continued to worsen in spite of all the commitments made by successive governments and institutions put in place to fight it.
2. NEITI function is meaningless without the ability to enforce the recommendations from its audit reports there gaps in the NEITI act.
3. There is lack of political will by government to compel the international oil companies operating in Nigeria to operate in line with international best practices.
4. Environmental Impact Assessment by extractive industries are often times done without active involvement and participation of the communities.
5. There is a deliberate plot by International Oil Companies to remove section 1504 of the Dodd Frank law that emphasis openness of all transaction in the extractive sub-sector.
6. Though gas flaring statistics in Nigeria is reportedly said to have reduced, there still high

rate of gas flaring and its attendant negative effect on human life and livelihood.

7. Lack of effective legislation is compounding the opaqueness in the extractive sectors including non passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill.
8. Low level of awareness on NEITI and its activities among citizens.
9. That we observed that Nigeria is the only oil producing country without a Sovereign Wealth Fund.
10. The government is not sensitive to the plight of the people. Government is silent on the UNEP report on Ogoni land. It has also displayed insensitivity on the Zamfara leg poisoning issue as fund presumably for it is nowhere to be found.
11. From the experiences shared at the summit, participants expressed dismay about the level of devastation caused by extractive activities in their communities.
12. The over fifty years of extractive activities in Nigeria has not translated to improved living condition, leaving the people in abject poverty.

Recommendation

In order to reinvigorate the anti-corruption crusade and salvage the nation from the cesspool of corruption in the extractive sector which the country currently finds itself, as well as addressing the concomitant effect of grand corruption in the country, the summit recommended as follows:

1. Government and its functionaries should be more responsive and responsible. Adherence and enforcement of policies should be given priority.
2. We recommend the speedy passage of the Petroleum Industry Bill into law.
3. All industries in the extractive sector should involve community members in the conduct of Environmental Impact Assessment to bring ownership and participation.
4. The government should adopt and domesticate section 1504 of the Dodd Frank law to further open up the sector.

5. The National Assembly should insist that 2013 stoppage date of gas flaring by multi-national oil companies operating in Nigeria should be strictly adhered to.
6. PWYP should be included in the NSWG which is the EITI standard.
7. Capacity building for citizens through training, workshops, seminars, community mobilization and distribution of Information, Education and Communication materials in local Nigeria languages to enhance citizen participation in EITI process.
8. Other stakeholders should support the Students' Forum on EITI to take the lead to sensitize and establish similar platforms in other institutions of learning across the country.
9. Host communities network should be supported to sensitize, mobilise, and establish platforms across the extractive industries host communities in Nigeria to engage the NEITI process.
10. The government should design and implement people oriented programmes and policies that ensure the welfare of citizens and provide social safety nets for all Nigerians.
11. Civil Society groups and non state actors must re-commit to a pragmatic and proactive strategy for fighting corruption by providing the necessary information to the people so as to sufficiently mobilize them to own the fight against corruption.
12. We recommend to the Federal Government to show political will on the establishment of the Sovereign Wealth Fund to take care of infrastructural development, future use and for emergency without minding the intimidation from the state governors. Civil Society Organisation on the implementation of the Sovereign Wealth Fund.
13. The collaboration between PWYP Nigeria and other CSOs in the extractive industry is commendable, however this should be further strengthened by including PWYP in the NSWG which is the international standard.
14. The federal government should re-visit tax policies and carry out a review of tax holidays and incentives which are obsolete and detriment to the country.
15. Government should commence immediate implementation of the UNEP report on Ogoni land, KPMG report and re-visit the remediation issue in Anka community in Zamfara State.
16. Office of the Attorney General should speed up the prosecution of those indicted in the Hon. Farouq Lawan Oil Subsidy probe.
17. We recommend at all level the platform for women and other vulnerable groups should be created and give full support for EITI Process.

Conclusion

The summit commended PACT/USAID for the support and thanked participants for their diverse contributions which made the summit a success. We commend the Farouq Lawan Committee report on the fuel subsidy probe for making it public and also thank President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan for ordering the Attorney General of the federation to bring those indicted to book. Also, the first Global Women's Forum on EITI was officially Inaugurated by the Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Extractive Industries and Transparency Initiative (NEITI), Mrs. Zainab S. Ahmed, who use the occasion to charged women in Nigeria to brace up to the challenge of playing major roles in the efforts to save the youths from the 'current misuse' by negative elements in the country. We are optimistic that the recommendations, strategies and action plan developed will indeed bring about a new and improved transparency regime and ensure prosperity for Nigerians.

Signed:

1. Ms. Faith Nwadish National Co-ordinator PWYP
2. Mr. Mohammed Mustapha - North-West PWYP
3. Mr. Sadiq Ibrahim- North-East PWYP
4. Mr. Taiwo Otilayo- North-Central PWYP
5. Mr. Gordon Abiama- South-South PWYP
6. Mrs Obiageli Ukeoma- South-West PWYP
7. Elder Emeka Ogazi South-East PWYP
8. Prince Preye Pawuru- Host Communities Network of Nigeria
9. Ms Hope Diamond Koyenum - Students' Forum on EITI
10. Mr. Omo Julius Onabu- Media

Communique unanimously adopted by participants at the National Summit on the Freedom of Information Act held at NICON LUXURY HOTEL in Abuja on the 19th day of June, 2012 upon a motion for adoption moved by Ms Faith Nwadishi, National Coordinator, Publish What You Pay (PWYP), Nigeria. The motion was seconded by Mr. Uchenna Innocent Ogbu of the High Court of Justice, Abuja and supported by Mrs. Umar Maryam of the Federal Ministry of Information, Abuja.

Introduction

A two-day National Summit on the Freedom of Information Act was held at the NICON Luxury Hotel in Abuja on Monday June 18 and Tuesday, June 19, 2012. It was attended by 164 participants, from various sectors and interest groups, including the National Assembly, the Presidency, institutions and agencies of the Executive at Federal, State and Local Government levels; the Judiciary, anti-corruption agencies, regulatory and other oversight bodies; civil society, the media, the private sector, public corporations and state-owned enterprises, the general public and other interest groups.

The Summit was organized by Media Rights Agenda (MRA) and sponsored by Pact Nigeria.

Summit Objectives:

The stated objectives of the Summit were to:

- Engage in broad-based consultations among representatives of key stakeholders in the public sector, particularly the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary; civil society, the media, the private sector and other interest groups with outcomes that should feed into a variety of ongoing processes to develop strategies and action plans for effective implementation of the FOI Act.
- Create a platform for an intensive appraisal of the FOI Act, including identifying its strengths and weaknesses and thereby ensuring that participants, especially in the public sector, have a better understanding of its purpose, objectives and potentials while also agreeing on strategies for overcoming its inadequacies.
- Map out wide-ranging strategies for ensuring public awareness of the Act; better knowledge of its provisions by public sector actors and ordinary citizens as well as for the overall effective implementation of the Act, including by identifying the roles which various stakeholders can play in these different processes and aspects.

The Summit was declared open by the Minister of Information, Mr. Labaran Maku, while the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Mohammed Bello Adoke (SAN), represented by his Special Adviser, Professor Deji Adekunle, delivered the Keynote Address. The opening session was chaired by Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah, the Catholic Bishop of the Sokoto Diocese.

The Summit was addressed, among others, by Ekiti State Governor, Dr. Kayode Fayemi, represented by the Attorney-General of Ekiti State, Mr. Dayo Adelaja; Mr. Mobolaji Adebisi, Special Assistant (Media) to President Goodluck Jonathan; Mr. Ehi E. Okoyomon, Managing Director and CEO of the Nigerian Security Printing and Minting Company Plc.; Dr. Sam Amadi, Chairman of the Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission; Hon. Matthew Omegara, the Chair of the House of Representatives Committee on the Freedom of Information Act; Hon. Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chair of the House of Representatives Committee on the Diaspora; Mrs. Ayo Obe, former President of the Civil Liberties Organization (CLO); Dr. Bassey I. Etim-Ikang, Director of Research, Planning and Statistics in the Office of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation; Hon. Kehinde Bamgbetan, Chairman of Ejiabo Local Government Council of Lagos State; and Mr. Gbenga Sesan, ICT expert and Project Director of Paradigm Initiative Nigeria (PIN).

Conclusions and Observations

The right of access to information held by governments and government bodies at all levels is a fundamental right which every Nigerian is entitled to enjoy. The Summit commends the 6th National Assembly for finally passing the Freedom of Information Bill in 2011 in recognition of this right. It also commends President Goodluck Jonathan for his bold and courageous move in signing the Bill into Law.

The Summit notes and fully endorses President Jonathan's statement of firm belief upon the signing the FOI Bill into Law that the Act would "strengthen all institutions to ensure greater transparency, probity and accountability."

The Summit does not dispute the right of the States to pass their own Freedom of Information Laws. It however commends those State Governments that have indicated their willingness to be bound by the Federal Freedom of Information Act as well as the Ekiti State Government for speedily passing its own Freedom of Information Law.

The Summit also commends those local government councils that have indicated their readiness to be bound by the Federal Freedom of Information Act and are taking steps to implement the Law with regards to their records and information. The Summit however acknowledges the challenges which confront local governments in the implementation of the Act, particularly those arising from inadequate resources and capacity.

The Summit welcomes the efforts so far made by the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice to provide guidance to all ministries, departments and agencies of the Federal Government on their duties and responsibilities under the FOI Act as well as how to implement the Law. The Summit however notes that his implementation and reporting guidelines need to be disseminated much more widely to public institutions and other stakeholders than is presently the case.

The Summit endorses the advice of the Attorney-General of the Federation to public institutions to use modern technology to inform citizens about the activities of government and the information it holds. In particular, Summit participants align themselves with the injunction of the Attorney-General that “agencies should readily and systematically post information online in advance of any public request.”

The Summit acknowledges that the absence of an independent administrative oversight body or agency to superintend over the implementation of the Act, undertake or coordinate public enlightenment activities, and receive complaints of wrongful denial of access to information, is a major weakness of the Act as there is a risk that the courts could become swamped with FOI cases since litigation is the only option open to citizens denied access to information.

The Summit agrees with the broad outlines of the Roadmap developed by the Federal Government for the implementation of the FOI Act and calls for the wide dissemination of the detailed roadmap and its urgent implementation.

The Summit expressed concern about the low level of public awareness about the FOI Act, its provisions and how to use it as it is clear that most of the prime beneficiaries of the Freedom of Information Act are yet to fully appreciate the enormous benefits that they can derive from more active application of the Law.

Recommendations

Participants therefore recommended as follows:

The right of access to information being a fundamental right, the Summit calls on all states which are yet to implement the Freedom of Information Act 2011, including those states that have declared their intention to enact their own Laws, to do so in the earliest time possible as their continued delay in implementing the Act or enacting their own Laws amounts to violation of the rights of Nigerians, particularly those residents in such states, to access information held by the respective states.

Various stakeholder groups, particularly the media, civil society and government public enlightenment agencies, should undertake public enlightenment activities to ensure better public understanding of the provisions of the Act and how to use it. Such communication endeavours should be sustained over time to achieve the desired impact.

In order to lessen the number of cases going to court and its attendant burden on information seekers, public institution

defending such cases and the courts, ongoing efforts to amend the Federal Public Service Rules should include administrative sanctions for unjustified denials or delays of requests for information under the FOI Act. This will provide an alternative to litigation which will be less cumbersome, less time-consuming and less costly for all parties concerned.

Public officers should be re-oriented on the superiority of the FOI Act to the Official Secrets Act. In this regard, we wish to commend to all public institutions the views of the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice, Mr. Mohammed Bello Adoke (SAN) that “any inconsistency between the FOIA and the Official Secrets Act should ordinarily be resolved in favour of the Freedom of Information Act in accordance with the well-known canon of statutory interpretation that a latter statute prevails where there is inconsistency between two statutes. This is put beyond controversy by virtue of Sections 1, 27 and 28 of the Freedom of Information Act.”

Furthermore, the public service should embark on a re-classification of records under the Official Secrets Act so as to reduce conflict with the Freedom of Information Act, as advised by the Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice.

Public institutions should create or strengthen their internal structures for managing information and responding to information requests.

Deliberate measures should be taken to ensure consultation and networking among various stakeholders, including governments and government bodies, civil society, the media and members of the public that will enhance the effective implementation of the Act.

In order to ensure the effective implementation of the Freedom of Information Act, budgetary allocations should be made to support the implementation of the Act by various public institutions. The Summit therefore calls upon the National Assembly to ensure that the necessary budgetary approvals are given for the year 2013 and beyond to advance FOI implementation.

The Summit calls on all public institutions that are yet to fulfil their proactive disclosure obligations under the Act to do so without further delay and urges the Attorney-General of the Federation to take measures to ensure compliance with this and other duties and obligations of public institutions under the Act.

Public institutions should explore the use of various ICTs and social media tools in engaging the FOI Act, particularly in the area of proactive disclosures, including twitter, Facebook, mobile phone apps, blogs, multimedia tools, among others. Public institutions should also use electronic records management systems to enhance the implementation of the Act.

In order to reduce implementation costs and unnecessary delays, public institutions are reminded that they do not need to create additional websites or portals for FOI implementation. Existing websites or portals can be made more dynamic to take FOI issues on board.

REPRESENTATION: X-RAYING THE SEVENTH ASSEMBLY IN THE LAST ONE YEAR

By Abdulkareem Tijjani

The legislature are the arm of government that is saddled with the constitutional mandate to make laws, oversight, inspect the implementation and mainstream the yearnings and wants of the people in its legislative agenda via coming up with peoples' oriented bills and legislation. But since the restoration of [democratic rule](#) in Nigeria in 1999, the legislative arm of government has been said to be a "learning process" that has witnessed series of challenges.

Many have argued that members of the Assembly have not justified the huge investment on them; either through quality legislation or effective representation. There has also been criticism that the legislators are insensitive to the plight of Nigerians. Because constituency residents and citizens are getting poorer, as lack of basic amenities grows continuously and constituency have become instruments of official corruption, fraud and lubricant of primitive accumulation for lawmakers, as lawmakers siphon constituency allowances for personal use.

The Constitutional Responsibilities of the Legislature include making laws for the peace, progress and good governance of the country and representing their constituency interest, but over the years in Nigeria lawmaking is no longer the remit of prudent, intelligent and honorable persons, but of those who engage in profligacy and depravity. Members of the legislature have created the impression that the country does not have people who have credibility in public offices. They have become negative influence on the State legislatures, infecting them with the inspiration to siphon public funds with impunity and leave the constituencies persons helpless.

Though the legislative agenda of the seventh national assembly looked very promising at the inception of the government due to the people's oriented agenda embedded in the blue print unveiled by the leadership of the national assembly at the inception of the legislative year in June 2011. But an x-ray of the regime in the last legislative year do not really show adherence to the legislative agenda, as the people are till date placed far from the government due to lack of introduction and implementation of people's oriented legislative agenda.

Analysts and political observers qualified the

incumbent leadership of the national assembly as a replica of the old order, going by the growing unemployment rates, general insecurity, wastage in government and high rate of corruption in public places to mention just a few. In fact, Nigeria's case is a case of animal farm where all animals are not equal; while the people at constituency level cry woe for non availability of basic amenities, political office holders and people at the helms of affairs siphon allocations that are meant for constituency development for their personal use.

This is prevalent because of lack of strong and reliable feedback mechanism to measure the effect of this huge constituency allocation to constituency development in Nigeria and has also encouraged corruption in that regard.

In cases where lawmakers are finished with constituency allowance, they engage in various investigation of the executive in order to annex funds for themselves. They spend huge chunk of public funds to conduct the many investigations. At the end, the impact of the probes is yet to be seen. Many of the reports have been swept under the carpet with some of the indicted politicians still hanging around the corridors of power. Some bills have spent so much time that one starts to wonder what our law makers are doing, this only further confirms to Nigerians the unseriousness of legislative practices in Nigeria. The present set of



Hon. Emeka Ihedioha, Deputy Speaker, House of Reps.

lawmakers lack the courage to take any of the investigations to a logical conclusion there was always a stumbling block occasioned by greed, corruption and abuse of national service as is with the case of Hon Hembe, Hon Lawal and even the scandal involving the Joint Committee of the Senate on the Pensions Probe and the Pensions Reforms Task Team. There is no democracy without a legitimate legislature that has integrity, the essence of representation is among others to champion the course of the common man effectively, and our parliaments need to develop their capacity to carry out their legitimate functions. Nigerians understand that Parliament still has some growth to do, it is therefore important that ethics required of a legislator should be imbibed, this will go a long way in building trust and bringing about development needed to change the socio-economic life of electorates in Nigeria.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: Strengthening Safe Motherhood

By Annabel Oronsaye

Health sector reforms emerged as a major focus in the 1990s covering a wide range of structural and institutional changes. The components of a fundamental health sector reform includes: decentralization of power and resources; improving function of national health ministry's; improving the performance of civil service (and managers); broadening health financing mechanism; introducing managed competition; guaranteeing access, redressing equity and pro-poor orientation; as well as broadening ownership and impact. Nigeria's overall health system performance was ranked 187th among the 191 Member States by the WHO in 2000 and the critical importance of reproductive health to achieving international development goals was affirmed at the highest level at the 2005 World Summit.

Reproductive Health is also a human right. Yet poor reproductive health conditions are the leading cause of deaths and illnesses in women of childbearing age worldwide, while some 350 million couples lack the ability to plan their families or space their children. Every minute, a woman in the developing world dies from treatable complications of pregnancy or childbirth. Every minute, a family is devastated. The lives of surviving children are put at risk, community persons suffer untimely death due to ill health and lack of medical attention to cure it. And for every woman who dies, as many as 20 are seriously harmed by fistula or other injuries of childbearing and these entire crises can be describe as disaster.

The fertility level in Nigeria is quite high (total fertility rate; TFR is 5.7) which implies that an average Nigerian woman will bear approximately six children in her lifetime (NDHS 2008). The 2006 census (142 million) gave an annual population growth rate figure of 3.2 percent. At this growth rate it would take only 22 years for the population of Nigeria to double. More than two-fifths of the population is currently under the age of 15 years.

Reproductive ill healths have been a great concern to many stakeholders as maternal mortality and morbidity are very high. Meanwhile, reproductive health knowledge and access to quality of care maternal health services in Africa are poor with



Lady in labour on a wheelbarrow going to the nearest main road.

significant health consequences.

Reproductive health occupies a central position in the identity of the health as well as the development of a given population. However, the events of reproductive health are usually found in women who due to their biological function invariably bear the greater burden of the shortcomings of reproductive health such as unsafe motherhood or unsafe abortion.

In Nigeria, there is need to improve maternal and child health care services because most deaths of women during pregnancy or delivery are preventable. In the Revised National Health Policy of Nigeria, among the three identified current situation of the health status of the country is that the maternal mortality rate (about one mother's death in every one hundred deliveries) is one of the highest in the world. In the light of this, one of the key National Policy on Reproductive Health objective is to reduce maternal morbidity due to pregnancy and childbirth by 50%. One of the strategic thrusts is the promotion of a healthy reproductive health lifestyle by process of providing appropriate knowledge to bring about appropriate behavioural change and improve participation in the use of reproductive health services. Appropriate reproductive health knowledge, belief and power of women to access quality family planning

**“
Reproductive health occupies a central position in the identity of the health as well as the development of a given population. However, the events of reproductive health are usually found in women who due to their biological function invariably bear the greater burden of the shortcomings of reproductive health such as unsafe motherhood or unsafe abortion.
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BILLS UPDATE (JUNE, 2012)

Compiled by Our Staff Writer

| S/N | BILL NO | BILL NAME | YEAR | STAGE |
|-----|---------|--|------|----------------|
| 1 | SB 118 | A Bill for an Act to regulate the Business of Equipment Leasing in Nigeria and for Connected Purposes Therewith | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 2 | HB 46 | A Bill for an Act to Establish the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants of Nigeria to provide for the control of its Membership and to Promote and foster the Practice of the Arts and Science of Management Accountancy in the Federation and for Other Purposes Connected Therewith | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 3 | HB 14 | A Bill for an Act to Establish the of the Nigerian Financial Ombudsman, an Independent Body, Charged with the Responsibility for resolving Financial and Related Disputes in the Nigerian Financial Services Sector and Related Matters | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 4 | HB 7 | A Bill for an Act to amend the Investment and Securities Commission Act 2007 to Provide for Greater Transparency and Accountability in the Finances of Securities and Exchange Commission; And to Ensure Greater Legislative Oversight; And for Other Matters Connected Therewith | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 5 | HB 262 | A Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 to separate the Office of the Attorney-General from that of the Minister of Justice and to Provide for an Independent Office of the Attorney General and for Matters Connected Thereto | 2012 | Third Reading |
| 6 | HB 258 | A Bill for an Act to Amend the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act, 2004 to Provide that the removal of the Chairman of the Commission shall be subject to Ratification by Two Third Majority of the Senate and other Related Matter Thereto | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 7 | HB 238 | A Bill for an Act to Repeal the Customs and Excise Management Act, Cap. C45, Laws; to establish the Nigeria Customs Service; Reform the Administration and Management of Customs and Excise in Nigeria and Other Related Matters | 2012 | Third Reading |
| 8 | HB 278 | A Bill for an Act to Amend the Provision of Section 68 (1) (g) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended) | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 9 | HB 15 | A Bill for an Act to Establish the Nigerian International Financial Centre to Provide for a Financial Free Zone Offering a Full Range of Financial and Allied Services, 2012 | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 10 | HB 250 | A Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Costitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 to allow for more representation in the National Assembly for the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja and Other Matters Connected Therewith | 2012 | Second Reading |
| 11 | HB 182 | A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Protection of Humans from Certain levels of Exposure to Electromagnetic Field and for Other Matters Connected Therewith | 2012 | Second Reading |