FOURTH REPUBLIC
7TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
SECOND SESSION
NO. 69

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 7 March, 2013

1. The House met at 11.37 a.m. Mr Deputy Speaker read the Prayers.

2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
Mr Deputy Speaker announced that he had examined and approved the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 6 March, 2013.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings was adopted.

3. **Announcement:**
***Visitors in the Gallery*:**
Mr Deputy Speaker recognized the presence of the following visitors:

(*a*) Students Representatives Council of the Nigeria Law School, Bwari, Abuja;

(*b*) Staff and Students of Trinity International Schools, Karu, Abuja;

(*c*) Staff and Students of Image Makers Nursery and Primary School, Suleja, Niger State.

4. **Petitions:**
The following petitions were presented and laid by:

(*i*) Hon. Ismaila Inah Hussain (*Idah/Igalamela/Ibaji/Ofu Federal Constituency*) on behalf of Abubakar Sadiq Umar, seeking the intervention of the House to redress the non-release of his result by the Tafawa Balewa University, Bauchi;

(*ii*) Hon. Yusuf A. Tajudeen (*Ijumu/Kabba-Bunu Federal Constituency*) on behalf of sacked staff of Midcom Nigeria Limited, praying the House to intervene in their dismissal by the Indian Management Team of Midcom Nigeria Limited, with a view to reinstating them;

(*iii*) Hon. Kamil Akinlabi Mudashiru (*Afijo/Atiba East/Oyo West Federal Constituency*) on behalf of Olatokun K. O., praying the House to investigate in his wrongful retirement from the service of Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), with a view to reinstating him;

(*iv*) Hon. Bassey Ewa Eko (*Yakurr/Abi Federal Constituency*) on behalf of Eleng Igboke, seeking the House to redress the termination of his appointment by the Nigeria Police;

(*v*) Hon. Kingsley Chinda (*Obio/Akpor Federal Constituency*) from Emmanuel Ogbonda on behalf of Ward Development Committee, praying the House to investigate the abandonment of the project on the Federal Health Centre located at Woji, Obio/Akpor in Rivers State, with a view to ensuring its completion;

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(*vi*) Hon. Ibrahim T. El-Sudi (*Taraba Federal Constituency*) on behalf of:

(*a*) Oliver Mbagwu & Co. for Mr & Mrs Festus Ihezue, praying the House to investigate the killing of Mr Ifeanyi Ihezue at Lagoon Hotel, Ilaje, Lagos by Inspector Owena and the Manager of the Hotel, with a view to ensuring justice;

(*b*) Augustine N. Adamu, praying the House to intervene in his dismissal by the management of Federal Medical Centre, Jalingo, Taraba State, with a view to reinstating him;

(*vii*) Hon. Mpigi Barinade (*Eleme/Oyigbo/Tai Federal Constituency*) from Abel O. Oluka on behalf of concerned Indorama Host Community Youth, praying the House to intervene in the construction of Indorama - Eleme Fertilizer and Chemical Limited by Indorama/Daewoo Nigeria Limited without due consultation with the host community.

Petitions referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

5. Matters of Urgent Public Importance:

(*i*) Citing Standing Order VIII, Rule 46, Hon. Aminu Suleiman (*Fage Federal Constituency*) drew the attention of the House to the recent grant of the sum of ₦3 billion to Nollywood by the Executive Arm of Government for the purpose of boosting film-making and production activities in the country. He observed that film-making in English language is the dominate type in the country and stressed the need for an action by the House to ensure that the government grant is disbursed to other film-making bodies outside the English language genre. He thus urged the House to consider the matter of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to enable it debate the matter forthwith.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance, put and agreed to.

Question that the House do suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) *to enable it debate the matter forthwith, put and agreed to.*

₦3 billion Federal Government Special Grant to Nollywood, need to expand and accommodate other Film Producers like Kannywood etc:

The House

Notes with delight the Federal Government's gesture to the tune of ₦3 billion to help boost the activities of film making and production in the country;

Aware that this gesture will help promote our culture and sustain an industry employing thousands of Nigerians;

Realizing however, that 99% of the film produced by Nollywood are usually in English, the need to accommodate similar film producers acting in different other Nigeria languages like the Kannywood and many others scattered across the country becomes imperative.

Resolves to:

(*i*) Commend the Federal Government's gesture;

(*ii*) urge the Federal Government to accommodate Kannywood and other similar film producers across the country who are duly registered and recognized by the relevant Federal Agencies;

(*iii*) mandate the Committee on Legislative Compliance to monitor adherence to this Resolution and report back to the House as soon as disbursement commences (*Hon. Aminu Suleiman — Fage Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Mr Deputy Speaker, in his Ruling on the Constitutional Point of Order Raised by Hon. Samson Osagie as to whether the Grant was appropriated by the National Assembly, stated that the Grant to the Film Making Industry was duly appropriated under the Appropriation Act, 2013*; adding that the Executive Arm has the Constitutional responsibility to disburse the money duly appropriated by the Appropriation*

Act. Mr Deputy Speaker however pointed out that Hon. Aminu Suleiman's Motion is predicated on the necessity for fairness in the disbursement of the Grant to all categories of operators in the Film-making industry in the country, and in view of this, the Executive should be well-advised to ensure fairness and equity in the disbursement of the Appropriated Grant and accommodate the different categories of film producers in Nigeria.

(*ii*) Also citing Standing Order VIII, Rule 46, Hon. Robinson Edet Uwak (*Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udung Uko/Urue Offong/Oruko Federal Constituency*) called the attention of the House to the recent violent attack on the Nigerian Embassy in Dakar, Senegal by Nigerians living in that country in which the building, vehicles and equipment were vandalized and the lives of the diplomatic staff endangered. He expressed dismay over the apparent negligence of the Senegalese Authorities during the attack, in violation of their security responsibility as host country. He therefore urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to enable it debate the matter immediately.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance, put and agreed to.

Question that the House do suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) *to enable it debate the matter forthwith, put and agreed to.*

Violent attack on the Nigerian Embassy in Dakar, Senegal in which the building, vehicles and equipment were vandalized:

The House:

Notes that the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the Republic Senegal have cordial diplomatic ties and bilateral relations that date back to history, and both countries are members of the ECOWAS that means both countries have the responsibility to protect the other's diplomatic corps and embassies;

Further notes therefore with dismay the recent incidence that took place in the Nigerian Embassy in Dakar, the Capital City of the Republic of Senegal, where suspected Nigerian Citizens went wild and totally vandalized the Nigerian Embassy building, vehicles, equipment, as well as harass the diplomatic staff assigned to that office;

Is aware that the unfortunate incidence happened in the full glare of the Senegalese people as well as their law enforcement agency, who did not deem it fit to intervene and breakup the riotous actions by these purportedly angry Nigerians, neither did they find it appropriate to rescue the lives of the endangered Nigerian Embassy Officials who were being attacked despite repeated calls to the local Police;

Is troubled that not only was the building, equipment, and staff attacked by the angry mob, but the Nigerian Flag, which is powerful symbol of Nigeria's presence in Senegal, was dishonoured by violently pulling it down and uprooting its post, thereby desecrating it in public spectacle. It is necessary to note that this is a violation of the Constitutional provisions of Chapter 2, Section 24 (*a*) and (*b*), which stipulates that:

> It shall be the duty of every citizen to —
>
> (*a*) abide by this Constitution, respect its ideals and its institutions, **the National Flag**, the National Anthem, the National Pledge, and legitimate authorities;
>
> (*b*) help to **enhance the power, prestige and good name of Nigeria**, defend Nigeria and render such national service as may be required;

Is concerned that the recorded media of this violent episode has become viral on the web and many Nigerians at home and abroad are fully aware of this and its implication on Nigeria's National Interest;

Also notes that there is urgent need for Nigeria to continuously sit down to review her foreign policies to ensure that matters ofthis nature are nipped in the bud before they are made manifest;

Observes that the negligence of the Government of Senegal is in contradiction with regional security and development enjoyed by the ECOWAS Community and the duty to protect the Nigerian Officials and the Embassy in Senegal;

Further notes that Nigeria is a sovereign and respected country in the comity of Nations, thus all its representations whether at home or abroad are an integral part of its strength and pride. These representations, whether it be people, buildings, symbols, or materials are therefore sacrosanct and cannot be at any time abused or desecrated.

Resolves to:

Constitute an *Ad-hoc* Committee comprising of the Committees on Foreign Affairs, National Security to investigate the matter and report back to this Honourable House within four weeks (*Hon. Robinson Edet Uwak — Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udung Uko/Urue Offong/Oruko Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Ordered, That the Chairman, Committee on Foreign Affairs should continue with the commendable work she had already initiated on the matter and report back to the House as soon as possible.

Motion; consequentially withdrawn.

(*iii*) Further citing Standing Order VIII, Rule 46, Hon. Binta Bello Maigari (*Kaltungo/Shongom Federal Constituency*) drew the attention of the House to the International Women's Day scheduled for Friday, 8 March, 2013. She noted that the day is set aside to celebrate the achievements of women across the world and that public holiday is declared by some country in commemoration of the day. She therefore called on the House to join the rest of the world in the celebration of the day and thus urged it to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to enable the House debate the matter immediately.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance, put and agreed to.

Question that the House do suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) *to enable it debate the matter forthwith, put and agreed to.*

Need to eulogize the virtues of Nigerian Women as we celebrate the International Women Day:

Notes that March 8 is celebrated annually as the International Women's Day (IWD), to provide a common day for globally recognizing and applauding women's achievements and for observing and highlighting gender inequalities and issues;

Aware that in several countries, March 8, is a public holiday;

Further notes that though many women in progressive societies such a Nigeria enjoy some liberty, there are still thousands of women that are suppressed, tortured and abused under several semblances;

Disturbed that Nigeria still groans under Economic poverty and political hopelessness;

Further disturbed that Nigeria is yet to meet the 35% affirmative action for women political office holders;

Worried that Nigerian women in Parliament consist of only 6.8% of parliamentarians in the House of Representatives and about 28% of the Federal Executive Council are women.

Resolves to:

(*i*) Congratulate the Nigerian Women as they celebrate the International Women's Day;

(*ii*) commend the dexterity and courage of the Nigerian Women in the face of oppressive and discriminatory practices in our society;

(*iii*) condemn all forms of discriminatory practices in Nigeria;

(*iv*) urge the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to declare March 8, a public holiday (*Hon. Binta Bello Maigari — Kaltungo/Shongom Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted that March 8 is celebrated annually as the International Women's Day (IWD), to provide a common day for globally recognizing and applauding women's achievements and for observing and highlighting gender inequalities and issues;

Aware that in several countries, March 8, is a public holiday;

Further noted that though many women in progressive societies such a Nigeria enjoy some liberty, there are still thousands of women that are suppressed, tortured and abused under several semblances;

Disturbed that Nigeria still groans under Economic poverty and political hopelessness;

Further disturbed that Nigeria is yet to meet the 35% affirmative action for women political office holders;

Worried that Nigerian women in Parliament consist of only 6.8% of parliamentarians in the House of Representatives and about 28% of the Federal Executive Council are women.

Resolved to:

(*i*) Congratulate the Nigerian Women as they celebrate the International Women's Day;

(*ii*) commend the dexterity and courage of the Nigerian Women in the face of oppressive and discriminatory practices in our society;

(*iii*) condemn all forms of discriminatory practices in Nigeria;

(*iv*) urge the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to declare March 8, a public holiday (**HR. 59/2013**).

(*iv*) Also citing Standing Order VIII, Rule 46, Hon. Chris Emeka Azubogu (*Nnewi North/Nnewi South/Ekwusigo Federal Constituency*) recalled the recent publications in some national dailies where the challenges of the Nigerian rail system was highlighted. He noted the efforts of the Federal Government towards resuscitating railway transportation in the country and stressed the need to put in place adequate operational guidelines, safety and security measures to ensure the safety and comfort of passengers. He thus urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to enable the House debate the matter immediately.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance, put and agreed to.

Question that the House do suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) *to enable it debate the matter forthwith, put and negatived.*

Matter to stand over till the next Legislative Day.

6. Need to Translate the National Anthem and the Pledge into Nigerian Indigenous Languages:
Motion made and Question proposed:

The House:

Notes that patriotism which entails love and devotion to one's country is an essential ingredient for the unity and progress of any Nation;

Further notes that the current National Anthem was written in English language and adopted in 1978 to replace the colonial Nigeria National Anthem "Nigeria We Hail Thee". The lyrics are a combination of words and phrases taken from five (5) of the best entries in a national contest by John A. Ikechukwu, Eme Etim Akpan, B. A. Ogunnaike, Sota Omoigui and P. O. Aderibigbe. The words were put to music by the Nigeria Police Band under the directorship of Benedict E. Odiase;

Aware that in every public function, whether at Federal, State or Local Government level, the National Anthem is performed usually at the opening and closing part of such occasions. The National Anthem and the Pledge are meant to instill sense of patriotism in the citizenry, a clarion call for them to show love, commitment, respect, dedication and loyalty to the country and also to extol the virtues of past heroes;

Further aware that Nigeria is one of the Commonwealth countries whose official language is English, the National Anthem and the Pledge are written in English language and can therefore only be recited, or sung in English language by a select few literates in the country who are educated;

Concerned that the National Anthem or the Pledge has little or no meaning at all to about 57 million out of an estimated population of 160 million people in Nigeria who are illiterates and dwell mainly in rural areas and as such, the intended message is neither comprehended nor appreciated by them.

Resolves to:

(*i*) Urge the Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to take necessary steps to have the National Anthem and the Pledge translated into some major indigenous languages for the benefit of those Nigerians who can neither read nor write English language, while ensuring that the original lyrics/words and B. E. Odiase's musical note/rhyme are not altered but fully synchronised;

(*ii*) further urge the Director-General of the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to carry-out public enlightenment campaigns and sensitisation on the significance of the National Anthem, the Pledge and other National symbols with a view to instilling the spirit of patriotism in the citizens especially the youths (*Hon. Rotimi Makinde — Ife Central/Ife East/Ife North/Ife South Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Amendment Proposed:
In Prayer (*i*), line 2, immediately after the word "into", leave out the words "some major indigenous languages" and *insert* the words "all Nigerian Languages" (*Hon. Friday Itulah — Esan North East/South East Federal Constituency*).

Question that the amendment be made, put and negatived.

Main Question put and negatived.

7. **Consolidation of Bills:**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended) by providing Immunity for the Members of the Legislature in respect of the words spoken or written at the Plenary Session or at Committee Proceedings, to Guarantee that Freedom of Speech, Debates and Proceedings in Legislative Houses are not impeached or questioned in any Court or place out of Parliament and for Related Matters (HB. 432) and a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Guarantee Freedom of Speech and Legislative actions of Members of the National Assembly (HB. 457) be now consolidated" (*Hon. Albert T. Sam-Tsokwa — Dunga/Ussa/Takum Federal Constituency*).

Question put and agreed to.

8. **A Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended) by providing Immunity for the Members of the Legislature in respect of the words spoken or written at the Plenary Session or at Committee Proceedings, to Guarantee that Freedom of Speech, Debates and Proceedings in Legislative Houses are not impeached or questioned in any Court or place out of Parliament and for Related Matters (HB. 432) and a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Guarantee Freedom of Speech and Legislative actions of Members of the National Assembly (HB. 457) — *Second Reading*:**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Alter the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as Amended) by providing Immunity for the Members of the Legislature in respect of the words spoken or written at the Plenary Session or at Committee Proceedings, to Guarantee that Freedom of Speech, Debates and Proceedings in Legislative Houses are not impeached or questioned in any Court or place out of Parliament and for Related Matters (HB. 432) and a Bill for an Act to Alter the Provisions of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to Guarantee Freedom of Speech and Legislative actions of Members of the National Assembly (HB. 457) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Ali Ahmad — Ilorin East/Ilorin South Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Question that the Bill be now read a Second Time, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time and referred to the Ad-hoc Committee on the Review of the Constitution.

9. **A Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Nigeria National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons to coordinate and Implement activities to combat the problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria in line with the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and for Related Matters (HB. 461) — *Second Reading*:**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Provide for the Establishment of the Nigeria National Commission against the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons to coordinate and Implement activities to combat the problem of the Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Nigeria in line with the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons and for Related Matters (HB. 461) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Nnenna I. Ukeje — Bende Federal Constituency*).

Mr Deputy Speaker recalled that the House had earlier adjourned debate on the Bill on Tuesday, 5 March, 2013, to enable the Committee on Rules and Business verify an observation that a similar Bill on the same subject matter (A Bill for an Act to Repeal the Firearms Act, No. 32 of 1959 Cap. LFN, 2004 and to establish a comprehensive and effective system of firearms control and to provide for matters connected therewith (HB. 37)) had earlier gone through Second Reading in the current Session.

Briefing the House, on the assignment, the Chairman of the Committee on Rules and Business, Hon. Albert T. Sam-Tsokwa stated that both bills appeared to be on the same subject matter but on closer scrutiny one merely provides generally on firearms in Nigeria, while the other seeks to make provisions for the establishment of a Commission against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in line with the Economic Community of West Africa States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons. He further explained that the combined effect of the provision of Standing Orders IX, Rule 57 (6), and XII, Rule 92 can not stop any legislative process as the definition of a "Session" as captured in the Standing Order of the House is "one Legislative Year". He noted that the Bill (HB. 37) was not taken in the current Session and consequently prayed that, the Bill (HB. 416) should be considered for Second Reading.

Resumption of Debate:

Question that the Bill be now read a Second Time, put and agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time and referred to the Committees on Public Safety and National Security, and Justice.

10. **Adjournment:**
That the House do now adjourn till Tuesday, 12 March, 2013 at 11.00 a.m. (Hon. Leo Ogor — Deputy House Leader).

The House adjourned accordingly at 2.43 p.m.

Chukwuemeka Nkem Ihedioha
Deputy Speaker