FOURTH REPUBLIC
7TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
FOURTH SESSION
No. 9

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 10 July, 2014

1. The House met at 11.42 a.m. Mr Speaker read the Prayers.

2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
Mr Speaker announced that he had examined and approved the *Votes and Proceedings* of Wednesday, 9 July, 2014.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings was adopted.

3. **Announcement:**

(*a*) ***Visitors in the Gallery*:**
Mr Speaker recognized the presence of the following:

(*i*) Law Students Chambers, National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN), Benin Study Centre, Benin City, Edo State;

(*ii*) Student Representatives Council, Student's Union, Auchi Polytechnic, Edo State;

(*iii*) Mr Clement Alabi, a Community Leader from Akure North/Akure South Federal Constituency, Ondo State.

(*b*) ***Bereavement*:**
Mr Speaker read a communication from Hon. Akpan Micah Umoh (*Ikot Abasi/Mkpat Enin/Eastern Obolo Federal Constituency*) announcing the demise of his mother, Mrs Ady Micah Tom Umoh on Saturday, 28 June, 2014, at the age of 80.

A minute silence was observed in honour of the deceased.

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

(*i*) Hon. Kamil Akinlabi Mudashiru (*Afijio/Atiba East/Oyo West Federal Constituency*) from:

(*a*) Mr Stanley Nwaokike and Uche Afoaku for themselves and on behalf of the Landlords and Allotees of some plots of land in CRD, Lugbe 1 Layout, Abuja, praying the House to investigate the allegation of unlawful and forceful acquisition

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of plots of land duly allocated to the ordinary Nigerians in the area by a private developer — Houses for Africa Nigeria Limited, with a view to ensuring justice;

(*b*) Tolu Babaleye & Co., praying the House to investigate the fraudulent concealment of facts and deception by Chike Obi with a view to securing the approval of the National Assembly for his appointment as the Managing Director of Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON);

(*ii*) Hon. Irona Alphonsus Gerald (*Ohaji/Egbema/Oguta/Oru West Federal Constituency*) from Hon. (Nze) Igna M. O. Umunna (Ojinanaka), praying the House to intervene in the alleged kidnap of his wife while driving by Lt Samuel Sarah of the Nigerian Navy, Lagos, which led to the loss of the car;

(*iii*) Hon. Eddie Mbadiwe (*Ideato North/Ideato South Federal Constituency*) from Professor Chibuike Uche, praying the House to intervene in the attempt to subvert justice in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) by the University Authorities and to ensure that justice is done;

(*iv*) Hon. Uzo Azubuike (*Aba North/Aba South Federal Constituency*), praying the House to prevail on Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to complete the construction of the abandoned Ukaegbu road, Ogbor hill, Aba, Abia State.

Petitions referred to the Committee on Public Petitions.

5. Matters of Urgent Public Importance(Standing Order VIII, Rule 46):

(*i*) Hon. Sunday Karimi (*Yagba East/West/Mopa West Federal Constituency*) informed the House that there is apparent trend of profiling some Nigerians as insurgents. He noted that such profiling is directed against some ethnic groups in a section of the country. He cautioned that if the trend is not checked, it could cause divisions along ethnic and religious lines and thus urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) so that the matter could be debated immediately.

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

(*ii*) Hon. Ibrahim Shehu-Gusau (*Gusau/Tsafe Federal Constituency*) called the attention of the House to the ongoing strike action by the Academic Staff Union of Polytechnics (ASUP) which had been recurring since 2012. He stated that the strike has been disrupting academic activities of over 2 million students, and therefore urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) so that it could be debated 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.*

Urgent Need to Revisit and Resolve the Issue of Nigeria Polytechnic Strike:

The House:

Notes that the Nigerian Polytechnic have been on strike since August 2013;

Aware that the issues raised by the striking staff are very critical and need to be addressed;

Further aware that among other issues, the issues include:

(1) B.Sc - HND Dichotomy,

(2) Funding of Polytechnics in Nigeria,

(3) ConTiss 15;

Disturbed that after Presidential visitation of Polytechnic since 2012 the White Paper is yet to be released;

Further disturbed that the strike has affected the studies of over 2 million Nigerian students who. would have graduated from their classes and those that would have gotten admission;

Worried that even after the meeting called by the Committee on Education, between the Minister of Education and the Academic staff union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and all the issues were discussed. Nothing has come out of it;

Further worried that a one week deadline was given on an issue to the Hon. Minister of Education and he is yet to get back to the Committee since May 2014;

Resolves to:

(*i*) As a matter of urgency and national importance, the Federal Government should release the White Paper;

(*ii*) Resolve all pending issues with ASUP for the immediate resumption of studies in the Polytechnics (*Hon. Ibrahim Shehu-Gusau — Gusau/Tsafe Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Amendment Proposed:
Delete Prayer (*i*) (*Hon. Ibrahim Shehu-Gusau — Gusau/Tsafe Federal Constituency*).

Question that the amendment be made, put and agreed to.

Main Question as amended, put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted that the Nigerian Polytechnic have been on strike since August 2013;

Aware that the issues raised by the striking staff are very critical and need to be addressed;

Further aware that among other issues, the issues include:

(1) B.Sc - HND Dichotomy,

(2) Funding of Polytechnics in Nigeria,

(3) ConTiss 15;

Disturbed that after Presidential visitation of Polytechnic since 2012 the White Paper is yet to be released;

Further disturbed that the strike has affected the studies of over 2 million Nigerian students who. would have graduated from their classes and those that would have gotten admission;

Worried that even after the meeting called by the Committee on Education, between the Minister of Education and the Academic staff union of Polytechnics (ASUP) and all the issues were discussed. Nothing has come out of it;

Further worried that a one week deadline was given on an issue to the Hon. Minister of Education and he is yet to get back to the Committee since May 2014;

Resolved to:

Resolve all pending issues with ASUP for the immediate resumption of studies in the Polytechnics (**HR. 21/2014**).

(*iii*) Hon. Odebunmi Olusegun Dokun (*Ogo-Oluwa/Surulere Federal Constituency*) informed the House that the Ministry of Federal Capital Territory is in the habit of illegally deducting money from the statutory allocations of Federal Capital Territory Area Councils. He noted that such deductions could negatively affect grassroots development in the Area Councils. He therefore urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance.

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

(*iv*) Hon. Pally Iriase (*Owan East/Owan West Federal Constituency*) called the attention of the House on the brewing discontentment surrounding the appointment of the new Vice Chancellor of the University of Abuja. He linked the discontentment to the selection process and stressed that it is assuming ethno-religious dimension. He therefore urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance and to suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) so that it could be debated 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.*

Urgent Need to Address the Brewing Discontentment on the Appointment of a New Vice Chancellor for University of Abuja:

The House:

Notes that there has been discontentment on the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor for the University of Abuja;

Further notes that this discontentment is fast assuming ethno-religious coloration which may spell doom for the University of Abuja as an Ivory Tower and has far reaching implication for Nigeria in the long-run;

Aware that the discontentment stems from alleged injustice, discrimination and unfairness in the processes leading to the said appointment, which led to the dropping of first and second candidates who scored over 80% and 70% to pave the way for the candidate who scored a little above 60%;

Further aware that a situation where a third placed candidate was allegedly chosen in preference to the other two front-runners in the competition for the post of the Vice-Chancellor requires convincing explanation from the University Governing Council;

Concerned that there is an urgent need to stop the intractable problems bedevilling the Nigerian University system arising from brazen disregard for merit, fairness and justice;

Worried that unless steps are taken to courageously address the discontentment in the University of Abuja Community, the matter may lead to avoidable unrest;

Resolves to:

Set up an *Ad-hoc* Committee to investigate the roles played by the Governing Council of the University of Abuja in the recent recruitment of the Vice Chancellor, and to report its findings and recommendations within 7 days (*Hon. Pally Iriase — Owan East/West Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted that there has been discontentment on the appointment of a new Vice Chancellor for the University of Abuja;

Further noted that this discontentment is fast assuming ethno-religious coloration which may spell doom for the University of Abuja as an Ivory Tower and has far reaching implication for Nigeria in the long-run;

Aware that the discontentment stems from alleged injustice, discrimination and unfairness in the processes leading to the said appointment, which led to the dropping of first and second candidates who scored over 80% and 70% to pave the way for the candidate who scored a little above 60%;

Further aware that a situation where a third placed candidate was allegedly chosen in preference to the other two front-runners in the competition for the post of the Vice-Chancellor requires convincing explanation from the University Governing Council;

Concerned that there is an urgent need to stop the intractable problems bedevilling the Nigerian University system arising from brazen disregard for merit, fairness and justice;

Worried that unless steps are taken to courageously address the discontentment in the University of Abuja Community, the matter may lead to avoidable unrest;

Resolved to:

Set up an *Ad-hoc* Committee to investigate the roles played by the Governing Council of the University of Abuja in the recent recruitment of the Vice Chancellor, and to report its findings and recommendations within 7 days (**HR. 22/2014**).

(*v*) Hon. Ali Wudil Muhammed (*Wudil/Garko Federal Constituency*) drew the attention of the House to the recent suspension of the Nigeria Football Federation (NFF) by Federation of International Football Association (FIFA) on Wednesday, 9 July, 2014, and noted that the action could have serious negative consequences on football activities in the country. He thus urged the House to consider the matter as one of urgent public importance.

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

Matter to stand over till the next legislative day.

6. Presentation of Bills:
The following Bills were presented and read the *First Time*:

(*i*) Environmental Managers Registration Council of Nigeria Bill, 2014 (HB. 586).

(*ii*) National Commission for the Prohibition of Illegal Importation of Small Arms, Ammunitions, and Light Weapons (Establishment) Bill, 2014 (HB. 639).

(*iii*) Veterinary Surgeons Council Act (Amendment) Bill, 2014 (HB. 642).

(*iv*) Prisons Act (Amendment) Bill, 2014 (HB. 652).

(*v*) Anti-Terrorism and National Security Agency (Establishment) Bill, 2014 (HB. 653).

(*vi*) Corporate Social Responsibility (Special Provisions, etc.) Bill, 2014 (HB. 662).

(*vii*) National Industrial Court Act (First Amendment) Bill, 2014 (HB. 666).

7. Return of Looted Benin Artifacts to the Oba of Benin by Dr Mark Walker, a British Citizen:
Motion made and Question proposed:

The House:

Notes the rare gesture of Dr Mark Walker, a British citizen who, on June 20, 2014, returned to His Royal Majesty, Omo Noba N'edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Erediauwa I, CFR, the Oba of Benin, two (2) artifacts namely, a beaked bird and a royal bell, which were among the precious artifacts looted from the Palace of the Oba of Benin during the punitive expedition/invasion of Benin in 1897 by British soldiers led by Captain Philip Walker, the grandfather of Dr Mark Walker;

Also notes that many bronzes and ivory artifacts of Benin kingdom were looted during the expedition/invasion, partly to defray the cost the military action by the British Government against Benin Kingdom to avenge the death of some trade missionaries;

Recalls that the military action by the British soldiers led by Captain Philip Walker resulted into the killing of thousands of Benin people, the deportation of Oba Ovonranmwen to Calabar and the desecration of the royal palace, incidents that underlie the socio-cultural and economic significance of the looted artifacts to the Benin people, even till date;

Aware that among the celebrated artifacts that were looted by the soldiers was the original mask head of Queen Idia which, in 1977, was used as the official symbol of the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) and it has remained, among others, in the British Museum till date;

Cognizant that the Oba of Benin, the Government and people of Nigeria have repeatedly requested the British Government and all other people in whose possessions any of those great works of art are being kept to return them as those artifacts are part of the heritage of the Benis and define them as a people;

Appreciates the gesture of Dr Mark Walker who, upon realizing that those artifacts were taken from Benin Kingdom by his grandfather, made painstaking inquiries from the Richard Lander Society about their origin which signals the possibility of the retrieval of all other looted artifacts from Benin Kingdom by the British and all other persons or authorities concerned;

Resolves to:

(*i*) Congratulate the Government and people of Nigeria, particularly the Oba of Benin on the return of two of the many looted Benin artifacts by a courageous and humane British citizen, Dr Mark Walker;

(*ii*) appreciate Dr Walker for showing exemplary strength of Character by his action;

(*iii*) call on the British Parliament to heed the repeated calls for the return of the artifacts looted from Nigeria;

(*iv*) communicate this resolution to the following:

(*a*) the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

(*b*) the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria;

(*c*) His Royal Majesty, Omo Noba N'edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Erediauwa1, CFR, Oba of Benin;

(*d*) the Prime Minister of Britain;

(*e*) the Speaker of the Parliament of Britain; and

(*f*) Dr Mark Walker (*Hon. Samson Osagie — Orhionmwon Uhunmwode Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Question put and agreed to.

The House:

Noted the rare gesture of Dr Mark Walker, a British citizen who, on June 20, 2014, returned to His Royal Majesty, Omo Noba N'edo Uku Akpolokpolo, Oba Erediauwa I, CFR, the Oba of Benin, two (2) artifacts namely, a beaked bird and a royal bell, which were among the precious artifacts looted from the Palace of the Oba of Benin during the punitive expedition/invasion of Benin in 1897 by British soldiers led by Captain Philip Walker, the grandfather of Dr Mark Walker;

Also noted that many bronzes and ivory artifacts of Benin kingdom were looted during the expedition/invasion, partly to defray the cost the military action by the British Government against Benin Kingdom to avenge the death of some trade missionaries;

Recalled that the military action by the British soldiers led by Captain Philip Walker resulted into the killing of thousands of Benin people, the deportation of Oba Ovonranmwen to Calabar and the desecration of the royal palace, incidents that underlie the socio-cultural and economic significance of the looted artifacts to the Benin people, even till date;

Aware that among the celebrated artifacts that were looted by the soldiers was the original mask head of Queen Idia which, in 1977, was used as the official symbol of the Festival of Arts and Culture (FESTAC) and it has remained, among others, in the British Museum till date;

Cognizant that the Oba of Benin, the Government and people of Nigeria have repeatedly requested the British Government and all other people in whose possessions any of those great works of art are being kept to return them as those artifacts are part of the heritage of the Benis and define them as a people;

10. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Labour Act, Cap. L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide a Timeframe for the Regulation of Casual or Temporary Employment to Permanent Status by all Employers of Labour in Nigeria and for Other Matters Related Thereto (HB. 605) — *Second Reading*:**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Labour Act, Cap. L1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide a Timeframe for the Regulation of Casual or Temporary Employment to Permanent Status by all Employers of Labour in Nigeria and for Other Matters Related Thereto (HB. 605) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Emmanuel Jime — Makurdi/Guma Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

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

Bill read the Second Time and referred to the Committee on Labour, Employment and Productivity.

11. **A Bill for an Act to Impose Limits on the Extent to which Civil Liability for Breach of Contract or for Negligence or Other Breach of Duty, can be avoided by means of Contract Terms and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 733) — *Second Reading*:**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Impose Limits on the Extent to which Civil Liability for Breach of Contract or for Negligence or Other Breach of Duty, can be avoided by means of Contract Terms and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 733) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Robinson Uwak — Oron/Mbo/Okobo/Udung Uko/Urue Offong/Oruko Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

Bill withdrawn by leave of the House.

12. **A Bill for an Act to Repeal and Re-Enact the Public Complaints Commission Act, to provide wider powers to inquire into complaints by members of the public concerning the Administrative actions of any Public Authority and Companies or their Officials and for Other Matters Ancillary Thereto (HB. 719) — *Second Reading*:**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Repeal and Re-Enact the Public Complaints Commission Act, to provide wider powers to inquire into complaints by members of the public concerning the Administrative actions of any Public Authority and Companies or their Officials and for Other Matters Ancillary Thereto (HB. 719) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Uzo Azubuike — Aba North/Aba South Federal Constituency*).

Debate:

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

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

13. **Adjournment:**
That the House do adjourn till Tuesday, 15 *July*, 2014 *at* 11.00 *a.m.* (*Hon. Mulikat Akande-Adeola — House Leader*).

The House adjourned accordingly at 2.20 *p.m.*

Aminu Waziri Tambuwal
Speaker