SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 23rd June, 2015

1. The Senate met at 10:57 a.m. The Senate President read prayers.

2. **Votes and Proceedings:**
The Senate examined the Votes and Proceedings of Wednesday, 10th June, 2015.

Question was put and the Votes and Proceedings were approved.

3. **Oaths of Allegiance and Membership (Senator-Elect):**
Senator-elect Rabiu Mohammed Musa Kwankwaso took and subscribed to the Oaths of Allegiance and Membership as required by law.

4. **Announcements:**

(i) Collection of Identity Cards:

The Senate President read a letter from Senator Mohammed Shaaba Lafiagi (*Kwara North*) as follows:

THE SENATE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON SENATORS' WELFARE

June 23, 2015

The President
Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Your Excellency,

COLLECTION OF IDENTITY CARDS

Distinguished Senators are requested to visit the National Assembly Identity Card Unit for arrangements in respect of their National Assembly Identity Cards:

Venue:	—	*Senate Hearing Room 2*
Date:	—	*23rd - 26th June, 2015*
Time:	—	*10:00 am - 3:00 pm daily*

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Distinguished Senators are implored to get the identity cards because of the new security measures that are being put in place, please.

(Signed)
Senator Mohammed Shaaba Lafiagi
Chairman
Ad-Hoc Committee on Senators' Welfare

(ii) All Progressives Congress (APC) Caucus Meeting:
The Senate President announced that there would be a meeting of the All Progressives Congress (APC) Caucus at 2:00 p.m. in Senate Meeting Room 301, Senate New Building.

5. Closed Session:
Motion made: That the Senate do resolve into a Closed Session to discuss matters of interest for the smooth running of the Senate (*Senator Ike Ekweremadu — Enugu West*).

Question put and agreed to.

Closed Session — 11: 12 a.m.

Open Session — 11: 57 a.m.

The Senate President reported that the Senate in a Closed Session discussed matters of National Importance and other matters relevant to the smooth running of the Senate.

6. Remarks by Senate President:

President of the Senate
Federal Republic of Nigeria

WELCOME SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, HIS EXCELLENCY, SENATOR (DR) ABUBAKAR BUKOLA SARAKI (CON) TO SENATORS OF THE 8TH SENATE ON RESUMPTION FROM A SHORT RECESS ON TUESDAY, 23 JUNE, 2015.

Protocol:

1. *Distinguished colleagues, I am especially delighted to welcome you back to the hallowed Chamber of the Senate after a short recess. It is my hope that the recess afforded some of us time to rest from the dizzying activities of elections and inauguration such that we could feel the pulse of the nation again and be ready to get unto the business of making laws for the peace, order and good government of Nigeria.*

2. *As I had noted in my inaugural address, the task before us is enormous but very clear. Nigerians voted for change. They demand that we deliver to them tangible change. They expect that we improve the quality of governance. Three clear issues agitate their mind today; the falling government revenues and the current fiscal crisis in many of our states, the unsustainable cost of governance in the country and the rising cost of doing business in Nigeria. These concerns have also agitated our minds individually and collectively and we must provide answers because it can no longer be business as usual.*

3. *It is clear that it is at times like these that nations either buckle up, face the realities of their predicaments, and forge ahead to ensure a brighter future for the next generation, or turn a blind eye to the extravagant facts that are staring us in the face. As it stands, given the trust that Nigerians have placed on us, legislators of the 8th National Assembly, to leave a historic impact on the affairs of our nation, we must choose to show that we are made for this moments, to leave a historic impact. Without doing so, we will not have the moral authority to question Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs)that carry on with little regards for the public good.*

4. *My fellow colleagues, I dare say to you, it is time for us to roll up the sleeves for history beacons. We must hold fast to the reason we were elected in the first place to listen to and fight for the concerns of our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters, fathers and mothers back home. We are the closest representation that they have to the federal system; hence, we must also be the most dogged-advocates of their demands.*

5. *In the last few days, we have seen the media awash with fictitious reports on wardrobe allowances for National Assembly members. The response to this report, which was not just false and malicious but also reckless at best, further emphasizes the need for us to run a more transparent National Assembly to avoid the attendant misinformation this type of mischief can bring.*

6. *In the light of this, distinguished colleagues, and in keeping with our avowed commitment to lead from the frontline, I met last week with officials from the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC), the Statutory body with the remit to set salaries and allowances for both the Executive and the Legislature, to get accurate information on the true state of all salaries and allowances for members of the National Assembly. In the coming days after the leadership of the National Assembly is fully established, we shall be setting up an ad hoc committee to reappraise the structure of the National Assembly budget, make it more open, and ensure that the entire budget is in line with economic realities.*

7. *With the falling price of oil in the international market and the attendant reduction in revenues, the fiscal stress is already beginning to tell on our economy with some states becoming hard pressed to pay even salaries of workers. Implementation of capital projects under the budget has become very challenging. These problems will not wait for us to settle down, we must get into the business segment and make priority efforts to have a closer review of the revenue stream. One sure task we must deal with to minimize the current crisis will be to find ways and means to shore up the revenues. To achieve this all cards will be on the table. Most importantly, we must reduce to the barest minimum revenue leakage points; strengthen oversight of the entire revenue collection and mobilization architecture of the federation.*

8. *In view therefore, may I seize this opportunity to announce to you, the immediate composition of an 18man Senate ad hoc committee comprising of 3 Senators from each geopolitical zone, to immediately draw up a Legislative Agenda for the 8thSenate within a week. The expected draft agenda, which will be laid on the floor of the Senate for your approval my distinguished colleagues, will give the Senate focus and cohesion in pursuing our set targets.*

9. *Distinguished colleagues, now that we are back, there is no doubt that we have great legislative challenges to face and the high expectations of our people to meet. We must see the challenges we face today also as opportunity to look inwards to find answers to our developmental problems. All that we need is patriotism, maturity and unconditional commitment to the course of change.*

10. My distinguished colleagues, I believe we can make this nation Nigeria great again. But it all starts now if we all can believe.

11. Thank you for your attention and God bless Nigeria.

(Signed)
Sen. (Dr.) Abubakar Bukola Saraki (CON)
President of the Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria.

7. Presentation of Bills:

(*i*) Nigerian Railway Corporation Act, 1955 N129 LFN 2004 (Repeal and Re-enactment) Bill 2015 (SB. 001) — *Read the First Time*

(*ii*) Federal Capital Territory Area Councils (Administrative and Political Structure) Bill 2015 (SB. 002) — *Read the First Time*

8. Motion:
The rising cases of non-payment of workers' salaries in the Country:

Consideration of Motion deferred to another Legislative Day.

9. Adjournment:
Motion made: That the Senate do now adjourn till Wednesday, 24th June, 2015 at 10.00 a.m. (*Senator Ike Ekweremadu — Enugu West*).

Adjourned accordingly at 12:28 *p.m.*

Abubakar Olubukola Saraki, CON
President,
Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.