FOURTH REPUBLIC
8TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST SESSION
NO. 53

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday, 12 January, 2016

1. The House met at 11.07 a.m. Mr Speaker read the Prayers.

2. **Votes and Proceedings**
Mr Speaker announced that he had examined and approved the *Second Votes and Proceedings* of Tuesday, 22 December, 2015.

By unanimous consent, the Votes and Proceedings was adopted.

3. **Oaths of Allegiance and Membership**
The following Members-elect took and subscribed to the Oaths of Allegiance, and Membership:

(*i*) Ferdinand Dozie Nwankwo (*Anaocha/Njikoka/Dunukofia Federal Constituency*); and

(*ii*) Yaya Bauchi Tango (*Kwami/Funakaye/Gombe Federal Constituency*).

4. **Announcement**

(*a*) ***Visitors in the Gallery*:**
Mr Speaker recognized the presence of the executives of the All Progressives Congress (APC) in the 11 Wards of Konshisha Local Government Area of Benue State.

(*b*) ***Bereavement*:**
Mr Speaker read a communication from Hon. Oghene Emma Egoh (*Amuwo Odofin Federal Constituency*) announcing the death of Chief Benjamin Ibegbuna Olinma, former Clerk of the House of Representatives (1979 - 1983) on Tuesday, 8 December, 2015.

A minute silence was observed in honour of the deceased.

5. **Welcome Address by Mr Speaker**
Mr Speaker addressed the House as follows:

***Protocols*:**

I am delighted to welcome you back from this short recess which afforded us the opportunity to fellowship with our constituents during the Christmas and New Year celebrations. Let me congratulate all of us for making it into this New Year 2016 *and most importantly to thank the almighty God for His grace upon us all.*

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2. *Crucial duties beckon as we resume: the* 2016 *Appropriation Bill deserves expeditious consideration on our part so as to facilitate early commencement of it's implementation, besides you are very much aware we had introduced an unprecedented number of Bills with* 130 *Bills introduced in one day into the legislative mill. I am on record to have promised to ensure that we pass these Bills into law within the first quarter of this year. We must therefore brace up for the hectic task ahead.*

3. *At our last sitting of* 2015, *I had stated that a well crafted budget is in vain without efficient and diligent implementation. It means then that we must not only do our part by giving Nigerians a budget that meets the new vision, spirit and aspirations but determine, through the instrumentality of oversight, to hold the Executive Branch accountable for a full and efficient budget implementation.*

4. *In my New Year greetings, I had called on our citizens to shake up docility and go to work in the New Year in order to build a country of our dream. In the aftermath of that call, I got thousands of direct messages on my Twitter handle from Nigerians saying they are prepared to go to work but there are no employment opportunities. This further dramatizes the urgency of the unemployment situation in Nigeria. I was also rudely awaken to the reality of the large number of Nigerians, especially construction workers that have gone without salaries for months while others have, in fact, been laid off from their jobs on account of the inability of many construction firms executing government contracts to continue with existing contracts owing to non-payment for work executed. Since job creation is one of the fundamental policies of the APC administration, we cannot treat job losses lightly.*

5. *So many of our people are hurting. As true representatives of the people, we owe a duty to make haste; and whether we make haste slowly or we slowly make haste, we must hasten those long nights of despair into a glorious morning for our citizens who hope to go back to work as. soon as Government pays the firms they were working for. We must therefore pass the* 2016 *budget which includes Mr President's proposals on job creation, early, to restore confidence in existing obligations and the economy generally. I have no doubt Hon. Colleagues, that we shall rise in unity, as has been the tradition of this honourable House, to surmount these challenges without any display of partisanship.*

6. *The crashing prices of crude oil in the international market and the concomitant impact on our economy is a sad reminder to us of our collective failure over the years to diversify from our mono product economy. It is a wake up call for walking the talk on diversification which has been our rhetorics for decades and we have no excuse for letting this opportunity slip by again. I believe, dear colleagues, that this realization will shape our views and decisions as we consider the* 2016 *Appropriation Bill.*

7. *In order to ensure an orderly and predictable budgeting system in Nigeria, it may be necessary to introduce some Constitutional amendments. Specifically,* **Section 81 (1)** *may be amended to read that "The President shall cause to be prepared and laid before each House of the National Assembly* ***not later than ninety days*** *before the end of the financial year, estimates of the revenues and expenditure of the Federation for the next following financial year". Submitting a Budget at least* 3 *months before the end of a financial year is consistent with international best practices and allows the parliament enough time to scrutinise and pass the budget early, before the commencement of a financial year. This would do away with the current provision that allows the President to present the Budget at* ***"any time"*** *before the end of the financial year.*

Furthermore, ***Section 82*** *of the Constitution may also need to be amended to reduce the period allowed for pre budget expenditure authorization by Mr President from six months to three months, as this distorts the budget process. Time has come also to enforce the reporting requirements imposed in the yearly appropriation Bills on the Minister of Finance and various MDAs.*

8. *Honorable Colleagues, recent monetary and fiscal policies aimed at preventing money laundering and protecting our currency, though no doubt well intentioned, have resulted in avoidable hiccups in our international financial transactions with multifaceted counterproductive implications for both commerce, foreign investor promotion and diaspora Nigerians including students. This is a matter of urgent national importance requiring all hands on deck. Accordingly, the House Committees on Banking and Currency; Finance; Diaspora and both Basic and Tertiary Education are hereby directed to quickly put their heads together and collaborate with the relevant executive agencies to expeditiously resolve the prevailing bottlenecks in our Foreign Exchange regime.*

9. *Once more, my dear colleagues, I welcome us back and pray that the Almighty God will avail us abundant wisdom, spirit of discernment, courage and good health to execute our mandate to the glory of His name and the benefit of the Nigerian people and indeed humanity.*

10. *God bless you all and may God Bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

6. Arrangement of the Business of the Day

Mr Speaker noted the need for slight alteration to the usual arrangement of business of the House for the purpose of exigency and efficient handling of the matters before it. Accordingly, he **ordered** that all ***Bills*** as listed on the ***Order Paper*** should be taken before all ***Motions***.

7. Consolidation of Bills

(*i*) *Motion made and Question proposed*, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Archives Act, Cap. N6, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 298); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Archives Act, Cap. N6, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Increase the amount to be paid as Fine for the commission of an Offence by any person under the Act and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 177) be now consolidated" (*Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa — Buruku Federal Constituency*).

Agreed to.

(*ii*) *Motion made and Question proposed*, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization Act, Cap. N13, LFN, 2004 to provide for Private Sector participation, promotion of Commercial Agriculture and for Other Related Matters (HB. 93); and a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Centre for Agricultural Mechanization Act, Cap. N13, LFN, 2004 to provide for Private Sector participation, promotion of Commercial Agriculture and for Other Related Matters (HB. 94) be now consolidated" (*Hon. Orker-Jev Emmanuel Yisa — Buruku Federal Constituency*).

Agreed to.

8. A Bill for an Act to Amend the Price Control Act, Cap. P28, LFN, 2004 to Provide for concessions and waivers, stiffer penalties and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 264) — *Second Reading*.

Order read; deferred by leave of the House to enable the Committee on Rules and Business consolidate the Bill with another Bill on the same subject matter.

9. A Bill for an Act to Amend the National Agricultural Land Development Authority Act, Cap. N4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 237) — *Second Reading*.

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the National Agricultural Land Development Authority Act, Cap. N4, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 237) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Mohammed Tahir Monguno — Monguno/Marte/Nganzai Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Agricultural Production and Services.

10. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Currency Conversion (Freezing Orders) Act, Cap. P36, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to give Discretionary Powers to the Judge of a High Court to order Forfeiture of Assets of affected persons; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 274) — *Second Reading*.**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Currency Conversion (Freezing Orders) Act, Cap. P36, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to give Discretionary Powers to the Judge of a High Court to order Forfeiture of Assets of affected persons; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 274) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Ahmed Idris — Wase Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committees on Banking and Currency, and Federal Judiciary.

11. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Produce (Enforcement of Export Standards) Act, Cap. P32, LFN, 2004 to Review the Penalties Imposed under the Act and for Other Related Matters (HB. 219) — *Second Reading*.**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Produce (Enforcement of Export Standards) Act, Cap. P32, LFN, 2004 to Review the Penalties Imposed under the Act and for Other Related Matters (HB. 219) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Uzoma Nkem-Abonta — Aba North/Aba South Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Agricultural Production and Services.

12. **A Bill for an Act to Prohibit Hoarding of certain Non-perishable Agricultural Produce and Regulating their Supply and Distribution in order to Control the Market Price of those Produce for the Benefit of Nigerians and for Other Related Matters (HB. 57) — *Second Reading*.**

Order read; deferred by leave of the House.

13. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Order Act, Cap. P42, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, in order to make Provisions for at least Five Days' Notice to be given to the Police by any Person or group who desires to hold Meetings, Assemblies, Processions or Protests for the Purpose of giving Protection and Preventing the disruption of Peaceful Exercise of Fundamental Rights of Nigerians and for Other Related Matters (HB. 250) — *Second Reading*.**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Public Order Act, Cap. P42, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 2004, in order to make Provisions for at least Five Days' Notice to be given to the Police by any Person or group who desires to hold Meetings, Assemblies, Processions or Protests for the Purpose of giving Protection and Preventing the disruption of Peaceful Exercise of Fundamental Rights of Nigerians and for Other Related Matters (HB. 250) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Toby Okechukwu — Aninri/Agwu-/Oji-River Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Bill withdrawn by leave of the House.

14. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment, etc.) Act, Cap. E1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide for among others, the restructuring of the Commission; and for Other Matters Related Thereto (HB. 227) — *Second Reading*.**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (Establishment, etc.) Act, Cap. E1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to provide for among others, the restructuring of the Commission; and for Other Matters Related Thereto (HB. 227) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai — Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Financial Crimes.

15. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Water Resources Act, Cap. W2, LFN, 2004 to Review Upwards the Stipulated Fines and Penalties for Offences under the Act and for Other Related Matters (HB. 234) — *Second Reading*.**
Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Water Resources Act, Cap. W2, LFN, 2004 to Review Upwards the Stipulated Fines and Penalties for Offences under the Act and for Other Related Matters (HB. 234) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Ossai Nicholas Ossai — Ndokwa East/Ndokwa West/Ukwuani Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Water Resources.

16. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (Establishment, etc.) Act, 2011 to Align it with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Restore the Sovereignty of the Naira as the National Currency, Ensure Transparency of its Funding, and Entrench Parliamentary Accountability; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 114) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Nigeria Sovereign Investment Authority (Establishment, etc.) Act, 2011 to Align it with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Restore the Sovereignty of the Naira as the National Currency, Ensure Transparency of its Funding, and Entrench Parliamentary Accountability; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 114) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Shehu N. Garba — Jemaa/Sanga Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Banking and Currency.

17. **A Bill for an Act to Repeal the National Fertilizer Board Act, Cap. N39, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 and for Other Related Matters (HB. 240) — *Second Reading*.**

Order read; deferred by leave of the House to enable the Committee on Rules and Business consolidate the Bill with another Bill on the same subject matter.

18. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Quantity Surveyors (Registration, etc.) Act, Cap. Q1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to among others, increase the Fines under the Act; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 252) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Quantity Surveyors (Registration, etc.) Act, Cap. Q1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to among others, increase the Fines under the Act; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 252) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Gaza Jonathan Gbefwi — Karu/Keffi/Kokona Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Housing.

19. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Mortgage Institutions Act, Cap. M19 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to review upwards the Penalties under the Act; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 253) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Mortgage Institutions Act, Cap. M19 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to review upwards the Penalties under the Act; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 253) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Gaza Jonathan Gbefwi — Karu/Keffi/Kokona Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Housing.

20. **A Bill for an Act to Establish the Promotion of Democracy Commission to Guarantee Democracy in the Local Government and Other tiers of Government and to ensure greater probity and Transparency in Handling of Revenues belonging to the Local Government Councils and Other Tiers of Government and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 165) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Establish the Promotion of Democracy Commission to Guarantee Democracy in the Local Government and Other tiers of Government and to ensure greater probity and Transparency in Handling of Revenues belonging to the Local Government Councils and Other Tiers of Government and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 165) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok — Jos South/Jos East Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Bill withdrawn by leave of the House.

21. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Weights and Measures Act, Cap. W3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Review Upwards the Fines Stipulated for Offences under the Act and for Other Related Matters (HB. 265) — *Second Reading*.**

Order read; deferred by leave of the House.

22. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Value Added Tax Act, Cap. V1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Review Upwards the Fines and Penalties Specified for Offences under the Act; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 293) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Value Added Tax Act, Cap. V1, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to Review Upwards the Fines and Penalties Specified for Offences under the Act; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 293) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Chike John Okafor — Ihime Mbano/Ihitte Uboma/Obowo Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committee on Finance.

23. **A Bill for an Act to Establish the Public Service Institute of Nigeria to be a World Class Centre of Excellence in transforming Public Sector Governance, Management and Leadership Development; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 59) — *Second Reading*.**

Order read; deferred by leave of the House.

24. **A Bill for an Act to Amend the Petroleum Training Institute Act, Cap. P16, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to empower the Board to remove a staff of the Institute; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 251) — *Second Reading*.**

Motion made and Question proposed, "That a Bill for an Act to Amend the Petroleum Training Institute Act, Cap. P16, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004 to empower the Board to remove a staff of the Institute; and for Other Matters Connected Therewith (HB. 251) be now read a Second Time" (*Hon. Victor Nwokolo — Ika North East/Ika South Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question that the Bill be read a Second Time — Agreed to.

Bill read the Second Time by the Clerk.

Bill referred to the Committees on Petroleum Resources (Upstream), Petroleum Resources (Downstream), and Tertiary Education and Services.

25. A Bill for an Act to Repeal the Ahmadu Bello University (Transitional Provisions) Act, Cap. A14, LFN, 2004; and for Other Related Matters (HB. 260) — *Second Reading*.

Order read; deferred by leave of the House.

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

(*i*) ***Urgent need to Compel Commercial Banks to comply with the directive of Central Bank of Nigeria on zero COT Charges*:**

Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok (*Jos South/Jos East Federal Constituency*) introduced the subject matter and prayed the House to:

(*a*) consider and approve the matter as one of urgent public importance; and

(*b*) suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to allow debate on the matter forthwith.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance — Agreed to.

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

Urgent Need by Banks to Comply with CBN Directive on Zero COT Charges by Banks:

The House:

Notes reports in the media on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Guidelines tagged "Guide to Bank charges" which gradually phased out Commission on turnover (COT) in Nigeria;

Also notes a report on page 40 of Daily Sun of January 5th, 2016, wherein it was reported, "The CBN had in 2013 released the guidelines ... According to the guideline, COT was reduced to ₦3 per ₦1,000 in 2013, ₦2 per ₦1,000 in 2014 and ₦l per ₦1,000 in 2015 while it will be phased out in 2016";

Worried that there is non compliance in 2016 as reflected in "Daily Sun findings showed that some banks have continued to charge above ₦1 per ₦1,000 turnover that was effective from January this year. .. it was learnt that in some banks, the amount charged as COT depends on the customers relationship with the Banks";

Also worried that this laudable policy by the CBN, which was well received by the public, is being flagrantly ignored and undermined by commercial banks with attendant costs on ordinary citizens who are Bank customers;

Disturbed that the zero COT policy which is meant to alienate the suffering of citizens, boost the Economy by encouraging transactions through the Banks is not being implemented to the detriment of the Economy;

Also disturbed that the CBN zero COT policy, which is in tandem with international best practices, is not being implemented by commercial banks allegedly because the CBN has not issued any formal circular directing implementation of the zero COT;

Resolves to:

(*i*) Urge the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to immediately ensure full implementation of the zero COT by commercial banks;

(*ii*) also urge the CBN to order Deposit money Banks to refund all COT charges this year, giving them 30 days to refund or face severe penalties; and

(*iii*) mandate the Committee on Banking and Currency to ensure compliance and report back to the House within four (4) weeks (*Hon. Edward Gyang Pwajok — Jos South/Jos East Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question agreed to.

The House:

Noted reports in the media on the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Guidelines tagged "Guide to Bank charges" which gradually phased out Commission on turnover (COT) in Nigeria;

Also noted a report on page 40 of Daily Sun of January 5th, 2016, wherein it was reported, "The CBN had in 2013 released the guidelines ... According to the guideline, COT was reduced to ₦3 per ₦1,000 in 2013, ₦2 per ₦1,000 in 2014 and ₦l per ₦1,000 in 2015 while it will be phased out in 2016";

Worried that there is non compliance in 2016 as reflected in "Daily Sun findings showed that some banks have continued to charge above ₦1 per ₦1,000 turnover that was effective from January this year. .. it was learnt that in some banks, the amount charged as COT depends on the customers relationship with the Banks";

Also worried that this laudable policy by the CBN, which was well received by the public, is being flagrantly ignored and undermined by commercial banks with attendant costs on ordinary citizens who are Bank customers;

Disturbed that the zero COT policy which is meant to alienate the suffering of citizens, boost the Economy by encouraging transactions through the Banks is not being implemented to the detriment of the Economy;

Also disturbed that the CBN zero COT policy, which is in tandem with international best practices, is not being implemented by commercial banks allegedly because the CBN has not issued any formal circular directing implementation of the zero COT;

Resolved to:

(*i*) Urge the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to immediately ensure full implementation of the zero COT by commercial banks;

(*ii*) also urge the CBN to order Deposit money Banks to refund all COT charges this year, giving them 30 days to refund or face severe penalties; and

(*iii*) mandate the Committee on Banking and Currency to ensure compliance and report back to the House within four (4) weeks (**HR. 01/2016**).

Motion referred to the Committee on Banking and Currency.

(*ii*) ***Gas Explosion at Nnewi Industrial Town, Anambra State*:**
Hon. Chris Emeka Azubogu (*Nnewi North/Nnewi South/Ekwusigo Federal Constituency*) introduced the subject matter and prayed the House to:

(*a*) consider and approve the matter as one of urgent public importance; and

(*b*) suspend Order VIII, Rule 46 (3) to allow debate on the matter forthwith.

Question that the matter be considered as one of urgent public importance — Agreed to.

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

Unfortunate Gas Explosion at Nnewi Industrial Town on the 24th December, 2015:

The House:

Notes with great sorrow the unfortunate gas explosion at Nnewi Industrial Town on Thursday, 24 December, 2015 which resulted in a fire outbreak that took the lives of over thirty people and led to the hospitalization of many;

Also notes the explosion and fire outbreak is just one in a series of both domestic and industrial outbreak that have been occurring all over the country with increasing frequency, causing the death of hundreds, the incapacitation of thousands and the loss of billions of Naira in property and other investments;

Saddened that many of the laws, rules and regulations governing this very important sector are outdated and the institutions responsible for the enforcement of theses existing regulations are themselves ill-equipped and ill-prepared to do so effectively;

Aware that as a consequence of these institutional and regulatory failings, our ability to prevent disasters as well as our capacity to manage them effectively when they do occur have become severely compromised;

Also aware that disasters are an inevitable byproduct of rapid development, population growth, accelerated infrastructure development and irreversible changes to our natural environment;

Concerned that when the next disaster will occur and what the immediate precipitating factors will be is not known, but what we can do is to regulate standards of behavior to limit the likelihood of occurrence and their severity when they inevitably occur, through the deployment of necessary resources and relevant technology to ensure that we respond on time and effectively when the need arises to save lives and protect our citizens which is the primary responsibility of any government;

Resolves to:

(*i*) Observe a minute's silence in memory of those who lost their lives as a result of the unfortunate events of 24 December, 2015 as we commiserate with their families in this time of bereavement; and

(*ii*) call on the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other relevant agencies of the Federal Government to accelerate efforts to ensure that the injured receive the necessary care, material comfort and assistance they need to get back on their feet as quickly as possible (*Hon. Chris Emeka Azubogu — Nnewi North-South/Ekwusigo Federal Constituency*).

Debate.

Question agreed to.

The House:

Noted with great sorrow the unfortunate gas explosion at Nnewi Industrial Town on Thursday, 24 December, 2015 which resulted in a fire outbreak that took the lives of over thirty people and led to the hospitalization of many;

Also noted the explosion and fire outbreak is just one in a series of both domestic and industrial outbreak that have been occurring all over the country with increasing frequency, causing the death of hundreds, the incapacitation of thousands and the loss of billions of Naira in property and other investments;

Saddened that many of the laws, rules and regulations governing this very important sector are outdated and the institutions responsible for the enforcement of theses existing regulations are themselves ill-equipped and ill-prepared to do so effectively;

Aware that as a consequence of these institutional and regulatory failings, our ability to prevent disasters as well as our capacity to manage them effectively when they do occur have become severely compromised;

Also aware that disasters are an inevitable byproduct of rapid development population growth, accelerated infrastructure development and irreversible changes to our natural environment;

Concerned that when the next disaster will occur and what the immediate precipitating factors will be is not known, but what we can do is to regulate standards of behavior to limit the likelihood of occurrence and their severity when they inevitably occur, through the deployment of necessary resources and relevant technology to ensure that we respond on time and effectively when the need arises to save lives and protect our citizens which is the primary responsibility of any government;

Resolved to:

(*i*) Observe a minute's silence in memory of those who lost their lives as a result of the unfortunate events of 24 December, 2015 as we commiserate with their families in this time of bereavement; and

(*ii*) call on the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) and other relevant agencies of the Federal Government to accelerate efforts to ensure that the injured receive the necessary care, material comfort and assistance they need to get back on their feet as quickly as possible (**HR. 02/2016**).

A minute silence was observed in honour of the deceased.

27. Urgent Need for the Completion of Bagel-Zungur Irrigation Scheme in Bauchi State
Motion made and Question proposed:

The House:

Notes that Bagel-Zungur River Basin is an extensive, fertile and agricultural land lying between Bagel town in Dass Local Government and Zungur Development Area in Bauchi Local Government, covering about 28,000 hectares of land and capable of employing about 18,000 people through irrigation and controlled grazing;

Also notes that River Bagel is capable of storing and supplying about 248 x 106m3 of water in 1 of every 5 dry years, making it possible for large scale irrigation and supply of water to neighboring Communities within and peripheral to the project area;

Recalls that the project was initiated by the Upper Benue River Basin Development Authority in 1980 with the aim of reducing unemployment, boosting agricultural production as well as supplying potable water;

Concerned that since the completion of feasibility study and the design of the project by EPD Nigeria Ltd as well as the settlement of compensation to indigenous land owners, the project couldn't continue due to lack of political will;

Also concerned that the failure of the irrigation scheme to take off despite its huge potentials has led to the present low agricultural productivity and high level of unemployment with the attendant poverty bedeviling the people in the surrounding communities as well as lack of potable water in the areas;

Resolves to:

(*i*) Urge the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, and the Upper Benue River Development Authority to, as a matter of urgency, review the design and cost of the project and make adequate budgetary provision in the 2016 budget proposal for its completion; and

(*ii*) also urge the Committees on Water Resources and Legislative Compliance to ensure compliance (*Hon. Shehu Aliyu Musa — Bauchi Federal Constituency*).

Question agreed to.

(HR. 03/2016).

Motion referred to the Committees on Water Resources, and Legislative Compliance, pursuant to Order VIII, Rule 51 (5).

28. Adjournment

That the House do adjourn till Wednesday, 13 *January*, 2016 *at* 11.00 *a.m.* (*Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila — House Leader*).

The House adjourned accordingly at 2.38 *p.m.*

Yakubu Dogara
Speaker