

Sponsor: Senator Gbenga Ashafa (*Lagos East*)

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to lead the debate on the general principles of The City University of Technology, Yaba Bill, 2018. You will recall that this Bill was read for the first time on this Chamber on Wednesday, 16th November, 2016.

The Bill essentially seeks to transform the Institute of Technology Yaba to the City University of Technology Yaba.

Nigeria's steady march towards education for all in the shortest possible time has taken a giant leap with the introduction of this Bill for Act to provide for the establishment of the City University of Technology, Yaba and other related matters.

I am personally excited by the prospect of transforming this polytechnic to a university of technology because ~~it will motivate both students and academic staff~~ just as it will upgrade its facilities and enhance its capability to achieve its objectives.

Similarly, The New University of Technology will encourage the advancement of learning and hold out to all persons without distinction of race, creed, sex or political conviction the opportunity of acquiring a higher and liberal education. It will also do the following:

- (a) Provide courses of instruction and other facilities for the pursuit of learning in all its branches, and to make those facilities available on proper terms to such persons as are equipped to benefit from them;
- (b) Encourage and promote scholarship and conduct research in all fields of learning with emphasis on technical education;
- (c) Relate its activities to the social, cultural and economic needs of the people of Nigeria; and
- (d) Undertake any other activities appropriate for a university of the highest standards.

Mr. President, distinguished colleagues, I recall that in similar circumstances in the United Kingdom, most of its polytechnics were upgraded to universities, for instance, the former Polytechnic of Central London became the University of Westminster; South Bank Polytechnic became the University of South Bank while the Polytechnic of North London became the University of North London. It should not be seen that we in Nigeria are copying them, but it is simply the reality of the day we live in.

If Nigeria as planned should aim to become one of the world's leading economies as currently being pursued by government, we must be ready to adjust and position our educational institutions so that its products are geared for the technological challenges inherent in such projections. Our educational authorities are moving to revamp our institutions for these objectives.

The City University of Technology, Yaba when enacted by the National Assembly will have power to establish such campuses, colleges, faculties, institutes, schools, extra-mural departments and other teaching and research units within the University as may from time to time seem necessary or desirable subject to the approval of the National Universities Commission. It will also -

1. Institute professorships, readerships, lectureships and other posts and offices and to make appointments thereto;
2. Institute and award fellowships, scholarships, exhibitions, bursaries, medals, prizes and other titles, distinctions, awards and forms of assistance;
3. Provide for the discipline and welfare of members of the University;
4. Hold examinations and grant degrees, diplomas, certificates and other distinctions to persons who have pursued a course of study approved by the University; and among other activities; and
5. Grant honorary degrees, fellowships or academic titles.

To ensure continuity in the administration of the university, it is provided in Section 8 that all property held by or on behalf of Yaba Tech shall be vested in the University and be held by it for the purposes of the University. Notably, all the

staff hereby transferred to the University and previous service shall count as service for the purposes of any pension payable by the University.

Given its age and achievements, as well as the requirements of the Nigerian economy, it is clear to that with the enactment of this Bill the University will focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) courses.

The attainment of university status would definitely enhance the operations of the Yaba Polytechnic and clarify its mission and vision. It is definitely old enough; its facilities are superior to those found in many other Nigerian universities, and with the arguable exception of very few Universities, no other tertiary institution can boast of a richer tradition of learning.

However, Mr. President my respected colleagues the institution is prepared to undertake the educational and other modifications that are a natural corollary of transforming to a university. The institution is also prepared to remains true to its core mandate of producing well-trained manpower capable of driving the technological, management and business goals of the nation.

In this regard, it will seek to imitate the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) which has built upon a tradition of distinction to become one of the world's foremost educational institutions.

Mr. President, Distinguished Senators, I am fully satisfied that the provisions in this Bill are adequate to ensure the takeoff of the proposed University and I will not hesitate to encourage my colleagues to support it at all stages of its journey to becoming a law of the Federation of Nigeria.

I wish to state here that the structures and personnel needed for this transformation to a University are already in place and available at the Yaba Polytechnic and therefore there is no need of a financial compendium in accordance with rule 77(3) of our Standing Rules.

I therefore urge my colleagues to give your full support to this bill.

Thank You