

**LEAD DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, AN ACT TO ESTABLISH A  
FEDERAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP CENTRES AT THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA  
LEVELS OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, 2016**

I have the pleasure to lead the debate on this second reading of the bill for an Act to establish a Federal Entrepreneurship Centre in all the 774 Local Government Area of the Nigerian Federation.

This Bill was read for the first time on the 12<sup>th</sup> day of July, 2016 and it has the primary purpose of addressing the problems of unemployment amongst the youths of our Nation, especially at this time in our history.

Today it is a well know information that the unemployment statistics of Nigerian youths continue to rise astronomically, with current statistics showing an alarming 59.95% of Nigerian youths within the age bracket of 15-24 years as unemployed or underemployed.

The same statistics equally show that 29% of Nigeria's unemployed youths are made up of untrained and uneducated youths, and they live in the rural population of our States, and with women accounting for 50% of such unemployed youths.

The daunting statistics of uneducated, untrained and unemployed Nigerian youths is equally made more complex by the high rate of about 71% of unemployment amongst youths that graduate from the tertiary Institutions of our Nation. Even that rate of graduate unemployment seems to be growing at a rate of 5.6%, despite the few job creation initiatives of the Federal Government such as SIWES and NEEDS – which disappointingly – have fallen by 69% in recent times.

Mr. President, my distinguished colleagues, while the unemployment scenario of Nigerian youths today may appear daunting, - no one shares any doubt that entrepreneurship remains the single sure engine for tapping the potentials open to all those that are unemployed, - whether they be untrained, uneducated, educated or poorly trained and idle manpower.

The ideal resolution lies in our collective ability to identify an entrepreneurship training platform that can be accessed at the point of need so as to assist the unemployed gain self-sustenance within a sustainable environment.

Tackling our youth unemployment status therefore calls for a strategic policy thrust, that is driven by an Act of Parliament and empowered to consistently develop ready-made entrepreneurs at the Local Government Area Levels, so that our unemployed youths find avenues for developing skills that match opportunities available in the economic markets around them.

This Bill which seeks to establish a Federal Entrepreneurship Centres at the 774 Local Government Areas of the Nigerian Federation, will fill the necessary gap between 'unemployed youths and appropriate skill acquisition' for sustained living. When passed into law, it will equally give legal teeth to the expectations of Federal Government's job creation initiatives as envisaged from SIWES and NEEDS. The Bill provides for the training and retaining of unemployed youths in needed skills, and at the point of need. These I believe will make a world of difference in the world of work and self-employment.

Section 3(a-b) provides a mandate for the consistent education, training and retaining of not less than 90% of unemployed youths in each LGA Centre catchment, so that they acquire a standardized self-method of job creation and empowerment- that take advantage of local resources, including solid minerals, in the building of reliant businesses.

Section 4 and 5 of the Bill provide for a Board of Directors of the Federal Entrepreneurship Centre to be established under the Federal Ministry of Education, for effective supervision of directors and staff, and ensuring that the unique curricula of the Centres serve the special needs of the Centres, the trainees and the Local Government catchments – while also capturing the expected 90% of unemployed youths, and providing a system of evaluation of the progress made by trainees as they transit into active youth entrepreneurs.

This bill when passed into law will attract its funding from the combined sources of the Federal Government, State Governments, Local Governments, and from the social responsibility contributions of business investors and high net-worth individuals operating within the LGA locations of the entrepreneurship Centres.

Mr President, Distinguished colleagues, I seek your support so that this Bill is passed into Law. That Act for all intents and purposes is sure to become the economic elixir, the rare formula and panacea our various Governments at all levels have for long been seeking to address the growing problem of youth unemployment in our Nation.

This Bill when passed into Law may be cited as the Federal Entrepreneurship Establishment Act, 2016. It will not just add value to the lives of our unemployed youths and citizens, it will reduce the population of unemployed youths in the Nation through sustainable facilitation of creativity and sharpening of entrepreneurial skills. It will also provide a pool of ready-made and eager young entrepreneurs for the investment of Government grants to promote assured self-employment at the grass-roots and avoid unnecessary bonanza and phantom projects that do not yield economic dividends to the Nation.

But above everything else, this Bill passed into law will provide the avenue for reducing youths' restiveness, violence and other anti-social tendencies that now affect our society, and which often derive their sources from idle and unemployed youths.

I therefore seek your maximum support for the passage of this Bill.

Thank you.