

LEAD DEBATE

A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE NIGERIA CENTRE FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (NCDC) AND FOR MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH, 2016: SB. 256

Sponsor: SENATOR T. A. ORJI, CON

Abia Central Senatorial District

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, I will like to humbly remind you that the "Bill for an Act for the establishment of the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (NCDC) and for matters connected therewith, 2016 was first read on the floor of the Senate on Wednesday 20th April, 2016.

This Bill seeks to formally and legally establish a Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention under the Federal Ministry of Health. The main goal of the centre is to protect the public health and safety through the control and prevention of disease, injury and disability. The NCDC will focus its attention especially on infectious disease, food borne pathogens, environmental health, occupational safety and health, health promotion, injury prevention and educational activities designed to improve the health of Nigerians. In addition, the Centre will carry out research and provide information on non-communicable diseases. The Centre is expected to put processes in place to detect and respond to new and emerging health threats, be it within our shores or foreign.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, there is the need for a strong Public Health System in Nigeria and the Centre for Disease Control administratively put in place in year 2001 will further be strengthened to perform its roles with the enactment of this legislation, giving it a legal status with definition of its powers.

The Bill seeks to establish the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control to coordinate and facilitate the prevention, detection and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases in Nigeria.

It is made up of seven (7) parts, twenty three sections and supplementary provisions relating to the Board.

Part I, on establishment: deals with the establishment clause, the governing board of the Centre, tenure of office for members of Board and the functions of the Board.

Part II, deals with the functions and powers of the Centre, including to:

- a) Detect, investigate, prevent and control emerging and re-emerging diseases of public health importance.
- b) Strengthen capacity building to support surveillance research and to implement prevention and to control programmes through Nigeria Field Epidemiological and Laboratory Training Programmes (NFELTP)
- c) Provide communication to the public on disease particularly emerging and re-emerging diseases.
- d) Support the operationalization of International Health Regulation (IHR) including trans-border disease surveillance and control activities.
- e) Provide leadership to coordinate and control national and trans-border responses to mass public health emergencies.
- f) Network public health activities targeted at mitigating epidemic disease impact including facilitation of eradication of targeted diseases.
- g) Provide technical support to States and Local governments in the planning, implementation and management of disease controlling and preventing communicable and non-communicable diseases.
- h) Oversee the implementation of International Health regulations and coordinates local compliance including liaising with relevant established within and outside Nigeria in pursuance of the functions of the Centre.

Part III, deals with the structure of the Centre.

Part IV, deals with staff of the centre, while

Part V, deals with financial provisions and fund administration.

Part VI, provides for the constitution of the Advisory Council of NCDC, while

Part VII, deals with miscellaneous issues including legal proceedings, interpretation clause and Short Title. A supplementary provision on the proceedings of the Board and Committees is also provided, with an Explanatory Memorandum.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, this Bill which will give legal backing and teeth to the activities of the Nigeria Centre for Diseases Control is humbly presented for passage into Law. The Centre played a foremost role in the fight against the outbreak of Ebola virus Disease in Nigeria and had in collaboration with WHO provided technical support /expert advice to the States affected. It has continued to play key roles in the containment of many communicable diseases in our country including Cholera, Lassa fever, etc. The Centre will continue to be key in public health issues and will be our link to other similar bodies and the WHO in global public health regulations/activities.

Financial Requirements

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, the NCDC has been operating administratively for several years, with the required personnel in place. It has its operational office in Abuja and has received a fair share of our annual budget as appropriated by the National Assembly for several years. There will not be any new financial requirements arising from this legislation.

Conclusion

Mr President, Distinguished Colleagues, the NCDC, already put in place administratively is functional and alive to its duties. This legislation is to give the Centre the legal strength to function and network in and across our borders as a legal entity empowered by our Laws to provide health security and protect us from health threats.

I wish to appeal to my colleagues to support that this Bill be read a 2nd time.

I so move.