

LEAD DEBATE

IMMIGRATION ACT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018 (SB.203)

Sponsor: Senator Gbolahan Dada (Ogun West)

Mr President, Distinguished Colleagues, permit me to lead the debate on the general principles of this important Bill for an Act to amend the Immigration Act 2015 and other matters connected therewith. The short title of this Bill is *Immigration Act (Amendment) Bill, 2018 (SB. 203)*.

This Bill was read for the first time in this Chamber on Wednesday, 16th March 2016. The major Objectives of this Amendment Bill are as follows:

- To provide additional duties to the Comptroller General with respect to issuance and monitoring of business permit, expatriate quotas to foreigners, effective transfer of technology to Nigerians understudying expatriates and producing a database for all expatriate workers in Nigeria etc.
- To provide funding through appropriation by National Assembly for procurement and installation of border security equipments, e-gate world class scanners etc to aid immigration activities and promote security at Nigeria borders

Distinguished Colleagues, it is public knowledge that our borders are very porous. It is reported that about one thousand, four hundred and seventy nine (1,479) illegal borders exists in Nigeria. The implication of this is that illegal aliens, contrabands, illicit weapons can swiftly be brought into the country un-noticed through our porous borders.

As at today, Nigeria shares about 773km border stretch with Benin Republic, about 87km with Chad, a stretch of 1,049km with Niger Republic and 1,690km with Cameroon. Furthermore, an investigation conducted by a National Daily revealed that over 250 footpaths exists between Damaturu and Maiduguri axis with direct link to Cameroon, Chad or Niger. Unfortunately, majority of these footpaths are unknown to security agents. The security implication for this could be imagined than experience.

Distinguished Colleagues. The time has come for Nigeria to deploy border control technology to monitor our extensive 5,000km border and this is one of the main objectives of this Bill. Nigeria needs surveillance technology that uses unmanned solar powered ground sensors and night vision telescopes. This Bill, when it becomes law, will allow the National Assembly to provide funding for procurement and installation of border security equipments. Today, several countries use drone technology to monitor borders and other illicit trafficking activities. The United States has been using drone technology for over 10 years with huge remarkable success. Nigeria should not be lacking behind.

Distinguished Colleagues. Another important issue to be addressed by this Bill is the abuse of expatriate quota in the country. There is a report of expatriate quota racket by some international oil companies (IOCs). An investigation revealed that the agency, which monitors expatriates' inflow was flooded with 5,159 expatriate quota applications within 11 months. This application surge occurred at a period Nigerians are losing jobs due to rightsizing by IOCs. This should not be!

Mr President. Distinguished Colleagues. I sincerely doubt if we have records or data base of expatriates living in this Country with information on what they do and where they live. This is very important in order to check abuse of our Immigration and Labour laws. Expatriate quotas are usually restricted to the oil and gas industry but it is unfortunate to observe that foreigners are now venturing into construction labour, domestic services such as house keeping and driving and other non specialist services to the detriment of available local skills. This Bill seeks to address many issues bothering on the abuse of expatriate quotas in order to protect the teeming unemployed youths.

In view of the foregoing and for many other reasons, I urge all my distinguished colleagues to support the second reading of this Bill and ensure its passage.

Thank you, Mr President.

Thank you, my Distinguished Colleagues.



LEAD DEBATE ON A BILL FOR AN ACT TO REPEAL THE NATIONAL BOARD FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION ACT AND RE-ENACT THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR TECHNICAL, VOCATIONAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EDUCATION 2018 (SB 560)

Sponsor: Senator Barau I. Jibrin (Kano North Senatorial District)

Mr. President, many thanks for this opportunity to commence debate on the proposed significant repeal of the National Board for Technical Educational Act No.9 1977 and Enactment of National Commission for Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Education. The present administration has skilling and employment of Nigeria youth as one of its priority agenda. There is therefore need to reorganise the existing regulatory agency responsible for technical education to coordinate and develop skill policies for Nigeria.

Lately, the country has been experiencing youth unemployment problem occasioned by lack of relevant skills qualification that can match most jobs, which are now created in the micro, small and medium enterprises, which can engage the country's large youth population. There is need therefore to institutionalise vocational qualification training in Nigeria to help in upgrading skills of young people out of employment or underemployed through establishing an agency backed by law to coordinate the system, this will help transform our youthful population into highly skilled and competent citizens.

There are large numbers of actors delivering skills education e.g. federal and state governments' agencies, private developers, non-governmental organisations. Their efforts often overlap and are not standardised or regulated.

Therefore the repeal of the National Board Technical Education Act and enactment of National Commission for Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Education will promote the institutionalization of professional and technical skills development for sustenance of the National Economy.

The Bill in addition to regulating the establishment of polytechnics and Technical, Vocational and Entrepreneurial Institutions seeks to broaden the Law to formulate, coordinate and regulate all skilled development policies and institutions in Nigeria.

In view of the above I urge you all to support the passage of this bill.

Thank you.