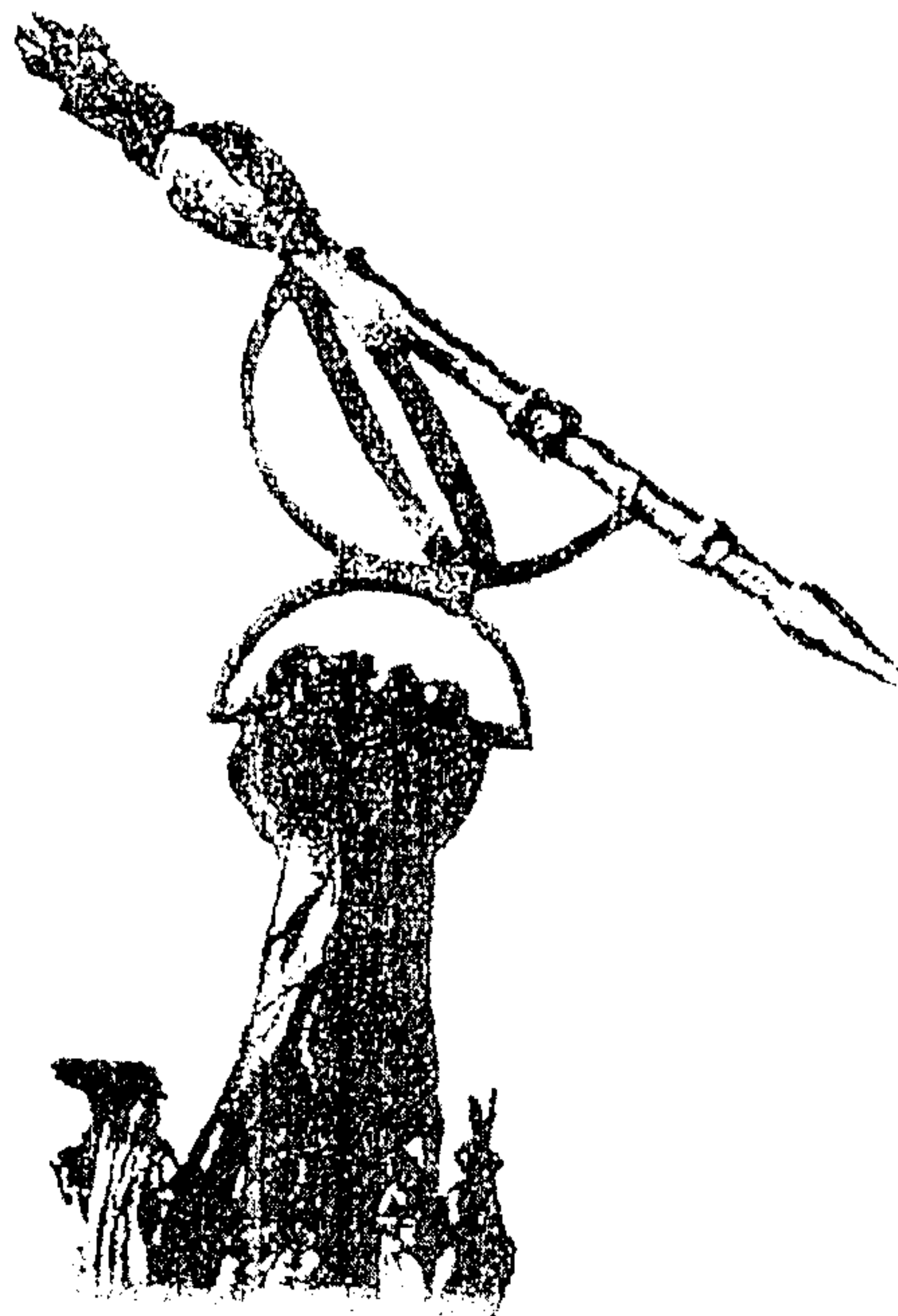




**REPORT OF THE AD-HOC COMMITTEE ON THE
LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

SUBMITTED TO THE

**SENATE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA
8TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
2015 – 2019**

JULY 2015

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA FOR THE 8TH SENATE

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INTRODUCTION

The **8th Senate** of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 2015 – 2019 is determined to use its legislative powers and authority to deliver on citizens' expectations of government and fulfill its responsibilities of lawmaking, oversight and representation. To this end, the Senate in consultation with its membership and several stakeholders has resolved to give to itself a Legislative Agenda that would help it deliver on expectations of the citizens. The development of A Legislative Agenda for the **8th Senate** would be the first time that the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria would be capturing and encapsulating its legislative priorities and goals in one document.

The Legislative Agenda identifies and indicates the direction that the Senate intends to take to achieve its goals over the next four years. The Senate intends to reposition itself in the mind of Nigerians as an effective, efficient and capable legislative chamber working for the Nigerian people to improve living conditions and the governance system in the country. The 2015 General Elections marked a watershed in Nigeria's democratic development and Nigerians expect to see government evolve and be more responsive to their needs and expectations.

The **8th Senate** will work to improve citizens understanding of the Senate's role in the legislative process and build confidence in the ability of government to address their needs. The Senate in its work will be guided by the nation's best interest and will work cordially and in synergy with the House of Representatives and the Executive and Judiciary to deliver on legislative goals and improved governance of the country.

The **8th Senate** will take the business of legislation very seriously. Our legislative drive and activities will be targeted at reforming critical sectors of the Nigerian society and the economy and will aim to deliver development, reforms, transparency and accountability in government. The Senate will take legislative steps to combat poverty, reduce

unemployment, tackle insecurity, and address long standing challenges related to the environment including desertification, erosion and pollution.

The Senate as a responsible institution will work in tandem with the House of Representatives to curtail every form of wastages in governance, entrench probity, accountability and transparency. The Senate is poised to make effective and efficient use of her legislative resources for timely delivery and passage of Bills, support government reform programmes aimed at poverty reduction, employment generation and wealth creation.

This Senate will expeditiously reform the Annual budget and economic planning process taking cognizance of the urgent need for budget implementation. A look at the annual budget from 1999 to 2014 shows lack of implementation and abandonment of projects and this has caused loss of huge funds thereby distorting and dislocating the Nigerian economy. Oversight functions as core function of the Senate will be stepped-up to ensure effective service delivery and value for money.

The Senate will also collaborate with the executive arm of government to reduce the cost of governance in Nigeria and will take every legislative measure to help achieve this. In response to citizens concern and public expectations, the **8th Senate** will be accessible and will ensure that its processes are transparent. To this end, the **8th Senate** will engage with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the media and collaborate with citizens group to deliver on its legislative agenda.

OBJECTIVES/GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- i. Develop an effective and efficient Senate positioned to carry out its constitutionally recognized mandate of legislation, oversight and representation.
- ii. Establish and maintain high ethical standards in the conduct of Senate business.

- iii. Strengthen the mechanism and processes of Committees of the Senate to deliver on legislative goals.
- iv. Adopt a strategy that will open up communication within the Senate and between the Senate and other stakeholders.
- v. Identify and target passage of priority legislation within an agreed time frame.
- vi. Foster engagement and collaboration with Civil Society Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and Constituents.
- vii. Take necessary legislative steps to address national economic challenges, poverty, infrastructure decline, wastages in government, leakages in revenues, and corruption.
- viii. Take necessary legislative steps to address security challenges in the country.
- ix. Take necessary legislative initiative to promote equality and inclusiveness and ensure that the rights of women, youths and vulnerable persons in the society are addressed.
- x. Ensure that the budget process is made to deliver on the objectives of development.
- xi. Initiate comprehensive legislative action to address unsettled issues relating to the Constitution and Electoral Reforms.
- xii. Improve the use of modern communications technology in the conduct of the Senate's legislative business.

THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

1. Needs Assessment

The Senate will institute a needs assessment of its resources; equipment, manpower, processes and mechanisms to determine adequacy or not and what will be best to be put in place to enable it deliver on its mandate. The legislative needs assessment will also seek to apportion costs to the needs of the Senate and the National Assembly and determine whether resources currently existing, is adequate for the running of an efficient legislative system. It will also seek to respond to the concerns constantly raised about the cost of running the legislature including wastages that result from disengaging experienced legislative staff at the end of every four-year cycle.

The National Assembly consists of multiple directorates and units including:

- a) The Senate
- b) House of Representatives
- c) Directorate of Finance and Accounts
- d) Directorate of Legal Services
- e) Directorate of Procurement, Estate and Works
- f) Directorate of Corporate Affairs
- g) Directorate of Common Services
- h) National Assembly Service Commission
- i) National Institute For Legislative Studies
- j) National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO)

The legislative needs assessment will be carried out by an independent Committee comprising experts and credible and experience Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

2. Legislative Processes:

The Senate will improve and enhance its legislative processes to enable it better deliver on its mandate. The improvements to

the legislative processes will aim to achieve the quality of bills, timeliness in their passage and the effective implementation of other legislative activities such as oversight and public hearings. Bills and Motions will be prioritized in line with the set Agenda.

3. **Standing and Ad-hoc Committees:**

The Senate Legislative Agenda will address the shortcomings that presently manifest in the Committee system and fortify Committees to tackle the challenges of under development by strengthening the Committees. Adherence to codes of ethics, funding, training and retraining of legislators and support staff will be instituted.

The Committees will be re-engineered to drive the legislative business and activities of the Senate with great and enhanced efficiency and effectiveness. The internal operations of the Senate and its Committees will be refocused to become ***very results-oriented.***

Impediments to proper funding and efficient staffing of Committees will be removed in order to make them more effective. The Senate leadership will sanction Committees that fail to deliver on tasks and assignments. Chairmanship and membership of Committees will be constituted according to the skills, capacity and experience of Senators. This is to ensure that Committees are made up of Senators with good knowledge of the mandate of the Committees.

The Senate will standardize the operational instruments of the work of its Committees. To this end, standard formats, templates, manuals and formats for Committee work in the areas of meetings, public hearings, reporting and oversight will be introduced. The performance of the Committees will be measured against the benchmarks set by these instruments.

The Senate mechanism for supervision of Committees will be strengthened and strictly enforced.

The Senate leadership will conduct regular meetings with Chairmen and Deputy Chairmen of all Special, Standing or Ad-Hoc Committees to set Legislative Targets, Review performance in the attainment of Targets and ensure that the priority legislative activities of the Committees are consistent with the Legislative Agenda of the Senate.

The Senate will introduce a systematic process of training, retraining and skill acquisition by its members and staff to enable them better carry out their responsibilities efficiently. Efforts will be made to improve communication and relationship between Senators and staff of the Senate.

Regular Retreats and Seminars for Senators, staff and legislative aides would also be encouraged.

The Senate shall support and collaborate with legislative capacity building and efforts being implemented by the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) and other National Assembly capacity-building partners and organizations.

4. Oversight Functions and Public Hearings:

Committees will be well funded to independently carry out their functions without the influences that come from ministries, departments and agencies under their jurisdiction. Oversight visits will be well planned and scheduled. Attention will be centered on periodic review and analysis of reports from ministries, departments and agencies before embarking on oversight. The Senate will make oversight functions more systematic.

The Senate will encourage Civil Society Organizations involved in budget monitoring, implementation and governance issues to contribute and partner with its Committees on oversight activities. In addition, Committees' oversight will be properly guided to avoid abuse of power.

The Senate Oversight activities will seek to ensure effective exercise of the provisions of Sections 88 and 89 of the Constitution that empowers the National Assembly to investigate with a view to exposing corruption, inefficiency and waste in the conduct of government business. Other legislative instruments that authorize Senate's exercise of oversight will be invoked.

To promote legislative synergy at the National Assembly, the Senate will collaborate with the House of Representatives where necessary to achieve joint oversight and investigative visits and hearings. The Senate will as well ensure the elimination of overlap of Committee functions especially in carrying out oversight.

Committees will be encouraged to communicate effectively in their oversight functions and avoid conduct of multiple oversight activities on the same issues and involving the same officials of government. The Senate will develop needed legislative tools, templates and mechanisms to coordinate and streamline both investigative and oversight activities.

5. Ethical and Code of Conduct for Members

The Senate will seek to rebuild and restore citizens' confidence in the legislative institution by adopting far-reaching ethical codes for the **8th Senate**. The Code will require that we:

- Review the existing code of conduct for Senators;

- Maintain a high level of integrity, discipline and moral principles at all times;
- Senators shall conduct themselves so as to reflect the position and inspire confidence, respect, trusts of colleagues and the public;
- Encourage non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of legislative practices;
- Promote the spirit of cooperation, fair dealings and ethical practices with other legislators;
- Refrain from misrepresentation and other conduct that may bring the Senate or the National Assembly to disrepute;
- Avoid attacking the motives of fellow legislators including making ridiculous use of abusive and un-parliamentary language, and unfair comments about colleagues regardless of ethnicity, religious or political affiliation;
- Keep in confidence any information obtained in the course of their legislative assignments.

6. Tracking of Bills, Motions and other Legislative Assignments: The **8th Senate** shall develop an appropriate legislative mechanism to track bills, motions and delegated or subsidiary legislation.

The Senate will fast-track the passage of bills and motions to curtail waste of time, energy and resources. The Senate shall proactively collaborate and partner with the House of Representatives to avoid waste in the process of the legislative business of the **8th Senate**.

Presently, there is no defined or predetermined process of rule-making, regulations and quasi legislation in the country. The abuse of the powers of making Rules, Regulations and Subsidiary Legislation by the executive arm of government will be curtailed. Appropriate mechanisms will be established to monitor all forms of quasi and subsidiary legislation to ensure that they do not contradict the principal legislation.

7. Reduction of Cost of Governance: The Senate shall evolve a more transparent and accountable system that eliminates duplication of costs and wastages in the governance process of the country in order to free fund that would help in the massive infrastructural development of Nigeria.

The subject of reduction in cost of governance has been a sensitive matter on the front burner of national issues in the polity especially with regards to the National Assembly. While much of this could be due to an underlining ambiguity in the monthly salaries of legislators and their allowances, there still persists the need to project clarity, accountability and transparency in all legislative matters and legislators' welfare.

The **8th Senate** recognizes the concerns raised by Nigerians about the cost of running office most especially with the economic challenges facing our nation. The Senate will be more transparent regarding all public funds spent for the purpose of paying salaries and allowances of legislators and ensure that distinction is sufficiently made between what a legislator actually earns and what is spent to run and implement legislative business and committee activities. The watchword in our financial issues will be fiscal conservatism.

Committees set up by the Executive have recommended merging and consolidation of government Ministries, Departments and Agencies to significantly reduce the cost of governance.

The Senate will take legislative measures to carry out prudent reduction of the cost of governance in various areas of our national life, including coming up with the best cost-effective regime in the **8th Senate**.

LEGISLATIVE BEST PRACTICES

1. E-Parliament: The 8th Senate will pursue an objective of introducing and using ICT in the regular conduct of legislative activities of the Senate. The concept of e-parliament will be made to operate such that modern information communication tools will be used across the activities of the National Assembly. Access to the Internet will be made commonplace throughout the National Assembly environment.

The ICT framework of the National Assembly will be geared towards achieving the following:

- Making legislative information widely and freely available to citizens aimed at increasing the accountability, transparency and provision of legislation process information;
- Improved and faster means of information and service delivery to the citizenry;
- Increasing citizen participation in legislation with improved accessibility of citizens to their representatives, creating a vision for partnership in the decision making process; and,
- Access to activities going on in the different constituencies of the members through their personal portal at the NASS website.

- 2. E-Voting:** The Senate will make e-voting a regular feature of Senate legislative business. The adoption of E-Voting is to clear any iota of doubt on the credibility of the voting process in the Senate. The method will ensure transparency and accountability thereby restoring the credibility of the voting activities in the system.
- 3. Establishment of the Parliament Radio and Television Station:** The Senate will facilitate the completion and take-off of the dedicated radio and television station created to cover the activities of the National Assembly.
- 4. Electronic Archives:** The Senate commits to establishing an electronic archival system for the National Assembly in line with the current trend of using online real-time data processing techniques to organize and archive information effectively. In furtherance of this, the Senate will create a high-powered web portal, which will serve as an electronic compendium for Senate proceedings from 1999 to date.
- 5. Senate Museum—Historical Data Gallery (1999 to date):**
In view of the strategic significance of museums in the documentation, preservation and diffusion of iconic moments and figures in a nation's history, the **8th Senate** will establish one.
- 6.** Improve on the existing working conditions in the Chamber.

process of information sharing in order to strengthen it and achieve seamless communication with the House of Representatives. Improved communications with the House will ensure speedy passage of bills and harmonization and concurrence as well. Effort will be made to encourage joint legislative activities in the area of investigative hearings, oversight, and as well, joint meetings between Committees. Where necessary, and to give effect to legislative resolutions, joint action between both Houses will be undertaken.

- 2. In-House Communication:** The Senate commits to improving communication among Senators and Committees as well as with staff, and staff of Committees to achieve the common goal of legislating for the common good.
- 3. Communication with the Executive Arm:** The Senate commits to improving its communications with the executive arm of government. The Senate will establish a mechanism that addresses challenges of communication between the legislature and the executive, and work to reduce these challenges.
- 4. Communication with the Judiciary:** The Senate will take steps to identify the best means of communicating with the judiciary on issues relating to the protection and promotion of the independence of both arms of government.
- 5. Communication with the Public:** The Senate will increase its communication with the public in order to provide information on its activities and promote participation of citizens in legislative work. Avenues to enhance greater communication with citizens will be explored and the use of ICT in this regard will be put in place. Senate communication

with the public will provide better information that would help understanding of the full work of the National Assembly and distribution of budgeted resources. This will take away constant public questions on the issue of funding of the National Assembly.

ANNUAL NATIONAL BUDGET

a) Review of the Budgeting and Planning Process and the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO):

The Senate commits to a comprehensive review of Nigeria's budgeting and planning process in order to achieve efficient and results oriented use of national income and resources. The components of the Senate legislative intervention in the budget process will include a comprehensive Legislative-Executive initiative on the budget to address the challenges currently being experienced in the national budgeting system. The challenges include double and uncoordinated budgeting, poor budget implementation, declining revenues, non-remittance of revenues by ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) and deliberate refusal of the executive to implement budget as passed by the legislature.

The Senate also commits to the adoption and use of an effective Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) for budgeting and compliance with the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act (FRA) 2007 on budget matters. Committees of the National Assembly will be supported to carry out effective budget oversight and their recommendations on implementation of budget by MDAs will be given legislative bite. The report of Committees on oversight of MDAs would be used to determine the passage of budgets of MDAs. Legislative action will be taken to censure the action of the executive in sometimes choosing which aspects of the National Budget it wants to implement.

The Senate will ensure the coming into being, of an independent effective, nonpartisan Budget Office (NABRO) by law to aid in economic and budgetary information and planning. Two previous sessions of the National Assembly have passed the NABRO Bill but it failed to receive Presidential Assent. Working with the House of Representatives, the Senate will expeditiously and within the first year of the **8th Senate** ensure the passage of the NABRO Bill.

b) Time Frame for Submission and Deadline for Approval of the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF): The Senate recognizing the relationship between the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) and the outcomes identified in the national plan will strengthen MTEF by linking it with the National Implementation Plan (NIP). This will be in line with Part II (Section II, 3-iii) of Fiscal Responsibility Act No. 37 of 2007, which provides that the *"Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) shall contain a fiscal strategy paper that sets out the strategic, economic, social and developmental priorities of the Federal Government for the next three financial years."*

The Senate will take legislative action to streamline the budgetary process and improve on the integrity of the process and merge the Budget Office of the Federation with the National Planning Commission for optimal output. Similarly, the laws establishing the National Planning Commission, the Fiscal Responsibility Commission, the Budget Office of the Federation will be streamlined to clearly define their functions to strengthen the process and promote smooth collaboration.

The Senate will open for review, the question of the commencement of the budget year for the country. Currently, the budget year cycle runs from January to December. Given that our election cycle runs from the end of May, there may be need to synchronize this with the budget cycle to avoid the budget distortion and non-implementation that arises in any election year,

which affects delivery in the critical first year of a new government.

c) Deadline for Submission and Passage of the Appropriation

Bill: The Senate will take legislative action to ensure that the legal provisions guiding deadlines for the submission and passage of the nation's Appropriations Bill is complied with by the executive.

d) Defence of Budget proposals by ministries, departments

and agencies: The Senate will implement a vigorous process of budget defence so that ministries, departments and agencies do not repeat budget items and expenditure on an annual basis without justification. The practice of repeating the same budget expenditure on an annual basis even when a need is not established will be stopped. Budgets will be based on value for money and on 'as needed' basis.

NATIONAL ECONOMY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- i. Welfare, Security and Safety of citizens:** The Senate will take action to give legislative effect to the provision of the Constitution on the Fundamental Objectives and Principles of State Policy, which stipulates the responsibility and duty of government to provide for the welfare, security and safety of citizens. Laws will be enacted and existing laws amended to guarantee the security and welfare of every Nigerian on an equal basis and without discrimination of whatsoever nature.
- ii. Diversification of the Economy:** The Senate recognizes the importance of a diversified national economy and will take legislative action to open the resource base of the country beyond the present dependence on oil. Other sources of economic diversification such as Agriculture, Mining, Tourism, services etc. will be supported through legislative initiatives. Furthermore, Legislative action will be taken to encourage the business environment that is not restrained by legal bottlenecks and

bureaucratic obstacles. Special legislative measures to promote private sector involvement and collaboration with government on projects and policies will also be encouraged.

- iii. **Remittance of all Monies due to the Federation into the Federation Account:** The Senate will give legislative effect to the constitutional provision on revenue generation and remittance requiring MDAs to remit into the Federation Account, revenues generated by them. In addition, monies held under special funds such as the Ecological Fund, Excess Crude Account, Natural Resources Fund, Solid Minerals Development Fund, Industrial Training Fund, TETFUND and such other funds will be closely monitored and expenditure thereunder scrutinized to ensure accountability and transparency in their management.
- iv. **Plugging of all Financial Leakages:** The Senate will take legislative action to plug financial and systemic leakages that has caused Nigeria an enormous amount of resources that will otherwise be available for development.

Legislative action will be taken to tackle tax avoidance and evasion in the country by companies and taxable persons who employ various tax avoidance devices to escape or minimize their taxes, thereby hindering national development. Laws will be strengthened to encourage compliance with tax obligations by all persons. The **8th Senate** will also review some of the existing Acts relating to these issues with the view to making them more effective and efficient.

- v. **Development of Infrastructure:** The Senate will take legislative action to support Nigeria's rapid infrastructure development. The country's infrastructure decline will be reversed and legislative support given to rebuilding public transportation, electricity, fast rail system, federal highways, modern airports, housing and general infrastructure.

current poverty statistics of Nigeria. Legislative initiatives such as budgetary interventions and support for anti-poverty initiatives of government will be pursued.

vii. North East/Niger Delta and Bakassi:

- **North East Zone** – The Senate commits to taking legislative initiatives aimed at rebuilding the North East geopolitical zone of the country ravaged by years of insurgency and terrorism. The Senate recognizes that the crises of the North East zone can only be tackled if its economic conditions are significantly improved. To this end, the Senate will support the adoption of special economic measures to address the problems of unemployment, insecurity, absence of infrastructure and general economic decline.

The Senate will also take legislative action to support the challenges faced by Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) including challenges of rebuilding housing and resettling persons who have moved far away from their traditional homes.

- **Niger Delta** – The Senate will take legislative action to review the various Niger-Delta initiatives that seek to address problems specific to the geo-political zone including the problems of environmental pollution, poverty, and infrastructural decay. Initiatives such as Derivation Funds in the Revenue Allocation Formula, Ecological Funds, Amnesty Programme, creation of NDDC, and creation of Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs will be further reviewed to either make them more effective and efficient, merged or scrapped.

- **Bakassi** – The **8th Senate** will take legislative action to support physical demarcation of the boundaries around the Bakassi region to prevent further territorial concessions and achieve full and adequate resettlement of indigenes of the area into Nigeria.

viii. Mass Housing, Urban Development and Mortgages:

The Senate will take legislative action to increase home ownership in the country including action supporting alterations to the Land Use Act 1978. The Senate is set to tackle these issues by reviewing the Land Use Act and other Cumbersome Processes, which hinder access to land and mortgages.

The **8th Senate** will strengthen the Federal Mortgage Bank and Mortgage Refinance Company of Nigeria (NMRC), an institution designed to bridge the funding cost of residential mortgages by promoting the availability and affordability of good housing through increased access to liquidity and longer-terms funds in the mortgage market.

ix. Power and Rural Electrification: The Senate shall take legislative action to support improved generation and distribution of electricity to homes and businesses.

The **8th Senate** will set a robust legislative and regulatory framework for rural applications efficiency of policy instruments seeking to set clear goals, legislative requirements and subsidiary instruments that will provide legal bases for policy perspectives as well as institutional mechanisms for policy implementation.

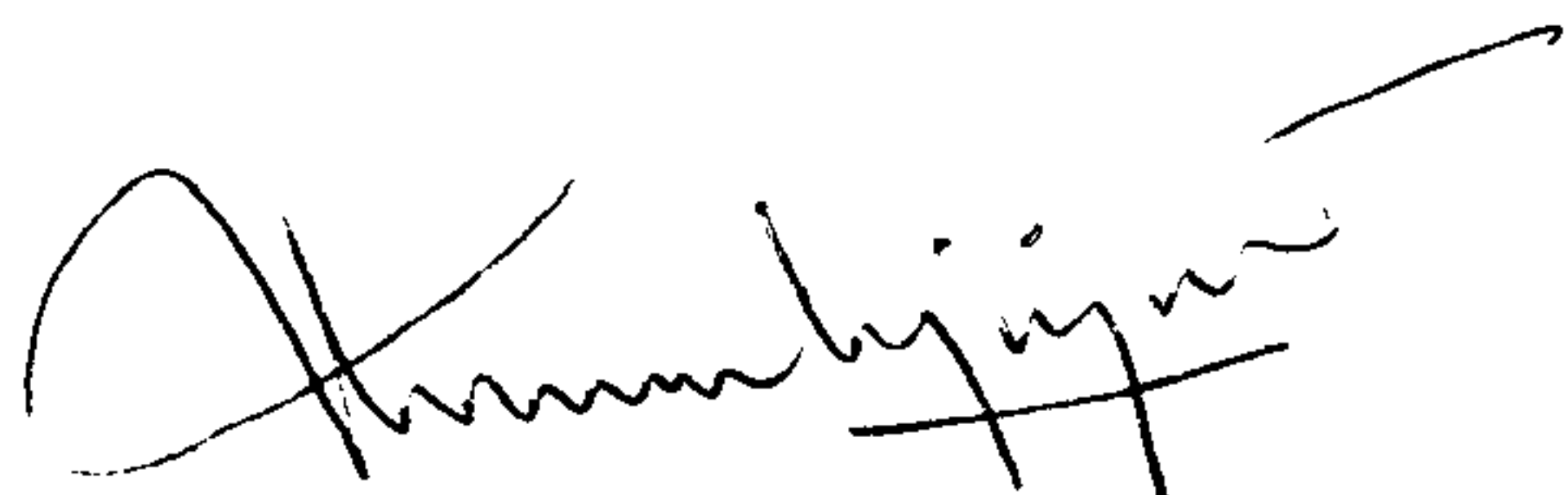
Additionally, the **8th Senate** will repeal and re-enact the National Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) Act to provide conditions and incentives for encouraging the harnessing of renewable energy technologies through effective implementing institutions.

accrue to the Nigeria people. The implementation will seek the partnership collaboration and cooperation of all stakeholders, development partners, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), professional bodies and the Nigerian people.

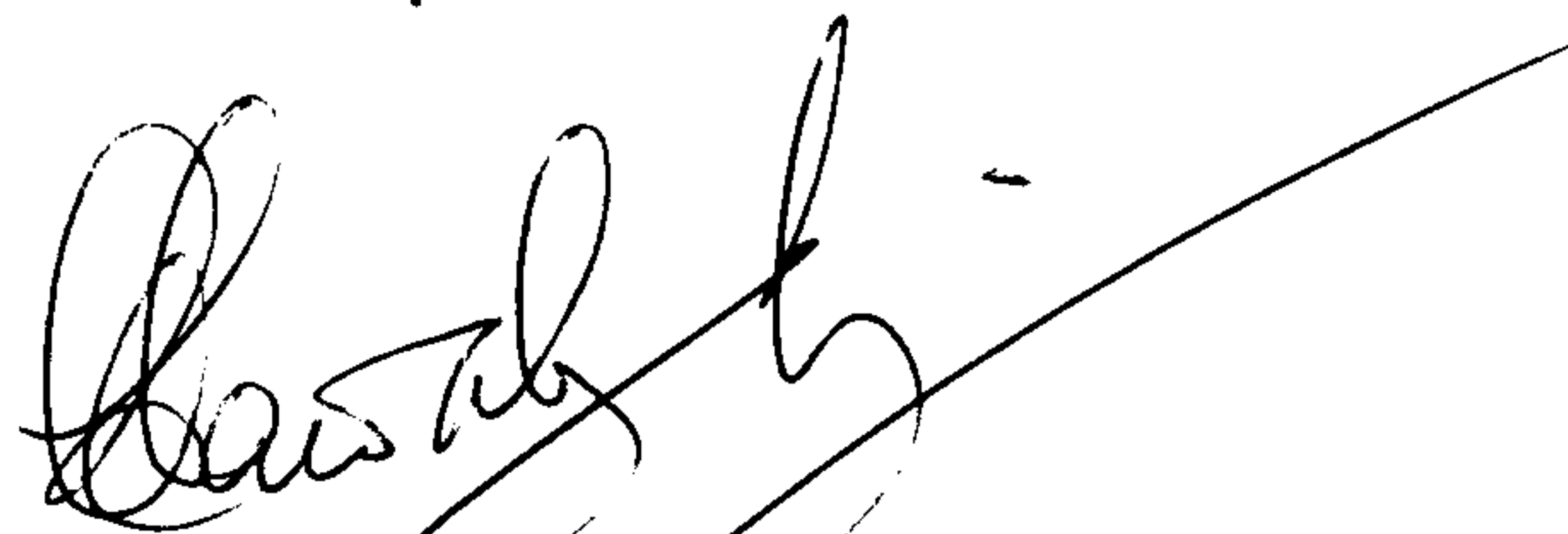
CONCLUSION

This Agenda is not totally exhaustive of our planned legislative activities in the **8th Senate**. Additionally we will work on issues of National Importance that may require our attention during the period under consideration. The Agenda will only serve as a compass to direct legislative activities in the next four years, so as to avoid confusion, time and resources wastage, and duplication.

The **8th Senate** will establish modalities for the implementation of this Legislative Agenda. Partnership, collaboration and cooperation with civil society organizations, development partners and professional bodies to realize the effective implementation and monitoring of this Agenda shall be adopted. Subject to the approval of the Committee of the Whole of the Senate, the Ad-hoc Committee on Legislative Agenda should agree to reconvene to draw up an implementation and action plan for the **8th Senate** Agenda.



SENATOR MOHAMMED A. NDUME
Chairman/ Senate Leader



LAWAL B. BUNGUDU
Committee Clerk

MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

1. Senator Bala Ibn Na, Allah

2. Senator George T. Sekibo

3. Senator Kabiru I. Gaya

4. Senator Binta Masi Garba

5. Senator Mohammed S. Ohiare

6. Senator Hope O. Uzodimma

7. Senator Sonny Ogbuoji

8. Senator Babajide Omoworare

9. Senator Joshua C. Dariye

10. Senator David Umaru

11. Senator John Owan Enoh

12. Senator Uche Lilian Ekwunife

13. Senator Duro Faseyi

14. Senator Tayo Alasoadura

15. Senator Ben Murray-Bruce

16. Senator Mohammed Hassan

17. Senator Shehu Sani

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