

VALEDICTORY SPEECH ON THE DEATH OF SENATOR IGNATIUS DATONG LONGJAN (16TH MAY, 1945 - 10TH FEBRUARY, 2020)

Sen. Abdullahi, Yahaya Abubakar (*Kebbi North-Senate Leader*)

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagus, let me register formally to the Senate the sad death of Senator Ignatius Datong Longjan which occurred on Tuesday, 10th February, 2020, while undergoing treatment at the Turkish Hospital Abuja after a protracted sickness. His death has thrown the Senate in deep mourning once again, having lost one of its own, Senator Benjamin Uwajumogu barely two months ago.

Late Senator Ignatius Datong Longjan was born in Kwa village of Qua'an Pan Local Government and started his academic career at Kwa Primary School 1954-1958; St. Joseph's College, Vom 1959-1964, Bida Staff Training Centre 1966. Thereafter, he was admitted into the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU) Zaria, where he obtained Diploma in Law, Institute of International Affairs, Lagos 1976 and City University of New York, USA where he obtained B.A. Public Administration in 1991.

As a career Civil Servant, he worked with the Northern Nigeria Ministry of Information, Kaduna 1965-1968, Benue Plateau State Ministry of Information, Jos 1968-1969, Federal Ministry of Education, Jos 1969-1973, International Court of Justice Haque, as Protocol Officer attached to Justice Elias of Nigeria 1980-1983 and finally Ministry of Foreign Affairs (then Ministry of External Affairs) Lagos 1975-2000.

He also served reputedly at the Nigerian Embassey, Geinea between 1983 to 1984 and was appointed as Head of Chancery, General Administration in the Consulate-General of Nigeria, New York, USA from 1988 to 1992. His exploit was capped with his appointment as the Head Chancery at the very strategic Nigerian Embassey in

Moscow, Russia from 1998 to 2000 where he finally retired from service.

In politics, Late Senator Ignatius Datong Longjan acquired even more experience in administration and governance as he served as Financial Secretary, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), Plateau State Chapter 2005-2007, Chief of Staff to former Plateau State Governor, Senator Jonah Jang 2007-2011, and later became the Deputy Governor of Plateau from 2011 to 2015. His humility, humanity and wealth of wisdom was always at display when he weighed on any issue that concerns people.

He was appointed as Chairman of the Governing Council of the nation's highest institution of learning, the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, NIPSS, Kuru in March 2018 from where he resigned and contested and won the Plateau Southern Senatorial District seat and was inaugurated as a Senator of the Ninth Assembly on the 11th June, 2019 where he served until his sad demise.

Since his election as Senator representing Plateau South Senatorial District in the Upper Chamber of the National Assembly last year, Late Senator Ignatius Datong Longjan has contributed immensely to the quality of debate at the Floor of the Senate. Until his death, he was a member of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) and was the Vice-Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Senate Committee on Culture and Tourism as well as member of several other Senate Committees.

Mr. President, Distinguished Senators, we have lost a great colleague in the Senate. May I on behalf of the Senate take this opportunity to commiserate with members of the Longjan family who are here today and members of his constituency as well as the government and people of Plateau State who have obviously lost a great man.

He vision was to ensure that the Nigerian Tourism Sector is developed to meet with global best practice.

Yet, Late Senator Ignatius Datong Longjan will be remembered for his legislative interest in Agriculture, an area he was interested in improving, for he believed that food security for Nigerians was crucial to economic success of the country.

His remains lies in State in this Hallowed Chamber for his Valedictory Session as he begins journey to rest in perfect peace.

I feel depressed and disturbed by the death of our dear friend and colleague, a very amiable and dependable member of this Distinguished Senate, but Almighty God knows best.

We shall miss you dearly, good night, until we all meet to part no more.

Adieu Datong!