

## **LEGISLATIVE BRIEF**

**LONG TITLE:** A BILL FOR AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION CHARGED WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO RECEIVE AND MANAGE FUNDS FROM THE FEDERATION ACCOUNT ALLOCATION AND OTHER SOURCES, DONATIONS, GRANTS AIDS FOR THE INTEGRATION, DEVELOPMENT, RESOLUTION OF INFRASTRUCTURAL DEFICIT, MILITANCY, COMMUNAL CRISES AS WELL AS TACKLE ECOLOGICAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS(HB 630)

**SHORT TITLE:** A BILL FOR AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS.

**SPONSORED BY:** HON. AWAJI-INOMBEK D. ABIANTE and 55 others.

### **LEAD DEBATE ON THE BILL FOR AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE SOUTH - SOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS (HB 630)**

The Right-Honourable Speaker and my Honourable Colleagues, I thank you for the opportunity to lead debate on this important legislative proposal that seeks to establish the South-South Development Commission to serve as a springboard for the engagement, integration and development of the South-South region as well as resolve issues of infrastructural deficit, militancy, communal crises as well as the ecological problems and (any) other related environmental or developmental challenges in the region.

### **BACKGROUND**

In 1993, the regime of Late General Sani Abacha created six (6) geopolitical zones with the aim amongst others of enhancing equal distribution of the Nation's economic, political and educational resources. Late General Sani Abacha deserves commendation for this well-thought idea that was tailored towards bringing development to every part of the Country especially given the peculiarity and diverse nature of the Country with greater affinity in the regional structure thereby having very workable solutions.

The six geopolitical zones created by the Late General Sani Abacha include the South East, South West, South-South, North Central, North East, and North West.

As at today, the North East Development Commission is in place and functioning, a bill for the establishment of the South West Development Commission has scaled second reading, while the bills for the establishment of other Zonal Development Commissions are also in the works at various stages.

### **RATIONALE FOR SOUTH-SOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION BILL, 2020**

The question that may be bothering the minds of some of my colleagues at this point may be 'Why the need to establish a South-South Development Commission, when there is a Niger Delta Development Commission in place'?

The answer is not far-fetched. It is instructive to point out that the Niger Delta Development Commission created by President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000 merely replaced the OMPADEC (Oil Mineral Producing Areas Development Commission). It was for the development of oil producing area or better still communities, which include areas and communities from States in the South East (Abia & Imo) and South West (Ondo) and most recently Lagos (where oil was discovered in 2016).

It is expected that membership of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) will expand as oil exploration and commercial finds continues in the Country. Presently, States like Lagos (South West) and Anambra (South East) are agitating and rightly too to be included in the commission on the claims of having become oil producing.

There is a recently reported find of oil in the North East and when eventual commercial production commences, they are also expected to lay claim to the membership of the NDDC (North East).

Also, the boundary contention between Kogi (North Central), Anambra and Enugu (South East) when resolved may make one more of the States or even all to be a member(s) of the NDDC due to availability of oil in the disputed area.