

## LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

**TITLE:** A BILL FOR AN ACT TO ALTER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, 1999 AND FOR RELATED MATTERS

**Sponsored by:** Hon. Awaji-Inombek D. Abiante, *PhD*

### INTRODUCTION

In mathematics, a sub-set is smaller than a set; there is a State and there is a Sub-state, it is a general knowledge that a sub-set resides in a set, while a Sub-state is located within a State. Taking these into consideration and looking at the way the words 'Federal Capital Territory (FCT)' and 'Abuja' were used in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, one is bound to ask if the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is inside Abuja, or Abuja is inside the Federal Capital Territory.

The citation in Part 1 of Chapter V111 of the 1999 Constitution as amended is cited as 'FEDERAL CAPITAL TERRITORY, ABUJA'. With this citation, Abuja is given prominence as the dominant title (that is to say the FCT is in Abuja), thus, we were made to believe that Abuja is bigger than the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), but the reverse is the case.

Mr. Speaker and my Distinguish Colleagues, it is an established fact that the land mass of the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is 7,315 km square while that of Abuja is 1,769 km square. The Federal Capital Territory is made up of six (6) area councils, namely Abaji, Abuja Municipal Area Council, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Kuje and Kwali. The capital city Abuja is located inside the wider Abuja Municipal Area Council; hence it will be an error of judgment to subsume an area of 7,315 km square under an area of 1,769 km square. Obviously a misnomer has been created during the course of writing the 1999 Constitution. Many chapters, sections, sub-sections and schedules of the Constitution were affected by this misnomer, hence the need for this Constitution amendment bill.

Washington, as the capital of the United States, is located in the District of Columbia (DC), same way Abuja is located in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT); it is called Washington DC, hence ours should be Abuja, Federal Capital Territory and not the other way round.

### INTENDMENT OF THE BILL

Mr. Speaker, my Honourable Colleagues, in order to normalize the status of Abuja in relation to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), there is a need to amend many relevant chapters, sections, sub-sections and schedules of the Amended 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

In essence, the words 'Federal Capital Territory, Abuja' as contained in relevant chapters, sections, sub-sections and schedules of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended) be deleted and 'Abuja, Federal Capital Territory' be inserted.

### CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker, my Honourable Colleagues, I wish to express my profound gratitude for your attention and urge you all to support this bill, which is aimed at correcting the error created when writing the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Thank you.