



**REMARKS BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
REP. FEMI GBAJABIAMILA AT THE RESUMPTION OF PLENARY.
TUESDAY, 14TH JUNE 2022.**

PROTOCOLS

Good morning honourable colleagues.

1. I am delighted to welcome you all to the chamber of the House of Representatives, and I thank you all most sincerely for being here this morning. I give thanks to God almighty by whose grace we have returned here to the green chamber after months of travel and intense activity.
2. It is essential to the practice of democracy that elected representatives must, at intervals, return to the electorate to give account of our service and seek a renewal of our mandate to serve. This periodic renewal of the mandate gives democratic government legitimacy. It allows us to act in the name of the people who elected us. And it ensures that we conduct ourselves in office knowing that we will give an account of our decisions and the priorities we chose to pursue in due time.
3. The past two months have been dominated by political pursuits across the country as political parties carry out various activities to nominate their candidates for the forthcoming general elections. All of us, members of the House of Representatives, have not been exempt from this process. Unfortunately, as is always the case in electoral contests, some of us who sought the nomination of our parties to return to legislature have not gotten it. Others who sought nomination to contest other positions have also fallen short in that quest.
4. Honourable colleagues, it is rather unfortunate that the process went the way it went. I make bold to say here that the legislature has once again suffered losses. The loss really is not for members who lost, it is a loss to democracy, to the institution and to the country. If it means anything, I know and I am aware that many of our members did not lose their primaries because they were rejected by their constituents. Many of our members lost because of the process, the process which we foresaw in the House of Representatives. The delegate system which unfortunately is not what a delegate system is supposed to be.
5. Honourable colleagues, many of our members lost because they were not even given a fair shot. We have good legislators, both here in the chambers and back home, who are probably not coming back because of this same process. When we fought for direct primaries in this house, we knew exactly what we were saying. It pains me

very deeply, that the process has gone the way it has gone. We will continue to push and continue to fight for our members, for democracy, for the institution and this country.

6. I have experienced political loss. And I can speak to the feelings of loss and disappointment that arise as a result. From that experience, I wish to share with you the everlasting truth that none of us is defined by the outcome of any election at any one time. What defines us before God and our fellow men is what we do in the time we have in public office and on earth. We are judged on earth and after by the work of our hands, quality of our service, the content of our character and passion of our convictions. These are the things that matter most and will count in the fullness of time.
7. Therefore, I enjoin you all to set aside your feelings about recent electoral experiences to focus on serving the mandate we still have. Whereas in the past, the start of the electoral calendar marked the end of governance as a priority, that will not be the case in this 9th Assembly. Our term in office does not end till next year. Until the moment it does, until the last minute of the final hour, we will do the people's work and serve their interests. That is the oath we swore and the commitment we will live up to, come what may.
8. The Electoral Act 2022 may well be among the most significant legislation passed in this 9th Assembly. We have already begun to witness the implementation of this new legislation and draw lessons that will guide future reform efforts. It is necessary to note that the process by which the Electoral Act became law has highlighted valuable lessons we will do well to take cognizance of. These lessons should inform and motivate us to improve the National Assembly's law-making process. Honourable colleagues, we must never forget that our work here is consequential. When we get it right, we can vastly improve the lives and circumstances of our people. And when we fall short, our country is poorer for it.
9. Between now and the general elections, we have to resolve to devote our minds and energy to the pressing concerns of governance. This is what the people who sent us here expect of us at this time when we have various significant challenges to contend with. Insecurity remains for us all a matter of the most serious concern. Barely a week ago, a church in Owo, Ondo State, became the scene of incomprehensible violence when gunmen attacked the congregation in the middle of service on the day of Pentecost. This House demands that the security agencies identify the perpetrators and sponsors of this depraved act, and we will hold their feet to the fire until they do so.
10. We will also continue activities to ensure full implementation of the Legislative Agenda of the 9th House of Representatives. This includes consideration and

passage of relevant legislation and other stakeholder engagement and outreach efforts. Several legislative agenda bills have been in Committee for longer than they should. Next week, I will invoke Order 18(3)(g) to commit those bills to the Committee of the Whole or any other relevant Committee of the House unless provided with a compelling reason to do otherwise. We have a limited time left to live up to our commitments in our legislative agenda, and we must make the time count.

11. I have long believed that legislative control of the public purse is one of our most important and consequential responsibilities. Since we resumed office, we have been responsible for passing three Appropriation Acts with trillions of naira in public expenditure included therein. In this our final year in office, it should be a matter of the highest priority for us to thoroughly review the implementation of those Appropriation Acts across the ministries, departments and agencies of the Federal Government of Nigeria. I urge the chairmen and members of the oversight committees of the House to begin now to undertake this review and to prepare reports that will be considered by the House and form part of the legacy of this 9th Assembly.
12. The constitutional amendment process is still ongoing. We have already sent several constitutional amendment bills to the State Houses of Assembly for consideration. While we cannot dictate the pace of activities in the State legislatures, we must consider the possibility that these proposals are at risk of being forgotten amidst the heightened politicking across the country. Therefore, to the extent that we can, there may be a need to coordinate interactions with the state legislatures to ensure timely consideration of the bills. The leadership of the House of Representatives will examine the options we have in this regard and take a decision shortly.
13. Honourable Colleagues, I have said before that the success or failure of the 9th House of Representatives would not be the result of the actions of any one individual. We will be judged on the sum of our collective efforts. Therefore, we are in this together. Let us continue to dedicate ourselves to the arduous work of nation-building. Let us remain steadfast in doing those things intended to make gentle the life of man in this world. And as we ask for God's favour in our endeavours, let us make certain that our decisions and actions and the priorities we pursue are always deserving of grace.
14. I welcome you all once more to the House of Representatives, and I thank you for your time this morning. God bless you all, and God bless our Federal Republic of Nigeria.