

**REMARKS BY THE RT. HON. ABBAS TAJUDEEN, PHD, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE
2ND SESSION OF THE 10TH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ON
TUESDAY, JULY 2ND 2024**

[Protocol]

Honourable colleagues, it is with immense joy and excitement that I welcome you all back to the People's House as we mark the commencement of the Second Session of the 10th House of Representatives. I hope that we all enjoyed a meaningful *Eid Al Adha* celebration with our families, constituents, and friends.

On the 13th of June 2023, we were inaugurated into this House with a shared commitment to be the strong voice and champions of our constituents. We made a solemn pledge to uphold the principles of democracy, justice, and progress. Today, as we reflect on our First Session, I am proud to say that we have not only honoured that pledge but have exceeded all expectations. Let me join all of you in offering our deepest gratitude to Almighty God for preserving our lives and sustaining us in this legislative journey. I congratulate and commend each and every one of you for the hard work, commitment, unity, forthrightness, and patriotism with which you have served our nation in the past year. Together, we have faced national challenges head-on, debated passionately, legislated wisely, and upheld the values that define us as a democratic society.

Over the past year, we have regrettably bid farewell to some of our beloved colleagues, **Hon. Abdulkadir Danbuga** (representing Isa-Sabon-Birni in Sokoto State) and **Hon. Isah Dogonyaro** (Garki/Babura

in Jigawa State). Their absence is deeply felt within these hallowed halls. May we pause to remember their dedication to public service, their commitment to their constituents, and their contributions to shaping our nation's future. We sincerely acknowledge and appreciate their services to the nation. Once again, we extend our heartfelt condolences to their families, their constituents, and indeed, to the entire nation. May their departed souls find eternal rest.

At the heart of this democratic journey has been the legislature, an institution that epitomizes the participatory character of our democracy. The National Assembly, comprising the Senate and the House of Representatives, has played a pivotal role in ensuring that the aspirations and interests of Nigerians are represented, laws are made for the peace and progress of the country, and the executive is held accountable.

The 10th House, in its First Session, has continued to uphold these tenets and the legacy of previous sessions before us. Throughout our first session, each one of you has demonstrated unwavering dedication and integrity in carrying out our duties. We have engaged in robust debates, passed crucial legislation, conducted thorough oversight, and stood firm in representing the diverse voices of our nation. Together, we have shown what true public service looks like – selfless, principled, and committed to the common good.

We have passed numerous laws that have shaped our economic landscape, reformed key sectors, and strengthened our democratic institutions. The House introduced **1,351 bills**, the highest number in any first session since 1999. Out of this impressive number, **89 bills** were passed, reflecting the House's commitment to legislative efficiency and

effectiveness. Key bills include the Access to Higher Education Act, 2024, popularly known as the Students Loan Bill, and the Electricity Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023, which aims to enhance the efficiency and sustainability of Nigeria's electricity sector by promoting investment in renewable energy sources. Furthermore, the Federal Audit Service Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023, strengthens financial oversight and transparency, ensuring better management of public funds and reducing corruption. Additionally, **679 motions** were introduced, setting a record for the number of motions in the first session.

One of the core functions of the legislature is oversight. Through public hearings, investigative committees, and rigorous debates, we have held the executive accountable, ensuring that public funds are used judiciously and that government policies are aligned with the needs of the people. Our oversight activities have led to significant outcomes, including recovering misappropriated funds and rectifying administrative inefficiencies.

We have rigorously engaged citizens in our various activities out of the firm understanding that we are here at the people's instance. We have considered a good number of public petitions, prioritized constituency engagements, and held productive citizens' town halls on budget considerations, electoral reforms, and the articulation of legislative agendas. We couldn't have done otherwise given our appellation as the People's House.

As we begin this second session, we must acknowledge that there are challenges ahead. Despite our efforts, Nigeria continues to grapple with issues of poverty, unemployment, and inequality. The expectations of our

constituents remain high, and they look up to us to address pressing issues such as security, economy, healthcare, education, and infrastructure. The gains of democracy must translate into tangible improvements in the lives of our citizens. As legislators, we are aware that our work is far from complete. We must continue to enact laws that promote economic growth, social justice, and environmental sustainability.

In this regard, it is imperative that we strengthen our institutions and enhance our legislative processes. We must invest in capacity building for legislators and staff, improve our data collection and analysis capabilities, and foster greater collaboration with civil society and the private sector. Transparency, accountability, and public participation must remain the cornerstones of our legislative agenda.

As I noted in my July 4, 2023 speech, this House has been called upon to serve at one of the most challenging times in our nation's history. However, it is a privilege to serve as members of this esteemed House at such a critical juncture in Nigeria's history. Our nation faces numerous challenges. Yet, it is precisely during times like these that strong leadership and decisive actions are needed most. We have been entrusted with the responsibility to steer our country towards a brighter future, and I have full confidence in our collective ability to rise to the occasion.

Let me at this juncture renew my pledge as your Speaker to remain fair and open to all, irrespective of our political views and affiliations. I serve you as a servant-leader, committed to upholding the principles of democracy and ensuring that every voice is heard in this hallowed chamber. I humbly acknowledge that my role as Speaker places me as

the first among equals in this august assembly. I do not see myself as a boss but rather as a facilitator of dialogue, a preserver of order, and a champion of democratic ideals. We are all colleagues here, united by our shared commitment to serving the people who have entrusted us with their hopes and aspirations. Each one of us brings unique perspectives and experiences to this House, and it is through collaboration and mutual respect that we can truly serve the interests of our nation. I pledge to uphold the values of inclusivity, transparency, accountability, and respect for all in all our deliberations and actions.

Together, let us demonstrate to our constituents that their trust in us is not misplaced and that we are worthy stewards of their hopes and aspirations. On this note, I am pleased to announce, as most of us are already aware, that from the 3rd to 5th of July 2024, we will be hosting the 2024 'House Open Week' as part of the activities marking the conclusion of our First Session and the commencement of the Second Session of this 10th House. The event will kick off with the presentation of the House's scorecard detailing our achievements and challenges over the past year. We will also have the honour of hosting prominent Nigerians and former presiding officers who will share their perspectives on our performance during this period. This reflective session will provide valuable insights into our strengths and areas for improvement.

Various engagements have been planned over three days to discuss the strategic legislative priorities outlined in our Legislative Agenda. These sessions are designed to facilitate discussions, debates, reflections on our deliberations, celebrate our achievements, and reaffirm our commitment to serving with integrity and diligence. It is my hope that this event will

not only strengthen our bonds as colleagues but also reinforce our dedication to fulfilling our legislative duties with excellence.

I urge each and every Member to actively participate in this event over the three days. It is for this reason that we have decided suspend sitting for Wednesday and Thursday to allow for more robust engagement with our constituents. Your engagement, input, and commitment are crucial in ensuring that we collectively chart a course that aligns with the interests of those we represent. Let us seize this opportunity to engage meaningfully with our people, exchange ideas, and work towards common goals for the betterment of our nation.

Let me use this opportunity to register the appreciation of the House to our development and technical partners who have supported the House during the first session and have continued to do so. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), UN-Women, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women Nigerian Office (UN-CEDAW), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Foundation (KAS), Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), YIAGA Africa, Nigerian Economic Summit Group, Ford Foundation, PERL, CISLAC, and many others. As we commence the second session of the House, we look forward to more robust partnerships.

May God continue to bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria and guide us in all our endeavours.

Thank you.