LEAD DEBATE ON 2026 APPROPRIATION ACT REPEAL AND RE-ENACTMENT BILL AND REVISED FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL FRAMEWORK.

Sponsor: Sen. Bamidele, Opeyemi Michael *(Ekiti Central) -Senate Leader*

Mr. President, Distinguished Senate President, I rise to lead debate on 2026 Appropriation Act Repeal and Re-Enact the Bill and Revised Federal Government Fiscal Framework.

The Bill is deemed to have been read the first time by virtue of the communication from Mr. President C - in - C as read by the President of the Senate today 24th November, 2026.

Distinguished Colleagues, the Bill before us represents an important instrument of fiscal governance. It seeks to realign the Federal Government's expenditure framework, accommodate existing financial commitments, improve the credibility of the capital budget and ensure orderly implementation of the revised fiscal programme for the 2026 financial year.

At the outset, I wish to emphasise that a national budget is not merely an aggregation of figures. It is a statement of government priorities, an instrument of economic management and, most importantly, a social contract between government and the Nigerian people.

1. Background and rationale for the revised budget

Distinguished Colleagues, the President's communication indicates that the revised fiscal framework has been undertaken to prioritise existing commitments and improve the credibility and execution of the capital budget while maintaining fiscal restraint.

Under the revised framework:

* Aggregate expenditure stands at ₦65.176 trillion, compared with ₦68.323 trillion in the approved budget.

* Projected Federal Government revenue, including Government-Owned Enterprises, is ₦33.720 trillion.

* Aggregate capital expenditure stands at ₦26.232 trillion.

These adjustments demonstrate an attempt to rationalise government expenditure and align available resources with priority obligations.

2. Fiscal deficit and borrowing framework

Distinguished colleagues, the revised framework retains a fiscal deficit of ₦31.457 trillion, representing 5.64 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

Planned new borrowing remains at ₦29.218 trillion, comprising:

* Domestic borrowing: ₦18.428 trillion.

* Foreign borrowing: ₦10.790 trillion.

The proposed external borrowing of US$7.7 billion, estimated at approximately ₦10.368 trillion at an exchange rate of ₦1,346.50 to the United States dollar, is intended to finance the existing foreign borrowing provision and, according to the President's communication, does not increase the borrowing envelope.

This is an important clarification. Nevertheless, Distinguished Colleagues, the continued reliance on borrowing calls for careful legislative scrutiny, particularly regarding debt sustainability, debt-servicing obligations and the capacity of government to translate borrowed funds into productive economic assets.

3. Implications for the Nigerian economy

Distinguished Senate President and my respected Colleagues, the implications of this revised framework must be examined against the prevailing economic realities confronting our country.

Nigeria is at a critical point in its economic recovery. The government is pursuing reforms intended to stabilise the economy, improve revenue mobilisation, attract investment and strengthen public finances.

However, the success of these reforms must ultimately be measured by their impact on ordinary Nigerians.

We must therefore ensure that the revised budget translates into:

* Improved infrastructure and completion of abandoned projects;

* Greater investment in agriculture and food security;

* Improved access to quality healthcare and education;

A revised budget must not become merely an accounting exercise. It must deliver measurable improvements in the lives of our citizens.

4. Legislative and constitutional considerations

Distinguished colleagues, our consideration of this Bill must be guided by our constitutional responsibility to protect public resources and ensure accountability in government expenditure.

Sections 80 and 81 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), establish the constitutional framework for withdrawals from public funds and the presentation of estimates of government revenue and expenditure.

Furthermore, the Fiscal Responsibility Act, 2007, provides an important framework for prudent fiscal management, transparency and sustainable public borrowing.

One issue that deserves particular attention is the proposed fiscal deficit of 5.64 per cent of GDP. This is above the three per cent benchmark provided under Section 12 of the Fiscal Responsibility Act, subject to the statutory provisions and exceptions.

I therefore submit that the relevant committees should establish the legal and economic justification for maintaining this level of deficit and ensure that the revised framework is consistent with the applicable fiscal responsibility requirements.

5. Matters requiring scrutiny by the Senate

Mr President, while recognising the importance of the President's request, I respectfully submit that the following matters deserve close examination during our legislative consideration:

* Revenue assumptions: The Senate should examine the feasibility of the projected ₦33.720 trillion revenue and demand clear strategies for improving revenue performance.

* Capital expenditure: The proposed ₦26.232 trillion capital allocation should be tied to identifiable projects, implementation schedules and measurable outcomes.

* Existing obligations: Government should provide an inventory of outstanding contractual obligations and demonstrate how the revised framework will facilitate their settlement.

Distinguished Colleagues, we must particularly guard against a situation where budgetary provisions are made without corresponding implementation capacity.

6. The importance of capital budget execution

Distinguished Senate President, one of the greatest challenges confronting our public financial management system is not always the absence of budgetary provisions, but the gap between appropriation and actual implementation.

The revision before us provides an opportunity to strengthen budget credibility by prioritising ongoing projects, settling legitimate outstanding obligations and avoiding the proliferation of new projects at the expense of existing commitments.

I strongly believe that completing existing projects will provide greater economic value than continually commencing new ones without guaranteeing their completion.

We must therefore insist on a transparent implementation framework, regular performance reports and effective monitoring by the National Assembly.

7. Recommendations and way forward

Mr President, Distinguished Senators, I wish to make the following recommendations:

* That the Senate ensures that the revised appropriation prioritises the completion of critical ongoing infrastructure projects.

* That all borrowing arrangements be subjected to rigorous legislative scrutiny, including full disclosure of their terms and conditions.

* That government intensifies efforts to broaden the revenue base, block leakages and improve the remittance of revenues by Government-Owned Enterprises.

8. Conclusion and appeal for passage

Distinguished Senate President, distinguished colleagues, the responsibility before us is both legislative and national.

We must appreciate the necessity of ensuring that government commitments are honoured, development projects are completed and public resources are deployed in a manner that delivers tangible benefits to Nigerians.

At the same time, our responsibility as representatives of the Nigerian people requires us to exercise due diligence, fiscal discipline and effective oversight.

The revised budget must serve as an instrument for economic recovery, national development, improved public service delivery and shared prosperity.

We must also remember that every naira borrowed today represents an obligation that future generations of Nigerians will inherit. We must therefore ensure that such borrowing creates enduring economic value rather than merely financing recurrent obligations.

I am persuaded that with the necessary legislative scrutiny, transparency and accountability, this revised fiscal framework can contribute meaningfully to the nation's development objectives.

Mr President, Distinguished Senators, I accordingly urge this Distinguished Senate to give the 2026 Revised Appropriation Bill the necessary consideration and support its passage in the overriding interest of our nation.

I so submit.