

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

# LEGISLATIVE Digest

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THE  
**10<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**  
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National Assembly



**... WE SHALL PREVAIL...**

*No storm of this age, however violent, shall sink the ship of our sovereign state, so long as we remain united, resolute and love one another. We shall prevail. The foes that we see today, we shall soon see them no more...*

*His Excellency*  
**Sen. Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio GCON**

*President of The Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

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# EDITORIAL

## AT THE HALFWAY MARK: RESPONSIBILITY, RENEWAL AND THE WORK AHEAD

**A**s the 10th National Assembly enters the second half of its 4 year term, we arrive not simply at a midpoint, but at a moment for reflection. Halfway is where progress is reviewed with honesty and the future approached with purpose.

Over the past two years, under the leadership of Senate President, Godswill Akpabio, GCON and Speaker, Tajudeen Abbas, GCON the National Assembly has advanced an agenda built on reform, consensus-building and institutional stability. Laws have been passed, oversight has strengthened, and citizen engagement has broadened. These gains matter. Yet, in any democracy, achievements are not endpoints; they are foundations on which to build.

The expectations of Nigerians today are clear. Citizens seek governance that is effective, transparent and felt in everyday life. The next phase of this 10th Assembly must therefore be defined by delivery, a delivery that improves livelihoods, expands opportunities, strengthens security and reflects the hopes and priorities of the people.

### Key responsibilities lie ahead.

- The constitutional amendment process must advance thoughtfully and decisively.
- Electoral reforms must be concluded early to rebuild trust before the next general elections.
- Security challenges demand structural reform and stronger partnerships with

— Editorial Board, Legislative Digest

## THE INVISIBLE PILLAR OF NIGERIA'S LEGISLATURE: HOW MANAGEMENT SUSTAINS THE WORKINGS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

**S**ince Nigeria attained independence on 1 October 1960, the nation has navigated a complex political journey that includes periods of military intervention and constitutional interruptions. That journey reached a turning point on 29 May 1999, when democratic governance was restored, ushering in an era of uninterrupted parliamentary democracy. Since then, the National Assembly has stood as the foremost guardian of the people's will, shaping national development through legislation, oversight, and representation.

Yet, behind the visible activities of lawmakers lies an indispensable but often overlooked pillar: the Management of the National Assembly. The Management of the National Assembly comprising the Clerk to the National Assembly, the chief administrative and accounting officer, the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly, Clerk and Deputy Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives respectively, who supports and coordinates parliamentary management functions, the Heads of Directorates, who oversee specific professional, technical, and administrative directorates. The Management forms the backbone of legislative operations and our function provides the structure, stability, and continuity required for the National Assembly to function effectively. Without this administrative engine, Nigeria's democracy could not run smoothly. Central to the National Assembly's role is the crafting of laws that shape Nigeria's present and future. The National Assembly also exercises constitutional oversight over the Executive branch. Also, Members of the National Assembly serve as the direct voices of their constituents.

The Management provides procedural guidance and ensure compliance with parliamentary rules, practices, and constitutional provisions. Every sitting of the Senate or House of Representatives is made possible by extensive behind-the-scenes work. Management prepares Order Papers, Votes and Proceedings, The Hansard (verbatim records), Legislative drafts and procedural briefs. We ensure that motions, bills, and amendments are properly documented, processed, and archived.

Committees are the "engine rooms of both Houses of the National Assembly"; The Management assigns clerks and other support staff to committees who take and keep minutes of meetings/ events, prepare memos and reports, coordinates hearings and stakeholder engagements, and ensures follow-up on resolutions and committee recommendations.

We oversee research, documentation, and reference services that lawmakers rely on. This ensures informed debate, evidence-based lawmaking, and availability of legislative archives.

Also, we train and cater for the welfare of staff and legislative aides, prepare and implement the budget of the National Assembly in accordance with the law and extant financial regulations, coordinate protocol, transportation, accommodation, and the procurement process of the National Assembly. These tasks, though often unseen, are essential in maintaining a functional legislature.

The Management sustains Parliamentary stability and ensures continuity across political transitions. While lawmakers change with election cycles, we remain the custodian of parliamentary memory. Our institutional continuity ensures smooth transition during the inauguration of new Assemblies and maintain consistency in record-keeping and procedures. During political conflicts, leadership disputes, or legislative deadlocks, Management provides procedural clarity and stabilizing

support. Our non-partisan and professional roles help maintain order during tense moments. By upholding parliamentary rules, documentation standards, and administrative ethics, Management protects the credibility and legitimacy of the National Assembly.

Despite its critical role, the National Assembly Management faces several constraints which the present Management with the support of the leadership of both Chambers is addressing. I do not intend to focus on these constraints here. However, these challenges highlight the need for greater investment and institutional strengthening. To address these challenges, the present Leadership has taken several steps to enhance the efficiency of the National Assembly.

In this year, we are training and re-training all staff and legislative aides in the National Assembly. We believe that continuous training, professional development, and exposure to global best practices improve staff competence. Secondly, the Management under my leadership has given priority to the welfare of staff and legislative aides. Salaries and regular allowances of staff and legislative aides are paid as and when due.

Also, we have put measures in place to enhance the development and the maintenance of existing infrastructure within the National Assembly Complex in Abuja and the Zonal offices. We have enhanced security within the National Assembly Complex in Abuja and the Zonal offices for the security and safety of lawmakers, staff and visitors to the complex. We are presently collaborating with other parliaments and global parliamentary bodies to facilitate knowledge exchange and institutional learning.

Furthermore, we have put measures in place for the adoption of electronic legislative tools, e-recording, and digital archiving. This is one of the several measures taken by the Management to engineer structural reforms, updating administrative frameworks, improving workflow systems, and strengthening accountability mechanisms.

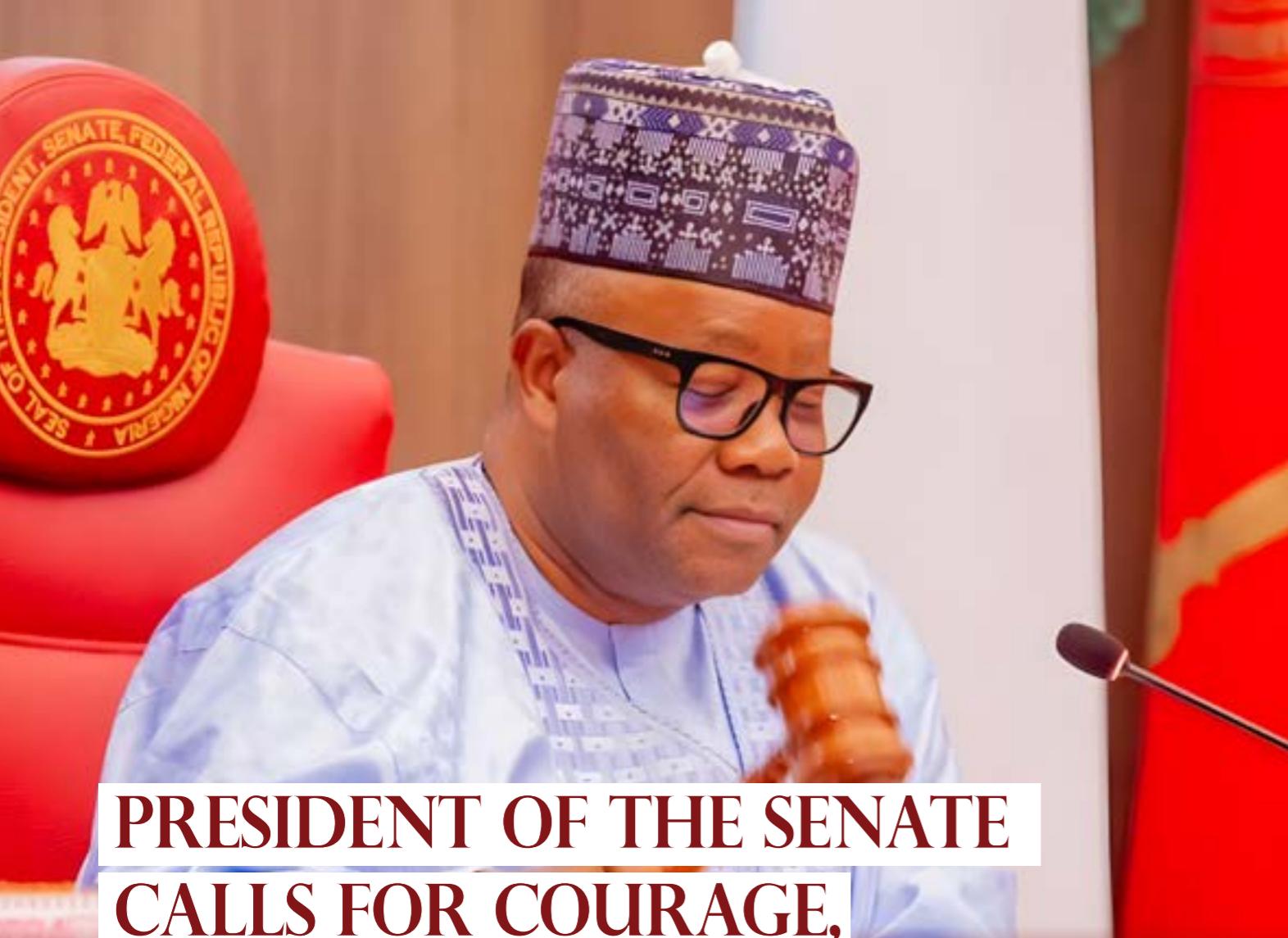
To conclude, the success of Nigeria's parliamentary democracy is not achieved by lawmakers alone. Behind the deliberations, debates, and decisions of the National Assembly stands a silent but powerful force, the Management.

Our administrative expertise, procedural knowledge, and organizational skill sustain the daily operations of the National Assembly and ensure its stability across political cycles.

Recognizing and strengthening this vital institution is essential not only for the efficiency of the National Assembly but for the deepening of Nigeria's democracy itself. A strong Management structure builds a strong Parliament, and a strong Parliament builds a strong nation.



**Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq.**  
Clerk to the National Assembly  
Editor-in-Chief



# PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE CALLS FOR COURAGE, REFORM AND STEADFAST LEADERSHIP

Distinguished colleagues, we meet again in this chamber — preserved by the mercy of Almighty God and entrusted once more with the noble charge of legislating for our Republic. I welcome you all from your recess — a period when you returned to your people, renewed your bonds, and reflected upon the grave responsibilities that attend the high office of Senator of the Federal Republic.

Before all else, let us extend our warm congratulations to His Excellency, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, and to all Nigerians, on the celebration of our nation's Independence Anniversary. After we hoisted our flag of freedom 65 years ago, we are reminded that the journey of nationhood is not a sprint but a relay — one generation handing the torch of faith and sacrifice to the next. The flame may flicker, but it must never die. May the labours of our heroes past continue to inspire us to build a nation that is free, just, and prosperous.

Our country has walked through both shadow

and sunshine while we were away. We grieve with the families who lost their loved ones in the cruel boat tragedy on the Niger River in Kogi State, and in the bloody outrage at a mosque in Katsina. We mourn also the twelve forest guards slain in Oke-Ode, Kwara State, cut down while protecting our environment — martyrs of service who remind us that insecurity knows no boundaries.

We commiserate with our compatriots across the flood-ravaged states of Bayelsa, Sokoto, Zamfara and others, as the 2025 flood season continues to uproot lives and destroy livelihoods. We urge urgent coordination between the federal and sub-national governments to mitigate these devastations before they become annual calamities. To every home afflicted by these disasters, insecurity, hunger, and hardship, we extend to them the hand of fellowship and the prayer of comfort. We promise them that we shall not flinch from the duty of relief and redress for our people.

While our hearts grieve, our hopes endure because of glimmers of progress. Nigeria's oil

production has climbed toward 1.8 million barrels per day, driven by reforms and renewed investor confidence. We must ensure that this blessing does not become another fleeting windfall, but a foundation for fiscal discipline, infrastructure renewal, and job creation.

Let us also heed the cry from the farms and markets. Over 33 million Nigerians face acute food insecurity — a crisis demanding urgent legislative attention to agriculture, rural roads, irrigation, and mechanization. Hunger cannot be defeated with words; it requires policy, budget, and will.

Our people do not look to us for lamentations; they look to us for action. The banners of terrorism and banditry still threaten the countryside. The cost of living weighs upon the family table like an iron chain. The flickering of our national grid leaves cities in darkness and commerce in paralysis. These trials summon us to service of uncommon urgency — and to partnership with the Executive Arm, that together we rewrite the story of our nation.



We must legislate with boldness. We must press forward with reforms to steady our economy, draw investment, broaden the tax base, and nurture growth. We must strike hard at the enemies of ignorance and disease by strengthening education and healthcare. We must give the youths of Nigeria not only hope but opportunity.

We must revisit the Constitution — to make our federalism stronger, our governance more efficient, and our democracy more inclusive. Above all, we must wield our power of oversight with vigilance, so that the people's money is spent for the people's good.

Our relations with the Executive shall remain frank and firm — neither obsequious nor obstructive. Where policies raise our people, we shall lend our strength; where they imperil them, we shall speak on their behalf. We must continue to uphold the independence of this Senate, the dignity of this chamber, and the majesty of the Constitution which governs us all.

To the citizens of Nigeria, we say this: we hear

you. We know your expectations. You ask not for excuses but for results; not for noise but for substance. This Senate will remain open, accountable, and responsive. We will not shrink from scrutiny — indeed, we welcome it, for accountability is the lifeblood of democracy. But it must be clearly understood: the foundation of every democracy is its legislature. Those who seek to weaken the legislature, in truth, seek to

wreck the substructure of democracy itself.

As we stand once more on the threshold of another election season, let us speak plainly to our constituents about the sacred duty of choice. Leadership is not a carnival, and governance

is not a stage for theatrics. Let no one mistake the nation's destiny for a costume drama, nor confuse applause with achievement. Whether in party primaries or general elections, let us not lay quality upon the altar of spectacle, nor exchange wisdom for noise, nor experience for glitter. If our politics must be mended, let it begin with the courage to choose men and women of integrity, of tested virtue, of proven competence, and of sincere devotion to service.

We must teach our people that democracy will only flourish when ballots are cast, not for the loudest voice, but for the wisest head; not for those who seek office as an ornament, but for those who see it as a burden of duty.

Distinguished colleagues, let history record that in our time, we did not shirk from truth, nor flinch from responsibility, but urged our people toward leaders worthy of their trust.

Let us resume our work with fresh vigour and steadfast resolve. Let us legislate not only for the Nigeria of today but for the generations whose faces we shall never see.

Let this Senate be remembered as an instrument of national transformation, a citadel of democracy, and a beacon of hope. Distinguished Senators, welcome back. May God prosper our labour, and may God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



## SPEAKER ABBAS TAJUDEEN, GCON CHARTS BOLD COURSE FOR THE SECOND HALF OF THE 10TH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Honourable colleagues, I warmly welcome you back to this chamber after our annual recess. Your time away was spent among your constituents, listening to their concerns and aspirations. These interactions are the essence of representation and provide the insight we need to make informed legislative decisions. They reveal the real struggles and expectations of citizens who depend on this House to respond effectively to their needs.

We resume today at a pivotal midpoint in the life of the 10th Assembly. The responsibilities before us are substantial, and the progress we have made so far is meaningful but incomplete. The Nigerian people look to us for more; they expect deliberate action that improves their daily lives. The Renewed Hope government of President Bola Ahmed Tinubu has pursued reforms to stabilise the economy, enhance security, and attract investment. These efforts require a legislature that provides rigorous oversight, crafts sound laws, and engages constructively with all arms of government.

Our midterm review confirms that the 10th House of Representatives has been the most productive since 1999, both in terms of legislative outputs and outcomes. Despite political and economic challenges,

we have strengthened internal capacity, updated our rules, and expanded citizen participation. We have deepened public engagement through the House Open Week, town halls, media briefings, and the use of digital and new media tools.

Between June 2023 and mid-2025, the House considered 2,263 bills, passed 237, and secured Presidential assent for 50, covering power reform, student loans, cybersecurity, tax policy, and regional development. Our oversight is becoming more rigorous, with ongoing investigations and financial recoveries.

Crucially, constructive collaboration with the Executive has enabled timely budgets, aligned reforms and effective policy outcomes, all while preserving the legislature's independence and demonstrating that shared goals deliver more than conflict.

Honourable colleagues, during the recess, national indicators showed cautious optimism. Headline inflation decreased for a fifth consecutive month to 20.12 per cent, while food inflation also eased.

Diplomatic measures restored United Arab Emirates (UAE) visa services and Emirates flights, reopening avenues for trade and travel. Our security agencies have disrupted insurgent networks and rescued abducted

citizens. While progress has been made, Nigerians still experience high living costs, underemployment, and insecurity in some areas. These challenges present opportunities for us to implement targeted legislative actions and foster ongoing engagement to create a brighter future for all.

In the coming months, our attention must turn to several urgent priorities. Chief among them is the constitutional amendment. Eighty-seven proposals concerning devolution of powers, local government autonomy, judicial reform, and socio-economic rights await debate and voting. The national public hearing held on Monday, 22 September 2025, organised by the House Committee on Constitutional Amendment, was well-attended and highly successful, reflecting broad public interest and support. We must now complete these votes and transmit the approved amendments to the State Assemblies before the end of December to enable early concurrence ahead of the election period.

We must also finalise electoral reforms well ahead of the 2027 general elections. The Electoral Act Amendment Bill seeks not only to strengthen measures against violence, improve access for persons with disabilities, and establish clearer timelines for resolving disputes, but also to reduce the ambiguities



that trailed the last elections. Our goal is to make elections less contentious and litigious, lower their cost through single-day voting, and make the process of party primaries more democratic and inclusive. Related constitutional changes include provisions for an Electoral Offences Commission. Our goal is to produce a new Electoral Act that stands the test of time.

Honourable colleagues. Another major priority is the Reserved Seats Bill for women. Currently, women hold fewer than 5% of seats in the National Assembly, placing Nigeria among the countries with the lowest female parliamentary representation worldwide. The bill proposes creating additional seats, without reallocating existing ones. These seats will be contested exclusively by women. They are entirely new and will not affect the current 109 seats in the Senate or the 360 seats in the House. This arrangement preserves the mandate and aspirations of existing Members while expanding opportunities for women's representation and helping Nigeria improve its poor global standing. I urge Members to support this historic step. We are all HeForShe in advancing gender inclusion, and how we vote on this bill will shape how history and our daughters remember us.

Security reforms remain a top priority. The debate on multi-level policing must move from theory to decisive legislative

action. Creating state police through a constitutional amendment remains an option. At the same time, we must strengthen community policing by revising the Police Act, 2020. While Section 19 establishes Community Policing Committees and Section 33(1) vests recruitment in the Inspector-General of Police, these provisions centralise too much authority and limit local responsiveness. We should consider devolving recruitment, training, and deployment of community police officers to states under federal oversight. This would give states a greater role in shaping their security architecture while preserving national standards and coordination. Economic recovery and job creation must stay at the core of our agenda. Small and medium-sized enterprises, the backbone of our economy, continue to face high costs, unreliable electricity, and limited access to credit. We must utilise legislative measures to speed up the implementation of the Startup Act, vocational training hubs, and technology parks. Equally important is progressive legislation to promote renewable energy, enhance grid reliability, and attract private investment to stabilise power supply and stimulate growth.

Honourable colleagues, I welcome you back to a critical and promising period of work. I hope that our endeavours in the coming weeks and months will honour the confidence that the Nigerian people have entrusted in us.

I welcome you back to a critical and promising period of work. I hope that our endeavours in the coming weeks and months will honour the confidence that the Nigerian people have entrusted in us.

Thank you, and may God bless the House of Representatives and the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



House of Representatives Zonal Public Hearing on the Review of the 1999 Constitution



## Re-engineering Nigeria's Democracy: 6th Review of the 1999 Constitution

By Fineman Guy Goyei & Bello Olatunji Babatunde

The 1999 Constitution, as the bedrock of governance in Nigeria understandably remains the most debated document in the country's political history. Owing its origins to promulgation under military rule, the Constitution has faced serious challenges in shedding its often ascribed identity as an artefact of an outgoing military oligarchy, rather than a true representation of the peoples' will. As a result, its legitimacy has long been questioned, particularly given its perceived over centralising tendencies, structural deficiencies and weak provisions for inclusivity and subnational governance. These criticisms have triggered repeated attempts to amend the Constitution, leading to five previous rounds of constitution alteration.

The first three alterations in 2010 introduced electoral reforms, shortened timelines for election petitions and strengthened the judiciary by elevating the National Industrial Court to a superior court of record. The Fourth Alteration Act, 2011, introduced financial autonomy for the legislature and the judiciary; though parts of the Act were subsequently struck down by the Supreme Court on procedural grounds. The Fifth Alteration (2017–2023) addressed multiple issues, including timelines for executive assent to bills, financial autonomy for state legislatures and judiciary, as well as the lowering of age limits for elective offices through the landmark *Not Too Young To Run* amendment.

Despite these efforts, core issues, such as local government autonomy, policing, fiscal federalism, gender representation and inclusivity have remained largely unresolved. These persistent concerns set the stage for the ongoing 2025 Constitution Review, the sixth attempt at altering the 1999 Constitution.

The amendment process itself is deliberately rigorous. Section 9 of the Constitution requires the support of at least two-thirds of both chambers of the National Assembly and approval from no fewer than two-thirds of the State Houses of Assembly for most amendments. For sensitive matters such as state creation, boundary adjustments and alterations to the Constitution's fundamental framework, the threshold rises to four-fifths of all members of the National Assembly. Amendments must then be harmonised between both chambers, ratified by at least 24 of the 36 states and finally presented to the President for assent.

The 2025 review process is notable both for its breadth and intensity of citizen engagement. This attempt by the 10th National Assembly has catalogued over 140 amendment bills across both chambers, covering issues such as local government autonomy, state police, fiscal restructuring, judicial reform, gender inclusion, electoral improvements, fundamental rights, citizenship and the recognition of traditional institutions. Public hearings were held across all six geopolitical zones and submissions received from civil society groups, professional bodies, traditional leaders and ordinary citizens. The

Lawmakers also engaged governors and state assemblies to secure the broad consensus required for success. Yet, sharp divisions persist. Local government autonomy enjoys wide public support but faces stiff resistance from governors. State police has become one of the most contentious proposals, dividing opinion between advocates of decentralisation and those wary of potential abuses. Thirty One separate proposals for state creation further complicate the review, raising concerns about governance costs, ethnic balancing and national unity. Also, gender inclusion bills continue to meet entrenched opposition, while fiscal reforms threaten to inflame federal-state tensions.

For the process to succeed, several conditions must be met: public participation must be genuine; proposals must be practical and clearly drafted and political will must be mobilised not only in the National Assembly, but also across at least 24 state legislatures. Above all, the process must reflect the will of the people to gain legitimacy and overcome the long-standing deficit of the 1999 Constitution. This remains to be seen.

If successful, the 2025 Constitution Review could mark a turning point in Nigeria's democratic journey by restructuring governance, deepening federalism and addressing structural weaknesses that have long hindered development. If it fails, however, the country risks continuing under the weight of weak local governance, insecure justice systems, exclusionary politics and an over-centralised federal structure.

# NIGERIA'S PROGRESS IN ADDRESSING ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE ISSUES SINCE ITS INDEPENDENCE

By Paul Eneojoh



This expert-level report assesses Nigeria's longitudinal progress in confronting environmental degradation and climate change since its independence, detailing the evolution of governance from reactive institutions to sophisticated modern policy architecture and critically evaluating the current implementation deficit against ambitious national commitments.

## I. Historical Evolution of Environmental Governance (1960–2000: From Inertia to Institutionalization)

The initial trajectory of Nigeria's environmental management after 1960 demonstrates a pervasive pattern of regulatory inertia. For decades, federal environmental consciousness was rudimentary, characterized by decentralization and a narrow focus on public health and sanitation. Under the 1979 Federal Constitution, environmental management centered predominantly on environmental hygiene, specifically the clearance of refuse and the management of liquid and solid wastes in abattoirs, homes and streets. Responsibility for supervising these activities was largely relegated to local government councils, signifying a fundamental lack of institutional capacity at the federal level to address large-scale industrial or complex ecological challenges.

This sanitation focused approach created a significant regulatory vacuum, leaving Nigeria without the institutional or legal framework necessary to effectively manage major industrial pollution or hazardous wastes. The shift from this state of inertia to genuine federal intervention was not a product of proactive planning but an accelerated, forced response to a national crisis. The fundamental policy change was hastened by the discovery in May 1988 of an Italian ship that had dumped toxic chemical wastes, primarily containing polychlorobiphenyls (PCBs), on Nigerian soil.

The immense media scrutiny and political outrage that followed the toxic waste incident catalyzed the establishment of a coordinated federal response. In December 1988, Decree 58 established the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA), representing the first genuine milestone in centralized environmental management. FEPA was mandated to protect, restore and preserve the ecosystem, with key functions including the establishment of national environmental guidelines and standards. These standards addressed critical areas that were previously unaddressed, such as water quality, effluent discharge, air and atmospheric quality, ozone layer protection, noise control and the management of hazardous substances. This crisis-driven origin suggests that institutional durability and sustained funding historically relied on high-profile incidents, leading to episodic policy rather than consistent, preventive strategic management. FEPA's mandate was later broadened in 1992 to encompass natural resources conservation and the agency was eventually transformed into the Federal Ministry of Environment in 1999.

### Evolution of Federal Environmental Mandates (1960–2000)

- | Period | Focus of Governance | Key Legislation/Institution | Context and Significance
- | Pre-1988 | Hygiene and Sanitation | 1979 Constitution (Local Councils)
- | Decentralized management; legal framework absent for industrial/toxic pollution.
- | 1988 | Crisis Response and Policy Establishment | Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) | Direct reaction to the toxic waste dumping; established federal standards and control.
- | Post-1999 | Ministry and Broader Scope | Federal Ministry of Environment (FEPA) dissolved into a full ministerial body, broadening capacity for natural resource conservation.

## II. Establishing the Modern Climate Architecture (2000 Present Policy Framework)

The period since 2020 has been defined by a rapid acceleration in legislative and strategic planning, establishing a sophisticated national climate architecture that contrasts sharply with the historical inertia of the pre-FEPA era.

### Synthesis of Findings

Nigeria has demonstrated remarkable institutional progress since its reactive environmental management era, establishing a comprehensive and ambitious climate architecture (Climate Act, ETP, Net Zero 2060). The economic rationale for the Energy Transition Plan is sound, projecting substantial cost savings and massive job creation.

However, this ambition is fundamentally undermined by a profound implementation deficit. The delay in implementing core regulatory mechanisms, such as the mandated carbon tax and trading scheme, directly increases perceived political risk and inhibits the mobilization of the necessary private sector capital (\$17 billion initially) required for the ETP's success. Simultaneously, the stagnation of critical social programmes like the NGEP highlights that execution bottlenecks in essential development areas pose as severe a threat to mitigation goals (AFOLU emissions) as challenges in the power sector.

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has made notable efforts to address environmental and climate challenges, but it has also encountered significant obstacles.

Let us explore some of Nigeria's key achievements in tackling these issues.

### Legislative frameworks and policies

- National Environmental Policy (1999): This policy was established to create a framework for tackling Nigeria's complex environmental issues. It aims to integrate environmental considerations into the country's socio-economic development strategies.
- Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Act (1992): This legislation required environmental assessments for projects that could significantly affect the environment. The EIA process seeks to promote sustainable development and reduce negative effects.
- Renewable Energy Policy (2006): The policy aims to boost the generation and utilisation of renewable energy sources in Nigeria, recognising the importance of sustainable energy development.

### International Agreements and Commitments

- Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC): Nigeria has actively participated in international climate negotiations and has submitted multiple Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Nigeria ratified the Paris Agreement (2015), committing to efforts focused on climate adaptation, mitigation and reaching sustainable development goals.

### Biodiversity and Conservation Initiatives

- Establishment of Protected Areas:



Nigeria has designated several national parks and wildlife reserves to safeguard biodiversity, including Yankari National Park and Cross River National Park. These protected zones are crucial for conserving Nigeria's diverse flora and fauna.

- Conservation Programmes: The Nigerian government and several NGOs have started programmes focused on conservation, including reforestation efforts and campaigns to safeguard endangered species.

### Community-Based Environmental Management

- Community Engagement in Conservation: Various local and international NGOs have worked to empower communities to manage natural resources sustainably. Initiatives include community forestry programmes that involve local communities in the stewardship of their environment.
- Local adaptation strategies: Communities, especially in rural areas, are increasingly using local methods to deal with climate impacts, such as traditional water conservation techniques or crop diversification practices to boost resilience.

### Afforestation and Reforestation Programmes

- National Afforestation Program: Launched to fight deforestation and desertification, this initiative aims to increase forest cover and protect existing forests through public awareness campaigns and community participation.
- Great Green Wall Initiative: Nigeria is part of this regional effort to combat desertification along the Sahel belt, which involves reforestation, sustainable land management practices and strengthening the resilience of local communities against the impacts of climate change.

### Renewable Energy Projects

- Solar Energy Initiatives: Several projects have been launched to harness solar energy, especially in off-grid rural areas. These efforts aim to improve energy access while decreasing dependency on fossil fuels.
- Wind and Biomass Energy Projects:

Nigeria has also explored wind energy potential and biomass energy initiatives, reflecting a broader move toward renewable energy sources in the country's energy mix.

### Education and Awareness Campaigns

- Environmental Education Programmes: There is a growing focus on incorporating environmental education into school curricula and public awareness campaigns to promote sustainable practices among the public.
- Governmental and NGO-led campaigns: Local NGOs and government agencies have launched initiatives to increase awareness about climate change and environmental sustainability, targeting different demographic groups.

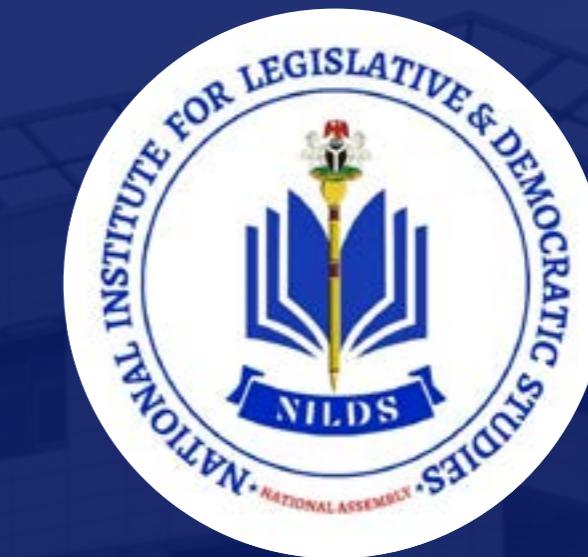
### Research and Innovation

- Climate Research Initiatives: Nigerian universities and research institutions are increasingly involved in climate research, which enhances understanding of local impacts of climate change, potential adaptation strategies and sustainable development practices.

### Engagement with Local and International Partners

- Nigeria partners with international organisations to improve its environmental governance, access funding and engage in capacity-building programmes.
- Partnerships for Sustainable Development: Collaborations with the private sector and civil society have been initiated to encourage sustainable business practices and environmental responsibility.

While Nigeria continues to face significant challenges related to environmental degradation and climate change, the country has achieved notable progress since its independence. These advances in legislation, international cooperation, community involvement and awareness campaigns demonstrate a growing commitment to environmental sustainability. Moving forward, ongoing efforts are essential to effectively implement policies and overcome the barriers to making meaningful progress in addressing climate change and promoting environmental stewardship.



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Tagbo Okeke and Mark Hirnyam

# SIGNED BUT NOT SEALED: THE REALITY ABOUT TREATIES IN NIGERIA WITHOUT LEGISLATIVE BACKING

Treaty-making remains an essential function of modern democratic governance, serving as the principal mechanism through which states regulate international relations, commerce, diplomacy and security. In an increasingly interdependent world, treaties define commitments on critical issues such as trade liberalisation, environmental protection, counterterrorism and human rights, albeit, the constitutional framework and political culture of each country determine how such international agreements are negotiated, approved and enforced. For legislatures, treaty-making is not merely a technical exercise but a test of democratic accountability. It can be argued that when elected representatives play a substantive role, international obligations align more closely with national interests and public expectations. Conversely, when the legislature is sidelined, treaties risk losing legitimacy and enforceability.

This reality is sharply illustrated in Nigeria, where despite constitutional provisions

mandating legislative ratification, the executive branch dominates treaty processes. Hence, the assertion that in Nigeria, treaties often remain "signed but not sealed" legally binding at the international level but without domestic force due to legislative inertia or executive overreach. By contrast, South Africa for instance, has developed a more structured and participatory framework that positions Parliament as an active partner in shaping foreign policy outcomes. In order to expose international experience as a measure of comparison, this article takes a look at the South African scenario.

Nigeria's 1999 Constitution adopts a dualist approach, stipulating under Section 12(1) that no treaty "shall have the force of law except to the extent to which any such treaty has been enacted into law by the National Assembly." This means treaties signed by the executive remain inoperative domestically, unless legislated into effect. The Supreme Court of Nigeria reaffirmed this principle in its decision in the case of *Abacha v. Fawehinmi* (2000), holding that international instruments, including human

rights treaties, cannot override national law unless domesticated. In practice, however, the executive often signs and even ratifies treaties without promptly transmitting them to the legislature. Some agreements are implemented administratively, through policies or budgetary allocations, without parliamentary endorsement, thereby creating constitutional grey areas that undermines both legality and accountability. For example, several environmental and trade agreements signed since the early 2000s remain undomesticated, creating uncertainty in enforcement and leaving Nigeria vulnerable to charges of non-compliance.

By contrast, South Africa's 1996 Constitution provides under Section 231 that international agreements are subject to parliamentary approval before ratification. Parliament must debate, scrutinise and approve treaties, often through the Portfolio Committee on International Relations and Cooperation, which may hold public hearings. Once approved, treaties, particularly self-executing ones, become binding without



the need for separate enabling legislation. This integrated framework reduces the risk of executive dominance and ensures that foreign commitments reflect democratic debate.

Nigeria's treaty-making practice is heavily executive-driven. The National Assembly is typically drawn into the process only at the ratification or domestication stage, when most substantive decisions have already been taken. As a result, lawmakers rarely influence the content or negotiation of treaties. Overwhelming opinion highlights recurring frustration faced by the legislature in enhancing its very significant role. Treaties often arrive at the National Assembly years after signature, sometimes already in partial implementation, leaving the legislature with little more than a "rubber stamp" role. A striking example is the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement. Though eventually ratified in 2019, Nigeria initially delayed participation and when the executive finally signed, Parliament had minimal input in shaping Nigeria's commitments—despite the profound implications for trade policy, tariffs and industrial competitiveness.

This situation stems not only from constitutional design but also from institutional weakness. It is compounded by the fact that Parliamentary committees on Foreign Affairs and Justice lack technical capacity, specialist staff and coordinated procedures for treaty scrutiny. Public participation is virtually absent and Civil Society Organisations have repeatedly complained of being excluded from consultations, even on treaties with direct socio-economic implications, such as health protocols with the World Health Organization.

South Africa's model demonstrates the democratic value of legislative involvement. Under Section 231 of that country's Constitution, Parliament debates treaties before ratification, often involving civil society, business and labour stakeholders.

For instance, trade agreements submitted through the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) are scrutinised by Parliament, sometimes with public hearings resembling South Africa's National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC) consultative process. Although operational challenges persist, such as late submissions by departments and stretched legal services, Parliament retains the constitutional power to reject or delay treaties and the judiciary has enforced this mandate. South African courts have invalidated executive actions that bypassed Parliament, reinforcing the principle of legislative supremacy in treaty processes. This legal clarity contrasts with Nigeria, where judicial interventions like *Abacha v. Fawehinmi* emphasise domestication but do not compel executive transparency or legislative pre-negotiation engagement.

The legislative role in treaty-making is not procedural box-ticking; it is essential for legitimacy, transparency and effective governance for several important reasons. Treaties can reshape domestic law, alter economic policy and redefine citizens' rights. Without parliamentary debate and public scrutiny, these profound shifts occur without democratic consent.

Moreover, Nigeria's weak treaty domestication record undermines its credibility abroad as partners view Nigeria as unreliable when ratified treaties languish undomesticated or are inconsistently implemented. The delays also weaken Nigeria's ability to benefit from multilateral agreements, as seen in the slow uptake of regional trade protocols under the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

This comparative study suggests several pathways for strengthening legislative roles in Nigeria, drawing lessons from South Africa including institutional reforms for engagement, strengthening domestication frameworks, capacity building and technical support and public participation.

The National Assembly should be involved from the negotiation stage, with mandatory pre-signature briefings for relevant committees and statutory timelines (e.g., 90 days) for submitting treaties to Parliament after signature, to prevent executive bottlenecks. Further, Nigeria should adopt an omnibus Treaty Implementation Act to streamline domestication procedures, clarify responsibilities and set deadlines. This would prevent the current backlog of undomesticated treaties and ensure compliance with constitutional requirements.

Committees require dedicated legal and economic experts to scrutinise complex agreements. Therefore, a specialised "Treaty Research Unit" within the National Assembly's bureaucracy could provide advisory briefs similar to South Africa's Parliamentary Legal Services. Also, formal mechanisms for stakeholder engagement, particularly on treaties with social and economic implications, should be institutionalised. Public hearings, modeled after South Africa's practices, would enhance legitimacy and citizen trust.

In conclusion, Treaty-making is a mirror of a country's democratic character. In Nigeria, treaties are too often "signed but not sealed", legally binding abroad but ineffective at home, stalled by constitutional gaps, executive dominance and weak legislative oversight. South Africa's experience shows that robust parliamentary engagement, public participation and judicial enforcement can create a more accountable and responsive system.

For Nigeria, reform is urgent. The National Assembly must reclaim its constitutional mandate, not merely to endorse but to shape and scrutinise international agreements. Only then can Nigeria's treaty commitments reflect the will of its people, strengthen its global credibility and ensure that foreign obligations translate into enforceable rights and benefits at home.



# SUSPENSION OF A LEGISLATOR AND RESUMPTION PROCEDURE

Every legislative house has its own rules of engagement. Nigeria, with her bicameral legislature at the national level, is not an exception. Both the Senate and the House of Representatives operate with their respective rules and the same applies to sub-nationals (State Houses of Assembly and Local Government Legislative Councils). These House and Senate rules empower the legislative arm to discipline erring members. Suspension is one of the disciplinary measures that can be taken against a legislator.

## GROUND FOR SUSPENSION

There are various reasons an elected legislator can be suspended. Some of these include:

- Misconduct: Unparliamentary behaviour that brings the legislative body into disrepute or public opprobrium.
- Disobedience to Orders: When a

legislator disobeys the directive of the Senate President, House Speaker, or a legislative resolution.

- Violation of the Code of Conduct for Members.
- Disorderly Behaviour.
- Breach of Legislative Rules and other acts deemed unparliamentary.

The Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act 2017, in line with its provisions in Section 14(2) and Section 15, empowers Legislative Houses in Nigeria to suspend erring members, for the purpose of clearance:

Section 14(2) states - Where a member commits a contempt of Legislative House, the Legislative House may by resolution reprimand such person or suspend him from service of the Legislative House, without pay, for such period as may be determined by the House, but not to the end of a Legislative session.

Section 15 states - A suspended member

of a Legislative House, under section 14 (2) of this Act, shall not enter or remain within the Chamber or its precincts while the suspension remains in force.

## PROCEDURE FOR SUSPENSION

There are laid-down procedures for the suspension of legislators as enshrined in their respective rules. The process involves:

1. Investigation: The relevant committee (such as the Committee on Ethics and Privileges or Public Petitions) investigates the alleged offence.
2. Report: The committee submits its findings to the legislative body with disciplinary recommendations.
3. Debate: The general house debates the report and the recommended disciplinary action.
4. Vote: A motion for suspension is moved by a member and members vote on it.
5. Suspension: After voting and the motion passes through, the affected legislator is



suspended for a specific period.

The duration of the suspension, in normal circumstances, depends on the severity of the offence.

However, there have been questions and public outcry over some suspensions carried out by Nigerian legislative houses, leading to judicial interventions.

## LIFTING OF SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION PROCEDURE

Worldwide, legislative houses operate with rules and are expected to follow them meticulously, being lawmakers themselves. If there is a procedure for suspension, there must equally be a procedure for lifting it. Once it takes a motion to suspend, it also takes a motion to lift the suspension.

Lifting the suspension of a member and their subsequent resumption involves:

1. Review: The legislative house reviews the suspension order to ascertain whether the necessary corrections have been made.
2. Motion: A motion to lift the suspension is moved.
3. Debate: The legislative house debates the motion.
4. Voting: Members vote on the motion to lift the suspension.
5. Lifting of Suspension: If the motion is approved, the suspension is lifted and the suspended member is allowed to resume legislative duties.

## FACTORS INFLUENCING THE LIFTING OF SUSPENSION IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLIES

Several factors influence the lifting of a suspension, including:

- Apology and Remorse: Demonstration of remorse and an apology often influence the decision to lift a suspension.
- Corrections: If a suspended member has taken steps to correct their wrongdoing or has shown improved behaviour, lifting the suspension becomes easier.
- Legislative Business and Constituency Representation: The need for the member's participation in crucial legislative business such as committee work, debates and constituency matters may influence the decision.

- Party Politics: Party leaders can influence the lifting of a suspension.
- Judicial Intervention: In some cases, judicial rulings compel or influence the lifting of suspensions.

These factors can interact in complex ways and the decision to lift a suspension depends on the specific circumstances of each case.

## SOME NOTABLE LEGISLATIVE SUSPENSIONS IN NIGERIA

From State Houses of Assembly to the Federal Legislative Houses, the suspension of legislators has frequently made news headlines. Some of these suspensions did not occur without judicial interventions.

- On March 6, 2025, the Senate suspended Sen. Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan for six months on grounds of gross misconduct. She has since resumed duties at the Upper Chamber.
- In Anambra State, Hon. Bernard Udemezue (PDP, Ayamelum Constituency) was suspended for three months for allegedly damaging the image of the legislature.
- Hon. Sani Iyaku of the Jigawa State House of Assembly was suspended in 2020 for misconduct.

- In 2017, Sen. Ali Ndume was suspended for six months by the Bukola Saraki-led Senate for gross misconduct.
- Hon. Jibrin Abdulmumin was suspended for six months in 2018 for accusing the Speaker and other principal officers of budget padding.
- In 2012, Hon. Rifkatu Danna of the Bauchi State House of Assembly was suspended for uncomplimentary remarks while opposing the relocation of the Tafawa Balewa Local Government headquarters.

- Dino Melaye was suspended by the Dimeji Bankole-led House of Representatives in 2010.
- Senators Ovie Omo-Agege and Abdul Ningi have also been suspended by the Senate for various reasons.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF SUSPENSION IN A LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Suspension, as a disciplinary measure, is vital for maintaining order and discipline among members. Its significance includes:

- Maintaining Order: Ensures members behave in a manner befitting their office, preserving decorum in the assembly.
- Enforcement of Rules: Upholds legislative rules and procedures, preventing disruptive behaviour.
- Protection of the Institution: Safeguards the integrity and reputation of the legislature.
- Promoting Accountability: Ensures members are responsible for their actions and answerable to both the institution and the public.
- Deterrent Effect: Deters other members from engaging in similar misconduct.
- Upholding the Rule of Law: Ensures members are subject to the same rules and standards as others.
- Ensuring Effective Governance: Prevents disruptions that could hinder the legislative process.

## JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS IN LEGISLATIVE SUSPENSION

The role of the judiciary in ensuring that suspensions are constitutional and reasonable is crucial in maintaining the rule of law and protecting the rights of elected members. The judicial role involves:

- Judicial Oversight: Prevents legislative overreach and ensures that suspensions follow constitutional procedures rather than arbitrary decisions.
- Preventing Abuse of Power: Ensures suspensions are not used to settle political scores or undermine democratic governance.
- Protection of Democratic Rights: Upholds the constitution and protects the rights of elected representatives from unfair suspension.

Suspension in a parliamentary house is a necessary tool for maintaining order and discipline. However, as observed in various judicial interventions, it must be exercised within the constitutional and legal framework. Legislative houses should balance discipline with democratic safeguards by ensuring that suspensions are fair, just, transparent and reasonable. The integrity and effectiveness of the legislature can only be maintained through adherence to established rules and judicial precedents.

# BILLS PROGRESSION CHART OF THE 10TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

By Mr. Ogundele Vincent & Jafar Muhammad

This report provides a data-driven overview of legislative performance during the first half of the 10th National Assembly (June 2023 – August 2025). Using official records from both Chambers, it highlights the number, sources and outcomes of bills processed, offering insight into the pace and focus of lawmaking at the federal level.



## SENATE

Between June 2023 and August 2025, the Senate received a total of 901 bills, of which 874 (97.00%) were members' bills and 27 (3.00%) originated from the Executive.



**660**

bills (73.25%) were read the first time, while 211 (23.42%) progressed to the second reading.



**196**

bills (21.75%) were referred to committees for further consideration, and 113 bills (12.54%) were eventually passed.



**24**

executive bills and 89 members' bills were passed, representing 2.66% and 9.88% of total bills, respectively.

Only five bills were withdrawn and four negative during the period.

This data suggests a modest level of legislative efficiency, with a majority of bills at various stages of consideration, and a relatively low number reaching passage.



## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



**2,404**

bills (96.70%) were read the first time, and 874 (35.16%) reached the second reading.



**139**

bills (5.59%) advanced to the committee stage, and 275 (11.06%) were passed.



**250**

(10.06%) were members' bills, while 25 (1.01%) were executive bills. Only two bills were withdrawn, and one was rejected.

The data indicates strong legislative engagement, with a high number of bills introduced and a consistent pace of progression through the readings.

### SUMMARY

Across both Chambers, the first half of the 10th National Assembly reflects robust legislative activity, marked by a predominance of members' bills and a steady flow of lawmaking efforts. While the proportion of bills passed relative to those introduced remains modest, the figures underscore a sustained commitment to legislative responsibilities and a dynamic output reflective of an active parliamentary term.



# THE 10<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: BUILDING MILESTONES

Bullah Audu Bi-Allah

**S**ince its inauguration on June 13, 2023, the 10th National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, under the leadership of the President of the Senate, Senator Godswill Akpabio and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, has demonstrated resolute commitment to effective governance through purposeful legislation, robust oversight and people-centered representation.

From the beginning, the 10th Assembly signalled a new epoch of cooperation and stability. Despite early predictions of tension and division, its leadership eventually emerged through a transparent and rancour-free election. Senator Godswill Akpabio was elected Senate President with 63 votes, while Senator Barau Jibrin emerged unopposed as Deputy Senate President. In the House of Representatives, Hon. Tajudeen

Abbas secured a resounding victory with 353 votes, with Hon. Benjamin Kalu also elected as Deputy Speaker unopposed.

This seamless transition and unity of purpose set the tone for a cohesive legislature ready to engage in the business of nation-building.

The 10th Assembly quickly rose above divisive sentiments, despite the initial concerns over perceived regional imbalance following the leadership emergence. The Assembly hit the ground running by focusing on legislative outputs that reflect national priorities, from economic revitalization to social welfare enhancement.

Faced with challenges such as limited Information and Communication Technology (ICT) integration, resource constraints and persistent negative public perception, a universal trend for legislatures globally, the

10th Assembly has remained undeterred in performing its core constitutional mandates of law-making, oversight and representation.

Over the last two years, the 10th Assembly has recorded remarkable legislative productivity, having passed 96 bills in the Senate and 186 in the House of Representatives, with 51 already signed into law by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu. Collectively, these laws aim to address structural and socio-economic gaps, stimulate economic growth and improve citizens' welfare.

Some of the landmark legislative achievements include the National Student Loan (Re-enactment) Act, 2025. Signed into law on April 3, 2025, this Act established the Nigerian Education Loan Fund (NELFUND), which provides interest-free loans to students in tertiary institutions. By expanding access to higher education,



the Act has already empowered thousands of young Nigerians, turning the dream of tertiary education into reality for many low-income families.

Another legacy legislation made possible by the 10th Assembly is the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act, 2025. This Act, assented to on July 29, 2025, increased the national minimum wage from N30,000 to N70,000 and reduced the review cycle from every five (5) years to three (3) years. This legislative reform reflects a progressive commitment to protecting workers' welfare and ensuring wage adjustments keep pace with inflationary realities. It has also enhanced purchasing power and uplifted the living standards of millions of Nigerian workers.

Key in this direction is also the Nigeria Tax Reform Acts, 2025 which was signed into law on June 26th, 2025. This comprehensive legislative package represents one of the most ambitious tax overhauls in Nigeria's recent history. The Act comprises four key Acts, namely: the Nigeria Tax Act, Nigeria

Revenue Service (Establishment) Act, Nigeria Tax Administration Act and the Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act.

- food security legislation to tackle rising hunger and agricultural instability.

Through these legislative efforts, the 10th Assembly seeks to consolidate democratic gains, strengthen institutions and ensure inclusive development across all regions.

As the National Assembly reconvened from its annual recess on October 7, 2025, lawmakers returned with renewed vigour to consolidate the impressive gains of the past two years. Nigerians, more than ever, look forward to a result-oriented legislature that continues to translate its promises into progress through deliberate legislation that would uplift lives, reform governance and restore confidence in democratic institutions.

So far, the journey of the 10th National Assembly demonstrates that with unity of purpose, responsible leadership and citizen-centred law-making, the legislature can truly serve as a beacon of hope and transformation in Nigeria's democratic trajectory.

# ONE YEAR AFTER PRESIDENT BOLA AHMED TINUBU COMMISSIONED THE NALTF: FROM VISION TO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF LEGISLATIVE KNOWLEDGE

The National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF) recently marked its first anniversary since being formally commissioned by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR, on May 29, 2024, a visionary step toward modernizing Nigeria's legislative research and knowledge management system.

At the inauguration, President Tinubu commended members of the National Assembly for their commitment to building and sustaining the country's democratic institutions. He emphasized the duty of every generation to protect and strengthen democracy for posterity. In his words, the President affirmed that:

"We must nurture our democracy so that our children and great-grandchildren will be assured of prosperity, progress, and development."

One year later, the story of the NALTF is that of vision meeting action. The anniversary celebration, themed "One Team, One Dream Mission Possible," provided an opportunity for reflection, evaluation, and appreciation of progress achieved within a short period.

Speaking at the event, the Executive Secretary of NALTF, Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba, expressed heartfelt gratitude to the management and staff of the organization for their dedication and teamwork. He acknowledged the unwavering support of the leadership of the National Assembly in ensuring that the Fund remains focused on its core objectives which include:

- i. To acquire and manage a comprehensive collection of legislative, legal, and scholarly resources;
- ii. To drive digital transformation, preserving assets and ensuring real-time access;
- iii. To promote transparency and civic engagement through open access to knowledge;
- iv. To build capacity for legislative staff, researchers, and policy professionals; and
- v. To support research and innovation that strengthen evidence-based policymaking.

The Executive Secretary noted that although the institution is still in its early stages, its impact is already being felt across the National Assembly and beyond. According to him, the transition from traditional documentation to digital systems, symbolizes a fundamental



shift in how legislative knowledge is accessed, preserved, and shared.

Among the key milestones recorded in the past year are:

- i. Operationalization of the e-Library, which now hosts more than 2,000 digital resources and serves thousands of users across Nigeria;
- ii. Launch of the Legislative Museum, featuring immersive Virtual Reality (VR) technology that brings Nigeria's parliamentary history to life; and
- iii. Commencement of large-scale digitization of legislative records to ensure their preservation and easy accessibility for future generations.

These achievements, according to the Executive Secretary, are proof that the vision of the National Assembly to build a modern, knowledge-driven legislature is on course. He further stated that the goal is not just to build a library but to create an evolving ecosystem where knowledge, technology, and innovation intersect to serve democracy.

As part of the day's activities, a keynote lecture was delivered by Dr. Victor Dare, Group Managing Director of Better Ways Group, on the topic "Organizational Culture and Attitudinal Change."

Dr. Dare emphasized that institutions thrive when their people share common values, purpose, and discipline.

He expanded on the "One Team, One Dream Mission Possible" philosophy and introduced the SPICE framework—Service, Professionalism, Integrity, Collaboration, and Excellence—as the core attributes needed to sustain a high-performing organization.

According to Dr. Dare, cultivating the right workplace culture requires mutual respect, clearly defined professional boundaries, and a shared commitment to continuous improvement. "Culture eats strategy for breakfast," he noted, urging NALTF staff to embody the right attitudes that reflect the institution's ideals.

The celebration also served as a moment of recognition for the collective effort of departments, units, and individuals who have worked tirelessly to lay a strong foundation for NALTF's success. It was a day of pride and reflection—proof that a shared vision, when backed by teamwork and leadership support, can produce tangible outcomes in record time.

Looking ahead, the Executive Secretary pledged that the National Library Trust Fund would continue to innovate, expand partnerships, and align with the global shift toward open access and digital governance. Plans are underway to deepen collaboration with research institutions, strengthen capacity-building programmes, and broaden the Fund's reach to subnational legislatures and academic institutions.

In the words of one of the attendees, the transformation driven by NALTF represents "a new dawn for legislative learning and research in Nigeria." Indeed, the initiative is fast becoming a model for how knowledge institutions within government can harness technology to enhance transparency, accountability, and public participation.

One year on, the National Assembly Library Trust Fund stands as a beacon of innovation—bridging the past, empowering the present, and shaping the future of legislative knowledge in Nigeria.

# EMERGENCY RULE: HOW TINUBU SAVED RIVERS STATE FROM CRISIS

Ude Uzochukwu



When Rivers State sneezes, the Niger Delta catches a cold. And in early 2025, the oil-rich state wasn't just sneezing, it was convulsing. What began as a quiet political misunderstanding between a sitting governor and his predecessor soon snowballed into one of the most dangerous power struggles in Nigeria's recent democratic history.

## The Calm Before the Storm

Before March 18, 2025, Port Harcourt still hummed with the rhythm of commerce and crude. But behind the calm façade, tension brewed between Governor Siminalayi Fubara and his predecessor, His Excellency Nyesom Wike.

The main causes of the political conflict remained mostly undisclosed, with widespread speculation across the country. Was it a battle for control of the state's political machinery ...or simply ego and power play?

While some waved it off as a classic case of

"godfather and godson parting ways", others believed it was related to managing the state's limited resources. Regardless of the cause, the conflict threatened the progress and development of Rivers State.

As the friction intensified, the Rivers State House of Assembly split sharply and out of 32 lawmakers, 27 declared their loyalty to the former Governor, Nyesom Wike, while only a small band of 7 loyalists stood by the incumbent Governor, Siminalayi Fubara.

The legislative chamber soon turned into a battleground of allegiances and ambition.

## A House Divided

Reading like a script from a political thriller and a move that stunned the nation, the Rivers State Assembly Complex was demolished overnight and though members of the Governor's camp claimed safety concerns for this action, many observers and his critics believed it was a move by the Governor to prevent impeachment.

## When Courts Became Battlefields

This political standoff quickly turned into a legal battle and by February 28, 2025, the crisis had moved from the streets of Port



Harcourt to the hallowed halls of justice.

Multiple suits flew between factions, culminating in a Supreme Court ruling that Rivers State had been operating outside constitutional bounds by spending state funds without legislative approval and ordered the reinstatement of the embattled Speaker, Rt. Hon. Martin Amaewhule, along with his 27 colleagues, directing them to resume their legislative duties.

It was a legal earthquake and it shook the very foundation of governance in the state.

#### Timeline of Tension

- Oct 6, 2024: Local government elections held despite legal opposition.
- Feb 2025: Supreme Court rules against Fubara's financial decisions.
- Mar 2025: Renewed protests and threats of impeachment.
- Apr 2025: Oil facilities vandalized amid rising insecurity.
- Sept 17, 2025: State of Emergency lifted after six months.

#### Blood, Ballots and Broken Peace

The Governor's decision to go ahead with local government elections on October 6, 2024 amid ongoing legal challenges poured gasoline on an already raging fire and angered those opposing him in the state. Violence erupted in at least six local government areas. Secretariats were vandalized; rival youth groups clashed in the streets and despite all of this, the Governor went ahead and swore in the winners.

Despite efforts by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and respected elders holding multiple peace meetings in Abuja, this failed to produce lasting results. This frustrated the President so much that at one meeting, he reportedly told both men: "Rivers State is bigger than any individual."

However, in February 2025, a truce between Governor Fubara and former Governor Wike was brokered with handshakes and photo ops, but unfortunately, the peace was short-lived as it was speculated that the Governor later reneged on the terms, reigniting tensions as the drums of impeachment began to beat again.

#### When the President Drew the Line

The escalating crisis led to the destruction of vital oil facilities and created a security vacuum that allowed criminal groups to terrorize the state.

Then came the presidential intervention that changed the entire dynamics and stunned the nation's political establishment.

Political observers noted that the emergency rule not only restored order and halted further political deterioration but also protected Governor Fubara from imminent impeachment, allowing tempers to cool.

#### The Road Back to Peace

For six tense months, Rivers State existed under federal oversight. Committees to oversee the affairs of the state were formed in the Senate and House of Representatives, new security strategies introduced and back-channel negotiations intensified.

Finally, on September 17, 2025, the State of Emergency was officially lifted following the peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Governor was reinstated and governance resumed under more stable conditions.

Analysts credited Tinubu's political acumen and timing for averting what could have been a full-blown constitutional crisis in Nigeria's oil heartland.

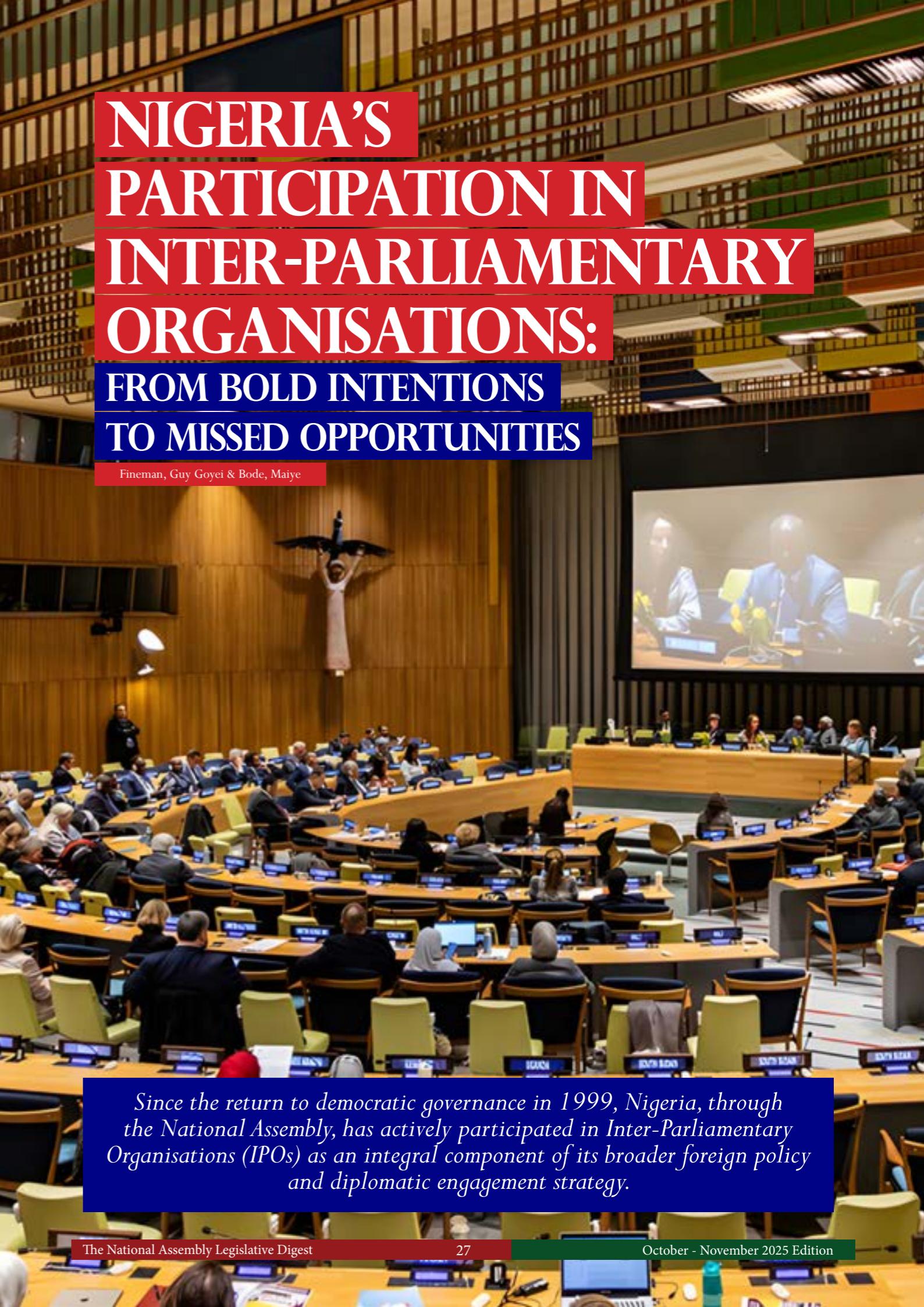
#### Lessons from the Turmoil

The Rivers crisis left behind bruised egos, broken alliances and invaluable lessons. It revealed the fragility of Nigeria's subnational politics and the dangers of unrestrained power tussles.

For President Tinubu, it was a demonstration of authority under pressure. For Governor Fubara, a political near-death experience. And for the people of Rivers, a hard-earned reminder that democracy, while messy, remains the only path forward.

# NIGERIA'S PARTICIPATION IN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ORGANISATIONS: FROM BOLD INTENTIONS TO MISSED OPPORTUNITIES

Fineman, Guy Goyei & Bode, Maiye



*Since the return to democratic governance in 1999, Nigeria, through the National Assembly, has actively participated in Inter-Parliamentary Organisations (IPOs) as an integral component of its broader foreign policy and diplomatic engagement strategy.*



**T**oday, Nigeria belongs to a number of International Parliamentary Organisations (IPOs) including the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA), African Parliamentary Union (APU), African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)/ European Union (EU) Joint Assembly, the Pan-African Parliament (PAP) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament. These IPOs have featured prominently in Nigeria's external legislative engagements.

Nigeria's return to IPOs after decades of military rule and diplomatic isolation signalled a renewed commitment to diplomacy, cooperation, legislative peer review and democratic norms. These bodies also reflect Nigeria's foreign policy goals of regional integration, African solidarity, South-South cooperation and democratic consolidation. However, while Nigeria's participation in these IPOs presents clear opportunities, it also exposes drawbacks that undermine its noble intentions.

#### **LEGISLATIVE DIPLOMACY AS AN INSTRUMENT OF FOREIGN POLICY**

One major advantage of Nigeria's participation in IPOs is the diversification of foreign policy instruments. Traditionally, Nigeria's foreign policy has been executive-driven, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs playing the central role. Through IPOs, however, legislative diplomacy provides lawmakers with a platform to advocate national interests, engage in informal or track-two diplomacy and support democratic ideals abroad.

Involvement in IPOs strengthens Nigeria's regional leadership. For instance, Nigerian parliamentarians have played key roles in the ECOWAS Parliament by pushing for greater regional integration and championing peace and security, reinforcing Nigeria's status in West Africa.

Nigeria has also amplified its voice on the global stage. As Africa's most populous country and one of its largest economies, it has used platforms such as the PAP and ECOWAS Parliament to promote integration, peacebuilding, conflict resolution and democratic consolidation in countries like Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali.

Nigerian lawmakers have further used IPOs to champion African debt relief, equitable trade and reform of international institutions. For example, in the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Nigeria has repeatedly voiced concerns over unfair trade agreements and pushed for more balanced development cooperation.

#### **BUILDING SOFT POWER AND GLOBAL VISIBILITY**

Through parliamentary diplomacy, Nigeria has been able to forge alliances and build soft power. These fora provide unique spaces for personal networks, dialogue and influence beyond the scope of executive diplomacy.

Securing leadership roles in IPOs underscores Nigeria's geopolitical relevance. For instance, Senator Godswill Akpabio's seat on the IPU Executive Committee, Senator Osita Nguw's role as the African Representative on the Bureau of the IPU Standing Committee on Peace and

International Security and Hon. Dr. Zainab Gimba's leadership of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) illustrate Nigeria's ability to shape dialogue and policy in multilateral spaces.

Parliamentary diplomacy also sustains Nigeria's global visibility, particularly when executive foreign policy appears reactive or weak. Lawmakers often step in to engage international debates on human rights, climate change, counterterrorism and migration.

Participation in the CPA and IPU has further provided Nigerian lawmakers exposure to international best practices in law making, oversight, ethics and constituency relations. Workshops, study tours, peer learning and exchange programmes have offered insights into areas like budget scrutiny, committee systems, legislative drafting and accountability. Although impact has been uneven, these engagements hold potential to reinforce institutional competence within the National Assembly.

#### **CHALLENGES AND COORDINATION GAPS**

However, Nigeria's engagement in IPOs has often been more symbolic than strategic. Several challenges persist.

Foreign policy objectives are not always aligned with legislative engagements. There is a disconnect between the executive and legislature in coordinating diplomatic strategy. Resolutions passed at the ECOWAS Parliament or PAP are often not implemented domestically due to poor synergy.

To address this, the 10th House of

Representatives sought to align its legislative agenda with national foreign policy. Agenda 7 of its Legislative Agenda affirms its role in shaping Nigeria's foreign policy by reviewing and domesticating treaties, ensuring compliance with constitutional processes and harmonising the Constitution with the Treaty Ratification Act. The House also proposed better funding for diplomatic missions, collaboration on economic diplomacy and strengthening parliamentary diplomacy through Friendship Groups. It further prioritised protecting Nigerians abroad, supporting regional security cooperation and enhancing oversight. However, these priorities are not fully reflected in the Senate, which by convention should provide central momentum for Nigeria's parliamentary diplomacy.

#### **INSTITUTIONAL WEAKNESSES AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES**

Effectiveness is further undermined by budgetary constraints and frequent disruptions in parliamentary leadership. The Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations and Protocols is responsible for coordinating the National Assembly's engagement in inter-parliamentary affairs. Along with the Inter-Parliamentary Relations Committees in both chambers which have oversight jurisdiction, it is consistently underfunded and inadequately staffed. This limits their capacity to drive Nigeria's parliamentary diplomacy.

This, in part, undermines the National Assembly's capacity to engage meaningfully in IPOs. Thus, Nigeria at times plays a passive role, contradicting its stated ambition of continental leadership.

Weak institutional memory is another

challenge. Knowledge gained from IPOs is rarely retained due to high turnover and lack of structured succession planning. This leads to repeated reinvention and reliance on external consultants who may lack political leverage.

Much of Nigeria's engagement is also perceived as ceremonial. Delegations often attend conferences without post-conference follow-ups, limiting the relevance of resolutions to national priorities.

#### **NEED FOR A FRAMEWORK FOR PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMACY**

Nigeria lacks a clear framework for parliamentary diplomacy. Without consistent alignment with executive foreign policy, delegations often operate in silos, creating duplication and contradictory messaging. Critics argue participation is reduced to routine attendance, with little follow-up. Delegation selection is also sometimes based on patronage rather than expertise.

While some criticisms may be overstated, it is important to note that Article 7 of the IPU Statutes obligates member states to inform their parliaments and governments of IPU resolutions to stimulate implementation. This is advisory rather than binding and other IPOs such as the CPA, PAP and ECOWAS Parliament also rely on moral persuasion and political will, not enforcement.

#### **REFORMING NIGERIA'S PARLIAMENTARY FOREIGN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

In conclusion, Nigeria's engagement in IPOs represents a progressive step toward more inclusive diplomacy, offering platforms for oversight, solidarity and capacity

development. However, these benefits are undermined by inefficiencies, lack of political will and poor coordination.

To maximise value, Nigeria must reform its parliamentary foreign engagement strategy. This includes strengthening committees, institutionalising knowledge transfer and promoting accountability in representation. Collaboration between the executive and the legislature must be deepened to ensure coherence in foreign policy.

Leadership positions in IPOs should be pursued not for prestige but as strategic platforms to shape global agendas in line with national interests. Delegation selection should be based on expertise, with mandatory pre-briefings and public post-engagement reports. Follow-up mechanisms must monitor implementation of commitments.

The National Assembly must also invest in research and training, strengthening its Research Department to support international engagement with policy briefs and diplomatic training.

Most importantly, Nigeria must move beyond the optics of participation and embrace substantive engagement. IPOs should serve not only foreign policy but also democratic development at home. Until then, Nigeria's involvement will remain an underutilised channel of diplomacy, constrained by internal dysfunction and missed opportunities.

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# FLEX-ICONS:

## DOCUMENTING POWER, LEGACY AND LEADERSHIP ACROSS NIGERIA'S FOURTH REPUBLIC

Uko Etuk



**A**s Nigeria's democracy marks a quarter century of uninterrupted civil rule, OrderPaper Nigeria is leading a landmark national effort to chronicle the country's most transformative public leaders — those who have served in both the Legislature and the Executive — through the **ICONS of the Fourth Republic Project**. This pioneering effort is being driven under the auspices of the Facility for **Legislative-Executive Exchange (FLEX)**, another bespoke OrderPaper initiative.

Now in full throttle, the project is not merely a documentation exercise; it is an act of civic introspection — asking how far Nigeria has come, what has been learned and how those who have shaped power can help rebuild public trust in governance.

### From Vision to Movement

Launched as part of OrderPaper's 10-year

mission to deepen legislative accountability and democratic continuity, the ICONS Project has evolved into a living repository of Nigeria's governance journey.

Altogether, the project targets over 100 nominees slated for induction into the ICONS (Initiative for Celebrating Outstanding National Statespersons) Hall of Fame. Leading the list is Nigeria's President, His Excellency, **Bola Ahmed Tinubu** who is joined by First Lady, **Sen. Remi Tinubu**, Vice President, **Sen. Kashim Shettima**, the Senate President, **Sen. Godswill Akpabio**, Chief of Staff to the President, **Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila** and the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, **Sen. George Akume** — all of whom personify the dual service between the Legislature and the Executive that the FLEX-ICONS Project seeks to examine.

At its core, the project aims to do more than celebrate political journeys. It seeks to hold up a mirror to power — to reflect on how experience, knowledge and transition across

Kaduna, Bassey Otu of Cross River, Francis Nwifuru of Ebonyi and Bala Mohammed of Bauchi make the list of nominees. There are also federal appointees (present and past) who made the list, including Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba, Executive Secretary of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF), Hon. Dr. Dakuku Peterside, Sen. Ita Enang, Sen. Victor Ndoma-Egba and Rt. Hon. Samuel Onuigbo. The project has also engaged former presiding and principal officers of the National Assembly like Rt. Hon. Aminu Masari, Rt. Hon. Emeka Ihedioha and former Governors and senior Members of Parliament like Sen. Danjuma Goje, Sen. Simon Lalor, Sen. Kabiru Gaya, Sen. Abdulhamid Madorion and Barr. Bala Ngigili, among a host of others.

**A Living Archive with Public Meaning**  
At its core, the project aims to do more than celebrate political journeys. It seeks to hold up a mirror to power — to reflect on how experience, knowledge and transition across



institutions should translate into better governance outcomes for the Nigerian people.

The ICONS Book of Records, supported by the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF), will serve not just as a historical compendium, but as a civic education tool, a people's reference for understanding how leaders make and implement policy and how institutional memory can serve as a national asset.

The accompanying ICONS Digital Repository and Documentary Series will tell these stories in accessible formats, short films, features and documentaries allowing citizens, especially young Nigerians, to engage directly with their democracy's living archives.

### Why FLEX-ICONS Matters to the People

Nigeria's democracy is now 26 years old, long enough for citizens to ask tough

questions. With so many seasoned leaders who have operated from both chambers of power, shouldn't the lives of the people be better off? Shouldn't the roads be smoother, schools stronger, hospitals functional and governance more accountable?

**These are not rhetorical questions. They are the moral core of FLEX-ICONS.**

By spotlighting those who have wielded power at both levels, the project insists that experience must equal impact; that legacy must mean improvement in the lives of the people. It encourages the targeted community of ICONS to see themselves not as subjects of praise, but as custodians of democratic continuity, a generation tasked with proving that Nigeria's democracy can deliver.

In this way, the project becomes a civic bridge, connecting elite memory with mass expectation, reminding leaders that every

public office held is a covenant with the people.

### As Oke Epia, OrderPaper's CEO and Project Convener, explains:

"We are not just celebrating personalities; we are preserving democratic memory and in doing so, we are calling power to purpose. ICONS is about understanding how leadership can serve continuity, not convenience."

### Partnerships and the Road Ahead

The Project enjoys growing institutional and moral support from the National Assembly, the Presidency and progressive state governments, alongside civil society and media partners. Ongoing collaborations include Zenith Bank, Access Bank, Seplat Energy, the Aig-Imoukhuede Foundation. On the media front, collaborations with Arise News, Channels TV, BBC and Netflix will help bring Nigeria's governance story to a global audience.



The culmination will be the ICONS Showcase Gala and the unveiling of the FLEX Book of Records in 2026 envisioned as a civic convergence of Nigeria's leadership community, scholars, journalists and citizens in dialogue on governance continuity and public trust.

#### A Republic Remembered and Renewed

In a time when cynicism about leadership runs deep, the FLEX-ICONS Project offers a rare opportunity to convert nostalgia into

knowledge and knowledge into national renewal.

It is a reminder that the measure of power is not in titles held but in lives transformed; that the real legacy of the Fourth Republic will not be written in books alone, but in whether Nigerians can finally feel the dividends of democracy in their daily lives.

By preserving the stories of those who have governed from both chambers of power, OrderPaper Nigeria is not just documenting

the past but also challenging today's leaders to ensure that tomorrow's citizens inherit a better republic than the one they were handed.

Uko Etuk is the Programmes Manager at OrderPaper Nigeria and lead of the team curating the ICONS of the Fourth Republic: Book of Records, a documentation of distinguished Nigerians who have served in both the Legislature and the Executive since 1999 under the FLEX Initiative.

# TOWARDS INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE: THE PUSH FOR RESERVED SEATS FOR WOMEN IN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

*In spite of decades of advocacy and constitutional guarantees of equality, women's representation in Nigeria's National Assembly remains dismally low. A new legislative effort seeks to reverse the trend through reserved seats. This proposal has sparked both optimism and debate within the National Assembly.*

Akubueze Augustina



## RENEWING THE CALL FOR INCLUSION

### INTRODUCTION:

For many years, Nigerian women have demanded equal participation in the nation's political process. The call grew stronger after the 1995 Beijing Conference, where the 35 percent affirmative action for women was first championed. Nearly three decades later, the question of women's political inclusion remains unresolved. Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and party-level commitments, female representation in Nigeria's National and State Assemblies remains alarmingly low.

Fewer than 20 out of 469 lawmakers in the current National Assembly are women and the numbers have continued to decline since 1999. This trend has raised growing concern among legislators, civil society actors and international partners about the deep structural barriers that limit women's participation in Nigeria's governance.

### WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION SINCE 1999: GAINS AND DECLINES

At the onset of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999, only three women were elected to the Senate and 13 to the House of Representatives. The figures improved slightly in subsequent elections, peaking in 2007 with nine female senators and 27 women in the House, the highest Nigeria has

ever recorded.

However, this progress proved unsustainable. By 2011, women held just seven Senate seats and 26 in the House. The 2015 and 2019 elections saw eight female senators each, but representation in the House dropped to 22 and later to 13 members. Following the 2023 elections, female representation declined further in the Senate to only four seats, while the House slightly improved to 16 women before dropping to 15 following the death of Hon. Oriyomi Onanuga.

At the state level, the pattern mirrors the national trend. In 1999, women held between 12 and 25 state assembly seats, rising to 68 in 2007, the highest ever. Since then, the numbers have fallen steadily, with only 48 women elected in 2023. In total, women now occupy just 64 out of 1,460 legislative seats nationwide, representing a mere 4.38 percent. This decline highlights the persistent barriers to women's political empowerment in Nigeria despite years of advocacy and policy commitments.

### COMPARATIVE GLOBAL CONTEXT

By contrast, some countries have achieved or even surpassed gender parity in their parliaments. According to the 2023 UN Women global ranking, Rwanda leads with 64 percent female representation, followed by Cuba (56 percent), Nicaragua (55 percent) and Mexico, Andorra and the United Arab Emirates with 50 percent each. These examples suggest that deliberate

institutional reforms, such as gender quotas or reserved seats, can produce tangible results.

Nigeria's figures, by comparison, indicate that policy pronouncements alone have not been sufficient. Women's participation as candidates for the Senate, House of Representatives and State Assemblies remains low. In the 2023 elections, just 92 women contested for 109 senatorial seats out of 1,101 candidates. For the House of Representatives, only 288 women contested among 3,122 candidates. At the state assembly level, only 1,019 women ran out of over 10,000 candidates and in some states, no political party fielded female candidates at all.

Although many political party constitutions include provisions for women's inclusion, for instance, requiring one woman among every three delegates, these commitments rarely translate into actual representation due to deep-rooted cultural and structural barriers.

### THE RESERVED SEATS FOR WOMEN BILL: A RENEWED PUSH

To address this imbalance, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, has reintroduced a bill to reserve seats for women in parliament. The proposal, originally introduced in the 9th Assembly by Hon. Nkiruka Onyejeocha, failed to pass despite early support. Out of the 240 votes required for passage, only 91 lawmakers voted in favour.



#### SUPPORT AND OPPOSITION

Kalu remains optimistic about the bill's prospects in the 10th Assembly, noting that Speaker Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas has thrown his full support behind the initiative. The Speaker has also established a special committee to build consensus across party lines, emphasising that the bill is not about sentiment but about addressing a constitutional and democratic imbalance. Nearly half of Nigeria's population is female, yet women hold less than five percent of legislative seats, a statistic the Speaker describes as "a democratic deficit that must be corrected."

Supporters of the bill argue that it is about inclusion, not tokenism. Hon. Kafiat Ogbara, Chairman of the House Committee on Women Affairs, has stressed that the goal is to give women a stronger voice in shaping policies that affect their lives and communities. Similarly, Senator Ireti Kingibe, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Women Affairs, believes that women's leadership is essential for sustainable development and democratic growth.

International partners, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



and UN Women, have also endorsed the proposal. They point to global experiences where reserved seats accelerated gender equality, improved governance and fostered social cohesion. According to the UNDP, Nigerian women are already leaders in education, healthcare and peacebuilding, yet remain systematically excluded from formal politics due to limited access to funding, gender bias and weak party structures.

However, opposition to the bill persists. Some lawmakers and commentators fear it could increase the cost of governance by expanding the number of legislative seats. Others question whether reserved seats

could undermine merit or reinforce gender stereotypes. Proponents counter that such fears overlook the transformative potential of inclusive governance and that the bill's long-term benefits far outweigh its costs.

#### THE ROAD AHEAD

The proposed constitutional amendment seeks to create one additional female senator for each state and the Federal Capital Territory and to add at least one or two female representatives per state in the House. It also aims to allocate three reserved seats for women in each state assembly and to establish additional seats for women and

persons with disabilities across geopolitical zones.

The Reserved Seats for Women Bill is, by far, Nigeria's boldest legislative attempt to tackle gender imbalance in politics. While its passage remains uncertain, it reflects growing recognition within the legislature that without structural reforms, women will continue to be sidelined in governance.

#### TOWARD INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

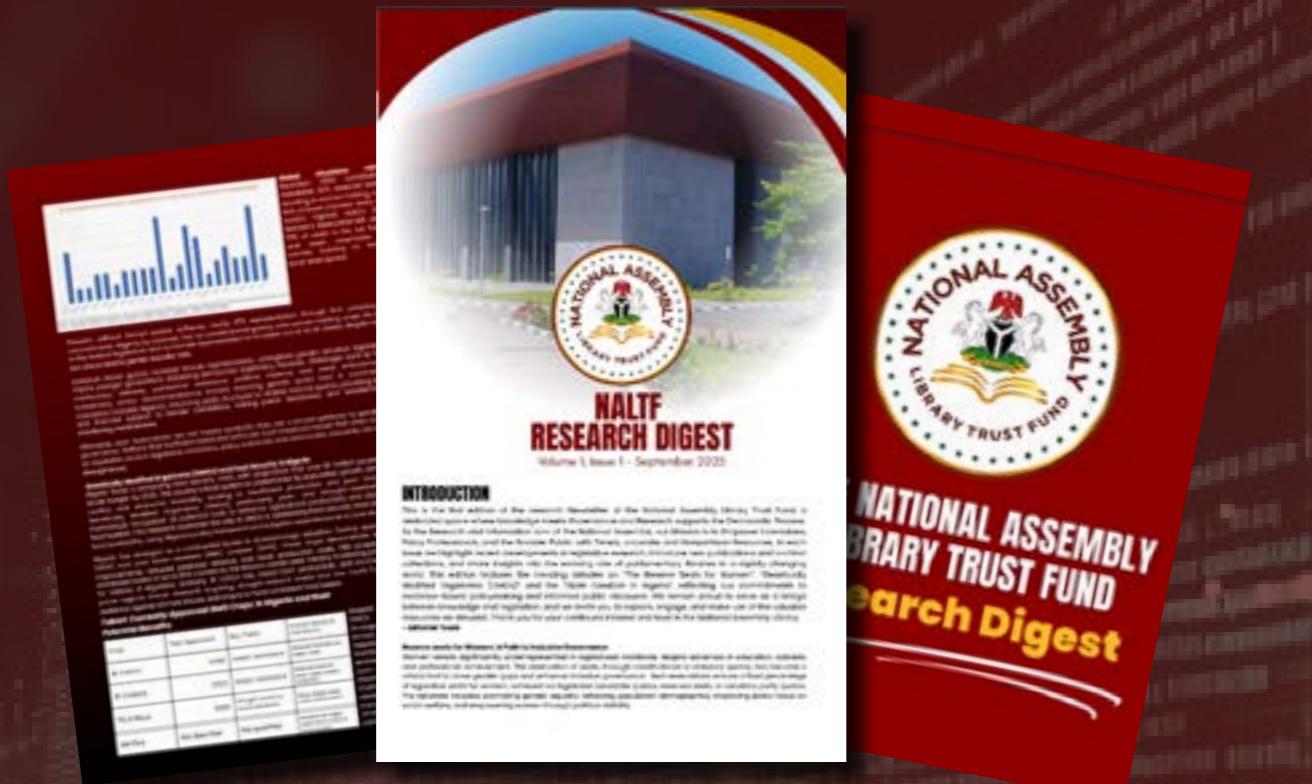
The Reserved Seats for Women Bill

represents a decisive step toward inclusive governance in Nigeria. While resistance remains, it underscores a growing awareness that democracy cannot thrive without equitable representation. As the National Assembly debates this landmark proposal, the institution stands at a defining moment, to either sustain the status quo or make history by enshrining women's voices more firmly within its chambers.

*Akubueze Augustina is a legislative researcher and gender advocate with the National Assembly.*



# Research Digest



## The Research Department of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF)

Equipping Nigeria's lawmakers with up-to-date research and policy analysis on issues of national significance such as economic development, public health and governance.

Our dedicated units are adept at identifying emerging trends and providing current data to support timely and informed legislative action.

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## Reflections on Leadership

# LEADING CHANGE FROM WHERE YOU STAND

Idowu Bakare

*This column will explore lessons in public leadership drawn from experience, complex assignments, team interactions and the everyday realities of serving within Nigeria's public service. It is a space to reflect on what leadership means in practice, not in theory; and how we can lead change thoughtfully, responsibly and with respect for the people around us.*

In the public service, leadership is often misunderstood as something tied to position, title, or rank. Yet, experience shows that leadership is less about authority and more about influence: the ability to bring people together, frame problems clearly, build trust and guide progress in environments that are sometimes slow, complex, or resistant to change.

Many of us work in places where reforms require patience, collaboration and a measured sense of strategy. True leadership in such contexts is not loud; it is often deliberate and steady. It begins with understanding that change rarely happens by force. It happens through conversation, persuasion, careful alignment of interests and the courage to move step-by-step even when the path is not easy.

One of the most important principles of effective leadership — especially in our kind of work environment — is psychological safety: the sense that subordinates officers can speak honestly, make suggestions, ask questions and even make mistakes without fear of embarrassment or punishment. When people feel safe to contribute, innovation emerges. When they do not, silence becomes the culture and silence is the enemy of progress.

We have all seen workplaces where talented people hold back because they feel their voice does not matter or their ideas might be dismissed. This could happen in our committees, directorates or departments. And we have also seen how a simple act of openness such as inviting perspectives, asking for input, acknowledging another person's effort, can change the tone and energy of a team entirely. As a leader, you have a lot to gain when you open the space for subordinates to contribute and to fail without fear of backlash. Leadership, therefore, is not always a grand move. Often, it is a quiet choice to make space for others to thrive.

Another key realization is that leaders themselves must remain learners. We influence others better when we are honest about our own blind spots, when we take time to reflect on how we respond to pressure and when we are willing to adjust our approach. Leading change requires not only skill, but self-awareness.

And because public service involves constant negotiation between policy and reality, ambition and resources, therefore, leaders must be patient but persistent. They must know when to push, when to pause and when to build alliances before moving forward. Influence is shaped not only by what we know, but by how well we understand the people we work with.

As we continue this column in future editions, we will explore themes such as decision-making, managing resistance, teamwork, communication and how to build trust in environments where it is fragile. The goal is not to prescribe answers, but to reflect together as colleagues committed to improving the institutions we serve.

Leadership is not a destination. It is a practice shaped every day; in meetings, emails, conversations, and in how we treat one another.

And the strongest leaders are not those who command the room, but those who create room for others to contribute





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## NASS CONFIRMS NEW SERVICE CHIEFS, TASKS THEM ON NATIONAL SECURITY

The Nigerian Senate has screened and confirmed the appointments of four new Service Chiefs, paving the way for them to assume their new roles immediately. The confirmed appointees are:

- General Olufemi Oluyede as Chief of Defence Staff
- Major General Waheedi Shaibu as Chief of Army Staff
- Rear Admiral Idi Abbas as Chief of Naval Staff
- Air Vice Marshal Kennedy Aneke as Chief of Air Staff

The confirmation was made after a thorough screening process, which included both open and closed sessions at the National Assembly complex in Abuja. Senate President Godswill Akpabio emphasized that the process was a constitutional duty aimed at ensuring that only capable and patriotic officers lead the nation's security agencies. During the screening, Senator Isa Jubrin expressed his confidence in Major General Shaibu's abilities, citing his humility and dedication to his work. Jubrin, who has known Shaibu for 30 years, believes that he has the potential to help Nigeria overcome its current challenges.

The Senate had initially planned to hold the screening next week but rescheduled it to allow the new Service Chiefs to assume their duties without delay. Akpabio stated that the adjustment was necessary to facilitate a smooth transition.

The confirmed Service Chiefs were tasked to take a bow and assume office immediately after their confirmation. This development marks a significant step in President Bola Tinubu's efforts to strengthen the country's security architecture.

## MR. EMMANUEL ODO ASSUMES CLERKSHIP OF THE SENATE

Following his appointment by the National Assembly Service Commission, Mr. Emmanuel Odo has assumed the parliamentary service career position of Clerk of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. By this appointment, Mr. Odo becomes the 12th Senate Clerk since the commencement of the fourth republic. His elevation is sequel to the approval of the National Assembly Service Commission. The appointment, as announced by the senior official of the Commission, takes effect from September 16, 2025.

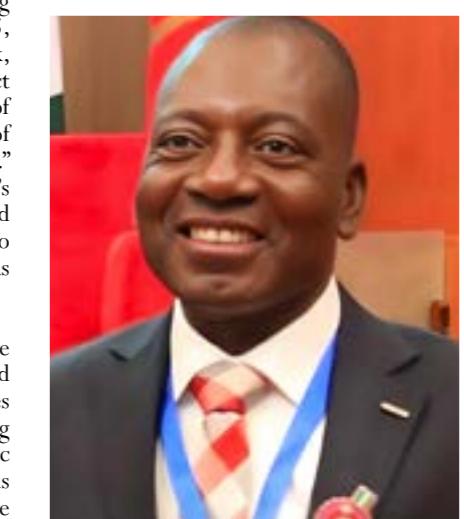
Before his appointment, Mr. Odo who holds a doctorate degree was the immediate past Deputy Clerk, (Admin.) and had served briefly as the Acting Clerk of the Senate following the retirement of Mr. Emmanuel Rawlings Agada.

In the conveying appointment letter signed

by the Executive Chairman of the National Assembly Service Commission, Dr. Saviour Enyiekere declared, "I write to inform you that the 6th Commission at its 10th Meeting held on Tuesday, 16th September 2025, approved your appointment as Acting Clerk, Senate in the National Assembly with effect from 16/09/2025. This is in exercise of its powers as provided in Section 6(b) of the National Assembly Service Act, 2014." The letter went further to say that Odo's appointment recognizes his hard work and administrative competence, urging him to maintain the confidence the Commission has placed in him.

Dr. Odo brings to the table, deep legislative and administrative reserve in chamber and committee administration at different stages of his public service life journey spanning over three decades. While the bureaucratic community of NASS felicitate him on his noble attainment, the Senate Directorate

family expects a better deal in welfare and motivation of Senate staff during his clerkship.



# SHOULD WE BELIEVE THE PRESIDENT

Asma'u Baikie



So we have an event coming up in December 2025 God willing and like the typical Nigerians that we are, we decided to make some purchases of foodstuff in preparation for the event right from September in order to avoid the price hike of commodities that is common with the end of year frenzies. Amazingly while conducting a casual market survey as at first of October 2025, it was clearly evident that the shopping of the foodstuff we had carried out as a precautionary measure has backfired. The 25 litres of Kings vegetable oil we purchased at 82,000 in September now goes for 70,000 while the bag of rice we bought for 74,000 now goes for 60,000.

## What happened?

While delivering his Independence Day address, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu words seem to be like a prophecy that is coming to pass instantly. He said, "we have finally turned the corner and the worse is over. Yesterday's pains are giving way to relief."

President Tinubu further stated that, "our administration has redirected the economy towards a more inclusive path, channelling money to fund education, healthcare, national security, agriculture and critical economic infrastructure such as roads, power, broadband and social investment programmes. These initiatives will generally improve Nigerians' quality of life. As a result of the tough decision we made, the Federal and State Government, including Local Government now have more resources to take care of the people at the lower level of the ladder to address our development challenges."

Nigerians recall that part of the tough decision the President must have been referring to was the removal of fuel subsidies at the onset of his administration two years ago that led to untold hardship among the lower rug of the citizens.

The President pointed in his 2025 independence day anniversary speech that his administration "ended the corrupt fuel subsidies and multiple foreign exchange rates that did not favour the general populace and the administration swiftly took some drastic steps that at the onset feels bitter but will benefit all in the long run."

According to him, "in resetting our country for sustainable growth, we ended the corrupt fuel subsidies and multiple foreign exchange rates that created massive incentives for a renter economy, benefiting only a tiny minority. At the same time, the masses received little or nothing from our Commonwealth."

So the President gave his address on October 1st and few days later citizens are beginning to experience a reduction in the price of essential commodities even as the year comes to an end when the prices of the items especially foodstuff generally began to soar.

Now Nigerians need to take a pause to ponder? Is the current price reduction in commodities and even farm produce related to the implementation of Presidential policies or is it a mere coincidence? Should Nigerians begin to rejoice at the words of the President that the worst days are over and begin to bask in a new and glorious future? Is it okay to accept utterance of Mr. President as a sure banker or do we take them with a pinch of salt ...Like another political statement, made just to excite the populace and play on their psychology with no political will for implementation? Should we believe the President?

One of the loudest voices in the Nigerian commodity markets is the Chairman of BUA Group, Alhaji Abdulsamad Rabiu. He was at the Presidential Villa some time back, on a visit to President Tinubu after which he addressed the State House correspondences. He stated that the recent drop in prices of food items is due to BUA Food's resolve to key into President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's waivers policy on imported food which allowed the company to import a lot of wheat, maize and rice.

According to him, President Tinubu's waivers policy on imported goods was Nigerians' saving grace as it poses more problems for rice hoarders and forced the slash of prices in the country.



In the same vein, one online newspaper article titled, Naira stabilisation through deregulation of the FX market and subsidy removal, succinctly puts it that, "under President Tinubu's leadership, Nigeria is turning the corner from stabilising the Naira and curbing inflation to reducing debt burden and expanding access to education and health, the administration is delivering bold reforms with real results."

Even critics of the Tinubu administration like Dr Sam Amadi who has given a back lash of the two years of the administration stated that, "admittedly the government has stabilised macroeconomy policy than Buhari

administration. It's fiscal policies are also better than Buhari's."

To conclude this piece, two economic pointers by this administration are worthy of note. The first is that our currency rate against the dollar was no longer determined by fluctuations in crude oil prices, while the second is that the slashed interest rate by the Central Bank- the first time in five years- are two pivotal pointers to the boosters in macro-economic stability.

"Our macro-economic progress have proven that our sacrifices have not been in vain," the President said.

The above are part of the government policies that have led to a conclusion that there are no chance coincidences when it comes buying commodities at cheaper rates in the market. It didn't just happen, rather

this came about only because policies that are implemented by the administration is automatically being reflected in the everyday life of the citizens.

It is important for the citizens of the Nation Nigeria to believe in the policies of the President and patiently endure the process while we await the better future we desire.

## NAIRA-FOR-CRUISE-OIL POLICY: HOUSE AD-HOC COMMITTEE URGED TO UPHOLD INTEGRITY

In a bid to strengthen Nigeria's fiscal stability, the House of Representatives on September 24, 2025, inaugurated an Ad-Hoc Committee on the implementation and oversight of the Naira-for-Crude-Oil policy. The committee, chaired by Rt. Hon. (Barr.) Boniface S. Emerengwa, was tasked to ensure transparency, promote sound policy recommendations and support national development. Representing the Speaker, the Minority Leader, Rt. Hon. Kingsley Chinda, emphasized that the committee's task carries significant responsibility, as its recommendations could shape the nation's economic direction. He urged members to carry out their assignment "with integrity, courage and a clear sense of purpose." In his remarks, the Committee Chairman explained that the Naira-for-Crude-Oil initiative aims to reduce dependence on foreign currencies and strengthen the naira. "If properly structured, this policy will boost confidence in our national currency and ease pressure on foreign reserves," he noted. The committee will engage stakeholders in the oil and gas sector and financial institutions to produce comprehensive recommendations that will guide future legislative actions.

## PASAN WELCOMES NEW STAFF WITH SENSITIZATION WORKSHOP

The Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN) has once again demonstrated its commitment to staff development and institutional excellence by hosting a sensitization workshop for newly recruited employees of the National Assembly. Themed "PASAN: Forging a New Era of Parliamentary Workers' Unionism in the National Assembly," the workshop sought to instill professionalism, discipline and a strong work ethic among new staff. In his opening remarks, Comrade Sunday Sabiyyi urged participants to be proactive, pursue further education and remain dedicated to excellence. He emphasized that complacency has no place in public service. Similarly, Comrade Ikechukwu Alaribe, PASAN's Zonal Vice President, reminded participants that the union is not only a platform for protection but also for progress. "Unity is vital for our collective growth," he said, encouraging staff to shun nepotism, embrace merit and uphold integrity in service. The event, which drew enthusiastic participation, reinforced PASAN's reputation as a forward-looking institution committed to fostering an empowered and value-driven workforce.

## STRENGTHENING FISCAL OVERSIGHT ACROSS AFRICA: NABRO HOSTS 8TH ANPBO CONFERENCE IN ABUJA

Abuja played host to Africa's foremost fiscal minds as the 8th Annual Conference of the African Network of Parliamentary Budget Offices (ANPBO) convened from September 21–27, 2025, at the Abuja Continental Hotel. Hosted by the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO), the conference brought together delegates from 16 African nations to discuss strategies for deepening accountability, transparency and effective budget oversight across the continent. Themed "The Role of Parliamentary Budget Offices in African Parliaments' Fiscal Oversight: Contribution to the African 2063 Development Agenda," the conference provided a robust platform for dialogue, collaboration and reform. Declaring the event open, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, GCON, Speaker of the House of Representatives, emphasized the urgent need to combat corruption and illicit financial outflows, which he said drain an estimated \$148 billion annually from Africa. He called for stronger fiscal legislation and smarter oversight mechanisms to ensure that budgets translate into tangible benefits for citizens. The Clerk to the National Assembly (CAN), Barrister Kamoru Ogunlana, described the gathering as "a powerful reminder of our collective duty to uphold transparency and fiscal discipline," while Prof. Dumisani Jantjies, ANPBO Chairperson, highlighted the growing importance of independent budget offices in strengthening democracy and economic stability.

With participation from countries such as Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Uganda and Namibia, the conference reaffirmed Africa's collective resolve to build stronger institutions and promote responsible public financial management.

## NASS CLARIFIES REPORT ON DEAD BODY FOUND NEAR COMPLEX

Anunkor Chizobam Nwakaego



The management of the National Assembly has clarified reports circulating in the media about a dead body allegedly found within its complex, stating that the incident occurred outside the Assembly premises.

According to preliminary findings by the police, the deceased, identified as Mr. Gaddafi Edward Iwar, a 55-year-old Tiv man, was discovered on September 7, 2025, around 9:00 a.m. in a red Peugeot 406 car parked near the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF).

Medical personnel from the National Assembly Clinic, led by Dr. B.O. Bernard, examined the body, which was found in a sleeping position on the back seat of the vehicle. The remains were later transferred to Asokoro District Hospital, but due to the advanced stage of decomposition, the hospital declined to accept them.

The Tiv Community and Youth Group, led by Mr. Justin Atsaigba, subsequently took custody of the body and conducted a burial the same day at Gbawu Community, on the border between AMAC and Kuje Area Councils.

In a statement, the management of the National Assembly emphasized that the deceased was neither a staff member nor an authorized person within the complex, adding that the body was not found on Assembly grounds as earlier reported.

The police investigation into the incident is still ongoing.

The National Assembly Legislative Digest

## PRAGMATIC LEGISLATION IN ACTION

Paul Eneojoh



**S**ince its inauguration in June 2023, Nigeria's 10th National Assembly has demonstrated a pragmatic legislative approach aimed at addressing the country's most pressing challenges. Not only has this Assembly promoted legislative efficiency, it has also strengthened governance outcomes and improved citizens' quality of life, through purposeful lawmaking, strategic collaboration and people-centred reforms.

One of the hallmarks of the 10th Assembly's legislative success has been its emphasis on collaboration within and across party lines. This cooperative spirit has fostered a conducive environment for consensus-building on critical national issues.

By facilitating joint ownership of key legislative initiatives, the Assembly has enhanced policy continuity and reduced vulnerability to political transitions. For example, the Assembly's record of reviewing well over 1,000 bills in its first two years, with 65.3% passing second reading and 51 of those receiving presidential assent, is a demonstration of its broad legislative engagement and cross-bench cooperation.

Similarly, the Investments and Securities Act, 2025 and tax-reform bills are part of the Assembly's interventions aimed at deepening the financial sector and stimulating investment.

Through these initiatives, the 10th Assembly seeks to build a robust and

sustainable economic framework capable of generating employment, reducing poverty and positioning Nigeria for long-term development. Continuous stakeholder engagement remains key to the success of these reforms.

Given Nigeria's evolving security landscape, the 10th Assembly has taken decisive steps to fortify the nation's internal security architecture. Legislative actions have included increased funding for security agencies, the establishment of frameworks for community policing and targeted responses to terrorism, banditry and cyber threats. For instance, the House mid-term review highlights the passage of the Cybercrimes (Prohibition, Prevention, etc.) Act, 2024 and the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons Act, 2024 among other security-sector reforms.

These measures not only reflect a holistic approach to security but also prioritise the prevention, collaboration and respect for human rights while ensuring that every Nigerian feels safe in their communities.

Recognising health and education as pillars of national development, the Assembly has advanced legislation to improve healthcare access, quality and funding as well as to enhance educational standards and inclusivity. Legislative efforts have focused on improving school infrastructure, teacher capacity and equitable access, especially for vulnerable populations.



For example, in its scorecard by the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, the 10th Assembly observed that allocations to education increased from 5.7 % in 2021 to at least 8.2 % in 2023/2024 and health allocations rose to 5.46 % in 2024.

By promoting accessible and quality education and healthcare, the 10th Assembly aims to empower citizens, strengthen human capital and contribute to sustainable national development.

Integrity in governance remains a core value of the 10th Assembly. Laws and policies have been advanced to strengthen anti-corruption mechanisms, ensure fiscal responsibility and entrench transparency in public administration. While names of specific Acts are still surfacing public discourse, the Assembly's impressive legislative output reflects institutional momentum toward accountability.

Through open legislative processes, robust oversight and citizen participation, the Assembly is building public confidence and institutional credibility. Its unwavering commitment to accountability is vital for entrenching a culture of good governance in Nigeria.

In recognition of the critical role of youth and women in national development, the Assembly has also prioritised legislation that promotes empowerment, inclusivity and equal opportunity. These include initiatives encouraging youth participation in governance, expanding economic access for women and ensuring equitable representation in leadership and decision-making.

While there has been no comprehensive Act, for instance, in the area of gender may yet be broadly highlighted in the media, the Assembly's legislative agenda reflects this

inclusive orientation in principle and policy. Measures such as these, signal a progressive shift toward inclusive governance and also reflects the diversity, aspirations and potential of Nigeria's population.

The 10th Assembly has also placed environmental protection and climate action at the forefront of its legislative agenda. Deliberations and bills have focused on promoting renewable energy,

**Legislative success is not measured by the number of bills introduced but by the lives improved through them. The Assembly's cooperative spirit has transformed statistics into stories of national progress.**

conserving biodiversity, mitigating pollution and addressing the impacts of climate change. For instance, the passage of the Electricity Act (Amendment) Bill, 2023, aimed at improving the electricity sector and promoting renewable energy, is one of the economic and infrastructure reform bills of this Assembly.

These legislative efforts demonstrate a proactive commitment to safeguarding Nigeria's natural heritage while advancing

sustainable development goals. Effective implementation and cross-sectoral collaboration will be essential in achieving long-term environmental resilience.

A notable aspect of the Assembly's legislative practice is its commitment to public engagement. By institutionalising mechanisms for stakeholder input through public hearings, consultations, town hall meetings, the House's open-week programme and digital platforms, the 10th Assembly ensures that legislative outputs reflect citizens' voices and aspirations.

This participatory approach enhances transparency, strengthens legislative legitimacy and reinforces the principle that democracy thrives when people are active participants in governance.

In conclusion, the 10th National Assembly has distinguished itself through a pragmatic, inclusive and reform-driven legislative approach. By prioritising collaboration, economic diversification, security, social reform and transparency, it has positioned itself as a responsive institution committed to national progress.

As Nigeria continues to navigate complex governance challenges, the Assembly's sustained dedication to pragmatic law making would remain pivotal in shaping effective policies and delivering on citizens' expectations.

Ultimately, its legacy will be measured not only by the laws it passes but by the tangible improvements those laws bring to the lives of Nigerians.

Paul Eneojoh writes from the National Assembly Library Trust Funds and can be reached on +234 806 535 8968

# TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TAKES CENTER STAGE AT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY TRAINING

Asma'u A. Baikie



The recently concluded training for Deputy Directors and Assistant Directors of the National Assembly provided a refreshing and impactful learning experience centered on the theme of "Enhancing Institutional Value through Disciplined Execution." The programme emphasized the need for participants to aspire to become transformational leaders, those who inspire change and purpose, rather than transactional leaders who focus solely on routine exchanges.

Held at the Congress Hall, Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, the two-day training was facilitated by experts from the Institute of National Transformation (INT). It featured interactive presentations, intensive lectures and instructive films, designed to promote dedication to duty, discipline and a renewed mindset among participants.

Participants were also encouraged to make personal commitments toward changing entrenched workplace habits and fostering greater patriotism. The sessions covered the following topics:

- The ROI Methodology – Lessons from Singapore
- Transformational vs. Transactional Leadership
- Good to Great Methodology – Culture Matters
- The Four Disciplines of Execution: Leading the Change
- Becoming a Person of Value

The Clerk to the National Assembly (CNA), Mr. Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq., represented by the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly (DCNA), Engr. Bashir A. Yero, commended the initiative during both the opening and closing ceremonies. He charged participants to apply the knowledge gained to enhance institutional capacity and service delivery within the National Assembly.

Engr. Yero further urged staff not to allow the momentum of the training to fade but to exemplify the principles of discipline, commitment and patriotism, becoming role models to their subordinates and contributing to national transformation with little or no supervision.

The Institute of National Transformation, founded over two decades ago by Professor Vincent Anigbogu, has been at the forefront of leadership reorientation and national development. Drawing lessons from Lee Kuan Yew's transformation of Singapore and Nelson Mandela's exemplary leadership, the training featured film screenings on both leaders to reinforce practical lessons in vision-driven governance and moral integrity.

In the Communiqué issued at the end of the training programme, participants expressed profound appreciation to the Clerk to the National Assembly, Mr. Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq., for initiating such an inspiring and thought-provoking training. They also commended the Directorate of Human Resources and Staff Development for organizing a training that promises to significantly enhance efficiency, professionalism and patriotic service delivery within the National Assembly.

# NEWS FROM OTHER PARLIAMENTS



Spain

## Parliament to Consider Law Ending Daylight Saving Time

Spain's Parliament is preparing to debate a new proposal that would formally end the long-standing practice of changing clocks twice a year. The initiative seeks to align Spain with growing calls across Europe to abolish daylight saving time. Prime Minister Sánchez described the practice as outdated and disruptive, saying it no longer produces meaningful energy savings and instead affects citizens' well-being and productivity.

Under the proposal, Parliament would adopt a national position calling for the European Union to finally abolish daylight saving time by 2026. Lawmakers are expected to debate not only whether to abolish clock changes but also which time system Spain should adopt permanently between standard time or summer time. The issue is particularly complex because Spain's current time zone already runs an hour ahead of its geographical position.

## Parliament Approves Three-Year Military Mandate for Operations in Syria and Iraq

Turkey: The Grand National Assembly of Türkiye has approved a motion extending Turkey's military mandate to conduct operations in neighbouring Syria and Iraq for another three years, the longest such authorisation since its first cross-border intervention in 2016. The extension enables President Erdogan and the armed forces to maintain and launch operations in these theatres until at least late 2028, effectively insulating the mandate from any potential shift in parliamentary power.

Supporters of the extension argue it is a necessary safeguard for national security, citing the ongoing threats posed by the

While the government frames the move as a measure to improve quality of life and align Spain with scientific recommendations, opposition parties have questioned its timing. Some critics claim that reviving the daylight-saving debate may distract from more pressing domestic issues. Others, however, acknowledge that parliamentary deliberation on the matter is overdue, given broad public support for ending clock changes.



Turkey

## NEWS FROM OTHER PARLIAMENTS



Kenya  
Parliament Passes Ground-Breaking Crypto Asset Law

In a decisive move toward digital financial innovation, Kenya's legislature has enacted a new law to regulate digital assets and foster investment in the sector. The National Assembly of Kenya approved the Virtual Asset Service Providers Bill in October, aiming to bring clarity and oversight to cryptocurrencies and other virtual assets. The legislation designates the Central Bank of Kenya as the licensing authority for the issuance of stablecoins and virtual assets, while the Capital Markets Authority of Kenya will oversee exchanges and trading platforms.

Kenyan lawmakers say this regulatory clarity is expected to drive significant investment into fintech and crypto-asset markets. The chairman of the parliamentary finance committee believes the law will position Kenya as a gateway into Africa for digital-asset commerce, particularly appealing to younger adults who are increasingly using virtual assets for trading and payments. The law also addresses longstanding concerns about the role of anonymous digital transactions in undermining currencies in emerging economies. Global regulators had previously warned that rapid growth in U.S. dollar-backed stablecoins could threaten the stability of local monetary systems. Kenya's version draws on regulatory models from the United States and the United Kingdom, marking a shift from its pioneering mobile-money model to a broader digital-asset strategy.

With the bill now passed, the next step is its signing into law by President William Ruto. Once in effect, the regulatory framework is expected to reinforce Kenya's status as a leader in African fintech innovation, offering a robust environment for both domestic and international investors.

## EU Parliament to Reopen Review of Major Corporate Sustainability Law after pushback from US and Qatar



The European Parliament has voted to reopen deliberations on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD), signalling a fresh round of amendments to the law aimed at holding large companies accountable for environmental and human-rights abuses in their global operations. The move came amid mounting pressure from the United States and Qatar, both of which warned that the rule could disrupt critical energy supplies and undermine broader trade and investment ties with the EU. Lawmakers now plan to finalise Parliament's negotiating position at a designated plenary session in November, before engaging in discussions with the European Council and other EU institutions with a view to approving the legislation before the end of the year.

As the process unfolds, key questions remain over how far the law will be scaled back and whether certain obligations such as mandatory transition plans will be eliminated. The outcome will have major implications for how deeply companies are held to account for their supply-chain practices and how the EU balances sustainability ambitions with economic competitiveness.

The Parliament of Ghana has achieved a commendable ranking in the recently released Africa Open Parliament Index, securing the second place among 33 national legislatures across Africa with an overall score of 77.60%. This places Ghana just behind the Parliament of South Africa, which achieved a top score of 79.69%.

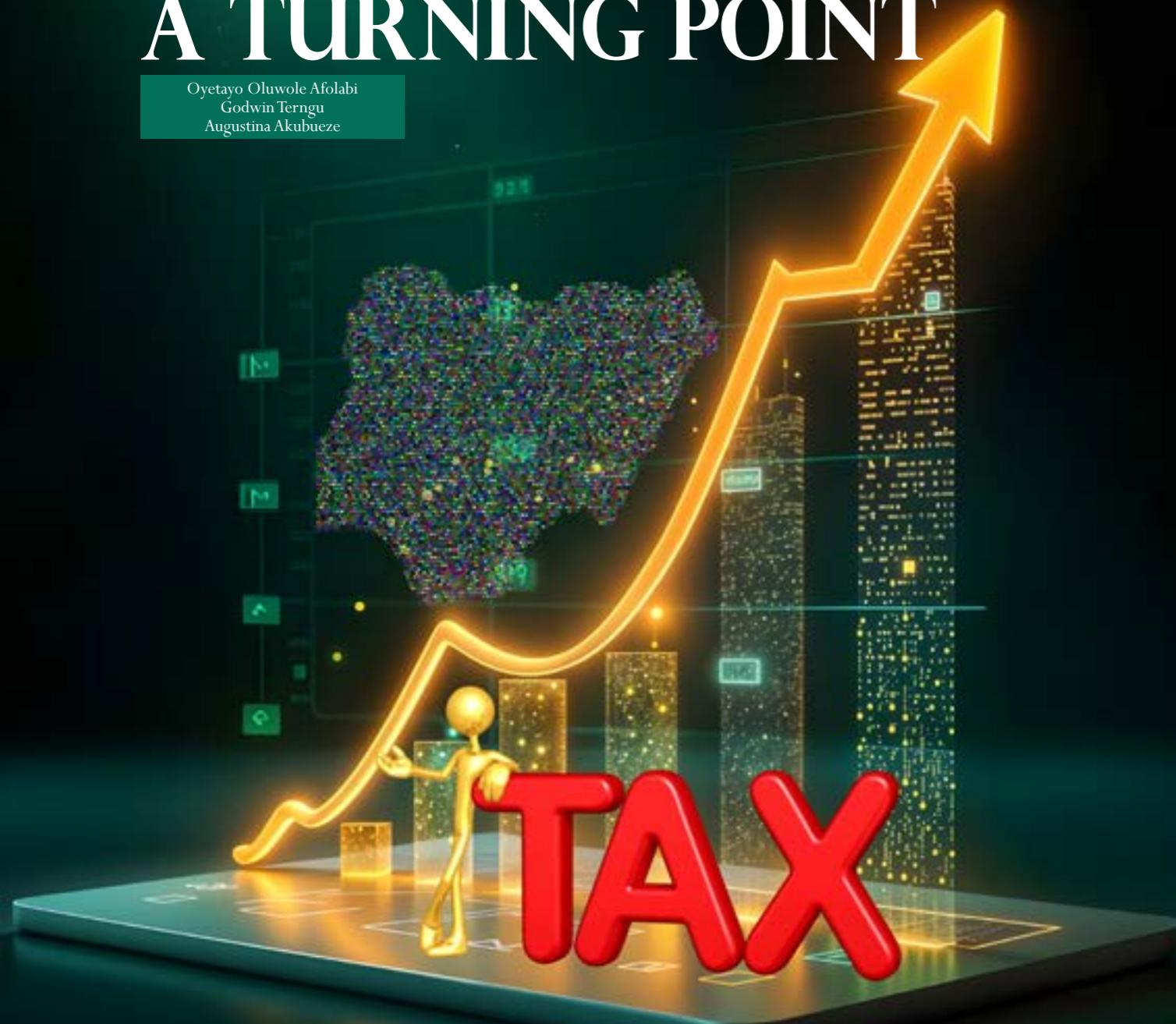
According to the index metrics, Ghana's performance underscores its leadership in legislative transparency in West Africa, where it continues to hold the top regional position. The ranking reflects improvements in areas such as timely publication of parliamentary documentation, open sessions for public access and structured procedures for citizen inquiries.

Despite the strong overall showing, the report also highlights areas requiring further attention. While Ghana scored well in transparency and civic participation, it lagged in accountability measures. According to stakeholders, the gap suggests that while the Parliament is more open in terms of information, converting that openness into effective citizen oversight remains a challenge.

Looking ahead, the Ghanaian Parliament will be tested on how it leverages this strong ranking into tangible outcomes—ensuring public trust, enhancing legislative impact and increasing institutional responsiveness. Its leadership in the region sets a standard, but sustained effort will be needed to translate transparency into real-world accountability and meaningful participation.

# NIGERIA'S 2025 TAX REFORM ACTS: A TURNING POINT

Oyetayo Oluwole Afolabi  
Godwin Tengu  
Augustina Akubueze



*A New Chapter in Nigeria's Fiscal History: Nigeria's recent tax reform, signed into law on 26 June 2025 and scheduled to take effect on 1 January 2026, represents one of the most consequential legislative achievements in the nation's history.*



President Bola Ahmed Tinubu approved the package, known collectively as the Tax Reform Acts, comprising four statutes:

1. The Nigeria Tax Act (NTA)
2. The Nigeria Tax Administration Act (NTAA)
3. The Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act (NRSA)
4. The Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act (JRBA)

Together, these laws replace more than a dozen outdated fiscal statutes and mark a systemic shift away from piecemeal amendments toward a coherent, modern framework designed to enhance efficiency, transparency and fairness in revenue administration.

Taxation has long been central to Nigeria's fiscal and political evolution, from the Raisman Commission in the 1950s, which standardised fiscal principles and decentralised taxing powers, to the introduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) in the 1990s, aimed at diversifying government revenue beyond oil.

More recent efforts include the Finance Acts (2019–2022), which expanded the tax net to cover digital services and the Petroleum Industry Act (2021), which restructured oil and gas taxation. In 2023, the Presidential Committee on Fiscal Policy and Tax Reforms, chaired by Taiwo Oyedele, was inaugurated to harmonise taxes, simplify compliance and improve collections. The Tax Reform Acts are the culmination of that trajectory, far-reaching in ambition,

integrative in design and unprecedented in scope.

## From Contention to Consensus

The legislative path was anything but smooth. Introduced in late 2024, the bills initially triggered strong opposition. The National Economic Council urged their withdrawal, arguing that consultations were inadequate, while the Northern Governors' Forum warned that the proposed VAT distribution formula would disadvantage their region.

Business associations raised compliance concerns and civil society organisations questioned the fairness of new levies. Yet, rather than retreating, the legislative process expanded. Public hearings in February 2025 gathered wide-ranging inputs from professional bodies, private-sector representatives and civic voices.

President Tinubu encouraged stakeholders to work through the National Assembly, while Oyedele stressed that the old VAT framework had long been inequitable.

The National Assembly's leadership responded by deliberately reviewing its calendar to create room for negotiation and compromise. The House of Representatives passed the bills on 18 March 2025, followed by the Senate on 8 May 2025. The President's assent on 26 June 2025 marked the culmination of months of dialogue, revisions and consensus-building.

The success was not only in the technical design but also in the political process, transforming fierce opposition into broad consensus on one of Nigeria's most divisive

fiscal questions: how to tax and how to share.

## Key Provisions and Institutional Changes

- i. The Nigeria Tax Act (NTA) consolidates corporate, personal, capital gains and value-added taxes into a single statute.
- ii. Small businesses with annual turnover of N50 million or less and total fixed assets not exceeding N250 million are exempt from corporate tax.
- iii. Larger firms face a 30 percent corporate rate plus a 4 percent development levy.
- iv. A Domestic Minimum Effective Tax Rate ensures multinationals pay at least 15 percent, in line with emerging global norms.
- v. Individuals earning N800,000 or less annually are exempt from personal income tax, while low-income earners receive a rent deduction capped at N500,000.
- vi. Capital gains tax now extends to digital assets, including cryptocurrencies.
- vii. VAT remains at 7.5 percent, but now covers e-commerce and non-resident suppliers.
- viii. A 5 percent fossil-fuel surcharge, excluding kerosene and gas, promotes a shift toward cleaner energy.
- ix. The Nigeria Tax Administration Act (NTAA) standardises procedures across all levels of government, making Taxpayer Identification Numbers (TINs) mandatory for financial transactions. It empowers banks to report large inflows and outflows, strengthens penalties for non-compliance and authorises authorities to seize assets from persistent defaulters.



The Act also introduces faster refund timelines and advance rulings to support business certainty.

x. The Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act (NRSA) dissolves the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) and establishes the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), a more autonomous, performance-driven institution responsible for collecting federal tax and non-tax revenues. The NRS, led by a Senate-confirmed Executive Chair, will retain 4 percent of non-petroleum collections to fund its operations.

xi. The Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act (JRBA) provides a framework for intergovernmental coordination, bringing together state tax authorities, the FCT and key agencies such as Customs and Immigration. It will manage a central taxpayer database, publish periodic reports on exemptions and resolve jurisdictional disputes.

xii. New accountability institutions include the Tax Appeal Tribunal (with zonal divisions) and the Office of the Tax Ombud, established to investigate abuses and protect taxpayer rights.

#### Fiscal Impact and National Significance

By embedding fairness and transparency, the reforms seek to redefine the relationship between citizens and the state. For households, exemptions and deductions offer relief amid inflationary pressures. For businesses, especially SMEs, simplified compliance rules reduce administrative burdens. For government, consolidated statutes and digitized systems promise enhanced efficiency and credibility. The timing could not be more critical. Nigeria faces double-digit inflation, a volatile

exchange rate and a debt-service burden consuming a large portion of revenue. With a tax-to-GDP ratio of just 7 percent among the lowest in Africa, the country's fiscal space has been extremely constrained. By contrast, Kenya's ratio stands at about 15 percent, South Africa's above 20 percent and Ghana's around 13 percent.

Closing this gap is not merely a revenue issue; it is essential for maintaining state legitimacy and fiscal sustainability. By broadening the tax base, digitising administration and aligning with global minimum tax standards, the new framework positions Nigeria to meet international expectations while protecting social equity through progressive exemptions.

#### Implementation and Legislative Oversight

Implementation, however, presents real challenges. Rolling out new digital systems nationwide will require investment in infrastructure and capacity building, especially in rural areas with weak

connectivity. Preserving the autonomy of the NRS against political interference will test both political will and institutional discipline. Managing federal-state relations under the JRBA will also require sustained legislative mediation to prevent jurisdictional disputes. Public trust remains crucial. If enforcement is viewed as arbitrary or punitive, voluntary compliance could decline. The fossil-fuel surcharge, although modest, may spark public debate in a hydrocarbon-dependent economy, particularly if inflationary pressures persist.

The National Assembly's oversight role will therefore be critical. Through its committees on Finance, Appropriations and Public Accounts, the legislature will monitor implementation, assess performance and ensure that the spirit of transparency envisioned by the Acts is fully realised.

#### Conclusion: A Legacy of Legislative Vision

What distinguishes the Tax Reform Acts of 2025 is not only their substance but also

the ethos of consensus and inclusion that shaped them. In a country often divided by regional and political lines, lawmakers, governors and stakeholders demonstrated that dialogue and patience can produce durable reform.

As a legacy legislation of the 10th National Assembly, these Acts reposition Nigeria's fiscal system for efficiency, fairness and credibility. They embed modernisation into governance, expand fiscal space and chart a new course toward resilience in a post-oil economy. The challenges ahead remain immense, but the fact of their passage, achieved through democratic consensus in the face of fierce opposition, marks a true inflection point in Nigeria's fiscal and political evolution.

Ultimately, the Tax Reform Acts are more than just laws; they are a reaffirmation of legislative leadership proof that equity, transparency and dialogue can produce bold, enduring solutions to Nigeria's most pressing national challenges.





# THE GAINS OF NIGERIA'S TAX REFORM ACT 2025

Owolaye Shola T.

**O**n June 26, 2025, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu signed into law a comprehensive tax reform act that consolidates four new Acts: the Nigeria Tax Act (NTA), the Nigeria Tax Administration Act (NTAA), the Nigeria Revenue Service Act (NRSA) and the Joint Revenue Board Act (JRBA).

The 2025 Tax Reform Acts are aimed at revitalizing Nigeria's fiscal landscape, increasing domestic revenue and promoting economic inclusivity. This article examines the gains of Nigeria Tax Reform Act 2025, exploring potential impact on revenue generation, economic efficiency, administrative reform, equity and national competitiveness. While the success of these acts will ultimately depend on its implementation, the reform represents a foundational shift toward a more sustainable and equitable tax system within the Nigerian economy.

For decades, Nigeria has maintained a record of low tax-to-GDP ratios. The country's over-reliance on oil revenues, coupled with a fragmented and inefficient tax structure, has significantly limited its fiscal capacity. With a tax-to-GDP ratio of less than 10% compared to the African average of 15% and the OECD average of 34%, Nigeria has struggled with rising debt dependency, underinvestment in infrastructure and inadequate public service delivery.

To address these challenges, the government introduced and passed four landmark tax reform acts, initiating sweeping changes to the national tax system. The reform is one

of the most ambitious fiscal policy shifts in Nigeria's democratic era, focusing on expanding the taxpayer base, simplifying tax administration, protecting low-income earners and digitizing compliance mechanisms.

It is therefore essential to assess both the potential and the realized gains of these reforms as their implementation unfolds.

## A New Fiscal Framework

The 2025 tax reform is anchored on four core legislative pillars, each designed to modernize Nigeria's tax framework by leveraging technology and improving institutional coordination:

1. Nigeria Tax Act (2025) – Harmonizes and updates existing tax laws, broadens tax definitions and introduces new tax rules.
2. Nigeria Tax Administration Act (2025) – Reorganizes tax processes, audit procedures, penalties and filing systems.
3. Nigeria Revenue Service (Establishment) Act (2025) – Establishes the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS), replacing the former Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS).
4. Joint Revenue Board (Establishment) Act (2025) – Coordinates intergovernmental tax administration and creates dispute resolution bodies such as the Tax Tribunal and the Tax Ombudsman.

## Improved Revenue Mobilization

One of the key expected gains from the 2025 Tax Reform Act is improved tax revenue

mobilization. The reforms aim to broaden the tax base by:

- i. Taxing digital assets and previously untaxed income categories;
- ii. Improving VAT input-output reconciliation;
- iii. Introducing minimum effective tax rates for multinational corporations; and
- iv. Reducing revenue leakages through real-time electronic invoicing and digital audit trails.

These measures are projected to increase Nigeria's tax-to-GDP ratio from approximately 9% in 2024 to between 12% and 13% by 2027, marking a significant improvement in fiscal performance (PwC Nigeria, 2025).

## Equity and Progressivity

The reforms also strengthen equity and progressivity in the tax system, including:

- i. Exemption for Low-Income Earners: Personal income tax now excludes individuals earning N800,000 or less per annum, effectively removing the tax burden on low-income workers. Conversely, higher-income earners are taxed at progressive rates of up to 25%. The Act also increases the exemption threshold for compensation related to employment loss or injury from N10 million to N50 million.
- ii. Small Business Relief: Small companies with gross turnover of N100 million or less and fixed assets not exceeding N250 million are now exempt from CIT, CGT and the 4% Development Levy. This provision supports entrepreneurship and

business expansion.

- iii. Clarified Tax Residency Rules: The reform provides clearer residency definitions. An individual is deemed a tax resident if they spend at least 183 days in Nigeria, maintain a permanent home or have substantial economic or family ties the tax year.
- iv. Global Income Taxation: Resident individuals are now taxed on global income, while non-residents are taxed only on income earned from duties performed in Nigeria.
- v. Wealth-Based Taxation: High-net-worth individuals and multinational corporations face stricter reporting obligations and mandatory tax floors.
- vi. Expanded Reliefs: The exemption threshold for compensation due to job loss or injury has been raised to N50 million, offering improved protection for affected individuals.

These measures make Nigeria's tax system fairer and more progressive, ensuring that higher earners contribute proportionately more to national development.

## Digital Transformation of Tax Systems

All registered businesses are now required to adopt e-invoicing and real-time VAT systems that comply with NRS technology standards. This shift represents a major step toward aligning Nigeria with global best practices in digital compliance.

By 2026, all registered enterprises are expected to fully transition to digital VAT systems and corporate tax e-filing, enhancing transparency, accountability and traceability of transactions. The integration of big data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) in tax administration will enable the government to make evidence-based fiscal decisions, monitor compliance and reduce fraud. This digital transformation lays the foundation for a modern and transparent tax system that improves revenue mobilization and aligns Nigeria's fiscal operations with international norms.

## VAT at Zero Rate on Essential Goods and Services

The 2025 reform expands the scope of zero-

rated VAT items to support low-income households and essential sectors. These now include basic food items, pharmaceuticals, electricity services, medical equipment, educational materials, tuition fees and non-oil exports.

Businesses selling zero-rated goods and services can now recover input VAT, an improvement over the previous system that enhances cash flow and encourages operational sustainability.

## Economic Growth and Investment Promotion

The reform emphasizes fairness, efficiency and transparency as tools for strengthening investor confidence. It introduces tax credits for capital investments, incentives for research and development and reduced compliance burdens for medium-sized enterprises. These measures aim to stimulate private-sector participation, encourage innovation and promote productivity. By aligning Nigeria's framework with the OECD/G20 Inclusive Framework on BEPS and AfCFTA principles, the reform enhances Nigeria's competitiveness and global credibility.

## Investment Incentives and Economic Development Measures

The new Economic Development Incentive (EDI) scheme replaces the Pioneer Status Incentive, granting a 5% annual tax credit on qualifying capital expenditures for up to five years. This rewards real investment in productive assets rather than speculative or paper-based claims.

Unused credits can be carried forward for five additional years, after which they expire, ensuring accountability and efficiency. The reforms also tighten compliance for capital allowances, restricting benefits for assets that bypass VAT or import duties to discourage informal procurement.

## Other Structural Reforms

Free Zones and Export Processing Zones: Companies operating within these zones remain exempt from export taxes but face stricter compliance rules if trading domestically.

**Capital Gains Tax:** CGT now applies to indirect share transfers, targeting offshore holding structures with Nigerian asset value.

**Development Levy:** A unified 4% Development Levy replaces overlapping sectoral levies such as the Tertiary Education Tax, NASENI Levy, NHIS Levy and Police Trust Fund Levy.

## Governance and Dispute Resolution

- The establishment of the Nigeria Revenue Service (NRS) replaces the FIRS as the central tax authority, providing greater autonomy and a stronger digital infrastructure.
- The Joint Revenue Board (JRB) promotes harmonization between federal, state and local governments, eliminating overlapping levies and fostering intergovernmental collaboration.
- The Tax Ombud Office provides a neutral platform for taxpayers' complaints, while reforms to the Tax Appeal Tribunal (TAT) including shorter adjudication timelines and digital hearings improve efficiency and trust.
- A codified Taxpayer Bill of Rights now guarantees access to information, fair treatment and transparent appeal processes, reinforcing accountability and the rule of law.

## Sectoral Impacts

The reform encourages formalization in the informal sector, improves oversight in oil and gas and captures new revenue streams in the digital economy, including gig work, crypto assets and e-commerce.

In conclusion, the 2025 Nigeria Tax Reform Act marks a pivotal milestone in addressing long-standing fiscal inefficiencies. By enhancing equity, modernizing administration and embedding international best practices, it sets a foundation for sustainable development.

Its success, however, depends on effective implementation, strong institutional capacity and sustained political will. If properly executed, the reforms could redefine Nigeria's tax culture, strengthen fiscal resilience, attract investment and promote a fairer, more prosperous society.

# JIGAWA STATE

## BUILDING GOVERNANCE & SOCIAL ORDER THROUGH LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS



The Jigawa State House of Assembly, has witnessed a year of intense legislative activity. These efforts span across moral-governance reforms, fiscal frameworks, environmental protection and local-government oversight.

The following legislative efforts highlight the major bills and laws passed by the Jigawa State House of Assembly:

### 1. The Hisbah Board Act

- The Assembly passed a law to establish the Jigawa State Hisbah Board, replacing the earlier Hisbah Advisory Committee Law of 2004.
- The new law formalised the board as a statutory body with jurisdiction across the state, tasked with promoting moral values, neighbourhood surveillance, crime detection & prevention.
- On the 23rd of July 2025, the Governor signed the Bill into law.
- Notably, the Act provides the legal backing for the Board's operations, its administrative structure, powers and functions.
- This law institutionalises moral governance structures in Jigawa, state, which is in line with the broader trends of Hisbah institutionalisation in the northern parts of Nigeria.

### 2. 2025 Appropriation/Budget Act

- The Assembly passed the 2025 fiscal year budget for Jigawa State: approx. N698.3 billion for the state government and N184.4 billion for the 27 local governments.
- The summary breakdown includes ~N538 billion for capital development,

- ~N90.7 billion to personnel, ~N70.2 billion to other recurrent expenditures (as reported).
- This budget marks the financial framework for the state's "Innovation & Transformation" agenda for 2025.

### 3. Supplementary Budget & Environmental Protection Act

- The Assembly approved a supplementary appropriation of about N75.1 billion (N58 billion for state government and N17.1 billion for local governments) in 2025.
- On the same day the supplementary budget was signed into law, the Governor also assented to the Environmental Protection Bill, Jigawa State aimed at strengthening sustainable environmental protection in the State.

### 4. Other Key Bills Passed / Assented

- The legislature also passed a number of other significant laws in 2025, basically to improve the governance architecture in education, technology, identity management, local government, health and electoral reform. Highlights include:

#### Assented Laws

- Jigawa State Senior Secondary Education Board Law
- Information & Digital Technology Agency Law
- Resident Identity Management Law
- Independent Electoral Commission (Amendment) Law No.1
- Local Government Councils Amendment Law (No.6)
- Local Government Councils Supplementary Appropriation Law

Indeed, 2025 marks a robust legislative year for Jigawa State. The Assembly has moved beyond routine budgeting to structural reforms in moral governance (Hisbah), fiscal agility (supplementary budgets, appropriation law), regulatory oversight (electricity, digital tech, identity) and social infrastructure (education, health, local government).

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# NIGERIA AT 65: A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, HERITAGE AND DIVERSITY

Reigneth Nwaimo and Ngozi Opara



Nigeria marked her 65th Independence Day with a celebration that was as colourful as her people; a reminder that our cultural heritage remains the fabric of our unity. The National Assembly Library served as a splendid venue for an evening devoted to celebrating Nigeria's rich culture, heritage and diversity. This remarkable event formed a key part of the Nigeria at 65 festivities, offering guests an immersive experience that honoured the nation's enduring traditions and promising future.

October 1st has always been more than a date on the calendar for Nigerians; it is a mirror that reflects how far Nigeria has come. On that day, the National Assembly Library Trust Fund at the Three Arms Zone came alive in a way that words can barely capture. It wasn't just another ceremony to mark Nigeria's

Independence Day; it was a living, breathing portrait of who we are as a nation: colourful, diverse and beautifully connected.

The theme for this year's celebration, "Cultural Heritage and Diversity: Our Strength, Our Identity," was more than a slogan. It was a story that unfolded in the attire, the music, the food and the faces of everyone who gathered to honour sixty-five years of nationhood.

The air was full of warmth from the sheer vibrancy that surrounded it. There was colour every where: flowing agbadas, neatly embroidered isiagu, bold ankara prints and shimmering lace. One thing was sure, everyone came dressed, not just to impress, but to represent our cultural heritage and diversity.

As dignitaries arrived, lawmakers, ministers,

cultural representatives and citizens, the sense of unity deepened. The event began with the national anthem, sung with reverence. In that moment, one could feel the weight of history; of independence earned, of dreams still unfolding. The flags waved gently outside and for a fleeting second, all differences faded. We were simply Nigerians.

## Welcome Address and Conservation Awareness

The event commenced with a warm welcome from Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba, Executive Secretary of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF). In his address, Hon. Nwawuba announced the library's forthcoming initiatives aimed at raising awareness about a special species of gorillas in Cross River State that is currently facing extinction. He encouraged attendees to savour the evening's culinary offerings,





which showcased delicacies from Nigeria's many cultures, much to the delight of all present.

#### Diplomatic and Legislative Attendance

The event continued with remarks from representatives of the National Assembly and invited dignitaries, all echoing the same message: that Nigeria's greatest gift is her diversity. But it was the cultural showcases that truly gave those words life.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, who was represented by the Minority Leader of the House, Kingsley Ogundu Chinda, delivered the Goodwill message. The Majority Leader who was also present offered his own words of congratulations.

Troupes from across the six geopolitical zones performed, each one painting a piece of Nigeria's story through rhythm and movement. It was beyond entertainment; it was identity in motion. Watching them depicted what it meant to belong to a country of many voices.

Between the laughter and music, there were quiet moments as the different speeches spoke to the heart of the day. Everyone present understood that cultural heritage is not just a relic of our past rather a living treasure that continues to shape our national identity. It is the thread that ties our past to our future. It reminds us that while our languages and traditions may differ, our shared hope remains one: the hope of a united, peaceful and prosperous Nigeria.

But perhaps the most reflective moment of the day came from the President's Independence live broadcast. President Bola Ahmed Tinubu's voice filled the air: "I am pleased to report that we have finally turned the corner. The worst is over. Yesterday's

pains are giving way to relief," he declared.

His words carried both reassurance and realism, a message to a nation that has endured hardship but continues to hope. He acknowledged the tough road Nigeria had travelled, the economic storms weathered and the resilience of her people who have refused to give up.

The President recalled inheriting "a near-collapsed economy caused by decades of fiscal policy distortions," and spoke of bold reforms, the removal of fuel subsidy, the unification of foreign exchange and redirection of resources to sectors that truly matter: education, healthcare, agriculture and infrastructure.

With the speech, there was relief and reflection. For all the political divides and differing opinions, there was one truth everyone could agree on: Nigeria has endured and Nigeria is still standing.

The President spoke of the progress in transportation, the rail lines nearing completion, the coastal and northern highways underway and the 40% growth recorded in rail and water transport in just over two years. He highlighted the steady improvement of economic indices: a GDP growth of 4.23%, inflation dropping to its lowest in three years and foreign reserves rising to \$42 billion, the highest since 2019.

More than the numbers, however, the tone of the address lingered. It was not hopeful, a call for collective action. "We are racing against time," the President said. "All hands must be on deck to fast-track development and deliver the promise of a greater Nigeria."

As the event progressed, people watched with amazement as cultural groups from

different parts of the country took turns to perform, each one adding a unique texture to the day's experience. Together, they told one story: that our diversity is not our divide, but our strength.

The gathering featured a vibrant mix of entertainment, including live music performances, fashion displays and spoken word presentations. Guests also enjoyed a variety of Nigerian dishes, representing the culinary diversity of the nation.

With the food, it was a feast that tasted like Nigeria itself. The culinary display was as diverse as the people. Tables were lined with Nigeria's most beloved traditional dishes. Every meal told its own story, a story of where we came from and what we share. The air was filled with the irresistible aroma of different delicacies that were more than a meal; it was a memory on a plate; a reminder that our culinary traditions are part of what unites us.

Guests moved from table to table, laughing, taking photos and sharing stories over plates of familiar food. The laughter came easily, the kind that only happens when people feel at home. You could feel a certain nostalgia too, an unspoken pride in where we've come from. As people greeted one another with laughter and hugs, there was that familiar warmth that defines Nigeria. No matter how diverse our tongues or tribes, there is always a way we find each other in joy.

The 65th Independence Day celebration was more than an event. It was a reflection, a reminder that despite our struggles, Nigeria's heartbeat is still strong. Our diversity is not a story of separation, but of togetherness. It is what makes us who we are: many voices, one people, one home.

As the day unfolded, the joy was contagious.



You could see it in the faces of the staff, in the smiles of visitors taking photographs. Even the dignitaries loosened up, laughing, clapping and exchanging jokes. There was an ease in the atmosphere that felt refreshing, almost sacred.

#### Diplomatic and Legislative Attendance

Standing there, it was hard not to think about what it all meant. Sixty-five years since independence; a story still being written, a country still learning, still growing, still hoping. That day at the National Assembly Library Trust Fund wasn't just another national event. It was a reminder of who we are, not a nation without its challenges, but one with an unbreakable spirit. A people who continue to find beauty in difference, who continue to dance, to sing, to believe.

Nigeria's story is far from finished. But on that Independence Day, it was clear that the threads holding us together: culture, diversity and shared identity are still strong, still vibrant and still capable of weaving

something beautiful.

The evening was marked by several memorable highlights. Guests enjoyed authentic Nigerian cuisine, admired captivating fashion displays and were entertained by live music and a stirring spoken word performance. A guided tour of the Library's artefact collection provided further insight into Nigeria's rich heritage. The event beautifully showcased the depth and vibrancy of the nation's culture at 65, serving as a fitting tribute to both its traditions and its future.

For all her struggles and triumphs, her debates and dreams, Nigeria remains a land of many tongues but one song. A land where cultural heritage is not just history, but identity; and diversity is not a challenge, but a gift.

And as the President said, the worst is over. The dawn of a renewed Nigeria has begun.



# PARLIAMENTARY SUSPENSION: BALANCING DISCIPLINE, DECORIUM, AND REPRESENTATION

Idowu Bakare

The recent suspension of Senator Natasha Akpoti-Uduaghan by the Nigerian Senate has once again drawn attention to the long-standing parliamentary power to discipline members through temporary suspension. In Nigeria, both chambers of the National Assembly reserve the right under their Standing Orders and Constitutional powers of self-regulation to sanction members for disorderly conduct, breach of privilege, or actions deemed unbecoming of a legislator.

Parliamentary suspension is not unique to Nigeria. Around the world, legislatures employ similar mechanisms to preserve decorum and ensure that debates are conducted within the bounds of parliamentary order. In the United Kingdom's House of Commons, the Speaker may "name" a Member for gross misconduct, after which the House can vote on a suspension; usually between five and twenty sitting days with pay withheld during that period. Likewise, India's Lok Sabha allows the Speaker to suspend a member for up to five days or for the remainder of the session for persistent disorder, while South Africa's Parliament, under its Powers, Privileges and Immunities Act, may suspend members without remuneration following an investigation by its disciplinary committee.

These disciplinary powers are rooted in the idea that a parliament must be able to maintain internal discipline without interference from the executive or judiciary. However, a parallel school of thought cautions that suspension, especially when lengthy or politically charged, can effectively silence the voices of constituents who elected the suspended lawmaker. In other words, it raises the question: does punishing a legislator also punish the people who sent them to Parliament?

In Nigeria, this question has reached the courts on several occasions. In *Abdulmumin Jibrin v. House of Representatives* (2016), the Federal High Court declared the lawmaker's 180-day suspension illegal, holding that it breached his constitutional right to fair hearing and his constituents'

right to representation. Similarly, courts in other jurisdictions have taken comparable views. In South Africa's landmark *De Lille v. Speaker of the National Assembly* (1998), the Constitutional Court ruled that suspension for speech-related conduct violated the principle of representative democracy since it penalised not only the member but also the electorate.

exercise of its disciplinary authority falls within global parliamentary norms. Yet, as comparative experiences show, such powers are best used with restraint and transparency. When grounded in due process, suspension strengthens parliamentary integrity; when prolonged

or perceived as excessive, it risks undermining the democratic contract between representatives and the represented. Ultimately, the goal should be to protect both, the dignity of the legislature and the voice of the people it exists to serve.



In conclusion, the Nigerian Senate's recent

## CNA ATTENDS ASGAP CONFERENCE, CALLS FOR STRONGER PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION TO DRIVE AFRICAN INTEGRATION



The Clerk to the National Assembly of Nigeria (CNA), Mr. Kamoru Ogunlana Esq., has called for renewed commitment among African parliaments to strengthen inter-parliamentary cooperation and deepen collaboration in implementing continental development agendas. He made the call while attending the 6th Annual Conference of the Association of Secretaries-General and Clerks of African Parliaments (ASGAP), which took place recently at the Pan-African Parliament in Midrand, South Africa, on the sidelines of the meetings of standing committees of the Pan African Parliament.

Jointly presided by Mr. Najib El Khadi, ASGAP Vice Chairperson and Ms. Lindiwe Khumalo, Clerk of the Pan-African Parliament, opened the session with calls for deeper cooperation to drive Africa's legislative and governance agenda.

"Parliaments must serve not just as national institutions, but as bridges linking our peoples and policies across Africa," Mr. Ogunlana stated. "By strengthening collaboration, sharing institutional knowledge and harmonising legislative processes, we can accelerate the domestication of AU treaties and create a framework that supports the Africa we all envision, peaceful, prosperous and people-centered."

The CNA also reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to active participation in continental parliamentary initiatives and pledged continued engagement with ASGAP and other inter-parliamentary networks. He praised the Pan-African Parliament and ASGAP leadership for sustaining platforms that promote institutional learning and peer support among parliamentary administrations.

Throughout the conference, delegates deliberated on strategies to enhance the efficiency of African legislatures, particularly in treaty ratification, policy harmonisation and budgetary oversight related to AU programmes. The meeting also resolved to establish stronger mechanisms for technical cooperation among clerks, promote digital transformation in parliamentary management and strengthen capacity-building for legislative staff.

The conference, which was attended by Clerks from over forty African parliaments, was the first to be held since the CNA assumed office. His presence at the conference reaffirmed Nigeria's role within Africa's parliamentary community and its continued advocacy for a more united and accountable governance framework across the continent.



## AFRICA'S PARLIAMENT BUDGET OFFICES UNITE TO STRENGTHEN FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Federal Capital Territory played host to one of the most significant gatherings of African legislators and fiscal experts as the National Assembly of Nigeria welcomed delegates from across the continent to the 8th African Network of Parliamentary Budget Offices (AN-PBO) Conference held from September 21 to 27, 2025. The event, which drew participants from 18 countries, focused on strengthening parliamentary budget institutions, improving fiscal oversight and deepening transparency in public finance management.

Organised under the supervision of the Clerk to the National Assembly, Mr. Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq., the week-long event was the product of months of detailed planning by a Central Planning Committee chaired by Mr. Godwin Ekenyong, Secretary of the Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary and Protocol. The committee's effective coordination of logistics, finance and media made Abuja 2025 a model for future AN-PBO events.

In his keynote address, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, Ph.D., GCON, said that responsible fiscal management and sustainable borrowing were essential to Africa's development. He underscored the importance of AN-PBOs in promoting accountability and evidence-based decision-making and reaffirmed Nigeria's commitment to institutionalising the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) as a permanent structure of the legislature.

The Clerk to the National Assembly, Mr. Ogunlana, urged participants to elevate their analytical capacity and adopt data-driven methodologies that make PBOs credible and non-partisan sources of fiscal information. "Parliamentary Budget Offices must go beyond routine fiscal reviews to become centres of knowledge and innovation that shape national development priorities," he said, stressing Nigeria's resolve to lead Africa in fiscal transparency.

Echoing this sentiment, Professor Dumisani

Jantjes, President of the AN-PBO Governing Council, described Abuja 2025 as "the most impactful and well-organised conference ever held." He lauded the National Assembly's hospitality and efficiency, noting that the real success of the conference would be measured by how participants apply lessons learned to strengthen their respective national budget offices and oversight systems.

The three-day technical sessions covered wide-ranging themes, including public debt management, gender-responsive budgeting, climate finance and sub-national fiscal oversight. Experts from Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, Gambia, Liberia, Zambia, Uganda, Tanzania and Cabo Verde shared insights on strengthening institutional independence and fiscal discipline. A key consensus emerged that effective PBOs must be legally empowered, adequately funded and structurally autonomous.

Delegates also toured major national landmarks such as the National Assembly Complex, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)



and the Nike Art Gallery, giving them a firsthand look at Nigeria's cultural and democratic heritage. The week concluded with a colourful Gala and Cultural Night at the Abuja Continental Hotel, celebrating African unity through music and dance.

At the closing Governing Council meeting, participants reaffirmed their commitment to inter-parliamentary cooperation, gender-inclusive and climate-sensitive budgeting and stronger legal frameworks for independent and well-funded budget offices. As delegates departed Abuja, there was broad agreement that the 2025 edition had set a new benchmark for collaboration and excellence in Africa's fiscal governance dialogue, strengthening the continent's collective resolve to manage public resources with transparency, integrity and purpose.



# Legislative LEXICON

- By-leave:** With the permission of every member present in the chamber
- Contempt:** Disobedience to the authority or orders of the house or interference with or obstruction of their work or work of the members.
- Cross Voting:** This Occurs when legislators vote against their party official position, often due to personal conviction or dissent with party lines.
- Disallowance:** The vetoing of subsidiary legislation by the parliament, which has the effect of repealing it.
- Filibuster:** A parliamentary tactic used to delay or block legislation by extending debate. Legislators use it to present a vote on a bill, often forcing negotiation or compromise.
- Hung Parliament:** A hung parliament occurs when no party or coalition gains an absolute majority after an election. It often leads to negotiation or coalition government to ensure stable leadership.
- Life of a Parliament:** the period of time from the first meeting of parliament to dissolution of the house.
- Noes:** The collective vote of members in the House of Parliament who oppose a proposal by voting "No".
- Parliamentary Precincts:** The area in which a Parliament House is situated and have certain regulatory powers.
- Prorogue the Parliament:** To end a session of parliament without dissolving the house and therefore without a subsequent election.
- Writs for an election:** Formal orders, issued by the presiding officer requiring that an election be held.

# THE HIGHS AND LOWS OF NIGERIA'S FOOTBALL HEROES: A TALE OF TRIUMPH AND TRIBULATION

Owolaye Shola T.

Nigeria is often referred to as the “Giant of Africa”—not just for its population or economy, but also for its proud sporting legacy, particularly in football. Over the decades, Nigeria's national teams—the Super Eagles (men) and the Super Falcons (women)—have dazzled on the world stage, delivering moments of pure magic and suffering heartbreakng defeats. Their journeys are stories of heroism, resilience, and the unbreakable spirit of a football-loving nation.

## The Super Eagles: A Legacy of Passion and Potential

The Super Eagles, Nigeria's senior men's national team, have long symbolized national pride. Their first major triumph came in 1980 when they won the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) on home soil. That victory marked the beginning of a deep bond between Nigerians and their team—a bond built on hope, expectation, and passionate loyalty.

### Success Stories:

The Super Eagles have lifted the AFCON trophy three times—1980, 1994, and 2013—cementing their place among Africa's elite. Since their debut at the 1994 FIFA World Cup, Nigeria has qualified for six out of seven tournaments up to 2018. They've reached the Round of 16 on three occasions. The Super Eagles' final push toward the 2026 FIFA World Cup felt like a cinematic drama, one part heroic, one part tragic, all wrapped in 210 minutes of football played in Rabat. Their 4–1 extra-time demolition of Gabon reminded the world of Nigeria's capacity for brilliance.

**A Night of Missed Chances vs DR Congo**  
Against DR Congo, Nigeria again started brilliantly—with Frank Onyeka scoring a third-minute opener, reminiscent of their 4–1 demolition of Gabon just days earlier. However, DR Congo's resilience shone through as Meschack Elia equalized in the 32nd minute, setting the stage for a gripping contest.

By the shootout, Nigeria looked like a team carrying the weight of African football on its shoulders. Congo, light and fearless, converted with icy precision. The 4–3 loss sealed Nigeria's exit and their World Cup dream evaporated.

Nigeria deserved to be in the final qualifying round. But the truth is simple and painful: you can't reach the World Cup on talent alone. Only a mentally prepared, structurally supported team earns that right.

The Eagles will be back. But for now... this one hurts.

**Golden Generation (1994–1998):** With legends like Jay-Jay Okocha, Sunday Oliseh, and Nwankwo Kanu, this era is widely seen as Nigeria's golden age in men's football.

**The Super Falcons: Queens of African Football**

In contrast to the mixed international success of the Super Eagles, the Super Falcons have reigned supreme on the African continent. Since the inception of the CAF Women's Africa Cup of Nations in 1991, the Falcons have set the gold standard for women's football in Africa.

### Success Stories:

The Super Falcons have won a record ten WAFCON titles, with their most recent triumph coming in 2024 against Morocco. Nigeria's women have appeared in every FIFA Women's World Cup since the tournament began and have also qualified for multiple Olympic Games. In 1999, the Falcons made history by reaching the quarter-finals—a first for any African women's team.

At the 2023 Women's World Cup, they reached the Round of 16, held Olympic champions Canada to a draw, and came close to upsetting England. Their courageous performance earned global respect and renewed calls for proper investment in women's football.

### What the Future Holds

Both the Super Eagles and Super Falcons are

standing at a crossroads. For the men, the task is to rebuild, harness their young talents, and re-establish themselves as continental and global forces. For the women, the priority lies in ensuring that success is matched with investment, professionalism, and respect.

A recurring theme in both camps is the need for better governance, sustainable development programs, grassroots investment, and a player-centric approach. The raw talent is undeniable, but talent alone cannot carry the burden of national expectation.

Nigeria's football reputation cannot continue to rest on nostalgia. Nations with half our talent are progressing because they have mastered game management, discipline, and mental toughness.

Until the Super Eagles confront the psychological side of modern football—penalties, pressure moments, and winning mentality, our immate talent will keep falling short. And this goes beyond coaching; it is a structural problem rooted in player welfare, leadership culture, and long-term planning.

### Conclusion

Nigeria's national football teams have gifted the nation unforgettable memories—goals that shook the continent, victories that united a people, and moments that inspired generations. But alongside the triumphs are painful lessons from missed opportunities and structural failings.

To truly honor the legacy of these football heroes, Nigeria must move beyond emotion and invest in the systems that sustain success. Because in football, as in life, lasting greatness isn't just about winning—it's about building a legacy.

This article is dedicated to every Nigerian football fan who has laughed, cried, and dreamed alongside the Super Eagles and Super Falcons. The journey continues.



## NASS SPORTS CLUB: RISING STARS IN PUBLIC SERVICE SPORTS

Closer to home, another sporting story is unfolding right within the National Assembly. The National Assembly Sports Club (NASS SC), though relatively young, has become a powerhouse in public service sports, thanks to commitment, teamwork and management support.

At the 35th edition of the Federation of Public Service Games (FEPSGA) held in Jos, Plateau State, the club made a stunning debut. Its Scrabble ace, Godwin Ortserga, won the singles title without losing a game and alongside Baba-Ahmed, also clinched gold in the doubles. The Table Tennis team, anchored by Comrade Bature Musa, Victor Nwador and Koko, dominated the men's and women's singles as well as doubles events.

From football and basketball to swimming, badminton and chess, the NASS Sports Club is making a statement of excellence, and we're just blazing a trail of excellence.





Idowu Bakare

### Canada's Parliament once had its own official Cats

They were brought in 1924 to control a rat infestation. Even after chemical pest control replaced them in the 1950s, the cats stayed on, multiplying and becoming beloved fixtures. Volunteers cared for them, building tiny "cat condos" and turning the colony into a popular tourist attraction in Ottawa. Through a spay-and-neuter program and adoptions, the colony gradually disappeared and in 2013, the sanctuary officially closed. The last cat, a black feline named Coal, passed away early this year after becoming a social-media favourite.



### New Zealand Parliament was the first to allow women vote



The victory was led by fearless suffragists like Kate Sheppard, whose tireless campaigning turned protest into progress. While others offered women only partial or temporary voting rights, New Zealand boldly went all in granting full voting rights to all adult women in national elections and setting a global benchmark for equality.

### Switzerland has no president, it is led by a rotating 7-member Council



Switzerland has no recognized president or prime minister, the seven-member Federal Council collectively serves as both the head of government and head of state. There is no single president with executive power. Executive power rotates yearly among the members.

### Iceland holds the world's oldest continuous parliament

Iceland's Althingi holds the title of the world's oldest continuous parliament, founded way back in 930 AD; over a thousand years ago! It began as an open-air assembly where Viking chieftains gathered each summer at Pingvallir to make laws and settle disputes. Today, the Althingi still meets in Reykjavik, blending ancient tradition with modern democracy; a living symbol of Iceland's enduring commitment to collective decision-making and the rule of law.

## Sweden runs a Single-Chamber Parliament



Sweden scrapped its upper house (the Senate) back in 1971, streamlining its Parliament into a single-chamber system known as the Riksdag.

What's remarkable is that, despite having only one chamber, Sweden's legislature remains one of the most transparent and accountable in the world. With open committee sessions, extensive public records and strong citizen oversight, the country proves that fewer chambers don't have to mean less democracy.



### Finland MPs can bring babies to the Chamber



In Finland, members of Parliament can bring their babies to the chamber! It is part of the country's strong family-friendly policies. And yes, babies have been known to coo during debates.

### Swiss Parliament meets only 4 times a year



The Swiss Parliament sits only four times per year, each lasting three weeks, in March, June, September and December. It may also hold special sessions if the need arises. In addition to these regular meetings, the two chambers also convene together as the United Federal Assembly at least once a year.



# National Assembly Service Commission

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