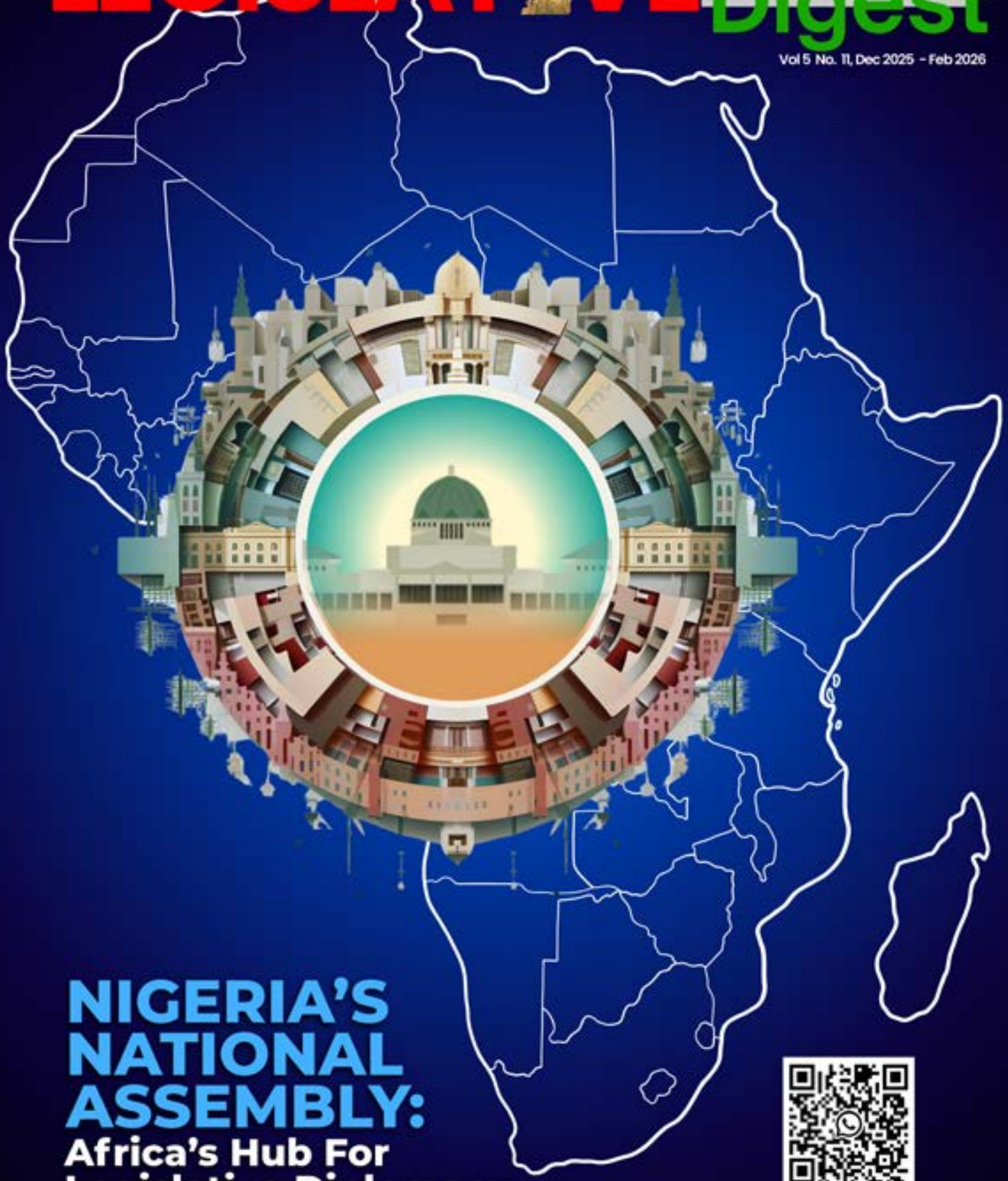
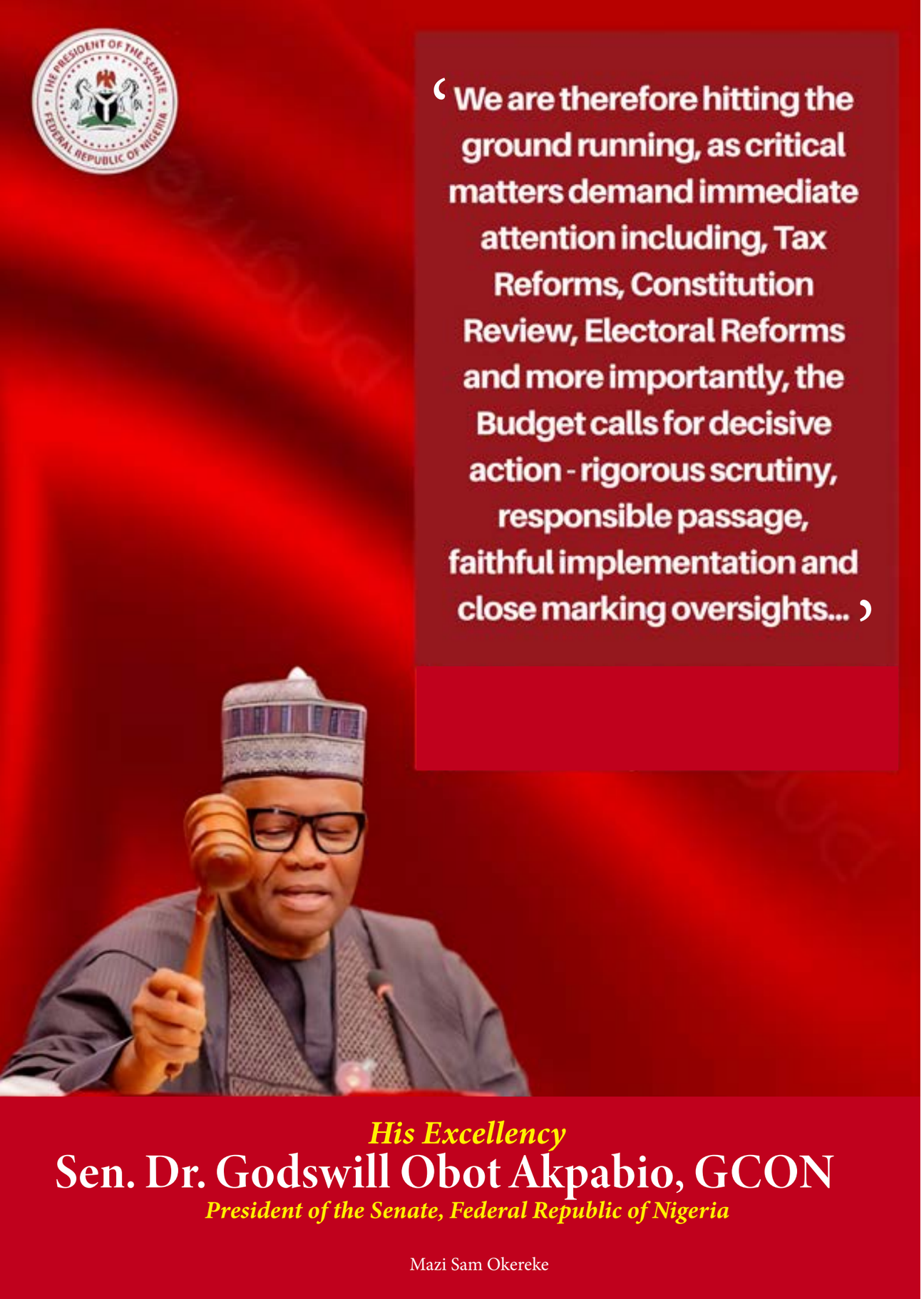
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE Digest
Vol 5 No. 11, Dec 2025 - Feb 2026



NIGERIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:
Africa's Hub For Legislative Diplomacy

An Official Publication of the National Assembly



His Excellency

Sen. Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON

President of the Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria

Mazi Sam Okereke

CONTENTS

05 One Year of Purposeful Leadership: Celebrating Reform and Renewal at the National Assembly

10 Rethinking the Appointment and Accountability of the Clerk to the National Assembly

20 Interview: Nigeria’s National Assembly: Africa’s Hub For Legislative Diplomacy - A Conversation With Cospal Secretary-General, Mr. Dapo Oyewole

24 Professionalising Capacity Building for Legislative Excellence: Why Specialised Staff Training Matters in the National Assembly

32 Building Bridges Through Parliament: The Nigeria – Ghana Trade Resolution

34 ECOWAS Parliament at 25: Celebrating A Milestone Of Regional Integration Amidst Crisis Of Coups And Democratic Erosion

36 A Celebration Of Proverbs And Heritage

40 House of Reps Moves to Protect Green Areas Around National Assembly Premises

41 Kogi Assembly in Action: How the 8th House Is Shaping Governance in the State

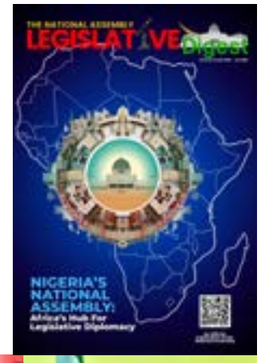
43 Reflections on Leadership: Psychological Safety: The Quiet Force Behind Effective Leadership

45 Senate Ambassadorial Screening and Confirmation: A Strategic Reset for Nigeria’s Diplomacy

49 THE PARLIAMENT THAT BUILT A DEMOCRACY: How the National Assembly Evolved - 1999 to 2025 ...And The Future It Must Now Shape

51 NILDS in 2025: The Powerhouse Shaping Africa’s Parliaments

53 News from other PARLIAMENTS



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE DIGEST TEAM

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

Editors
Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba
Executive Secretary, National Assembly Library Trust Fund

Ali Barde Umoru, PhD
Secretary, Research and Information

Deputy Editor
Dr. Olatunji Bello

Assistant Editors
Bullah Audu Bi-Allah
Director Information

Oyetayo Oluwole Afolabi
Director Archives/Museum

Matthew Coker
Research, NALTF

Associate Editors Legal and International Desk
Nguyilan Wakombo, Esq.
Idowu Bakare

Associate Editors Legislative and Research Desk
Fineman Guy Goyei, PhD
Mark Hiryam
Uche Okoronkwo

Production
Maiye Rotimi
Tagbo Okeke

Administration and Corporate Affairs
Asma'u Baikie
Ms. Chinenye Monde-Anumihe
Eze O'Oduaree
Omolola Zakari

Reporters and Correspondents
Godwin Terngu Ortserga
Augustina Akubueze
Abubakar Abdulraheem
Ukpabio Iboro J.
Vincent Ogundele
Stephanie Adaba
Mama Adisatu Mohammed
Felix Ereoili Aiyewa
Lamuye Wuraola
Ogheneochuko Favour I.
Uzochuckwu Ben Ude
Jafar Sagagi
Mohammed Ndagi
Paul Eneojoh
Reigneth Nwaimo
Usman Abubakar Usman

Circulation / Distribution
Shehu Umar Tama (Head)
Bukola Akintelure
Jibrin Idakwo
Uke Augustine
Boniface Nwokocha
Owolaye Shola T.
Chizobam Anunko

Media and Photography
Paul Amedu Anyebe
Abubakar Mohammed
Ekeh Macfred Nnanyere
David Samuel

Publisher
National Assembly LibaryTrust Fund
in collaboration with Directorate of Research and Information
Three Arm Zone, Abuja
All Correspondence to the
Editor: legislativedigest.nass@nass.gov.ng
Tel: +234 (0) 704 475 9865, 911 681 4486

Creative Design
Shonubi A. Samson

EDITORIAL

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AT THE HEART OF AFRICA'S PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

Across Africa, parliaments are increasingly recognised not only as lawmaking institutions, but as influential diplomatic actors contributing to regional cooperation, democratic norms, and collective responses to shared challenges. Within this evolving environment, Nigeria's National Assembly has emerged as a central convening force, positioning Abuja as a key hub for legislative diplomacy on the continent.

This role has gained particular relevance during the tenure of the 10th National Assembly, which has come of age amid geopolitical uncertainty, democratic transitions, security pressures, and economic realignments across Africa. In such a context, parliamentary diplomacy is no longer ceremonial. It has become an essential instrument for dialogue, peer learning, confidence-building, and democratic consolidation.

Nigeria's leadership in this space is anchored in both scale and experience. As one of Africa's largest democracies, with a bicameral legislature comprising 469 elected members, the National Assembly brings institutional depth, political diversity, and administrative capacity to inter-parliamentary engagement. Yet leadership is not defined by size alone. What distinguishes Nigeria's role is the deliberate manner in which parliamentary diplomacy has been structured, professionalised, and aligned with broader continental objectives.

Under the leadership of the President of the Senate, His Excellency Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, the 10th National Assembly has demonstrated a renewed commitment to purposeful and results-oriented engagement. This is reflected in the growing number of high-level exchanges, technical missions, study visits, and inter-parliamentary dialogues hosted in Abuja. These engagements increasingly treat partner legislatures not as ceremonial visitors, but as collaborators in institutional development and reform.

A defining feature of Nigeria's approach to legislative diplomacy is its emphasis on peer learning and capacity building. Across the continent, legislatures face similar challenges in areas such as legislative drafting, budget oversight, committee systems, inclusion, digital transformation, and constituency engagement. By facilitating structured exchanges and practical discussions, Nigeria has positioned its National Assembly as a platform for sharing experiences, examining reforms, and adapting best practices to African realities.

Capacity development has therefore become a central pillar of this engagement. Increasingly, African legislatures seek institution-to-institution support rather than abstract or externally driven models. Through training programmes, mentoring initiatives, and structured exchanges particularly via the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) Nigeria has contributed to strengthening legislative skills, administrative systems, and institutional confidence across the continent. This reflects a clear understanding that democratic resilience depends on strong legislatures, built progressively through learning, practice, and institutional continuity.

Nigeria's active participation in inter-parliamentary organisations further reinforces this leadership role. Engagements within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association, the Pan-African Parliament, the ECOWAS Parliament, and the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures (COSPAL) have enabled Nigerian legislators and officials to contribute substantively to continental and global legislative discourse. The decision to site COSPAL's headquarters in Abuja, with a Nigerian serving as its pioneer Secretary-General, underscores Nigeria's growing stature in African parliamentary cooperation.

Importantly, Nigeria's legislative diplomacy places increasing emphasis on substance over symbolism. Engagements are focused on practical policy exchange, institutional reform, and realistic adaptation of lessons learned, rather than protocol alone. This pragmatic orientation has enhanced the credibility of the National Assembly as a legislative partner and strengthened Abuja's reputation as a meeting point for parliamentary collaboration.

The emergence of Nigeria's National Assembly as a diplomatic hub also reflects the strength of its parliamentary bureaucracy. Behind every successful engagement is a professional administrative system capable of planning, coordinating, documenting, and following up on outcomes. Legislative diplomacy is sustained not only by elected leadership, but by institutional memory, technical expertise, and continuity assets that the National Assembly has continued to strengthen. In this regard, the Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, has reinvigorated the Directorate of Inter-Parliamentary Relations to deliver more impactful service. This renewed focus has been complemented by the recent deployment of Dr. Fortune Ihua-Madueni as Secretary of the Interparliamentary Relations Directorate, her depth of administrative and international experience is helping to navigate the practical demands of parliamentary diplomacy and is providing critical institutional support to lawmakers' external engagements.

This editorial therefore serves both as reflection and call to action. It affirms that cooperation among African parliaments is not a matter of competition, but a collective investment in democratic resilience. Nigeria's National Assembly has demonstrated that legislative diplomacy, when pursued with clarity and purpose, can contribute meaningfully to continental progress. The task ahead is to sustain this momentum and ensure that Africa's legislatures continue to engage, learn, and advance together.

ONE YEAR OF PURPOSEFUL LEADERSHIP:

CELEBRATING REFORM AND RENEWAL AT THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

As I mark one in office, as Clerk to the National Assembly (CNA), on the 1st January, 2026, this milestone provides an opportunity to celebrate a year of steady progress, reform-driven leadership, and renewed confidence in the National Assembly Management. Appointed on the 2nd February, 2025, I assumed office amid high expectations and fiscal constraints, yet the Service has recorded notable achievements in institutional reforms, staff welfare, capacity building and infrastructural development.

A defining feature of my first year has been a strong commitment to institutional reform. Foremost, among these, is the ongoing legislative review of the National Assembly Service Act (No. 7), 2014, aimed at introducing merit-based qualifications for the appointment of the CNA, DCNA, CS, CHR, the Deputy Clerks of the two Chambers, Secretaries of Directorates, and Directors. By emphasising academic credentials, cognate experience and proven competence, the reform seeks to promote transparency, professionalism and specialisation in the career progression of staff and in legislative administration.

The ownership and management of the National Assembly Complex in Abuja is vested in the Federal Capital Territory Administration by law. Also, the National Assembly Complex in Lagos is occupied and managed by the Office of the Secretary to the Government of the Federation. This arrangement derogates from the principle of Parliamentary Autonomy. With the support of the leadership of the two Chambers, relevant laws are also being reviewed to vest ownership and management of these Complexes in the National Assembly Management. This reform represents a significant step towards institutional independence and improved asset management.

Similarly, the review of the National Assembly Service Pension Board (Establishment) Act, 2025, a laudable initiative by my immediate predecessor, is underway to realise the objectives of the Act. The highlight of the review is to re-introduce the Contributory Pension Scheme alongside the payment of enhanced gratuity to retired staff, thereby addressing long-standing welfare concerns and re-enforcing confidence among serving and retired personnel.

Despite inheriting a modest budget for the year under review, my administration has prioritised staff welfare. Salaries and allowances of staff and legislative aides are paid promptly, while all arrears arising from wage increase/adjustments and wage awards by the Federal Government have been fully settled without any corresponding increase in the budgetary allocation. In addition, all eligible staff and legislative aides entitled to First 28days allowance received their entitlements, marking a major morale boost across the Service.

Capacity building for staff and legislative aides also received unprecedented attention. Within the year, over 4,200 personnel were trained. A record number of staff attended international workshops, conferences and seminars, expanding institutional capacity and global exposure.

Operational efficiencies improved significantly with the procurement of utility vehicles for critical directorates, with arrangements already concluded to extend this support to deserving departments. Financial administration has been standardised, as standing imprest is disbursed equitably to all directors and heads of departments, eliminating past disparities. Notably, long-standing imbalances in the entitlements between the Deputy Clerks of the two Chambers and other Top Management staff were successfully bridged, strengthening equity and harmony within the Management structure.

Pivotal to the wellbeing of staff is the National Assembly Clinic. The clinic benefitted from enhanced funding and upgrading of equipment, leading to improved healthcare services for lawmakers, staff, legislative aides and their family members. For instance, the labour ward and delivery services were upgraded to handle normal delivery, the medical laboratory was equipped with new machines to carry out PSA and HBAIC tests among others. The old Library building is undergoing renovation and rehabilitation, with plans to hand it over to the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) ensuring optional use of existing facilities.

Routine servicing and maintenance of equipment and facilities have been institutionalised, promoting sustainability and cost efficiency. In the area of security, a renewed focus on effective access control and operational efficiency has strengthened safety within the National Assembly Complex. Attempts by disgruntled elements to disrupt peace were promptly and decisively contained, reinforcing confidence in the service security architecture.

While celebrating these achievements, I remain mindful of persistent challenges, including limited budgetary allocation, inadequate office space and the need for enhanced condition of service for parliamentary staff. To these, I shall continue to advocate for enhanced condition of service for staff and the digitalisation of administrative and legislative processes, recognising that in modern parliamentary management, this is long overdue. Staff discipline and accountability also remain central to sustaining institutional progress.

This one year in office has been a learning curve for me and other management staff. The reforms and initiatives recorded during this period have laid a solid foundation for a more professional, efficient and autonomous National Assembly Service.

As the Service looks ahead, the first year stands not only as a record of achievements, but a promise of greater achievements to come.

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

UNDERSTANDING LEGISLATIVE DIPLOMACY AS AN IMPLIED RESPONSIBILITY OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Dr. Bello Olatunji Babatunde

The National Assembly of Nigeria shapes the country's democracy by playing its traditional roles of law making, oversight, i.e. monitoring public institutions and ensuring effective use of resources and representation by voicing citizens' concerns and interests, at the national level. It essentially bridges the gap between government and citizens, ensuring accountability and good governance, through broad national consensus. However, it has evolved over time, along with other legislatures, gradually growing its sphere of influence and building on existing legislative and representative responsibilities. Today the legislature is involved in making official contacts with foreign legislatures, receiving foreign leaders and complementing the executive in expressing and emphasising national foreign policy positions.

Legislative diplomacy, sometimes called parliamentary diplomacy, refers to the use of legislatures and parliamentarians such as the Nigerian National Assembly, as actors in international relations. Beyond their domestic lawmaking and oversight functions, Nigeria's National Assembly is increasingly engaging with foreign counterparts, international parliamentary organisations and transnational constituencies to shape Nigeria's foreign policy outcomes, build networks, influence norms, and advance national interests. With its status as Africa's most populous state and a strong regional relevance, the legislative diplomatic activities of the National Assembly have a growing significance for trade, security, migration, development cooperation and the country's international image.

Nigeria's bicameral National Assembly (Senate and House of Representatives) has constitutional and statutory roles that touch on foreign affairs, from legislative oversight of foreign policy and budgets, to involvement in treaty processes and the passage of laws needed for the implementation of international commitments.

There are also standing committees relevant to diplomatic engagement, which includes committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence, Foreign Relations, Diaspora, Trade and Investment, and Appropriations (which affects foreign assistance and embassy budgets). Parliamentary caucuses and friendship groups with specific countries or thematic interests are also avenues for engagement.

The role of the National Assembly in legislative diplomacy includes formal treaty ratification, inter-parliamentary visits and legislative advocacy, formal activities of parliamentary friendship groups, participation in regional and international parliamentary bodies (e.g. ECOWAS Parliament, African Parliamentary Union(APU), Inter-Parliamentary Union etc.), public statements on international issues, parliamentary monitoring of foreign policy and development assistance, and engagement with diasporas and transnational civil society.

By engaging with regional and international parliamentary bodies, Nigeria's legislature is helping shape solutions on trade, security, migration, and development.

The legislative diplomatic function of the National Assembly complements executive diplomacy by building relationships between legislatures, facilitating consensus-building for treaty ratification or foreign policy decisions, mobilising domestic support for international agreements, performing oversight of foreign policy and aid, and projecting soft power, which Joseph Nye defines as 'the ability to influence others through attraction and persuasion rather than coercion by leveraging on political values and good will.'

Modern day legislatures are now empowered to legitimise international commitments, translate complex external agreements into domestic law, ensure democratic scrutiny of the executive's foreign policy, and amplify national positions through parliamentary networks. These are clear cut legislative diplomatic responsibilities.

Senators and Members of the House of Representatives participate in ECOWAS parliamentary forums and deliberations that inform collective regional responses to coups, humanitarian crises and cross-border insurgency. Parliamentary endorsement and support are often important for legitimising regional actions and for ensuring domestic backing for troop commitments or peacekeeping contributions.

The National Assembly's role in scrutinising trade agreements and related implementing legislation influences Nigeria's participation in regional and continental trade arrangements. For example, parliamentary scrutiny and debate were central to Nigeria's engagement with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) process before ratification and domestic implementation measures were pursued.

Committees of the National Assembly and individual lawmakers engage with the Nigerian diaspora Commission on consular protection to legitimise remittance policies and bilateral migration arrangements; these legislative activities are evidence that legislative diplomacy can elevate diaspora concerns and feed them into formal bilateral negotiations.

On multilateral collaboration and norms - Nigerian legislators have continued to push for positions on climate change, development finance, technology transfer and human rights in international parliamentary fora like the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), contributing to shape regional and continental norms.

It is important to mention here, that there is room for improvement on the legislative diplomatic responsibilities of the National Assembly as existing constraints and challenges limit the contributions being made. For example; coordination gaps and limited access to information affect the parliament's and legislators' capacity to act effectively. Insufficient research support, briefings, language skills and travel resources to sustain effective, informed and continuous international engagement are a real challenge. It therefore becomes necessary to provide the required legislative support services within and outside the National Assembly by employing internal resources, backed by professional support from relevant government agencies and non-governmental organisation through deliberate partnership and collaborative efforts.

Domestic political contestation as well as poor structural governance framework can also undermine consistent parliamentary positions abroad; for instance, weak coordination and synergy between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nigeria's diplomatic missions and the National Assembly can lead to missed opportunities for parliamentary contributions to diplomatic initiatives.

In order to sustain and improve on the National Assembly' s ability to deliver on these responsibilities, several steps can be taken -

1. Institutionalise engagement and formalise procedures for systematic consultation between the executive and National Assembly on treaties, international commitments and embassy priorities. This will strengthen the role and resourcing of foreign-affairs-related committees and the parliamentary research service.
2. Initiate investment in professional research units, training of legislators and staff on international law, economics and languages; as well as and secondment between the foreign service and parliamentary staff, to build mutual understanding.
3. In order to enhance coordination, it has become necessary to establish regular liaison mechanisms between the National Assembly, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nigeria's missions abroad, to plan visits, exchange information, and align positions.
4. The National Assembly should also leverage on parliamentary networks that have been established, use membership in regional and global parliamentary bodies proactively to shape agendas, attract development partnerships, and support Nigeria's strategic priorities of trade, security and climate.
5. Most importantly, to achieve transparency and public outreach, communicate parliamentary roles in foreign policy to citizens, invite expert testimony on international agreements, and involve more diaspora associations in legislative consultations.

As global challenges like transnational insecurity, pandemics, climate change, migration, and economic interdependence become ever more central to national wellbeing, legislative diplomacy offers a complementary avenue for influence and oversight. For Nigeria, a more proactive, capacitated and coordinated National Assembly can deepen the country's regional leadership, improve implementation of international commitments, and strengthen democratic accountability in foreign policy. Strategic investments in institutional capacity, cross-branch coordination and sustained engagement with parliamentary networks will increase the effectiveness and credibility of Nigeria's legislative diplomacy in the years ahead.

Modern legislatures do more than pass laws — they translate international agreements into national progress and ensure foreign policy reflects the people's interest.

Sen. Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, President of the Senate

COUNTDOWN TO LEGACY: THE FINAL STRETCH OF THE TENTH SENATE

As the Tenth Senate enters the decisive phase of its mandate, Senate President Godswill Akpabio has called for urgency, reform, and a legacy defined by impact rather than intent.

History in the Making

As the first plenary session of 2026 commenced, the Senate chamber resonated with more than ceremonial formality; it carried the weight of history. Returning from the Christmas and New Year recess, Senate President, Distinguished Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, described the moment as the opening of a decisive chapter, the final phase that would define the legacy of the Tenth Senate and its pact with the Nigerian people. He asserted that in the months ahead, every motion, debate, and vote would be measured not by intent, but by tangible impact.

Welcoming Senators back to the chamber, he struck a careful balance between reflection and resolve. The recess, he observed, was not merely a pause in legislative activity but a vital opportunity to reconnect with the people by listening, learning, and grounding policy in the realities of daily life. Lawmaking, he reminded the Senate, gains legitimacy only when it echoes the voices of citizens, the concerns raised in villages and cities, the hopes shared in town halls, and the quiet expectations of those who simply want governance to work.

Facing National Challenges

This call to reflection came against a sobering national backdrop. Nigeria, he noted, faces mounting economic pressures, persistent security challenges, and growing social strain. Yet the country's progress endures because of the resilience of its people, those who adapt, persevere, and continue to believe in a better tomorrow. Their message to leadership, he said, is unmistakable. Reforms must work, institutions must listen, and the future must reward integrity and honest labour.

Security on the Frontline

Security featured prominently as both a legislative and moral priority. Commending ongoing military co-operation between Nigeria and the United States in combating terrorism, he described such partnerships as reinforcements to national resolve. Still, the focus returned to the human cost of insecurity. Families who have lost loved ones and communities living with fear remain at the centre of the challenge. Security, he stressed, is not abstract. It is about lives disrupted and futures cut short.

The Hunger Alarm

Equally urgent was the United Nations warning that up to 35 million Nigerians may face hunger this year. The figure, he said, is sobering and unacceptable, underscoring the need for intensified legislative action to strengthen food security and protect the most vulnerable. Hunger, he added, is not merely an economic statistic but a test of national conscience and political will.

Democracy Demands Discipline

With the election season approaching, a cautionary note followed. Political ambition, he warned, must never outweigh patriotism. Nigeria's unity and stability should not become casualties of competition. A healthy democracy, he emphasised, depends on principled contestation, responsible discourse, and unwavering commitment to national interest.

The Final Push

With less than one year and five months remaining in the legislative cycle, the Tenth Senate has entered the decisive phase of its mandate, the final stretch of the marathon that separates participation from performance. In this period, urgency he said must replace complacency without giving way to panic. Reform must be bold but not reckless. Productivity must be high, but never at the expense of standards. A reform-driven agenda, he said, should prioritise laws that unlock economic growth, strengthen institutions, secure lives and property, and restore public confidence in Nigeria. Legislative clutter must give way to clarity. History, he added, will judge the Senate not by the volume of bills passed, but by their impact.

Building a Lasting Legacy

The final stretch, he added, is also a legacy phase. It demands institutional housekeeping, the completion of unfinished work, the clearing of bottlenecks, and the resolve to leave behind a principled and functional legislature. Nigeria should emerge more governable than it was inherited, more just than it was found, and more hopeful than it has felt in recent years.

Tests of Commitment

Budget scrutiny, collaboration with the Executive, and constitutional responsibility were highlighted as immediate tests of seriousness. Co-operation, he emphasised, is not a matter of convenience but a compass for national progress.

Purpose Above Politics

At the heart of the address was a simple reminder of purpose. Senators, he said, are not in the chamber for themselves, but for Nigerians, to hear their cries, see their realities, and give legislative form to their hopes.

Finishing Strong

As the session concluded, the message left both colleagues and country with a challenge that doubled as a promise. The clock, he said, is running, the nation is watching, and history is taking notes. When the story of the Tenth Senate is told, the charge was clear. Let it be said that in the final stretch, it ran harder, thought deeper, acted bolder, and finished strong.

Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, Ph.D., GCON, Speaker House of Representatives

REFLECTIONS ON SPEAKER ABBAS-LED HOUSE'S ACTION AGAINST INSECURITY

Musa Krishi

Concerned by the national security crisis, the House of Representatives dedicated an entire legislative week (November 25–27, 2025) to a "Special Plenary Session on National Security". Led by Speaker Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, Ph.D., GCON, the session aimed to find legislative solutions to the menace . The historic session included officials from the United States Embassy, the Speaker of the Parliament of Saint Kitts and Nevis, and various civil society organizations

The Speaker's Mandate: A Call for Strategic Action

Speaker Abbas Tajudeen set a constructive tone, stating the session was not for assigning blame but for offering practical recommendations to support the Executive. The special session began with a powerful, poignant, and historic speech by Speaker Abbas Tajudeen, who set the tone of the all-important session. The Speaker began thus: Honorable colleagues, distinguished guests, fellow Nigerians, we meet at a time of unprecedented national challenges. This moment requires calm heads, careful judgment and thoughtful action, not rushed or sensational responses. The decision of this House to suspend all other matters to focus on national security is therefore neither symbolic nor procedural. It reflects the seriousness of the moment and our duty to speak for our constituents.

"The last few weeks have been difficult for our country. Communities have suffered severe attacks, including killings and multiple abductions targeting civilians, security personnel, and other vulnerable groups. These incidents occurred in rapid succession and affected different parts of the country, underscoring the scale and coordination of the threat we face."

Speaker Abbas described as shocking and distressing the abduction at the Government Girls Science School, Maga, in Kebbi State; the unfortunate invasion and abduction of students at the Saint Mary's Catholic School, Papiri, in Niger State; and the kidnapping of worshippers in Kwara State.

He added, "Acting squarely on the firm directives of the President, our security forces responded swiftly and courageously. The President's decision to postpone his scheduled and widely publicised trip to the G20 Summit in South Africa, to confront the current challenges directly set the tone for a more coordinated national response," and lauded the President's directive for the withdrawal of police personnel attached to VIPs.

"The House recognises the courage and commitment of our security personnel who serve under exceptionally difficult conditions. Many have paid the ultimate price in the line of duty, and their sacrifice will not be forgotten. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families who have lost loved ones in the course of these operations, and we honour their pain, strength, and resilience. As a mark of respect, may we rise and observe a minute of silence. May the souls of all the departed rest in peace, amen.

The speaker highlighted a number of threats that require directed strategic attention namely,

- National Urgency: He described recent abductions in Kebbi, Niger, and Kwara states as "shocking and distressing" .
- The Threat of Misinformation: The Speaker identified "fake news" as an emerging national threat that erodes trust and inflames communities .
- Progress Through Reform: He noted that administration reforms have already led to the freeing of thousands of captives and the elimination of high-ranking violent commanders .
- Defending Religious Freedom: He rejected the U.S. designation of Nigeria as a "Country of Particular Concern," asserting that violent groups—not state policy—target both Christian and Muslim communities .

Voices from the Regions: Security Briefings
Other Honourable members in attendance provided localized insights into the crisis, highlighting the unique challenges faced across the federation :

- South-West: Hon. Kafilat Ogbara and Hon. Isiaka Ibrahim lamented the rise in terror-like kidnappings and the social barriers created by insecurity.
- North-West: Hon. Sada Soli called for a holistic approach involving social, economic, and environmental strategies.
- North-East: Hon. Muktar Betara Aliyu highlighted the decade-long insurgency in Borno and called for better troop welfare.
- North-Central: Hon. Ahmed Idris Wase warned against religious coloration and noted that criminals had previously infiltrated some security agencies.
- South-East: Hon. Iduma Igariwey Enwo cited poor policy implementation as a major barrier to safety.
- South-South: Hon. Solomon Bob argued that perpetrators must be labelled and treated strictly as terrorists.

Thematic Resolutions for National Security
The House adopted over 50 far-reaching resolutions to be presented to the President:

Key Resolutions

After exhaustive deliberations on the security situation, the lawmakers adopted the resolutions, major among them was on terrorism financing, calling on the federal government not only to publicly identify individuals and organizations funding terrorism but also to sanction and prosecute them, rather than the occasional announcements on freezing the accounts of such people/organizations without naming them.

The House equally urged the Executive arm to create dedicated courts to attend to issues around terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping for transparent and speedy dispensation of justice.

The lawmakers also called for a total ban on ransom negotiations, as well as penalizing government officials who engage in such practices.

Additionally, they asked the federal government to decisively overhaul the country's security architecture by providing better remuneration and welfare for security personnel.

It is also on record that the House called for the strengthening of intelligence and technology to institute better intelligence sharing among security agencies, as well as enhance the use of drones and satellites for border surveillance, among others.

The lawmakers were also particular about community policing and illegal arms control. Another major resolution passed was calling on the government to address the root causes of insecurity, such as poverty, unemployment, and weak governance, by creating jobs and massive investment in the education sector. There was also a resolution calling for the establishment of military bases in volatile regions, high-risk areas, and strategic locations.

They, in addition, recommended immediate massive recruitment into the Armed Forces, the Police and other security agencies in line with recent presidential directives, as well as strengthened welfare for security personnel through improved salaries, insurance, housing, medical care, and compensation frameworks.
Other specific resolutions were:
Fiscal Measures for Security Enhancement
All security expenditure should be placed on 'First Line Charge' to guarantee predictable and timely funding, and all approved security budgets must be fully and promptly disbursed.

A phased strengthening of cashless transaction frameworks nationwide.

Security coverage for schools, worship centres, markets, and other soft targets should be strengthened through coordinated preventive measures and improved rapid-response capacity.

All public CCTV systems should be reactivated, upgraded, and, where necessary, complemented with new installations and integrated into a national and sub-national surveillance grid.

That intelligence gathering be strengthened at the community level and systematically linked to national systems.

Border security should be treated as a national emergency, with deployment of modern technologies such as drones, biometric systems, sensors, satellite imagery, AI-enabled predictive analytics, and integrated early warning systems.
A central Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre be established for real time interagency coordination.
The Multi-Agency Anti-Kidnap Fusion Cell be expanded, structured, and better resourced.
The House calls for an effective national tracking mechanism for all arms, Weapons and security equipment held by security agencies, etc.
At the end of the session, the lawmakers agreed to present the recommendations to the President for necessary action.
Krishi is the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the Speaker, House of Representatives.

These can be aggregated into the following thematic areas.

1. Judicial and Legal Reforms
- Terrorism Prosecution: Create dedicated courts for the speedy trial of terrorism, banditry, and kidnapping cases.
- Ransom Policy: Impose a total ban on ransom negotiations and penalize government officials who engage in the practice.
- Financial Accountability: Publicly identify, sanction, and prosecute individuals and organizations funding terrorism.

2. Fiscal Measures and Personnel Welfare
- Funding Stability: Place all security expenditure on a "First Line Charge" to ensure predictable and timely disbursement.
- Personnel Support: Massive recruitment into the Armed Forces and Police, alongside improved salaries, insurance, housing, and medical care.
- Economic Strategy: Address root causes of insecurity through job creation, poverty reduction, and massive investment in education.

3. Intelligence and Border Security
- Surveillance Technology: treated border security as a national emergency using drones, satellites, AI-enabled analytics, and biometric systems.
- Coordination Hubs: Establish a central Joint Intelligence Fusion Centre and expand the Multi-Agency Anti-Kidnap Fusion Cell .
- Public Safety Systems: Reactivate and upgrade all public CCTV systems into a national surveillance grid.

4. Infrastructure and Tactical Presence
- Soft Target Protection: Strengthen security coverage for schools, worship centers, and markets.
- Strategic Deployment: Establish military bases in volatile and high-risk regions.
- Cashless Framework: Implement a phased strengthening of cashless transactions to disrupt criminal financial flows.

Musa Abdullahi Krishi is the Special Adviser on Media and Publicity to the Speaker, House of Representatives.

RETHINKING THE APPOINTMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE CLERK TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Kamoru Ogunlana Esq., CNA

Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq. Clerk to the National Assembly

Strong legislatures are sustained not only by elected leadership but also by professional, stable, and clearly governed administrative systems. In the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, this administrative responsibility is anchored in the office of the Clerk to the National Assembly, an office established by the combined provisions of Section 51 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and Section 6 of the National Assembly Service Act, 2014 (NAS Act).

Recent discussions around the governance of the office of the CNA provide an opportunity for thoughtful reflection on whether existing legal arrangements fully support the efficiency, autonomy, and coherence of parliamentary administration.

The Clerk to the National Assembly is not an ordinary public servant. The Clerk serves as the Chief Procedural Adviser, Chief Executive, and Accounting Officer of the National Assembly. In practical terms, the Clerk is the engine room of the National Assembly Service.

The NAS Act further protects the office by requiring a resolution of both the Senate and the House of Representatives before the Clerk can be removed. This safeguard reflects a clear intention by the lawmakers to protect the Clerk from arbitrary administrative control. It is therefore inconsistent to treat the appointment of such a constitutionally protected office as a routine personnel matter.

Under the NAS Act, the National Assembly Service Commission exercises control over the appointment, promotion, and discipline of staff of the National Assembly. In practice, however, this broad mandate has led to dispute over the extent of the Commission's authority, particularly in relation to the role of the Clerk as the Chief Executive and Accounting officer of the National Assembly Service. Over time, this has extended into claims of direct authority over the Clerk, including responsibility for legislative and administrative activities.

This creates a divided loyalty that weakens the Office of the Clerk to the National Assembly. The Clerk reports daily to the Presiding Officers of the Senate and the House of Representatives, yet faces administrative control from a separate body. This dual and overlapping accountability structure is neither efficient nor consistent with sound governance principles.

Nigeria's public service provides several instructive parallels. The Police Service Commission, for example, is responsible for the appointment, promotion, and discipline of police officers, but not the Inspector-General of Police. Similarly, the Federal Civil Service Commission does not appoint Permanent Secretaries or the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation. In the judiciary, the Federal Judicial Service Commission does not appoint the Secretary of the National Judicial Council.

In each case, senior institutional officers are treated as exceptions because of their strategic leadership roles and direct accountability to institutional heads. The Clerk to the National Assembly fits squarely within this category.

Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq. CNA & Engr. Bashir Aminu Yero, DCNA

Beyond Nigeria, global parliamentary practice supports this approach. In most parliamentary democracies, the Clerk or Secretary-General of Parliament is appointed by, and accountable to, the presiding officers or the legislature itself. The exact method reflects each country's constitutional traditions. For example, in the UK, the Clerk of the House of Commons is appointed by the Crown, following recommendations by the House of Commons led by the Speaker, in the US, the Clerks of the Senate and the House of Representatives are elected directly by members of the Senate and the House respectively, in India, the Secretary-Generals of Lok-Sabha and Rajya-Sabha are appointed by the presiding officers of the respective Houses, in Germany, the Clerk of the Bundestag is appointed by the President of Bundestag. These are just a few examples. This arrangement reinforces parliamentary independence, clarifies authority, and enhances administrative efficiency. While institutional context differs, these comparative experiences offer useful insights for Nigeria's ongoing efforts to strengthen parliamentary governance.

The issue extends beyond the Clerk's appointment. Effective administration requires timely decisions on recruitment, promotion, and discipline particularly at the junior staff level. Centralising all personnel decisions within the National Assembly Service Commission has created unnecessary delays and weakened managerial discipline.

Empowering the Clerk to appoint, promote, and discipline junior staff on Grade Levels 01–06, subject to clear guidelines and oversight of the Commission, would bring efficiency without undermining accountability. It would also allow the Commission to focus on policy, standards, and senior-level governance.
Amending the NAS Act to vest the appointment and removal of the Clerk in the Presiding Officers, while delegating junior staff management to the Clerk, is consistent with constitutional logic, Nigerian precedents, and global parliamentary practice.

Ultimately, this is about strengthening the National Assembly as an institution. A parliament that cannot clearly control its own administration risks weakening its independence and effectiveness.

The time has come for the National Assembly to align its laws with its constitutional role and assert its administrative autonomy firmly, thoughtfully, and in the best interest of Nigeria's democracy.

Rebuilding A Dream:

Inside the Senate's Push to Revive Nigeria's Automotive Industry

Akubueze Augustina

The hall at the Wells Carlton Hotel and Apartments in Asokoro hummed with the quiet urgency of a nation at an industrial crossroads. Manufacturers, regulators, financiers, and policymakers gathered under one roof many of them long-time witnesses to Nigeria's stalled automotive ambitions, all hoping that this time, the tide might finally turn.

The Senate Committee on Industry had called the high-level stakeholders' roundtable with one ambitious purpose: to chart a new, realistic pathway for reviving Nigeria's automotive industry. The conversation was long overdue.

Themed "Revitalizing Nigeria's Automotive Industry: Legislative Pathways for Innovation, Investment and Industrial Growth," the forum was more than a policy discussion it was a sober examination of how Africa's most populous nation had become a dumping ground for imported vehicles despite its vast talent, market size, and industrial potential.

Delivering the keynote on behalf of the Senate leadership, Deputy Senate Leader, Senator Ashiru Oyelola Yisa, did not mince words. Nigeria, he said, has for decades functioned more as a showroom for foreign automotive manufacturers than as a producer of its own machines. For a nation of over 200 million people, he argued, this model is simply unsustainable.

"Our reliance on imported vehicles amounts to exporting jobs," he warned. "This cannot continue. The automotive industry is the steel backbone of any modern industrial economy. A country that builds its own machines builds the foundation for long-term economic independence."

His message set the tone for the day: direct, forceful, and steeped in the belief that Nigeria's industrial revival must begin with the ability to manufacture.

Senator Francis Adenigba Fadahunsi, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Industry, was commended for convening what many participants described as a defining national moment - one requiring discipline, courage, and a shared commitment to break from decades of policy failure.

As the discussions unfolded, familiar obstacles resurfaced: inconsistent government policies, unregulated importation, smuggling, poor infrastructure, and legislation that no longer reflects global automotive realities. But this time, lawmakers urged stakeholders not to dwell on the problems but to confront them with workable, actionable solutions.

The Tenth Senate reiterated its readiness to provide the legislative backbone needed for the industry to stand again. Yet, participants were reminded that laws alone cannot build factories or restore investor confidence. Real progress, they agreed, would depend on stronger collaboration between industry players, more efficient government agencies, and a clear, stable policy environment.

Despite the challenges, the mood in the room was far from bleak. There was a shared belief perhaps stronger than in previous years that Nigeria could still reclaim its industrial aspirations. Some participants called the forum a "turning point," a moment when the country chose production over dependence, and innovation over inertia.

The National Automotive Design and Development Council (NADDC) and other stakeholders were acknowledged for their ongoing efforts to steer the nation toward an era of technological advancement and industrial reawakening.

Whether this is the beginning of a true automotive renaissance or another missed opportunity remains to be seen. But if the passion in the room was any indication, Nigeria may finally be ready to build the machines that will drive its future.

ONE-ON-ONE WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND DEMOCRATIC STUDIES (NILDS)

Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman, Director-General, NILDS, speaks with Oyetayo Afolabi, Assistant Editor, and Asma'u Baikie, Senior Correspondent, on how NILDS is leveraging human capacity building as a tool of legislative diplomacy to strengthen inter-parliamentary relations and promote democratic governance across Africa and beyond.

Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman

***Legislative Digest:** A major highlight of 2025 was NILDS' robust international parliamentary engagement, including hosting delegates and conducting specialised programmes for foreign legislatures and regional parliamentary bodies. What inspired the decision to extend specialised capacity building to other African countries?*

Prof. Abubakar: The essence of our institute, NILDS, is to deepen the capacity of democratic institutions, the legislative, parliamentary actors, parliamentary staff, parliamentarians, and every stakeholder of democracy. That means it goes beyond just the legislatures; even the executives are covered, including informal structures, political parties, opposition parties, pressure groups, NGOs, civil society organisations, and the press.

Since the inception of the institute, we have lived up to the expectations and mandate of enhancing the capacity of all these actors and institutions. And when we talk of institutions as our major audience or clients, it is not just limited to Nigeria. By our size as a country, by our potential as a nation, by the manifest favour on us as a country, we are to serve the entire African continent. Even if it is not explicitly stated in our Act, anything Nigerian does is not just for Nigeria alone. When it

Professor Abubakar with Mr. Oyetayo Oluwole Afolabi

comes to serving people, institutions, and putting down your skills and endowments in the service of humanity, it goes beyond Nigeria. In terms of population, intellect, capacity, and material resources, God has given us abundance to cater for the black nations of the world.

That is why our institute is not peculiar to serving Nigerian parliamentarians or democratic actors alone, but to a large extent, our services extend beyond the shores of this country. Last year was significant because many donor agencies that usually collaborated with us, such as the CARS, UN-related movements, and Westminster foundations, were not able to support us due to global developments, including the policies under the Trump administration that impacted funding.

Despite this, NILDS remained at the forefront of capacity building for parliamentarians from other African countries. For example, we signed an MOU with Benin Republic to train their parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 2025 to 2028. The same year, we hosted parliamentary staff from Ghana, Somalia, Uganda, Liberia, and Malawi. We also conducted extensive training programmes for the ECOWAS Parliament that lasted almost two months consecutively.

You may wonder where we are getting the capacity and resources from. Even funding from the federal allocation was affected by the global crisis, yet our output significantly increased. Legislative diplomacy, or parliamentary diplomacy, is not just about NILDS training Nigerian actors but also about complementing the executive in enhancing commonalities and bringing African countries together. At this level, NILDS has been a leading force and we hope to sustain this

***Legislative Digest:** Does NILDS collaborate with ECOWAS or other international parliamentary organisations to organise these training programmes? How has it been able to carry out such extensive activities despite limited funding?*

Prof. Abubakar: Since the inception of the institute, we have been partners in progress with ECOWAS. They support us technically by providing opportunities to train their parliamentary staff. I want to commend the current leadership of the ECOWAS Parliament, led by Hon. Maimuna, who personally visited us on a courtesy call. During that visit, we agreed on many areas of collaboration, and we have maintained active engagement since then.

NILDS was not set up to make money or generate revenue. Our purpose is to enhance the capacity of actors and stakeholders in governance and democracy. Without capacity building and training of actors within government, leadership and institutions cannot be nurtured.

> ***"NILDS is building stronger African parliaments through capacity, training, and shared democratic values."***

I also commend NGOs that work with us. While they do not provide cash, they contribute technical expertise and resources to ensure projects are accomplished. These include United Nations-related agencies, Westminster Foundation, German agencies, and several local Nigerian NGOs.

Last year, many of these collaborations were not forthcoming. The success we achieved was largely due to the dedication and effort of our staff. They actively reached out to prospective clients, particularly state assemblies, when traditional partners were not available. For instance, our training department delivered 57 programmes in 2025, up from 37 in 2024. When you include other departments, including research and support services, the total output was even more remarkable. This demonstrates how we achieved our goals through staff initiative, technical skill, and support from the National Assembly.

***Legislative Digest:** How does the NILDS curriculum aim to transform participants' ideological perspectives to strengthen democracy in their respective countries? Is it tailored to different political systems, or mainly based on Nigeria's model?*

Prof. Abubakar: Government everywhere performs a single core function: delivering services to the people. This applies to all societies, regardless of whether they are parliamentary or presidential systems, bicameral or unicameral. Governance is the work of people, and our goal is to nurture the skills of those individuals who administer society.

We are mindful of the divergent nature of political systems. For example, Benin Republic has a unicameral parliament, whereas Nigeria operates a bicameral system. Nevertheless, the essential functions of lawmaking, representation, and oversight are the same.

Delegates often come with specific challenges they want to address. Ghana, for instance,

sent delegates to understand security sector oversight in Nigeria. Although they do not currently face the same security challenges as Nigeria, they wish to anticipate and prepare for potential issues. Terrorism and banditry are concerns across Africa, and the skills required for oversight are similar everywhere.

Our approach is to assemble experts from the National Assembly, including senators and board members, to guide participants and share practical experience. Some countries, such as Uganda, Liberia, and Ghana, have replicated aspects of NILDS in their own countries after visiting Nigeria. Delegates often ask how NILDS operates independently within the National Assembly, how we manage funding, and how we maintain autonomy despite political pressures. They are often surprised to learn that NILDS awards degrees such as Masters and PhDs, which many other institutes in Africa do not offer.

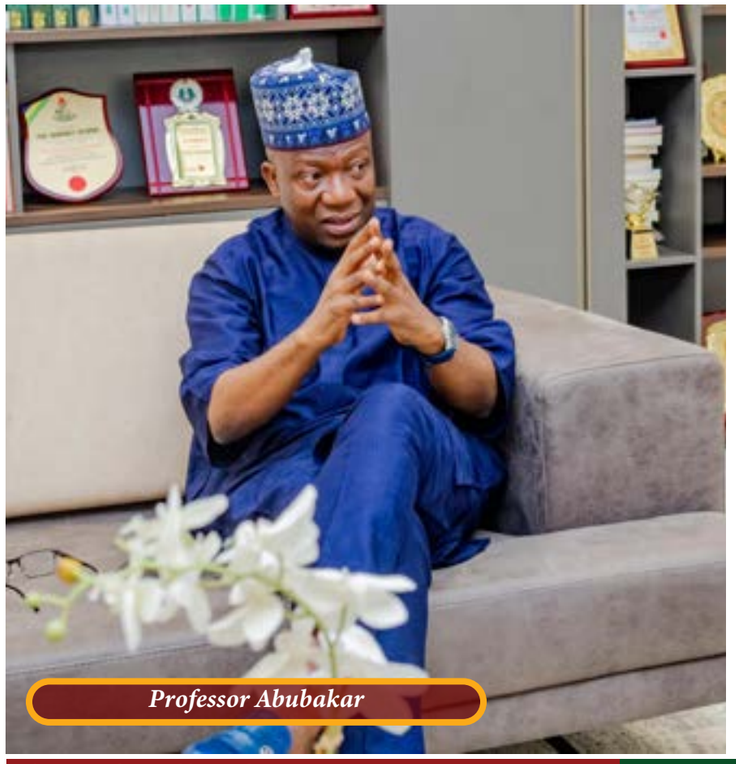
> *"Nigeria, through NILDS, is emerging as a hub for legislative training and parliamentary diplomacy in Africa."*

Legislative Digest: Given NILDS' investment in legislative capacity building, how has this translated into Nigeria's parliamentary diplomacy and strengthened Nigeria's soft power in Africa?

Prof. Abubakar: Foreign policy has objectives, and parliamentary diplomacy is a tool to achieve them. Nigeria's foreign policy aims to improve the welfare of its people, protect the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and unite African countries. NILDS supports these objectives by training, facilitating exchange programmes, and connecting with other parliaments.

Delegates from countries such as Benin, Somalia, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda regularly visit NILDS. When issues are discussed in regional or international parliamentary forums—whether debt, taxation, job creation, or African unity—these actors often support the Nigerian position, reflecting our influence and soft power.

NILDS has also strengthened peace and security. Countries whose committees we train are more likely to explore peaceful solutions to disputes rather than resorting to conflict. Our work contributes to unification, capacity development, and the broader realisation of Nigeria's foreign policy objectives



Professor Abubakar

Legislative Digest: How does NILDS use human capacity building as a tool of parliamentary diplomacy to promote cooperation, democratic values, and trust among parliaments in Africa and beyond?

Prof. Abubakar: Through initiatives such as COSPAL, the Conference of Speakers and Heads of Parliament of African Legislatures, NILDS fosters cooperation and trust. NILDS serves as the headquarters and provides all technical support for the organisation.

Our engagement promotes knowledge sharing across the continent. For example, Ghanaian parliamentarians frequently visit Nigeria to learn and exchange experiences. Similar exchanges occur with the Benin Republic, despite historical linguistic and political differences.

ECOWAS Parliament training also draws participants from both Francophone and Anglophone countries. The result is enhanced cooperation, improved skills, and unity among parliamentary staff and parliamentarians across Africa.

Legislative Digest: How does NILDS recruit participants for its programmes?

Prof. Abubakar: Recruitment is both demand- and supply-driven. Our Department of Trade and International Cooperation actively identifies clients, including legislatures, parliamentary staff, and democratic institutions. We reach out digitally, through media platforms, and physically to ensure clients are aware of our programmes.

Sometimes participants apply directly, but our proactive approach ensures broad engagement. For example, we identify gaps in electoral legislation and reach out to relevant stakeholders before the National Assembly requests our input.

The success of our 2025 programmes was largely due to the aggressive outreach efforts of our staff, ensuring that the right participants were informed and engaged.

Legislative Digest: How many cohorts of fellows from outside Nigeria has NILDS trained so far?

Prof. Abubakar: Over our 15 years as an institute, NILDS has trained numerous cohorts from across Africa. Delegates from Ghana, Liberia, Benin, and other countries regularly participate, demonstrating the high demand for our programmes. The impact is evident: participants return to their countries and influence legislative processes and governance, reflecting the effectiveness of our training.

Legislative Digest: Some programmes combine classroom instruction with practical field experience at the National Assembly. Can you elaborate on how these components work together?

Prof. Abubakar: We have two main components. Classroom instruction provides theory and discussion on legislative processes, including lawmaking, oversight, and parliamentary roles. Practical field experience exposes participants to the National Assembly, allowing them to see the chamber, the mace, the sergeant-at-arms, and live proceedings.

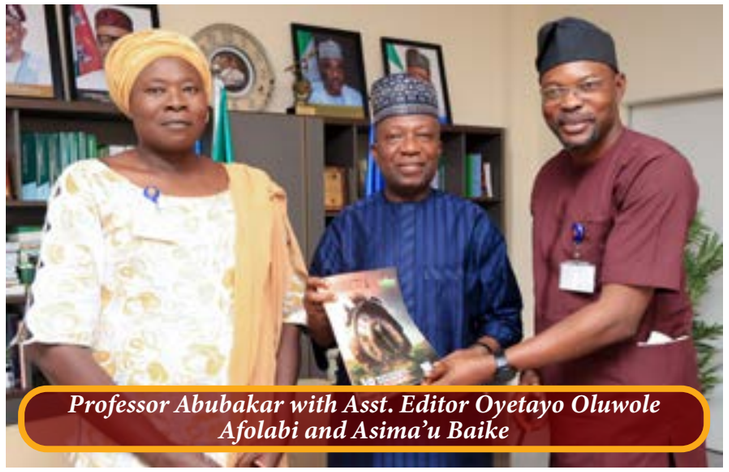
This dual approach ensures a holistic learning experience. For example, when delegates visited Austria, they observed similarities and differences in parliamentary structures, which they could then compare with Nigeria. Practical exposure allows participants to internalise lessons and adapt them to their home countries effectively.

Legislative Digest: Through its extensive 2025 training portfolio, NILDS consolidated its position as Nigeria's premier legislative capacity building institution. What are your strategic plans for 2026 and beyond?

Prof. Abubakar: I would not want to go into too much detail because strategic and work plans are normally only rolled out after Governing Council approval. What I can share is that our immediate priority this year is to consolidate the gains of last year.

We plan to focus on honing the skills of various parliamentary committees. Last year, limited funding affected some committee-level initiatives. This year, we will identify specific committees to train and develop further.

We will also focus on staff development. Several new staff members joined in 2024 and 2025 and have not had international training exposure. We believe an institution cannot train others effectively if its own staff are not adequately trained.



Professor Abubakar with Asst. Editor Oyetayo Oluwole Afolabi and Asima'u Baike

As 2026 is an election year, we also aim to strengthen capacities across political structures, NGOs, civil society organisations, security agencies, police, election monitors, and the media. All plans are subject to Governing Council approval.

> *"Beyond borders, NILDS is shaping governance by empowering lawmakers across the continent."*

Legislative Digest: Overall, would you say you are satisfied with the progress made by NILDS so far? Could you mention specific milestones?

Prof. Abubakar: Absolutely. We are fulfilled as an organisation and as an institution. Our work is visible to Nigerians and across Africa, and the progress made puts Nigeria on the map internationally.

It Is difficult to single out one milestone because we have many accomplishments. Should I highlight the Advanced Executive Programme we commenced last year? Or the MOU signed with Benin Republic, which was unprecedented? Or the multiple MOUs executed with other organisations, which have never happened before? All are significant.

Personally, the documentation of my six years in office was particularly meaningful. My staff compiled a record of achievements over this period, which I consider the culmination of our efforts and the climax of last year's accomplishments. This kind of institutional documentation is rare and valuable.

Professor Abubakar with the National Assembly Legislative Digest Team

THE MYTH:

Art as a Catalyst for Fostering Inclusion

Nwaimo Reigneth

Discussions on nation-building often begin with policies, institutions, and infrastructure. Yet, as was underscored during The Myth: Art as a Catalyst for Fostering Inclusion exhibition, the foundations of national progress are just as deeply rooted in ideas, and art remains one of the most powerful forces for shaping them.

Hosted at the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, the exhibition aligned artistic expression with a space dedicated to knowledge, research, and national memory, reinforcing inclusion as an issue informed by learning as much as by empathy.

Art, Ideas, and National Progress

In his address at the event, the Executive Secretary of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba, emphasised that art is not only a means of expression but a tool for national progress, one that helps societies interpret their experiences, challenge entrenched beliefs, heal divisions, and imagine new possibilities. He noted that while laws and institutions are vital, nations ultimately rise on the strength of ideas, and art plays a defining role in shaping those ideas.

This reflection set the tone for the exhibition, positioning art as an active contributor to nation-building rather than a peripheral cultural activity.

The Exhibition and Its Advocacy Focus

The Myth exhibition was designed as an advocacy-driven initiative, aimed at challenging persistent misconceptions surrounding autism spectrum disorder. Through visual expression, the exhibition invited audiences to move beyond deficit-based narratives and to engage with autism through creativity, individuality, and potential.

Driven by the Kanyechukwu Autism Society, in collaboration with the National Assembly Library and stakeholders in the arts sector, the exhibition sought to create awareness and advocate for the full inclusion of autistic persons across educational, social, and economic spaces. By showcasing artistic excellence, the exhibition highlighted what becomes possible when individuals on the autism spectrum are provided with support, opportunity, and platforms for expression. The decision to host the exhibition within the National Assembly Library was deliberate, placing the issue of inclusion directly before lawmakers and policy influencers, and encouraging reflection on the legislative frameworks that shape access to education, employment, and social participation for Nigeria's neurodivergent community.

Art as Expression and Inclusion

A recurring theme throughout the exhibition was the capacity of art to create space for expression without judgment.

In a context where autism is still widely misunderstood and many families face stigma and systemic barriers, art emerged as a language that allows talent to be seen and abilities to shine without prejudice.

As Rt. Hon. Nwawuba observed, creativity knows no boundaries. The works on display served as a reminder that intellectual and artistic contributions are not limited by neurological differences, but are often constrained by the absence of inclusive systems.

Panel Conversations: Advocacy and Storytelling

The exhibition was complemented by panel discussions that expanded on its central theme.

The first panel examined art as advocacy, focusing on the intersections between autism, inclusion, and public policy. Discussions highlighted how creative expression can humanise policy issues, strengthen advocacy efforts, and influence public understanding in ways that formal policy language alone may not achieve.

The second panel explored the power of art as a catalyst for storytelling, emphasising storytelling as a means of reshaping narratives around disability. Through visual and emotional engagement, art was presented as a tool for fostering empathy, promoting acceptance, and encouraging societal shifts that support inclusive governance.

Underlying the exhibition was a broader message: a nation cannot meaningfully speak of progress without embracing all its citizens. Advocacy for persons with disabilities was framed as both a responsibility and a measure of collective humanity.

The Myth: Art as a Catalyst for Fostering Inclusion demonstrated how art can move conversations on inclusion from the margins to the centre of national discourse. By bringing creativity, advocacy, and policy into one space, the exhibition challenged long-held assumptions and invited a reimagining of how society views autism and inclusion.

A CONVERSATION WITH COSPAL SECRETARY-GENERAL, MR. DAPO OYEWOLE

The Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures (CoSPAL) is an indigenous pan-African inter-parliamentary organisation established in 2020, with its headquarters in Abuja, Nigeria.

Legislative Digest: Who is Dapo Oyewole, and what professional experiences shaped your current role as Secretary-General of COSPAL?

Oyewole: I describe myself as a policy architect. Over the years, I have worked across the executive and legislative arms of government, as well as in international development and global affairs. I have served as Special Adviser to two Ministers of National Planning, to the Minister of Finance, and to the Speaker of the 9th House of Representatives, with responsibility for inter-parliamentary relations and international affairs. I also served as Senior Special Assistant to the President on International Cooperation.

Across three administrations and two political parties, my work has largely been technocratic rather than electoral, focused on building the frameworks that enable political leaders to translate vision into effective governance.

Legislative Digest: What inspired the establishment of COSPAL, and what mandate does it serve within Africa's inter-parliamentary relations?

Oyewole: COSPAL emerged during a convergence of challenges, particularly the COVID-19 pandemic. Africa found itself underprepared, and legislatures had to rethink how they respond to transnational crises. At the same time, African countries were being asked to prioritise debt servicing over saving lives.

> *"Africa's legislative leaders needed a permanent platform to speak with one voice, not only in times of crisis, but proactively."*

This made it clear that legislative leaders needed to speak with one voice. While executives had platforms like the G20 or AU Summits, Speakers of Parliaments did not have a standing forum, so COSPAL was created to bring together Africa's legislative leadership, not only to respond to crises, but to proactively shape standards, strengthen democratic solidarity, and foster peer learning across the continent.

Legislative Digest: How is COSPAL structured, and does its membership cover the entire African continent?

Oyewole: COSPAL is a pan-African institution headquartered in Abuja, Nigeria, but it serves parliaments across the entire continent. Since 2022, we have held three General Assemblies — in Abuja, Accra, and Rabat — each marking a new stage of institutional development.

The General Assembly is the supreme organ. Leadership includes a Chairman (a sitting Speaker), Vice-Chairpersons representing Africa's regions, and the Secretariat, which manages day-to-day operations. I was unanimously elected Secretary-General in Accra.

One of our early concerns was avoiding the perception of COSPAL as a Nigerian or Anglophone agenda. What we saw in Rabat was encouraging — Francophone participation exceeded Anglophone participation, which confirmed that COSPAL delivers value across linguistic and regional lines.

Legislative Digest: How is COSPAL funded, and is the position of Secretary-General open to all African nationals?

Oyewole: COSPAL is funded through a combination of membership subscriptions, programme-based revenues, and host-country support. Nigeria, as host, provides institutional backing, particularly through the National Assembly.

> *"You do not throw the baby out with the bathwater — even under military rule, parliaments must be sustained."*

The Secretary-General serves a four-year term, renewable twice. Importantly, the position is not reserved for Nigeria. COSPAL is designed to rotate leadership and representation, and we are already building a multinational Secretariat with staff seconded from different African parliaments.

Legislative Digest: How does COSPAL advance parliamentary diplomacy, particularly in conflict prevention and resolution?

Oyewole: Parliamentary diplomacy has become increasingly critical. Legislators are closer to their constituencies than executives and often maintain trusted cross-border relationships through parliamentary friendship groups.

A practical example is the Nigeria–Ghana trade dispute during the 9th Assembly. Parliamentary engagement resolved in days what had remained unresolved for months at executive level. Through dialogue, town-hall meetings, and structured negotiations, solutions were reached that protected citizens and restored relations.

This is the value COSPAL institutionalises — quiet diplomacy, built on trust and relationships, rather than public confrontation.

Legislative Digest: How does COSPAL respond to regional tensions and conflicts across Africa?

Oyewole: COSPAL responds when member parliaments request intervention. We have

Group photograph of Students of LMI with COSPAL Secretary-General, Mr. Dapo Oyewole, Chief of Staff to the President, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila and Executive Secretary, NALTF, Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba

convened and attempted extraordinary sessions on urgent regional crises, including those in the Lake Chad Basin.

Following the Rabat Declaration, COSPAL is now formally mandated to engage in conflict prevention, election support, and parliamentary diplomacy. We are also establishing a Centre for Legislative Leadership and Parliamentary Diplomacy, including a situation room that provides early-warning analysis, research, and policy recommendations.

Legislative Digest: COSPAL was formerly known as COSAP. Why the change in name?

Oyewole: The original name focused on Speakers alone. Senate Presidents rightly asked to be included. We saw this as a positive signal of interest and ownership, not resistance. So, guided by our legislative leaders, we transitioned to the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures — COSPAL — ensuring full inclusion across parliamentary leadership structures.

Legislative Digest: How does COSPAL support parliaments operating under military rule?

Oyewole: Our approach is pragmatic. We do not isolate or politicise. Instead, we work to sustain parliamentary institutions, protect parliamentarians, and preserve legislative capacity during periods of democratic transition. We are also undertaking research into best practices for parliamentary functioning under such circumstances. COSPAL is both a think-tank and an action-oriented institution.

Mr. Dapo Oyewole with Idowu Bakare

Legislative Digest: What is the Legislative Mentorship Initiative (LMI), and how does it fit into COSPAL's vision?

Oyewole: LMI was created to address a leadership gap. Many public officials enter office without formal preparation. LMI identifies young leaders, trains them intensively, and exposes them to the institutions of governance.

The programme is deliberately selective due to its intensity and cost. Over four years, we have built a strong alumni network now expanding beyond Nigeria. From this year, LMI will formally become pan-African under COSPAL.

Legislative Digest: Finally, how can Nigeria leverage its position as COSPAL's host country, and what message do you have for emerging leaders?

Oyewole: Hosting COSPAL enhances Nigeria's soft power. It strengthens the influence of its legislative leadership in global parliamentary institutions and reinforces Nigeria's role as a continental convenor.

For emerging leaders, parliamentary diplomacy is no longer optional. In a world of democratic fragility and geopolitical tension, legislatures must play a stabilising and constructive role.

Mr. Dapo Oyewole with Bode Maiye and Favour Idedevwo

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE & DEMOCRATIC STUDIES (NILDS)

Providing free services to Legislators and Committees on

Drafting | Policy/Issue/Information/Data Briefs
Technical Assistance to Legislators and Committees
Capacity Development Programmes | Research & Publications
Postgraduate Programmes | Outreach and Networking

For Further Enquiry Contact:
+234 803 716 8276, (0) 803 615 5701, (0) 803 302 5221

PROFESSIONALISING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR LEGISLATIVE EXCELLENCE:

Why Specialised Staff Training Matters in the National Assembly

Fineman, Guy Goyei

Cross Section of Participants at the Organised Staff Training

The Nigerian National Assembly has, over the years, evolved into a complex legislative bureaucracy with a sophisticated internal structure, designed to support law making, representation and oversight.

Today, its administrative architecture comprises 13 Directorates and over 70 Departments, spanning legislative services, legal support, research, budget analysis, human resource management, finance, health, parliamentary security, estate management, procurement and inter-parliamentary relations. This expansive structure reflects both the growing responsibilities of the legislature and the increasing technical demands of modern parliamentary work.

At the core of this system is a clear division of responsibilities. Secretaries of Directorates, appointed by the National Assembly Service Commission, exercise general superintendence over broad directorate functions, while Directors of Departments provide specialised operational leadership within their technical domains. Together, they form the managerial backbone that powers the daily functioning of the institution.

However, despite this robust organisational design, a critical gap persists: the absence of a deliberate, systematic framework for professionalised and specialised training tailored to the distinct needs of each cadre of staff.

Modern legislatures can no longer be sustained by general administrative competence alone. Legislative officers require advanced expertise in bill drafting, legislative scrutiny and committee procedure. In the same vein, legal officers must remain abreast of evolving constitutional jurisprudence and comparative legislative practices. Similarly, budget and finance officers are expected to master programme-based budgeting, fiscal risk analysis and public financial management reforms.

Also, engineers, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) specialists and estate officers must understand smart infrastructure, digital security and sustainability standards, while medical personnel must align with best practices in occupational health and institutional wellness.

Dr. Bello Olatunji Babatunde delivering a lecture

Without continuous, targeted professional development, even the most sophisticated parliamentary systems risk institutional stagnation. Where training is not intentionally professionalised, several negative consequences emerge-

- staff performance becomes reactive rather than proactive and strategic;
- technical gaps slow legislative processes, weaken committee work and reduce the credibility of reports, budget reviews and oversight outputs;
- limited exposure to global best practices isolates staff from innovations in legislative technology and evidence-based law making; and
- over time, morale and professional commitment may decline as staff perceive limited opportunities for growth and specialisation.

These challenges do not stem from a lack of effort as the National Assembly has consistently organised workshops, seminars and refresher courses. However, most of such interventions have been general in nature, rather than structured around professional certification pathways or cadre-specific competence frameworks, thereby limiting long-term institutional impact.

The case for a deliberately professionalised training regime is therefore, compelling. Specialised capacity development would improve legislative efficiency, strengthen research and drafting quality, enhance budget scrutiny and deepen institutional memory. It would also position the National Assembly for stronger regional and continental leadership through more effective parliamentary diplomacy and inter-parliamentary cooperation.

To achieve this transformation, a number of actionable steps are necessary. First, the National Assembly should institutionalise a comprehensive training needs assessment framework that maps required competencies to each staff cadre, including administrative, legal, legislative, budget, engineering, health, finance and audit officers.

Second, structured certification and accreditation pathways should be developed in partnership with professional bodies and universities, enabling staff to obtain recognised qualifications in legislative drafting, parliamentary procedure, public finance, procurement, ICT governance and health management.

Third, and critically, the extensive practical knowledge of serving and retired senior staff should be systematically harnessed. Cerebral and highly experienced officers and retirees of the National Assembly should, more often, be engaged as resource persons, mentors and adjunct trainers under a structured framework coordinated by the Directorate of Human Resources and Staff Development, working with relevant beneficiary directorates and departments.

Legislative competence is not acquired solely from textbooks, university classrooms or commercial environments, but is developed through years of practical exposure to parliamentary practice and procedures, committee work, floor management and procedural administration. Institutionalising this experiential knowledge will help transfer tacit skills that cannot be replicated through theory alone.

Fourth, parliamentary exchange and attachment programmes should be formalised with other national and international legislatures to expose staff to global best practices.

Fifth, to enhance productivity, there should be commensurate professional development for officers of the Service as they progress in their careers and assume higher responsibilities.

Finally, sustained investment in digital learning platforms and internal knowledge management systems will make training continuous, accessible and measurable.
The future effectiveness and credibility of the National Assembly would depend not only on the constitutional powers it holds, but also on the professional competence and institutional memory of the officers who enliven its daily work.

By professionalising staff training, systematically capturing institutional knowledge from experienced officers and retirees, and embedding a culture of continuous learning, the National Assembly can enhance performance, preserve institutional memory, and strengthen its standing as a model legislature in Africa.

Fineman Guy Goyei, PhD is a legislative researcher in the Nigeria National Assembly and can be reached on goyeifineman@gmail.com or guy.fineman@nass.gov.ng

ANOTHER KUDOS TO THE CNA!

It may be recalled that, as part of staff welfare and improved health services, the CNA approved a comprehensive obstetric care training for medical staff in October. This was in addition to the upgrade of the labour ward and delivery services.

These efforts are already yielding results. Yesterday, the first normal delivery was successfully carried out at the new NASS clinic. Several women are now also registered at the antenatal clinic.

I waited for three years as a director with high expectations, but those hopes gradually faded. Receiving this utility vehicle, an SUV, is motivating and makes me feel valued and included. Our Clerk is truly a father indeed.

The Clerk to the National Assembly demonstrated compassion and inclusive leadership by presenting an electric wheelchair to a staff of the National Assembly living with disability. The gesture reflects the Clerk's strong commitment to staff welfare and social inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind in the pursuit of dignity and equal opportunity within the parliamentary community.

The electric wheelchair will significantly improve the recipient's mobility, independence, and quality of life. Beyond the material support, the act stands as a powerful reminder that leadership is measured not only by policy and procedure, but also by empathy and care for the vulnerable. This intervention reinforces the National Assembly's dedication to humanity, service, and responsible governance.

Legislative LEXICON

1. **Division:** A formal voting procedure in the chamber where members indicate their votes as "Aye" or "No." Purpose: To record how members voted on a question.
2. **Exclusive Legislative List:** Matters that only the National Assembly can legislate on, such as defence, currency, and foreign affairs.
3. **Filibuster:** A prolonged speech or series of speeches made to delay legislative action. Context: Often used in other jurisdictions; not common in Nigerian practice but understood in comparative legislative studies.
4. **First Reading:** The initial stage in the passage of a bill where its title is read, usually without debate.
5. **Gazettement:** The official publication of a law or government notice in the Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette. Importance: Gazettement makes a law enforceable.
6. **Hansard:** The official transcript of everything said in the National Assembly during plenary sessions. Why it matters: It provides a permanent, searchable record of debates.
7. **Impeachment:** The formal process by which a President or Vice President can be charged with misconduct. Reference: Constitution, including Section 143.
8. **Joint Committee:** A committee composed of members from both the Senate and House of Representatives, usually for matters of shared interest.
9. **Plenary:** A full sitting of the Senate or House of Representatives where all members may participate.
10. **Quorum:** The minimum number of members required to be present for the Assembly to validly conduct business.

NABRO
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET AND RESEARCH OFFICE (NABRO)

2026 BUDGET AT A GLANCE

The 2026 Budget is Defined by Three Core Realities

1

An Unprecedented Expenditure Plan

The government proposes a **₦58.5 trillion** budget, heavily weighted towards capital projects (**₦23.2T**) and servicing existing debt (**₦15.9T**).

2

A Constrained Revenue Base

Total projected inflows of **₦33.2 trillion**, while significant, are forecast to cover only **57%** of the planned spending.

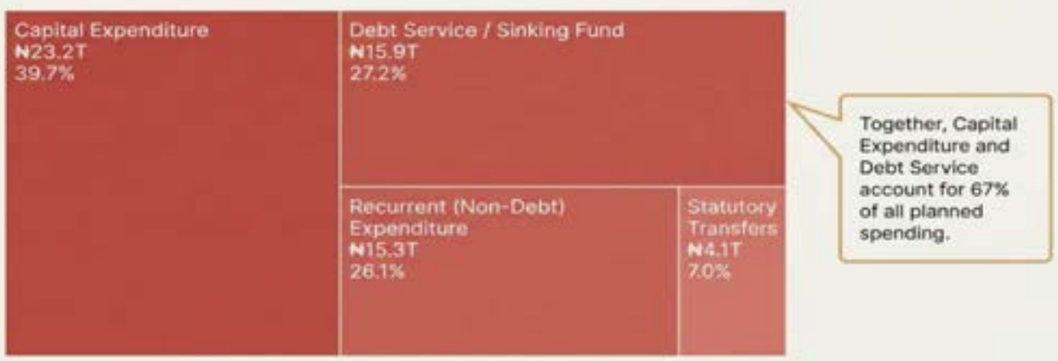
3

A Reliance on New Debt

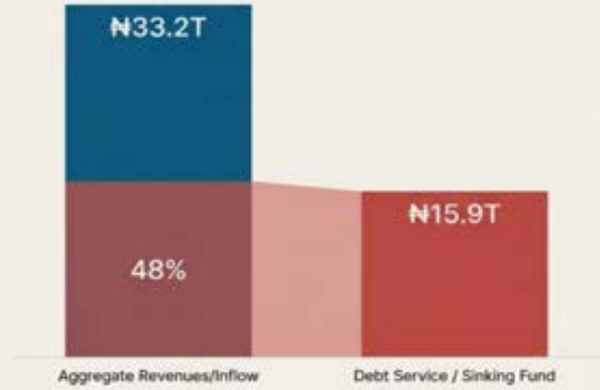
A resulting **₦25.3 trillion** deficit will be overwhelmingly financed by new debt (91.1%)

The ₦58.5 Trillion Expenditure Plan Creates a ₦25.3 Trillion Gap Over Projected Revenues

Capital Projects and Debt Service Form the Twin Pillars of the ₦58.5 Trillion Expenditure Plan

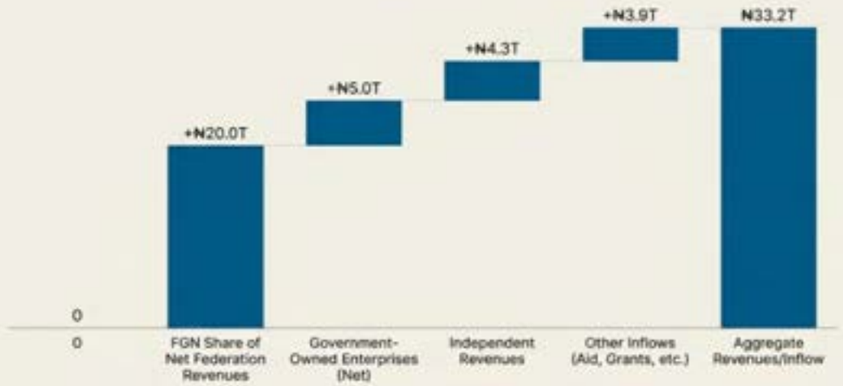


Debt Service Obligations Alone Are Projected to Consume 48% of All Government Revenue



The ₦15.9 trillion allocated for debt servicing underscores the escalating pressure of past borrowing on the current fiscal space, limiting discretionary spending.

Federation Account Revenues Form the Bedrock of the ₦33.2 Trillion Inflow Projection



The FGN's share of Net Federation Revenues accounts for over 60% of total expected inflows, highlighting the central importance of this revenue stream.

Deconstructing Federation Revenues: How ₦23.1 Trillion Gross Becomes ₦20.0 Trillion Net

Over ₦3 trillion in deductions are netted from gross federation revenues before the final share is available for the FGN budget. Understanding this flow is critical to accurately assessing government liquidity.

BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH PARLIAMENT:
The Nigeria – Ghana Trade Resolution

Tagbo Okeke

In the evolving landscape of African diplomacy, legislative diplomacy, which is the use of parliamentary institutions and legislators both in official and personal capacities to engage and advance national interest through dialogue, has emerged as a powerful complement to traditional executive led foreign policy channels. Across the continent, parliaments are increasingly active in conflict resolution, regional integration, and forging bilateral ties that promote peace and shared prosperity. At the forefront of this shift is Nigeria's National Assembly, a body that has positioned itself as a diplomatic legislative hub in Africa, championing dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect among nations.

A prime illustration of this new frontier in parliamentary engagement was the bold diplomatic intervention led by the former Speaker of Nigeria's House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, during the diplomatic row and escalating trade disputes between Nigeria and Ghana in September 2020.

Nigeria and Ghana share rich historical, cultural, and economic bonds. Both countries have been leaders within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and are long time advocates of free movement, regional trade, and Pan-African cooperation. However, these long-standing ties were tested in the latter half of 2020, when disagreements over the treatment of Nigerian traders in Ghana escalated into a diplomatic impasse.

At the center of the dispute was Ghana's implementation of a regulation requiring a US$1 million capital base for foreign investors, a policy that many saw as disproportionately affecting Nigerian traders and entrepreneurs. This, along with reported harassment and the closure of Nigerian-owned shops, ignited public concern and strained bilateral economic relations.

This dispute occurred at a moment when Africa was strengthening regional trade frameworks such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), thereby threatening to, undermine the very principles of intra-African cooperation that both Ghana and Nigeria had championed. The situation demanded a statesmanlike response that was capable of not only bridging political differences but also protecting the interests of citizens whose livelihoods depended on robust cross-border trade.

In response, the former Speaker embarked on a two-day diplomatic mission to Accra, Ghana, from September 2–3, 2020, with a clear goal to engage Ghanaian counterparts at both parliamentary and executive levels in order to defuse tensions, explore legislative solutions, and reinforce the mutual interests that bind the two nations.

Unlike traditional diplomatic missions led by foreign ministries, this initiative marked a deliberate deployment of legislative diplomacy designed to complement executive level efforts, thus, demonstrating the value of parliamentary engagement where legislators serve as direct representatives of the people and catalysts for policy alignment across borders.

During the visit, the Speaker and his delegation held extensive discussions with the Speaker of the Parliament of Ghana, Prof. Mike Oquaye, other senior parliamentary and executive officials, and representatives of the Nigerian traders' community in Ghana. The focus of this engagement was to address the grievances of Nigerian traders, reaffirming ECOWAS trade and free-movement protocols, and exploring legislative pathways for resolving outstanding issues.

The immediate outcome of the intervention was a de-escalation of tensions and a renewed commitment by both sides to dialogue and review of contentious policies. Beyond the short term, the mission significantly strengthened parliamentary channels between Nigeria and Ghana, laying the groundwork for sustained cooperation.

This episode reinforced the role of the National Assembly as a trusted and credible diplomatic actor. The Nigerian legislative approach, emphasized mutual respect, equality between partners, and a commitment to joint problem-solving. Such a posture strengthened Nigeria's soft power on the continent and deepened the narrative that parliamentary diplomacy is integral to regional peace and economic well-being.

Globally, legislative diplomacy is not without precedent. In the United States of America, members of congress routinely engage in legislative diplomacy (congressional diplomacy) by leading bipartisan delegations abroad and act as informal intermediaries during diplomatic tensions. The late Senator John McCain, remains one of the most prominent examples, who frequently engaged foreign leaders independently of the executive arm and served as a trusted channel during periods of strained US executive diplomacy. Similarly, the U.S. Congressional Black Caucus has maintained regular engagements with African heads of state and parliaments to advocate for stronger US – Africa trade and development partnerships - another example of strong identity based legislative diplomacy at work in the American congress.

Beyond trade and economic disputes, the National Assembly has also demonstrated its capacity in moments of regional political crisis. A notable example in recent times, was its intervention following the military coup in Niger Republic in July 2023. In the aftermath of that military takeover, and amid rising tensions within the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) over a possible military intervention, the Nigerian Senate led by its President, Distinguished Senator Godswill Akpabio, called for restraint and prioritized political dialogue over the use of force. The Senate urged President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, who was at the time, serving as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government, to exhaust diplomatic, political, and negotiation based options in addressing the crisis.

At the center of the dispute was Ghana's implementation of a regulation requiring a US$1 million capital base for foreign investors, a policy that many saw as disproportionately affecting Nigerian traders and entrepreneurs. This, along with reported harassment and the closure of Nigerian-owned shops, ignited public concern and strained bilateral economic relations.

While the Niger crisis remains complex and evolving, The National Assembly illustrated an important principle of modern parliamentary engagement and reinforced Nigeria's long standing preference for peaceful conflict resolution and regional leadership grounded in dialogue. This is essential for Africa to fully realize its potential.

The Nigeria–Ghana trade resolution underscores the growing relevance of legislative diplomacy as a vital instrument of modern governance and regional engagement. By deploying parliamentary dialogue to complement executive action, the National Assembly demonstrated its capacity to protect citizens' interests, de-escalate tensions, and reinforce regional norms anchored in cooperation and mutual respect. As Africa continues to pursue deeper integration through frameworks such as ECOWAS and the AfCFTA, sustained parliamentary engagement will remain indispensable to promoting peaceful dispute resolution, economic stability, and the consolidation of democratic institutions across the continent.

ECOWAS Parliament at 25:

Celebrating A Milestone Of Regional Integration Amidst Crisis Of Coups And Democratic Erosion

Godwin Ortserga
Anunkor Chizobam

Senator Barau I. Jibrin and Rt. Hon. Memounatou Ibrahima

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament recently celebrated its 25th anniversary, marking an important milestone in its journey towards fostering regional unity, peace, and democratic governance across West Africa.

Since its establishment and subsequent inauguration of the first legislature in November 2000, the ECOWAS Parliament has evolved from a consultative chamber to a true decision-making actor, with expanded prerogatives in legislative initiatives, budget formulation, and oversight of community policies and programs. Over the past quarter-century, the ECOWAS Parliament has played a pivotal role in promoting economic integration, advocating for human rights, and addressing regional challenges through collaborative efforts. Its notable achievements include fostering parliamentary cooperation, managing political crises, and advancing regional integration. The parliament has also been instrumental in observing and monitoring elections in member states, ensuring peaceful transitions of power.

However, despite its successes, in more recent times, the sub-region is facing significant challenges, including rising political tensions, violent extremism, economic crises, terrorism and other forms of insecurity, and unconstitutional changes of government Against this backdrop, parliamentarians convened not only to celebrate a silver jubilee but to confront the accelerating erosion of democratic norms and the severe economic fallout of chronic instability.

The Parliament opened its 2025 second ordinary session on 1 December 2025, in Abuja, at the start of a critical two-week gathering that coincided with the institution's 25th anniversary. The timing was profoundly symbolic, coming when the sub-region is engulfed in a wave of military coups, the exit of three key member states, and a deepening security crisis. The withdrawal of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger which are under military rule has shrunk the bloc from 15 to 12 members. Guinea-Bissau's recent military takeover further contracted the democratic space, while Benin narrowly thwarted a coup attempt with Nigerian assistance under ECOWAS protocols.

First Deputy Speaker of the Parliament Senator Barau I. Jibrin, standing in for the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Memounatou Ibrahima, set a resolute opening tone by forcefully condemning recent military seizures of power. He labelled the recent coup in Guinea-Bissau "an unacceptable assault on democracy" and a direct threat to regional stability, aligning the Parliament with ECOWAS's stated zero-tolerance principle. He stated that their presence at the ordinary session was a further demonstration of the collective commitment to the ideals of regional cooperation, peace and democratic governance, which define the very essence of the Community. His remarks were echoed by a chorus of regional leaders who underscored the urgency of the crisis.

President Julius Maada Bio of Sierra Leone and current chair of the ECOWAS, warned starkly, that the sub-region will not survive the prevailing threats unless member states take drastic, collective action. President of the ECOWAS Commission, Omar Touray noted that the anniversary arrived at a turning point where "democratic norms that once defined the Community are being eroded." On his part, former Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan, linked security to governance, stating that violent extremism exploits institutional weaknesses, while former Vice President Yemi Osinbajo described the era as "tumultuous," urging a unified response to interconnected security, economic, and political shocks.

To address these challenges, the ECOWAS

Dignitaries at the ECOWAS Parliament at 25 held at the Bola Ahmed Tinubu International Conference Centre

Parliament is calling for stronger democratic governance, adherence to the rule of law, and deeper integration among member states. The parliament is also prioritizing economic integration, trade facilitation, and regional security cooperation.

Therefore, the parliamentary agenda directly addressed the region's fragility with key deliberations including scrutiny of the draft 2026 Community budget, proposed amendments to ensure the 0.5% Community levy on extra-regional imports funds stability, development, and citizen-focused programmes. There were proposals to enhance the capacity and enforcement authority of the ECOWAS Court of Justice, to protect human rights and uphold regional rulings.

Discussions also covered new rules to improve transparency, public-debt management, and accounting standards to safeguard the region's financial stability. Importantly, the Parliament adopted a resolution condemning the Guinea-Bissau coup and demanding the restoration of constitutional order, reinforcing ECOWAS's stance against unconstitutional power changes.

While the ECOWAS Parliament still lacks direct legislative power, its 25th-anniversary session highlighted a determined journey towards deeper integration. The gathering crystallized a collective resolve to defend democratic institutions, leverage economic tools like the Community Levy more effectively, strengthen judicial and financial oversight, and pursue the long-term vision of a directly elected Parliament with full legislative powers.

The true legacy of this silver jubilee session will be measured not by its commemorations, but by the tangible actions that follow to secure democracy, stability, and development in a region standing at a precipice. The Parliament, much like ECOWAS itself, faces its most definitive test.

Senator Barau I. Jibrin

A CELEBRATION OF PROVERBS AND HERITAGE

'Magana jari ce,' (words are capital), the Hausa say.

This idea sat comfortably in the room and ran through the programme as people gathered at the Serenity Banquet Hall of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, for the public presentation of 80 Owe and Proverbs Da Karin Magana, written by Asma'u Baikie, in honour of her mother, Mrs. Lucy Baikie, as she turned 80.

The gathering was not just a formal ceremony, but a conversation around language, memory and the quiet ways wisdom is passed on. In his keynote address, the Director-General of the International Institute of Journalism, Dr. Emmanuel Usman Shehu, spoke about the place of proverbs in everyday life, noting that they shape how people think, speak and understand the world. Proverbs, he said, carry history and values, and are meant to be used, spoken often, lived daily and shared freely. The Dan Buram of Wusasa, Mallam James Usman Bagudu, spoke on the role of proverbs in African societies, particularly within Hausa culture. He described them as tools for guidance and instruction, expressions that shape character and help communities make sense of experience. He therefore commended the book as a meaningful contribution to cultural preservation and education.

The book reviewers: Mrs. Ojo Kupoluyi, Barrister Celestina Aikpehae and Mallam James Usman Bagudu, each examined the book through the languages it carries: Yoruba, English and Hausa. Drawing from the proverbs in the book and from personal experience, they spoke about how these expressions continue to influence speech, writing and everyday decision-making, encouraging their regular use as a way of keeping culture alive.

The author's story as she took the stage was simple, over the years, she had listened to her mother speak and noted the proverbs used naturally in conversation. Those notes eventually became a collection of 80 proverbs gathered across three languages, shaped by time, patience and careful listening.

By the end of the programme, one thought lingered, that the book is not only a record of proverbs, but a tribute to motherhood and memory. In preserving her mother's words, Asmau Baikie has ensured that they will continue to speak.

STRENGTHENING AFRICAN PARLIAMENTS FOR DEMOCRATIC STABILITY

Oyetayo Afolabi

Across the African continent, democracy continues to evolve in dynamic, sometimes turbulent ways. Elections have become more regular, political participation is expanding and constitutional reforms are gradually shaping more accountable governance structures. One institution remains central to whether African democracies can truly mature and deliver on their promises or not. That institution is a strong parliament.

A strong parliament is not merely a legislative chamber where laws are debated and passed. It is the heart of democratic governance. It embodies the will of the people, scrutinises the executive, approves public expenditure and ensures that government serves citizens with transparency and fairness. When parliaments function effectively, democracy is strengthened. When they are weak, compromised or sidelined, democratic instability follows.

Experience has shown that the stability of democratic systems is directly linked to the capacity and independence of legislatures. Yet, many countries on the African continent still struggle with challenges such as executive dominance, limited financial autonomy, inadequate professional support for lawmakers, weak oversight tools and insufficient technology infrastructure. These limitations reduce the parliament's ability to perform its constitutional responsibilities and weaken the overall resilience of democratic institutions.

However, encouraging progress is emerging. One of the most promising developments is the growing recognition across African countries that parliamentary capacity building is not optional, it is essential. Legislatures are increasingly investing in structured training for lawmakers, professional development for staff and the establishment of legislative support institutions. Nigeria's National Assembly, particularly through the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), has become a leading example by providing continuous training that strengthens lawmaking, oversight and representation.

Peer-to-peer learning is another vital component. African parliaments have begun to learn from each other, exchange ideas and share practical experiences. Recent visits to the Nigerian National Assembly by delegations from several African countries demonstrate a continental appetite for collaboration. These engagements allow parliaments to understand comparative practices, refine their administrative systems and adopt innovations suitable for their specific contexts.

> *The path to democratic stability in Africa runs through a strong, independent, and effective parliament*

Technology is also shaping the future of parliamentary work. Digital platforms for committee management, legislative drafting, public engagement and real-time oversight enhance efficiency and transparency. African parliaments that embrace technology will be better positioned to serve their citizens and safeguard democracy.

Ultimately, strengthening African parliaments is not only about institutional development. It is about nurturing democratic culture. When citizens trust their legislatures, they feel included in governance. When lawmakers are accountable and empowered, governments become more responsive. When parliamentary institutions are robust, political tensions are managed peacefully rather than through conflict.

The path to democratic stability in Africa runs through the parliament. It requires investment, reform, collaboration and vision. As African countries continue to build their legislative capacities, the continent moves closer to a future where democracy is not only practiced but deeply rooted. A resilient parliament means a resilient democracy, and that is the cornerstone of national progress.

HOUSE OF REPS MOVES TO PROTECT GREEN AREAS AROUND NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PREMISES

Akubueze Augustina

Tree felling the cutting down of trees for construction, agriculture, or energy has long been part of human activity. While the practice can support responsible development when properly regulated, it becomes environmentally destructive when carried out without planning or oversight.

Across many countries, including Nigeria, trees are removed to make way for expanding cities, new building projects, farmlands, and for the harvesting of firewood and charcoal. As infrastructure grows and rural households seek affordable energy sources, pressure on forested areas intensifies, often with far-reaching consequences.

Trees support biodiversity, stabilise soil, improve air quality, and play a critical role in climate resilience. They help communities adapt to rising temperatures and increasingly unpredictable weather patterns.

But when trees are cleared without environmental assessments or reforestation plans, landscapes quickly deteriorate. Heat levels rise, erosion worsens, and water absorption decreases. Both urban and rural environments suffer, and long-term ecological balance becomes increasingly fragile.

Abuja originally designed with extensive green belts to enhance beauty, health, and livability has not been exempt from these pressures. Rapid development, unauthorised land use, and inconsistent enforcement of environmental regulations have diminished its green spaces. The impact has become especially noticeable around the National Assembly Complex, where trees that once framed the structure are now disappearing.

For decades, the complex was surrounded by tall trees and lush lawns. Today, that landscape is changing. Areas that once offered shade now show exposed soil, cleared patches, and piles of felled timber.

Alarmed by these developments, the House of Representatives recently raised concerns during a plenary session about the accelerating pace of tree felling within and around the National Assembly premises. Lawmakers noted that many trees were being cut under the guise of development or construction, yet without the required environmental impact assessments or plans for replacement. Even more troubling, they observed, were stacks of felled trees being gathered as firewood—an indication that the activity was taking place without regulation or supervision.

The lawmakers warned that continued tree felling could worsen Abuja's rising temperatures, increase soil erosion, reduce biodiversity, and undermine Nigeria's climate commitments. They stressed that the surroundings of the National Assembly should model sustainability and responsible urban planning.

To address the issue, the House adopted several measures aimed at restoring and protecting green spaces around the National Assembly. First is a strict Tree Replacement Policy requiring that at least three indigenous trees be planted for every one removed.

The National Assembly Management is also to collaborate with the Federal Capital Territory Administration on a Green Infrastructure Development Framework to ensure that future construction projects in the Three Arms Zone integrate tree preservation, landscaping, and environmental safeguards from the planning stage.

In addition, the House directed its relevant committees to work with the Federal Capital Development Authority, the Ecological Fund Office, and other agencies to audit the green spaces lost to recent construction and farming activities. A Legislative Green Task Force will also be established to oversee sustainability initiatives across the National Assembly and ensure strict compliance with environmental standards.

KOGI ASSEMBLY IN ACTION: HOW THE 8TH HOUSE IS SHAPING GOVERNANCE IN THE STATE

Owolaye Shola Theophilius

The Kogi State House of Assembly has, over the past two years, shown signs of renewed legislative activity, with actions that reflect both institutional stability and a growing focus on responsive governance. Since its inauguration in June 2023, the 8th House of Assembly has moved steadily to assert its role in lawmaking, budget approval, and policy intervention across key sectors of the state.

The Assembly was inaugurated on 6 June 2023, following the dissolution of the 7th Assembly a day earlier in line with constitutional provisions. At its maiden sitting, members elected Rt. Hon. Aliyu Umar Yusuf as Speaker and Hon. Enema Paul as Deputy Speaker. The leadership transition marked the beginning of a new legislative cycle, with the Speaker pledging that the House would focus on laws capable of delivering practical benefits to the people of Kogi State.

That promise has begun to take shape through a combination of fiscal decisions and targeted legislation. One of the Assembly's major undertakings was the passage of the 2025 Appropriation Bill on 24 December 2024. The budget, totaling N582.4 billion, earmarked N281.15 billion for recurrent expenditure and N301.28 billion for capital projects. The passage of the budget provided the legal framework for government spending and underscored the legislature's central role in defining the state's development priorities. Beyond budgetary matters, the Assembly has also taken steps to address everyday challenges faced by residents. In July 2025, lawmakers passed a law restricting the movement of heavy-duty trucks within Lokoja metropolis, following growing concerns over traffic congestion and road accidents. The measure was widely seen as a practical response to urban safety and mobility issues in the state capital.

During the same legislative period, the House also passed two notable laws with longer-term implications for governance. The Kogi State Agency for Climate Change Law established a dedicated body to address climate-related risks and environmental management, placing the state among those beginning to align policy with emerging global concerns. In addition, the Kogi State Bureau of Lands Law was enacted to strengthen land administration, reduce disputes, and improve internally generated revenue through a more structured land management system.

Observers note that the pattern of lawmaking by the 8th Assembly suggests a legislature seeking to balance cooperation with the executive while gradually expanding its policy focus. While early engagements reflected a collaborative working relationship, the House has increasingly ventured beyond routine approvals into sector-specific interventions touching transport, environment, and land governance.

> *The true test of the 8th Kogi State House of Assembly lies not in the number of laws passed, but in how effectively those laws translate into accountability and tangible benefits for citizens.*

Between June 2023 and July 2025, the Assembly's activities point to a period of legislative renewal marked by leadership stability, fiscal responsibility, and targeted policy action. As the House moves forward, attention is expected to shift toward effective oversight and implementation, ensuring that laws passed translate into visible improvements in the lives of citizens.

For many stakeholders, the true test of the 8th Kogi State House of Assembly will lie not only in the volume of legislation produced, but in how consistently it sustains engagement with the executive and the public, and how firmly it anchors governance on accountability and impact.

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 healthandgovernance.

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

We specialise in conducting targeted research and collating information that align with the unique interests and focus areas of individual legislators, ensuring that every member has access to relevant insights for decision-making. Through comprehensive research and tailored support, we help ensure Nigeria's policies and laws are well-founded and responsive to the nation's evolving needs.

NALTF RESEARCH

Empowering lawmakers. Enhancing legislation. Enriching the nation.

National Assebly Library Trust Fund, National Assembly Complex, Three Arms Zone, Central Business District, Central Area, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. | Email: info@naltf.gov.ng

www.naltf.gov.ng @naltf_ng @naltrustfund

Reflections on Leadership

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY: THE QUIET FORCE BEHIND EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Idowu Bakare

In many workplaces, leadership is often associated with decisiveness, authority, and control. Yet some of the most effective leaders I have encountered possess a different, quieter strength: the ability to create environments where people feel safe to think, speak, and contribute honestly. This quality is known as psychological safety, and it is one of the most underestimated tools of leadership in the public service.

Psychological safety does not mean lowering standards or avoiding accountability. It means creating a climate where individuals can ask questions, offer ideas, admit uncertainty, and even make mistakes without fear of embarrassment, ridicule, or retaliation. In such environments, people bring their full intelligence to work. Where psychological safety is absent, silence becomes the norm, and silence is costly.

In hierarchical systems like the public service, silence often masquerades as discipline. Meetings are quiet, dissent is rare, and decisions appear unanimous. But beneath that surface calm, valuable insights are frequently withheld. Junior officers hesitate to speak. Technical staff avoid challenging assumptions. Errors go unreported until they become crises. Leaders may believe consensus exists, when in reality, caution and fear have replaced candour.

The cost of this silence is not abstract. Poor decisions are made with incomplete information. Opportunities for innovation are missed. Risks go unflagged. Over time, capable people disengage, not because they lack ideas, but because they believe their ideas do not matter or they will be talked down for having an opinion.

Leadership plays a decisive role in shaping this culture. Psychological safety is not created by policy documents or slogans; it is created through everyday behaviour. How a leader responds to dissent, questions, or mistakes sends powerful signals. A dismissive comment, an impatient interruption, or public criticism can shut down participation for months. Conversely, a simple acknowledgment — "That's a useful perspective," or "Let's examine that further" — can open the door to deeper engagement.

Leaders who foster psychological safety ask more questions than they give answers. They listen not just for agreement, but for insight. They create space for quieter voices and protect those who raise uncomfortable truths. Importantly, they distinguish between honest mistakes and negligence, responding to each appropriately.

This approach is particularly important in environments dealing with complex policy choices, institutional reform, or public accountability. In such settings, no single individual has all the answers. The quality of decisions depends on the quality of input, and input depends on whether people feel safe to contribute.

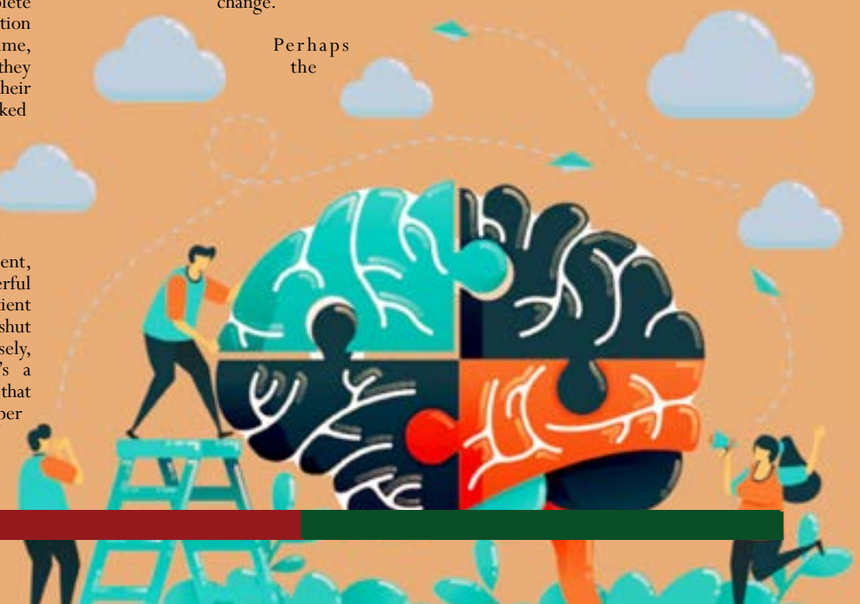
Psychological safety also strengthens trust. When people feel heard and respected, they are more willing to commit to collective goals, even when outcomes are uncertain or workloads are demanding. Trust, once built, becomes a stabilising force during periods of change.

Perhaps the most difficult aspect of this kind of leadership is restraint. It requires leaders to resist the urge to dominate discussions, to be comfortable with not knowing everything, and to accept that good ideas can come from anywhere in the organisation. This humility is not weakness; it is strategic strength.

As leaders, especially within public institutions, we must recognise that authority alone does not produce excellence. People do. And people perform best when they feel safe to think, speak, and act in the service of shared objectives.

In the end, psychological safety is not about being soft. It is about being smart. It is about unlocking the collective intelligence of teams and ensuring that leadership decisions are informed by truth, not silence.

Leadership, at its best, creates space — and in that space, institutions grow stronger; the National Assembly can grow stronger.



Appointments

NASC STRENGTHENS LEGISLATIVE ADMINISTRATION WITH KEY APPOINTMENTS AND REDEPLOYMENTS

O'Oduaree Eze

The National Assembly Service Commission (NASC) has approved the appointment (effective 9 February 2026) of Mr. Ibrahim Sidi as Acting Clerk of the House of Representatives, following the retirement of Dr. Yahaya Danzariya from service. With this appointment, Mr. Sidi becomes the 8th Clerk of the House since the commencement of Nigeria's Fourth Republic in 1999.

Others are Siyaka Wahab Sadiq as Deputy Clerk (Legislative), House of Representatives, and Dauda Bulama Bukar as Deputy Clerk (Administration), House of Representatives.

The Commission also approved the appointment of several senior officers as Secretaries of Directorates, in Acting capacity, including – Fortune Ihua-Maduenyi as Acting Secretary, Protocol and Inter-Parliamentary Relations; Asien Fatima Nana as Acting Secretary, Zonal Liaison Offices; and Engr. Bashir Layya as Acting Secretary, Estate and Works.

In addition, the Commission approved the redeployment of some officers to strengthen service delivery across the National Assembly. Mofoluwake Ogunbayo was redeployed from the Directorate of Special Duties and Parliamentary Security to serve as Secretary, Procurement and Supplies, while Kehinde Amos moved from Deputy Clerk, Human Resources (Legislative) to Deputy Clerk, Senate (Legislative). Atiku Ibrahim was redeployed from Procurement and Supplies to Secretary, Finance and Accounts.

Similarly, Vivien Njemanze was redeployed from Deputy Clerk, House of Representatives (Administration) to Deputy Clerk, Senate (Administration), while Andrew Nwoba moved from Zonal Liaison Offices to serve as Secretary, Special Duties and Parliamentary Security.

All appointments and redeployments took immediate effect, except the appointment of Engr. Bashir Layya, which took effect from 3 February 2026. Collectively, these decisions reflect the Commission's commitment to institutional continuity, balanced leadership deployment, and enhanced administrative efficiency within the National Assembly Service.

Mr. Ibrahim Sidi
AG. Clerk, House of Representatives

Siyaka Wahab Sadiq
AG. Deputy Clerk (Legislative)
House of Representatives

Dauda Bulama Bukar
AG. Deputy Clerk (Administration)
House of Representatives

Dr. Fortune Ihua-Maduenyi
AG. Secretary, Protocol and
Inter-Parliamentary Relations

Asien Fatima Nana
AG. Secretary, Zonal Liaison Offices

Engr. Bashir Layya
AG. Secretary, Estate and Works

SENATE AMBASSADORIAL SCREENING AND CONFIRMATION: A STRATEGIC RESET FOR NIGERIA'S DIPLOMACY

The recent screening and confirmation of sixty-seven ambassadorial nominees by the Nigerian Senate is far more than a routine diplomatic reshuffle. It represents a deliberate effort to recalibrate Nigeria's foreign policy posture and reassert the country's relevance within an increasingly complex and competitive global environment.

Beyond the sheer number of confirmations, the exercise itself signals renewed seriousness about diplomatic representation. After prolonged vacancies in several missions abroad, the screening process underscores an institutional recognition that diplomacy is a frontline instrument of national interest rather than a ceremonial obligation.

A Deliberate Balance in Appointments

One of the most notable outcomes of the screening exercise is the near-even split between career diplomats and non-career nominees. This balance reflects a strategic attempt to blend institutional memory and technical expertise with political influence, public visibility, and access to informal power networks.

Career diplomats bring decades of professional experience, mastery of protocol, and continuity in bilateral and multilateral engagements. Their confirmation reinforces Nigeria's commitment to stability and professionalism in foreign policy execution, particularly in sensitive negotiations and multilateral forums.

Non-career ambassadors, by contrast, contribute political weight, economic leverage, and in some cases international name recognition. When effectively integrated into the foreign service structure, such appointees can strengthen economic diplomacy, attract investment, and expand Nigeria's strategic partnerships. The screening process, therefore, was not merely about validating credentials but about assessing each nominee's capacity to function productively within the formal architecture of Nigeria's diplomacy.

Federal Character and a Smooth Screening Process

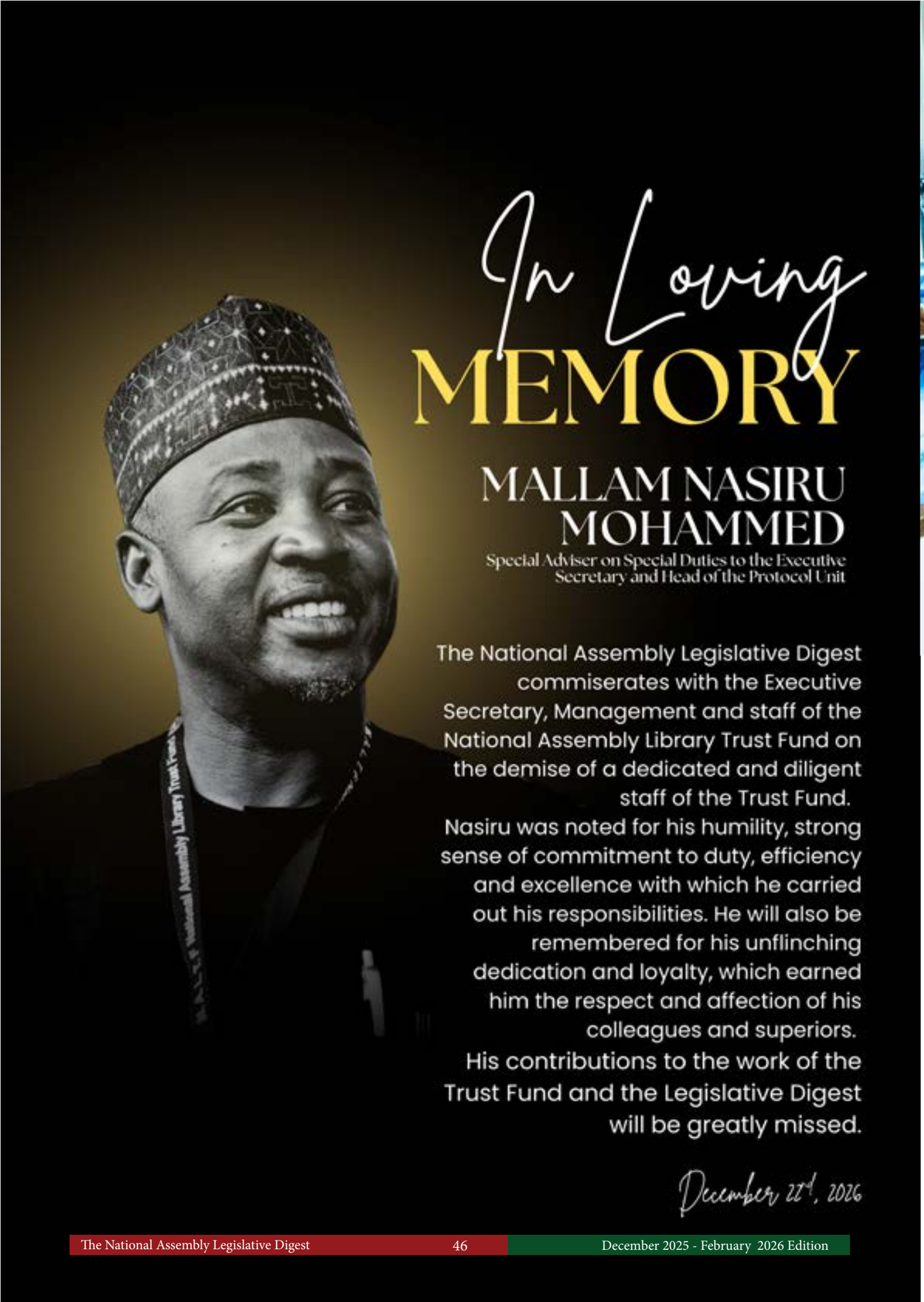
The Senate screening also demonstrated clear attention to regional balance and the constitutional principle of federal character. Nominees were drawn from across the federation, reinforcing inclusivity and ensuring that Nigeria's diversity is reflected in its external representation. In a country as heterogeneous as Nigeria, equitable representation is essential to domestic legitimacy and national cohesion.

Equally significant was the unusually smooth nature of the screening. According to the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, no petitions or formal objections were submitted against any nominee. This rare outcome suggests a measure of political consensus and institutional coordination, as well as a shared recognition of the urgency of restoring Nigeria's diplomatic footprint after years of underrepresentation in key global capitals.

The Task Ahead

Screening and confirmation, however, are only the beginning. The true test of these appointments lies in performance. The new envoys must swiftly adapt to their postings, assert Nigeria's interests in bilateral and multilateral engagements, and translate professional expertise, political influence, and social capital into measurable diplomatic and economic gains.

Ultimately, the Senate's confirmation of these nominees represents a strategic reset in Nigeria's diplomacy. By blending continuity with renewal, professionalism with influence, and inclusivity with competence, the exercise signals a renewed determination to project a credible, confident, and effective Nigerian presence on the global stage.



THE NATIONAL POLICY DIALOGUE OF LEGISLATURE, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY

Chizobam Anunkor

The National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF) and the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) have taken a significant step towards promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance with the successful hosting of the inaugural National Policy Dialogue, held on May 12, 2025, at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja, bringing together stakeholders from the legislature, civil society, and the international development community to discuss the Legislative Agenda of the 10th House of Representatives. The event was supported by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and demonstrates the commitment of NALTF and PLAC to promoting transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in governance.

Themed "Transparency, Inclusion, and Accountability," the dialogue focused on eight strategic priority areas, including strengthening good governance, improving national security, law reform, economic growth and development, social sector reform and development, inclusion and open parliament, influencing Nigeria's foreign policy, and climate change and environmental sustainability. The National Policy Dialogue aimed to evaluate the progress of the legislative agenda, identify critical areas for future lawmaking, build consensus around legislative priorities, and foster collaboration and inclusivity in the legislative process. The dialogue featured keynote speeches and panel discussions, including the presentation of the Mid-Term Report Card of the 10th House of Representatives, providing a comprehensive overview of the legislative activities and progress made so far.

In their remarks, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, emphasised the importance of citizen engagement in the legislative process while the Executive Secretary of NALTF, Hon. Henry Nwawuba, noted that the dialogue was a crucial step towards building a more responsive and effective legislative institution.

As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of governance, the Inaugural National Policy Dialogue serves as a beacon of hope for a more responsive and effective legislative institution.

NASS

Titbits

Idedevwo Ogheneochuko

NASS REINFORCES STAFF CAPACITY FOR ENHANCED LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT

As part of its ongoing efforts to deepen institutional efficiency and strengthen legislative processes, the National Assembly in collaboration with the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) hosted a three-day capacity building workshop for its staff.

The programme explored key thematic areas including policy translation, policy analysis frameworks, analytical models, and strategic information and communication management. It aimed at equipping personnel with the technical competence and forward-looking mindset required to deliver quality support to lawmakers.

Participants described the training as timely, insightful, and engaging, noting that it sharpened their analytical abilities and refreshed their understanding of legislative practices. The initiative is expected to further enhance organisational productivity and service delivery across the National Assembly.

NUJ NASS CHAPEL HOSTS PRESS WEEK 2025, HIGHLIGHTS MEDIA'S ROLE IN LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

The Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), National Assembly Chapel, commemorated its 2025 Press Week with a thought-provoking theme: "Information Management in the National Assembly: The Role of the Media." The event drew an impressive array of dignitaries, including the Senate President, the Clerk to the National Assembly, and the NUJ FCT Council Chairman, reflecting its significance within the legislative space. Delivering the keynote address, Guest Speaker Dr. Austin Uganwa underscored the critical importance of effective information and media management within the National Assembly. He highlighted innovative and strategic approaches for strengthening communication practices, noting that a well-informed legislature depends on efficient information flow and media collaboration. The various presentations during the event reaffirmed the central role of the media in shaping legislative transparency, institutional growth, and democratic accountability.

The ceremony also featured a memorable awards segment celebrating individuals whose works have advanced media professionalism and contributed meaningfully to national development. Honourees included Rt. Hon. Alhassan Ado-Doguwa, Sen. Nasir Zango Daura, His Excellency, Muhammadu Inuwa Yahaya(Governor of Gombe State), Mr Kamoru Ogunlana, esq. (Clerk to the National Assembly), Hon. Henry Nwawuba (Executive Secretary, National Assembly Library Trust Fund), Pharm. Ali B. Umoru,PhD, (Secretary, Directorate of Research and Information, National Assembly) among others.

THE PARLIAMENT THAT BUILT A DEMOCRACY:

HOW THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY EVOLVED - 1999 TO 2025

...AND THE FUTURE IT MUST NOW SHAPE

O'Oduaree Eze

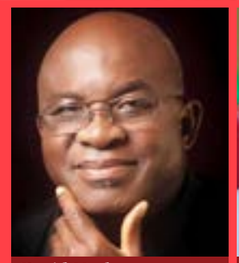
Evan Enwerem
1999-1999

Chuba Okadigbo
1999-2000

Anyim Pius Anyim
2000-2003

Adolphus Wabara
2003-2005

Ken Nnamani
2005-2007



David Mark
2007-2015

Bukola Saraki
2015-2019

Ahmed Lawan
2019 - 2023

Godswill Akpabio
2023 - till date

When the doors of the National Assembly swung open on June 3, 1999, the echoes that filled the chambers were not only the voices of newly elected lawmakers but the cautious optimism of a nation reclaiming its democratic voice. After sixteen years of military rule, Nigeria's return to civil governance came with high expectations and even higher uncertainty. For the lawmakers of the Fourth Republic, it was both a beginning and a burden: to rebuild an institution nearly erased by decrees and restore faith in representative government.

Two and a half decades later, the National Assembly has grown from a fledgling body, unsure of its footing, into a confident institution that shapes, questions, and sometimes even restrains the other arms of government. Yet, its evolution has not been linear — it has stumbled, adapted, and redefined itself through every era.

1999–2003: The Reawakening of a Parliament

The Fourth Republic restored Nigeria's bicameral legislature under the 1999 Constitution, entrusting it with the core powers to make laws, conduct oversight, and represent the people (Sections 4, 88, and 89). But in those early years, the Assembly was learning to walk again. Many members were first-time legislators; parliamentary rules and procedures had to be relearned; and the culture of accountability had to be rebuilt from the ruins of authoritarian rule.

It was a period of institutional rediscovery, but also one where the Executive Branch largely had its way. With a still-fragile legislature trying to understand its own powers, the presidency often dominated policy direction, and the balance of power was skewed. However, the Assembly's formative struggles were not in vain. It began establishing vital committees, reviving public hearings, and reasserting its place in the governance structure. These foundational steps would later give rise to a more confident and assertive parliament.

2003–2011: The Age of Legislative Confidence

By its second and third terms, the National Assembly had begun to find its voice and use it. This era marked the rise of legislative confidence, as lawmakers became more assertive in oversight, constitutional amendment, and public accountability.

It was during this period that the legislature famously rejected the "Third Term Agenda", a proposed constitutional amendment widely believed to have been engineered to extend presidential tenure beyond the constitutional limit. The move solidified the National Assembly's role as the guardian of Nigeria's democratic order.

Beyond that defining moment, the Assembly initiated a series of high-profile investigations that signaled its growing independence. Among them were the probe into the privatization of public enterprises, the investigation into power sector spending, and the N1.2 trillion fuel subsidy inquiry. These inquiries exposed irregularities in governance and sent a clear message that the legislature would no longer be a silent spectator in national affairs.

The 2010 Constitutional Amendments further underscored this newfound

Rt. Hon. Salisu Buhari
1999-2000

Rt. Hon. Ghali U. Na'Abba
2000-2003

Rt. Hon. Aminu B. Masari
2003-2007

Rt. Hon. Patricia O. Etteh
2007-2007

Rt. Hon. Dimeji Bankole
2007-2011

Rt. Hon. Aminu Tambuwal
2011-2015

Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara
2015-2019

Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila
2019-2023

Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abass
2023

confidence — strengthening the electoral system, reforming governance institutions, and clarifying the roles of the three arms of government. The National Assembly had evolved from a reactive chamber to a proactive architect of Nigeria's democratic framework.

2011–2019: The Transparency and Independence Era

The rise of social media brought a new dimension to parliamentary life. Legislative debates that once unfolded behind closed doors now played out before a digital audience of millions. Citizens demanded accountability, lawmakers became more visible, and public scrutiny intensified.

In this era, the National Assembly not only became more transparent but also asserted its independence like never before. The election of presiding officers against the preference of the ruling party and, in some cases, from the opposition demonstrated the legislature's willingness to protect its autonomy.

The 8th Assembly (2015–2019) was particularly notable. It witnessed the defection of presiding officers from the ruling party to the opposition, yet legislative business continued, underscoring the institution's growing stability and maturity. The Assembly also championed open public hearings, live-streamed sessions, and collaboration with civil society. It was the beginning of a parliament that not only made laws but explained its work and defended its right to do so.

2019–2023: The Reform Legislature

By the Ninth Assembly, the National Assembly had become a fully matured institution, one that is technically proficient, reform-oriented, and strategically aligned with national development priorities.
This period produced some of the country's most consequential legislation:

- The long-awaited Petroleum Industry Act (PIA), which restructured Nigeria's oil and gas sector after nearly two decades of debate.
- The 2022 Electoral Act, which introduced electronic transmission of results and greater transparency in the electoral process.
- Judicial and governance reforms that improved timelines for dispute resolution and institutional accountability.

Oversight became more organized and evidence-based, and committees grew increasingly specialized. The legislature was no longer just an auditor of executive performance but a partner in national policy formulation.

2023–2025: Modernization and Institutional Renewal

The 10th National Assembly entered with a mission to modernize governance and restore public confidence in legislative institutions. It prioritized digital transformation, research-driven policymaking, and parliamentary diplomacy.

A symbolic milestone of this era was the recommissioning of the Legislative Digest, the official publication of the National Assembly, marking a return to intellectual tradition and institutional memory. Lawmakers have also deepened collaboration with administrative staff, promoted digital workflow, and worked to bring the legislature closer to citizens through open communication.

The result is a legislature increasingly citizen-facing, self-reflective, and determined to align tradition with technology.

Challenges of a Modern Parliament

Despite these strides, the National Assembly still contends with enduring challenges:

- Persistent public mistrust and misinformation.
- Weak legislative research and data systems.
- Underutilization of digital tools in lawmaking.
- Difficulty in engaging a young, vocal, and impatient citizenry.

Yet these challenges also offer opportunity to innovate, to reform, and to build a parliament that truly mirrors the complexity and aspirations of 21st-century Nigeria.

The Road Ahead: Building the Legislature of the Future

1. A Fully Digital Parliament: Embracing e-committees, AI-assisted drafting, and integrated data systems will make the legislature faster and more accessible.
2. Strengthening Research Capacity: Evidence-based lawmaking must become the standard, not the exception.
3. Deepening Citizen Engagement: The Assembly must communicate beyond experts — reaching citizens where they are, in language they understand.

A Legislature Still Becoming

From 1999 to 2025, the National Assembly has journeyed from a hesitant institution in a fragile democracy to one of Nigeria's strongest pillars of stability. It has grown through trial, tension, and transformation, and in doing so, has become the enduring symbol of Nigeria's democratic resilience.
As it stands at the dawn of a new chapter, one truth remains: the future of Nigeria's democracy will depend on how boldly its legislature continues to modernize, innovate, and earn the trust of the people it serves.
The story of the National Assembly is still unfolding — and its next chapter may well define the future of Nigeria's democracy

NEWS FROM OTHER PARLIAMENTS

Ghana

Parliament to partner with NILDS to sharpen MP's skills

Ghana's Parliament is considering a strategic partnership with Nigeria's National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) as part of efforts to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of its lawmakers.

The proposed collaboration emerged during a recent benchmarking visit to Nigeria by a delegation of Ghanaian legislators and parliamentary staff, who toured key legislative institutions in Abuja. Central to the visit was an engagement with NILDS, Nigeria's premier legislative training and research institute, which provides structured capacity-building programmes for lawmakers and parliamentary officials.

Speaking after the visit, the leader of the delegation, James Aganga, described NILDS as a model institution whose training frameworks and research support systems could significantly enhance parliamentary work in Ghana. He said the delegation would brief Ghana's Parliament on the possibility of formalising cooperation, particularly in areas such as legislative drafting, committee operations, policy analysis and democratic governance.

If finalised, the partnership would represent a notable step in West African parliamentary cooperation, reflecting a growing recognition that effective legislatures depend not only on political will, but also on sustained investment in skills, knowledge and institutional development.

Turkey

MPs fight in Parliament during 2026 budget debate

Turkish lawmakers were involved in a brief physical altercation on in December during a tense debate on the country's 2026 budget, though parliament ultimately went on to pass both the budget and a related financial accounts bill. The incident occurred in the Grand National Assembly after a ruling Justice and Development Party MP, Mustafa Varank, made remarks aimed at opposition Republican People's Party chairman Özgür Özel. The comments, which referenced images taken at the grave of former MP Kamer Genç, drew a sharp response from CHP Group Deputy Chairman Gökhan Günaydın, who accused the government of intentionally inflaming tensions during budget deliberations.

What began as a verbal exchange escalated when lawmakers clashed over references to the legacy of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey. The disagreement quickly turned physical, with MPs pushing one another before security officers and fellow legislators intervened. The disruption lasted about ten minutes and briefly flared up again after a recess.

Despite the disorder, parliamentary proceedings resumed. The 2026 budget was approved by a vote of 320 to 249, while the 2024 final accounts bill passed with 316 votes in favour and 247 against.

South Africa: Zuma's Daughter quits parliament amid Russia-Ukraine recruitment allegations

Duduzile Zuma Sambudla, daughter of former South African president Jacob Zuma, has resigned from the country's parliament following controversy over alleged links to recruitment for Russia's war in Ukraine.

Zuma Sambudla, a lawmaker with the uMkhonto weSizwe Party, stepped down amid police investigations into claims that several South Africans were misled into travelling to Russia and later deployed to the conflict zone. Authorities say the men were promised work or training opportunities, only to find themselves caught up in the war.

Her party said the resignation was voluntary and would allow her to focus on cooperating with investigations and efforts to secure the return of the affected South Africans.

The development has sparked renewed debate about accountability, foreign conflicts and their spillover into domestic politics, as well as the continued influence of the Zuma family on South Africa's political landscape.

Her departure also triggered a reshuffle in MK's parliamentary ranks, with another family member taking her seat. The episode underscores how international conflicts can ripple back home, touching even national political leaders and stirring intense public scrutiny.

France: Parliament Advances Ban on Social Media for Under-15s

In a bold move that could reshape digital life for teens, France's National Assembly has approved a bill that would bar children under 15 from accessing social media platforms. The legislation, championed by President Emmanuel Macron and backed by a strong majority of lawmakers, now heads to the Senate for further consideration before it can become law.

Parliamentarians say the measure aims to shield children from the mental health risks and social pressures associated with apps like Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. Lawmakers also tied the debate to broader efforts to curb online bullying and excessive screen time among young people.

Public opinion in France appears to favour stricter limits: recent polls suggest a large majority support an age-based restriction on social media use. If the legislation clears the upper house, France would follow Australia as one of the few countries moving toward formal age bans on major social networks.

The proposal also includes tighter rules on mobile phone use in schools and could be in place in time for the next academic year, marking a significant step in the ongoing debate over how best to protect children online.

Rwanda Moves to Curb Teenage Pregnancies with New Health Law

Chizobam Anunkor

Rwanda

In a ground-breaking move, Rwanda's Parliament has passed a landmark health law granting adolescents aged 15 and above independent access to contraceptives and reproductive health services, a major policy shift aimed at tackling the country's rising rate of teenage pregnancies.

Passed on August 4, 2025, the law removes the requirement for parental or guardian consent, a move widely welcomed by public health experts, human rights advocates and civil society groups as a decisive step toward protecting adolescent health and rights.

Government data indicate that more than 8,000 teenage girls received pregnancy-related care in health facilities nationwide over the past year, underscoring the scale of the challenge the legislation seeks to address.

Supporters argue that the new legal framework will reduce unintended pregnancies, improve health outcomes for young people and promote informed decision-making. The law also formally regulates surrogacy under assisted reproductive technologies, further strengthening Rwanda's reproductive health governance.

The Minister of Health, Dr. Sabin Nsanzimana, described the legislation as a critical intervention for safeguarding adolescents and young people, noting its potential to curb preventable health risks associated with early and unwanted pregnancies. Civil society groups and human rights organisations echoed this position, citing links between adolescent pregnancies, maternal complications and infant health risks.

While the bill sparked debate in Parliament, particularly concerns that it could weaken parental authority, lawmakers backing the reform maintained that the policy reflects public health realities and prioritises the welfare of young people.

As the law moves into the implementation phase, stakeholders say its success will depend on effective public education, youth-friendly health services and sustained government commitment.

If fully enforced, the reform is expected to mark a turning point in Rwanda's efforts to reduce teenage pregnancies and advance adolescent reproductive health.

Rwanda's new health law offers important lessons for other African countries grappling with high rates of adolescent pregnancy and preventable maternal health risks. By aligning public health policy with demographic realities, the legislation demonstrates how evidence-based reforms can balance cultural sensitivities with the urgent need to protect young people's health and rights.

The law signals a broader shift toward youth-centred health governance, emphasising prevention, access and informed choice over restriction.

For the rest of Africa, Rwanda's approach underscores the value of strengthening legal frameworks, investing in adolescent-friendly health services and engaging families, communities as well as civil society in open dialogue.

As more countries seek sustainable solutions to adolescent reproductive health challenges, Rwanda's reform may serve as a policy reference point for advancing public health, reducing teenage pregnancies and safeguarding the next generation.

INSIGHTS, IDEAS, AND INNOVATION:

REFLECTIONS FROM THE 2025 NCSL LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT IN BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

Asiya Muhtar Yola

Every summer, as the heat settles over the United States, lawmakers from every corner of the country pack their bags and head to a shared destination. They leave behind their home states, committees, and packed legislative calendars to gather under one roof and ask a simple but powerful question: How can we govern better?

This year carried a special kind of buzz. The National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) was celebrating its 50th anniversary, and the host city, Boston, Massachusetts, felt like the perfect backdrop historic, vibrant, and full of civic energy. Walking into the Convention Center, you could feel the sense of occasion. Delegates from every U.S. state filled the halls, joined by participants from around the world including our delegation from the Nigerian National Assembly ready to learn, observe, and exchange ideas.

For me, the Summit was a breath of fresh air. From the very first session, it felt less like a conference and more like a giant classroom filled with people genuinely eager to solve problems. Conversations were open and frank. Participants spoke candidly about what was working in their states and what wasn't. It didn't matter if you were from Cincinnati or Nigeria, everyone came with questions, and everyone left with answers.
One session that struck me deeply focused on civility in public service. In a room full of lawmakers and legislative staff with differing ideologies and experiences, the facilitators reminded us that democracy only thrives when disagreements do not turn into divisions.

They shared stories of heated debates handled with respect and emphasized how simple acts of listening, acknowledging differences, and showing courtesy can help rebuild trust in institutions. It was a timely reminder that while policies shape nations, the tone and conduct of leaders shape the soul of democracy.

The topics covered at the Summit were as wide-ranging and relevant as the world we live in:

- Artificial intelligence in governance.
- Digital transformation.
- Election integrity.
- Education reform.
- Infrastructure.
-

All the big issues that shape daily life.

This is precisely why the NCSL Summit matters for Nigeria. Many of the discussions on fake news, technology-driven public services, and strengthening budget oversight mirror the challenges we face at home. Seeing how other legislatures confront these issues broadens our perspective. It helps us see what can be adapted, what can be avoided, and what can be reimagined within Nigeria's unique context. In many ways, attending the Summit felt like investing in the long-term health of our democracy.

Beyond the policy sessions, it was the human moments that left the deepest impression—the side conversations, the laughter in hallways, the shared stories of success and struggle. There was a quiet sense of unity and understanding that, even across continents, people who love their countries and believe in democracy are working toward the same goal: better governance.

By the final day, one message echoed through every room: strong legislatures build strong democracies. At a time when citizens everywhere are losing trust in public institutions, the responsibility on lawmakers is heavier than ever. Leading with integrity, communicating with honesty, and legislating with purpose are no longer ideals—they are necessities.

In the end, the NCSL Legislative Summit was not just about learning how others legislate. It was about imagining what our own National Assembly can become—how we can prepare for the future, and how we can lead with renewed confidence, purpose, and clarity.

SEEDS OF DEBATE:
Legislating the Future of Genetically Modified Foods in Nigeria

O'Oduaree Eze

Across Nigeria's bustling markets the sight of fresh maize, tomatoes, yams, and vegetables suggests agricultural abundance. Yet behind this colourful display lies a complex question that is steadily finding its way to the floor of the National Assembly: how can Nigeria sustainably feed its growing population in the face of shrinking farmlands, erratic rainfall, and rising food prices? One solution offered by modern science is genetically modified (GM) foods: crops whose genetic material has been altered to improve yield, resist pests, or survive extreme weather. But with innovation comes uncertainty, and with uncertainty comes the duty of lawmakers to set clear and responsible rules.

Understanding GM Foods and Their Promise Genetically modified foods are produced from organisms whose DNA has been deliberately altered through biotechnology to enhance certain traits, such as drought tolerance, faster maturity, or nutritional enrichment. Advocates argue that these innovations could transform Nigeria's agricultural landscape, allowing farmers to produce more with less and reducing dependence on food imports. In a nation where food inflation often outpaces income growth, such technology promises a potential lifeline.

However, critics urge caution. They warn that the long-term health effects of GM foods remain inconclusive, that modified genes could disrupt ecosystems, and that corporate control over patented seeds could erode local farming traditions. This tension between scientific promise and public concern is precisely why the legislative response matters.

Nigeria's Legal Foundation: The Biosafety Framework

Nigeria is among Africa's few nations with a structured legal framework for biotechnology. The National Biosafety Management Agency (NBMA) Act of 2015 established the NBMA as the national regulator overseeing the safe use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs). The agency is empowered to:

- Issue permits for the research, importation, and release of GMOs.
- Monitor compliance with biosafety standards.
- Align Nigeria's biotechnology governance with international best practices.

Beyond statutory law, Nigeria's Constitution provides broader principles. Section 14(2)(b) identifies the welfare of citizens as the government's primary purpose, while Section 20 obliges the state to protect the environment. Together, they form the moral and constitutional backbone of biosafety policy, ensuring that innovation never undermines public health or environmental integrity.

The National Assembly's Crucial Role

In the fast-evolving world of biotechnology, legislation cannot remain static. The National Assembly plays a pivotal role in maintaining that balance through:

1. Oversight – ensuring that NBMA decisions are transparent, evidence-based, and free from undue influence.
2. Legislation – updating laws where gaps exist, such as in labeling requirements, liability for environmental damage, or redress for affected farmers.
3. Representation – articulating public concerns, particularly from farmers, consumers, and advocacy groups.

Nigeria's obligations under the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety further underscore its commitment to global standards on GMO regulation and environmental protection.

Balancing Promise with Prudence

The debate on GM foods is not one of opposition versus acceptance but of balance between feeding the nation and safeguarding its people.

- The Promise: GM crops could help Nigeria confront food insecurity, improve yields, and reduce pesticide dependence, potentially lowering costs for smallholder farmers.
- The Concerns: Unanswered questions remain about long-term health impacts, biodiversity loss, and the ethics of seed ownership. Civil society groups have also pressed for mandatory labeling to give consumers the right to choose what they eat.

For lawmakers, this means crafting legislation that promotes scientific progress without eroding public trust.

Charting the Way Forward

To guide Nigeria safely through the biotechnology era, the National Assembly may consider several forward-looking steps:

- Strengthen Oversight: Require periodic reports from the NBMA and ensure parliamentary hearings on biosafety decisions.
- Enhance Transparency: Mandate clear labeling of genetically modified foods to protect consumer choice.
- Fund Local Research: Support Nigerian universities and institutes to conduct independent, context-specific studies on GMOs.
- Promote Public Engagement: Build awareness campaigns that demystify biotechnology and encourage informed debate among farmers, youth, and consumers.

Conclusion: Trust as the Foundation of Law

The question of genetically modified food is not merely scientific, it is profoundly legislative. It touches on health, environment, commerce, and the social contract between citizens and the state. The NBMA Act provides a framework, but the work of refining, monitoring, and updating it lies with lawmakers.

Whether GM foods become a cornerstone of Nigeria's food security strategy or a flashpoint of public resistance will depend largely on how the National Assembly shapes the conversation. In the end, the real product of legislation is trust — trust that the food on every Nigerian's table is safe, that the land remains fertile, and that the people's welfare remains the true harvest of every law enacted.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES HOLDS VALEDICTORY SESSION FOR RETIRED CLERK, DR. YAHAYA DANZARIA

The House of Representatives held a valedictory session in honour of the retired Clerk of the House, Dr. Yahaya Danzaria, celebrating decades of dedicated service to Nigeria's parliamentary democracy and institutional development. The session, presided over by the Speaker, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, PhD, GCON, brought together lawmakers across party lines, management and staff of the National Assembly, former clerks, retired officers, and other distinguished guests.

In his valedictory address, the Speaker described the occasion as more than a ceremonial farewell, noting that it was a moment to honour a career devoted to the "stability, integrity, and continuity of parliamentary democracy." He emphasised that while elected officials come and go, the strength of the legislature depends on enduring institutional frameworks sustained by professional officers, particularly the Clerk of the House.

According to the Speaker, the Office of the Clerk occupies a central place in democratic governance, providing continuity beyond electoral cycles, safeguarding legislative legitimacy, and ensuring that parliamentary debates and decisions conform to constitutional and legal standards. He noted that Dr. Danzaria discharged this sensitive responsibility with "clarity, discipline, and restraint," earning the respect of members and staff alike.

Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen highlighted the retiring Clerk's strong academic and professional background, describing him as a meticulous administrator trained in law and further grounded in public administration and policy analysis. This blend, he said, enabled Dr. Danzaria to bring legal precision and administrative insight to parliamentary work, especially in matters of procedure and order.

He observed that Dr. Danzaria understood that procedure is not ceremonial but functional," adding that parliamentary rules exist to protect minority rights, preserve order, and ensure that the decisions of the House can withstand legal and constitutional scrutiny.

Speaking further, he recalled some of Danzaria's key institutional contributions, including his support for the formulation and implementation of the Legislative Agenda of the 10th House of Representatives, his role in the revision of the Standing Orders, and his insistence on the timely preparation and circulation of Notice Papers, to improve legislative planning and efficiency.

Beyond technical competence, the Speaker praised the retired Clerk's personal qualities, describing him as calm, humble, and composed under pressure. He noted that Dr. Danzaria managed relationships without open conflict and consistently prioritised institutional sustainability, leaving behind a legacy that would endure within the parliamentary system.

In their contributions, some principal officers praised the retired Clerk for maintaining neutrality and professionalism in the discharge of his duties, stressing that his counsel often helped the House uphold democratic values and constitutional order. They also highlighted his role in modernising parliamentary administration and promoting best practices aligned with international legislative standards.

Several lawmakers also took turns to pay tribute, commending Dr. Danzaria for his neutrality, professionalism, and commitment to due process. Members noted that his guidance was instrumental during complex legislative sessions and transitions, helping the House to maintain order and credibility.

Among the dignitaries present were some members of Danzaria's family, the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly, Engr. Bashir Yero, a former Clerk to the National Assembly, Alhaji Sani Omolori, and several other senior parliamentary administrators.

As he bows out of public service, the Legislative Digest extends warm congratulations to him on a well earned retirement and wishes him good health, fulfilment and continued impact in the next chapter of his life.

PRINCE OLUYEMI OGUNYOMI (FORMER CLERK TO THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY) RECOGNISED AS ONDO STATE TURNS 50

Oyetayo Afolabi

The Government of Ondo State, under the leadership of the Governor, His Excellency, Dr Lucky Orimisan Aiyedatiwa, has conferred the Ondo State Award for Legislative Excellence on Prince Oluyemi Ogunyomi, as part of activities marking 50 years of the creation of the Sunshine State. The Award Ceremony was one of the major highlights of anniversary celebrations, recognising individuals whose service, dedication, sacrifices and enduring contributions have helped shape the identity, progress and legacy of Ondo State. The award was presented at a well-attended ceremony, held on Tuesday, 3 February 2026, at the International Culture and Event Centre, The Dome, Akure. Prince Ogunyomi received the honour in recognition of his pivotal role in the development of Ondo State, as well as his exceptional service to democratic governance and legislative administration at both state and national levels.

Prince Ogunyomi's distinguished career in the National Assembly is widely regarded as exemplary. His stewardship as Clerk of both the House of Representatives and the Senate and his tenure as Clerk to the National Assembly were marked by institutional stability, procedural integrity and professional excellence. He is the first and only Nigerian to have served in both chambers of the Nigerian National Assembly, before his historic appointment as Clerk to the National Assembly, a rare achievement in Nigeria's legislative history. The honour bestowed on Prince Oluyemi Ogunyomi stands as a testament to a lifetime of service and Ondo State's enduring contribution to Nigeria's democratic and legislative development.

EDO STATE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY PASSES N939.85 BILLION 2026 BUDGET

Benedicta Ateso Akhere

The Edo State House of Assembly has passed the N939.85 billion 2026 Appropriation Bill, following consideration of the estimates submitted by the executive. The passage of the budget represents the completion of the legislature's constitutional role in authorising public expenditure for the 2026 fiscal year.

The appropriation bill, titled "Budget of Hope and Growth," was considered during plenary sessions, where lawmakers examined sectoral allocations and overall fiscal assumptions. During deliberations, the budget was extensively discussed in relation to key policy areas such as security, infrastructure, agriculture, education, healthcare and employment.

Budget Presentation and Policy Framework
Presenting the budget to the Assembly, Governor Monday Okpebholo outlined the administration's policy priorities for 2026, stating that the estimates were structured to build on programmes initiated in the previous fiscal year. According to the Governor, the budget places emphasis on security, infrastructure, agriculture, education, job creation and healthcare. The Governor further explained that the budget aligns with the administration's SHINE framework. SHINE is an acronym for Security, Health, Infrastructure, Natural Resources/Agriculture and Education, which serves as a thematic guide for sectoral allocations and programme design.

Fiscal Structure and Sectoral Allocations
The 2026 budget proposes total expenditure of N939.85 billion, with N637 billion (approximately 68 per cent) allocated to capital expenditure and N302 billion (32 per cent) to recurrent expenditure. This distribution reflects a stronger emphasis on capital projects relative to personnel and overhead costs.
Under the proposed framework, the economic sector accounts for N614.2 billion, covering agriculture, roads, transport, and energy-related projects. Social services, including education and healthcare, also receive significant allocations, reflecting their prominence within the budget structure.

Revenue Assumptions and Financing Sources
The budget is projected to be financed through a combination of Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) estimated at N160 billion, Federation Account Allocation Committee (FAAC) receipts of N480 billion, capital receipts and grants amounting to N153 billion, and N146 billion expected from Public-Private Partnership (PPP) arrangements.

These projections indicate an effort to diversify revenue sources beyond federal transfers. However, the realisation of these revenue targets will depend on actual economic performance, efficiency in revenue administration, and the timing and structure of proposed PPP transactions.

Observations on the 2026 Budget
With close to 70 per cent of total spending allocated to capital projects, the budget prioritises infrastructure, public facilities, and productive sectors that have longer-term economic implications.

In addition, allocations to education and health suggest continued public investment in social services, including school infrastructure, personnel requirements and healthcare facilities. More so, funding levels in agriculture and security-related sectors reflect their prominence within the overall expenditure framework, particularly in relation to food production, rural livelihoods, and public safety.

Lastly, the use of the SHINE framework provides a thematic structure for the budget, linking sectoral spending to an articulated policy model, though implementation outcomes will depend on execution capacity.

Implementation Risks and Considerations

Several factors may affect budget performance during the fiscal year:
Firstly, projected revenues from IGR and PPPs may be affected by economic conditions, compliance levels, and project timelines. Continuous monitoring of revenue inflows will be critical.

Secondly, the ability of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) to implement large capital projects remains a key variable. Procurement efficiency, technical capacity and oversight mechanisms will influence outcomes.

Thirdly, inflation and cost fluctuations may affect the real value of budgeted allocations, particularly for infrastructure projects, highlighting the importance of cost controls and fiscal buffers.

During the budget presentation, the Governor acknowledged existing development challenges, including infrastructure deficits, food security concerns and employment pressures, noting that these issues continue to shape fiscal priorities.

Conclusion
The passage of the 2026 Appropriation Bill provides the legal basis for public spending in Edo State for the fiscal year. Anchored on the SHINE framework and characterised by a high capital-to-recurrent expenditure ratio, the budget outlines the government's spending priorities and revenue assumptions. As with previous budgets, the extent to which these allocations translate into measurable outcomes will depend on revenue realisation, institutional capacity, fiscal discipline, and legislative oversight throughout the budget cycle.

Benedicta Ateso Akhere, is the Edo State Liaison Officer, NALTF and can be reached via bakhere@naltf.gov.ng

DIRECTORATE OF ZONAL LIAISON OFFICES: Connecting Parliament and People

Akubueze Augustina

The Directorate of Zonal Liaison Offices has emerged as a cornerstone of the National Assembly's efforts to strengthen communication and engagement with citizens across Nigeria. As a vital component of the legislature's administrative structure, the directorate ensures that democratic governance is not confined to the chambers of the Senate and the House of Representatives, but extends to the grassroots, where it matters most.

Established in 2024, the directorate was conceived as a bridge between elected representatives and their constituents. It supervises a network of zonal liaison offices spread across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones, serving as regional hubs for citizen engagement. Through these offices, public concerns, expectations, and feedback are systematically gathered and relayed to the National Assembly, while legislative information and updates are disseminated to the public to promote transparency and inclusiveness.

Currently, the South-West Zonal Liaison Office, located in Lagos, is fully operational. The South-East and South-South offices will be situated in Umuahia and Uyo, respectively. The North-East Zonal Office will be situated in Gombe, while the North-West Zonal Office will be located in Kaduna. The location of the North-Central Zonal Office is yet to be announced.

The Directorate of Zonal Liaison Offices was pioneered under the leadership of its first Secretary, Mr Essien Eyo Essien, whose tenure laid the essential administrative and operational foundations for effective grassroots engagement. Building on this groundwork, Mr Andrew Ogbonnaya Nwoba later assumed leadership of the directorate, providing strategic direction and oversight that reinforced professionalism, coordination, and responsiveness across the zonal offices. Following his redeployment to the Directorate of Special Duties and Parliamentary Security, Mrs Asien Fatima Nana has been appointed as the current Secretary of the directorate.

Functionally, the directorate performs core administrative, communicative, and community-focused roles within the National Assembly bureaucracy. It supports legislators by ensuring that citizens' voices are carefully documented, analysed, and considered, thereby enhancing the relevance and quality of legislative deliberations.

Beyond information exchange, the zonal liaison offices are actively involved in advocacy and public enlightenment. They organise community outreaches, stakeholder forums, and civic education programmes aimed at demystifying the legislative process and encouraging greater citizen participation in governance. These initiatives underscore a fundamental democratic principle that governance is most effective when citizens feel heard, informed, and represented.

In an era where public trust in institutions is increasingly fragile, the Directorate of Zonal Liaison Offices stands out as a vital link between the National Assembly and the Nigerian people. By strengthening accountability and fostering two-way communication, the directorate reinforces the idea of democracy as a shared and participatory enterprise.

STATE POLICING:
A PATHWAY TO ADDRESSING NIGERIA'S ESCALATING INSECURITY

Akubueze Augustina

State policing in Nigeria has become one of the most pressing security debates in recent years. With insecurity escalating across the country, many Nigerians are questioning whether the current centralized policing system can meet the demands of a complex, diverse, and rapidly changing society. Banditry, insurgency, communal clashes, and rising urban crime have all exposed the weaknesses of a system designed decades ago for challenges very different from those faced today.

Modern policing in Nigeria has its roots in colonial constabulary forces created to protect British economic and political interests rather than serve local communities. After independence, a series of reforms eventually produced the centralized model enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, giving the Federal Government full policing authority. As a result, state governors, though legally described as chief security officers, have minimal control over their police commissioners. While this centralized system was intended to preserve national unity and prevent abuses seen in the First Republic, it has increasingly struggled to respond to modern security threats that are largely local and require specialized approaches.

The push for state policing has grown because Nigeria's security challenges are both widespread and varied. Banditry and cattle rustling dominate the North West, insurgency persists in the North East, communal conflicts and farmer–herder disputes affect the North Central, while cultism, kidnapping, and armed robbery are common in many southern states. A single National policing command struggles to respond effectively to such diverse threats. The Nigeria Police Force is also severely understaffed, with fewer than 400,000 officers serving a population of more than 200 million. Many officers are deployed to guard Very Important Personalities (VIPs), leaving communities with insufficient coverage.

However, in a significant development aimed at addressing this challenge, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu recently ordered the withdrawal of police officers currently providing security for VIPs. Henceforth, police authorities will deploy them to concentrate on their core police duties. This directive is intended to free up manpower for crime prevention, patrol duties, and community security across the nation.

As public pressure for reform grows, the conversation is shifting from debate to legislative action. On February, 20, 2024, a bill seeking to establish state policing, sponsored by Deputy Speaker Benjamin Kalu and fourteen other lawmakers passed second reading in the House of Representatives. The Bill was referred to the House Committee on Constitution Review for further scrutiny after which it will require concurrence from the Senate and subsequent transmission to all 36 State Houses of Assembly. If up to twenty-four (two-third) State Houses of Assembly approve it, the bill will proceed to the President for assent and then will become law.

Supporters of state policing argue that it would make security operations more responsive and context-specific.

It would also enhance accountability, as state governments could more effectively monitor and evaluate police performance. Advocates point to federal systems such as those of the United States, Germany, India, and Canada, where decentralized policing is standard, as evidence that Nigeria's federal structure can accommodate subnational police forces. Improved security, they contend, could also boost economic activity by encouraging investment, tourism, and commerce.

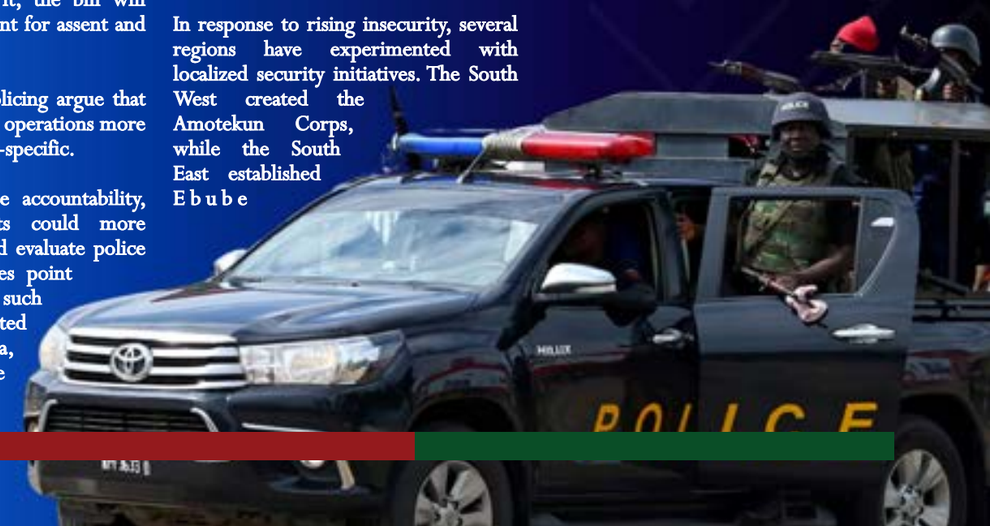
Critics, however, caution that state policing carries significant risks. Political misuse is a major concern. In Nigeria's highly competitive political environment, politicians might use state police to harass opponents, influence elections, or silence the voices of critics. Financial capacity is another challenge, many states continue to struggle to pay salaries and may find it difficult to fund training, equipment, welfare, and infrastructure for a modern police force. Fragmentation of national security efforts is another worry, with multiple police agencies potentially creating jurisdictional conflicts and inconsistent enforcement. Minority groups in some states fear that dominant ethnic groups could control recruitment and operations, undermining their safety and sense of belonging.

> *"A police force rooted in the state would better understand local languages, customs, and security dynamics, enabling faster response times and improved intelligence gathering"*

In response to rising insecurity, several regions have experimented with localized security initiatives. The South West created the Amotekun Corps, while the South East established Ebube Agu. These outfits provide valuable community-level support but lack full policing powers because the constitution grants exclusive authority to the Federal Government. Their emergence, however, underscores a growing demand for policing that is closer to the people.

For state policing to succeed, reforms must be carefully structured, transparent, and responsibly implemented. Constitutional amendments should clearly define the powers of state police and their relationship with federal agencies. Independent oversight mechanisms are essential to prevent political manipulation and ensure that recruitment, discipline, and promotions are merit-based. Coordination between state and federal forces will be critical for intelligence sharing and joint operations. States will also need sustainable funding models through dedicated budgets, federal grants, or public–private partnerships. Training should emphasize professionalism, technology, community engagement, and respect for human rights. Recruitment must reflect Nigeria's diversity to ensure that all ethnic and minority groups feel represented and protected.

Ultimately, the debate about state policing centers on finding the most effective way to secure Nigeria. While concerns about misuse are legitimate, strong institutions, robust oversight, and transparent legal frameworks can mitigate many of the risks. A well-designed state policing system has the potential to strengthen Nigeria's security architecture, align policing with federal principles, and bring law enforcement closer to the people, an essential step toward building a safer and more stable nation.



LAWMAKERS SET TIMETABLE FOR VOTING ON CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS AS JOINT RETREAT CONCLUDES

Abubakar Abdulraheem

Federal lawmakers have unveiled a clear timetable for the next phase of Nigeria's ongoing constitution amendment process. This is a fallout of the just e concluded Second Joint Retreat of the Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Constitution Review.

The retreat which brought together members of both chambers of the National Assembly as well as Speakers of State Houses of Assembly pursued the central goal of harmonizing priority areas for constitutional reform while ensuring that both federal and state legislative actors are aligned as the process advances.

Presentation and Debate Scheduled for Early December

In his remarks, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives and Chairman of the House Committee on Constitution Review, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, announced that the Committee's report will be presented to the House for debate and consideration from the 2nd to 4th of December, 2025.

Lawmakers are thus, expected to:

1. Examine the committee's recommendations clause by clause
2. Debate proposed alterations
3. Assess the implications of each amendment for governance, national stability, and development

This stage marks one of the most crucial parts of the review process, as legislators dissect the technical and political dimensions of each proposal.

Voting on Amendment Bills Set for December 9–10

Following the debates, the National Assembly will move into the decisive phase of the exercise, that is voting on the constitutional amendment Bills scheduled for December 9th and 10th, 2025.

During these sessions, each chamber (the Senate and the House of Representatives) will determine which proposals secure the constitutionally required threshold to advance to State Houses of Assembly for further ratification.

Only amendments supported by at least two-thirds of the federal legislature will proceed to the states, where a similar approval threshold must be met before any alteration becomes part of the Constitution.

Commitment to a Transparent and Inclusive Process

The Deputy President of the Senate and Chairman of the Senate Committee on Constitution Review emphasized that the newly released timeline reflects the National Assembly's commitment to delivering a "transparent, inclusive, and responsive" amendment process.

He noted that months of consultations with stakeholders ranging from civil society organizations and legal experts to traditional rulers and advocacy groups played a critical role in shaping the draft submitted for legislative scrutiny. According to him, the retreat consolidated these discussions and ensured that lawmakers had a shared understanding of the issues on the table.

Key Issues Expected to Dominate Debates

With the timetable now official, national attention shifts to the upcoming plenary sessions where robust and, in some cases, contentious debates are expected. Among the major proposals likely to generate divergent perspectives are:

1. Devolution of powers
2. Electoral reforms and INEC restructuring
3. Creation of new states
4. Local government autonomy
5. Judicial restructuring and fiscal federalism

The December votes will determine which of these long-debated issues take a step closer to becoming part of the Nigerian Constitution.

State Speakers Pledge Cooperation

Speaking at the retreat, the Chairman of the Conference of State Legislators, Rt. Hon. Debo Ogundoyin, represented by the Speaker of the Gombe State House of Assembly, Rt. Hon. Abubakar Muhammed, commended the committee for its commitment to producing a Constitution that reflects the aspirations of all Nigerians.

He assured federal lawmakers of the cooperation and support of all State Speakers, adding that State Houses of Assembly would expedite consideration of the amendment bills once transmitted.

A Crucial Step in Modernizing Governance

The joint retreat is widely regarded as a major milestone in the broader effort to modernize Nigeria's governance framework. Officials expressed optimism that the 2025 constitution amendment exercise will yield meaningful, widely supported reforms capable of strengthening democratic institutions and improving service delivery.

It will be recalled that the Constitution Review Committee had earlier announced its intention to complete the first phase of amendments before the end of December 2025. With the timetable now in place, the National Assembly appears set to meet that goal.

NIGERIA'S FINANCIAL FUTURE: Understanding The Investment And Securities Act 2025

Idedevwo Ogheneochuko

A Modern Financial Game-Changer Signed into law on March 29, 2025, the Investment and Securities Act (ISA) 2025 represents one of the most comprehensive updates to Nigeria's financial regulatory framework in nearly two decades. Designed to modernize the governance of investments, capital markets, and financial instruments, the Act enhances transparency, strengthens investor protection, and expands the powers of regulators to address emerging risks particularly in digital assets and cross-border financial activities.

Beyond its legal updates, the real significance of ISA 2025 lies in its economic implications. By shaping how capital flows, how companies raise funds, and how investors participate in the market, the Act could accelerate economic growth or stall it depending on its implementation. The reform therefore marks a defining moment in Nigeria's financial future.

Why a New Law Was Needed

When the ISA 2007 was enacted, global finance looked very different. Digital trading platforms were nascent, cross-border capital movement was slower, and sectors such as fintech, crypto-assets, and complex derivatives had not yet transformed global markets. Over time, rapid technological innovation exposed major gaps in the 2007 law, particularly around investor protection, oversight of digital financial products, and market surveillance.

Recognizing these challenges, government policymakers drafted the Investment and Securities Act 2025 to build a more resilient, competitive, and transparent capital-market environment. The reform aims to:

1. Align Nigeria's capital-market rules with global best practices
2. Strengthen regulatory oversight
3. Encourage responsible technological innovation
4. Improve mechanisms for attracting local and foreign investment

In effect, ISA 2025 reflects nearly two decades of evolution in Nigeria's capital markets. It modernizes the legal framework and equips the financial ecosystem to support sustainable growth in a fast-changing global economy.

Key Innovations in ISA 2025

The ISA 2025 significantly restructures Nigeria's capital-market regulatory architecture. Among its most notable innovations are:

1. Recognition of Digital Assets

For the first time, cryptocurrencies, tokens, and blockchain-based instruments are officially recognized as securities. Digital-asset exchanges must now register with the SEC, enhancing investor safety and closing regulatory loopholes.

2. Smarter, Safer Market Infrastructure

Exchanges are now classified as composite (multi-asset) or specialized, each with clearly defined obligations. Clearinghouses and depositories fall under stricter SEC supervision, including new insolvency safeguards that strengthen stability and investor confidence.

3. Stronger Investor Protection

Enhanced enforcement powers enable the SEC to:

a) Monitor systemic risks
b) Suspend trading during emergencies
c) Require improved transparency through Legal Entity Identifiers (LEIs)
d) Fraud penalties have been significantly increased, signaling zero tolerance for market abuse.

4. Expanded Access to Capital

Sub-national governments, SMEs, startups, and venture-capital funds can now raise capital more easily. This broadens financing options for infrastructure, innovation, and real-sector development.

5. Tougher Anti-Fraud Measures

Unregistered schemes including Ponzi operations are explicitly criminalized. The Act also allows digital investigations and strengthens dispute resolution through an expanded Investments and Securities Tribunal.

What ISA 2025 Means for Nigeria

Investors - Stricter disclosure rules, digital-asset regulation, and tighter penalties for fraud reduce risk and increase market confidence.

Companies - Clearer rules for raising capital including through digital assets provide certainty for long-term planning and investment. Although compliance obligations have increased, the overall environment is more predictable.

Nigeria's Economy - By formalizing digital finance, expanding capital-raising channels, and modernizing market infrastructure, ISA 2025 is expected to:

I. Boost economic growth
II. Attract foreign investment
III. Support infrastructure and industrial financing
IV. Reactions: Optimism with a Note of Caution

Since its passage, ISA 2025 has drawn widespread attention ranging from regulatory praise to cautious optimism from market players.

Regulators - The SEC, under Director-General Emomotimi Agama, has described the Act as a transformative milestone that aligns Nigeria's capital markets with global standards. The Commission expects full compliance by January 2026 and maintains that the law will deepen investment flows and strengthen investor confidence.

Capital-Market Experts and Lawyers - Analysts such as Professor Uche Uwaleke applaud the Act's inclusion of digital assets, calling it a necessary step in regulating fintech innovation. Market lawyers have similarly praised the law's support for new instruments, infrastructure financing, and venture-capital investment.
However, some caution that regulating cross-border digital platforms remains a major challenge.

Industry Stakeholders - Capital-market associations including CMSA and ASHON welcome the opportunities ISA 2025 opens for tokenized securities, ethical finance, and SME funding. Market operators also note that the law encourages diversification across asset classes.

Fintechs and Everyday Investors - Fintech operators view the new rules as a path toward legitimacy and innovation in tokenized products and alternative trading systems. Investors especially those in non-interest products like Sukuk have shown stronger participation.

Yet the SEC's warnings about scams and unregistered exchanges have made some retail investors uneasy, particularly those accustomed to informal digital-investment platforms.

Overall, ISA 2025 is widely regarded as forward-looking. It enhances transparency and modernizes Nigeria's investment climate, but its success depends heavily on strict enforcement and stakeholder compliance.
Capacity-Building Effects of ISA 2025
ISA 2025 is not merely a regulatory tool it is a vehicle for economic empowerment. By recognizing digital and virtual assets, it expands safe access to emerging markets while curbing fraud. Its capital-raising provisions for SMEs, startups, and government entities promote job creation and economic diversification. Improved investor protection boosts public confidence, while the modernization of capital-market infrastructure enables more efficient trading across asset classes.

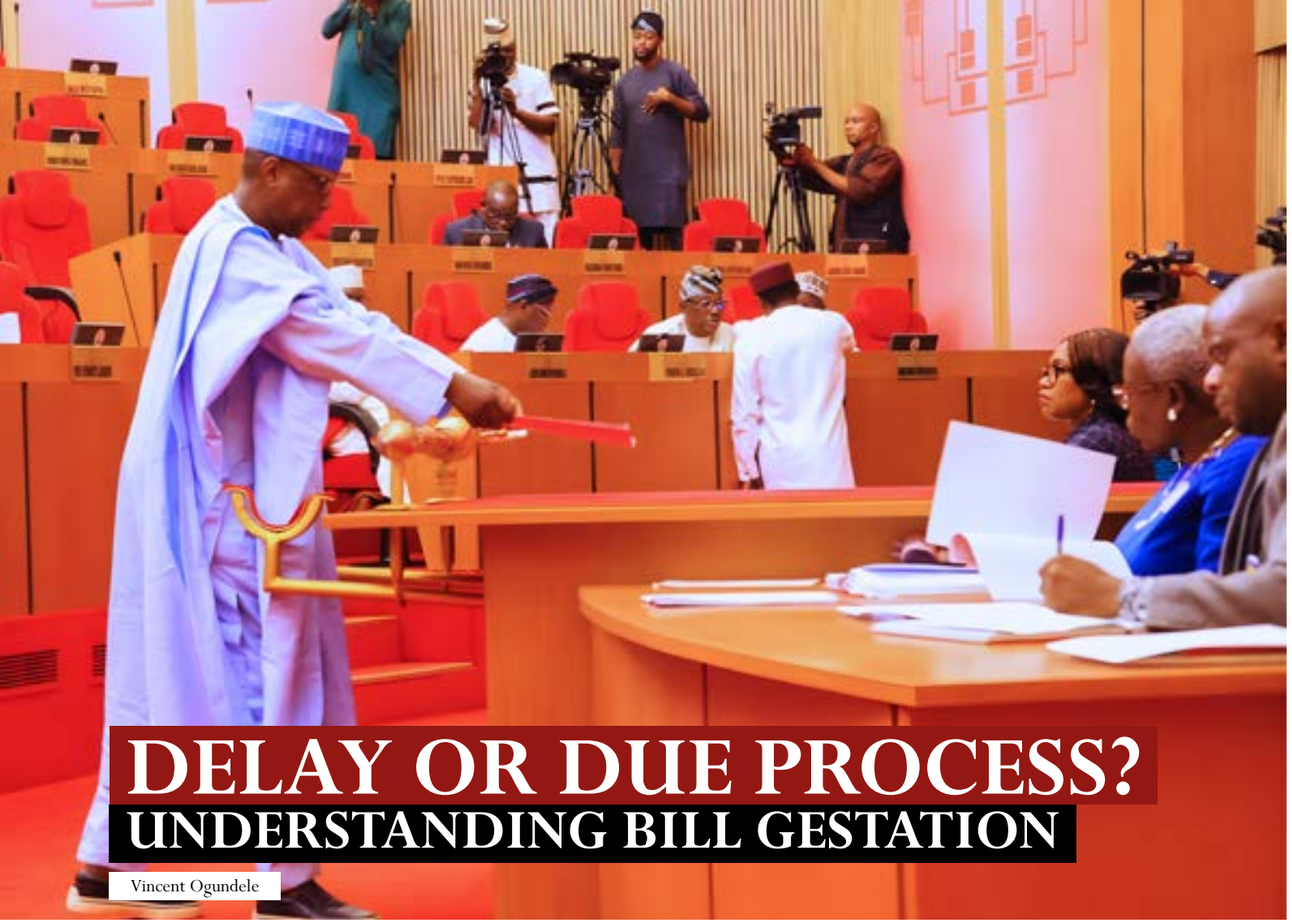
The Act also strengthens the integration of commodities particularly agriculture into the financial system, improving financing for farmers and rural communities. Altogether, ISA 2025 supports national economic development through innovation, oversight, and wider participation.
The Takeaway

The Investment and Securities Act 2025 is more than an update to financial law it is a blueprint for Nigeria's economic future. By formalizing digital finance, strengthening regulatory oversight, and modernizing capital-market structures, the Act positions Nigeria as a credible player in the global financial arena. Its influence will be felt in everyday investment decisions, corporate growth strategies, and the national development agenda.

ISA 2025 is, in every sense, a catalyst for financial innovation and long-term economic transformation.

SIDEBAR: 5 Things Investors Should Know About ISA 2025

- ☐ Clear Rules – The Act sets out a comprehensive legal framework for all digital assets.
- ☐ Stronger Protection – New disclosure and reporting standards shield investors from fraud.
- ☐ Global Alignment – The reforms harmonize Nigerian markets with international standards.
- ☐ Compliance Is Critical – Registration and reporting obligations must be strictly followed.
- ☐ New Assets to Watch – NFTs, DeFi products, and other innovations are covered—though grey areas still exist.



DELAY OR DUE PROCESS?
UNDERSTANDING BILL GESTATION

Vincent Ogundele

The "gestation period" of a Bill refers to the length of time it spends undergoing consideration through the various stages of the lawmaking process before final passage. This period varies significantly depending on the nature of the Bill, its urgency, political context, and procedural factors. In practice, a Bill may spend a few days, several weeks, months, or even years from its introduction to its eventual passage.

Although, no law prescribes a specific timeframe for the passage of Bills in the Nigerian legislature, the legislative process, comprising introduction, first reading, second reading, committee scrutiny, third reading, passage, and eventual presidential assent, plays a central role in determining how long a Bill spends before becoming law. On average, the passage of a Bill should not exceed six months, depending on its nature. However, since the beginning of the Fourth Republic, and including the 10th National Assembly, many Bills have exceeded this timeframe.

Several factors influence the length of the gestation period of Bills, making each Bill's journey unique. The following key determinants often shape how quickly or slowly a Bill progresses through the legislative process:

1. Political Urgency

Political urgency refers to the priority that lawmakers accord to Bills addressing pressing national concerns. Bills related to economic crises, budgetary matters, national security threats, public health emergencies, or natural disasters are often fast-tracked.
Tables 1 and 2 below show that 53 Senate bills and 98 House bills were passed within 1–100 days. Executive Bills constitute the majority of these fast-tracked Bills, owing to their urgent nature and the need for rapid policy responses.

2. Legislative Priorities

Bills that align with the ruling party's agenda, especially those tied to campaign promises or major policy reforms, often receive expedited attention. Such Bills may originate as executive proposals or private member Bills supported strongly by leadership and key stakeholders, making their passage faster.

3. Strong Public Support

Bills that enjoy strong public backing (expressed through public hearings, protests, media campaigns, petitions, or social media advocacy) tend to move more quickly. Lawmakers are typically more willing to support legislations that are popular among their constituents.

4. Bipartisan Support

When lawmakers across party lines agree on the merit of a Bill, bipartisan cooperation can significantly shorten its gestation period. Cross-party consensus enhances credibility, reduces partisanship, and increases the likelihood of smooth passage.

5. Stakeholder Influence

Lobbying and advocacy from interest groups, industry associations, professional bodies, and citizens can shape legislative attitudes and timelines. Stakeholders may mobilize support or opposition, influencing committee recommendations and floor decisions. This can either speed up or delay passage.

6. Complexity of the Bill

Bills containing intricate or contentious provisions require more extensive deliberation, technical review, stakeholder input, and committee scrutiny. As a result, they tend to spend longer periods in both chambers.

According to the data presented in the table below, 9 Senate Bills (7.96%) and 38 House Bills (13.81%) took between 500 and 800 days before passage.

7. Committee Dynamics

Committees play a critical role in determining the pace of a bill's progression. Committee leadership, membership composition, technical capacity, and workload all influence the speed of consideration. Supportive leadership can expedite a bill's processing, whereas skepticism or competing priorities can slow it down.

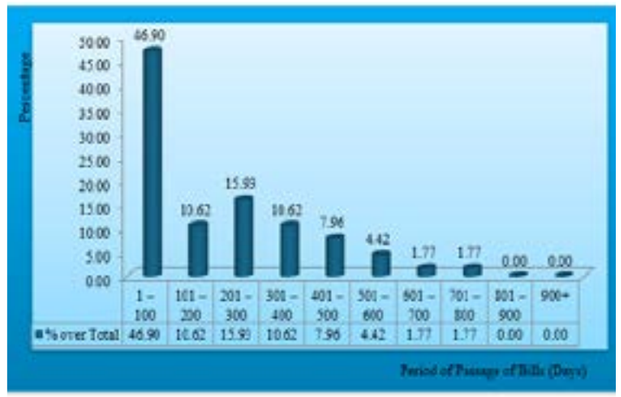
Analysis of Gestation Periods: Senate and House of Representatives

Table 1: Senate – Distribution of 113 Bills Passed (June 2023 – August 2025)

Periods for Passage of Bills (Day)	No. of Bills	% over Total
1 – 100	53	46.90
101 – 200	12	10.62
201 – 300	18	15.93
301 – 400	12	10.62
401 – 500	9	7.96
501 – 600	5	4.42
601 – 700	2	1.77
701 – 800	2	1.77
801 – 900	0	0.00
900+	0	0.00
Total	113	100.00

Source: Underlying data from Department of Rules and Business, Senate, NASS

Figure: 1 Bills Passed by the Senate: Percentage Distribution of Gestation Periods, June, 2023 – August, 2025



Key Observations – Senate

- 46.90% of Senate Bills were passed within 1–100 days, mostly executive and Bills that require urgency
- 30 Bills (26.55%) took between 201–400 days, indicating more extensive consideration.
- Only 2 Bills (1.77%) took more than 700 days.

August, 2025

Conclusion

The gestation period of Bills in the 10th National Assembly varies widely due to institutional, political, and procedural factors. While a significant number of Bills, particularly Bills that require urgency and those sponsored by the executive arm were passed swiftly within 100 days, many others required more extended deliberation, sometimes exceeding 500 days.
These findings highlight the complexity of Nigeria's legislative environment and underscore the importance of political will, committee efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and public participation in shaping legislative outcomes. Hence, it is recommended that legislative practice and procedure in the National Assembly must consider codifying the gestation period for Bills while also ensuring that the capacity of the Department responsible for Bills and particularly, Bill Scrutiny in both Houses is enhanced in order to ensure that the quality of Bills is maintained and only Bills that meet institutional requirements are considered for presentation. This is to address the huge number of Bills churned out by legislators just to score political points. The media must also de-emphasize using number of Bills sponsored by legislators as yard stick for measuring legislative effectiveness, as the role or function of the legislature is beyond merely sponsorship of Bills but emphasizes the representative role of the

Table 2: Actual and Percentage Distribution of 275 Bills Passed by the House of Representative between June, 2023 and August, 2025 by Gestation Periods

Periods for Passage of Bills (Day)	No. of Bills	% over Total
1 – 100	98	35.64
101 – 200	59	21.45
201 – 300	34	12.36
301 – 400	29	10.55
401 – 500	17	6.18
501 – 600	20	7.27
601 – 700	15	5.45
701 – 800	3	1.09
801 – 900	0	0.00
900+	0	0.00
Total	275	100.00

Source: Underlying data from Department of Rules and Business, House of Representative, NASS

Figure 2: Bills Passed by the House of Representative: Percentage Distribution of Gestation Periods, June, 2023 –

Key Observations – House

98 Bills (35.64%) were passed within 1–100 days, again dominated by executive and emergency-related bills.
38 Bills (13.81%) took between 500 and 800 days—higher than the Senate, reflecting broader House membership and more complex committee layers.
Akin to the Senate, no Bill exceeded 800 days.

TEAM NASS SHINES AT FEPSGA 2025, CLINCHES GOLD IN TABLE TENNIS OTHERS

Abubakar Abdulraheem,
Owolaye Shola
Godwin Ortserga

As public servants from across the federation converged in Adamawa State for the 44th edition of the Federation of Public Service Games (FEPSGA), the National Assembly (NASS) contingent departed Abuja with a clear mandate: to compete with discipline, uphold institutional values, and represent the National Assembly with honour.

Ahead of the Games, which held in Yola from 7 to 13 December 2025, the Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq., hosted and sent off the Team NASS contingent, describing the Games as more than a sporting competition. According to him, FEPSGA represents a national platform for unity, camaraderie, and shared commitment among public servants across ministries, departments, and agencies.

Ogunlana urged members of the delegation to approach the competition with the same discipline, teamwork, and sense of duty that characterise their service within the legislature. He reminded them that participation in the Games reflects a broader public-service tradition where fitness, healthy competition, and teamwork contribute to morale, resilience, and institutional solidarity. He further encouraged the athletes to carry the image of the National Assembly with dignity, respect the spirit of fair play, and use the opportunity to build relationships with colleagues across government.

He concluded by wishing the contingent safe travels and a successful outing, expressing confidence that their conduct would reflect professionalism and national pride.

Responding on behalf of the team at the send-off, the leader of the contingent and Chairman of the National Assembly Sports Club, Comrade Bature Musa, expressed appreciation to the Clerk for his consistent moral and financial support. He assured management that the team was well prepared and determined to surpass its previous performance at the Games.

That commitment translated into results in Yola, as Team NASS recorded a commendable performance at the just-concluded FEPSGA 2025. Competing against contingents from federal ministries, agencies, and parastatals nationwide, the National Assembly athletes demonstrated resilience, discipline, and sportsmanship, returning with an impressive medal haul.

The team's standout performance came in table tennis, where the female team clinched a gold medal in the team event, reinforcing NASS's reputation as a strong force in the sport. The mixed doubles pair secured two silver medals, while the men's doubles added three bronze medals. The female football team also made history by winning a bronze medal in their first appearance at the Games, a feat widely praised as a significant milestone for the Nass Queen football team.

In other events, the male football and volleyball teams advanced to the quarter-final stages before exiting the competition. Overall, 110 participants represented the National Assembly Service across multiple disciplines, including male and female football, volleyball, table tennis, basketball, swimming, ayo, badminton, chess, scrabble, and athletics, although scrabble and athletics events were eventually not held.

Beyond the medal table, Team NASS's performance highlighted both progress and persistent challenges. Officials noted that the absence of a dedicated sports facility within the National Assembly complex affected preparation, as most training sessions had to be conducted outside the premises. They appealed for increased funding and the establishment of a standard sports centre to enhance future performance and athlete development.

Speaking at the conclusion of the games, Chairman of the NASS Sports Club, Comrade Bature Musa, expressed delight with the team's results. He observed that the Club's consistency in good performance since the its debut at the games is a testament to the team's hard work and dedication. He pledged that the Club will continue to represent the National Assembly with a sustained spirit of dedication. Musa thanked the National Assembly Management for its financial and moral support, noting that such backing has accounted for the team's consistent success at the games. He also appealed to the Management to "ensure that appropriation for sports is captured in the budget, in line with what obtains in the ministries, agencies and other arms of government," arguing that a dedicated budget would eliminate the need to go cap in hand seeking funding for each game and would boost the development of sports infrastructure for the Club.

For Team NASS, the journey from a purposeful send-off in Abuja to a strong showing in Yola reaffirmed the value of institutional support, disciplined preparation, and the enduring spirit of teamwork that defines the National Assembly Service.

The Federation of Public Service Games was established in the early 2000s as a non-profit umbrella body for sports associations representing the various ministries, departments and agencies of the Federal Government of Nigeria. Its formation was driven by a desire to foster camaraderie, healthy competition and a sense of national unity among public servants, while promoting physical fitness within the civil service. Over the past two decades, FEPSGA has grown into one of the most visible platforms for inter-ministerial sporting interaction, drawing thousands of athletes and officials to its annual multi-sport festival. Participation in the games has been linked to improved morale among employees, with many reporting higher job satisfaction after representing their ministries on the field of play. The shared experience of training and competing together has fostered a spirit of teamwork that often spills over into daily work, leading to smoother inter-departmental projects and a reduction in bureaucratic friction. This year's edition, held with heightened competition and increased participation, reflected the growing importance of FEPSGA as a platform for strengthening fitness, teamwork and discipline within the public service.

Did You Know?

Idowu Bakare

United States Congress once debated whether Tomato was a fruit or vegetable

The United States Congress once found itself at the centre of an unlikely debate while considering a tax bill: was a tomato a fruit or a vegetable? The legislation imposed duties on vegetables but exempted fruits, prompting importers to challenge how tomatoes were classified.

In 1893, the Court settled the matter in Nix v. Hedden. While acknowledging that tomatoes are technically fruits, the justices ruled that for tax purposes they would be classified as vegetables, relying on everyday usage rather than scientific classification. Since tomatoes are commonly eaten as part of main meals and not as dessert, they were deemed vegetables in the eyes of the law

The case remains a quirky reminder that in law, common usage can sometimes outweigh scientific fact.

Kenya's Parliament combines elected and nominated members to promote gender balance

Kenya's 2010 Constitution introduced the "two-thirds gender rule," which requires that no more than two-thirds of members of any public body be of the same gender.

However, fully achieving this "two-thirds gender rule" in Parliament has been persistent challenge. To support this, the National Assembly includes nominated members in both chambers who represent women, youth, and persons with disabilities.

While the rule has not been fully achieved, these measures make Kenya's Parliament one of Africa's most deliberate experiments in inclusive representation.

Australia's Parliament Lets the Public Walk on Its Roof

Australia's Parliament House in Canberra is designed with a powerful democratic symbol built right into its architecture. The building has grass-covered roofs that allow members of the public to walk over the Parliament itself.

Known as an "earth-covered roof," the design was intended to convey a clear message that in a democracy, the people stand above the government.

Japan's Parliament Has Been Relocated Multiple Times After Disasters

Japan's Parliament, known as the National Diet, has had a surprisingly mobile history. In its early years, lawmakers met in temporary wooden buildings in Tokyo that were destroyed by fire not once, but twice, forcing Parliament to relocate and rebuild.

The first Diet building opened in 1890 and burned down within months. A second temporary structure lasted longer but was also lost to fire in 1925. Determined to end the cycle, Japan eventually constructed the solid National Diet Building in 1936 using reinforced steel and concrete, designed to withstand earthquakes and conflict. The building still stands today, proving that even parliaments sometimes have to learn resilience the hard way.

Ethiopia's Parliament is designed to represent its people, not just political parties?

Ethiopia operates a bicameral parliament known as the Federal Parliamentary Assembly, made up of the House of Peoples' Representatives and the House of Federation.

The House of Federation is specifically structured to represent the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia, rather than political parties.

Members represent ethnic groups (nations, nationalities, and peoples) and are elected by regional councils, not directly by popular vote. Each group is guaranteed at least one representative, with additional seats for each million population. Its functions include interpreting the constitution, determining rights of self-determination/secession, and resolving disputes between states.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SERVICE COMMISSION
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

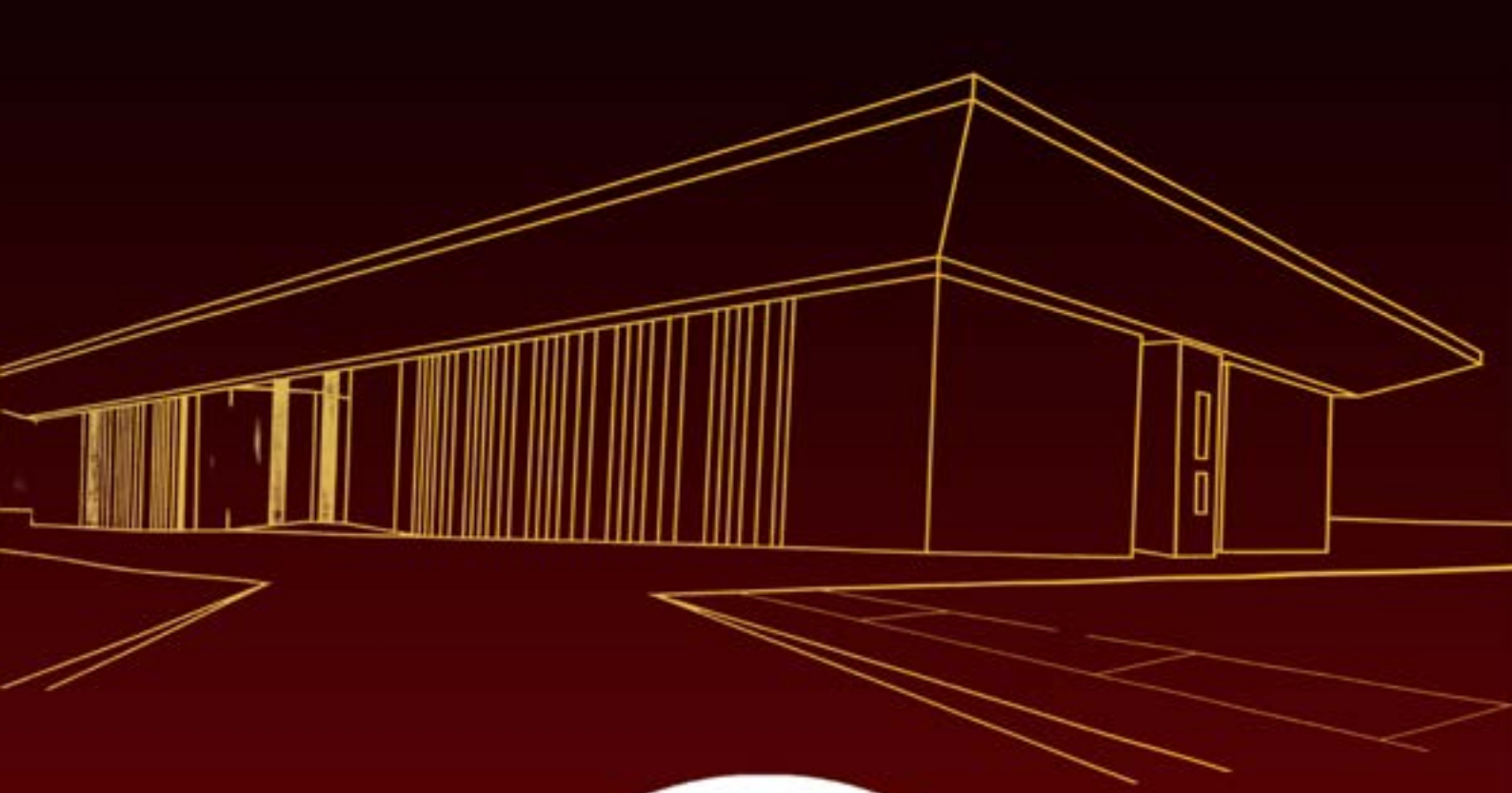
National Assembly Service Commission

Appointment, Promotion and Discipline of Staff of the National Assembly

To ensure the development of a corp of excellent manpower resources that is competent and knowledgeable for the National Assembly Service.

To build an excellent work force that will provide support and expertise to legislators with a view of meeting the challenges of good legislation for democratic governance and sustainable development.

Address: Plot 664 T.O.S. Benson, Crescent, Utako 900108 Abuja
Phone: +2349114141445 I +2349114141446
Email: info@nasc.gov.ng



National Assembly Library Trust Fund

...a catalyst for Legislative Excellence in Africa

National Assebly Library Trust Fund, National Assembly Complex, Three Arms Zone, Central Business District, Central Area, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory. | Email: info@naltf.gov.ng

www.naltf.gov.ng @naltf_ng @naltrustfund