

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

LEGISLATIVE



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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES:

**Pistons that Drive
the Engines of Every
Legislature**



An Official
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National Assembly



“This administration cannot afford distractions from those seeking to politicize our nation’s challenges - It’s dishonourable to Nigerians. The “National Assembly”, under my watch, is poised to give this Administration every legitimate support to better Nigeria”



His Excellency
Sen. Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON
President of the Senate, Federal Republic of Nigeria

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Clerk to the National Assembly

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Uke Augustine
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Chizobam Anunkor

Media and Photography
Paul Amedu Anyebe
Ekeh Macfred Nnanyere
David Samuel

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

Creative Design
Shonubi A. Samson

EDITORIAL

COMMITTEES AS THE ENGINE ROOM OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

In every parliament, the most visible moments take place in plenary debates, speeches, motions, and votes. Yet, the real substance of democratic governance often unfolds away from the chamber floor, within committee rooms. It is here that legislators engage in detailed scrutiny of bills, conduct investigations, hold public hearings, and interact directly with citizens, experts, and institutions. Committees, therefore, function as the engine room of legislative effectiveness.

In Nigeria's National Assembly, committees are central to lawmaking, oversight, representation, and accountability. Empowered by Sections 88 and 89 of the 1999 Constitution, they investigate matters within legislative competence, examine the administration of laws, and ensure that public funds are properly utilized. Through these functions, committees translate constitutional authority into practical oversight and governance.

The 10th National Assembly provides clear examples of this role in action. The House of Representatives Public Accounts Committee has demonstrated the power of audit-based oversight by recovering significant revenues, including billions of naira from oil companies and other firms. Meanwhile, ad-hoc committees addressing issues such as cryptocurrency and Point-of-Sale operations reflect the legislature's responsiveness to emerging challenges in a rapidly evolving digital economy.

Committees have also strengthened democratic participation. Constitution Review Committees, through zonal and national public hearings, have created platforms for citizens to contribute directly to constitutional reform. In doing so, they bridge the gap between government and the governed, making democracy more inclusive and participatory.

Oversight of public spending remains another critical function. Investigations into

the quality and execution of projects funded by agencies such as TETFund illustrate how committees ensure that appropriated funds deliver tangible benefits. This aligns with international best practices, where committees undertake detailed legislative work, consult experts, and refine policies before final decisions are made in plenary.

By enabling public input and technical scrutiny, committees make representation more practical. Citizens may not speak on the floor of parliament, but they can submit memoranda, testify at hearings, and influence outcomes through committee processes. In this way, committees widen participation and deepen democratic engagement.

However, the effectiveness of committees is not guaranteed. It depends on strong research support, capable secretariats, adequate funding, transparent procedures, and consistent follow-up on findings. Without these, oversight risks becoming performative, and public confidence in the legislative process may decline.

Strengthening the committee system is therefore essential. This includes improving data systems, enhancing research capacity, digitizing records, tracking resolutions, and communicating outcomes more clearly to the public. Committees must not only ask questions but also ensure that answers lead to measurable action and policy improvement.

Ultimately, democracy is sustained not only by elections but by continuous scrutiny, engagement, and accountability. Committees perform this vital, often unseen work refining legislation, holding institutions accountable, and giving citizens a meaningful voice. To truly understand the National Assembly, one must look beyond the plenary and into the committee rooms, where much of democracy's hardest and most important work is done.

— Editorial Board, *Legislative Digest*

POST-PASSAGE LEGISLATIVE SCRUTINY OF THE ACTS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY: RE-EXAMINING THE ROLE OF THE CLERK

Introduction

Section 318 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) defines ‘Act’ or ‘Act of the National Assembly’ as any law made by the National Assembly. An Act of the National Assembly is the most enduring product of the National Assembly and its legitimacy depends not merely on the intendment of the lawmakers but also on the integrity, clarity, and constitutionality of the text eventually presented for presidential assent. The responsibility to ensure this is partly vested in the Clerk to the National Assembly (CNA), whose mandate includes the technical and legal scrutiny of bills after passage but before transmission to the President for assent.

The common view that a bill must be transmitted for assent “hook, line and sinker” immediately after passage is misguided and overlooks the critical constitutional and administrative role of the CNA. This raises fundamental questions about the essence, scope, and limits of post-passage scrutiny of bills by the CNA.

This article interrogates these issues and proposes institutional safeguards to preserve the credibility of Acts of the National Assembly.

The Role of the CNA After a Bill is Passed

Post-passage legislative scrutiny by the CNA is not a ceremonial or clerical exercise. It is an essential quality-control mechanism designed to ensure that the bill passed accurately reflects legislative intent, the provisions are consistent with the Constitution, internal contradictions, drafting errors, ambiguities, and cross-referencing defects are eliminated, and the final enrolled bill is legally enforceable.

After a bill is passed, the CNA plays a central administrative and procedural role in ensuring that the lawmaking process prescribed in the Constitution and the Standing Orders is strictly observed and the law is brought into force; he supervises the preparation of the harmonised clean copy of the bill, ensuring that it accurately reflects what was passed, and that any discrepancies between the Senate and House of Representatives versions of the bill are reconciled; he prepares the certificate of authentication which he personally endorses in line with the Acts Authentication Act Cap. A2, LFN, 2004; he formally transmits 3 copies of the authenticated bill to the President for assent; he monitors the assent timeline (30 days) for legislative follow-up; if the President gives assent to a bill, the bill officially becomes an Act of the National Assembly, and the CNA is so notified to convey the message to both Chambers; he enrolls the assented or approved bill (where the bill is passed by two-third majority to override Presidential veto) in the Supreme Court of Nigeria; he causes the bill to be published in the Official Gazette of the Federation; he circulates the Gazetted Act to lawmakers and relevant MDAs; and he archives the assented bill and all the background documents for record purposes.

It is clear from the above that the CNA does not function as a rubber stamp. Rather, he operates as a technical custodian of legislative integrity, bridging the political decision of lawmakers with the legal reality of enforceable law. The common impression that once a bill is passed, the bill is adopted wholesale by the CNA without any scrutiny negates the very rationale for the existence of the office and reduces legislative professionalism to political expediency.

Scope and Limits of Post-Passage Scrutiny

A critical distinction must be drawn between permissible technical corrections and impermissible substantive alterations after a bill has been passed.

After the passage of a bill but before transmission for assent, the CNA may lawfully effect correction of typographical, grammatical,

and punctuation errors; renumbering of sections, subsections, and schedules; harmonisation of cross-references; correction of citation errors and definitions for consistency; and formatting and structural alignment with the in-house drafting conventions. These changes do not alter the substance, intent, or policy choices of the lawmakers.

In contrast, the following are constitutionally and procedurally unacceptable; insertion or deletion of clauses not debated or approved, alteration of penalties, exemptions, or enforcement mechanisms; and any change capable of affecting the rights, liabilities, or obligations of citizens. Any such alteration amounts to legislation without parliamentary approval, undermining legislative sovereignty.

Unauthorized post-passage alterations pose grave dangers including erosion of public confidence in the law-making process, exposure of enacted laws to constitutional challenge, personal and institutional liability for legislative personnel and reputational damage to the National Assembly as an institution.

Recommendations

A central concern is how to protect the CNA and other legislative personnel from personal liability or disciplinary sanctions when they insist on performing their duties honestly and professionally. The following measures are imperative: the functions and limits of the CNA should be expressly codified, affirming his authority to refuse unlawful or substantive post-passage alterations; all directives affecting post-passage of bills should be in writing, traceable to an authorised parliamentary resolution or leadership decision, and archived as part of the legislative record. This protects the CNA from retrospective blame; the CNA should enjoy qualified immunity for actions taken in good faith in the discharge of his administrative duties, similar to protection accorded judicial officers; the final version of any bill transmitted to the President should be published to allow comparison with the version passed by both Chambers; and Acts of the National Assembly should be gazetted without delay. This will give members of the public timely access to the Acts.

Conclusion

The common view of the public that once a bill is passed, the CNA should adopt the bill “hook, line and sinker” and transmit for assent without scrutiny, reflects a troubling misunderstanding of legislative governance. Post-Passage legislative scrutiny is not defiance; it is fidelity to the Constitution, to the Parliament, and to the Nigerian people. The strength of Nigeria’s democracy will not be measured solely by the number of laws passed, but by the integrity of the process through which those laws emerge. Protecting the independence of the Office of the CNA and clarifying the permissible scope of post-passage corrections of bills are indispensable steps toward preserving legislative credibility and constitutional order. In the final analysis, a bill hurried into assent at the expense of scrutiny may ultimately cost the nation far more than the delay that scrutiny would have required.



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

COMPONENTS & COMPETENCE OF AN IDEAL LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

Dr. Bello Olatunji Babatunde

The detailed work of every legislature is carried out in legislative committees: drafting, examining, amending and scrutinising laws, as well as overseeing government action and inaction. In any healthy legislative democracy, committees convert broad political mandates into practicable and accountable public policy. An ideal committee combines sound institutional design, applies procedural safeguards and is supported by skilled personnel. It engages in public-facing practices and uses informed, impartial, timely and transparent decision-making processes to achieve effectiveness, thereby strengthening its ability to make sound recommendations to plenary as required. There are other basic but very important core components that make legislative committees efficient and effective. A clear mandate and defined jurisdiction are valuable to committees. This entails clarity in processes for hearings, witness selection, investigations, consideration of amendments, quorum and voting procedures, as well as the prevention of arbitrariness. A well delineated mandate prevents overlap, turf battles and gaps in legislative responsibilities. When a committee's mandate is clear, it allows members and the public to know what the committee is responsible for and what outcomes to expect. This should be accompanied by statutory or standing rules, similar to plenary rules, that specify the

committee's subject areas, powers such as subpoena and reporting, and its relationship with other committees.

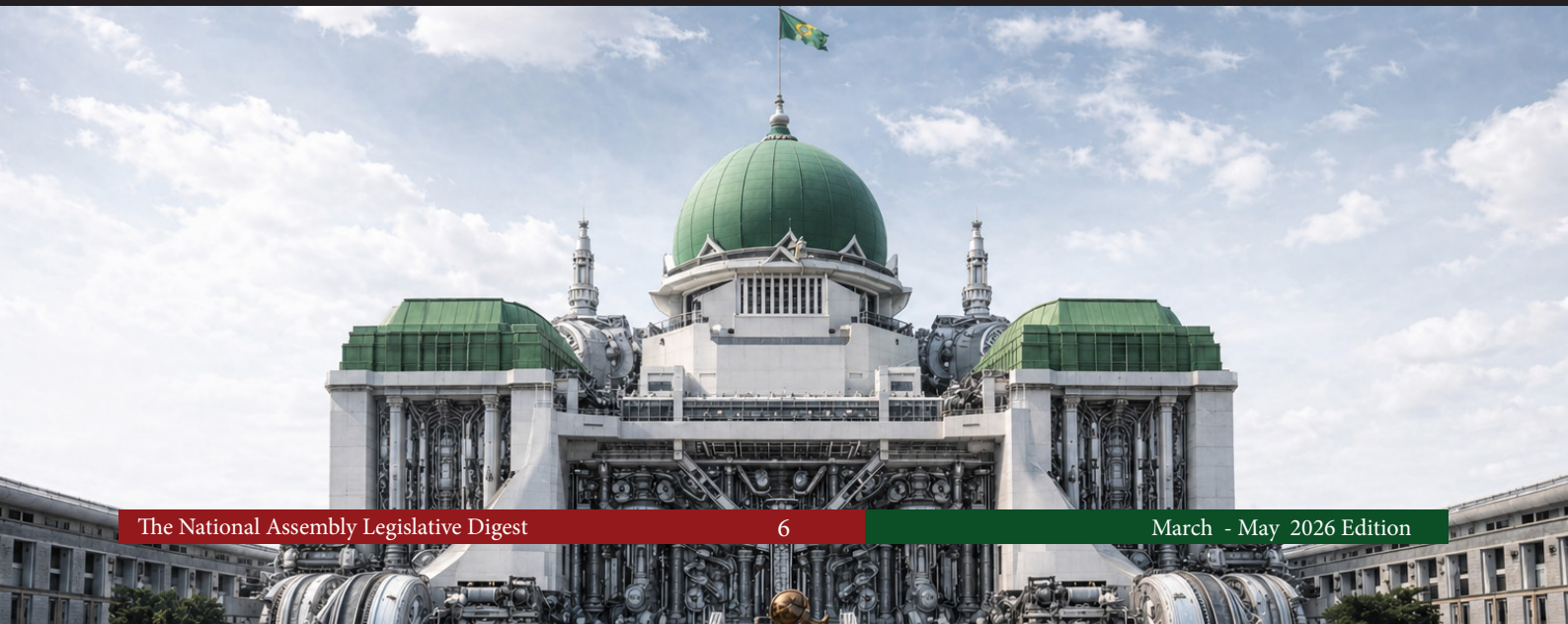
Appropriate size and proportional representation are also very important components of a competent committee. The size of a committee affects both manageability and representativeness. Proportionate party representation ensures the committee reflects the legislature's political makeup while preserving minority voices. A committee should be small enough to function efficiently but large enough to include relevant party and demographic representation. Cooperation across party lines improves the quality and legitimacy of committee work, while minority protections prevent majoritarian capture of procedural control.

"The success of legislative oversight depends not only on authority but on competence, integrity, and institutional support."

Professional and nonpartisan staff with the required expertise are vital prerequisites for those who will serve in the committee secretariat. This should include nonpartisan analysts, legal counsel and investigators who provide research, drafting and essential technical background work needed for legislation and oversight. Committees should have access to dedicated research units and maintain formal links with parliamentary libraries and independent policy institutes. They must also receive timely and high quality research to support evidence based decisions, reduce unintended consequences and improve policy effectiveness.

The use of technology and digital information management systems also makes the work of committees easier and faster. For example, the use of user friendly digital public portals for submissions, remote hearing capabilities and strong data protection protocols are modern tools that increase efficiency, expand access and improve record keeping.

Transparency and public accessibility are virtues that ought to be demonstrated by committees through inclusive consultations and civic participation. Transparency depends on openness in their work and clear rationales for decisions. It also requires public hearings, published minutes and reports, live or archived broadcasts and accessible records of evidence and submissions. Additional efforts should be made by committees to





engage targeted stakeholders through workshops, working groups or retreats. They should also accept and consider written submissions from the public. Furthermore, committees should create inclusive platforms for participation and expression, including mechanisms that enable marginalised groups to participate meaningfully in the legislative process.

To achieve robust oversight and enforcement powers over ministries, departments and agencies of government, a committee must have the capacity to compel information and follow up on legislative recommendations. Such powers should include the authority to summon witnesses and documents, enforce reporting deadlines and establish mechanisms to monitor the implementation of legislative recommendations. Financial capacity also cannot be ignored. Committees require funding for oversight activities, research, travel, hearings, technology and general administration. Underfunded committees cannot carry out substantive work effectively. Therefore, committees of the legislature should have protected budget lines, the authority to allocate resources for inquiries and adequate logistical support for field visits and specialist input when required.

It is also important that committees and their responsibilities are meaningfully integrated with the legislative process. Their outputs must influence floor decisions and lawmaking. For example, there should be timely reporting cycles that are tied to the legislative calendar.

Committee competence refers to the capacity of a legislative committee to discharge its responsibilities effectively, impartially and transparently. This is central to the quality of lawmaking and democratic governance. Committee competence is multidimensional.

It encompasses: Institutional competence: appropriate legal authority, clear procedures and adequate powers to summon witnesses, request documents and impose deadlines.

“Committees can only be effective when supported by clear rules, adequate resources, and enforceable oversight powers.”

Technical competence: subject matter knowledge, analytical capability and access to high quality research and data.

Procedural competence: mastery of parliamentary rules, fair chairing of deliberations and the ability to manage workloads and timelines.

Ethical and political competence: impartiality, respect for due process, capacity for bipartisan cooperation and resistance to undue influence.

Communicative competence: transparent reporting, effective public engagement and clear communication with stakeholders and the broader legislature.

As earlier mentioned, a balanced and representative committee membership also reflects competence and the legislature's political composition while protecting the committee's ability to deliberate in good faith. A mix of experienced and new legislators, along with diversity in expertise and background, strengthens deliberation and enhances committee legitimacy.

Effective leadership also influences the success of a committee. Committee chairs should be competent in managing debate, enforcing rules and fostering an environment where minority views are heard. They should practise leadership norms that encourage cross party collaboration and discourage politicised grandstanding.

A committee can only be considered competent when there is adequate provision of resources and logistical mechanisms. Reliable funding, meeting space, technology including secure data systems and logistical support are essential. Effective processes and practices also contribute to competence. Evidence based review ensures that research, comparative analysis and impact assessments are systematically used before drafting or amending laws.

Structured hearings typically include pre circulated briefs, time limited but substantive questioning and clear submission procedures. Interactive drafting involves stages of consultation, revision and redrafting that allow for refinement and coalition building.

If committees are to succeed in their legislative responsibilities, certain common pitfalls must be avoided. These include partisan staffing or chair appointments that undermine neutrality, excessive secrecy or unclear rule changes that erode public trust, under resourcing that reduces committees to symbolic bodies, procedural logjams that turn committees into delay mechanisms rather than deliberative engines, and failure to follow up on recommendations which weakens oversight credibility.

To be truly effective, a committee must balance representativeness and technical competence, openness and necessary confidentiality in investigations, as well as independence and collaborative coordination. Practical steps for legislatures seeking improvement include codifying mandates and rules, investing in nonpartisan staff and research capacity, ensuring transparent procedures and public access, granting enforceable oversight powers and instituting regular performance review.

These components not only enhance accountability but also ensure that committees fulfil their critical role in shaping informed, credible and impactful legislation.



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

PEACE IS NEVER ACCIDENTIAL

- President of the Senate At 152nd IPU

At a moment in history when the world faces growing uncertainty, rising insecurity, deepening political divisions, and humanitarian crises across continents, the call for peace, justice, and collective responsibility has become more urgent than ever. Addressing delegates at the 152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Sen. Dr. Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria delivered a profound and thought-provoking message centered on hope, humanity, democratic responsibility, and global solidarity.

Speaking on behalf of the Nigerian Parliament and the people of Nigeria, the President of the Senate presented not only the perspective of a nation shaped by diversity and resilience, but also the voice of a people who understand the painful realities of conflict and the difficult journey toward peace and stability. His address reflected Nigeria's historical experiences, democratic evolution, and unwavering commitment to unity despite numerous internal and external challenges.

He reminded the global audience that peace is never

accidental and cannot be inherited without effort. Rather, peace must be intentionally nurtured, continuously protected, and courageously defended by leaders, institutions, and citizens alike. According to him, nations that fail to actively safeguard justice and inclusion often become vulnerable to instability, division, and violence.

“Peace is never accidental and cannot be inherited without effort. It must be intentionally nurtured, continuously protected, and courageously defended.”

Drawing from Nigeria's own national experience, including the painful memories of the civil war and the persistent threats posed by terrorism, banditry, insurgency, and communal conflicts, the Senate President emphasized that Nigeria understands the true cost of instability. Yet

despite these difficulties, the country has remained steadfast in preserving its democratic institutions, strengthening national unity, and promoting peaceful coexistence among its diverse ethnic, religious, and cultural groups.

He noted that Nigeria's democratic journey has not been without setbacks, but the nation's resilience continues to inspire hope. Through constitutional governance, dialogue, and institutional reforms, Nigeria has continued to demonstrate its belief that democracy remains one of the strongest foundations for national development, accountability, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Central to his address was the critical role of parliaments in shaping the future of nations. Beyond their traditional responsibility of making laws, he described legislatures as institutions that embody the conscience of society. According to him, parliaments are platforms where the voices of ordinary citizens are heard, where justice is defended, where accountability is demanded, and where the hopes of future generations are safeguarded.

In one of the defining moments of his speech, the Senate President stated that while the judiciary



may traditionally be regarded as the last hope of the common man, the legislature remains the first hope of the masses because it directly represents the people and carries the responsibility of responding to their needs, fears, and aspirations. Reflecting on the theme of the 152nd IPU Assembly, “Nurturing Hope, Securing Peace, and Ensuring Justice for Future Generations,” he described it as not only timely but deeply urgent in today’s global climate. Across the world, insecurity and violent conflicts continue to threaten lives, economies, and democratic institutions. From the devastating wars in parts of the Middle East and Eastern Europe to persistent instability in several African nations, the consequences of conflict continue to affect millions of innocent people.

He stressed that the effects of war are no longer confined within national borders. In an increasingly interconnected world, insecurity in one region often creates economic, political, and humanitarian consequences far beyond the immediate conflict zone. Rising food insecurity, displacement of populations, refugee crises, economic disruptions, and growing mistrust among nations have become shared global concerns.

He reminded the Assembly that every conflict leaves lasting scars on societies and that the true cost of violence cannot be fully measured in numbers alone. Children lose their futures, families lose loved ones, and communities lose the sense of security and belonging that sustains human dignity.

Nigeria’s position, he explained, is not rooted in blame or political alignment but in the defense

of shared humanity. Quoting the renowned civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., he emphasized the interconnectedness of humanity, reminding delegates that injustice anywhere ultimately threatens justice everywhere. According to him, no nation can afford to ignore the suffering of others because global peace and stability depend on collective responsibility and mutual respect.

“While the judiciary may be regarded as the last hope of the common man, the legislature remains the first hope of the masses.”

The Senate President further called on international institutions, especially the Inter-Parliamentary Union, to rise above diplomatic formalities and become a stronger moral force in global affairs. At a time when many citizens around the world are losing faith in international systems and institutions, he argued that organizations like the IPU must serve as the voice of the voiceless and defenders of democratic values.

He urged the IPU to strengthen parliamentary diplomacy, encourage constructive dialogue among nations, and promote policies that prioritize

peacebuilding, justice, inclusion, and sustainable development. He also emphasized the need for stronger collaboration between the IPU and the United Nations in addressing emerging global threats and protecting vulnerable populations.

According to him, equality among nations must remain a fundamental principle of international relations. Strength, whether military, economic, or political, should never be used to justify injustice, oppression, or disregard for international norms. A just and peaceful world, he stressed, can only exist where all nations, regardless of size or influence, are treated with dignity and fairness.

In concluding his address, the Senate President made a passionate appeal for renewed global commitment to humanity, peace, and future generations. He urged leaders across the world to rise above divisions, narrow interests, and destructive politics in order to build a future founded on solidarity, justice, and shared prosperity.

He called on nations to choose construction over destruction, dialogue over violence, and unity over division. The responsibility of today’s leaders, he said, is not only to address present challenges but also to protect the hopes and opportunities of generations yet unborn.

Reaffirming Nigeria’s commitment to global peace, democratic governance, and international cooperation, the Senate President declared that Nigeria remains ready to work alongside the international community in advancing a more peaceful, just, and hopeful world.



Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu, Deputy Speaker House of Representatives

WHEN GLOBAL CONFLICT HITS HOME: Why the Middle East Crisis Matters for Nigeria's Economy, Energy, and Diplomacy – Deputy Speaker at the 152nd IPU

When conflict erupts thousands of miles away, Nigeria often feels the impact long before it fully registers the cause. The escalating tensions between the United States and Iran, centred around the Strait of Hormuz are a clear example. What appears to be a distant geopolitical confrontation is, in reality, a defining moment for Nigeria's economic stability, energy security, and diplomatic posture.

Oil at the Centre of the Crisis

At the heart of the unfolding situation is oil. The Strait of Hormuz remains one of the world's most critical energy corridors, with a significant share of global crude supply passing through it daily. Any disruption real or anticipated immediately triggers volatility in international oil markets.

Recent developments have already pushed oil prices upward, tightening global supply chains and amplifying inflationary pressures across economies. Central banks are

responding cautiously, while global growth projections face renewed uncertainty.

“Nigeria stands at a crossroads between opportunity and vulnerability, between dependence and transformation.”

Nigeria's Double-Edged Opportunity For Nigeria, the implications are both immediate and paradoxical.

On one hand, higher oil prices offer a fiscal boost. Increased revenue per barrel can strengthen government earnings, improve foreign exchange inflows, and potentially stabilise the naira. In principle, this creates an opportunity to expand infrastructure

investment and improve public finances.

On the other hand, Nigeria's structural realities complicate this advantage.

Despite being a major oil producer, the country remains dependent on imported refined petroleum products. As global oil prices rise, domestic fuel costs often follow, driving inflation and increasing the cost of living. This contradiction—earning more from crude exports while paying more for energy consumption—continues to expose gaps in Nigeria's energy framework.

The Refining Question and Energy Security

This moment underscores a long-standing challenge: limited domestic refining capacity.

While initiatives such as the Dangote Refinery signal progress toward self-sufficiency, the broader energy system remains vulnerable to external shocks. Without sustained reforms and investments in refining, gas development, and renewable energy, Nigeria will continue to experience this cycle of external dependency.



A Strategic Opening in Global Markets Amid the uncertainty lies a significant opportunity.

As Middle Eastern supply becomes constrained, global buyers are actively seeking alternative sources of crude. Nigeria is well-positioned to respond particularly within the Atlantic Basin if production levels remain stable and export systems function efficiently.

European and Asian markets, facing potential supply disruptions, could increasingly turn to Nigerian crude. This creates an opening for Nigeria to strengthen its role as a reliable energy partner in a shifting global landscape.

Beyond Oil: A Turning Point for Energy Policy

The current crisis is accelerating a broader global rethink of energy security.

Institutions such as the International Energy Agency have highlighted the scale of ongoing disruptions, prompting countries to diversify energy sources and invest more aggressively in alternatives. For Nigeria, this is both a warning and an opportunity: a warning that long-term reliance on oil may be unsustainable, and an opportunity to reposition through strategic investment in gas and renewable energy.

The Diplomatic Dimension Beyond economics, the crisis carries important diplomatic implications.

As global institutions face increasing strain,

countries like Nigeria have an opportunity to play a more assertive role. With its history in peacekeeping and mediation, Nigeria can position itself as a stabilising voice within the Global South—advocating for de-escalation, respect for international law, and protection of critical energy routes.

The Role of Parliament

For lawmakers, this moment demands both external engagement and internal action.

Parliamentary diplomacy through inter-parliamentary unions and bilateral engagements offers a platform to shape global discourse and reinforce Nigeria's strategic interests.

At home, however, the priority is clear: oversight and reform.

“Leadership is measured not by proximity to conflict, but by clarity of response.”

Drawing from global best practices, including frameworks such as those highlighted in parliamentary peacebuilding initiatives, legislatures play a critical role in transforming policy into durable systems. For Nigeria, this means:

Strengthening oversight of oil revenue management

Ensuring transparency and accountability in windfall gains
Accelerating reforms in refining and energy infrastructure
Building legislative frameworks that reduce vulnerability to external shocks
A Defining Moment for Leadership

History shows that global crises reshape nations.

From the oil shocks of the 1970s to the financial crisis of 2008, moments of disruption have redefined economic systems and political alignments. The current conflict may do the same particularly in energy security and global alliances.

For Nigeria, the impact is already underway.

The real question is whether the country will remain a passive observer of global events or emerge as a strategic actor capable of turning disruption into direction.

Conclusion: From Exposure to Strategy

In times of global uncertainty, leadership is measured not by proximity to conflict, but by clarity of response. Nigeria stands at a crossroads between opportunity and vulnerability, between dependence and transformation.

The decisions taken now by government and parliament alike will determine whether this crisis becomes another external shock to absorb or a turning point toward resilience,

REFORMING NIGERIA'S PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES: LESSONS FROM COMPARATIVE PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE

Kamoru Ogunlana Esq., CNA

1.0 Introduction

Section 62(1) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 (as amended) empowers the Nigeria's National Assembly to appoint committees for such special and general purpose as it deems fit. Parliamentary committees are created to assist parliaments to discharge their primary functions of lawmaking, representation, and overseeing government MDAs.

Committees constitute the operational backbone of modern parliaments. In established democracies, committees are deliberately designed to promote efficiency, specialisation, accountability, and coordination, particularly in bicameral parliaments. A comparative examination of committees in selected jurisdictions with bicameral parliament, provides clear benchmarks for reforming Nigeria's National Assembly committees.

This comparative analysis demonstrates that Nigeria's challenges are neither unique nor insurmountable. Rather, they reflect structural and procedural gaps that can be addressed through deliberate alignment with tested international models.

2.0 Comparative Committee Structures and Practices

2.1 Committee Numbers and Scope

The number of ministerial portfolios (MDAs) a country establishes is not fixed by any universal rule - it is shaped by a mix of political, constitutional, administrative and practical considerations. Though most parliaments, by law or convention, enjoy autonomy from the executive arm of government, parliaments often mirror or respond to the executive structure when creating their own committees, but not always in a one-to-one way.

The US government has 15 Cabinet Departments, while the US Congress has 36 Standing Committees (House of Reps 20 and Senate 16); the United Kingdom government has between 20 main Departments while the UK Parliament has 20 Departmental Select Committees (1 per major Department); Australian government has 23 Cabinet Ministers, while the Australian Parliament maintains about 28 Standing Committees (across the Senate and the House); Canadian government has between 30 - 40 Ministers while the Canadian Parliament has 25 Standing Committees; Indian government has between 70 - 80 Ministerial portfolios while the Indian Parliament has 24 Departmental related Standing Committees (many Ministries, fewer committees - the committees supervise multiple Ministries). Also, the German government has between 15 -17 Federal Ministries while the



German Parliament (Bundestag) has about 24 Standing Committees; South African government has 30 Ministries while the South African Parliament has exactly 30 portfolio committees (each Ministry has one portfolio Committee); the Kenyan government has 21 Ministries while the National Assembly has between 18-20 Departmental related Committees.

The Federal Government of Nigeria has over 36 Ministries while the National Assembly has about 243 Standing Committees. This far exceeds international norms. For Nigeria's National Assembly, the key lesson is streamlining ministries, reducing overlaps, and strengthening parliamentary committees so they are fewer, more specialised, and more capable of holding the executive accountable. Ultimately, efficiency comes from alignment, clarity and institutional discipline - not size or number.

2.2 Subcommittee Systems

In the US Congress, subcommittees are essential because Congress deals with a huge number of bills and responsibilities. The structure of the US Congress - with relatively few standing committees but many specialised subcommittees - offers a clear lesson for Nigeria's National Assembly: it is more effective to consolidate oversight at the top and specialise at the lower levels. Instead of maintaining many standing committees (often with overlapping mandate), Nigeria could reduce and rationalise its standing committees into broader sector-based ones, then create well-resourced subcommittees to handle specific ministries or policy areas. In Nigeria's National Assembly, the subcommittee

system has largely collapsed. Reviving subcommittees would distribute workload, improve focus, and enhance oversight outcomes.

In essence, fewer powerful committees supported by active subcommittees can deliver stronger accountability than many fragmented committees.

2.3 Use of Ad-hoc Committees

Ad-hoc committees provide flexibility within parliament, allowing quick response to emerging issues without overburdening standing committees. Despite institutional differences, their creation, operation and dissolution follow remarkably similar principles globally. In Canada, the UK and Australia, ad-hoc committees are rare, time-bound, and used for inquiries into specific public issues or legislation. Dissolved after completing inquiries. Standing Committees retain primacy in oversight and legislative scrutiny. In South Africa, ad-hoc committees are established and used to investigate specific matters of national importance or special legislative or oversight assignments. In Nigeria ad-hoc committees are frequently established, often overlapping with standing committees. The frequent and uncoordinated creation of ad-hoc committees has led to jurisdictional conflicts with standing committees. Clear rules should restrict ad-hoc committees to exceptional circumstances, preserving the authority and continuity of standing committees.

2.4 Leadership and Membership of Committees

The method of selecting chairpersons and membership of committees generally reflects a

mix of party strength, seniority, expertise and political negotiation. In most parliaments, the chairpersons are selected from the political party with majority seats. The composition of each committee is structured to reflect the strength of each political party in the parliament. In the US Congress, longest-serving majority party members usually become Chair in the Senate. In the UK, Committee chairs are elected by the whole House. In Kenya, Chairs and Vice-Chairs are elected by committee members. However, some committees, i. e. Public Accounts and Public Petitions, are chaired by opposition. In India, the Presiding Officers nominate membership and appoint chairs of committee.

In Nigeria's National Assembly, committee members are appointed by the Presiding Officers of the two Chambers. Chairs are also appointed (not elected), with emphasis on party dominance and Federal Character principle. Nigeria's National Assembly should adopt practices such as electing committee chairs as in the UK and Kenya; and aligning committee assignments more closely with membership expertise and experience as in the US Congress. This would reduce the dominance of Presiding Officers in appointment while promoting independence, continuity and bipartisan cooperation.

2.5 Public Engagement

Public engagement in parliamentary committee work is treated as a legal and procedural obligation rather than a discretionary courtesy. In the US Congress, committees are generally required by the Chamber rules to hold open hearings, and receive written submissions, enabling citizens, experts, and civil society to shape legislation. The UK Parliament, through its select committees, operates an advanced outreach model grounded in Standing Orders and practices such as public calls for evidence, e-petitions (under the UK Petitions Act 2015), and televised hearings.

In Africa, Kenya and South Africa provide particularly relevant models: the Constitution of Kenya 2010 expressly obligates Parliament to "facilitate public participation and involvement.". Also, the Constitution of South Africa similarly mandates the National Assembly to ensure public involvement in its processes, a provision actively implemented through extensive provincial hearings and stakeholder consultations by committees. By contrast, Nigeria's National Assembly provides for public hearings in its Standing Orders, but these are often inconsistently applied, limited in outreach, and weakly enforced in law. A key reform lesson is the need to elevate public participation from procedural practice to a constitutional or statutory obligation.

2.6 Cooperation of Committees in Bicameral Parliaments

In a bicameral parliament, formal committee-level cooperation between the two Chambers is often limited, but various institutional linkages exist to ensure coordination, consistency and complementarity. These linkages take several recognisable forms. The Parliament of India uses Department -related Standing Committees that are joint bodies of both Chambers (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha). Members from both Houses sit together in a single committee to oversee a major sector or Ministry. This creates a unified scrutiny,

shared expertise and a single line of engagement with the executive.

Nigeria's National Assembly stands out for having weak formalised linkages, relying mainly on Conference committees. The key lesson is to move away from duplicating work between the Senate and House Committees and instead, institutionalise joint, sector-based committees (e.g. finance, petroleum, defence, public accounts, appropriation). This would reduce rivalry and inconsistencies between the two Chambers, and improve policy coherence. In essence, Nigeria can achieve more effective and less costly oversight by integrating committee work in both Chambers where interests overlap.

2.7 Attendance and Quorum of Committee Meeting

Attendance and quorum in Committee meetings are treated as core obligations tied to legislative credibility, not optional participation.

In the US Congress and UK parliament, committees can often take evidence with lower quorum but require a full quorum for formal decisions. This quorum rule allows committees to function without paralysis while still ensuring legitimacy. This flexibility ensures continuity of work even when attendance fluctuates. Nigeria can adopt this dual-quorum model to prevent delays while preserving procedural integrity.

Nigeria's National Assembly committee system is larger and less coordinated than global best practices. Comparative models from countries like the US, UK, and South Africa show that fewer, more specialised committees with stronger oversight, public participation, and better coordination improve legislative efficiency and accountability.

In the US Congress, persistent absenteeism can lead to loss of influence, removal from committee or denial of leadership role. In the UK, members risk losing committee positions or reputational standing. Nigeria should move beyond weak or symbolic penalties by introducing clear consequences, such as removal from committee or loss of chairmanship.

2.8 Time Allocation and Legislative Priorities

Across bicameral parliaments, plenary sittings and committee meetings are carefully arranged to minimise clashes and maximise legislative efficiency.

In the US Congress, committees meet throughout

the day, often at the same time as plenary. However, there is heavy reliance on committees to reduce pressure on plenary sittings. In the UK parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords meet at different times of the day, their committees meet in the mornings or off-peak hours but rarely during major plenary business. In the Parliament of Canada, the two Chambers sit at slightly different times, committee meetings are held in the morning and evening slots. In the Parliament of Australia, staggered sittings between the House of Representatives and the Senate. Committees meet early morning or evening but extensively during non-sitting weeks. This separation significantly reduces scheduling conflicts. In South Africa, the two Chambers have separate programmed sittings. Committees often meet in parallel and also have dedicated Committee days/weeks. There is a clear division between plenary and Committee time. However, parliamentary rules prioritise Committee meetings, with plenary meetings structured around Committee schedules.

In Nigeria's National Assembly, the House and Senate sit independently. Plenary is usually held in the morning. Committees meet after plenary, in the afternoon or on non-sitting days. Both Chambers typically commence plenary sittings around 11:00 a.m. and adjourn by 4:00 p.m., leaving very little time for committees to meet, especially on sitting days. Adopting dedicated committee days and restructuring plenary schedules would align Nigeria with international norms and enhance committee productivity.

2.9 Allocation of Meeting Rooms

Generally, committee meeting spaces are dedicated rooms assigned to specific committees, though there are some variations depending on the institution and circumstances. In the US Congress, committees are allocated dedicated meeting rooms. In the UK parliament, select committees often use regularly assigned rooms, but there is more centralised scheduling, and rooms can be booked as needed rather than permanently owned by a committee. In Nigeria's National Assembly, the absence of sufficient committee meeting rooms and dedicated secretariat offices has significantly constrained committee effectiveness. Committees frequently compete for limited spaces, resulting in postponed meetings, truncated deliberations and reduced productivity.

Committees should have dedicated meeting rooms as in the US Congress. This helps to stabilise the staff of the committee secretariats and gives them a public face for easy location by members, stakeholders and the general public.

3.0 Conclusion

Comparative legislative experience demonstrates that strong committee systems are not accidental; they are the product of deliberate institutional design, sustained investment, and disciplined practice. By aligning its parliamentary committees with international best practices, Nigeria's National Assembly can significantly improve legislative quality, oversight effectiveness, and democratic accountability. Such reforms will ensure that committees function as the true engines of bicameral governance and national development.

UPHOLDING THE VALUES AND WORK ETHICS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Ukpabio Ibora J.

In every democracy, the legislature stands as the soul of governance. Nigeria's National Assembly (NASS), empowered by the Constitution, carry the immense responsibility of lawmaking, representation, and oversight. Behind the lawmakers, however, is a critical but often overlooked force, the National Assembly bureaucracy, the professional engine that keeps the wheels of Parliament turning.

These public servants operate under established rules, procedures, and ethical codes. The National Assembly Service Commission (NASC) was created to ensure that administrative support remains consistent, rational, and insulated from personal whims or political interference. This structure reflects Max Weber's timeless theory of bureaucracy, a system rooted in competence, predictability, and discipline.

Today, troubling signs suggest that these foundational principles are weakening.

Across the NASS workforce, ethical concerns are emerging - nervy management/union relations, internal union disputes, and increasing instances of staff bypassing standard procedures in their interactions with principal officers. Equally worrisome is the unauthorised circulation of confidential or personal information on social media by third parties. Such behaviour violates established codes and undermines the integrity of the institution. The National Assembly is not a marketplace for personal battles; nor is it a trade union enclave. It is a constitutional institution that demands professionalism, decorum, and respect for due process.

The Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN) evolved from Senior/Junior Staff Associations, has contributed significantly to staff welfare over the years. But the current drift toward confrontational activism and sensational narratives risks eroding public confidence in the very institution its members serve. It becomes unfortunate when individuals or groups attempt to cast the National Assembly in negative light for motives inconsistent with institutional progress.

What many overlook is that the National Assembly is home to some of Nigeria's finest public servants, professionals who have represented the country with distinction on international platforms. Their recognition is

earned through competence, not agitation.

This is why industrial tension within NASS must be managed responsibly. The Public Service Rules, Financial Regulations, Code of Ethics in the National Assembly Service, the PASAN Constitution, and relevant circulars all provide clear pathways for resolving grievances. Disrespect, insults, and insubordination are not signs of activism; they are disciplinary offences. When staff or unions bypass established channels, they do more harm than good, both to themselves and to the institution they claim to defend.

That said, the responsibility does not rest on workers alone. The political leadership and management of the National Assembly must be more responsive to staff concerns - and they are commended for efforts made so far. Nigeria's harsh economic climate and evolving workplace expectations demand modern administrative approaches. Staff require continuous capacity building, regular training, and mentorship. Every new

employee must receive thorough orientation on rules, culture, and standard procedures. Crucially, core documents guiding conduct should be easily accessible, personally provided and owned, not merely display on PowerPoint slides during induction programmes.

As the National Assembly stands at a crossroad, it can either rise as one of Africa's leading parliamentary institutions, anchored on the rule of law, professionalism, and a future ready workforce, or it can slip into avoidable internal crises driven by disregard for rules.

The choice before every stakeholder, principal officers, management, unions, and individual staff, is clear: We either build an institution we can be proud of - one admired by all, or we undermine it. We cannot do both.



LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES

IN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Paul Enejo

TYPES OF COMMITTEES



STANDING COMMITTEES

PERMANENT LEGISLATIVE BODY ROUTINELY ENGAGED



AD-HOC COMMITTEES

TEMPORARY LEGISLATIVE BODY CREATED FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSE



SPECIAL COMMITTEES

KEY FUNCTIONS



LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT



BILL DRAFTING & REVIEW



BUDGET SCRUTINY

INVESTIGATIONS & HEARINGS



WITNESS TESTIMONIES



REPORTS & RECOMMENDATIONS



ACCOUNTABILITY & TRANSPARENCY

DECISION-MAKING



DELIBERATIONS



VOTING ON RESOLUTIONS



CONSENSUS BUILDING

CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE





The Senate Chamber, National Assembly

HOW THE LEGISLATURE CONTROLS PUBLIC SPENDING

Akubueze Augustina

When citizens debate government budgets, they often focus on the big numbers like the trillions allocated to sectors such as infrastructure, education, and security. Yet behind these figures lies a lesser-known but critical parliamentary process where lawmakers meticulously examine the executive's financial proposals. This process takes place in what is known as the Committee of Supply.

The origin of the Committee of Supply can be traced to the Westminster parliamentary tradition, which has influenced many Commonwealth countries, including Nigeria. Unlike regular legislative

committees made up of selected members, the Committee of Supply is a committee of the whole House. This means that every legislator participates when the House resolves itself into this committee. At this stage, parliamentary procedures

become less formal, enabling members to engage in detailed, and sometimes intense, debates on government spending plans. It is here that the technical language of the budget intersects with political priorities and public expectations.

“The Committee of Supply is a cornerstone of democratic governance, ensuring that public funds are spent legally, prudently, and in the public interest.”

In Nigeria, the power to control public spending is firmly grounded under Section 80(3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended), which vests the National Assembly of Nigeria with the authority to approve government expenditure through appropriation laws. The Committee of Supply operates within this constitutional framework, serving as a vital stage in the passage of the national budget. Without legislative approval through this process, the executive arm cannot lawfully expend public funds.



The House of Reps Chamber, National Assembly

The Committee of Supply is the stage at which the national budget is examined in depth, often line by line. Lawmakers scrutinize allocations to Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, questioning whether proposed expenditures are necessary, efficient, and justified. Members of the legislature may propose amendments, recommend reductions or increases, or reallocate funds to better reflect legislative judgment and public priorities.

One of the Committee's most significant functions is reinforcing the legislature's "power of the purse"—the foundational democratic principle that elected representatives control public finances. By debating and approving spending proposals, the National Assembly ensures that the executive remains accountable to the people. The process also enhances transparency and strengthens institutional checks and balances.

Unlike permanent standing committees, such as the Committee on Appropriations or various sectoral committees, the

Committee of Supply exists only during budget consideration. Once the House concludes its review and resumes plenary session, the committee is dissolved. Despite its temporary nature, its impact on national policy and governance is substantial.

"The control of the purse is the most powerful instrument by which a representative assembly can maintain its authority."

The Committee of Supply is far more than a parliamentary formality. It is a cornerstone of democratic governance,

ensuring that public funds are spent legally, prudently, and in the public interest. Through this mechanism, legislators shape national priorities and act as vigilant watchdogs over the executive.

In a democracy, the Committee of Supply is far more than a procedural stage in budget consideration. It is a central pillar of democratic accountability, ensuring that public funds are spent lawfully, efficiently, and in the public interest. Through this forum, legislators interrogate executive proposals and align national expenditure with the priorities of the people. As William Ewart Gladstone famously stated, "the control of the purse is the most powerful instrument by which a representative assembly can maintain its authority." The Committee of Supply embodies this principle in practice. By subjecting government spending to rigorous scrutiny, the legislature affirms its constitutional mandate and reinforces the foundational doctrine that no public money shall be spent without the consent of the people's representatives.

THE QUIET POWER OF AD-HOC COMMITTEES

Akubueze Augustina Obiageli



Members of the Ad-hoc Committee on the oversight of the River State Emergency Rule

When most Nigerians watch the proceedings of the National Assembly on television or from the Chamber gallery, they see debates on Bills and Motions. What they rarely see is the quiet engine behind many of the National Assembly's biggest decisions, temporary panels called ad hoc

"Ad hoc committees remain one of the legislature's most effective instruments for problem solving and accountability."

committees.

In the National Assembly, an ad hoc committee is a temporary, task-specific body established to address urgent, extraordinary or sensitive matters that are outside the routine jurisdiction of standing committees. Its primary role is to investigate allegations of misconduct, policy failures, administrative lapses, public petitions or other urgent national

issues.

To do this, an ad hoc committee conducts inquiries, holds public hearings, invites relevant ministries, departments and agencies, receives memoranda and evidence and may carry out oversight inspections. It can also resolve issues that cut across multiple standing committees or handle special legislative assignments such as reviewing major transactions, addressing national security or economic concerns, or examining controversial matters.

Once its work is completed, the ad hoc committee submits a report to the plenary, detailing its findings, recommendations, and proposed legislative or administrative actions. After the report is considered and disposed of, the committee ceases to exist.

Such committees are formed when a matter is urgent, technically complex, cross-sectoral, politically sensitive or nationally significant, typically through a motion adopted in plenary or a directive from the Presiding Officer with approval of the Senate. They are designed to provide focused attention, ensure efficiency, strengthen legislative oversight and demonstrate responsiveness to public concerns. In terms of characteristics, ad hoc Committees are temporary, mandate-specific, time-bound and dissolved upon submission of their report.

Though ad hoc committees exist temporarily, their findings can influence national policy, expose corruption and reshape public institutions. In Nigeria's evolving democracy ad hoc committees have become one of the legislature's most potent tools.

Unlike standing committees, such as those on health, finance or education, which operate throughout a legislative term, ad hoc committees are dissolved once their task is completed. Their existence is backed by Section 60 of the 1999 Constitution as amended, which gives each chamber the authority to regulate its internal procedures as well as the Standing Orders/Rules of the Senate and the House.

Perhaps the most visible role of ad hoc committees is investigation. Over the years, they have been tasked with probing fuel subsidy scandals, electoral disputes, security failures and allegations of financial mismanagement in government agencies. Through document reviews and testimonies from government officials, industry experts and civil society groups, these committees compile reports that often dominate headlines and influence executive action. In some cases, their findings have led to policy reforms, prosecutions, and administrative sanctions.

“Though ad hoc committees exist temporarily, their findings can influence national policy, expose corruption and reshape public institutions.”

Ad hoc committees are also formed when lawmakers face complex policy issues that require specialised scrutiny. For major constitutional amendments, sweeping reforms, or highly technical bills, the National Assembly may set up a dedicated panel to study proposals in depth. These committees engage experts where necessary, consult stakeholders and gather public input before making their recommendations. Their reports often shape how lawmakers vote and how policies are ultimately implemented.

Nigeria has faced unexpected challenges from economic recessions and public health emergencies to infrastructure failures and security crises. In such moments, ad hoc committees offer flexibility. Lawmakers can quickly assemble a panel to assess the situation, investigate causes, and propose solutions. This ability to respond rapidly to emerging national issues makes ad hoc committees an essential tool in times of crisis.

Ad hoc committees are temporary investigative panels that quietly power the National Assembly's oversight—probing urgent national issues, exposing misconduct, and shaping policy before dissolving once their mandate is fulfilled.

While standing committees regularly monitor ministries and agencies, ad hoc committees often dig deeper into specific programmes, contracts or institutions. Their focused mandate allows for thorough investigations, sometimes uncovering systemic weaknesses or corruption. Their recommendations can trigger reforms, disciplinary actions or changes in policy direction, strengthening legislative oversight of the executive branch.

Members of ad hoc committees are appointed by the Senate President or the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as the case may be. The leadership and membership of such committees typically reflect party representation and geopolitical or regional balance. Legislators are supported by legislative staff, researchers and subject matter experts who analyse evidences and draft reports.

Examples of Ad Hoc Committees in the 10th Assembly include investigative and oversight committees, such as those on fuel subsidy removal, oil theft, the Dangote Refinery–NNPC rift, electricity tariff hikes, job racketeering in federal agencies, agricultural subsidies and intervention funds (2015–2025), concessionaire-operated ports (2006–2025), pre-shipment inspections and non-repatriation of crude oil proceeds, mineral exploitation and anti-money laundering and rising insecurity in the FCT; as well as legislative and constitutional committees on constitution review and alteration and the harmonisation and amendment of the Electoral Act.

These committees are dissolved once they submit their reports and complete their mandates, but their influence often extends far beyond their brief lifespan.

Despite their temporary nature, ad hoc committees have played a lasting role in Nigeria's democratic journey. They provide a platform for transparency, public participation and accountability. By investigating critical issues and proposing reforms, they help strengthen public trust in the National Assembly.

In a political system often criticised for opacity and partisanship, these quiet panels offer a glimpse of the legislature at work, systematic, investigative and responsive. In Nigeria's complex democracy, ad hoc committees remain one of legislature's most effective instruments for problem solving and accountability, proof that sometimes the most important work happens behind the scenes.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RENEWABLE ENERGY:

High-Level Dissemination
Session on the Enhanced Solar
Energy TVET Curriculum in Nigeria



Shedding Light on Nigeria's Renewable Energy Potentials

Nwokocha Okwudili

The National Assembly Complex, Abuja, was abuzz with activity on Tuesday, February 24, 2026, as the Committee on Renewable Energy convened an investigative hearing to examine the country's renewable energy sector. The hearing, chaired by Hon. Afam Victor Ogene, aimed to address pressing issues hindering the growth of renewable energy in Nigeria and explore opportunities for sustainable development.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Ogene highlighted the committee's three key mandates: investigating the domiciliation of green energy projects, examining foreign grants and government investments in the sector, and assessing the utilization of renewable energy in Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). The committee's inquiry is expected to shed light on the prevalence of dysfunctional streetlights, procurement practices, and the overall value for public investment in the renewable energy sector.

The Honorable Speaker, House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, PhD, GCON, emphasized the importance of the hearing, citing the need for sustainable energy solutions to address Nigeria's power challenges and mitigate the impact of climate change. He noted that the 10th Assembly had created the Committee on Renewable Energy to oversee the implementation of the Electricity Act and promote the development of renewable energy in Nigeria.

The proposed resolution for MDAs to source 50% of their power needs from

renewable energy sources presents a significant opportunity for Nigeria to attract investments, stimulate job creation, and enhance sustainability in the electricity sector. As the nation strives to achieve a more diversified energy mix, reduced reliance on traditional sources, and a more resilient energy infrastructure, this hearing marks a crucial step towards realizing these goals.

"Nigeria must build a more diversified energy mix and a more resilient energy infrastructure."

The committee's efforts to investigate and address the challenges facing the renewable energy sector are commendable, and its findings are expected to inform policy decisions and drive sustainable development in Nigeria. As the nation looks to the future, it is imperative that stakeholders collaborate to ensure transparent and effective procurement processes, and contribute to Nigeria's sustainable development.

Hon. Ogene while speaking at the opening ceremony had disclosed further: "It's important to note that the investigation of the 'Grants and Investments' for the development of the renewable energy sector in Nigeria since 2015, as mandated

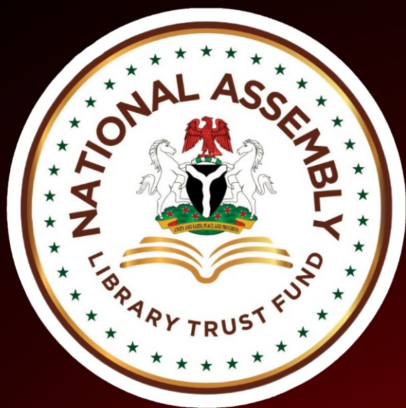
by the House on Thursday June 6, 2024, has been ongoing, but was halted at a time to address the uncooperative tendencies by some Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of government who were directly involved with dealings in investment, procurement, and receipt of grants for the development of the renewable energy sector.

"So, the committee has consolidated the three assignments to optimize time and resources, recognizing their inter-connectedness and significance to Nigeria's energy security and socio-economic development. "For instance, if you look around you, whether in the cities where some of us reside or our rural areas, you will most likely notice that many of the streetlights installed for the good of the people go bad less than six months after installation. Why is it so?

Do streetlights in Europe and other parts of the world suffer the same fate? What could be responsible for this economic waste, considering the high cost of procurement and installation of these dysfunctional streetlights to the nation? "These issues are indeed critical. The prevalence of dysfunctional streetlights, often failing shortly after installation, raises concerns about procurement practices, maintenance, and the overall value for public investment. Comparing our infrastructure to global standards, such as those in Europe, highlights potential inefficiencies and areas for improvement."

He emphasized that addressing these challenges was crucial to curbing economic waste and ensuring sustainable development in the nation.

The Speaker was represented by Rt. Hon. Ibrahim Abdullahi Halims, Deputy Leader, House of Representatives.



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LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES AS PILLARS OF OVERSIGHT AND EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Edwina-ifioke Ndarake & Utibe Ukpogor

Legislative committees constitute the operational backbone of parliamentary systems across the world. While plenary sittings often command public visibility, the substantive work of law-making, policy scrutiny, budget examination and oversight of Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) is largely undertaken within committees. In Nigeria, the authority of legislative committees is grounded in Sections 62 and 88 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) and further elaborated through the Standing Orders of the Senate and the House of Representatives, as well as those of State Houses of Assembly.

Committees enhance legislative efficiency by enabling specialisation across critical sectors such as health, finance, education, security and infrastructure. Through this system, lawmakers are able to develop subject-matter expertise, engage more rigorously with policy issues and contribute to informed decision-making.

This division of labour not only improves the quality of legislative output but also ensures that the increasing complexity of governance is managed with the required technical depth.

A core function of legislative committees is oversight, which serves as a fundamental mechanism for ensuring executive accountability. Through oversight activities, committees monitor the implementation of laws, evaluate government programmes and scrutinise public expenditure. This function is essential in promoting transparency, preventing misuse of public resources and ensuring that government policies deliver intended outcomes. Committees also provide an institutional platform for stakeholder engagement, allowing civil society organisations, experts and citizens to contribute to the legislative process through public hearings and consultations.

In addition to oversight, committees play a central role in the legislative process itself. Bills are typically referred to relevant committees after second reading for detailed clause-by-clause consideration, public input and technical refinement. Committees may propose amendments, harmonise conflicting provisions and submit reports to the plenary for final consideration. This process ensures

that legislation is subjected to rigorous scrutiny before enactment.

Through oversight activities, committees monitor the implementation of laws, evaluate government programmes and scrutinise public expenditure. This function is essential in promoting transparency, preventing misuse of public resources and ensuring that government policies deliver intended outcomes.

A practical illustration of committee effectiveness can be observed in the work of the Health Committee of the Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly. In the current legislative cycle, the Committee undertook an unscheduled oversight visit to the State Ministry of Health and the State Emergency Operations Centre to assess compliance with the State Health Sector Action Plan and evaluate service delivery standards.

Led by its Chairman, Hon. Moses Essien, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of infrastructural development, administrative processes, financial management practices and emergency

Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment in institutional capacity, including staff training, research support and improved coordination between the legislature and the executive.

healthcare capacity. The oversight exercise highlighted notable reforms within the Ministry, including the deployment of digital attendance systems, installation of closed-circuit television for monitoring, modernisation of office infrastructure and the provision of a 24-hour solar-powered electricity supply.

The Committee also assessed the performance of the State Free Ambulance Emergency Services, which reportedly saved 1,799 lives between March and December 2025. Furthermore, it evaluated the operational readiness of the Emergency Operations Centre, including its fleet of ambulances equipped for intensive care, advanced cardiac life support and basic life support services. These findings underscore the tangible impact of effective legislative oversight on service delivery and public welfare.

Beyond assessment, the Committee engaged in forward-looking policy advocacy. It called for increased budgetary allocation to the health sector in line with the 15 per cent benchmark set by the 2001 Abuja Declaration, while also consulting stakeholders on proposals to establish specialised health institutions, including an Eye Hospital, a Cancer Centre and teaching hospitals for Akwa Ibom State University. Such engagements demonstrate the role of committees not only as oversight bodies but also as catalysts for policy innovation and development planning.

Notwithstanding these contributions, legislative committees often face challenges such as limited technical capacity, resource constraints and delays in the implementation of their recommendations. Addressing these challenges requires sustained investment in institutional capacity, including staff training, research support and improved coordination between the legislature and the executive.

In conclusion, legislative committees remain indispensable to democratic governance. By combining oversight, legislative scrutiny and stakeholder engagement, they ensure that public policies are effectively implemented and aligned with the needs of citizens. Their work, though frequently conducted outside the public spotlight, is central to promoting accountability, enhancing governance outcomes and strengthening democratic institutions in Nigeria.

BEYOND RHETORIC: 10TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY'S BOLD PUSH FOR BUDGET DISCIPLINE AND END TO ABANDONED PROJECTS

Chizobam Anunkor

For two days at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja, Nigeria's budgeting system came under intense review. The message was clear and urgent: the country must link its annual budgets to a realistic national development plan or continue wasting resources on over 56,000 abandoned projects.

This was the central focus of the National Policy Dialogue on Planning and Budgeting, convened by the Joint Committee on National Planning and Economic Development. The dialogue brought together key stakeholders from the Executive, Legislature, and economic policy space to address long-standing weaknesses in Nigeria's planning and budgeting system.

The Dialogue: Purpose and Context

Held on April 15–16, 2026, at the National Assembly Complex, the event was organised in collaboration with:

- Office of the Vice President
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of National Planning
- Budget Office of the Federation

Themed “The Imperatives of National Development Plan for Effective Budgeting System and Sustainable Growth of the Nigerian Economy,” the dialogue focused on aligning planning with budgeting to drive measurable national development.

The Chairman of the Joint Committee, Ibrahim Ayokunle Isiaka, emphasised the urgency: “We cannot continue on a business-as-usual trajectory. Growth must be deliberate, structured, and tied to an implementable national plan.”

With GDP growth at 3.54% against a population growth rate of 2.7%, Nigeria risks falling further behind its \$1 trillion economy target unless reforms are implemented.

Key Messages from Stakeholders

Representing the Vice President, Special Adviser on Economic Affairs Tope Fasua stressed the need to rethink budgeting systems to improve service delivery and economic growth.

Similarly, Hon. Clement Jimbo, Deputy Chairman of the House Committee on Budget and National Planning, highlighted the importance of planning discipline:

“If you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.”

He acknowledged the limitations of the current envelope budgeting system and proposed a gradual transition to performance-based budgeting, while noting that full zero-based budgeting may be too demanding for over 1,000 MDAs.

The Core Problem: A Broken System

The keynote speaker, Ben Akabueze, delivered a frank diagnosis:

Nigeria is not lacking ideas, the real challenge is implementation. He revealed that over 56,000 government projects remain uncompleted nationwide, a direct result of systemic failures in planning and budgeting.

Five Major Gaps and Practical Solutions

1. Disconnect Between Planning and Budgeting

Problem: Plans and budgets are prepared by different institutions with little coordination.

Solution: Amend the Fiscal Responsibility Act to ensure only projects in the National Development Plan with proper costing are included in budgets.

2. Unrealistic Revenue Projections

Problem: Overestimated revenues lead to underfunded budgets and abandoned projects.

Solution: Establish a Revenue Assumptions Council and pilot zero-based budgeting in key MDAs.

3. Poor Project Preparation

Problem: Projects are included without designs, approvals, or feasibility studies.

Solution: Introduce a mandatory Project Readiness Filter — “No design, no funding.”

4. Weak Monitoring and Accountability

Problem: Lack of transparency and irregular fund releases.

Solution:

Link GIFMIS to a public dashboard
Publish quarterly performance reports
Tie funding to verified project milestones

5. Lack of Coordination Across Government Levels

Problem: Poor alignment between federal, state, and local budgets.

Solution: Strengthen coordination through the National Economic Council and align FAAC allocations with development goals.

The Tax Reality

Akabueze also highlighted Nigeria's low tax-to-GDP ratio (below 10%, compared to Africa's 16% average), stressing that tax reforms are unavoidable:

“Reforms may be difficult, but they are necessary to create a stable and predictable economic environment.”

From Dialogue to Action: What the 10th Assembly Is Doing

The significance of this dialogue lies in its legislative backing. The National Assembly is already moving toward concrete reforms:

1. Strengthening the Law

Amendments to the Fiscal Responsibility Act will ensure that only approved and planned projects receive funding.

2. Establishing a Project Readiness Secretariat

This will screen all capital projects before inclusion in the budget.

3. Enhancing Transparency

A public dashboard will track all ongoing and abandoned projects, allowing citizens to monitor progress.

4. Improving Budget Alignment

Pre-budget retreats between the Executive and Legislature will ensure agreement on key assumptions before budget preparation.

5. Testing New Budgeting Models

Pilot zero-based budgeting in selected MDAs for the 2027 budget cycle.

Conclusion: A Shift from Talk to Results

Nigeria has held many policy dialogues in the past, but this initiative stands out because of legislative ownership. The body responsible for approving the budget is now actively shaping how it is prepared and implemented.

Closing message captured the essence of the reform effort:

“Budgets must move from annual rituals to instruments of development.”

If these reforms are fully implemented—legal backing, project screening, and transparency mechanisms—Nigeria may finally achieve a budgeting system where every naira is tied to a planned, measurable, and deliverable outcome. The 10th National Assembly has laid out the blueprint. The next step is execution.



SCREENING NIGERIAN DIPLOMATS: THE WORKINGS OF SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Ukpabio Ibora J.

In every nation's diplomatic architecture, ambassadors stand as the face, voice, and conscience of the state abroad. They negotiate interests, protect citizens, build partnerships, and project national identity. In Nigeria, however, ambassadors are not made by executive nomination alone. Their emergence reflects a constitutionally grounded process of legislative scrutiny, embodied in the work of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs.

Behind each ambassadorial posting lies a structured confirmation system designed to ensure that those entrusted with representing Nigeria possess the competence, integrity, and diplomatic temperament the role demands.

Under Section 171(4) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), "an appointment to the office of an Ambassador, High Commissioner, or other Principal Representatives of Nigeria abroad shall not take effect unless the appointment is

confirmed by the Senate." This provision establishes an important constitutional balance: while the President nominates, the Senate screens and confirms nominees.

Within the Senate, this responsibility rests with the Committee on Foreign Affairs made up of 32 members selected across party lines and supported by professional administrative staff led by the Committee Clerk. Once the President transmits ambassadorial nominations to the Senate, they are formally referred to the Committee for screening and recommendation in accordance with Senate Standing Orders.

This stage marks the transition from nomination to evaluation, the point at which potential envoys are examined not merely as individuals of achievement, but as future custodians of Nigeria's international presence.

The Committee's work begins long before nominees appear in person. Through the Office of the Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters

(Senate), it requests a comprehensive portfolio of documentation: curriculum vitae, academic credentials, tax compliance records, security clearances, police fingerprint reports, and Code of Conduct Bureau acknowledgement.

This documentary phase serves a dual purpose. It verifies qualifications and legal compliance, but it also protects institutional credibility. Diplomacy, after all, is an arena where reputational risk travels quickly across borders.

Only after a thorough review of these materials does the Committee invite nominees for physical screening.

The Committee Screening Room: Where Diplomats Are Tested

Committee screenings are formal yet probing. Attendance is open not only to Committee members but to all Senators who wish to participate, reinforcing the collective ownership of Nigeria's diplomatic representation.

Each nominee undergoes a structured



review of their personal background and professional trajectory. Dates of birth and states of origin are verified, and educational institutions and qualifications are checked for consistency. Career progression across the public and private sectors is assessed, alongside recognitions, leadership roles, and notable achievements. Beyond credentials, the Committee also looks for something less tangible but equally vital: diplomatic disposition.

Nominees respond to questions regarding their experience in governance, international engagement, and policy implementation. They are expected to demonstrate an understanding of Nigeria's foreign policy priorities and the responsibilities inherent in representing the country abroad. Articulatness, composure, and clarity of thought are closely observed. The process is as much about temperament as it is about the résumé.

In reaching its findings, the Committee applies several benchmarks. Nominees must have cleared security vetting by the Department of State Services and demonstrated compliance with the Code of Conduct requirements. No credible petitions or adverse reports should be pending against them.

Equally important are professional stature and depth of experience. Many nominees come from senior ranks of public service, diplomacy, academia, the military, or the private sector. The Committee evaluates whether these careers demonstrate leadership, judgment, and national service consistent with ambassadorial responsibility.

Where satisfied, the Committee recommends confirmation to the Senate

If the Senate approves, its resolution is transmitted to the President, who then completes executive actions and determines diplomatic posting.

At that moment, the nominee's journey reaches its turning point, marking a transformation from citizen to envoy, from national participant to international representative.

in plenary. If the Senate approves, its resolution is transmitted to the President, who then completes executive actions and determines diplomatic posting.

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from national participant to international representative.

The Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs activities may not make headlines or draw public attention, yet its influence is profound. By scrutinizing ambassadorial nominees, it safeguards the quality of Nigeria's diplomatic corps and reinforces constitutional oversight over foreign representation.

In a world where diplomacy shapes trade, security cooperation, migration policy, and geopolitical alignment, the credibility of ambassadors directly affects national interests. The Committee's work therefore resonates far beyond the screening room into embassies, negotiations, and international forums where Nigeria's voice is heard.

The making of an ambassador in Nigeria is neither ceremonial nor automatic. It is a deliberate institutional process - one that blends executive choice with legislative scrutiny, professional achievement with public accountability.





THE COMMITTEE SYSTEM: THE STRATEGIC CORE OF LEGISLATIVE EXCELLENCE IN THE 10TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Oyetayo Afolabi

In assessing the performance and trajectory of the 10th National Assembly, it is imperative to situate the committee system at the centre of legislative effectiveness. While plenary sittings command public visibility and constitutional finality, it is within committees that the most rigorous dimensions of lawmaking and oversight occur. Committees are where policy proposals are interrogated line by line, fiscal allocations are scrutinised against national priorities, and executive implementation is subjected to structured evaluation. In practical and institutional terms, they constitute the operational core of parliamentary governance.

The governance environment within which the 10th National Assembly operates is characterised by fiscal constraints, economic recalibration, security pressures, and heightened citizen expectations. These realities demand legislative engagement that is not merely reactive, but technically informed and strategically structured. The committee system provides the framework for such engagement. By allocating sector-specific mandates across standing, ad hoc, and joint committees, the National Assembly ensures depth of focus, continuity of attention, and the development of subject matter familiarity among Members.

Comparative legislative scholarship consistently affirms that parliaments with strong committee structures demonstrate greater policy coherence, more credible oversight outcomes, and higher institutional productivity. This is not incidental. Specialisation reduces superficial debate and strengthens analytical rigour. Within the 10th National Assembly, committee deliberations have increasingly shaped the refinement of bills, strengthened regulatory frameworks, and improved the clarity of legislative intent before measures reach plenary consideration.

Oversight remains one of the most consequential dimensions of committee activity. Through budget defence sessions, investigative hearings, compliance reviews, and performance assessments of Ministries, Departments and Agencies, committees

provide structured platforms for evaluating public expenditure and policy delivery. In a period of constrained resources, such scrutiny is indispensable. Findings from committee proceedings frequently inform legislative recommendations, administrative adjustments and, where necessary, statutory amendments. In this respect, committees serve not merely as supervisory entities, but as instruments for performance optimisation within the broader governance system.

Equally significant is the participatory architecture embedded within committee operations. Public hearings and consultative engagements extend the legislative space beyond elected officials to include civil society organisations, professional associations, regulatory bodies, and technical experts. Evidence from democratic governance studies indicates that policies subjected to structured stakeholder engagement enjoy greater legitimacy, improved compliance, and enhanced sustainability. By institutionalising inclusive processes, committees reinforce the principle that effective legislation must be informed by both technical expertise and societal realities.

“Committees are the intellectual engine of democracy—where political will meets technical competence for the service of the nation.”

From an administrative perspective, the performance of committees is inseparable from the institutional capacity of the legislative bureaucracy. Clerks, legal advisers, researchers, and committee secretariats provide procedural guidance, analytical support, and institutional memory. Their role ensures continuity across legislative sessions and safeguards the integrity of committee processes. As reform initiatives and complex regulatory

matters expand under the 10th National Assembly, the demand for high-quality research support and data-driven analysis has intensified. Sustained investment in bureaucratic competence therefore remains a strategic priority.

Capacity development is equally central to sustaining committee effectiveness. Governance challenges increasingly span fiscal sustainability, digital transformation, climate adaptation, industrial development, and national security. Continuous professional development, peer learning, and exposure to comparative parliamentary practices enhance Members’ ability to interpret technical data, frame strategic inquiries, and formulate evidence-informed recommendations. In an era defined by complexity, committees must anticipate policy risks and engage proactively rather than respond retrospectively.

Ultimately, the enduring strength of the 10th National Assembly will not be measured solely by the volume of legislation enacted, but by the quality of scrutiny applied, the depth of oversight exercised, and the institutional resilience sustained through its committees. Strengthening committee autonomy, enhancing research capacity, institutionalising systematic follow-up mechanisms, and reinforcing administrative professionalism are therefore strategic imperatives. These are not abstract aspirations, but practical requirements for credible and accountable governance.

As the National Assembly continues to refine its processes and deepen its institutional culture, the committee system remains the clearest expression of legislative seriousness. Its effectiveness depends not only on political will, but on disciplined procedure, technical competence, and administrative continuity. Sustaining these foundations is a collective responsibility. In doing so, the 10th National Assembly affirms its commitment to a legislature that is not only visible in plenary, but rigorous in detail, responsive in oversight, and resilient in structure. It is within the steady, methodical work of committees that democratic accountability is strengthened and national progress is secured.

BREAKING THE CHAINS OF NEGLECT: HOUSE COMMITTEE PUSHES FOR RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT OF HOST COMMUNITIES

Anunkor Chizobam N., Felix Ayewa Eraolei & Uke Augustine



The House of Representatives Committee on Host Communities was established during the 9th Assembly, following the enactment of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in August 2021. Its creation marked a significant step in Nigeria's efforts to address the persistent challenges confronting oil and gas host communities, which have long endured environmental degradation and socio-economic neglect. The Committee reflects a deliberate institutional response to the need for inclusive and sustained attention to the welfare of these communities.

Under the chairmanship of Hon. Dumnamene R. Dekor, the Committee has pursued its mandate with notable commitment, positioning itself as a critical platform for advancing the rights and interests of oil-bearing communities across the country.

Functions of the Committee

The Committee's functions are broad and responsive to the complexities of host community concerns. Central to its mandate is the protection of the rights and welfare of oil-producing communities, including advocacy for fair compensation, environmental remediation, and sustainable socio-economic development.

It also ensures the implementation of agreements between host communities and oil companies, while exercising oversight over the utilisation of the 13 per cent derivation funds to guarantee that such resources are deployed for the intended benefit of the communities.

In addition, the Committee provides a formal channel for receiving and addressing petitions from host communities, thereby strengthening accountability and access to redress. It monitors the management of Host Communities Development Trusts (HCDTs)

to ensure transparency and effectiveness, and oversees the Hydrocarbon Pollution Remediation Project (HYPREP) to promote environmental restoration in impacted areas. The 3% OPEX Compliance

A major focus of the Committee's work is the enforcement of the statutory requirement for oil companies to allocate three per cent of their annual operating expenditure (OPEX) to HCDTs. This provision of the PIA is intended to fund critical development initiatives in host communities, including education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

Notwithstanding this legal obligation, compliance has been uneven, with some international oil companies citing interpretational disputes and concerns over fund management. In response, the Committee has engaged closely with the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission (NUPRC) to address these challenges and ensure adherence to the law.

Impact of Non-Compliance

The consequences of non-compliance are far-reaching. Persistent underdevelopment in host communities continues to fuel poverty and unemployment, while inadequate environmental remediation exacerbates ecological damage and undermines livelihoods.

These conditions have, in turn, contributed

to social unrest and instability in oil-producing regions, with broader implications for national economic growth and equity.

Efforts and Achievements

Despite these challenges, the Committee has recorded notable achievements. It has facilitated the establishment of a harmonised Host Communities Executive, helping to resolve leadership disputes and foster unity among stakeholders.

Through collaboration with civil society and non-governmental organisations, the committee has strengthened transparency and accountability in the management of community funds.

Furthermore, its interventions have contributed to improved compliance with PIA provisions and enhanced governance of HCDTs.

The House of Representatives Committee on Host Communities remains steadfast in its commitment to promoting equity, accountability and sustainable development. Its ongoing efforts underscore the National Assembly's resolve to ensure that host communities are not only recognised as critical stakeholders in the petroleum sector but are also accorded the rights and opportunities necessary for their long-term prosperity.





Understanding The Conference Committee in the National Assembly: Procedure and Practice in the Senate and House of Representatives

Fineman, Guy Goyei

In the course of the legislative process, differences sometimes arise between the versions of a bill passed by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Nigeria. When this happens, the Constitution and legislative procedure provide a structured mechanism for resolution known as the Conference Committee. This article explains what a conference committee is, why it is constituted, and the procedure for considering its report in plenary of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Definition and Purpose of Conference Committee

A Conference Committee is an ad hoc, bicameral committee constituted to reconcile differences between the Senate and the House of Representatives on a bill that has been passed in differing forms by both chambers. It is not a standing committee but a temporary committee composed of members drawn from both Houses. Members of a conference committee are usually nominated by the leadership, reflecting the subject-matter committee that handled the bill.

The primary purpose of a conference committee is to reconcile conflicting provisions in a bill, to produce a single, agreed text, acceptable to both chambers. It seeks to preserve the original legislative intent while ensuring compliance with the Constitution and to prevent deadlock in the law-making process.

Conference committees are commonly used for high-impact or time-sensitive legislation such as the Appropriation Bill, Constitution Alteration Bills or major reform laws.

Constitutional and Procedural Basis

While the 1999 Constitution (as amended) establishes the bicameral structure of the National Assembly, the operational details for resolving disagreements are governed primarily by legislative practice and procedure as detailed in the respective Standing Orders and Rules of both chambers. The authority derives from the legislative powers vested in the National Assembly under Section 4 of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended), as well as the power granted to each chamber under Section 60 to regulate its own procedure.

“In every mature democracy, compromise is not weakness; it is the mechanism through which stronger and more credible laws emerge.”

Pursuant to this constitutional authority, the Senate and the House of Representatives have made detailed provisions governing conference committees in their respective Standing Orders, which can be found in Order 86(a)–(d) of the Senate Standing Orders, 2023 (as amended), and Rule 12(a)–(d) of the House of Representatives Standing Orders, setting out the procedure for the constitution, composition and operation of Conference Committees between the two Houses.

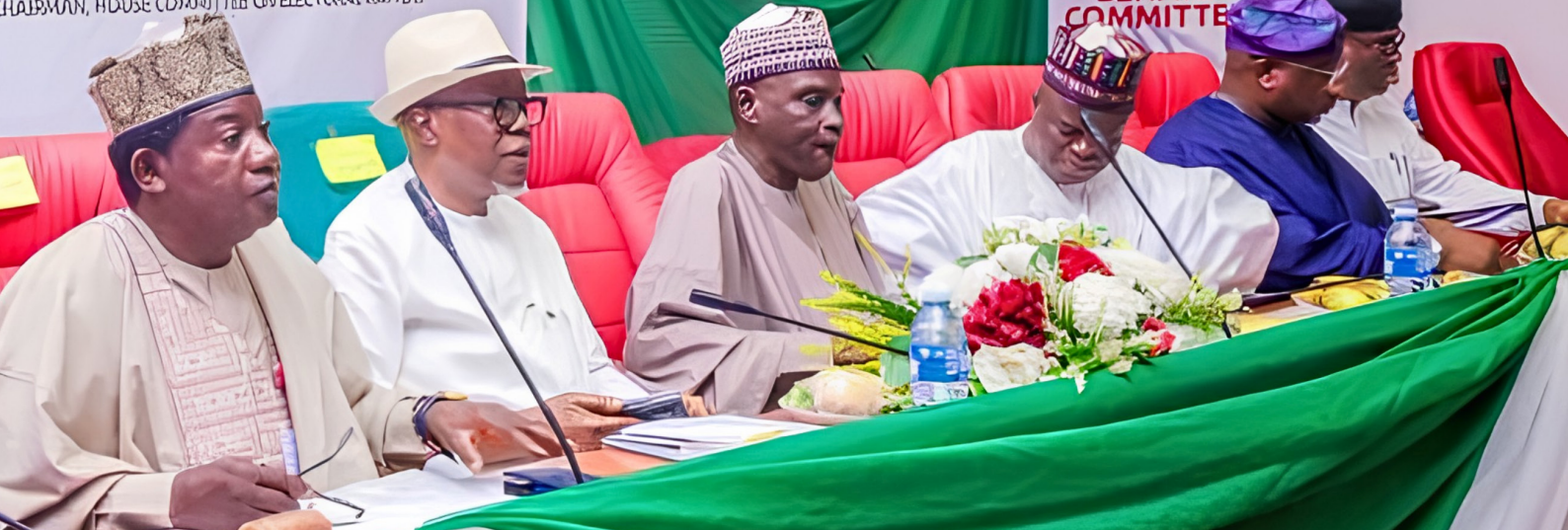
Constitution, Composition and Mandate of a Conference Committee

A conference committee becomes necessary where a bill passed by one chamber is transmitted to the other and returned with amendments to provisions that are not accepted, in whole or in part, by the chamber returning the bill. Where this cannot be resolved through the exchange of messages between the Senate and the House of Representatives, either chamber may, by motion, resolve to constitute a conference committee and request the concurrence of the other chamber.

In constituting a conference committee, each House appoints its own conferees, typically drawn from the relevant subject-matter committee that considered the bill and usually includes principal officers, high-ranking members or legislators with subject-matter expertise who were actively involved in its deliberation, with the composition reflecting party balance and the leadership structure of each chamber.

The number of conferees is determined by the leadership of each chamber and may vary depending on the complexity and significance of the legislation. Once constituted, the committee functions as a joint negotiating body, although its members continue to act as representatives of their respective chambers.

The conference committee meets jointly to identify the specific areas of disagreement, negotiate compromise positions and agree on harmonised wording or phrasing. Its deliberations culminate in a conference report containing the reconciled version of the bill, explanatory notes, where necessary,



and signatures of the conferees. The committee's mandate is limited to matters in dispute and does not extend to introducing entirely new provisions unrelated to the differences between the two versions of the bill.

Consideration of Conference Committee Report in Both Houses

Upon the conclusion of its deliberations, the conference committee submits its report to both chambers for consideration in plenary. In the Senate, the chairman of the Senate conferees, often the chair of the relevant standing committee, moves a motion that the Senate do receive and consider the report of the conference committee on the Bill. In the House of Representatives, the chairman of the House conferees moves a similar motion. The report is then formally laid before the respective chambers.

The motion is seconded and opened for debate, which is generally confined to the reconciled provisions agreed upon by both Houses. Members may express support or reservations, focusing on whether the compromise reflects the chamber's earlier position and the broader national interest. As the report embodies a negotiated settlement, amendments are ordinarily not entertained; each chamber may either adopt or reject it.

If adopted by both chambers, the harmonised text becomes the final version of the bill as passed by the National Assembly. Where necessary, it is read a final time in accordance with the Standing Orders. The Clerk to the National Assembly then prepares the clean copy for authentication and transmission to the President for assent, after which it becomes law.

However, where substantial concerns arise during consideration, a member may move a motion for rescission and re-committal. If carried, the chamber rescinds its previous decision on the report and recommits the bill, either to the conference committee or to the relevant standing committee, for further review and harmonisation. The committee is then required to re-examine the areas of contention and submit a fresh report for

consideration. This procedure ensures that the chamber retains ultimate control over its decisions while preserving the integrity of the legislative process.

It is instructive to note that a conference committee report is considered in plenary, not in the Committee of the Whole. During a regular plenary sitting, the chairman of the conferees moves a motion that the chamber "do receive and consider the Report of the Conference Committee." The report is then debated, usually without amendment, and the chamber votes to adopt or reject it.

"The Conference Committees are the bridge between legislative disagreement and national consensus, ensuring that democracy advances through negotiation rather than division."

The Committee of the Whole is reserved for clause-by-clause scrutiny of bills, typically during second reading or detailed committee stages. By contrast, a conference report reflects a negotiated settlement between both chambers and is not reopened for detailed amendment. In exceptional cases, a motion for rescission and re-committal may return the matter to committee for further review; however, it is still not referred to the Committee of the Whole.

Significance of Conference Committee

Conference committees play a critical role in sustaining the integrity of Nigeria's bicameral legislature. Such committees preserve the constitutional balance between the Senate and the House of Representatives, while promoting negotiation over rivalry, by providing a structured forum for resolving inter-chamber differences. Their work enriches legislative efficiency, prevents procedural impasse and ensures coherence in national policy formulation.

In a complex presidential system such as that of Nigeria, conference committees function as instruments of compromise, stability and institutional maturity, underpinning both the credibility and effectiveness of the legislative process.

Conclusion

The conference committee remains one of the most important yet often understated mechanisms within the legislative architecture of Nigeria's National Assembly. It embodies the spirit of bicameral cooperation, thereby ensuring that differences between the Senate and the House of Representatives are resolved and decided through structured negotiation rather than institutional friction. Conference committees safeguard legislative continuity, uphold constitutional order and strengthen the credibility of enacted laws, by reconciling differing positions into a single harmonised text,

As legislative business becomes increasingly complex, particularly in areas such as fiscal governance, constitutional amendment and sectoral reform, the effective functioning of conference committees assumes even greater significance. To enhance their impact, there is a compelling need for sustained capacity building for legislators and committee staff, clearer procedural documentation of conference practices and greater transparency in the presentation of conference reports to the public because institutionalising best practices in conference committee operations will not only improve legislative efficiency but also reinforce public confidence in the National Assembly's ability to manage disagreements constructively. Continued procedural refinement and legislative professionalism are essential to ensure that conference committees remain robust instruments of democratic governance and inter-chamber harmony.

Fineman Guy Goyei is a legislative researcher in the National Assembly and can be reached on goyeyfineman@gmail.com.

Power to Appoint and Remove Legislative Committee Heads and Members: Judicial Position

Oyetayo Afolabi Oluwole

The composition of the membership of legislative committees has remained a pivotal element of parliamentary governance since the inauguration of the National Assembly in 1999. This significance derives from the indispensable role committees play in the effective discharge of legislative functions.

Committees constitute the institutional backbone of the legislature, serving as the primary vehicles through which legislative efficiency, scrutiny, and productivity are achieved. Core parliamentary activities, including plenary deliberations, investigative and public hearings, constitutional amendment processes, and budgetary examinations, are substantially shaped and executed through committee structures. In addition, committees are central to the legislature's oversight responsibilities and its engagement with Ministries, Departments, and Agencies.

Given these realities, the composition of committee leadership and membership is accorded considerable priority by the leadership of both chambers of the National Assembly. Typically undertaken at the commencement of a legislative tenure of four years, this process is governed by the

Standing Rules of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The process is initiated through the constitution of the Selection Committee, which is vested with the mandate to recommend the establishment, leadership, and membership of legislative committees. In practice, the Selection Committee is chaired by the President of the Senate in the

“The strength of parliamentary governance lies in the legislature’s ability to organise, regulate, and discipline its internal affairs independently.”

Senate and by the Speaker in the House of Representatives.

Over time, the procedural rules governing committee composition, as well as the appointment and removal of committee heads, have undergone significant revisions

in response to evolving legislative exigencies. Notwithstanding these developments, such rules have historically generated institutional tensions, occasionally culminating in judicial intervention.

At the core of these disputes lies the question of institutional authority: whether the power to appoint and remove committee heads resides exclusively in the office of the President of the Senate or the Speaker of the House, or whether such authority must be exercised collectively through the Selection Committee.

This question was brought into sharp relief in a dispute arising from the removal of Hon. Ehiogie West Idahosa of Edo State as Chairman of the House Committee on Petroleum and his subsequent replacement by Hon. Halims Agoda of Delta State, during the Fourth House of Representatives under the leadership of Rt. Hon. Ghali Umar Na’Abba (1999 to 2003).

Although the office of committee chairman carries substantial political and administrative influence, it is neither a constitutional nor a statutory office. Rather, it is an internal institutional arrangement created pursuant to the rules of the House to facilitate legislative organisation and operational effectiveness.

In contesting his removal, Hon. Idahosa initiated legal proceedings at the Federal



High Court, sitting in Abuja, where he argued that, having been appointed through a process involving the Selection Committee and ratification by the House, his removal ought not to have been effected unilaterally, without recourse to the same procedural framework. He consequently sought declaratory reliefs to the effect that his removal was unlawful, null and void, as well as an order for his reinstatement and restoration of attendant privileges.

In response, the defendants contended that the authority to appoint necessarily encompasses the authority to remove. They argued that committee leadership positions are inherently administrative and discretionary in nature, thereby subjecting them to reallocation in accordance with the exigencies of legislative administration. On this basis, it was maintained that the Speaker, as the presiding officer and head of the House, retains the prerogative to reassign or remove committee chairmen without the necessity of re-engaging the Selection Committee.

The principal issue before the court, presided over by Justice Egbo Egbo, was whether the dispute was justiciable and, if so, whether judicial intervention was warranted in what appeared to be an internal legislative matter.

In its determination, the court held that committee leadership positions do not constitute legally enforceable rights, as they are not creations of the Constitution or

statute but rather derive from the internal rules of the legislature. Consequently, such positions do not attract judicial protection in the same manner as constitutionally recognised offices.

“The authority to appoint and remove committee heads reflects the constitutional principle that every legislature must control its own internal structure.”

Justice Egbo Egbo further affirmed that the power of appointment inherently includes the power of removal, and that such authority is vested within the leadership structure of the House, particularly in the office of the Speaker acting within the institutional framework of the legislature. The court emphasised that the role of the Selection Committee in recommending committee composition does not derogate from the discretionary authority of the House leadership to effect changes in committee leadership.

Accordingly, the court declined to grant the reliefs sought by the claimant, holding that his removal did not constitute a violation of any legally cognisable right. The claim for reinstatement was therefore refused.

This decision underscores the principle that committee leadership positions are internal administrative arrangements subject to the control and discretion of legislative leadership. While procedural mechanisms may involve collective bodies such as the Selection Committee, ultimate authority over appointment and removal resides within the institutional hierarchy of the legislature.

More broadly, the case delineates the limits of judicial intervention in legislative affairs. Where disputes pertain to internal administrative organisation, as opposed to the infringement of constitutional or statutory rights, the courts will exercise restraint and decline to interfere.

In conclusion, the authority to appoint and remove committee heads and members remains fundamentally an aspect of legislative self-organisation, exercised primarily by the presiding officers within the framework of legislative rules. Disputes arising therefrom are more appropriately characterised as matters of internal governance rather than legal entitlement, thereby falling largely outside the ambit of judicial review.

UNPACKING PARLIAMENTARY POWERHOUSES:

A Global Look at Committee Functions

Matthew Coker

Parliamentary committees are the backbone of modern legislatures, serving as a critical engine for detailed governance, particularly in Anglophone systems such as the United Kingdom, Canada, India, and the United States. While these nations approach committee operations with distinct methodologies, they share common objectives of robust legislation, comprehensive representation, and diligent oversight. This comparative review aims to distil these diverse models, offering valuable insights for the Nigerian National Assembly. The Core Mandates of Parliamentary Committees

Universally, committees fulfil three fundamental roles:

1. **Legislation:** Committees act as specialized legislative workshops, meticulously scrutinizing bills clause-by-clause, proposing amendments, and gathering expert and stakeholder input. This detailed work often profoundly shapes the final form of legislation. For instance, the UK's Public Bill Committees regularly refine government bills, such as the recent Online Safety Bill, through extensive line-by-line examination and proposed amendments before it progresses to the full Parliament.
2. **Representation:** Committees extend representation beyond geographical constituency, offering a forum for specific policy interests and expertise.

They actively solicit public input, ensuring diverse voices influence policymaking. In the United States Congress, committees like the House Committee on Energy and Commerce frequently hold public hearings, allowing advocacy groups, industry representatives, and citizens to present their views on proposed legislation, such as the recently debated federal privacy legislation, directly influencing its scope and provisions.

3. **Oversight and Accountability:** This critical function involves holding the executive branch accountable. Committees question ministers, summon officials, investigate government policies and expenditures, and scrutinize law implementation, bolstering transparency and preventing executive overreach. A notable example is Canada's Standing Committee on Public Accounts, which routinely scrutinizes government spending and

reports from the Auditor General, leading to recommendations that hold departments accountable for fiscal management, such as its ongoing review of COVID-19 pandemic spending.

Global Models of Committee Operation

The execution and emphasis of these functions vary significantly across parliamentary systems.

The Westminster Paradigm (UK, Canada, India)

Countries operating under the Westminster model, including the UK, Canada, and India, feature committee systems that largely reflect a parliamentary executive.

In the United Kingdom, Departmental Select Committees are permanent oversight bodies mirroring government departments. They scrutinize policy and expenditure, conducting in-depth inquiries and publishing reports with recommendations. For example, the House of Commons Treasury Committee regularly examines the Bank of England's monetary policy decisions, ensuring accountability for economic governance. Public Bill Committees, in contrast, are temporary and focus solely on detailed legislative scrutiny.

Canada's system primarily uses Standing Committees that combine both legislative and oversight functions. These permanent committees, typically aligned with government departments, efficiently handle bill scrutiny and departmental oversight.

"Strong parliaments are not built in plenary alone; they are forged in committee rooms where scrutiny deepens, expertise grows, and accountability gives democracy its true meaning."





The Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance reviews pre-budget submissions, shaping the government's fiscal priorities and scrutinizing departmental estimates, demonstrating its dual legislative and oversight role.

India's Parliament leverages Departmentally Related Standing Committees (DRSCs), introduced in 1993, for enhanced executive scrutiny. These permanent committees examine bills, consider demands for grants, and review departmental reports. The DRSC on Health and Family Welfare regularly examines government health schemes and proposed legislation, ensuring a comprehensive review of policies affecting public health. Ad Hoc Committees are formed for specific, time-bound tasks.

The US Congressional Model

The United States Congress, with its presidential system and rigid separation of powers, features a distinct committee system. Standing Committees are powerful, permanent bodies with broad legislative jurisdiction. A bill's fate often hinges on its passage through committee, which are active sites of legislative drafting, debate, and amendment. These committees possess significant investigative powers, including the ability to subpoena witnesses.

A compelling illustration of a standing committee's power is the House Committee on Appropriations, which controls federal discretionary spending. Its subcommittees craft legislation that allocates billions of dollars across government agencies, a process known as "marking up" bills, a legislative function distinct from mere scrutiny.

Contrasting Approaches: Key Distinctions

1. **Legislative Origination:** In the US Congress, committees are the primary originators and shapers of legislation, where bills can be "killed." While Westminster-style committees scrutinize and amend, they typically do so after a bill's principles have been endorsed by the full chamber.

2. **Oversight Independence:** US Congressional committees, benefiting from the separation of powers, exert powerful, independent oversight, often directly challenging the Executive. Westminster committees on the other hand, while influential, usually issue non-binding recommendations, with stronger executive accountability often derived from public pressure and reporting.

3. **Specialization:** The US, Canada, and Indian DRSCs emphasize permanent, specialized committees, fostering deep subject matter expertise through long member tenures. The UK's Public Bill Committees, being ad hoc, offer less continuity for individual legislative specialization.

4. **Party Discipline:** Westminster systems generally exhibit strong party discipline within committees, aligning votes with party lines. In the US Congress, while partisanship is significant, individual members and chairs can wield more independent influence due to diffuse power structures.

"Parliamentary committees are the engines of democracy, transforming legislative debate into accountability, representation, and effective governance."

Insights for the Nigerian National Assembly
For the Nigerian National Assembly, these diverse models offer practical lessons:

☐ **Elevate Oversight:** Adopting structures akin to the UK's Departmental Select Committees

or India's DRSCs can establish permanent, sector-specific committees for rigorous, sustained executive scrutiny of ministries and agencies.

☐ **Deepen Legislative Review:** Integrating "pre-legislative scrutiny," where bills undergo detailed committee examination before floor debate, as practiced in India, can lead to more robust and effective laws.

☐ **Cultivate Expertise:** Fostering longer member tenures on specific committees, similar to the US and Canadian models, can build invaluable institutional knowledge and specialized expertise.

☐ **Amplify Public Voice:** Emulating the extensive public hearings common in the US and India can make legislative and oversight processes more inclusive and responsive, ensuring citizens' inputs directly influence policy.

☐ **Invest in Resources:** Effective committees are resource-intensive. Providing dedicated research staff, legal counsel, and administrative support is crucial for high-quality parliamentary output.

Conclusion

Parliamentary committees are the bedrock of detailed deliberation and accountability in any democracy. The contrasting yet complementary approaches of the UK, Canada, India, and the US offer a rich tapestry of methods for refining legislation, enhancing representation, and ensuring executive accountability. For the Nigerian National Assembly, the opportunity lies not in replication, but in strategic adaptation. By selectively integrating these proven practices, Nigeria can strengthen its committee system, fostering a more robust, efficient, and responsive parliament that truly serves its vibrant democracy.



PROCEDURAL COURAGE: How The National Assembly Passed The Electoral Act, 2026

Godwin T. Ortserga,
Nwaimo Reigneth,
Idedevwo Oghenechuko

On Tuesday, February 17, 2026, the National Assembly passed the Bill for an Act to repeal the Electoral Act No. 13 of 2022 and enact the Electoral Act, 2026, to regulate the conduct of federal, state, and Area Council elections in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, and for related matters. The Bill, subsequently assented to on February 18, 2026, by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, marked a decisive moment in Nigeria's democratic evolution, setting the legal foundation for the 2027 general elections and beyond.

This legislative milestone was not merely routine lawmaking; it was a demonstration

of institutional responsiveness and procedural courage. Faced with emerging complexities, the Senate and the House of Representatives reconvened in an emergency plenary to reconsider and pass a harmonised version of the Bill.

“The Electoral Act, 2026, represents not just a legal reform, but a reaffirmation of Nigeria’s commitment to credible, inclusive, and responsive democracy.”

Ordinarily, once both chambers pass differing versions of a Bill, a conference committee is constituted to reconcile discrepancies. In this

case, the committee discharged its mandate effectively. However, subsequent developments, particularly the announcement of the 2027 election timetable by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), introduced fresh concerns. Chief among them was the 360-day notice period for elections contained in Clause 28 of the earlier Bill, which risked overlapping with significant religious observances such as Ramadan and Lent. This raised legitimate concerns about voter turnout, logistics, and the overall credibility of the electoral process.

Importantly, such substantive adjustments fell outside the remit of a conference committee, whose role is limited to harmonisation rather than innovation. Recognising this limitation, the National Assembly took the unusual but necessary step of rescinding its earlier decision. Invoking relevant provisions of their Standing Orders, both chambers recommitted the Bill for comprehensive reconsideration.

Electoral reform is a continuous process that demands learning, adaptation, and the courage to correct course, because true democracy is built through consistent improvement, not sudden change.



This decision underscores a critical principle of parliamentary governance: legislative processes must remain flexible enough to respond to changing realities while preserving procedural integrity. Through consultations with INEC, legal experts, and other stakeholders, lawmakers refined the Bill to better align with operational and societal contexts.

The eventual passage of the Electoral Act, 2026, reflects over two years of sustained engagement with key institutions, including INEC, the Office of the Attorney-General of the Federation, development partners, and civil society organisations. The result is a more coherent and responsive legal framework.

Key Features of the Electoral Act, 2026

1. Rationalised Election Timelines

One of the most significant reforms is the adjustment of the election notice period from 360 to 300 days. This recalibration mitigates potential conflicts with religious observances and improves logistical planning. The Act also provides clearer sequencing for party primaries, candidate submissions, and campaign activities, thereby reducing administrative overlaps and pre-election disputes.

2. Consolidation of Electoral Technology

Building on the innovations of the 2022 Act, the new law strengthens the legal foundation for the use of technology in elections. It clarifies procedures for biometric accreditation and electronic transmission of results, establishes contingency measures for technological failures, and reinforces the evidentiary value of electronically transmitted results in election petitions. These provisions aim to reduce ambiguity and enhance judicial certainty.

3. Strengthened Internal Party Democracy

The Act places renewed emphasis on internal party governance. It tightens compliance requirements for primaries, improves documentation standards, and clarifies rules governing delegate selection. Additionally, it defines stricter conditions and timelines for candidate substitution, limiting the scope for arbitrary changes that often trigger litigation.

4. Streamlined Dispute Resolution

To address the perennial challenge of prolonged electoral disputes, the Act refines timelines for filing and adjudicating pre-election and post-election matters. It also integrates provisions for the admissibility of digital evidence, ensuring that judicial processes keep pace with technological advancements. The goal is to promote timely resolution and reduce uncertainty.

5. Enhanced Electoral Offences Framework

The law introduces tougher penalties for electoral malpractices, including vote buying, result manipulation, destruction of materials, and interference with electoral technology. By strengthening deterrence mechanisms, the Act seeks to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process.

6. Improved Transparency and Oversight

Transparency is reinforced through mandatory publication of candidate information and expanded access to electoral data for stakeholders. The Act also clarifies the regulatory and oversight responsibilities of INEC, ensuring that its authority is exercised within well-defined statutory boundaries.

7. Strengthened Institutional Coordination

While preserving INEC's constitutional independence, the Act formalises collaboration between the Commission, security agencies, and other relevant bodies. This recognises the complex logistical and security demands of modern elections and promotes a more coordinated approach.

A Refinement, Not a Departure

The Electoral Act, 2026, does not represent a radical break from the 2022 framework. Rather, it is a thoughtful refinement, one that consolidates previous gains while addressing identified gaps. By recalibrating timelines, clarifying technological provisions, and strengthening institutional processes, the law enhances Nigeria's preparedness for future elections.

Equally significant is the process that produced it. By rescinding and revisiting its earlier decision, the National Assembly demonstrated a willingness to prioritise national interest over procedural rigidity. The swift presidential assent further completed the constitutional process, reinforcing executive-legislative synergy.

Conclusion:

Nigeria's electoral system remains a work in progress. However, it is now more structured, technologically integrated, and legally coherent than at any point since 1999. The Electoral Act, 2026, represents an incremental but meaningful step toward consolidating democratic governance. Ultimately, the success of any electoral framework lies not only in its provisions but in its implementation. Laws can set standards, but institutions must enforce them, and citizens must trust and uphold them. Electoral reform, therefore, is not a destination but a continuous process, one that evolves with each election cycle. As this Act demonstrates, progress is often achieved not through sweeping changes, but through careful refinement, institutional learning, and the courage to correct course when necessary.

REPS PANEL THREATENS ARRESTS AS NAIRA-FOR-CRUDE PROBE DEEPENS

ASMA'U BAIKIE



A policy designed to steady Nigeria's economy is now at the centre of a deepening political storm in Abuja. What began as a technical fix for the Federal Government's Naira-for-Crude initiative, has triggered a confrontation between lawmakers and the country's top economic officials.

At the heart of the dispute is a simple but troubling question: who is really benefiting?

The ad-hoc committee on the implementation and oversight of the Naira-for-crude-oil policy of the House of Representatives says it has struggled to obtain clear answers. At a recent public hearing, the Chairman of the committee Hon Emerengwa Boniface Sunday

warned that continued non-compliance from key stakeholders could lead to arrests.

Those invited to testify include officials from the finance ministry, the Central Bank of Nigeria, the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited, and other major regulatory bodies. Many, lawmakers say, have either failed to appear or submitted



House of Reps Members in session

incomplete documentation. The committee is seeking clarity on core issues: how much crude has been supplied under the policy? who paid for it? in what currency? and under what conditions? So far, those answers remain elusive.

What the panel has uncovered instead is raising deeper concerns.

According to data cited from the Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, between October 2024 and October 2025, the Dangote Petroleum Refinery received at least 132 crude cargoes under the arrangement, amounting to more than 123 million barrels.

Lawmakers say that figure represents over a quarter of Nigeria's annual crude production, based on estimates from the Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission. No other domestic refinery appears to have benefited at that scale.

The implication is politically sensitive. Without directly alleging wrongdoing, the committee has questioned whether a national policy has effectively become concentrated around a single private player.

At the same time, the broader economic impact of the policy remains unclear. Data from the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority show that Nigeria spent over N8 trillion on fuel imports in the first ten months of 2025.

Despite increased domestic refining, the

“Transparency in the oil sector is not optional; it is fundamental to public trust and economic stability.”

country still relies heavily on imported petroleum products. In October alone, local supply met only a fraction of national demand, leaving the rest to be sourced from abroad.

For critics, the contradiction is stark: a policy intended to conserve foreign exchange has yet to significantly reduce import dependence.

The committee is also raising constitutional concerns. Citing provisions that require national resources to be managed for the common good, lawmakers are questioning whether the concentration of crude supply aligns with that mandate.

While acknowledging the importance of large-scale domestic refining, the panel notes that smaller licensed refineries are still forced to purchase crude at international dollar rates effectively excluding them from the policy's benefits.

This imbalance, lawmakers argue, risks

distorting competition and entrenching market dominance.

Frustration within the committee is now reaching a tipping point. Invoking its constitutional powers, the panel has warned it may compel attendance through summons or warrants if key actors continue to ignore invitations.

“We do not make this statement with glee,” Hon Emerengwa Boniface Sunday said. “We make it with profound regret.”

Beyond the immediate standoff, the episode underscores a familiar challenge: transparency in Nigeria's oil sector. Long criticised for opacity, the industry remains central to the country's economic stability and political tensions.

The Naira-for-Crude policy was introduced as a reform measure, aimed at boosting local refining, easing pressure on foreign exchange, and lowering fuel costs. But its implementation is now under scrutiny, with lawmakers insisting that intent must be matched by accountability.

For ordinary Nigerians, the stakes are practical. Fuel prices remain volatile, foreign exchange pressures persist, and the promised benefits of reform are yet to be fully felt.

As the investigation continues, the outcome may shape not only the future of the policy, but also the credibility of legislative oversight in Nigeria's most critical sector.

NILDS MATRICULATES NEW POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS FOR LEADERSHIP IN GOVERNANCE

Akubueze Augustina



At the unfolded as more than a formal academic tradition. Held in affiliation with the University of Benin, the event marked a defining moment for a new cohort of postgraduate students embarking on a programme centred on governance, legislation, and public service.

From the outset, the ceremony carried a clear sense of purpose. Students, academic staff, and invited guests gathered not only to observe a milestone but to witness the induction of individuals into a system that demands intellectual discipline and civic responsibility. For the students, it signalled the beginning of a journey that extends well beyond the classroom.

The NILDS matriculation, in affiliation with the University of Benin, marked the start of a rigorous journey in governance and public service, challenging students to develop the discipline, integrity, and critical thinking needed to shape Nigeria's democratic future.

Matriculation at NILDS is not merely symbolic. It represents a commitment to a rigorous learning process that blends academic inquiry with practical relevance. In partnership with the University of Benin, the institute has positioned itself as a vital platform for building the capacity required to sustain democratic institutions in Nigeria. The ceremony was further distinguished by high-level representation from the National Assembly. Standing in for the President of the Senate, Distinguished Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, Senator Salisu Afolabi Shuaib, Chairman of the Senate Committee on ICT and Cyber Security, delivered the matriculation address with clarity and purpose.

"You have come here not by accident but by choice," he told the students, framing their





admission as a deliberate decision to embrace the responsibilities of governance.

He emphasised that NILDS is more than an academic institution. It is a space where intellectual growth is nurtured alongside ethical awareness and practical insight. Students are expected not only to acquire knowledge but to refine their thinking, question assumptions, and engage critically with democratic structures.

Addressing the realities of public service, he highlighted the evolving nature of governance in a rapidly changing world. Today's leaders, the students were reminded, must navigate complexity, balance competing interests, and respond to rising public expectations. This demands integrity, sound judgment, and the courage to act responsibly.

While the curriculum covers legislative procedures, policy development, and institutional frameworks, the true test lies in application. The emphasis on discipline, critical thinking, and humility reflects the institute's commitment to preparing individuals to contribute meaningfully to national development.

The ceremony also underscored the role of academic staff and institutional leadership. Through teaching and mentorship, they shape both the intellectual development and professional outlook of students, reinforcing the institute's mission of strengthening democratic governance through education. As the event progressed, its deeper significance became evident. What began as a formal ceremony evolved into a broader reflection on the role of education in

shaping the nation's future. The students, now formally admitted, were reminded of their place in the ongoing effort to build and sustain effective institutions.

Ultimately, the ceremony signified more than admission into an academic programme. It conveyed a clear sense of purpose and responsibility. The journey ahead will require discipline, intellectual curiosity, and an unwavering commitment to public service. More importantly, it offers a platform to cultivate the competence and character needed to confront the challenges of governance. The matriculation therefore marks not just a beginning but a deliberate step towards preparing a generation capable of strengthening democratic institutions and advancing national development.



Senate Committee on South East Development Commission:

Advancing Oversight, Accountability and Regional Development



Sen. Salihu Mustapha, Sen. Orji Uzor Kalu and Tagbo Okeke addressing the appropriations committee

Tagbo Okeke

The committee system remains one of the most important institutional pillars of the Nigerian Senate and, indeed, of democratic governance. Beyond the passage of legislation, Committees in the Senate provide the framework through which the National Assembly engages Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), scrutinises public expenditure, evaluates policy implementation and promotes accountability in governance. Through oversight functions, budget defence sessions, investigative hearings and policy engagements, committees serve as critical instruments for ensuring that public institutions operate within the limits of the law and in alignment with national development priorities.

In recent years, the establishment of specialised development commissions for various geopolitical zones has further expanded the role of legislative committees in promoting regional growth and balanced national development. One of such strategic committees is the Senate Committee on the South East Development Commission (SEDC), constituted following the establishment and inauguration of the South

East Development Commission.

The Committee is chaired by Distinguished Senator Orji Uzor Kalu, with Distinguished Senator Anthony Ani serving as Deputy Chairman. The Committee Secretariat is headed by Mr. Tagbo Okeke as Clerk of the Committee, assisted by Mr. Ugo George. Since its inauguration, the Committee has assumed a central role in providing legislative oversight over the activities and operations of the Commission.

“Effective legislative oversight is not merely about scrutiny; it is about ensuring that public resources translate into measurable development and lasting impact for the people.”

The mandate of the Committee is broad and strategic. Its responsibilities include oversight of all matters relating to the South East Development Commission, coordination and monitoring of development partners operating within the South East region and engagement with multilateral agencies, private sector actors and government institutions involved in rehabilitation, and development initiatives across the zone. The Committee also considers and scrutinises the annual budget estimates of the Commission while carrying out any additional responsibilities assigned by the Senate leadership.

The importance of this mandate lies in the unique developmental realities of the South East geopolitical zone. Comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States, the region continues to confront infrastructural deficits, environmental challenges, economic dislocation and developmental concerns that require coordinated institutional responses. The establishment of the South East Development Commission therefore represents a strategic intervention aimed at promoting reconstruction, economic revitalisation and sustainable development within the region. Similarly, the Senate Committee serves as the democratic mechanism for ensuring that the Commission effectively delivers on its mandate.



Senate Committee on SCDC Budget Presentation

Since the commencement of its activities, the Committee has demonstrated considerable commitment to legislative scrutiny and institutional accountability. It has carefully considered and scrutinised successive budget proposals presented by the Commission, including the recently defended 2026 budget estimates. During interactions with the Committee, the Managing Director of the Commission, Mr. Mark Okoye, alongside members of the Board, presented detailed briefings on programmes and initiatives undertaken within the past year.

Among the notable initiatives highlighted were the establishment of an investment vehicle approved by the President to facilitate regional economic development, participation in trade fairs both within and outside Nigeria, and the successful hosting of an investment summit in Enugu aimed at attracting investors and stimulating economic growth across the South East. The Commission also outlined plans regarding the acquisition and development of its permanent headquarters in Enugu, a move expected to improve institutional efficiency and operational coordination. In addition, discussions centred on collaborative partnerships with other regional development commissions to facilitate knowledge sharing and integrated developmental strategies.

Throughout these engagements, the Committee emphasised the principles of transparency, accountability and prudent utilisation of public resources. In his remarks, Senator Orji Uzor Kalu advised the leadership of the Commission to maintain continuous communication with the Senate Committee regarding programmes, projects and policy initiatives. This, according to the Committee Chairman, is necessary to guarantee transparency in the execution of projects and to ensure that public funds are tied to measurable developmental outcomes that directly benefit the people of the South East.

The Committee's commitment to regional development became even more evident during the consideration of the Commission's 2026 budget proposal before

the Senate Committee on Appropriations. Presenting the proposed budget estimate of N140 billion to the Senate Appropriation's Committee, Senator Kalu explained that N106.745 billion, representing approximately 76 per cent of the proposal, was allocated to capital expenditure. According to him, the allocation was intended to support critical infrastructure projects, ecological remediation, economic revitalisation programmes and strategic interventions across the South East region. He further disclosed that N25.955 billion, representing 18.54 per cent of the proposal, was earmarked for personnel costs.

“The South East Development Commission is not just a regional intervention; it is a commitment to reconstruction, economic revitalisation, and shared national progress.”

The Committee Chairman also drew attention to the funding challenges experienced by the Commission during the 2025 fiscal year, noting that inadequate releases had constrained the implementation of several strategic projects and programmes. In view of these limitations, he appealed for increased federal support and requested an additional allocation of N5 billion for each of the five South East states, amounting to N25 billion in supplementary intervention funding. The proposed additional allocation, he argued, would significantly enhance developmental initiatives in key sectors such as education, healthcare, infrastructure and economic empowerment.

The activities of the Senate Committee on the South East Development Commission illustrate the indispensable role of legislative oversight in democratic governance. Effective

oversight strengthens public accountability, improves institutional performance and ensures that government agencies remain responsive to the developmental aspirations of citizens. Through rigorous budget scrutiny, continuous engagement with the Commission and advocacy for improved regional funding, the Committee has demonstrated how parliamentary institutions can contribute meaningfully to national development and social stability. Globally, legislative committees with oversight responsibilities for regional development have played transformative roles in shaping inclusive governance and balanced economic growth. In the United States, congressional committees responsible for infrastructure, appropriations and regional development have historically influenced large-scale interventions aimed at revitalising underserved regions while strengthening fiscal accountability.

Equally, in India, parliamentary standing committees overseeing rural development and regional affairs have been instrumental in evaluating public policies designed to reduce inequality and promote inclusive national growth across diverse communities. The Senate Committee on the South East Development Commission reflects this broader democratic tradition. Its activities underscore the growing importance of parliamentary committees as engines of accountability, institutional transparency and developmental advocacy. By ensuring that the developmental needs and aspirations of the South East are effectively represented within the national policy framework, the Committee continues to reinforce the constitutional role of the National Assembly as the custodian of the public interest and a vital driver of democratic governance. As Nigeria continues to pursue inclusive development and national cohesion, the work of the Senate Committee on the South East Development Commission stands as a clear demonstration of how legislative institutions can promote responsive governance, strengthen public confidence in democratic institutions and facilitate sustainable regional transformation for the benefit of the nation as a whole.



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The eradication of poverty remains central to the global development agenda under Sustainable Development Goal 1. This article examines the role of Nigeria's National Assembly in advancing poverty reduction through legislative action, oversight, budgetary engagement, and parliamentary diplomacy. It argues that Nigeria's legislative framework demonstrates how parliaments can institutionalise social protection, enhance accountability, and contribute meaningfully to global development processes.

The persistence of poverty continues to define one of the most urgent challenges of the twenty-first century. Sustainable Development Goal 1 reflects a shared global commitment to end poverty in all its forms, with an emphasis on inclusion, equity, and protection for vulnerable populations. As Africa's most populous country, Nigeria's efforts carry both national and international significance. While the executive branch leads policy implementation, the legislature plays a decisive role in shaping the legal and institutional foundations that sustain poverty reduction initiatives. In recent years, Nigeria's National Assembly has expanded its influence beyond domestic lawmaking to include active engagement in international parliamentary processes, reinforcing its contribution to global development discourse.

Parliaments are increasingly recognised as pivotal actors in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. In Nigeria, the National Assembly advances poverty reduction through a combination of lawmaking, budgetary control, oversight, and parliamentary diplomacy. Through legislation, it establishes frameworks that promote social protection and economic inclusion. Through its authority over public finance, it influences the allocation of resources towards pro-poor programmes.

Its oversight function ensures accountability in implementation, while its participation in inter-parliamentary engagements facilitates policy exchange and cooperation. This integrated approach reflects global best practice and underscores the importance of legislative institutions in development governance.

A key milestone in Nigeria's legislative response to poverty is the National Social Investment Programme Agency Act, which transformed major social intervention initiatives into statutory obligations. This legal framework enhances continuity, transparency, and accountability in

programme delivery. It supports initiatives such as conditional cash transfers for extremely poor households, youth employment and skills development schemes, microcredit for informal sector participants, and school feeding programmes that link nutrition with education and local economic activity. These measures contribute directly to strengthening social protection systems and advancing the targets of SDG 1.

Ongoing legislative reforms further demonstrate an adaptive approach to poverty reduction. The proposed Social Welfare Service Bill seeks to establish a coordinated national welfare system that integrates various forms of assistance, including income support, food security, and housing services, supported by a unified beneficiary register to improve efficiency and targeting. Similarly, the proposed National Poverty Alleviation Management Commission Bill addresses the problem of fragmented interventions by promoting centralised coordination and improved monitoring. These initiatives align with global trends towards integrated welfare systems capable of responding to economic shocks and structural vulnerabilities.

The impact of legislative frameworks depends significantly on effective oversight. In Nigeria, parliamentary committees responsible for social development, finance, humanitarian affairs, and national planning play a critical role in monitoring poverty-related

programmes. Through budget reviews, investigative hearings, and performance assessments, these committees scrutinise public expenditure and ensure that allocated resources translate into measurable outcomes. This reinforces the broader principle that legislative oversight is essential to achieving sustainable development objectives.

Nigeria's National Assembly also contributes to poverty reduction through parliamentary diplomacy. Engagement in international parliamentary forums enables lawmakers to exchange experiences, adopt best practices, and participate in global advocacy on poverty and inequality. Involvement in accountability processes, including voluntary national reviews, strengthens transparency and democratic ownership of development commitments. This highlights the importance of international cooperation in achieving SDG 1.

Nigeria's experience demonstrates that parliaments are indispensable to the fight against poverty. Through the institutionalisation of social protection laws, forward-looking legislative reforms, effective oversight, and active international engagement, the National Assembly has positioned itself as a key driver of SDG 1. As the 2030 deadline approaches, stronger collaboration among parliaments, grounded in shared responsibility and global solidarity, will be essential to achieving lasting and inclusive poverty reduction.



ANALYSIS OF THE LEGISLATIVE HOUSES (POWERS AND PRIVILEGES) (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2025 (HB. 2431)

While Plenary sessions in parliament provide visibility and formal decision-making, committees serve as the primary platforms for detailed legislative scrutiny and oversight, hence modern democratic governance increasingly depends on the effectiveness of legislative committees. Committees must therefore be empowered and given adequate legal and institutional frameworks to deliver on their mandate. A significant gap observed in Nigeria's current legislative oversight framework is that many laws establishing Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) remain in force long after their relevance has diminished. In addition, evolving judicial interpretations have raised questions about legislative autonomy, particularly concerning internal disciplinary processes.

The Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2025 therefore seeks to position the Nigerian legislative committees as central drivers of governance outcomes rather than auxiliary bodies, to effectively fulfill this expectation. The proposed amendment responds to observed gaps by introducing structured, continuous oversight mechanisms, elements of post legislative scrutiny and ultimately strengthening the legal authority of legislative committees.

DETAILS OF THE BILL

Long Title: A Bill for an Act to amend the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017 to institutionalise sunset clauses and mandatory periodic legislative review of Acts establishing Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs), and to strengthen parliamentary discipline, immunity, and oversight powers; and for related matters.

Short Title: Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2025.

Sponsor: Hon. Aminu Jamo Daura
Clause 1 (Amendment of the Principal Act), provides the legal basis for amending the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) Act, 2017. Clause 2 (Recognition of legislative authority through Committees) introduces a new sub clause after the existing clause 1 to underscore the legitimacy of committee

actions as extensions of the House, especially in oversight and internal processes. Clause 3 (Periodic Review of Establishment Laws of MDAs) mandates committees to periodically review the laws establishing MDAs under their jurisdiction. In Clause 4 (Evaluation and Reform recommendations), committees are further empowered, by way of post legislative scrutiny, to evaluate the continued relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness of enabling laws. Where gaps are identified, they may recommend amendments, repeal, or the introduction of sunset clauses. Clause 5 (Citation) which is the final clause, provides for the short title of the Bill.

"The Bill seeks to position Nigerian legislative committees as central drivers of governance outcomes rather than auxiliary bodies."

Committees at the core of Legislative Functionality

The provisions of the Bill reflect a shift toward a more structured and deliberate use of committees as engines of legislative productivity. This repositioning enhances their capacity to:

- track institutional performance over time;
- develop subject-matter expertise within sectors;
- generate data-driven legislative proposals; and
- ensure continuity in oversight across legislative sessions.

Committees, in this sense, function as the operational units through which the broader objectives of the legislature are realised.

Legal and Constitutional Perspective

The provisions reinforce the constitutional authority of the National Assembly to regulate its internal affairs and conduct oversight through its committees.

The reinforcement of internal disciplinary authority, particularly in response to judicial scrutiny, also has implications for

committee work. Committees often serve as investigative and quasi-disciplinary bodies; thus, clearer legal backing for legislative autonomy provides a more secure environment for them to discharge these functions without undue external disruption.

Socio-Economic Implications

The structured review mechanisms introduced by the Bill have far-reaching implications for governance and public administration, including:

- Improved Service Delivery: Committees can identify inefficiencies in MDAs and recommend corrective legislative action.
- Rationalisation of Public Institutions: Periodic reviews create opportunities to streamline or merge overlapping agencies.
- Adaptive Legal Frameworks: Laws governing public institutions evolve in response to changing socio-economic conditions.

Institutional Gains for the Legislature

The Bill deepens the institutional relevance of committees within the legislative ecosystem. It enhances their role not only as oversight bodies but also as initiators of reform and custodians of legislative quality.

For the legislature as a whole, this translates into:

- greater coherence between lawmaking and oversight;
- strengthened accountability mechanisms;
- enhanced credibility in the eyes of the public; and
- a proactive rather than reactive legislative posture.

Comparative Insights and International Experience

Comparative legislative practice offers useful insight into how structured oversight, periodic statutory review, and clearly defined parliamentary privileges can enhance the effectiveness of committees and, by extension, the responsiveness of public institutions.

In the United States, particularly at the state level, sunset legislation has become an established tool for institutional accountability. States such as Texas operate

formal Sunset Advisory Commissions that work closely with legislative committees to review government agencies at fixed intervals. These reviews assess whether agencies should be retained, restructured, or abolished. Crucially, agencies are required to justify their continued existence and demonstrate performance outcomes before legislative committees.

In the United Kingdom, the doctrine of parliamentary privilege, anchored in the Bill of Rights 1689, ensures that proceedings in Parliament, including committee activities, are insulated from undue judicial interference. Select Committees of Parliament are highly influential in scrutinising government departments. Their reports, though not always binding, carry significant political and institutional weight, often compelling executive agencies to respond formally and implement recommendations.

Similarly, in Canada, parliamentary committees play a central role in statutory review and public administration oversight. Many laws include provisions requiring review after a specified period, and committees are tasked with conducting these assessments. Government departments are obligated to appear before committees, provide evidence, and respond to recommendations.

In Australia, sunset clauses are widely used in delegated legislation, ensuring that regulations expire unless actively reviewed and renewed by Parliament. Legislative committees scrutinize these instruments to ensure they remain necessary and effective.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of other jurisdictions demonstrate that effective legislative oversight is not merely a function of constitutional authority but of institutional design and practice. Where committees are empowered with clear mandates, supported by legal and institutional frameworks, and integrated into continuous review processes, they become decisive actors in shaping public sector performance.

In Nigeria, the framework proposed in the Legislative Houses (Powers and Privileges) (Amendment) Bill, 2025 strengthens this trajectory. By embedding structured review mechanisms and reinforcing the authority within which committees operate, it enhances their capacity to secure compliance from MDAs, ensure implementation of legislative resolutions, and sustain oversight beyond episodic interventions.



A War Far Away, A Test Close To Home: What the U.S.–Iran Conflict Means for Nigeria

Idowu Bakare

When conflict erupts in the Middle East, Nigeria often feels the tremors long before it hears the echoes. The ongoing confrontation between the United States and Iran, now straining global systems, is no exception. What may appear as a distant geopolitical struggle is, in reality, a defining moment for energy markets, economic stability, and diplomatic positioning across the Global South.

At the heart of the crisis lies oil. Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz, through which a significant portion of the world's oil flows, have triggered sharp spikes in crude prices and tightened global supply chains. In recent days, oil prices have surged again as negotiations faltered, with fears that the conflict could deepen and prolong global instability. The consequences are already visible: inflationary pressures, cautious central banks, and slowing economic activity

across major economies

For Nigeria, the implications are both immediate and paradoxical. On one hand, higher oil prices present a rare fiscal opportunity. As a major oil exporter, Nigeria stands to earn significantly more per barrel than projected in its budget framework. Analysts note that such geopolitical shocks can generate substantial revenue windfalls and boost foreign exchange inflows. In theory, this should strengthen public finances, support the naira, and create space for infrastructure investment.

But reality, as always, is more complex. Nigeria's structural vulnerabilities mean that global gains do not automatically translate into domestic stability. Despite being an oil-producing nation, the country remains heavily exposed to imported fuel dynamics. Rising global oil prices have historically translated into higher domestic fuel costs, increased inflation, and pressure on household incomes. Indeed, recent data

suggests that inflationary trends in Nigeria are already being influenced by global energy shocks linked to the conflict.

This contradiction of earning more from oil while paying more for energy underscores a deeper issue: Nigeria's incomplete energy transition and limited refining capacity. While developments like the Dangote Refinery offer a pathway toward greater self-sufficiency, the broader system remains vulnerable to external shocks.

Yet within this uncertainty lies a strategic opening.

As supply from the Middle East becomes constrained, global buyers are actively seeking alternative sources. This presents Nigeria with an opportunity to reposition itself as a reliable supplier within the Atlantic Basin. European and Asian markets, facing disruptions in Gulf exports, could increasingly turn to Nigerian crude grades, provided production levels are stable and export infrastructure remains efficient.

STRAIT OF HORMUZ THE WORLD'S MOST STRATEGIC CHOKEPOINT





Beyond oil, the conflict is accelerating a global rethinking of energy security. The International Energy Agency has described the current situation as one of the most significant disruptions in energy history, prompting countries to reconsider reliance on fossil fuels and invest more aggressively in alternatives. For Nigeria, this is both a warning and an opportunity: a warning that oil dominance may not last indefinitely, and an opportunity to invest strategically in gas, renewables, and energy diversification.

But perhaps the most important dimension of this moment is diplomatic.

The United Nations, already under strain, is being tested by the scale and complexity of the conflict. Questions around international law, multilateral cooperation, and global security are once again at the forefront. For Nigeria, newly represented at the UN by a leadership with parliamentary and diplomatic experience in Ambassador (Senator) Jimoh Ibrahim, this is a moment to engage more assertively.

Nigeria's government and parliament both have roles to play.

At the executive level, Nigeria must position itself as a stabilising voice within the Global South, advocating for de-escalation, respect

While the crisis offers a chance to boost exports and attract new buyers, it also exposes Nigeria's dependence on imported fuel and weak refining capacity.

international norms, and protection of global energy routes. Its long-standing role in peacekeeping and mediation provides a credible foundation for such engagement.

At the legislative level, the National Assembly has a parallel responsibility. Parliamentary diplomacy through inter-parliamentary unions, regional assemblies, and bilateral engagements offers a complementary channel to shape global discourse. Committees on foreign affairs and inter-parliamentary relations can engage counterparts, share perspectives, and reinforce Nigeria's diplomatic posture.

More importantly, Parliament must turn

its attention inward. This moment calls for stronger oversight of Nigeria's energy sector, ensuring that increased revenues are transparently managed and strategically deployed. It calls for accelerated reforms in refining, gas development, and energy infrastructure. And it demands a legislative framework that reduces the country's vulnerability to external shocks.

History shows that global crises often redraw economic and political maps. The 1970s oil shocks reshaped energy policy. The 2008 financial crisis redefined global regulation. The current conflict may well do the same for energy security and geopolitical alliances. For Nigeria, the question is not whether the crisis will have an impact. It already has.

The real question is whether the country will respond as a passive participant in global events or as a strategic actor capable of turning disruption into direction.

In moments like this, leadership is tested not by proximity to conflict, but by clarity of response.

And for Nigeria, that response is now due.

Idowu Bakare is a Deputy Director in the House of Representatives and former Clerk of the Committee Interparliamentary Relations

West Africa At A Turning Point:

Moving AfCFTA from Promise to Practice

Akubueze Augustina and Nguylan Wakombo

When lawmakers convened in Abuja, in February 2026, for the First Parliamentary and Extraordinary Session of the ECOWAS Parliament, the gathering reflected a shared recognition that West Africa stands at a decisive moment in its political and economic journey, when democratic strain, insecurity, economic volatility, and intensifying global competition have exposed the costs of fragmentation and highlighted the urgency of deeper regional integration.

At the centre of deliberations was the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a landmark agreement signed on 21st March, 2018, operational in 2019 and launched on 1st January 2021. With 54 of the 55 African Union member states participating, AfCFTA represents the world's largest free trade area by membership. It seeks to establish a single continental market for goods and services, promote trade within Africa, accelerate

industrialisation, and deepen economic integration. Its Secretariat headquartered in Accra, Ghana, reflects a shared commitment to institutional coherence and continental ownership.

The scale of the initiative is historic. AfCFTA connects 1.3 billion people across a combined gross domestic product of approximately 3.4 trillion dollars. As a flagship project under the African Union's Agenda 2063, it forms part of a long-term strategy to transform Africa's development trajectory. At its core, AfCFTA aims to eliminate tariffs and reduce non-tariff barriers that have long made trade within Africa costly and inefficient. By harmonising standards, simplifying customs procedures, and reducing bureaucratic bottlenecks, the agreement seeks to make trade across borders faster, cheaper, and more predictable. Its scope extends beyond goods to services, investment, intellectual property rights, and competition policy. If effectively implemented, AfCFTA could significantly increase trade within Africa, boost incomes, stimulate industrial growth,

and lift millions out of extreme poverty.

However, ambition alone cannot guarantee prosperity. This point was emphasised by President of the Nigerian Senate, Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, in a goodwill message delivered on his behalf, by the Deputy Senate President, Senator Jibrin Barau CFR, when he noted that disciplined execution is essential and that the challenge before West Africa is not designing frameworks, but implementing them with consistency and accountability.

The global economic environment underscores this necessity. Rising protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions have revealed the vulnerability of dependence on distant markets. External events continue to shape food prices, fuel availability, and currency stability across West Africa. In such a climate, isolated economies face structural disadvantage, while regional blocs benefit from scale, shared resilience, and stronger bargaining power. West Africa

NEW DEVELOPMENTS. SHARED FUTURE. STRONGER TOGETHER.



ECONOMIC GROWTH

West Africa is one of the world's fastest-growing regions, with a young population, expanding markets, and increasing investments.



ENERGY TRANSITION

A shift towards renewable energy is driving sustainable development and energy security across the region.



DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Technology and innovation are transforming lives, improving access to services, and creating new opportunities.



INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Major investments in roads, ports, railways, and airports are connecting communities and boosting trade.



REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Stronger cooperation through ECOWAS and regional initiatives promotes peace, stability, and prosperity.



SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Commitment to climate action, agriculture, and human capital development for a better tomorrow.

A NEW ERA OF OPPORTUNITY AND PROGRESS



cannot compete globally while it is divided internally.

Integration is therefore strategic, not optional. Historically, the region prospered through interconnected trade networks, long before colonial borders were imposed. The empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai thrived because goods, capital, and knowledge moved freely across vast territories. Timbuktu became a centre of commerce and scholarship, while Trans Sahelian routes efficiently transported gold, salt, and textiles. Economic integration is deeply rooted in West Africa's history; fragmentation is the exception. AfCFTA therefore provides a modern institutional framework to restore that tradition through aligned legal systems and cooperative governance.

Markets are not created by declarations alone. They require coherent legislation, efficient administration, and sustained political will. If traders encounter inconsistent standards, opaque customs, systems, or prolonged border delays, integration remains theoretical. Progress must be measured through tangible outcomes such as reduced trade costs, harmonised regulations, efficient ports and transport corridors, transparent customs processes, and interoperable digital systems.

The everyday experiences of traders, especially small-scale operators and women engaged in trade across borders, will ultimately determine AfCFTA's success. Legislative vigilance is therefore critical. Regional agreements must be incorporated into national laws and aligned with domestic regulatory frameworks because without harmonised legislation and vigilant enforcement, AfCFTA risks remaining aspirational rather than transformative.

Security and governance are equally essential as economic integration cannot flourish amid instability. Insecurity disrupts supply chains, discourages investment, and raises transaction costs. Where constitutional order weakens, investor confidence declines. Prosperity and stability reinforce one another. Economic opportunity strengthens social cohesion, while political stability attracts trade and capital. For Nigeria, the largest economy in ECOWAS, this relationship carries particular significance. Regional growth must be inclusive and balanced. Stability cannot endure if prosperity is uneven.

For decades, West Africa has remained primarily an exporter of raw materials and an importer of finished goods. This structural imbalance limits value retention and perpetuates dependency. AfCFTA presents an opportunity to build regional value chains by refining minerals locally, processing agricultural products domestically, and expanding manufacturing capacity across borders. Industrial cooperation, infrastructure investment, and regulatory harmonisation are indispensable to this shift. Strategic implementation can reposition the region from a supplier of raw commodities

to a producer of goods with added value. Demographics further strengthen the case for integration. West Africa's population is overwhelmingly young, entrepreneurial, and increasingly connected through digital technologies. AfCFTA offers a framework for scaling innovation in financial technology, digital commerce, agro processing, renewable energy, and creative industries. Demographic potential however, must be matched by policy reform, infrastructure development, and accessible regulatory systems. Integration must translate into practical opportunities for young people and small enterprises, not remain confined to official communiqués.

"AfCFTA presents West Africa with a defining moment: to move beyond fragmented economies toward a unified, well-coordinated regional market driven by disciplined implementation, legislative alignment, and shared commitment—unlocking resilience, competitiveness, and sustainable prosperity for its people."

A key insight from the parliamentary seminar was the evolving understanding of sovereignty. Cooperation does not weaken national authority; it enhances it. In a world structured around economic blocs, partnership increases resilience and bargaining strength. While the 20th century prioritised political independence, the 21st century increasingly demands economic independence, achievable through coordinated regional action.

History often signals pivotal moments quietly. The convergence of political strain, economic volatility, and demographic dynamism in West Africa suggests that such a turning point is here. Recent turbulence demonstrates the costs of fragmentation, while AfCFTA embodies the promise of unity. The task now is to move decisively

from aspiration to implementation, from protocol to productivity.

If implemented with discipline, policy alignment, shared commitment and regional integration can elevate West Africa from simply taking part in global markets to emerging as a competitive, self-reliant, and resilient economic force. The path ahead is clear; turn inward in fragmented nationalism or move forward through unity and coordinated action. The direction chosen will profoundly shape the region's future.

Next steps for implementation

The overarching AfCFTA Agreement sits on the three core pillars of Trade in Goods, Trade in Services and Dispute Settlement Mechanisms. It is divided into eight associated protocols which each address specific areas - Protocol on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Rules and Procedure for Dispute Settlement, Investment, Intellectual Property Rights, Competition Policy, Digital Trade, and Women and Youth in Trade. The Agreement and protocols require varying executive and legislative measures of the participating countries to be effectively implemented in their respective countries.

As of January 2026, there are 54 signatories and 49 State Parties to the AfCFTA Agreement, including Nigeria. The Agreement and Phase 1 Protocols together with their annexures and appendices have since becoming legally binding on all the State Parties that ratified them. Nigeria, having ratified the Agreement and 4 Protocols (Protocol on Trade in Goods, Trade in Services, Rules and Procedure for Dispute Settlement and Digital Trade), is now bound to honour her commitment by implementing the Agreement and protocols. Under Section 12 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, international treaties which have been ratified by the Nigeria require integration into the body of its laws through domestication by the National Assembly, in order to have the force of law and be enforceable in Nigerian courts. With the executive arm of government having done their part by signing and ratifying the Agreement and four of the eight protocols, the onus is now on the National Assembly to enact them into law, to provide a robust legal framework, in addition to the policy measures that have been taken by the Nigerian government.

Apart from enacting the Agreement and protocols into law, through any, or a combination of the methods of domestication practiced, other legislative actions which the National Assembly must consider include amending existing laws and regulations, enacting new ones, and updating relevant procedures. The National Assembly must also perform rigorous oversight to hold all stakeholders accountable within the ambit of its powers, to ensure Nigerian citizens and businesses fully benefit from the continental single market.



HOW NIGERIA SHAPED KEY OUTCOMES AT THE 152ND IPU ASSEMBLY

Anunkor Chizobam N.

The 152nd Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly, held recently in Istanbul, Türkiye, concluded with hundreds of lawmakers from across the world converging under the leadership of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye to deliberate on some of the most pressing challenges facing the global community. The gathering, themed “Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations,” unfolded against a backdrop of rising geopolitical tensions and widening economic inequalities, placing renewed emphasis on the role of parliaments in shaping durable solutions.

Bringing together representatives from 183 member parliaments and more than 5,000 delegates, the Istanbul Assembly reaffirmed the IPU’s position as a central forum for inter-parliamentary cooperation and legislative diplomacy. During the five-day meeting, parliamentarians engaged in intensive debates on post conflict management and global economic fairness,

spanning discussions on rebuilding fragile and post war states, strengthening democratic institutions, advancing inclusive governance, and addressing illicit financial flows alongside broader calls for more transparent and equitable global financial systems. Beyond formal resolutions, the Assembly also provided an opportunity for bilateral and multilateral engagements, as lawmakers sought common ground on peacebuilding, development, and global governance reforms.

Within this global setting, Nigeria emerged as a prominent and influential parliamentary voice, playing a central role in shaping outcomes, advancing African priorities, and securing key leadership positions. For Nigeria, the engagement marked a significant moment in the evolution of its parliamentary diplomacy. The 10th National Assembly leveraged the forum to deepen international partnerships, champion a landmark framework on post conflict recovery, and reinforce its growing presence within what is widely described as the “Parliament of Parliaments.”

The Nigerian delegation was led by the President of the Senate, Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, GCON. Also in the delegation was Deputy Speaker, Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu, CFR, Senator Natasha Akpoti Uduaghan, Hon. Bamidele Salam, Hon. Fatima Talba, Senator Aliyu Ikra Bilbis, the Clerk to the National Assembly, Mr. Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq, and the Secretary of the Directorate of Research and Information, Dr. Ali Umoru Barde.

Opening Nigeria’s formal interventions, the Senate President made a firm national statement advocating for a more equitable global order. He cautioned against the misuse of power in international relations, emphasising that violations of sovereignty in any region threatens stability worldwide. He also held bilateral discussions with Morocco’s parliamentary leadership, reaffirming a shared vision for Africa’s development grounded in mutual respect.



A major highlight of Nigeria's participation came through the Committee on Peace and International Security, where Deputy Speaker Benjamin Kalu served as co rapporteur alongside representatives from Jordan and the Netherlands. The committee adopted his draft resolution on post conflict recovery, which outlines a five pillar framework focused on rebuilding institutions, economic recovery, social reconciliation, inclusive governance, and sustained international cooperation. He emphasised that durable peace must be anchored on justice and national ownership, cautioning that externally imposed solutions risk prolonging cycles of instability.

In the Committee on Sustainable Development, Hon. Bamidele Salam positioned Nigeria at the forefront of debates on global economic reform, advocating measures to curb illicit financial flows and tax avoidance. He proposed a global minimum corporate tax rate of 15 percent, the creation of an IPU Network on asset recovery, and a review of trade practices affecting African agriculture.

Nigeria's voice was equally prominent in the advocacy for inclusion. At the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, Senator Natasha Akpoti Uduaghan highlighted legislative efforts to advance gender equality, including the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill and initiatives to strengthen affirmative action within political parties, while Hon. Fatima Talba drew the Assembly's attention to stagnating youth representation worldwide even as she proposed the establishment of a Youth Legislative Incubator Fund to nurture emerging leaders.

The delegation also joined global calls to protect the rights of parliamentarians, supporting the creation of a rapid response mechanism following reports that more than 1,000 legislators experienced some form of intimidation in year 2025. Nigeria further contributed to coordinated African positions on debt relief, climate financing, and humanitarian crises across Sudan, the Sahel, and Palestine.

“Beyond formal resolutions, lawmakers sought common ground on peacebuilding, development, and global governance reforms.”

By the end of the Assembly, Nigeria recorded notable leadership gains across key IPU structures. Speaker Abbas Tajudeen retained the country's seat on the IPU Executive Committee and was elected Vice President of the African Geopolitical Group. Senator Natasha Akpoti Uduaghan secured a position in the Bureau of the Committee

on Sustainable Development, while Hon. Bamidele Salam was appointed Rapporteur for an upcoming IPU study on digital public infrastructure and legislative oversight. Nigeria also maintained its West African seat on the IPU Executive Committee for the 2026 to 2029 term and earned a place in the High Level Advisory Group on Countering Terrorism, underscoring international recognition of its experience in security governance.

Notably, three major resolutions adopted at the Assembly bore Nigeria's imprint, particularly in peacebuilding and sustainable development. Chief among them was the post conflict recovery framework co-authored by the Deputy Speaker, that introduced stronger legislative oversight for peace missions and recommended dedicated funding mechanisms for victims of conflict.

Looking ahead, the National Assembly is expected to domesticate key outcomes from the Assembly through legislative action. Plans are already underway to establish implementation frameworks, create a formal IPU National Assembly coordination committee, and strengthen inter parliamentary collaboration, with indications that Nigeria may also host future IPU regional engagements in Abuja.

Ultimately, the Istanbul Assembly reaffirmed the critical role of parliaments in addressing global uncertainty and fostering dialogue across borders. For Nigeria, it marked a clear step forward, defined not only by diplomatic visibility but also by tangible influence on global policy conversations.

THE RULES AND BUSINESS COMMITTEE AS THE ENGINE OF PARLIAMENTARY WORK

Ukpabio Ibora J.



Order and efficiency are the result of deliberate planning rather than chance, across legislatures all over the world. Every debate, motion and bill follows a structured process that determines what is considered, when it is scheduled and how it progresses. In Nigeria's National Assembly, this critical coordinating role is performed by the Committee on Rules and Business in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

The Committee on Rules and Business is a special committee established under the Standing Orders of each chamber to organise and coordinate parliamentary procedure. Although it operates largely outside public attention compared to sectoral committees, its functions are central to the effective conduct of legislative business in both chambers of the National Assembly.

The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended), grants each chamber the authority to regulate its own procedure. Section 60 provides that the Senate and the House of Representatives shall regulate their respective proceedings, thereby empowering each chamber to establish rules governing its business, including sittings, recess and internal operations. Furthermore, Section 62 authorises both chambers to appoint committees as may be required for the efficient discharge of legislative responsibilities.

In line with this constitutional framework, each chamber adopts its Standing Orders at the beginning of every new Assembly. These rules provide for the establishment of the Committee on Rules and Business and define its structure, powers, and responsibilities. While the Committee often comprises principal officers and experienced legislators due to its strategic importance, there is no

constitutional limitation on who may serve as chair. Membership is generally drawn from ranking lawmakers to ensure effective coordination of legislative activities.

The Committee plays a central role in scheduling legislative business and managing the Notice and Order Papers, which constitute the official agenda for plenary sittings. It determines the sequence in which bills, motions, committee reports, petitions and executive communications are considered. By organising the daily and weekly agenda, the Committee promotes orderly debate and prevents congestion in parliamentary proceedings.

“The Constitution empowers each chamber to regulate its own proceedings and establish committees for the efficient discharge of legislative responsibilities.”

For each sitting day, the Committee prepares and circulates the Order Paper outlining items for deliberation. It also produces key procedural documents such as the Chamber Brief in the Senate, the Speaker's Guide in the House of Representatives and the Clerks' Guide, all of which support the smooth conduct of legislative business. In addition, the Committee ensures adherence to the Standing Orders by guiding the introduction and progression of bills through all legislative stages.

Following the second reading of bills, they are referred to the appropriate standing

committees for detailed scrutiny. The Committee on Rules and Business oversees this referral process and tracks legislative progress to ensure timely consideration. It also manages the broader legislative calendar, including the scheduling of ministerial appearances and oversight engagements. Where necessary, it handles motions for reconsideration of bills, working in collaboration with leadership and relevant directorates to ensure procedural compliance.

The Committee meets ahead of plenary sessions to review pending legislative items, including bills at different stages, motions, committee reports, and executive communications. Based on this review, it compiles the Notice and Order Papers, which provide the structure for debate and decision-making. While it organises and schedules business, final decisions remain the responsibility of the Senate or the House of Representatives during plenary sittings.

Although procedural in function, the Committee's role is highly strategic. By determining the flow and timing of legislative activities, it directly influences the pace, efficiency, and coherence of lawmaking. Without its coordinating function, parliamentary proceedings could become disjointed and inefficient.

The Committee on Rules and Business is therefore a key institutional mechanism responsible for organising legislative activities, managing the Order Paper, and ensuring compliance with procedural rules. Anchored in constitutional authority and guided by Standing Orders, it provides the organisational backbone of parliamentary operations. Its work, though often conducted behind the scenes, remains indispensable to orderly, transparent and effective legislative governance.

A black and white portrait of Abubakar Mohammed, a man wearing a traditional Nigerian cap (fila) and sunglasses, looking slightly to the right. The background of the portrait is a soft, out-of-focus yellow and green.

In Loving **MEMORY**

ABUBAKAR MOHAMMED

The National Assembly Legislative Digest commiserates with the National Assembly Management and staff on the demise of a dedicated and diligent staff of the Information Department. Noted for his humility, strong sense of commitment to duty, efficiency and excellence with which he carried out his responsibilities. He will also be remembered for his unflinching dedication and loyalty, which earned him the respect and affection of his colleagues and superiors. His contributions to the work of the Legislative Digest will be greatly missed.

January 20, 2026

CNA Commissions NABRO Office, Ends Years of Operating from Rented Facility



The Clerk to the National Assembly, Barr. Kamoru Ogunlana, on Wednesday, 22 April 2026, formally commissioned a new office complex for the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO), marking the end of years of operating from rented accommodation in the Federal Capital Territory.

The commissioning ceremony, held behind the White House within the National Assembly Complex, was attended by senior management staff of the National Assembly led by the Clerk to the National Assembly.

Speaking during the ceremony, Ogunlana commended the leadership of the National Assembly, particularly the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Abbas Tajudeen, for his role in securing the building for NABRO. The facility previously housed the National Assembly Library before the completion of a new library complex. The Clerk urged NABRO management to ensure proper maintenance of the building and its facilities in order to preserve their aesthetic and operational value. He also commended the contractor for delivering what he described as “meticulous work” in line with the standards of the National Assembly.

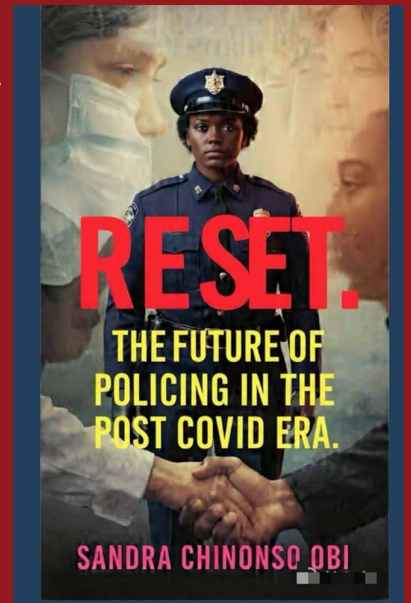
Ogunlana further stressed the importance of administrative discipline and facility management, directing that all electrical appliances and water systems be properly shut down at the close of work each day to ensure safety, efficiency, and sustainability. In her remarks, the Director of NABRO, Hajiya Dr Mariam, expressed appreciation to the Speaker, the Clerk, and the management of the National Assembly for relocating the office to what she described as a “state-of-the-art building in a class of its own.”

Dr Mariam, who said she had visited several parliaments and budget research institutions around the world, stated that the new NABRO facility ranks among the best she had seen. She assured management that the building would be properly maintained and preserved for future generations.

The delegation led by the Clerk to the National Assembly included the Deputy Clerk to the National Assembly, Engr. Bashir Yero, secretaries of various directorates, directors of departments, and other senior officials who witnessed the commissioning ceremony. The new headquarters is expected to strengthen NABRO’s institutional capacity to deliver independent budget analysis, fiscal research, and legislative support services to lawmakers.

CSP Sandra Obi Unveils New Book on Future of Policing in the Post-COVID Era

The National Assembly Library and Resource Centre recently hosted the launch of *Reset. The Future of Policing in the Post-COVID Era*, a thought-provoking book by Sandra Chinonso Obi, a seasoned police officer, security expert and reform-driven advocate for modern policing. The event, held within the National Assembly Complex, drew policymakers, security professionals, researchers and stakeholders committed to strengthening public safety and institutional reform in Nigeria.



The book examines the evolving realities of policing in a post-pandemic world and offers practical insights into the challenges and opportunities confronting law enforcement agencies. It is described as an important resource for law enforcement professionals, policymakers, scholars, community leaders and citizens interested in the future of justice and security. Beyond institutional reform, the publication emphasises the need to transform the foundations of legitimacy, accountability and public trust in modern policing systems.

In her remarks, CSP Obi noted that the book carefully combines research, policy frameworks and lived institutional experiences into a coherent vision for an effective, equitable and just law enforcement system. She described the publication as a timely contribution to ongoing conversations on security sector reform and community-centred policing.

Speaking at the event, the Clerk to the National Assembly, Barr. Kamoru Ogunlana, represented by Pharm. Ali B. Umoru of the Research and Information Directorate, stated that the COVID-19 pandemic exposed significant gaps in training, technology and public trust within policing institutions. He, however, noted that it also revealed the courage, resilience and adaptability of Nigerian police officers in difficult circumstances. According to him, the book is “not merely an academic exercise, but a legislative tool” that documents lessons from the pandemic era and outlines practical pathways for future reforms.

He commended the author for providing what he described as a blueprint for progress, adding that the work reflects the core responsibility of the National Assembly in transforming experience into policy and policy into national development.

The launch of *Reset. The Future of Policing in the Post-COVID Era* underscores the growing importance of research-driven dialogue in shaping responsive and people-oriented security institutions. It also reaffirms the National Assembly’s commitment to supporting intellectual contributions that advance governance, justice and national security.

OFFICIAL REPORT DEPARTMENT COMMENDS NATIONAL ASSEMBLY LEADERSHIP ON CAPACITY BUILDING INITIATIVES

O’Oduaree Eze



The Official Report Department of the National Assembly of Nigeria plays a critical role in the legislative process by ensuring the accurate, verbatim recording and documentation of parliamentary proceedings. As custodians of the Assembly’s official records—commonly published as the Votes and Proceedings and Hansard—the Department is tasked with preserving the integrity of debates, motions, resolutions, and legislative decisions. Its core objective is to provide a reliable, transparent, and permanent account of legislative activities, thereby supporting accountability, institutional memory, and informed governance.

In line with this mandate, staff of the Official Report Department have expressed deep appreciation for the sustained support and commitment of the National Assembly leadership towards strengthening legislative reporting and institutional capacity.

The commendation follows the recent approval and successful organisation of an in-house training programme designed specifically for newly appointed official reporters who previously had no formal background in parliamentary reporting. The initiative, widely described as a landmark achievement, represents the first structured training of its kind in the history of the Department and the National Assembly.

According to the Department, the training has already yielded measurable results, equipping participants with the technical competencies, procedural understanding, and editorial discipline required for effective legislative documentation. By enhancing reporters’ proficiency in capturing debates accurately and in real time, the programme is expected to significantly improve the quality, precision, and timeliness of parliamentary records.

This development forms part of a broader series of capacity-building and staff development initiatives introduced under the current leadership, reflecting a deliberate commitment to professionalism, continuous learning, and institutional reform. Such interventions are particularly vital in a modern legislature, where the demand for credible, accessible, and timely information continues to grow.

Observers note that strengthening the capacity of official reporters is fundamental to improving legislative processes. Accurate reporting not only ensures that proceedings are faithfully preserved but also reinforces transparency, public trust, and institutional efficiency. As the National Assembly continues to evolve, the role of the Official Report Department remains indispensable in bridging the gap between legislative action and public understanding.

The Department has further reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the ongoing transformation of the National Assembly through enhanced performance, professional excellence, and unwavering dedication to its constitutional responsibilities.

Legislative LEXICON

1. **Second Reading:** The stage in the legislative process where the general principles of a bill are debated.
2. **Third Reading:** The final stage of a bill in a chamber, usually followed by a final vote.
3. **Veto:** The President’s constitutional right to refuse assent to a bill. The National Assembly may override a veto with a required majority.
4. **Vote of Confidence / No Confidence:** Formal expressions by lawmakers either supporting or withdrawing support from a government functionary or body.
5. **Assent:** The formal approval given by the President to a bill passed by the National Assembly, after which it becomes law (Section 58, 1999 Constitution as amended).
6. **Committee of the Whole:** When the entire chamber sits as a committee to consider a bill clause-by-clause, allowing more flexible debate rules.
7. **Conference Committee:** A joint committee formed to reconcile differences between Senate and House versions of the same bill.
8. **Consideration Stage:** The phase where a bill is examined clause-by-clause and amendments are proposed before final passage.
9. **Enactment Clause:** The formal statement at the beginning of a law: “BE IT ENACTED by the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria...” It signifies legislative authority.
10. **Executive Communication:** A formal message transmitted from the President to the National Assembly, often relating to bills, nominations, or policy matters.

NASS CONFIRMS TEGBE AND ENIKANOLAIYE AS MINISTERS AMID REFORM PUSH

Oghenechuko Favour Idedevwo



The National Assembly has confirmed the appointments of Mr Joseph Olasunkanmi Tegbe as Minister of Power and Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye as Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. Their confirmations followed Senate screening exercises conducted in accordance with constitutional provisions.

Mr Tegbe was nominated by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu following the resignation of Mr Adebayo Adedeji. A former Senior Partner at KPMG Nigeria and Africa, Tegbe assured lawmakers during his appearance before the Senate of “measurable improvements” in the power sector within three to six months, emphasising transparency, accountability, and institutional reform as central pillars of his agenda.

Tegbe also pledged to conduct an independent assessment of the nation’s power sector while strengthening transparency and public sector performance. He noted that gas shortages, transmission bottlenecks, and poor coordination across the electricity

value chain have continued to limit power generation below the nation’s installed capacity.

To address these challenges, he outlined plans to stabilise the national grid, modernise critical infrastructure, improve commercial frameworks, and enforce accountability across the sector.

Tegbe has extensive experience in governance reform, fiscal policy, infrastructure development, technology advisory, digital strategy, cybersecurity, and international relations. His appointment is expected to support ongoing efforts to reposition Nigeria’s power sector and improve electricity supply across the country.

Ambassador Sola Enikanolaiye, until recently Senior Special Assistant to the President on Foreign Affairs and International Relations, also highlighted the Federal Government’s ongoing diplomatic engagements with South Africa and Ghana regarding attacks on Nigerians residing in both countries. He further expressed his commitment to

simplifying Nigeria’s visa processes in order to attract greater foreign investment and strengthen economic diplomacy.

An accomplished Nigerian career diplomat and technocrat with over three decades of service, Ambassador Enikanolaiye has held several senior diplomatic, administrative, and strategic positions, including serving as Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is recognised for his expertise in policy planning, strategic analysis, leadership, organisational management, and international relations.

The confirmation of both appointees reflects the Federal Government’s continued efforts to strengthen governance, improve service delivery, and advance Nigeria’s strategic interests at home and abroad. The appointments are also expected to support the administration’s broader agenda of economic reform, institutional strengthening, and enhanced international engagement.

TENETS OF POSITIVE ATTITUDE

A positive attitude shapes a better you and a better world.

1. BE POSITIVE

Focus on the good in every situation.



2. BE GRATEFUL

Appreciate what you have.



3. BE HUMBLE

Stay humble and respect others.



4. BE KIND

Treat people with respect and compassion.



5. BE DISCIPLINED

Be self-controlled and stay focused on your goals.



6. BE OPTIMISTIC

Expect the best and stay hopeful.



7. BE RESILIENT

Learn from challenges and keep moving forward.



8. BE HONEST

Always tell the truth and do what is right.



9. BE OPEN MINDED

Be willing to learn and accept new ideas.



10. BE A BUILDER

Encourage others and help build a better community.



★ YOUR ATTITUDE TODAY DETERMINES YOUR TOMORROW.

Reflections on Leadership

With Idowu Bakare



THE COURAGE TO HEAR WHAT YOU DON'T WANT TO HEAR

Leadership often speaks the language of openness. We say we value feedback. We invite ideas. We encourage people to “speak freely.” Yet in practice, one of the most difficult tests of leadership is not speaking, it is listening, especially when what is being said is uncomfortable, inconvenient, or contrary to our expectations.

In many organisations, particularly within structured public institutions like the National Assembly, information tends to travel upward in a filtered form. By the time it reaches leadership, it has been softened, refined, and sometimes stripped of its most important truth. Not because people are dishonest, but because they are cautious. They have learned, often from experience, that not every leader welcomes unvarnished perspectives.

This is where leadership is quietly tested.

The ability to hear what you do not want to hear requires more than patience; it requires intentional restraint. It means resisting the instinct to defend a position too quickly, to interrupt, or to dismiss a viewpoint simply because it challenges your thinking. It demands a level of discipline that is often underestimated — the discipline to pause, to reflect, and to consider that others may be seeing something you have missed.

Many leadership failures do not occur because leaders lack intelligence or commitment. They occur because leaders are insulated from reality. When dissent disappears, it is not a sign of alignment; it is often a sign of withdrawal. When meetings are always smooth, decisions uncontested, and ideas quickly agreed upon, it may indicate not strength, but silence.

And silence, over time, is costly.

Critical risks go unflagged. Weak assumptions go unchallenged. Opportunities for improvement are overlooked. In the public service, where decisions affect not just organisations but citizens, the cost of filtered information can be far-reaching.

Leaders who cultivate honest feedback



understand that disagreement is not disloyalty. In fact, it is often the highest form of commitment. People who care about outcomes are more likely to raise concerns, question direction, and offer alternative views. The challenge for leadership is to recognise this not as resistance, but as contribution.

Creating such an environment is not about grand declarations. It is shaped by everyday behaviour. How a leader reacts in a single moment to a correction, a question, or a differing opinion can determine whether people will speak up again. A defensive response closes the door. A thoughtful acknowledgment keeps it open.

Simple practices matter. Asking, “What are we missing?” and meaning it. Inviting the quietest voice in the room to contribute. Thanking those who raise difficult points, even when they complicate decisions. These actions, repeated over time, signal that truth is valued more than comfort.

There is also a personal dimension to this kind of leadership. Hearing what we do

not want to hear can challenge our sense of control, our confidence, and sometimes our ego. It can expose gaps in our thinking or reveal unintended consequences of our decisions. But this is precisely where growth occurs. Leadership is not diminished by such moments; it is strengthened by them.

In complex systems like government, no single individual holds all the information required to make perfect decisions. The quality of leadership, therefore, depends not only on what a leader knows, but on what a leader is willing to hear.

Ultimately, the courage to hear what you do not want to hear is the courage to lead in reality, not in comfort. It is the willingness to choose insight over approval, truth over ease, and long-term effectiveness over short-term reassurance.

Because in the end, leadership is not measured by how often we are agreed with, but by how well we understand the full picture before we decide.

And that understanding begins with listening.

STANDING COMMITTEES AND THE LAWMAKING PROCESS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Ukpabio Iboru J.



In 1885, long before he became the 28th President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson observed that “Congress in session is Congress on public exhibition, whilst Congress in its committee rooms is Congress at work.”

More than a century later, that insight remains one of the clearest descriptions of how legislatures function. While plenary debates capture public attention, the real craftsmanship of lawmaking happens away from the spotlight but in committee rooms where ideas are tested, policies scrutinized, and decisions refined.

This reality holds true in Nigeria. Since the transition from the Westminster parliamentary system of the First Republic to the current presidential model, the structure and process of lawmaking have evolved significantly. Today, the National Assembly relies heavily on its standing committees as the nucleus of legislative activity.

Although plenary sessions provide the

formal stage for debate and decision, most legislative work begins and matures within committees. Every bill, motion, and petition is subjected to detailed examination at this level before it is considered for final passage. In this sense, committees function as the primary filters of the legislative process, ensuring that proposals are rigorously assessed before they become law.

Real lawmaking in Nigeria happens in National Assembly committees, where bills are examined, budgets reviewed, and government held accountable making them the true engine of legislative work.

The authority of these committees is firmly grounded in law. Section 60 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) empowers each chamber of the National Assembly to regulate its procedures. This authority is operationalised through the Standing Orders of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, which provide the framework for the establishment, composition, and functioning of committees.

Structurally, standing committees are permanent features of the Assembly, reconstituted at the beginning of each legislative cycle. Their mandates are aligned with government ministries, departments, and agencies, allowing for specialised oversight and sector-focused lawmaking. In the current Assembly, the Senate operates dozens of standing committees, while the House of Representatives maintains an even broader committee structure, reflecting the scale and complexity of governance.

Membership of these committees is deliberately diverse, reflecting Nigeria's federal character and multiparty system.



Behind every law in Nigeria is committee work, where ideas are tested, policies refined, and accountability enforced before reaching the public stage.

Committee leadership and composition are designed to ensure representation across regions and political interests, while also encouraging the development of subject-matter expertise among members.

The functions of standing committees are both extensive and indispensable.

First, they serve as the principal arena for legislative scrutiny. Bills are examined in detail, often through public hearings where stakeholders, experts, and citizens contribute their perspectives. This process improves the quality of legislation and ensures that laws are informed by practical realities.

Second, committees play a central role in executive oversight. By engaging ministries and agencies, they monitor the implementation of laws, track public expenditure, and demand accountability. This function has become increasingly important in the 10th National Assembly, where committees have taken a more active role in investigative hearings, revenue tracking, and performance reviews of government institutions.

Third, committees are critical to the budget process. During appropriation cycles, they review and interrogate budget proposals

submitted by government agencies, ensuring that allocations are aligned with national priorities and that public funds are judiciously applied.

Finally, committees exercise investigative authority, probing matters of public concern and summoning officials where necessary. Through this function, they provide a direct institutional response to governance failures and public grievances.

In recent years, the work of committees has also reflected emerging policy priorities. From oversight of infrastructure and education funding to inquiries into financial systems, digital innovation, and national security concerns, committees have increasingly engaged with complex and evolving areas of governance. These engagements demonstrate their relevance in connecting legislative action to contemporary national challenges.

Beyond their technical roles, committees strengthen representative democracy by expanding participation. Public hearings, stakeholder consultations, and petitions provide citizens with avenues to influence the legislative process. In this way, committees bring governance closer to the people, ensuring that lawmaking is not only procedural but inclusive.

Yet, the effectiveness of the committee system is not automatic. It depends on adequate funding, strong research support, capable secretariats, and a culture of follow-through. Where these elements are weak, committee work risks becoming routine rather than impactful. Where they are strengthened, committees become powerful instruments of accountability and reform.

Ultimately, standing committees are more than procedural structures; they are the working machinery of the National Assembly. They transform legislative intent into actionable policy, bridge the gap between government and citizens, and uphold the system of checks and balances that sustains democratic governance.

As Nigeria continues to consolidate its democracy, the vitality of its legislature will increasingly depend on the strength of its committees. For it is in these rooms that the true work of parliament is done.



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NEWS FROM OTHER **PARLIAMENTS**



Brazil

Congress Approves Plan to Drastically Cut Bolsonaro's Jail Term

In a decisive legislative revolt, Brazil's conservative-majority Congress has formally overridden a presidential veto to drastically slash the prison sentence of former President Jair Bolsonaro. The move intensifies an already volatile political war over the nation's democratic institutions.

The successful override marks a devastating blow to current President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva. Bolsonaro, who was originally sentenced to 27 years in prison for his role in plotting a coup following his 2022 election defeat, could now see his term reduced to just over two years. The development serves as a stark warning

about how shifting legislative power can rapidly rewrite judicial mandates and destabilize democratic norms. The congressional override effectively nullifies President Lula's attempt to preserve the original 27-year sentence handed down by the Supreme Court.

Turkey

Parliament Adopts Law Banning Social Media for Children Under 15

The Turkish parliament has adopted a law that bans social media for children under 15 years old – making Turkey the latest country to adopt such a move aimed at protecting young people from online harms.

"A social network provider will not be allowed to provide services to children who have not reached the age of 15 and will be required to take the necessary measures, including age verification, to ensure that such services are not provided," the new law said. The law also introduces new requirements for social media companies for children above 15 years old.

"It [a provider of a social network] will take the necessary measures to provide differentiated services specific to children who have reached the age of 15. The

measures taken within this scope will be published on the social network provider's own website. The social network provider will provide clear, understandable, and user friendly parental control tools," the new law

added. However, it is still not clear how the ban will be implemented in practice. Justice Minister Akin Gurlek told parliament that a separate law will be introduced to regulate it.





France

Lawmakers pass bill simplifying return of artworks looted during colonial era

French lawmakers have passed a bill to simplify the return of artworks looted during the colonial era to their countries of origin.

France still has in its possession tens of thousands of artworks and other prized artefacts that it looted from its colonial empire.

The draft legislation to return them was unanimously approved by the lower house National Assembly in April while the upper house had unanimously passed the measure in January.

President Emmanuel Macron has made it a political promise to return the cultural items, and has gone further than his predecessors in admitting past French abuses in Africa.



Kenya

Parliament Begins Scrutiny of Bill Aimed At Lowering Fuel Costs

A Bill seeking to amend the Value Added Tax has been formally introduced in the National Assembly through a legislation process known as First Reading. Majority Leader Kimani Ichungwah is seeking to lower VAT on petroleum products from 16 percent to 8 percent for a period of three months.

The Bill was referred to the House Finance and Planning Committee where it will undergo parliamentary scrutiny and public participation before it can be enacted into law. The move comes after public uproar after the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority, adjusted increased by Sh28.69 per litre, while Diesel has recorded a steeper rise of Sh40.30 per litre. Following the adjustment, a litre of Super Petrol will now retail at Sh206.97 per litre, Diesel Sh206.84 per litre. President William Ruto recently announced rolled out a package of interventions to manage fuel price pressures amid global market volatility.

Taiwan

Taiwan parliament authorizes signing of stalled \$9 billion U.S. arms deals



Taiwan's parliament has authorized the government to sign U.S. agreements for four arms sales packages worth some \$9 billion, after officials warned that Taipei would go to the back of the line if it missed the deadline, sending the wrong message to Washington.

The back and forth on Taiwan's defense spending has provoked concern in the United States, as it is the most important international backer and arms supplier of the Chinese-claimed island, despite a lack of formal diplomatic ties.

Parliament Speaker Han Kuo-yu urged the government to submit a complete report on the weapons delivery schedule for parliament to review after it signs the letters.

The weapons covered include TOW anti-tank missiles, M109A7 self-propelled howitzers, Lockheed Martin-made Javelin missiles and the HIMARS multiple launch rocket system, worth around \$9

Somalia

Somalia Parliament's Mandate Expires Without Elections in Sight

The official four-year term of Somalia's bicameral Federal Parliament ended on Tuesday, April 14, in accordance with Article 60 of the country's Provisional Constitution. Parliament, which has served as the central pillar of Somalia's governance system since being sworn in on April 14, 2022, provided the legal foundation for the election of President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on May 15, 2022, and the subsequent formation of the federal government later that year.



Political analysts warn that the end of the parliamentary mandate may place the country in a transitional phase, political uncertainty, potentially limiting the ability of key institutions to undertake major legislative and oversight functions. Abdulatif Muse Sanyare, a member of the House of the People, said the parliament will now operate in a caretaker capacity.

The situation is further complicated by recent constitutional amendments approved by the federal parliament before the end of its term. The changes include extending the mandates of federal institutions, including the presidency, from four to five years. The federal government has defended the move as necessary for transitioning to a one-person, one-vote electoral system. However, the amendments have been strongly rejected by Puntland and Jubaland state administrations, as well as opposition groups, who argue that the Provisional Constitution clearly sets a four-year term and that the changes lack broad national consensus.



First Lady Commissions National Assembly Christian Chapel

Akubueze Augustina & Chizobam Anunkor

Nigeria's First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, CON, has officially commissioned the National Assembly Christian Chapel, which has now provided a permanent place of worship for Christian lawmakers and staff. The new sanctuary reflects the role of faith in public service and introduces a spiritual dimension to the institution's work..

Bishop Matthew Kukah, a renowned clergyman and Catholic Bishop of Sokoto State, delivered the exhortation, at the event calling on Nigerians to come together in unity and purpose. His words resonated with the audience, emphasizing the need for collective effort in addressing the country's challenges. "We must put aside our differences and work towards a common goal," he said. "We must be united in our pursuit of peace, justice, and prosperity for all Nigerians."

The commissioning ceremony was attended by the Senate President, Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON; Senate Leader, Senator Opeyemi Bamidele, CON; Senator Ipalibo Banigo; the President of the Christian Legislative Fellowship, Senator Binos Yaroe;

Senator Amos Yohanna, who also serves as Coordinator of the Senate Christian Fellowship; and other Senators.

"This chapel is a beacon of hope and unity, reminding us of the importance of faith, purpose, and collective effort."

Also in attendance were the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, CFR; the Coordinator of the House of Representatives Christian Fellowship, Hon. Amos Gwamna Magaji; the Clerk to the National Assembly, Barrister Kamoru Ogunlana; Clerk to the Senate, Dr. Emmanuel Odo, Secretaries of Directorates; and members of the Management and staff of the National Assembly.

The former Head of State, General Yakubu Gowon, GCFR, was also present, alongside faith leaders including Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah of the Catholic Diocese of Sokoto; Rev. Job Bagat Mallam, ECWA President; Archbishop Daniel Okoh,

President of the Christian Association of Nigeria; Bishop Francis Wale Oke, President of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria; and Bishop David Abioye of the Living Word Conquerors Global Assembly.

In her remarks, the First Lady described the Chapel as a beacon of hope and a source of guidance for those entrusted with the responsibilities of governance. For many, its completion represents far more than a new building. It marks the fulfilment of a journey that began years ago.

When the 6th Assembly commenced, there was no dedicated space for Christian legislators to gather for prayer. A small but determined group met in borrowed rooms, sometimes in a modest office and at other times in an empty hall, before a scheduled meeting. They prayed for wisdom, unity, and the nation's wellbeing. There was no formal structure, no official recognition, and no permanent space.

By the 7th Assembly, the prayer group had grown. More legislators joined, and the fellowship became formally organised with appointed leaders. They began to envision larger initiatives, including hosting gatherings similar to the National Prayer Breakfast held in the United States. Yet, one persistent challenge remained, which was



the absence of a permanent venue. Week after week, meetings were held wherever space could be found. On some occasions, gatherings were nearly cancelled due to lack of a suitable location.

With the inauguration of the 8th Assembly, momentum increased. Membership expanded, the fellowship strengthened, and aspirations grew bolder. During one meeting, the idea of building a chapel within the National Assembly complex was proposed. At first, the vision seemed ambitious and perhaps even unattainable. A chapel within the complex appeared improbable. Yet the idea endured and resurfaced in conversations and planning sessions.

On 24 May 2019, the foundation was laid by former Speaker, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara. It was a moment marked by hope and conviction. As the first stone was set, many believed they were building more than walls. They believed they were establishing a legacy. Plans were developed for a 750 seat auditorium capable of hosting weekly prayer meetings and the Annual National Prayer Breakfast and so gradually, the structure began to take shape.

During the 9th Assembly, construction continued despite challenges, including funding constraints, coordination difficulties, and inevitable delays. Leadership changed, but the vision remained steadfast. The Chapel was no longer merely an aspiration, it steadily becoming a reality.

With the advent of the 10th Assembly, the project was finally completed. What began as a small gathering of believers in borrowed rooms evolved into a lasting symbol of faith, perseverance, and unity.

Speakers at the commissioning emphasised themes of unity, ethical leadership, and

service to the common good. They noted that the Chapel should inspire lawmakers to legislate with fairness and accountability while fostering patriotism and collective responsibility.

It is noteworthy that while serving as a distinguished Senator of the Federal Republic, the First Lady, Senator Oluremi Tinubu, played an active leadership role within the Fellowship. She provided inspiration to the choir and the broader fellowship community, and her support proved instrumental in bringing the project to completion.

“What began as a small gathering of believers in borrowed rooms evolved into a lasting symbol of faith, perseverance, and unity.”

The Fellowship expressed appreciation to the Senate President, His Excellency Senator Godswill Akpabio, and the Deputy Speaker, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Kalu, for their substantial support towards completing the Chapel. Many individuals contributed to this achievement, including legislators, aides, staff, donors, and supporters. Their collective efforts transformed a shared vision into a permanent sanctuary.

Amid the intensity of legislative debate, the Chapel now offers a place for stillness, reflection, and moral renewal. It stands as a reminder that leadership is a sacred trust requiring wisdom, humility, and integrity. More than a building, the Chapel

is a testament to perseverance and proof that even the smallest gathering, guided by faith and unity, can create something that will endure for generations.

The ceremony also featured prayers from various Christian leaders, who beseeched God to bless Nigeria, the National Assembly, and the Church. The prayers, which were a fitting culmination to a day of celebration and rededication, reflected the country's rich spiritual heritage.

National Assembly Chapel is a symbol of the country's commitment to faith and spirituality. The chapel, which was dedicated in a grand ceremony, provides a space for lawmakers to reflect, recharge, and seek guidance. The mosque, inaugurated last year by Vice President Kashim Shettima, caters to the spiritual needs of Muslim lawmakers, demonstrating the National Assembly's commitment to inclusivity and diversity.

Senate President Godswill Akpabio also commended the initiative, saying it would foster a sense of community and shared purpose among lawmakers. “This chapel is a beacon of hope and unity, reminding us of the importance of faith, purpose, and collective effort,” he said.

The dedication of the Chapel is a significant development in the country's legislative history, providing a space for lawmakers to come together and seek guidance. As Nigeria navigates its challenges, the National Assembly Chapel stands as a symbol of hope and unity, reminding all of the importance of faith, purpose, and collective effort.

The country looks to the future, the National Assembly Chapel stands as a testament to the power of faith, unity, and collective effort, inspiring Nigerians to work towards a brighter future.



Owolaye Shola
Jafar Muhammad
Akubueze Augustina

Nigeria stands at a critical point in its development journey. With a population exceeding 230 million and millions of young people entering the labour market every year, the country must rethink how its education system prepares citizens for productive work. Strengthening agricultural education—particularly through the revitalization of agricultural colleges—offers a powerful pathway toward food security, job creation, and sustainable economic growth.

There was a time when Nigeria’s prosperity sprang directly from the land. Agriculture powered the economy, shaped regional strengths, and anchored national confidence. The towering groundnut pyramids of the North, the cocoa-driven prosperity of the West, and the palm produce wealth of the East symbolized a thriving agricultural economy. Before oil became the dominant source of public revenue, farming sustained livelihoods and

financed national development.

Today, that legacy appears distant. Nigeria now grapples with rising food prices, youth unemployment, and persistent insecurity in farming communities. The country imports commodities it once produced in abundance. Yet the fundamentals remain unchanged. Nigeria’s soil remains fertile, its climate supports diverse agricultural production, and its youthful population represents enormous productive potential. The challenge lies not in the land itself, but in how the nation organizes its institutions, policies, and human capital to harness these advantages.

A recent high-level retreat on “Agricultural Colleges and Institutions” organized by the Senate Committee on Agricultural Colleges and Institutions under the leadership of its Chairman, Senator Sharafadeen Abiodun Alli, provided an important platform for addressing these issues. Legislators, policymakers, educators, and industry stakeholders gathered to examine how

agricultural education can contribute more effectively to national food security and employment generation.

At the centre of the discussions was the often overlooked role of agricultural colleges. Historically, these institutions served as engines of rural transformation. They trained skilled farmers, researchers, and innovators who translated scientific knowledge into practical agricultural solutions.

Over time, however, many agricultural colleges have struggled with out-dated infrastructure, inadequate funding, weak industry partnerships, and limited integration of modern technologies. As a result, a significant gap has emerged between agricultural education and real-world agricultural practice. Many graduates leave these institutions with academic qualifications but without the practical skills required to succeed in modern agribusiness.

“Agricultural colleges must evolve from traditional training centres into modern

innovation hubs for agribusiness and food systems.”

This challenge reflects a broader issue within Nigeria’s education system. Many institutions still operate under an out-dated framework designed primarily to produce clerical workers rather than innovators or entrepreneurs. Consequently, graduates often enter the labour market as job seekers rather than job creators.

To address this challenge, entrepreneurship must become central to agricultural education. Students should be trained not only to cultivate crops but also to identify opportunities, organize resources, manage enterprises, and create value across the agricultural value chain. When properly equipped, graduates can become Agripreneurs capable of generating employment for themselves and others.

Achieving this transformation requires deliberate curriculum reform. Agricultural colleges must move away from theory-heavy instruction toward practical, skill-based training that reflects the realities of modern agriculture. Entrepreneurship education should be integrated into agricultural programmes alongside hands-on farm training, agro-processing experience, and instruction in business management, financial literacy, and digital marketing.

Modern agriculture is increasingly driven by technology. Mechanized farming systems, irrigation technologies, climate-smart practices, and digital tools are transforming agricultural production around the world. Nigerian agricultural colleges must therefore incorporate these innovations into their training systems.

Institutions also require functional demonstration farms, laboratories, mechanization centres, and agro-processing facilities where students can gain practical experience. Agricultural colleges should develop innovation hubs where students can transform ideas into viable enterprises.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) also plays an important role in strengthening Nigeria’s agricultural workforce. TVET

programmes provide young Nigerians with practical skills that can be applied directly in farming, processing, and related agricultural services.

While Nigeria has introduced policies promoting vocational education, many training institutions still struggle with out-dated equipment and limited access to modern technologies. Encouragingly, recent government initiatives that provide tuition support, stipends, certification opportunities, and mentorship programmes have begun attracting increased interest from young people.

*From Classrooms to
Farms and Markets,
Building Skilled
Agripreneurs to Feed
the Nation and Drive
Sustainable Growth*

However, lasting impact will depend on stronger partnerships between educational institutions and industry.

“When education aligns with industry needs, graduates become productive contributors to the economy from day one.”

Agricultural training must extend beyond crop production to include the entire agricultural value chain. This includes processing, storage, logistics, packaging, marketing, and agribusiness management. True food security depends not only on growing more food but also on strengthening the systems that preserve, distribute, and add value to agricultural products.

Collaboration is therefore essential. Agricultural colleges must work more closely with research institutions, agribusiness companies, financial institutions, cooperatives, and technology providers. Such partnerships can ensure that research addresses real challenges faced by farmers while providing students with valuable industry exposure through internships,

mentorship programmes, and practical training opportunities.

For these reforms to succeed, strong legislative support will be necessary. Key priorities include the mandatory inclusion of practical agricultural and TVET components in educational programmes, formal frameworks for public-private partnerships in curriculum development and internships, and increased funding for the modernization of agricultural institutions.

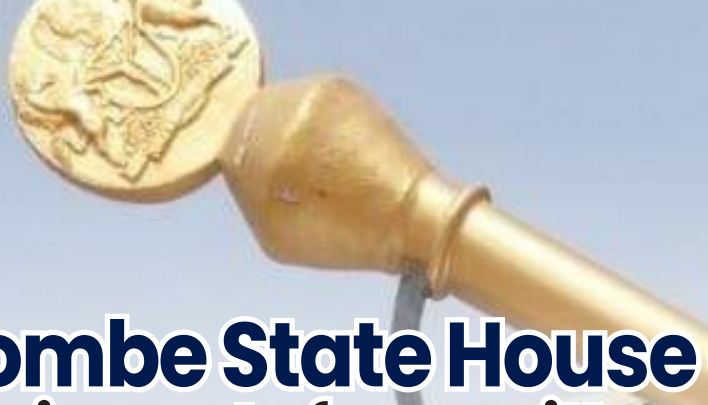
Government policies should also encourage entrepreneurship education and promote the integration of digital technologies into agricultural training. Flexibility should allow institutions to adapt programmes to regional strengths such as crop farming, livestock production, fisheries, or agro-processing.

If properly implemented, these reforms could deliver significant national benefits. Agricultural productivity would increase through improved farming practices and technological adoption. Agro-industrial activities would expand, supporting economic diversification beyond oil. Youth unemployment would decline as more young people establish successful agricultural enterprises. Rural communities would also experience renewed economic vitality.

Most importantly, Nigeria would nurture a new generation of skilled Agripreneurs capable of feeding the nation while competing in global agricultural markets.

Agricultural renewal must therefore be seen as more than an economic strategy. It represents a pathway to national stability, dignity, and long-term resilience. Agricultural colleges remain strategic assets within Nigeria’s development framework. When supported through effective legislation, modern curricula, adequate funding, and strong industry collaboration, they can drive food security, job creation, and economic transformation.

Nigeria’s soil remains ready. The challenge lies in the nation’s resolve to reconnect with the land through innovation, disciplined policy implementation, and institutional reform.



Gombe State House of Assembly: The impact of committee on Health

Ado Isah & Sandra Kaluri

Legislative committees are central to the effective functioning of modern democratic legislatures. Within state assemblies, committees provide the structure through which detailed legislative work, oversight responsibilities, and public engagement are carried out efficiently. In Nigeria's subnational legislatures, including the Gombe State House of Assembly, committees serve as the engine room of parliamentary activity, enabling lawmakers to examine issues in depth and ensure that government actions remain accountable to the people.

In most legislative systems, the full House cannot practically handle the detailed examination of every bill, policy proposal, or administrative activity. Legislative committees therefore play a critical role by conducting specialised and technical work on behalf of the Assembly. Through this structure, legislators are able to devote focused attention to specific sectors such as health, education, finance, agriculture, and infrastructure.

One of the most important functions of legislative committees is detailed lawmaking. Committees analyse proposed legislation, review provisions clause by clause, and recommend amendments where necessary. This process improves the quality of legislation and ensures that laws passed by the Assembly are practical, responsive, and aligned with public interest.

Committees also perform a vital oversight function. They monitor the activities of ministries, departments, and agencies of government in order to ensure that public institutions operate within the framework of the law and in accordance with approved policies. Through oversight visits, reviews of programmes, and engagements with officials, committees help strengthen transparency and accountability in governance.

Another critical responsibility of legislative committees is budget scrutiny. By examining budget proposals from government agencies, committees help ensure that public funds are allocated responsibly and used for their

intended purposes. This scrutiny contributes to fiscal discipline and strengthens public confidence in government financial management.

Legislative committees further promote democratic participation by providing a platform for public engagement. Through hearings, consultations, and policy dialogues, citizens, professional groups, and development partners can contribute their perspectives on issues under legislative consideration. This process improves the quality of policymaking and enhances transparency. In addition, committees often undertake specialised investigations into matters of public concern. Petitions from citizens, institutional complaints, or emerging policy challenges can be examined thoroughly by committees before recommendations are presented to the House for further action.

"The experience of the Gombe State House of Assembly Health Committee demonstrates how active committee work can improve governance and advance public welfare."

Within the Gombe State House of Assembly, the House Committee on Health represents one of the most active and impactful committees. As one of the twenty four standing committees of the Assembly, it plays a key role in supporting the development and oversight of the health sector across the state.

In its legislative function, the committee scrutinised and contributed to the passage of the law establishing the Drugs and Medical Consumables Agency. This legislation was designed to strengthen the management and distribution of essential medicines and medical supplies across the state's healthcare system. The committee has also maintained active oversight of the Hospital Management Board and other health related

institutions under its jurisdiction. Through regular engagement with these institutions, it ensures that policies and programmes are implemented effectively for the benefit of citizens.

As part of its oversight mandate, the committee conducted visits to all one hundred and fourteen Primary Health Care facilities across the state. These visits allowed members to assess the condition of facilities, review service delivery, and identify areas requiring policy attention or government intervention.

The committee has also carried out oversight activities involving development partners implementing health related programmes in the state. Such engagements strengthen collaboration between government institutions and partner organisations working to improve healthcare outcomes.

Recognising the importance of inclusive healthcare, the committee conducted visits to Tsangaya schools across the eleven Local Government Areas of the state. These visits were aimed at assessing the health and immunisation status of Almajiri pupils and identifying opportunities to strengthen health interventions within these communities.

In addition to state institutions, the committee has engaged with federal health institutions located within the state. Familiarisation visits and interactive sessions were held with the management of the Federal Teaching Hospital Gombe and the Federal Medical Centre Kumo. These engagements help strengthen coordination across different levels of the healthcare system. The committee has also participated in policy dialogue on Universal Health Coverage, reflecting its commitment to advancing equitable access to healthcare services for all residents of the state.

Overall, the work of legislative committees remains indispensable to the effectiveness of democratic governance. By enabling detailed scrutiny of legislation, strengthening oversight of public institutions, and promoting engagement with citizens and stakeholders, committees ensure that legislative institutions remain responsive, accountable, and capable of addressing complex policy challenges.



DIGITAL FIRST GOVERNANCE: CHARTING NIGERIA'S PATH TO A MODERN PUBLIC SECTOR

Nwaimo Reigneth

The 2026 National GovTech Policy Roundtable convened policymakers, development partners, institutional leaders, and private sector actors to deliberate on building a digital-first public sector that is efficient, transparent, and citizen-centered. Hosted with the support of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund and in collaboration with GovTech Africa, the roundtable provided a platform for dialogue, reflection, and forward-looking strategy, enabling participants to examine lessons from global experience and local realities.

Global Perspectives: Lessons from Finland and Rwanda

International partners provided insights into building resilient digital systems. The Finnish Ambassador to Nigeria, H.E Amb. Sanna Selin, emphasised that successful digital governance rests on three principles: trust, interoperability, and strong institutions. While acknowledging Nigeria's progress in digital identity, payments, and online services, Finland stressed that technology alone cannot drive transformation. Effective

laws, capable institutions, and secure data systems are equally critical.

H. E Amb. Moses Rugema, the High Commissioner of Rwanda to Nigeria stated that Rwanda's experience offered a structured model of transformation anchored on sequencing. Beginning with a clear national vision, operationalised through strategic frameworks, and supported by

“Building a digital-first public sector requires collaboration among government, private sector actors, development partners, and civil society.”

strong legal and data protection systems, Rwanda demonstrated how policy can drive infrastructure, which in turn enables services and adoption. Platforms such as Irembo have successfully digitised hundreds of services, reduced administrative bottlenecks, and

improved citizen access and satisfaction, showing that digital transformation is a deliberate stack of policies, systems, and capacity-building initiatives.

Nigeria's Progress and Institutional Reforms Domestically, Nigeria's reform efforts were highlighted by Princess Zahrah Mustapha Audu, the Director-General of the Presidential Enabling Business Environment Council (PEBEC). Over the years, Nigeria has achieved an over 40 percent reduction in business registration timelines and over 30 percent improvement in administrative efficiency across key sectors. By working with 69 business-facing Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, PEBEC has driven digitisation and promoted end-to-end online service delivery.

The ReportGov.ng platform is a real-time grievance redress mechanism that ensures responses to public complaints within 72 hours, enhancing transparency and accountability. The Regulatory Impact Analysis Framework institutionalises evidence-based policymaking and reinforces continuity in governance, signaling a deliberate shift from policy creation to policy implementation.



The Federal Civil Service's commitment to digitisation was delivered on behalf of the Head of the Civil Service of the Federation of Nigeria, Mrs. Didi Esther Walson-Jack, OON, mni, by Dr. Gideon Adogbo, who highlighted that the transition to a paperless operation across ministries and extra ministerial departments on 31st December 2025 was not only about reducing paper usage but also about transforming approvals, file management, institutional memory, and service delivery. By implementing enterprise conference management systems, digital communication platforms, knowledge tools, and process automation in collaboration with Galaxy Backbone, the Federal Civil Service has demonstrated that reform frameworks can move decisively from strategy to execution.

Ministerial Perspective: Innovation and Digital Transformation

The Honourable Minister of Communications, Innovations, and Digital Economy, Dr. Bosun Tijani, delivered the keynote speech through Prof. Ibrahim Adeyanju, MD/CEO of Galaxy Backbone. The Minister emphasised that the roundtable aligns with the administration's renewed hope agenda, particularly priority eight, which focuses on improved governance for effective service delivery. He called for breaking down silos that hinder progress and creating a roadmap for a government that serves with speed, engages with transparency, and delivers with certainty. Highlighting Nigeria's population of 240 million, he reminded participants that digital governance must meet citizens where they are in the digital space.

Legislative Backing and the Push for Digital Governance

Honorable Akin Rotimi, the spokesperson of the House of Representatives, speaking for the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Tajudeen Abbas, PhD emphasised that digital transformation is fundamentally about mindset, making government accessible, efficient, and accountable. The National Digital Economy and e-Governance Bill was highlighted as a cornerstone for reform, formalising electronic transactions, strengthening transparency, and providing a comprehensive framework for digital governance across Ministries, Departments, and Agencies. He noted that the 10th Assembly's legislative agenda focuses

on creating a predictable regulatory environment, supporting innovation while ensuring robust data protection and cybersecurity standards.

From Policy to Practice: The Implementation Imperative

The convener of the GovTech Policy Roundtable, the Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu, PhD, CFR provided a candid assessment of Nigeria's digital journey. Despite the abundance of policies, frameworks, and strategies, the central challenge remains political will and execution. Digital governance must move beyond pilot projects and be embedded into the core architecture of government operations.

Digital-first thinking, self-auditing systems,

“Digital-first thinking and emerging technologies can improve oversight, reduce corruption, and enhance service delivery.”

and emerging technologies like AI were emphasised as critical to improving oversight, reducing corruption, and enhancing service delivery. Inclusivity was underscored, ensuring that digital transformation empowers citizens across all demographics, including those with limited connectivity or digital literacy.

Infrastructure, Inclusion, and National Development

Speakers consistently stressed infrastructure as the backbone of digital transformation. Efforts such as the National Broadband Plan are essential to expanding connectivity and ensuring digital services reach both urban and rural communities. Investments in digital literacy and youth engagement were highlighted as necessary for long-term sustainability. Collaboration among government, private sector actors, development partners, and civil society

was recognised as vital to develop scalable, context-driven solutions.

Knowledge, History, and Institutional Memory

The Executive Secretary of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund, Rt. Hon. Henry Nwawuba emphasised the role of intellectual engagement in governance. Participants were encouraged to explore the rich historical and documentary resources within the Library, underscoring that knowledge of past governance practices informs better policymaking and strengthens democratic institutions.

Panel Sessions: Digital First Governance and Building the Digital Backbone

The first panel, “Digital First Governance: Rethinking How Nigerian Governments Serve, Engage, and Deliver,” explored citizen-centered digital strategies, inclusive service delivery, and the integration of digital-first thinking into laws, services, and systems.

The second panel, “Building the Digital Backbone of Government: Innovation, Investment, and Global Expertise for Sustainable Governance,” focused on infrastructure as the foundation of digital governance, highlighting connectivity expansion, investment in digital literacy, youth engagement, and collaboration for scalable solutions.

From Ambition to Action

The 2026 National GovTech Policy Roundtable made it clear that Nigeria stands at a pivotal moment in its digital transformation journey. Vision, frameworks, and initial reforms are in place, but sustained implementation, institutional coordination, and inclusive design are required to translate ambition into impact.

Digital-first governance is not merely a technological shift but a governance reform agenda. Its success will be measured by citizens' experiences, faster service delivery, greater transparency, and improved trust in government. Stakeholders are tasked with building enduring systems, implementing effective policies, and creating a digital ecosystem that genuinely serves all Nigerians.



PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION AND ACCOLADES FOR THE CNA

The Clerk to the National Assembly, Kamoru Ogunlana, Esq., has been presented with an Award of Excellence in recognition of his dedication and commitment to nation building, and support to the legal profession, especially young lawyers.

The award was presented at the 20th National Summit of the Nigerian Bar Association-Young Lawyers' Forum (NBA-YLF), held 22nd – 24th April, 2026 at Port Harcourt,

Rivers State.

The Forum noted the Ogunlana's sense of innovation in practice as a legislative counsel, citing his invaluable contributions through the various positions held in the National Assembly Service, particularly as one-time Secretary, Legal Services Directorate and now Clerk to the National Assembly. In those positions, he has deployed his extensive knowledge of legislative drafting, practice and procedure, to guide and direct the efficient management and production of legislation

in the National Assembly. The Forum also commended the CNA for his inspiration and encouragement to Young Lawyers to engage, participate and contribute meaningfully to their profession and the country at large.

The CNA who was represented at the event by Charles Yoila, Esq. (Director Litigation and Counselling, National Assembly), also served as a Speaker and Panelist on the topic 'The Legal Practitioners' Bill, 2025: The future of Young Lawyers.



THE EVOLUTION OF LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES IN NIGERIA'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



COMMITTEES: THE ENGINE ROOM OF LEGISLATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Since 1999, the National Assembly has expanded its committee structure to strengthen legislative work, oversight, and accountability in governance.



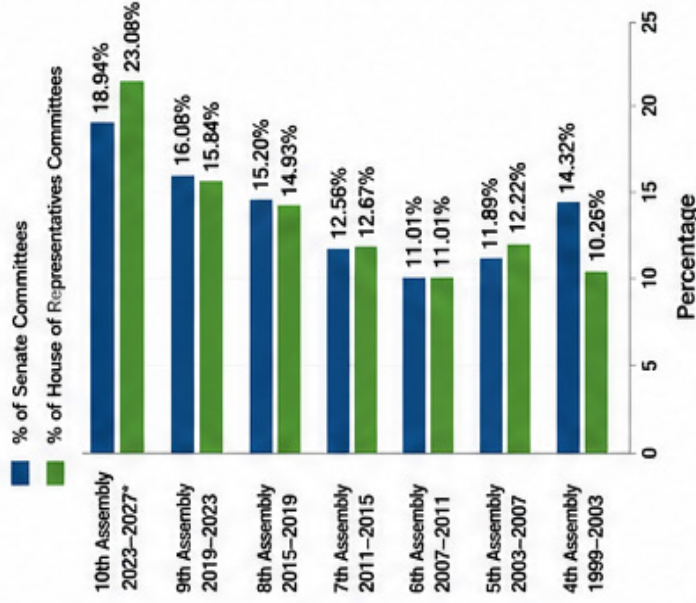
GROWTH OF COMMITTEES IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (1999–2027)

COMPARATIVE GROWTH OVER THE YEARS

LEGISLATIVE TENURE (FOURTH REPUBLIC)	SENATE COMMITTEES	% OF SENATE COMMITTEES	HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEES	% OF HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEES
4th Assembly 1999–2003	65	14.32%	68	10.26%
5th Assembly 2003–2007	54	11.89%	81	12.22%
6th Assembly 2007–2011	50	11.01%	73	11.01%
7th Assembly 2011–2015	57	12.56%	84	12.67%
8th Assembly 2015–2019	69	15.20%	99	14.93%
9th Assembly 2019–2023	73	16.08%	105	15.84%
10th Assembly 2023–2027*	86	18.94%	153	23.08%
TOTAL (2023–2027)	86	18.94%	153	23.08%

*As at 2027 (10th Assembly) • Total Committees in the 10th Assembly = 239

VISUAL GROWTH TREND (% SHARE OF COMMITTEES)



KEY TAKEAWAYS



Senate Committees grew from 65 in 1999–2003 to 86 in 2023–2027 (↑ 32.31%)



House Committees grew from 68 in 1999–2003 to 153 in 2023–2027 (↑ 125.00%)



Total Committees in the 10th Assembly (2023–2027): 239 Committees

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH SELECTED DEMOCRACIES (LATEST AVAILABLE DATA)

ITEM	 NIGERIA (10th Assembly)	 USA (119th Congress)	 UNITED KINGDOM (58th Parliament)	 SOUTH AFRICA (7th Parliament)	 INDIA (18th Lok Sabha)
LEGISLATIVE PERIOD (RECENT YEARS)	2023–2027	2021–2023 2023–2025 2025–2027	2019–2024	2024–Present	2024–2029
SENATE / UPPER CHAMBER	86 (Senate Committees)	16 (Consistent across recent years)	27 (House of Lords)	6 (Portfolio Committees)	24 (Standing Committees)
HOUSE / LOWER CHAMBER	153 (House Committees)	20 (Consistent across recent years)	37 (House of Commons)	6 (Permanent Standing Committees)	24 (Standing Committees)
TOTAL COMMITTEES	239	36	64	12	48
KEY NOTE	 Nigeria's committee structure is the largest among the selected democracies.	 Consistent committee numbers across congressional cycles.	 Stable committee structure across parliaments.	 Lean committee system focused on efficiency and oversight.	 Moderate committee structure with strong standing committees.



Nigeria's committee system is significantly larger than many democracies. While expansion can improve oversight, it also raises concerns about overlap, cost and efficiency.

 **CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED**

 Overlapping functions among committees

 High cost of governance

 Political patronage and committee expansion for satisfaction

 Potential for corruption and inefficiency

 Dilution of focus and reduced effectiveness

 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

 Rationalize and merge overlapping committees

 Ensure committee creation is need-driven, not politically motivated

 Strengthen research support and capacity for committees

 Improve transparency, accountability and public engagement

 Regular review of committees' performance and relevance

 **CONCLUSION**

Committees are the engine room of the legislature. Their growth in Nigeria's Fourth Republic reflects our maturing democracy, but quality and effectiveness must match the numbers.

 **More committees are not the goal—better committees are.** 



STRONG COMMITTEES. EFFECTIVE OVERSIGHT. ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE. BUILDING A BETTER NIGERIA TOGETHER.

Source: Senate & House of Representatives Reports, Orders, Rules and Business (1999–2027); National Assembly website.



*Chika Chukwumerije,
Olympic Bronze Medalist*

THE EVOLUTION OF TAEKWONDO:

GROWTH, HISTORY AND A RISING FORCE IN AFRICAN MARTIAL ARTS

Akintelure Bukola & Anunkor Chizobam

Sport in general, could be referred to any physical activities that involve competition, skills and physical exertion. Taekwondo sport therefore, means the art of foot fighting technique.

Literally, the term Taekwondo originated in Korea. It started as a martial art over 2,000 years ago, influenced by various styles like Taek Kyon and Karate. The modern version emerged in 1950s, developed by Korean masters like Choi Hong Hi. It became an Olympic sport in 2000.

Taekwondo is an ancient Korean martial art that translates to "Foot Hand" or "Kicking and Punching". It's a style that emphasizes fluid movements, kicks and footwork. The word Taekwondo is coined from two popular Korean words "Taek and Kyon". Taek Kyon's influence on Taekwondo is evident in its emphasis on kicking techniques and agility.

The term "Kyon" roughly translates to "fight" or "technique" while "Taek" means "Foot". So, Taek Kyon essentially means "foot fighting technique". This ancient art laid the groundwork for modern Taekwondo's kicking styles and patterns. Furthermore, Taekwondo is a martial art developed in the mid-20th century, combining traditional Korean martial art with influences from Japanese and Chinese martial arts, later evolving into a global sports.

Taekwondo's roots trace back to traditional Korean martial arts, particularly Taekkyeon and Subak, which emphasized fluid movements, kicks, and hand strikes. Evidence of martial arts in Korea dates as far back as the Three Kingdoms period, with murals in the Myung-

Chong tomb depicting sparring scenes. However, modern Taekwondo as a structured martial art emerged after World War II, during Korea's cultural revitalization following Japanese occupation, when martial arts schools, called Kwans, began to form. In the early years, the martial arts practiced by the different Kwans were not unified under a single name. However, in 1955, General Choi Hong Hi, often referred to as the father of Taekwondo proposed the name Taekwondo to consolidate the various systems under one banner. The term "Taekwondo" is derived from the Korean words "Tae" (foot), "Kwon" (hand) and "Do" (way or path), meaning the "way of the foot and fist." This new name represented a departure from previous terms like "Tang Soo Do" (which had been used to describe Korean Karate) and the distinct nature of the Korean martial arts.

General Choi's vision was not only to create a unified martial art but to also develop a comprehensive system that could be practiced globally. In addition to his leadership in development of Taekwondo as a martial art, Choi was also instrumental in promoting Taekwondo as a sport. In 1966, General Choi founded the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF) in

Seoul, South Korea. The ITF was established to promote Taekwondo internationally and to standardize the practice of Taekwondo globally. Under General Choi's leadership, the ITF emphasized the development of both the traditional and sport Taekwondo, incorporating patterns (or poomsae), sparring, and self-defense techniques into the training regimen. Choi's work also brought Taekwondo into the global spotlight. The ITF held its first World



Championship in 1973, drawing participants from various countries. Over the next few decades, the ITF expanded Taekwondo into countries across the globe, significantly contributing to its worldwide popularity.

"From traditional Korean fighting styles to an Olympic sport demonstrates its enduring cultural and martial significance."

Formation of modern Taekwondo

Between 1945 and 1955, Korea martial artists who had studied Japanese Karate and Chinese martial arts returned to Korea and began integrating these techniques with traditional Korean styles. The nine original Kwans- including:

Chung Do Kwan-founded by Lee Won kuk (1945)
Moo Duk Kwan-founded by Hwang Kee (1945)
Ji Do Kwan-(renamed from Yun Moo kwan)-founded by Chun Sang Sup (1946)
Chang-Moo-Kwan (renamed from kwon

Bop)-founded by Yoon Byung (1946)
Song Moo-Kwan – founded by Ro Byung Jik (1946)
Oh Do Kwan- founded by General Choi Hong Hi (1953)
Kang Do Won- founded by Hong Jong Pyo and Chul Hee (1953)
Jung Do Kwan- founded by Lee Yong Woo (1954)
Han moo Kwan- founded by Lee Kyo yoon

(1954), they all played a pivotal role in shaping the martial art, each emphasizing different techniques, discipline and moral philosophy.

In 1959, the Korean Taekwondo Association (KTA) was established to unify these schools and standardize training.

A significant turning point in the history of Taekwondo came in 1973 when a split occurred between the ITF and a new organization, the World Taekwondo Federation (WT). This split was due to a number of factors, including differences in philosophy, organizational structure, and the direction in which the two groups wanted to take Taekwondo.

In the early 1970s, the South Korean government, seeking to further solidify Taekwondo's position as the national martial art, began supporting the development of Taekwondo as a sport for international competition. The World Taekwondo Federation (WT) was founded in 1973 to serve this purpose, and it became the primary body responsible for the sport aspect of Taekwondo, including Olympic recognition. In 1980, the ITF's leadership fell into controversy after General Choi, seeking greater support for his vision of Taekwondo, moved to North Korea. Chio's



relocation and subsequent involvement with the North Korean government led to a significant decline in his relationship with the South Korean government and other Taekwondo organizations. Despite this, General Choi remained an influential figure in the ITF, though the organization was largely based outside South Korea and maintained a presence in countries like Canada and North Korea. Several key figures played pivotal roles in the early development of Taekwondo. Aside from General Chio Hong Hi, notable pioneers include:

* Kim, Bok Man: a prominent martial artist in the development of Taekwondo, he helped establish the original curriculum of Taekwondo and made significant contribution of the ITF's technical guidelines.

* Ri, Ki Ha: another important figure in the early years of Taekwondo, Ri helped popularize the sport, particularly in its early stages outside Korea. His role in creating standardized patterns and sparring techniques for the ITF was invaluable.

* Choi, Jung Hwa: the son of General Choi, he became an influential leader within the ITF, continuing his father's legacy and spreading Taekwondo internationally.

These early pioneers helped refine the martial art's techniques and philosophy, contributing to the global spread of Taekwondo.

In 1972, the Kukkiwon was established in Seoul, South Korea, as the world Taekwondo Headquarters. The Kukkiwon became the center of Taekwondo education, responsible for the certification of the black belts and the development of Taekwondo's standards, including the patterns practiced worldwide. In 1988, the World Taekwondo federation (WT) made a significant leap forward when Taekwondo was included as a demonstration sport at the Seoul Summer Olympics. It was officially added as a full medal sport in the 2000 Sydney Olympics. The recognition of Taekwondo by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) solidified its global reach

and appeal.

However, as the Taekwondo became more globally recognized, the expansion and governance of the sport also attracted scrutiny. One notable issue was the allegations of corruption that arose against the leadership of the World Taekwondo Federation (WT). These allegations primarily centered on financial mismanagement, questionable decisions surrounding the Olympic participation of Taekwondo, and the way the sport was governed at an international level. Despite these controversies, the sport continued to thrive, with increasing numbers of countries establishing national Taekwondo Federations. Taekwondo has continue to enjoy significant spread across the world as its expansion beyond Korea has been extraordinary. Today, Taekwondo is practiced in over 200

"Its evolution from ancient Korean roots to a structured global sport reflects both collaboration and resilience."

countries, with millions of practitioners worldwide. The sport has become the central part of many national sport programs, and Taekwondo's inclusion in the Olympics has only heightened its popularity. Nigerian for instance, the Taekwondo sport is a vibrant and rapidly growing martial art, with a strong presence in the country's sport scene. The Nigerian taekwondo Federation (NTF) is the governing body for the sport, responsible for promoting Taekwondo in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Taekwondo federation is also involved in international competitions, such as the US Open Taekwondo Championship and the Egypt World Taekwondo (WT) Open, showcasing the county's athletes on

a global stage. Over all, Nigeria Taekwondo sport is a dynamic and expanding sport in Nigeria with a commitment to excellence and community engagement.

Various international organizations now oversee Taekwondo, including the International Taekwondo Federation (ITF-Multiple Organizations), the American Taekwondo Association, the World Taekwondo Federation (WT), the Global Taekwondo Federation (GTA), the International Jung Jong Taekwondo Federation (IJTF), and the International World Taekwondo. Adding to this body are national organizations like the American Taekwondo Association, the Taekwon-Do America, United States Kido Federation, and many more. These organizations help maintain the integrity of the art while overseeing competitions, rule development, and international relations.

In summary, Taekwondo is a modern Korean martial art with historical roots in traditional Korean fighting styles, influenced by Japanese and Chinese martial arts, formalized through the Kwans, and developed into a global sport with structured competition and international recognition. It is one of the most popular martial arts in the world today, with a rich history shaped by numerous influential figures and events. Its evolution from the five original Kwans to its present-day global presence is a statement to its cultural and martial significance.

Taekwondo's journey from the five Kwans in post-war Korean to a global sport and martial art has been marked by both collaboration and conflict. The leadership of figures like General Choi Hong Hi, and the contributions of early pioneers, laid the groundwork for the growth, spread and international recognition of Taekwondo. Although controversies and splits have risen along the way, the continue evolution of the art and its widespread appeal demonstrate the enduring legacy of Taekwondo in the world of martial arts.



Spotlight on Kano State House of Assembly Appropriations Committee

Aminu Musa Haruna

In every functioning democracy, the real work rarely happens on the big stage. While plenary sessions draw the cameras and headlines, the substance of governance is shaped inside legislative committees. These smaller, specialized units are where bills are tested, budgets are broken down, and the actions of government are carefully examined.

Think of them as the engine room of parliament: out of sight, but essential to keeping the system running.

Why Committees Matter

Legislative committees are often called “mini parliaments,” and the label fits. They bring focus and expertise to the lawmaking process, allowing lawmakers to go beyond speeches and into substance. Here, policies are interrogated line by line, stakeholders are consulted, and decisions are refined before they ever reach the chamber floor.

Without committees, legislation would be rushed, oversight would be shallow, and public input would be limited. With them, democracy becomes more deliberate, more inclusive, and more accountable.

Spotlight on Kano’s Appropriation Committee

Within the Kano State House of Assembly, one committee stands out for its influence and visibility: the House Committee on Appropriation. Tasked with reviewing and shaping the state’s budget, it sits at the heart of governance, where policy meets

resources. Chaired by Aminu Ungogo, the committee plays a decisive role in determining how public funds are allocated. Its work directly impacts infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other essential services across the state.

Opening the Budget to the People

One of the committee’s most notable strides has been its push for greater transparency and citizen engagement. In recent budget cycles, lawmakers moved beyond closed-door deliberations, opening the process through public hearings and town hall meetings.

“While plenary sessions draw the cameras and headlines, the substance of governance is shaped inside legislative committees.”

As highlighted by Majority Leader Lawan Hussaini Dala, these consultations allowed residents to voice their priorities before the 2025 and 2026 budgets were finalized. It’s a shift that brings governance closer to the people and ensures that spending decisions reflect real needs, not just political calculations.

Balancing Pressure and Priorities

Still, the job is far from easy. With limited resources and growing demands, the committee must constantly make tough

decisions as to what gets funded and what must wait. At the same time, it walks a fine line between holding the executive accountable and allowing government programmes to function effectively.

These tensions are part of the job, and how they are managed often determines the quality of governance delivered.

A Turn Toward Innovation

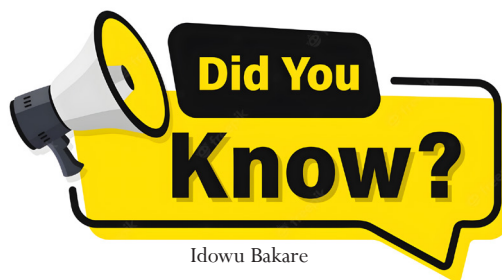
Looking ahead, there are signs of evolution. Speaker Jibril Falgore has pointed to the adoption of technology and data analytics as the next step in strengthening oversight. If implemented effectively, these tools could transform how budgets are tracked, evaluated, and reported thereby bringing a new level of precision and transparency to legislative work.

The Bigger Picture

Committees may not command the spotlight, but they remain indispensable to democratic governance. They are where scrutiny happens, where citizens find a voice, and where accountability takes shape.

In Kano, the Appropriation Committee offers a clear example of how this system should work: focused, responsive, and increasingly open. It is, in every sense, proof that the true power of a legislature lies not just in debate but in the quiet, consistent work behind the scenes.

For: Kano State Liaison Office, National Assembly Library Trust Fund.



Iceland's Parliament is over 1,000 years old?

Founded in 930 AD, the Althing began as an open-air assembly where Viking leaders gathered to make laws — making it the oldest continuous parliament in the world.

Long before modern buildings, the Althing was held in an open field at Þingvellir, where leaders gathered each summer to make laws and settle disputes — turning a natural landscape into one of the world's earliest “parliament chambers.”



Germany's Powerful Parliamentary Committees can rewrite entire laws?

Much of the Bundestag's real decision-making happens in committees, where detailed negotiations often determine the final shape of legislation. Once a bill is referred to a committee, it is examined in detail, often with input from experts and stakeholders. Through this process, committees can substantially amend — and sometimes effectively rewrite — proposed laws before they return to the Bundestag for final debate and approval.



UK MPs can neither accuse one another of lying nor clap during debates?



Members are not allowed to directly accuse each other of lying, and must instead use creative language — or risk being ordered out of the chamber. Also, instead of applause, they show approval by loudly saying “Hear, hear!” — a centuries-old tradition that keeps the chamber lively without turning it into a cheering arena.

Switzerland allows citizens to directly remove laws

In Switzerland, citizens can challenge laws passed by Parliament through referendums — effectively acting as a “second chamber” of the people.

If enough signatures are gathered, citizens can challenge laws passed by Parliament or even propose constitutional changes themselves. This system means that lawmakers must always consider public opinion, as the final say can rest with the people.



Ireland handpicked Senators

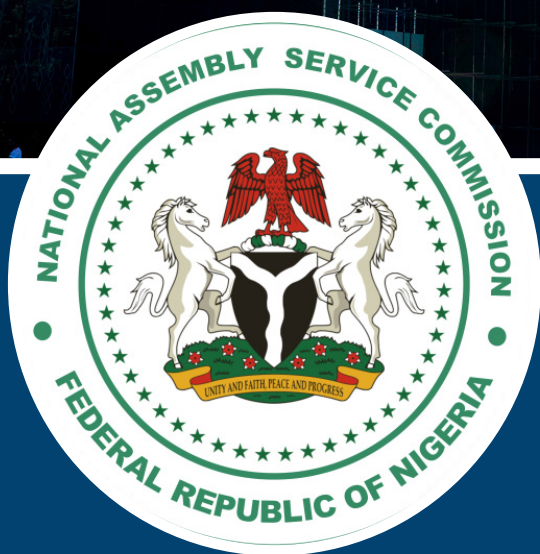
The Prime Minister (Taoiseach) has the power to hand-pick 11 people to sit in the Senate?

While 49 Senators are elected by panels and universities, these 11 “bonus” seats exist mainly to make sure the government has enough votes to actually pass its laws. It's a unique constitutional quirk that also allows the leader to fast-track diverse voices—like experts, activists, or representatives from Northern Ireland—directly into Parliament



Sweden's Humble MPs.

In the Swedish parliament, there are no private drivers or luxury perks. Most MPs are issued a yearly public transport pass and are expected to take the bus or train to work just like everyone else. The parliament has only three cars and are only used strictly for official occasions.



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.

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