



National Institute for Legislative Studies

Weekly Digest

COMMITTEE PREPARES FOR PARLIAMENTARY SECURITY SUMMIT



DG NILS chaired a recent meeting of The Technical Committee for Legislative Studies Capacity Building Project (NILS CAP)

The Technical Committee of the National Institute for Legislative Studies Capacity Building Project (NILS CAP), met recently in Abuja to review progress on preparations made towards a successful hosting of the Parliamentary Security Summit. The summit which is billed to

take place between 15th and 16th of September, 2014 will create an interface between ECOWAS Legislators and stakeholders in the security sector on the challenges of implementing anti-terrorism legislations in member states while giving an avenue to promote harmonization of policies and laws aimed at reversing the increasing cross border/transnational crimes within the subregion.

The committee led by the Director General, National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), Dr. Ladi Hamalai has paid advocacy and sensitization visits to stakeholders in the security sector while intensifying efforts

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COMMITTEE PREPARES FOR PARLIAMENTARY SECURITY SUMMIT CONT,D

and operations to ensure that the summit is successful and the expected outcomes met.

The Parliamentary Security Summit falls under one of the programmes contained in the grant agreement signed between the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) to support four components of institutional strengthening, training, networking and research. It will go a long way in the development of regulatory frameworks that will boost campaign against transnational crimes

and terrorism within the sub region while creating an interface between ECOWAS legislators and stakeholders in the security sector on the challenges of implementing anti-terrorism legislations in member states.

The NILS CAP is designed on the premise that as key institutions, legislatures are critical and fundamental in consolidating democratic gains and resolving pockets of instability in parts of the continent. It is also founded on a commitment to supporting good governance processes in Africa, and in working closely with regional communities.

PLANS FOR INDUCTING NEW LEGISLATORS 2015



The necessity of an induction course for fresh legislators is to prepare them for their new roles in parliaments. This is done through enhancing their theoretical knowledge of legislation and practical interactive skills in plenary sessions.

The National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), National Assembly, is leaving no stone unturned towards the induction course to be organized for new legislators from both National and State Assemblies. Preparations started since 2013. The planning committee for the induction held a retreat recently in Lagos where it was resolved that lectures will be held at plenary while syndicate sessions would be used for the discussions during the programme.

The induction programme slated for the first quarter of 2015 is an important process for easing the new legislators into the hectic task of lawmaking. The programme will go a long way in increasing

the effectiveness of the National Assembly as a representative agent of oversight and reform while playing a critical role in strengthening accountability and accessibility to the important processes of the National Assembly.

Since 1999 following the restoration of democracy in the country after a long period of military rule, orientation programs for new and returning legislators at the beginning of each new session has been cardinal mainly due to the high turn over rate of legislators in the country. The programme which has been continuously supported by UNDP and other International organisations focus on addressing the lack of experience on the part of the legislators, poor oversight capability and poor public perception and lack of understanding of the work of NASS.

Since April this year, NILS has embarked on preparing an induction kit for members of the 8th Assembly. According to the DG NILS, legislators will have an input since it will be made available online. Legislators and Presiding Officers will study and validate the tool kit before they will be ascertained as appropriate for the incoming (8th) Assembly.

The toolkit will target the promotion of best practices in legislative activities in Nigeria, strengthening democratic processes, structures and institutions; and promoting and protecting constitutional due process in legislative practices. Hopefully these themes will provide the legislators with institutionalised opportunities for problem-oriented studies and systematic training in the various disciplines of legislative institutions, processes and procedures. It will also improve the capacity of legislators to sustain and consolidate democratic governance through deliberation and policy formulation.

PENCOM AND NASC EMPOWERED BY NASS



The President with Newly Sworn-in Commissioners including NASC Chairman, Dr Adamu Fika (1st Row Right)

Two Acts recently assented by the President, Pension Reform Act, 2014 and National Assembly Service (establishment, etc.) Bill, 2014 are Acts that will have tremendous impact on the country – one will motivate and protect workers in Nigeria and the other will strengthen and make the national parliament independent. Both commissions are currently empowered to carry out their functions.

The NASC Act 2014 has significantly empowered the commission and has cleared many grey areas, leaving the commission to focus on management and efficiency of functions. Under the section Functions of the Service, for instance, the commission can now draw staff from the Federal or State Civil Service to fill vacancies on secondments or transfers and by the same token, a staff of NASS can seek to transfer or be seconded to any public service of the federation without disadvantage.

Another empowering clause relate to the flexible nature of establishing offices. Not only are directorates approved but the commission is given the power to establish more directorates, departments and divisions as exigencies may demand.

The serious handicaps that had encumbered PENCOM are also addressed by the new Pension Reform Act 2014. The new act creates a uniform contributory pension scheme that encompasses both the public and the private sectors. Furthermore, the commission is given the ability to oversight and punish institutions in regard to remittance and investment of funds.

Several changes are introduced:

1. *Increase in the contributory amount.* Every employer is now mandated to contribute 10per cent of their employee's income, while the employee is also

mandated to contribute 8per cent of total income. This would give a total of 18per cent.

2. *Redefinition of monthly emoluments.* Monthly emolument now means a total sum of basic salary, housing allowance and transport allowance. The implication is that all employers and employees will have to pay more.

3. *Exemption from taxation.*

4. *Strict pension offences and penalties.* The new act has prescribed a 10-year jail for pension thieves. The Commission can now, in addition to revoking the license of erring pension operators, take proactive corrective measures on licensed operators who may want to deal fraudulently with pension assets.

5. *Ease of access to funds in case of emergencies.* Where an employee disengages from employment or is disengaged before the age of 50 and is unable to secure another employment within 4 months of disengagement, Section 16 (5) of the Act permits such persons to make withdrawals from their retirement savings account (not exceeding 25% of the total amount credited to the retirement savings account).

6. *New frameworks for arbitration in collaboration with the National Industrial Court.* Section 106 of the Act now vests the National Industrial Court with jurisdiction in matters where an employee or beneficiary of a Retirement Savings Account is dissatisfied with a decision of the Commission, that was referred to it for review from a decision of a PFA or employer, to ensure that the decision complied with relevant provisions of the Act or regulations made thereunder.

All the above laws will help to ensure an efficient and vigilant pension commission.



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN THE PRESS, WEEK 28: 7TH – 11TH JULY, 2014

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Date	Newspaper	No. of Story	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Most Featured Sectors
7 th - 11 th July, 2014	Daily Trust	39	22	15	2	Leg, Pol & Exec
	Leadership	24	17	7	0	Pol, Leg & Econ
	Punch	16	9	6	1	Leg, Pol & Pet
	This Day	23	16	6	1	Pol, Leg & Pet
Total	4	102	64	34	4	5

REMARKS:

Press coverage of the National Assembly in the week under review was moderate. Legislative activities cut across 16 sectors of the nation's economy, out of which five were accorded prominence. Among them were:

- Legislature - 39 times
- Politics - 14 times
- Petroleum - 10 times
- Executive - 9 times
- Economy - 2 times

Other sectors also featured in the week's legislative activities of the apex legislature but on a low key note include: Aviation, Culture & Tourism, Education, Energy, Environment, Finance, Health, Information, Judiciary, Labour and Niger Delta.

A total of 102 stories concerning the country's apex legislature were recorded during the week. 64 of them projected the image of the National Assembly POSITIVELY. One of the positive reports was captioned "House opens investigation into 'failed' CCTV project". According to the story, the House of Representatives has mandated its Committees to investigate the alleged failure of the Video Surveillance and Close Circuit Television Cameras (CCTV) to detect criminal activities in some cities in the country. The Committees assigned to undertake the findings were those

of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Public Safety and National Security, they have two weeks to turn in their report. The decision to investigate the CCTV project was sequel to a motion sponsored by Rep Saviour Friday Udo noted that the current security situation in Nigeria was precarious despite the effort of the Federal Government. The story revealed that the contract was awarded to ZTE Corporation during the tenure of late President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua at the initial cost of \$470 million to be funded through a finance agreement between the Nigerian Government and China Export Bank to check insecurity in the country.

Meanwhile, 34 stories portrayed the image of the revered parliament in the NEUTRAL direction. One of the neutral reports reads "Ramadan: Law-maker Distributes 10 Trucks-load of Rice to 21 LGAs in Kebbi State". Accordingly, in an effort to bring succor and put smiles on the faces of thousands of people in the period of Ramadan fast, Sen. Abubakar Atiku Bagudu, representing Kebbi Central Senatorial District has distributed to the 21 Local Government Areas of Kebbi State ten truck-loaded with six hundred bags of rice to ease Ramadan fast for the people of the state.

On the flip side, four stories dimmed the image of the apex legislature NEGATIVELY. One of such reports was titled "Again Senate Sittings Short by 41 Days". According to the report, despite the fact that they were able to record a total of 140 days plenary sessions in the Third Legislative year, their impact in the country was nothing to write home about. The story added that the Senate seems powerless, even though the country is drifting towards anarchy.

National Assembly in the Press is a Publication of Information Unit, NILS.