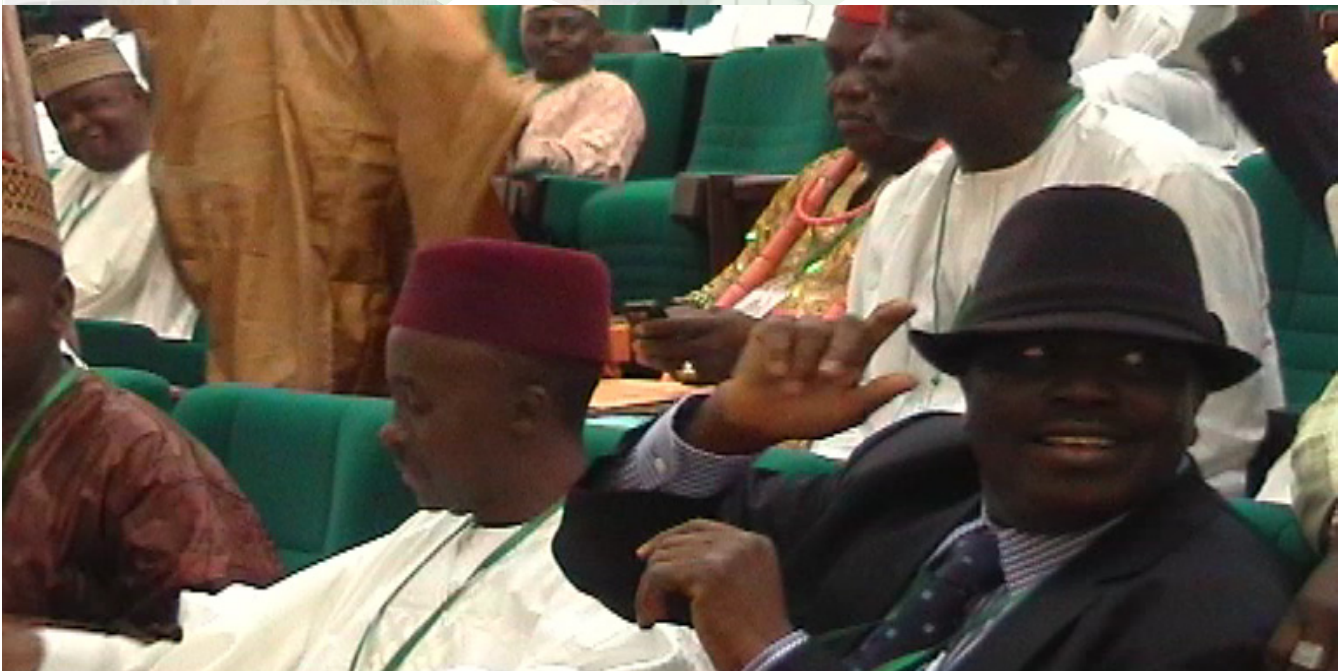




# National Institute for Legislative Studies

## Weekly Digest

### NILS PLANS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY



Rt. Hon. Speaker, Aminu Tambuwal at Inauguration of the 4th Assembly 2011

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Following months of deliberations and rigorous engagements, the implementation group on National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), United Nations Development Programmes (UNDP)/Democratic Governance for Development project met to give progress reports and proffer the way forward towards realizing a top-grade outcome.

In preparing a model oversight guide with necessary templates for the use of the two

chambers of the National Assembly, the subcommittee reported that ten instruments needed for effective oversight must be complete and sufficient. But the manual that will be developed will come about after due interactions with the legislators and subsequently, a seminar will be carried out on the manual.

On the review of rules and business of the National Assembly based on international best practices, it was revealed that the consultant engaged is well versed as he has participated in drafting the constitution as well as ethics and code of conduct for several African Parliaments. It was noted that coopting international consultants will be of value as they will bring perspectives from other countries thereby creating an all-encompassing view during the

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## NILS PLANS TO INCREASE EFFECTIVENESS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY CONT,D

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seminar to be organized for legislators.

One of the components which is reinvigorating the Civil Society Organizations' Liaison Office at the National Assembly also made submission and a capacity building workshop was organized for them recently. The workshop focused on strengthening relations between civil society organizations and the civil society organizations liaison office at the National Assembly.

The Director General of the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), Dr. Ladi Hamalai and chairman of the implementation committee advised the CSOs to be proactive towards activities of each committee at the National Assembly; stay ahead in the area of Bills presented on the floor of the chambers and go as far as sponsoring some Bills with a view to becoming a strong advocacy group for policy and legislation.

Dr. Hamalai reiterated that the CSOs should have their own coordinating committee and develop their own agenda to see how it interrelates with developments in the National Assembly. Moreover, they should identify their interest and intervene in that regard through public hearing, memoranda or communications so to stand out and make their efforts well rooted in achieving great result.

In engendering the process of lawmaking, representation and oversight for the benefit of the citizenry, especially girls and women, the component handling the project on gender audit and gender mainstreaming in the National Assembly informed that a sixty paged draft audit, of which a maximum of twenty five paged gender strategy will be developed, was presented to stakeholders at a roundtable recently.

The document, which was objectively critiqued by stakeholders cutting across civil society organizations, persons living with disabilities, development partners and the academia, will evolve into a framework which will form the gender strategy. Also, input from the political and bureaucratic leadership of the National

Assembly as well as the National Institute for Legislative Studies will add up for a holistic result.

The Director General posited that in viewing gender issue, a functional perspective should be adopted rather than abstract as the issue of development should be viewed vis a vis high dependency ratio on female gender which translates to a burden on the economy. She added that the structures and functions of the Women Affairs Ministry should be strengthened in order to have the functional purpose well grounded.

On reviewing the existing parliamentary sharing mechanism for better communication and outreach, the subcommittee handling the project briefed that approval has been secured for the use of existing server and computing resources in the National Assembly for development of Bungeni which will give room for an open parliament.

In developing a need assessment for the National Assembly, the subcommittee informed that research instruments have been developed and questionnaires administered to legislators, clerks and management staff of the National Assembly. On the book to be written about National Assembly and democratic governance in Nigeria, it was reported that the draft chapters will be ready by the end of July as efforts are being intensified to deliver in time.

The book is dedicated to democratic governance in Nigeria as a means of strengthening accountable and responsive governance institutions and consolidating democratic governance in line with international best practices.

Members of the 8th Assembly will be given induction kits to assist them in having a grip on the job at hand when they begin and the first retreat for them is billed to take place in the first quarter of August and a follow up will come up early in 2015.

The projects, which are being handled by a team of experts led by the Director General, National Institute for Legislative Studies, Dr. Ladi Hamalai, are set aimed at increasing the effectiveness of the National Assembly as a representative agent of oversight and reform while developing the institutional, human and operational capacities of legislators and staff of the National Assembly in order to have an improved and expedited legislative committee system.

## CLERK OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY RECEIVES FELLOWSHIP AWARD



Governor Umaru Al-Makura (left) with two recipients of the Fellowship Award (CNA right)

On Saturday, 9th of August, The College of Education Akwanga held a combined convocation ceremony, where 21,127 students were finally given certificates and eight prominent Nigerians were awarded honorary fellowship of the college. Several dignitaries attended the occasion, among them was the DG of NILS, Dr. Ladi Hamalai and the Clerk of National Assembly of Nigeria, Alhaji Salisu Maikasuwa, Ciroma Keffi. who was among the eight recipients of the fellowship award.

In her welcome address, the Provost of ATC Akwanga, Dr. Rebecca Umaru, lamented the several years the graduates of the college had gone without receiving their original certificates leading many graduates of the college to experience hardships in securing jobs and other related matters. In his keynote address, Professor Victor Dugga, reiterated the correlation between the quality of education and the standard of living in the world. He gave the example of India where a national focus on ICT has made the country the leading supplier of IT engineers and academicians in the world.

In his address the Governor of Nasarawa State, His Excellency Umaru Tanko Al-Makura affirmed that support for education is cardinal under his administration, especially after receiving

the recommendations of a visitation panel setup to assess the conditions in tertiary institutions in the state.

The Clerk of the National Assembly, a recipient of award, drew attention of graduates to the serious security and sectarian challenges facing the country, a general feature of resurgent democracy in Africa. Education, it appears to the CNA, is the most affected sector by insecurity in Nigeria. As a solution, Alhaji Maikasuwa finally advocated rigorous policies in education and poverty reduction in order to stem the growing trend of insecurity in Nigeria.



## SCHEDULED TRAININGS 2014

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The management team of the Institute held a two-day retreat in Abuja (15th Aug), with a view to taking decisions that would institutionalize a positive working culture. The latest retreat was the third since NILS became fully operational in 2012.

A total number of four out of fourteen work plan approved training programmes have been implemented. The programmes implemented are:

\* Training Programme on Drafting Financial Legislation under NILS/WFD collaboration on 23rd - 25th February, 2014 at NILS Training Room.

\* Training Programme on understanding the Legislature and the Legislative Process for 100 Aides of the Senate at the International conference centre, Abuja, on 24th - 25th March, 2014.

\* Retreat for Staff of Legislative Support Services Department on Legal writing and Research at Enugu 5th - 9th March, 2014.

\* Round Table Discussion on Law Reform in Nigeria in collaboration with National Assembly Committees on Justice, Judiciary and Human Rights at Transcorp Hilton, Abuja on 14th April, 2014.

The remaining training programmes which are yet to be implemented are:

1. International Bar Association Conference at Brisbane, Australia.
2. Improving research and writing skills of legislative aides for 100 aides of House of Representatives at Minna - Niger State.
3. Workshop on effective committee management for 60 committee staff of NASS and 36 from State Houses of Assembly at Minna.

4. 3 day workshop on use of library and legal research methodology (for non-legal officers) 30 National Assembly participants from State Houses of Assembly at Abuja.

5. Drafting of motions, briefs of argument and bill scrutiny and analysis for 60 participants from Senate at Makurdi, Benue State.

6. Court and case management Seminar at ILI, Washington DC USA.

7. Annual Legislative Summit at USA for 3 Legislators.

8. 5 day training workshop on principles and techniques of bill scrutiny and analysis for 36 participants of State Houses of Assembly.

9. Advanced Arbitration and Mediation Seminar at ILI Washington DC USA.

10. Research and Report Writing Techniques for 40 participants from National Assembly and 36 from States.

11. Legislative Aides in the Legislative process for 60 legislative Aides of State House of Assembly in each of the Geo-Political Zones (10 from each Zone)

12. National Dialogue on Electoral Reform and Management of Pre and post- election crises in collaboration with INEC

13. 2 day Training workshop on intermediate legislative drafting programme for 20 National Assembly and 36 States participants.

# NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN THE PRESS, WEEK 31: 4TH – 8TH AUGUST, 2014

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Date	Newspaper	No. of Story	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Most Featured Sectors
4 <sup>th</sup> - 8 <sup>th</sup> Aug, 2014	Daily Trust	19	9	10	0	Leg, Pol & Educ.
	Leadership	13	5	7	1	Pol, Leg & Educ.
	Punch	5	2	3	0	Leg, Pol & Educ.
	This Day	13	5	8	0	Leg & Pol
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>

## R E M A R K S :

National Assembly in the press in the week under review recorded low reportage due to the law-makers' long annual vacation which resulted in low legislative activities. During the week, legislative processes spread across five sectors of the nation's economy, out of which three featured most prominently. The sectors include:

- Legislature - 24 times
- Politics - 17 times
- Education - 4 times

Other sectors also involved the in the week's legislative activities of the apex legislature but on a low key note included; Defence and Energy.

Only 50 stories concerning the country's highest law-making institution were recorded during the week and 21 of them projected the image of the National Assembly POSITIVELY. One of the heartwarming reports was an editorial entitled "The New Pension Reform Law". According to the newspaper's position, at least the Pension Reform Act passed by the National Assembly was signed into law by President Goodluck Jonathan. The law is to govern and regulate the administration of uniform pension scheme for both public and private sectors. The law is a response to the dynamic nature of the society and consists of sound provisions aimed at not just bridging the gap between the public and private sector labour but also protecting the worker and ensuring that contributions and investments made with pension funds are protected against risks and abuses especially by managers.

However, 28 stories portrayed the image of

the revered parliament in the NEUTRAL direction. One of the neutral reports reads "2015: Don't campaign for me yet, says Tambuwal". Accordingly, the Speaker of House of Representatives, Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal has said it was against the law of the land for anybody to start campaigning for elective positions in the 2015 poll when the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had yet to give politician the nod to do so. Hon. Tambuwal dissociated himself from the posters flooding some parts of the Federal Capital Territory promoting him as the presidential candidate of the All Progressive Congress (APC).

Nonetheless, only one story tilted the image of the apex legislature NEGATIVELY.

One of such reports was captioned "Senate, INEC Conspiracy Against Fresh Party". According to the story, July 29, 2014 makes it exactly a year that the Fresh Democratic Party secured a judgement against the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) over its deregistration as a political party. One year after, the INEC and other defendants, the National Assembly and the Federal Government most notably, have failed to honour the judgement. It would be recalled that in December, 2012, INEC invoke the controversial Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended) delisted 28 political parties for alleged failure to win at least one seat at the State or National Assembly as well as Governorship and Presidential elections.

The story added that the Fresh Party's 2011 Presidential Candidate, Rev. Chris Okotie and other stakeholders contested deregistration at the Federal High Court 5, Abuja Division which handed down landmark judgement by Justice Gabriel Kolawole ruled that the deregistration was not only voided, the entire Electoral Act 2010 (As Amended) was illegal, unconstitutional, null and void in so far as it pertains to deregistration of political parties.

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