



National Institute for Legislative Studies

Weekly Digest

DG NILS, Dr Ladi Hamalai speaking at a workshop on "Elections, Strategic Communications and Logistics".



High Retention Rate in Legislature As Key to Constructive Engagement

Nigeria has been described as a country with low retention rates of legislators, this was illustrated in a graph during a training workshop on "Elections, Strategic Communications and Logistics" organised by the National Institute for Legislative Studies for aides to presiding officers of the National Assembly. The graph rated the United States of America as highest with 84% retention rates followed by Australia with 80% and West Germany with 78.7%. Nigeria however fell at the bottom of the table with 29.9% retention rates. During the power packed presentation by the Director General of the National Institute for Legislative Studies, Dr. Ladi Hamalai, MFR tagged

"Political Electioneering and Retention Rates in the National Assembly", she informed that the 7th National Assembly (2011) had the highest number (71%) of Members and 90% of Senators who had educational qualifications of 1st degree and above while explaining that retention in the Legislature will enhance institutional memory and facilitates human capacity due to long experience while enhancing constructive engagement with the executive. Dr. Hamalai suggested that 50 to 60% retention rate is good enough as against the 30% rate currently in existence. She reiterated that administration of elections should be made convenient and informed people should be

encouraged by the creation of more polling stations in elitist environment which will in turn produce more informed voters. Participants at the workshop shared their views as some believe Nigeria can adopt the method of the United States of America where candidates employ the use of social media to appeal for funds rather than rely largely on personal funds. Moreover, there is the need for legislators to group and find strength from talking with one voice and the pertinent need to make politics in Nigeria genuinely competitive. It was further discussed that the civil society Organizations should be empowered through constructive citizen engagement

to encourage good performance by parliamentarians so as to earn community approval by educated constituents. The training workshop also featured presentations on

“Political Electioneering in Nigeria and Institutional support: The INEC in perspective” by the Director General of The Electoral Institute in Nigeria, Prof. Abubakar Mohmoh, and “Comparative

Analysis of Typologies of Electoral Laws” by foremost governance adviser for the United Nations’ Development Programme in Nigeria, Prof. Sam Egwu among other formidable presenters.



NILS reaches out to IDPs in Adamawa

The Governing Council of the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), chaired by the Deputy Senate President, Senator Ike Ekweremadu and the Director General of the Institute, Dr. Ladi Hamalai (MFR) recently commiserated with the government and people of Adamawa State over the humanitarian crisis in the state. The predicament of the internally displaced persons in the state stemmed from the activities of Boko Haram insurgents which caused mass movement of displaced persons from different parts of the state to camps in Yola, the capital city. The Governing Council did not only sympathize in words, but matched it with action by contributing food materials worth 2 million naira to the state government. Dr. Ladi Hamalai, who presented the materials, said the crisis in Adamawa state burdens her heart personally as an indigene of the state and someone who has relatives among the displaced persons. Dr. Hamalai said the action of the Governing Council of the National Institute for Legislative Studies to cushion the hardship faced by the displaced persons is in line with their commitment to seeing that insurgency becomes a thing of the past in the

country. She reiterated that she will do all within her capacity to contribute to stability in the state, national unity and overall prosperity of the nation. While receiving the items on behalf of the State Governor, the Secretary to the State Government, Ibrahim Andrew Welye, said the deed of the Governing Council of NILS and the Director General of the Institute is a noble one because such acts give hope to people in the face of crisis and instability. He expressed appreciation on behalf of the State Government for the timely support, adding that trust is gained by actions displayed rather than mere words. He noted that the gesture will go a long way to ameliorate the suffering of the internally displaced persons. Adamawa state is among the three states in the North Eastern Nigeria where state of emergency was declared since May, 2014 due to the activities of the Boko Haram insurgents. The state recently experienced massive tension when Mubi, the 2nd largest town in the state was taken over by Boko Haram insurgents. The development has led to the mass movement of people resulting in over 12,000 people in the various internally displaced person camps in the state.

IN THE SENATE THIS WEEK



The Senate on Tuesday November 18, 2014 screened, approved and confirmed Honorable Justice Mahmud Mohammed for appointment as the Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN). His confirmation was sequel to the request of President Goodluck Jonathan sent to the Chamber on Thursday 13 November, 2014 which sought the Senate to screen and confirm the nominee in accordance with Section 231 (1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as Amended.

Moving the motion for the commencement of the screening exercise, Senate Leader, Sen. Victor Ndoma Egba also request the Senate to allow the Nominee, the current CJN, Justice Aloma Muktar, other Honorable Justices of the Supreme Court of Nigeria, the Attorney General of the Federation (AGF) and other Members of the Bench and Bar into the Chamber to observe the proceeding and was seconded by the Senate Minority Leader, Sen. George Akume. Both requests were put vote and they all sailed through and they were ushered into the Chamber.

The Senate thus resolved into the Committee of the Whole for the exercise. Senate President, David Mark urged the nominee to relax and attend to questions from Distinguished Senators which marked the beginning of question and answer session. Only three Senators, Deputy Senate President, Sen. Ike Ekweremadu, Sen. James Manager and Sen. Shola Adeyeye asked the first batch of questions on what is the Nominee's stand on the establishment of Special Courts on Anti-corruption and Constitution Amendment, how will he address the poor living standard of some Judges and Judicial staff in the country, how is the he going to address the issues of conflicting judgements given by the Courts in recent times, what is his take on the separation of the Office of the AGF and Minister of Justice and what is his take on moving away from the practice of appointing the most senior Justice of the Supreme Court as CJN whose tenure will last for a short period; for a young, dynamic, qualified Justice that will serve for a longer period as is the case with the United Kingdom and the United States of America whose judicial system the country seems to be copying?

Justice Mohammed responded to the questions satisfactorily thereby prompting law-makers to demand that he should take a bow and go; the presiding officer did not hesitate to put the request to vote and it scaled through, he bowed before the Senate and left. Sen. Mark puts the confirmation question before the Hallowed Chamber and it also sailed through thereby confirming Hon. Justice Mahmud Mohammed's nomination for appointment as the next CJN. Senate President congratulated

him and the Judiciary as an important arm of government and the last hope of the common man as well as wish him the best of luck.

Also, the Senate has read on the floor of the Chamber the request of President Goodluck Jonathan for the extension of proclamation of State of Emergency Rule in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States because the security situation that led to it has remained unabated according to the President. The Senate has commenced the consideration of the request in closed door session before resuming plenary after more than two hours and deferred the consideration to the next legislative date which is tomorrow.

The Senate on Wednesday November 19, 2014 continued the consideration of the extension of State of Emergency Rule in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States in closed door. It would be recalled that President Goodluck Jonathan sent a request for the extension of rule to the Chamber yesterday and the Chamber promptly commenced its consideration the same day but could not reach a conclusion on the matter and had deferred it to today, Wednesday.

At the commencement of today's plenary session, the Senate President, David Mark read a request from President Jonathan seeking the approval of the Hallowed Chamber on the Revised Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) 2014 as a result of the impact of falling oil prices globally vis a vis its impact on Nigeria's economy and the implementation of 2014 budget.

Senate Leader, Sen. Victor Ndoma Egba moved a motion on the continuation of the consideration of the Emergency Rule on three affected states in closed door and was seconded by the Senate Minority Leader, Sen. George Akume and the session went closed door until almost three hours when the Chamber resumed and announced that the consideration of the Emergency Rule request has been deferred to the next legislative date which is tomorrow, Thursday 20 November, 2014. The Chamber therefore adjourned sitting till tomorrow.

New Motions & Bills

MOTION

Extension of State of Emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States

Sen. Victor Ndoma-Egba, CON, SAN, (Senate Leader)

"That the Senate do consider the request of Mr. President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federation, for further extension of State of Emergency in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe States in accordance with the provisions of Section 305(6) (c) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999 as Amended".

BILLS

1. Trade Malpractice (Miscellaneous Offences) Act CAP T12 LFN 2011 (Amendment) Bill 2014 (SB. 534) - First Reading.

Sen. Akin Odunsi (Ogun West)

2. Electoral Act 2010 (Amendment) Bill 2014 (SB. 535) - First Reading.

Sen. Ali Ndume (Borno South)



Dr Hamalai Calls for Increased Female Participation in Governance

Lack of adequate finance has been fingered as one of the hindering factors to effective female participation in politics in Nigeria. This came to the fore recently when the Director General, National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS), Dr. Ladi Hamalai featured on "Duniyan Mata" (Women's World), a current affairs programme that educates women on education and leadership on Adamawa State Television, Yola.

The edition of the programme anchored by Rashida Jibril Shaune highlighted the achievements of Dr. Ladi Hamalai and the herculean roles she undertakes as the Director General of the capacity building Institute against the backdrop of training and overall knowledge management of the Nigerian legislature and their counterparts in the sub region.

Dr. Hamalai informed viewers that the Institute has finalized preparations to organize a conference in 2015 for female legislators who must have won their primary elections. The conference she said will host resource persons from Nigerian Independent Electoral Commission and relevant non-governmental organizations to discuss strategies the female politicians can adopt to compete favorably with their male counterparts and emerge victorious in the elections.

The Director General further calls on female politicians to build strong working relationships with party executives in their various states and at national level while on their part, they should display competence and prove their mettle.

She reiterated efforts of the present administration in boosting women participation in government and further called on heightened political will on the part of government to allow women occupy more elective positions.

NILS FASHIONS STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING CAPACITY OF PARLIMENTARY STAFF IN ECOWAS REGION

A training workshop with focus on effective speech and report writing for parliamentary staff of both National and State parliaments within the ECOWAS region kicked off on Monday 24, November 2014 at the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) conference hall, in Abuja. The workshop which came under the purview of a capacity building project tagged NILS-CAP with financial support of the Nigerian Government and African capacity building foundation (ACBF) was organized in collaboration with the ECOWAS Parliament.

Declaring the well-attended workshop open, the director of Finance and Administration in ECOWAS parliament, Mr. John Azumah exposed that NILS has fashioned strategies that critically is geared towards providing parliamentary staff with the requisite skills needed to perform in their assigned areas of duty. He further explained that the topic of the workshop is germane, hence the summoning of parliamentary

staff from various National parliaments including Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Gambia, Benin, Cote D'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and the host country Nigeria. Mr. Azumah seized the opportunity to urge participants to be interactive and try to identify all the deficiencies as well as work out practical modalities that bring them to par with international best practices. The Programme Manager, Valentina Tetteh who spoke on behalf of the Director General of NILS said the focus of the workshop is to refresh the knowledge and skills of the participants on the topic of interest. The programme is articulated with an expectation to leave the parliamentary staff with improved writing skills, particularly in the area of speech and reports. She expressed optimism that with good facilitation by seasoned Resource Persons and exchanges of experiences, the objective of the workshop is sure to be actualized.



Participants at the Writing Workshop organised by NILS for Staff of the ECOWAS Parliaments