

**A REVIEW OF COMMITTEES IN THE NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY: A STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE  
OF LEGISLATIVE FUNCTIONS, 2003-2013**

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**The Objective of the Book**

The objective of the book is to evaluate the Committees of the National Assembly concerning the performance of their oversight functions to recommend measures for improved performance.

**Subject Matter Coverage**

This book is a study of the committee system of the National Assembly in the Fourth Republic, with particular reference to the performance of legislative functions from 2003-2013. The book focuses on the performance of legislative oversight functions of the National Assembly through the mechanism of the Committee system. This is in recognition of the significance of legislative oversight as a core responsibility of the legislature. Legislative oversight refers to the review, monitoring and supervision of the government and public agencies, including the implementation of policy and legislation. It involves keeping an eye on the activities of governmental agencies especially the executive branch on behalf of the Nigerian people. This process brings to the knowledge of the public what the executive branch is doing, and allows the electorate to determine whether public servants are serving their collective interest or not.

The book is divided into nine (9) unequal chapters. Chapter one, which is the introductory chapter, gives highlights of the background of the book, including a brief overview of the nature and significance of oversight. The chapter upholds the centrality of the legislature to democratic governance globally. It posits that legislative oversight is an instrument through which the government is held accountable to the electorate. Consequently, oversight powers are vested in the legislature as a fundamental principle of separation of powers and on account of the legislature being an institution of the people's representatives. Generally, chapter one lays the foundation for the study,

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setting out the objectives, rationale and significance of the study, framework, scope, methodology, limitation, and structure of the book.

Chapter two dwells on the legislature and its committees, particularly in the context of the operations of the National Assembly. This chapter discusses the typology of legislatures such as integrative legislatures, legitimizing legislatures, arena legislatures and transformative legislatures. The chapter briefly discusses the core functions of legislatures, which are legislation, oversight and representation. It discusses the legislative process at the National Assembly, particularly the first reading, second reading, bill referral to the appropriate legislative committee for further legislative actions, committee report on the bill, and third reading that is the final stage. This chapter pays attention to the Committee system, including its merits, types of committees that include standing committees, special/select committees, sub-committees, joint committees, and the committee of the whole. This chapter also undertakes a survey of international practices on the committee system as well as the impact of committees in the legislative process. The chapter concludes that the committee system in the performance of legislative functions is a global practice, which has gained notoriety. Consequently, on the creation of committees, the general practice across the board is to take into cognizance current existing bureaucratic institutions such as MDAs as well as other areas where legislative oversight is required. Though Committees are differently named, their differences are merely nomenclatural as their operations in terms of jurisdictions and functions correspond with each other irrespective of the country.

Chapter three discusses perspectives on legislative oversight. In terms of goals and objectives, legislative oversight seeks to identify and avoid inefficiency and waste in government; determine the extent of government's effectiveness in carrying out the public policy as set by the legislature; determine whether responsible parties are administering the law fairly and properly throughout the jurisdiction, etc. In the United States Congress, oversight authority derives from its implied powers in the Constitution, public laws, and House and Senate rules. This is an integral part of the American system of checks and balances. This chapter discloses that the United States Supreme Court has

legitimated Congress's investigative power, subject to constitutional safeguards for civil liberties. Besides, the U.S. Congress formalized its legislative oversight functions through the Legislative Re-organization Act of 1946 and 1970, and the Congressional Budget Act of 1974. In the case of Nigeria, legislative oversight power is both implied and expressly stated. The primary constitutional provisions conferring legislative oversight powers on the National Assembly are sections 88 and 89 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999. This chapter lists instruments of oversight as questioning and interactive sessions; oversight visits and inspections; investigative hearings and investigations; examination and approval of the Appropriation Bill; reporting requirements; and bill referrals. Equally significant are the factors determining the performance of legislative oversight functions, which include political and electoral systems; parliamentary technical capacity; availability of information; transparency and integrity of legislative oversight process, etc.

Chapter four is a discourse on resource base for the National Assembly's legislative work. It discusses resource capacities of the National Assembly such as human resources, infrastructure, internet services and financial resources. The chapter discloses high turnover, the dominance of male gender, and the high educational profile of legislators of the National Assembly. In terms of high turnover, the chapter discloses that in the Sixth Assembly, out of 109 senators elected in 2007, 86 or 79 per cent were elected for the first time, implying a very high turnover rate. The implication is that 79 per cent of the senators who served in the Fifth Assembly were not returned to the Senate in 2007. In terms of financial resources, the chapter provides tables and charts to show aggregate budgets approved for the National Assembly from 2009-2014, which averaged 3.23 percent of the national budget. From the data provided, the recurrent budget accounted for nearly 90 percent or more of the funds appropriated to the National Assembly.

Chapter five is a consideration of background to legislative committees and oversight functions in the National Assembly. This chapter traces the historical evolution of the legislature in Nigeria; the first being the establishment of a miniature legislative council as an advisory body. The legislature gradually gained relevance until it finally got legislative powers, which were divided between the centre and the regional governments under

the Lyttleton Constitution of 1954. The modern legislature in Nigeria emerged in 1979 with the return to civil rule after years of military intervention in politics. The structure of the National Assembly under the 1999 Constitution is modelled after the position in the 1979 Constitution. Backed by section 62(1) of the 1999 Constitution, Committees are established to satisfy the need for specialization and division of labour in lawmaking. In the 7<sup>th</sup> Assembly, there are 56 Committees in the House of Representatives and 90 in the Senate. The mode of operation of Committees includes regular meetings and hearings. The chapter analyzed committee attendance at the National Assembly, UK Parliament and Indian Parliament and found that it is low, usually lower than 50%. Finally, the chapter discusses constraining factors in implementing oversight functions, which include executive resistance, institutional constraints, material resource constraints, and the composition of the staff of committees.

Chapter six is an analysis of the profile of Committee oversight activities in the National Assembly, particularly from 2001-2013. This analysis is aimed at providing insights into how active the committees are in the context of the performance of legislative oversight functions. The analysis is predicated on six criteria thus: the number of oversight visits conducted, public hearings held, the number of interactive sessions, bills referred to the committees, the number of tours made, and the number of petitions received. In addition to the above, motions and resolutions of the National Assembly are utilized. This chapter discloses growth in the number of committees at both houses of the National Assembly, attributable to certain factors. Following the inadequacies discovered because of the various analyses, the chapter recommends capacity building for committees; consistency in the conduct of oversight visits by committees in the National Assembly; improvement in the conduct of public hearings; capacity for committee members.

Chapter seven discusses the legislative oversight outcomes or achievements of Committees during the period under consideration. Irrespective of the coverage area, oversight activities of committees are aimed at ensuring that activities of government are carried on in a manner consistent with legislative intent, for efficiency, accountability, transparency and good governance. This

chapter undertakes the task of highlighting the direct outcomes of committee oversight, followed by the presentation and detailed discussions of oversight findings and outcomes of selected committees. The chapter highlights five illustrative cases arising mainly from activities of the Senate Committee on Aviation to underscore the significance of oversight findings and outcomes. The cases are the privatization of Skypower Aviation Handling Company Limited (SAHCOL); the ₦19.5 Billion Aviation Fraud; Restoration of Banking Licenses; Savannah Bank and Societe Generale Bank Limited; Compensation of Beneficiaries of Plane Crash; and Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BASA) Fund.

Chapter eight is an examination of the challenges to an oversight at the National Assembly. The chapter observes that committees of the National Assembly are confronted with a plethora of challenges in the conduct of legislative oversight. These challenges bother on essential working facilities including administrative techniques/ human resources, internet facilities, computers, office accommodation, transport logistics, modern library materials, among others. These challenges militate against committees' capacity to perform their oversight functions. Lack of adequate infrastructure hampers the effectiveness of the legislative process. Other challenges that confront committees in the performance of legislative oversight functions are duplication of committees and multiple memberships; absenteeism of committee members at meetings; non-participation in oversight visits; late submission and consideration of committees' reports; executive resistance of legislative scrutiny, etc. The chapter recommends adequate funding of committees; limiting membership of committees to curb the challenge of absenteeism; capacity building workshops, study tours, seminars and general training and re-training of Committee staff; provision of standard oversight templates, among others.

Chapter nine is the concluding part of this book. The chapter summarises the first-eight chapters and concludes that every aspect of oversight is backed by law. The powers may be express or implied in the Constitution. Another source of power to conduct legislative oversight is the Standing Orders/Rules of the Parliament. The performance of legislative oversight is done through a wide range of channels, organizations and structures. The conclusion discloses that oversight by the National Assembly has yielded several good results,

especially when considered against the backdrop of various challenges associated with the performance of the function.

### **Gaps Identified**

A lot has happened after the publication of this edition. Other challenges confronting legislative oversight have emerged, especially in the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly, which are outside the scope of this book. The eight Assembly witnessed one of the most turbulent relationships with the executive, especially concerning legislative oversight.

### **Recommendations**

The book should be updated with current trends in legislative oversight at the National Assembly. The update should focus on performances of Committees, successes of legislative oversight of the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly, and other emerging challenges of legislative oversight such powers of the National Assembly to alter an Appropriation Bill, judicial bottlenecks, flawed electoral process and docile citizenry.

## A REVIEW OF GENDER & LEADERSHIP TRAINING MANUAL FOR THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Adaobi Julia Ofordeme\*

Publishers	National Institute for Legislative Studies
Vol./Edition/No. of pages/chapters	Single Volume, 198 Pages and 6 Chapters

### **Other Details**

The Manual has six (6) Annexures of Icebreakers and Energizers to be used during training; summary of the National Assembly Gender Strategy and Priority Actions for gender equality and women empowerment; Resolutions of The Nigeria Women Strategy Conference of 17 and 18 February 2014 on Building Bridges of Opportunity 2015 and Beyond; Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights; and the Nigerian Women Charter of Demand.

### ***Subject Matter***

This “Gender & Leadership Training Manual for the National Assembly” provides extensive modules to be used as a guide by facilitators and trainers of Legislators and Legislative Staff on gender mainstreaming in public spaces.

### ***Purpose/Objective of the Book***

The purpose of this Manual is to provide guidelines and content support for training on gender and leadership for legislators and legislative staff of the National Assembly. This is to ensure gender mainstreaming in the National Assembly by ensuring that the Legislators and Legislative Staff have requisite knowledge and skills to enable them to understand the importance of gender and women's rights and make laws to protect them. Besides, the Manual aims at implementing the “Gender Strategy for the National Assembly” that includes enabling women legislators to participate actively and effectively in the legislative process and decision making at the National Assembly. The Gender Strategy for NASS was developed by the National Institute for Legislative Studies in 2014 to educate and change the views of Legislators and legislative staff on women’s and girl’s rights, educate the legislators and legislative staff on the importance of gender equality, inclusiveness and sensitivity in legislative processes, outputs and system. In formulating the Modules in the Manual, the Contributors aim at equipping stakeholders with

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skills to enable them to incorporate gender issues into the legislative process and activities; and in planning, implementation and evaluation of gender-sensitive projects based on careful gender analysis.

To effectively, efficiently, and systematically deliver their sessions, the Manual provides trainers and facilitators with the following six (6) Modules which form the chapters:

Module 1- This Module titled “Human Rights” gives participants a general understanding of human rights especially women’s rights. In administering this Module, Facilitators and Trainers are encouraged to use handouts, flip charts, markers and videos. This Module also encourages the use of personal experiences and live examples for training. It discusses different rights that are affected by different deprivations and oppressions suffered by women. To aid Facilitators, the Module included contents for the handouts to be used. These handouts extensively discuss challenges faced by women and their implications especially for the future of the girl-child, differences between equity and equality while drawing experiences from parts in the book "Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Adichie" and an incident about a woman who was wrongly charged with adultery in Yobe State because she is a woman and was found outside at midnight.

Module 2- The Module discusses Basic Gender Concepts extensively with about twenty-six(26) concepts such as gender equality, gender equity, affirmative action and gender-based discriminations; differences between sex and gender, and pre-conceived notions on gender. It further discussed different works performed by women such as cooking, what constitutes work, unpaid work including the changing roles of women and the different interventions needed to improve the lives of women. It summarizes by discussing the importance of a work-life balance for women and the institution of policies and laws that provide the same. Also, handouts including illustrations are provided to facilitate this Module.



Module 3- This Module on Women and Leadership discusses leadership generally and the importance of the role of women in leadership. It further discusses the importance of women empowerment, women working together and strategies for men to support women's work. For this Module, the handouts provided for facilitators include excerpts from some literature such as "Qualities of Women Leaders: The Unique Leadership Characteristics of Women by Linda Lowen". In summary, this module aims at ensuring that women are fully integrated into leadership roles at all levels and fully involved at all levels of government and home. Also, the module emphasizes the importance of gender equality and the fact that rights especially women's rights cannot be enjoyed in the public sphere if they are not upheld in private especially at homes.

Module 4- The Module "Women and Legislature" is one of the core objectives of this training module as it discusses the Legislature, its role in transforming the lives of women and the role of women in the legislature. This topic is vital as it forms the core of the "Gender Strategy for the National Assembly" which is to be implemented by this Manual. This Module also aims at enhancing the role of Legislative Aides and staff in assisting the Legislators in implementing the "Gender Strategy for the National Assembly". Part of the handouts used for this module is a list of International Treaties, Conventions and Resolutions on Gender Equality, which Nigeria has signed and ratified, but not domesticated except the UN Law on Trafficking and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. In addition, Committees of the National Assembly on Women Issues are listed as part of the handouts for this Module, although it states that the Committees have weak infrastructures that have affected its efficacy.

Module 5- This Module is on Women Communicating for Change. This Module is to teach women how to get involved and succeed in politics and government. In doing so, the Module discusses the dynamics of campaigns, politics and political parties, the importance of media in politics and the use of ICT in advocacy for politics. Further, this Module discusses the challenges of women in claiming and sustaining a political space due to our style of

politicking and the harshness of the political sphere in Nigeria. Some of the challenges for women in this regard are the lack of internal democratic principles and practices that address representational imbalances especially gender parity in political parties and political spheres. The Handouts in this Module provides strategies and guidelines to aid women in participating in politics such as commandments of campaigning, mistakes to avoid in getting ready to run, campaign timelines, budget, media kit contents, how to raise funds, media training guidelines, how to prepare for interviews, rules on the use of secular media and social media, use of language and skills of writing press release.

Module 6- This Module "Building an Agenda for Sustainable Development" discusses the need to create an opportunity for women and girls that will ensure sustainable development through proper planning, budgeting and participatory decision. This Module contains Handouts on Gender and women empowerment indicators such as education, health, human rights and economic structures; Gender reflective budgets with experiences from Austria and Belgium where there are Gender Mainstreaming Acts that ensure gender budgeting; and guidelines on analyzing the budget. It also discusses the importance of constituency and community engagements in government and legislative processes for sustainable development.

Generally, the Manual provides activities for each module which will help participants to better understand each Module and for Facilitators to evaluate their understanding of the Module.

### ***Gaps Identified***

This Training Manual on Gender and Leadership for the National Assembly will be very resourceful for trainers on leadership and gender roles not only for Legislators and Legislative Staff of the National Assembly as suggested by the Manual. However, it excludes other key players on gender mainstreaming such as the State Legislators, State Legislative staff and NGOs that work at the grassroots with the capacity of driving home the benefits of this manual as part of the persons that can use the manual. Although this Manual extensively

covers the subject matter, it did not cover some areas that are important to a text on this subject matter such as pregnancy, its effect and relative provisions to protect the rights of women in the Legislature. The Manual is on gender, but focused only on the female gender with only Activity 3.3 mentioning the male gender as part of the activity session for Module 3- Women and Leadership. In addition, in a bid to be an all-inclusive Manual, it is at the edge of being too general and vague to be effectively useful to the target audience especially the Legislators who are too busy for extensive training. There are a lot of repeated sections which may be printing errors such as the Preface, 0.1, and 0.2b - 0.2.2. Module 4.3 which listed International Treaties, Conventions and Resolutions on Gender Equality mentioned UN Law on Trafficking instead of giving the correct and full quotation which is “UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. The manual does not also clearly address how disciplinary committees in the legislature should handle various forms of workplace harassment. In Module 6 on Gender budgeting, the Manual only gave references to countries that practice gender budgeting but fail to underscore the need to generate evidence on the benefits of engendering the budget formulation process. Finally, the Manual has the date of first publication, while omitting the year of the current publication.

### ***Recommendations***

Readers and users of this Manual will find it very resourceful as it provides substantial material on training on women's and girls' rights especially in the legislature, however, the following recommendations may help in a future review of the Manual. Although preference is usually given to the female gender on discussions relating to gender especially in leadership as covered by this Manual, however, the male gender needs to also be discussed especially its role in women empowerment and gender mainstreaming. To ensure commitment to gender issues in the Legislature, the Manual should include areas of training for the Legislators on providing a proper motivation system to ensure a gender-inclusive and sensitive legislature. Training modules should be majorly for the key officers and management staff of the Legislature who can ensure the implementation of the modules. Besides, the Manual should be able to give users the skills to translate gender mainstreaming guidelines into actionable tasks.

The modules should be reviewed to cover current issues and gaps on gender and women mainstreaming in the Legislature to ensure its effectiveness such as issues on gender and education, disability, health, environment/climate change, and gender-based violence, abuse and harassment. In doing this, the Manual should focus on generic issues of gender analysis and mainstreaming, while making particular references to critical gender issues in priority sectors such as the ones mentioned above. Also, due to the target audience, more precise and concise training modules may be more effective. The training modules should include training on guidelines for Committees on budget and finance to ensure the engendering of budget and budget process of MDAs. In doing so, mechanisms can be developed to reward MDAs/sectors that develop gender-responsive budgets and sanction those that do not. Besides, the modules should include training on developing Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in Research as research informs policy and law-making. Further, gender sensitivity in research would aid in uncovering and addressing specific gender issues in the legislature.

Although the contents of this Manual was current at the time, it has been over three(3) years since the publication, so there is need for a review to cover new issues on the subject matter which is not been covered by the Manual such as gender's relation to environment/climate change, education, health, and disability. Finally, though this Training Manual is mainly for the National Assembly Legislators and Legislative Staff, it will also be beneficial to State Legislators and Legislative Staff, and organizations involved in gender role promotions especially NGOs involved in women rights, empowerment and inclusiveness in government.

### **Proposed Specific Updates**

There are needs for continuous review and update of this Manual every two(2) years to include new issues on gender mainstreaming in the Legislature, and other issues and recommendations made in this review. In addition, there is a need to develop a methodical roadmap with defined timeframes and shared specific responsibilities for the implementation of the frameworks and suggestions on ensuring gender mainstreaming in the Legislature. Gender mainstreaming strategies should also focus on effective male involvement to

address structural discrimination. Finally, there is a need for a year of publication in the Manual.

**A REVIEW OF 16 YEARS OF LAW MAKING 4<sup>TH</sup> -7<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL  
ASSEMBLY: AN ANALYSIS OF BILLS PROCESSED**

**Chinedu Anita Ikpeazu\***

Publishers	NILS, National Institute for Legislative Studies
Vol./Edition/No. of pages/chapters	Volume 4, Edited by Jake Dan-Azumi and Terfa Gbahabo, Ladi Hamalai (Editorial Advisor), 253 Pages of 7 Chapters.

**Subject Matter**

"16 Years of Law Making 4th -7th National Assembly: An analysis of Bills Processed" delivers a detailed account of the law-making activities of the National Assembly spanning 16 years. This publication is an excellent resource to students, educators, legislators, policymakers and any person who seeks information on the workings of the legislature with specific regard to its lawmaking function.

**Purpose/Objective of the Book**

The objective of the book is to bring to fore one of the core function of the National Institute for Legislative Studies, which is to act as a world-class institute for research and publication on legislative practice and procedure. The book under review accomplishes this task by showing the detailed progression of the bill making the process by both Houses of the National Assembly from 1999-2015. The reader is taken on a journey through the world of the legislature with specific regard to law-making, through its perceived shortcomings, successes, issues of concern and challenges, while also making comparisons with the Bill making process in other jurisdictions, such as Kenya, South Africa and the USA. The tone of the study reflects a learned appreciation for the very important and difficult task given to the Legislature to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the Federation. It is imperative to note that under the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, as amended, the National Assembly is tasked with three major functions, that is, lawmaking, oversight and representation. Specifically, section 4(2) empowers the National Assembly to make laws; thus recognizing the importance of the law-making function of the National Assembly. The Policy Analysis and Research Project, the predecessor of the National Institute

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for Legislative studies undertaken in 2010, an assessment of 10 years or lawmaking in the National Assembly and published a book titled “10 years of Lawmaking in the National Assembly, 1999-2009: An analysis of Bills Processed.” This publication was followed by “12 years of Lawmaking (4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> National Assembly): An analysis of Bills Processed”, Vol. 2. This represented an update of the aforementioned publication; both publications attempted to document the level of activity on the law-making function of the National Assembly in an analytical manner. This was followed by the publication of “14 years of Lawmaking in the National Assembly, 1999-2013: An analysis of Bills Processed”, Vol. 3; this updated the information in volume 2 by two legislative years. Finally the publication under review titled “16 Years of Law Making 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> National Assembly: An analysis of Bills Processed,” Vol 4 updated the information in volume 3 by two legislative years up to mid-2015. These aforementioned publications contain ample information on the law-making activities of both houses of the National Assembly. Thus the book is divided into Seven Chapters as follows:

Chapter One introduces the book, opening with a brief introduction of the constitutional responsibility vested in the National Assembly and the State Houses of Assembly, as provided by sections 4(2) and 58 in the case of the National Assembly and sections 4(7) and 100 in the case of the State Houses of Assembly. It progresses through defining the concept of a bill, sources and types of bills, and the procedure for passing a bill at the National Assembly. This format adopted by the author spotlights the key phases from the initiation of a proposal to draft a bill by the executive, legislature, interest groups/associations and the judiciary to the president’s or Governor’s Assent as the case may be.

Chapter Two discusses Bills' processing in the Senate. The chapter identifies that sixteen years into the resumed democratic governance in Nigeria, the country has continued to grapple with serious issues in the economic, political, social and cultural spheres; thus under the circumstances, the National Assembly has tended to be very active legislating not only for the peace, order and good governance of Nigeria but also for the much-desired economic and social development of the country. The chapter discusses the activities of the Senate in relation Bills, its processes and passage; accordingly, the bill processing in the Senate from 1999-2015 is discussed in detail, the author

determines that the Senate has gradually developed capacity and acquired confidence in initiating and processing bills; and that there has been a significant growth in the number of bills received in the Senate, for instance, 162 in 2012/2013 and 197 in 2013/2014 compared to only 39 in 1999/2000 when most of the legislators had little or no experience on the job. The chapter provides detailed information on classification of total bills passed in the senate by sponsorship from June 2009 to June 2015; output of bills in the senate in the same time period and their status; Bills passed in the Senate; gestation periods for the passage of bills; objectives of the bills passed by the Senate as well as Motions considered by the Senate. All the aforementioned subheads were discussed from June 2009 to June 2015.

Chapter three provides detailed information on the bills processing in the House of Representatives. The author points out that as a result of the large number of members of the House, i.e. 360 members as opposed to 109 Senators, it is expected that the House will have a higher level of activity, but the data on bills related activities in the House show that the House has only a slightly higher level of activity than the Senate, with regards to the number of bills introduced on the floor of the House. particularly, the chapter provides detailed and tabular information on the overview of bills processing in the House from 1999 -2015; output of Bills in the House from June 2009 – May 2013; Summary of status of bills received and considered in the House from June 1999- June 4<sup>th</sup> 2015; Output of Bills in the House, June 2009-May 2013; Bills passed in the House; gestation periods of Bills passed in the House; Classification of House bills by objectives; Classification of bills passed by the House by objectives; Objectives of the bills passed in the House; petitions considered by the House (this is not a law-making function; receiving petitions is an oversight instrument utilized by the legislature to resolve grievances laid before it); and motions considered by the House. All the aforementioned subheads were discussed from June 2009 to June 2015.

Chapter Four discusses Acts enacted by the National Assembly. Consequent upon the detailed analysis of the bills processing in the Senate and House of Representatives, the chapter examined, Bills that ended up as Acts of the National Assembly; and notes that based on available information, 1005 bills



were passed by both Houses of the National Assembly from June 1999 to May 2015, and 244 were assented to by the President.

Chapter Five discusses the significance of Bills and Acts. The chapter examines the potentials for positive impacts of the Bills and the concerns expressed about some of them. Thus, bills are categorized according to focus or objectives in order to determine its significance on issues in various spheres of the Country; notably, the essence of a bill may traverse more than one category, nevertheless, the chapter adopted the category as follows: Economic Development, Social Development, Political development, Institutional development and Cultural development. Specific bills and Acts such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission Act and the Public Procurement Act, etc. were analyzed; and it revealed their unparalleled significance and potentials for positive impacts on the socio-economic development of the country. This analysis also revealed some concerns about some bills and Acts, specifically irrelevancy of some bills, the time wasted in the passage of bills, as well as the loss of economic opportunities resulting from non-passage of the bill, especially bills with very vital subject matter; the Petroleum Industry Bill was used as an example. In conclusion, the chapter notes that the point that cannot be overemphasized is the need not only to have but also to expedite actions on Bills that will make meaningful impact on the living conditions of Nigerians and the growth and development of the country; as such bills must be assessed on the basis of their relevance and potential impact on the target beneficiaries.

Chapter Six provides for a comparative perspective in Bill processing activities. The chapter assesses the performance of the National Assembly within the global context using information from other Jurisdictions with a view determine how the Nigerian Legislature fares in comparison with other Legislatures both within and outside the continent, i.e. Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and the United States. The chapter notes that the Nigerian legislature compares favourably with compared legislatures in law-making activities; however, the National Assembly must strengthen its capacity to ensure the transformation of a plethora of passed bills into Laws.

Chapter Seven discusses some issues of concern, challenges and conclusion. The chapter notes that obviously, at the inception of the fourth assembly, after

many years of military rule and erosion of the democratic culture, many issues of concern and challenges surfaced, one of which was the very limited capacity of the legislators to carry out their legislative functions, however over time, as a result of concerted efforts, these challenges are continually being addressed to ensure a thriving democratic culture in Nigeria. Thus, the chapter highlights in detail some issues of concern and challenges facing the National Assembly, including but not limited to lack of quality of bills sponsored by legislators, lack of capacity by some legislators to engage with bills, lack of presidential assent on passed bills, concurrence requirement of bills, high rate of turnover of legislators, plethora of bills not processed when the lifespan of the Assembly ends, lack of knowledge of ICT by legislators and delay in enacting vital bills. In conclusion, the authors note that Nigeria is a country, which is still striving to eliminate the features of underdevelopment; consequently, there are many issues of concern attributable to all three arms of government. In particular, the legislature should not only legislate on issues of peace, order and good governance but also direct issues of Social and Economic Development.

In general, the chapters are filled with detailed tables and graphs for further illustration and to provide the reader with an in-depth analysis of various aspects of the bills processing in both Houses of the National Assembly, to aid the reader to better understand the details in the main text. The book contains 9 items in the annexures namely, second schedule of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Promulgation) 1999, No. 24; the Senate and House Committees in the National Assembly, June 2011-June 4, 2015; list of bills passed by the senate, 1999-2015; list of bills passed by the House of Representatives, 1999-2015; list of bills assented to June 1999 – May 2015; list of reports of the petitions receives and considered by the House of Representatives, June 2007- June 2015; list of motions proposed in the senate, 2009-2015; list of motions proposed in the House of Representatives, 2007-2015; and list of motions not resolved by the House of Representatives, June 2007 – June 4, 2015.

### Gaps and Recommendations

The book covers in detail 16 years of lawmaking in Nigeria, however, there are some gaps identified, for instance, provisions were made for petitions considered by the House of Representatives, but petitions considered by the Senate was not provided. The powers of the State House of Assembly to make law is provided by section 4(7) of the Constitution, and not section 7 as stated in the book;<sup>1</sup> the Constitution was also wrongly cited.<sup>2</sup> Besides, subhead 3.2 providing for "output of bills in the House, June 2009-May 2013" does not match the body; the body provides for June 2009-May 2015. The book does not contain the date or year of publication. Notably, the overall credibility of the content of the study does not suffer due to these gaps and errors.

Thus, recommendations are proffered to ensure the publication of Vol. 5 of the series at the end of this current assembly (8<sup>th</sup> Assembly), to ensure that the level of activity of the law-making function of the National Assembly is constantly updated, and to correct the error identified in the updated volume. It is also recommended to provide the year of publication; and to provide a general name for the series in addition to the volume numbers, as opposed to only identifying the publication by volume numbers. This is for clarity in citing the publications.

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<sup>1</sup>. See p 3, second paragraph.

<sup>2</sup>. See p 104, Annex 1.