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FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

**Wednesday
21st April, 2010**



NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DEBATES

**FOURTH REPUBLIC
THIRD ASSEMBLY
(SIXTH SENATE)**

THIRD SESSION

SENATE OFFICIAL REPORT

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**SENATE OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

Wednesday, 21st April, 2010

The Senate met at 10:35 a.m.

PRAYERS

(The President in the Chair)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

The President: Distinguished Senators, we have before us for approval, the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 20th April, 2010: Pages 741, 742, 743, 744.

Senator Bukar Abba Ibrahim (Yobe East): Mr. President, though I was not around, I think at the bottom of this page, the name, Senator Mujitaba M. Mallam, if I am correct, is from North West. On the following page, Senator Ahmed Lawan is from North East.

The President: That correction was done yesterday but that is the way it was written. You will see the correction in the Verbatim Report but these papers had to be reproduced the way it was given. Pages 745, 746, 747, 748.

Senator Joy Ifeyinwa Emodi (Anambra North): Mr. President, I move that the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 20th April, 2010 be adopted as amended.

Senator Eme Ufot Ekaette (Akwa Ibom South): Mr. President, I rise to second the Motion ably moved by Senator Joy Emodi that the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 20th April, 2010 be adopted as amended.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Votes and Proceedings of Tuesday, 20th April, 2010 be approved as amended.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Conference Committee on the National Space
and Development Agency Bill, 2010**

The President: The members of the Conference Committee on the National Space and Development Bill, 2010 are as follows:

Senator Gregory Ngaji - Chairman
Senator Caleb Zagi - Member
Senator Munirudeen A. Muse - Member
Senator Chimaroke Nnamani - Member
Senator Simeon Sule Ajibola - Member
Senator Omar A. Hambagda - Member

This Committee would report back at the earliest possible time.

**Conference Committee on the National Climate
Change Commission Bill, 2010**

The President: The members of the Conference Committee on the National Climate Change Commission Bill, 2010 are as follows:

Senator Grace Folashade Bent - Chairman
Senator Annie Okonkwo - Member
Senator Kamorudeen Adedibu - Member
Senator Yisa Braimoh - Member
Senator Umar A. Argungu - Member
Senator Gyang D. Dantong - Member

**Joint Meeting of the Committees on Banking,
Insurance and other Financial Institutions,
Capital Market and Finance**

The President: There would be a meeting of the Senate Committees on Banking, Insurance and other Financial Institutions, Capital Market and Finance to conclude deliberations on the Assets Management Corporation of Nigeria Establishment Bill, 2010.

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Date: Wednesday, 21st April, 2010

Venue: Senate Committee Room 107 – New Senate Building

Time: 2:00 p. m.

Distinguished Members of these Committees are requested to attend, please.

The Movement for the Creation of Apa State

The President: The Movement for the Creation of Apa State would present its Memorandum today at 1.15 p.m. in Room 301, New Senate Building.

All the Senators who are not engaged at that time are please requested to attend and give support.

(Signed)

Senator Joseph I. Akaagerger

Senator Festus Olabode George (Ekiti Central): Mr. President, I have a Point of Order.

The President: Point of Order, Senator Olabode.

Senator Festus Olabode George: Mr. President, I come under Order 41 which states thus: *A Petition may only be presented to the Senate by a Senator, who shall affix his name at the beginning thereof.*

My petition is premised on the unlawful dismissal from service of one of my constituents, Mr. Olujimi Vincent Oluyemi. The main facts of this Petition are that Mr. Vincent Olujimi was until his purported interdiction and removal from office as a staff of the Federal Minister of Internal Affairs and sent to the Federal Ministry of Civic Registration. While serving there – (*Interruptions*).

The President: We do not need all that details. It is a case of wrongful dismissal. Has it met all the conditions specified in Section 41(1) to 41(7)? Have you read Section 41(7)?

Senator Festus Olabode George: Section 41(7) says: *The Senate shall not receive any petition on any matter for which there is a judicial remedy.*

The President: Then, lay the Petition on the Table.

(*Petition laid.*)

The President: In accordance with Section 41(3) the Petition is referred to the Public Petitions and Ethics Committees.

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

Safe Water Bill, 2010

Senator Teslim Folarin (Oyo Central): Mr. President, the first Business of the Day is the presentation of a Bill standing in the name of Senate Chris Anyanwu on Safe Water Bill, 2010.

Mr. President, you may invite the Clerk of the Senate to read the short title of the Bill.

Safe Water Bill, 2010

Safe Water Bill, 2010 – *read the First Time.*

Corporate Manslaughter Bill, 2010

Senator Teslim Folarin: Mr. President, the second Business of the Day is the presentation of a Bill standing in the name of Senator Christ Anyanwu on the Corporate Manslaughter Bill, 2010.

Mr. President, you may wish to invite the Clerk of the Senate to read the short title of the Bill.

Corporate Manslaughter Bill, 2010

Corporate Manslaughter Bill, 2010 – *read the First Time.*

ORDERS OF THE DAY

MOTION

Confirmation of Nomination

Senator Teslim Folarin: Mr. President, the first Order of the Day is a Motion requesting this Senate to consider the request of the Acting President, Commander-in-Chief, for the confirmation of the nominations of following persons as Ministers of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in accordance with Section 147(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The names are as contained in the Order Paper.

In order to carryout this exercise, I now move that this Senate do resolve into the Committee of the Whole to conduct the confirmation hearing.

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Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos Central): Mr. President, I second the Motion as moved by the Leader that this Senate do resolve into the Committee of the Whole to consider the request of the Acting President for the confirmation of Ministerial Nominees.

Question put and agreed to.

Request of the Acting President, Commander-in-Chief, for the confirmation of the Nominations of Mr. Obadiah Ando (Taraba State) and Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu (Ebonyi State) as Ministers of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria in accordance with Section 147(2) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria – *CONSIDERED IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE*

(Mr. President in the Chair)

Senator Teslim Folarin: Mr. Chairman, suspending Order 17, I move that this Senate do admit the Nominees, Special Adviser to the President on National Assembly Matters and his Assistant into the Senate Chamber.

Senator Olorunnimbe Mamora: Mr. Chairman, I second the Motion that the Senate do suspend Order 17 to allow those mentioned by the Leader to come in to the Senate Chamber for purpose of screening.

Question put and agreed.

Resolved: That the Senate do suspend Order 17 to allow visitors into the Chambers.

(Mr. Obadiah Ando appears before the Senate)

The Chairman: The first nominee is Mr. Obadiah Ando from Taraba State. Mr. Ando, you are a Ministerial nominee, we will like you to tell us all the things that you think we should know to assist us in coming to a logical judgment about your nomination. Tell us the good things about yourself, what you think you have to bring on board if eventually you are confirmed as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Mr. Obadiah Ando (Taraba State): Your Excellency the Senate President, your Excellency the Deputy Senate President, distinguish Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, permit me to

use this occasion to commiserate with you and on behalf of my family I offer my condolences for the loss of two of your illustrious Members.

My names are Obadiah Ando, I was born in a small village in Taraba State. I attended Primary School at Lupwe and from there I proceeded to Plateau, Boys Secondary School, Gindiri. From Boys Secondary School Gindiri where I did my secondary school, I went back to do my HSC from there I went to Ahmadu Bello University. In 1974, I finished at Ahmadu Bello University and went to the then Mid Western State for my NYSC and I served at Kwale. From Kwale, I came back to Jos to resume as a Planning Officer in the Benue-Plateau State Government. In 1976, when States were created, I moved to Yola, the then Gongola State, served there as Planning Officer I up to a moment when God elevated me to the Chief Planning Officer and from there I became the Director of Budget from that post I was made a Permanent Secretary in 1986.

From 1986 I served in various Ministries and in 1991 I was made the State Secretary to Government; the last of Gongola State. When Taraba State was created, I was transferred as the new first Secretary to Taraba State Government. From there, I transferred my service to the Federal Government where I served in the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission as a Director. From the Revenue Mobilization Allocation and Fiscal Commission, I moved to the National Planning Commission from where I was posted to the Economic Affairs Department of the Presidency, from there I moved to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources from where I retired in 1998.

I joined Politics, and I attempted to be Governor of my State but I lost out and went back to the private sector, where I am now.

Senator Patrick E. Osakwe (Delta North): Mr. President, Mr. Nominee, going through your C.V, one will observe that you have attempted twice to be the Governor of your dear State, Taraba State, first one in 1999 and the second in 2007. Could you tell us because your C.V did not explain it, under what Party did you make those attempts? Secondly, what deprived you or what made you not to be the Governor of that State after your two attempts. Something must be responsible for your two failures. Presently, you want to serve the whole country, you were to serve your dear State

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Taraba, so now you are going on a very wider assignment, the Senate and Nigerians would be interested in knowing those impediments that really prevented you from being elected.

Senator Effiong D. Bob (Akwa Ibom North East): Mr. Chairman, my question is this, assuming this Senate confirms your nomination and you are posted to Ministry of Water Resources; from your records, you have been in the Ministry of Water Resources, you know the investment of Federal Government in boreholes throughout the country even in some places where those communities do not require boreholes and you also know the effect of dams to the economy of the country. Which one do you prefer; is it the sinking of boreholes or construction of mini water schemes in communities; Mini water scheme in the sense that you have treated water for the people or just the borehole?

Secondly, of all the dams that we have in the country, those ones that we even established many years ago which are all down, what would you do to bring back these things back to where they are supposed to be?

Senator Ike Ekweremadu (Enugu West): Mr. Nominee, I can see you are very vast in planning and statistics. One of the major problems we have as a country is the distribution of income and resources, there is a huge gap between the rich and the poor. It appears that we do not have essentially, the middle class.

As a Planning Officer, what advice would you give to the government to ensure that every Nigerian would have access to our commonwealth in terms of unemployment benefits, social security and benefits to the aged and those who are ill? How do we redistribute income to ensure that everybody in Nigeria would have a piece of the cake?

Mr. Obadiah Ando: Distinguished Senate President, I attempted to be Governor twice, yes. The first attempt was under ANPP in 1998. The second attempt was in 2007 under the umbrella of PDP. On what was responsible for my failure, it was God's will.

Assuming I am posted to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources, what do I prefer, is it boreholes or Dams? It depends on the location. There are areas that the sedimentary rocks in the

country would not do well for either the borehole or the dam. In those areas, you have to decide for the people to get what suits them first on the basis of comparative advantage. You do not decide just anyhow. In any case, we have enough Dams that can serve us in this country, only that we did not complete them. I will try to see that they are completed. To bring the Dams up, I will look for money from the government; and if I look for money from government when my Ministry comes to you we will beg you passionately to give us some of the funds so that we can produce Dams to the level that can satisfy our population.

On how do I advise the government on income distribution, I will advise the government to go for an integrated rural development approach; that is where the common people are? If we do that we would reduce what is called the drain of the rural areas. More young people will stay in the villages to farm and do other things instead of running to the big towns and the income bracket will normalize itself.

Senator Wilfred Bode Olajumoke (Ondo North): Mr. Nominee, going through your Résumé at different times you were a leader of one of the major political parties from SDP, UNCP, ANPP and now PDP. Over the time there had been the acknowledgement that most of the Political Parties suffer very high rate of indiscipline and it cuts across all the Political Parties. Would you agree with this? Considering the Amendment being proposed to the Constitution to internalize Democracy in all the Political Parties, what would be your take on this?

The second question has to do with your State. You come from Taraba State and there is high rate of River Blindness in Taraba. In fact, a village in Taraba has over 90 *per cent* of its Villagers totally blind. What is the cause of this high rate of blindness in Taraba and what is the solution to the problem of River blindness in the country?

Senator Kabiru Gaya (Kano South): Mr. Chairman, I know the Nominee and we have met before though under our great Party ANPP. I just want to ask you one question and my major concern is that the government of the Federation will be importing rice worth over four billion naira annually and we have vast land in Nigeria – virgin land. As you have just mentioned earlier, we have many Dams and in particular, in Kano State we have two of the largest Dams in Nigeria. We started

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this irrigation projects during the late Governor Audu Bako, may his soul rest in peace. During that time, they cultivated ten thousand hectares in four years and when Federal government took over the project under the River Basin, for 23 years, they were only able to cultivate 3000 hectares, dwindling the process.

As a nominee, if you are sent to the Federal Ministry of Water Resources or you have a chance to make an impact on this aspect, I think there is need to look into irrigation farming so that we can be able to utilize our farms three times a year and be able to give employment to so many Nigerians. I have been to Taraba especially Zankali area, they are great farmers but they are not being assisted greatly. So if you can encourage us also in that kind of irrigation farming in those areas or as you have said, where we can create boreholes and utilize the land surface for irrigation, I am sure that will boost agriculture and be able to help our youths that are unemployed.

Before you appear to the Senate, the budget has been passed but I know that the previous Minister tried his best. What effort can you add on this aspect or what is your view on irrigation farming?

Senator Andrew Abidemi Babalola (Oyo North): Mr. Obadia Ando, from your C.V. you have been in and out of government for a very long time and also in and out of parties. My question is that throughout this period we have had Governments that have failed Nigeria one way or the other. From your experience as a member of this Government what can you say has been the failure of governance in this country generally?

The Chairman: The last person in this series is the Joy of the Senate.

Senator Joy Ifeyinwa Emodi (Anambra North): Mr. Obadia Ando, let me commend you for your nomination. From your CV, I discovered that you have a lot of experience in matters of education. You were once an Acting Principal and Permanent Secretary Ministry of Education. There was an embarrassing occurrence in the sector recently and that was the issue of more than 85 *per cent* of the students who took NECO exams, failing. I think that was very embarrassing for our country. What do you think is responsible for this and what panacea can you propose to stop further occurrence? This is my simple question.

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The Chairman: You can now respond to the questions.

Mr. Obadia Ando: Thank you Mr. Senate President. A distinguished Senator talked about the river blindness in Taraba State and I was not surprise. Some few years back, an NYSC worker who was in Taraba saw this problem and raised an alarm. She asked for volunteers to come, donate their money to help Taraba eradicate river blindness. Many people responded, and of course she was one of the people who spent her money and chaired that committee. That NGO is still operating and luckily I happened to be working for somebody who also was a Chairman of that NGO. It has gone very far in minimizing the incidents of river blindness in Taraba State.

Of recent, the State Government has come to compliment the efforts of the NGO. They go round the Local Governments, give free drugs, register the people and come back the following year to see how they are doing.

On the issue of rice importation, the Ministry of Water Resources has about twelve River Basin Development Authorities, which were set up to harness water and distribute it for both irrigation and potable drinking water. About 12 years ago when I was still in the Ministry, they also went into the cultivation of rice to reduce the incidence of rice importation. In that cultivation, theirs was like a teacher, when they do it with improved varieties, they show the localities how to do the same thing.

Unfortunately, the River Basins have broken down and we do not use them like we do in the past. They need to be resuscitated. Also, the water they should use for irrigation is not as available as before and inconsistent Government policies have troubled the system. We have what we called Gurara One Dam and that Gurara One Dam is where we get water for Abuja. We supposed to have passed that water to the Ministry of Power to use it for generation of electricity as well as for irrigation. I intend to ensure that we return this to where they can be optimally used.

On NECO failure, the school system in Nigeria has actually been having problems. It is not what some of us used to know. The teachers are not the same as the teachers that we used. Maybe, the incentives that we give to them are not the best incentives. We need to look into that to find out whether that is the problem or that our students are

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not ready to read. We the parents also have to ensure that our children do not engage in so many extra-curriculum activities that do not pertain to their education. They should sit down and do what has taken them to school.

Senator Ahmed Ibrahim Lawan (Yobe North): Mr. Obadia Ando, I can see that you have been a Director, Policy, Planning and Budget in the National Planning Commission, Director, Economic Affairs in the Presidency, Director, Planning, Research and Statistics in the Federal Ministry of Water Resources and so many other directorships revolving around planning. As a preamble, I am one of those Nigerians who believe that it is not everything that we throw in money. Some of our projects in the past and to some extent today, have suffered mostly from planning than from funding.

We have so many gigantic and white elephant projects that have failed and so much funds were sunk into them. As someone who has been involved in planning, what do you think Nigeria needs to do today to reverse the trend of throwing in money, because most of the time our complaints are that we need more resources for projects, but what do you think we need to do to ensure that we use little money to achieve maximum benefits from projects in developing this country?

Secondly and finally, you were a gubernatorial candidate for APP in 1999 and then you became an aspirant for PDP. Can you tell us why you think APP was a good platform for you in 1999 and then PDP all of a sudden became your platform? If you compare the situation yesterday and the situation today in the two Parties what do you think is the problem? *(Interruptions)* Mr. Chairman, I need your protection from Senator James Manager.

The Chairman: It is not the interruptions from Senator James Manager really but I think it will not be proper for him to judge which of the two Political Parties is better in one way or the other. You have not finished your question but I think I know where the question is going to end and I think that is why the interruption from Senator James Manager. If you can just shorten your question so that he will get the gist.

Senator Ahmed Lawan: With all pleasure, Sir. I will not go further but let us share his opinion and experience; an experience about the two political parties; that is to say, whether the internal

democracy in ACP gave him an opportunity to contest and then an internal democracy in PDP, perhaps did not allow him to run. He will suggest something for us to work with. I believe that we need to have a system in all the parties where people are given opportunities like he was given in 1999 by the great APP.

The Chairman: No need for point of Order, he is not going to react to a leading question. That question is already given an answer. The lawyers know what leading questions are.

Senator Dahiru A. Kuta (Niger East): The nominee, you went through the HSC in 1968/69 and you had very good grades and had direct entry into the University. How do you access the quality of University graduates these days? What is wrong with our University system that we are having poor quality graduates? What is it that the Federal Government is supposed to have done to protect the University system from collapsing?

Senator Uche Chukwumerije (Abia North): Mr. Chairman, there is a military plot to trivialize a very historic, most honoured, social, revolutionary phenomenon, something called Comrades. *(Laughter)*

Mr. Nominee Sir, my question is an objective question, a multi choice kind of question. I will give you a question and I will suggest three answers and you will pick one; only one. My question goes this way: in 1999 you were in ANPP, by 2007 you are in PDP, choose one of these three answers. (1) I crossed over because I had no principles. (2) I crossed over because of material and political benefits. (3) I crossed over because of ideological reasons. Which of the three will you choose?

The Chairman: He will give an answer when he responds. Comrade Professor Jibril Aminu. *Interruptions*

Because of Comrade Uche Chukwumerije's comment about comradeship, I classify Professor Jubril Aminu as an authentic Comrade also, that will not be trivializing it any more. I am sure.

Senator Jibril Mohammed Aminu (Adamawa Central): Mr. Chairman, I am very delighted that led by the President of the Senate, the Senate is finding my true character.

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Several distinguished Senators: No!

Senator Jibril Aminu: Secondly, I always speak on orders and one of these days I think the Senate will agree that I am entitled to charge for carrying out some of the orders. Mr. Obadiah Ando, you are very experienced but your height does not seem to give that impression. I have been hearing about you for a long time before I had the pleasure of meeting you including the role you played in removing Mambila and Gashaka from Adamawa to Taraba. I hope that you have plenty of time to repent on that sin; what you did to us. Now, you are coming as a Minister, people have guessed you might go to the Ministry of Water Resources but probably true but we have been fooled here before to interview somebody for two hours, then they took him to a Ministry we did not think. It might happen to you but Senators seems to think you are going to the Ministry of Water Resources.

How sensible is Nigeria to continue to depending on rain fed agriculture? Even though, I know you and I came from the Benue Valley and particularly at your end there is plenty of water, how sensible is it, for us to continue to depend on rain fed agriculture?

Secondly, power is a problem and you are going to be probably the Minister of Water Resources. Coming from Taraba, next to Mambila which was pitched from Adamawa, now people have been talking about the Dam, Abongoroje Dam - the big Dam; what are you going to do to ensure that, that Dam receives the priority it deserves in this country so that Nigeria will enhance its power supply?

Thirdly, the Senate has spent a long time debating on one issue, which is the disaster of Lake Nyons. There is really no reason why that cannot happen in any other part in that area. Is there any place in your mind where you will address, if you get to the Ministry of Water Resources, this business of the potential disaster of Lake Nyons type emitting carbon dioxide? You and I come from very poor old Adamawa. You are a Minister from Adamawa State and we have a lot of potentials. What are you going to do as a Minister to ensure that these potentials do not just remain potential?

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The Chairman: I think that should be the last in this series. Mr. Obadiah Ando, I hope you got all the questions.

Mr. Obadiah Ando: The distinguished Senator said that money is not the answer. I agree that money is not the answer, but there are some areas that if you put in money and you do not put in money enough to the optimum, you can as well not start because you will just be at the bend to finish it. As an economist, I would like to spend less and gain more. So I have that predicament that you have; but unfortunately there are some projects that you have to spend money. It is my humble opinion that Planning has not been the problem of Nigeria. We have over the years, since independence, been planning; but have we religiously followed the plans approved in the developing plans on the Budgets?

On the quality of graduates today; during some of times, we had lower intakes, so we had the best of the bests and it was easier for the Universities to manage. Now, we have produced more students, they flood the Universities, the facilities are not enough for them to use the way we used them before. The optimum we had is no longer the optimum and that is why you find some of these problems. The other side is, how do we go about it? It is not just the Government; the Government, the Private Sector and our University Administrators and the Lecturers have to have serious dialogue to remember that all the children that we are breeding are supposed to succeed us and if we do not breed them well, our future is bleak. If we have that honest dialogue, we shall be on the right path.

I did not get the first question by Senator Chukwumerije. Please can I get the question again?

Senator Uche Chukwumerije (Abia North): My question is, choose one of three choices:

- (i) I left because I have no principles;
- (ii) I left in pursuit of material and political benefits;
- (iii) I left for superior ideological reasons.

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Mr. Obadiah Ando: My answer is none of the above - (*Laughter*). On the question raised by the distinguished Senator (Professor), I am sorry, I did not take the Ashaka and Mambila away from Adamawa to Taraba. It was an act of government by General Babangida.

I also believe that we cannot just concentrate on rain fed Agriculture and that is why I feel that we should resuscitate the River Basins and make sure that the mandate which created them is being implemented to the fullest.

For the Mambila Dam, in consultation with the Power Ministry, I will do all I can in my power to make sure that this Dam is built, not just because of the dam alone but that it can generate power that will serve the North-Eastern Sector, part of Cameroon, part of Niger, part of Chad and part of the South-East. Just for that generation of power that it will serve all those zones and not just for the irrigation part of it.

On the issue of Lake Nyons, I think this is an accident that if we do not take care, in two to five years, it will erupt, and once it does, the southern part of Taraba, the whole of Benue, Cross River and up to most of the South-East to Lokoja would be affected and devastated. Many people and crops would have to die; so the earlier opportunity we take with the studies that are on ground showing us what the imminent problems are, the better for all of us.

The Chairman: I have a very short question for you. I was just going through your CV to see whether you had any Military training at all; there is none but I found that your Referees, two of them are Military personnel. Is there any special reason?

Mr. Obadiah Ando: The special reason is that there are two people who know me in and out.

The Chairman: Is it the wish of the Senate that he should bow and go?

Some distinguished Senators: Yes.

(*Mr. Obadiah Ando took a bow and left*)

(*Professor Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu appears before the Senate*)

The Chairman: Distinguished Colleagues, the gentleman before us is Professor Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu. Prof. Chukwu, we have got a

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copy of your Curriculum Vitae, you are a nominee for Ministerial Appointment, tell us those things that you think you can bring on board if eventually you are confirmed as a Minister and you are in the cabinet. We already have your curriculum vitae; unless there is any point you particularly would like to emphasize, we can go through most of the details in your curriculum vitae.

Thank you.

Professor Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu (Ebonyi State): Your Excellency the President of the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, your Excellency the Deputy Senate President, the Senate Leader, the Deputy Senate Leader, the Chief whip, the Deputy Chief Whip, the Minority Leader, Other Principal Officers, distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, if I am confirmed by the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as a Minister and as the Senate President said, and if I am appointed as the Minister of the Federal Ministry of Health, it is not likely that there would be much time because the tenure of the present administration would be ending in a little over one year.

Already, there are policies that have already been adopted; there are already strategic plans that have been made. For instance, I am aware that before the very last Minister of Health left office, at the National Council on Health meeting that was held in Asaba, Delta State, a document he presented to that body was approved and that document is a National Health Strategic Development Plan. I would like to go through such document because that document clearly spells out things that could be achieved within the life of this present administration. One of them is to have a National Health Act.

I think it is important that the National Health Bill which I must say with all due humility, I participated in a way in helping to put together when I was the Chairman of the Health Reform Foundation of Nigeria for Ebonyi State. We were invited as major stakeholders and through series of meetings that were held particularly in Abuja, we made our input to that document which eventually went through all stages including the National Council on Health and I know that that document was sent as the National Health Bill to both the Senate as well as the Federal House of Representatives in 2008.

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Working with the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, one would be happy to have that come up as National Health Act. That document is expected to guide the country as a whole in terms of defining what National Health System is.

Secondly, I would like that in the life of this present administration, that Polio is finally eradicated from Nigeria. Distinguished Senators, I do know that you are fully aware that Nigeria is one of the four countries that has not had Polio eradicated. Nigeria is the only country in Africa despite our resources and capacity that is yet to have polio eradicated. I think it is visible before the end of this administration to have polio eradicated.

The third thing I would like to bring in is to ensure that the Tertiary Institutions actually perform. I would like to have situation where Nigerians will not have to rush to leave Nigeria to seek medical attention outside the country. I would also like to ensure that Malaria, HIV/AIDS are eradicated to a large extent before 2015, but we have to start somewhere. Already, the Millennium Development Goals targets that access to treatment should be universal by 2010 which is actually this year, and I already know that a lot has been done in that regard.

So, I will push for it so that access to treatment for HIV/AIDS becomes easily and universally accessible in Nigeria, and for the coverage to be 100 per cent by the end of this administration.

I would like also to bring in accountability, integrity and transparency in the conduct of affairs. The stewardship that should be available at the Federal Ministry of Health should be something that all Nigerians should be proud of. I would like to push on certain things that have already been done particularly in the last few months. For instance, one of the interventions to reduce Maternal Mortality Ratio shows that at present, it stands at 545 per one hundred thousand in Nigeria. I would like to continue the Mid-Wives Services Scheme. I think this scheme has become advanced, and all I have to do is to ensure that all Primary Health Care Centers and all Maternities access this service.

I would also like to ensure that National Health Insurance Scheme increases in terms of its coverage. Presently, only public servants working for the Federal Government are covered by the

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scheme. Presently, it has only been extended to pregnant women, but I think it is important working with the State and the Local Governments that the coverage is extended to public officers in these areas as well as to the informal sectors. I would want to work on that. It is visible to get an improvement in the present day coverage.

I would also want to ensure that the advocacy visit that has already been planned to the State and local Governments in terms of ensuring that the referral system in the National Health System becomes operative. As a result, I would like this advocacy visit to take place.

These are some of the things I would like to bring on if the Senate of the Federal Republic of Nigeria confirms me as a Minister and if I am appointed the Minister of Health.

Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan (Yobe North): Point of Order, Mr. Chairman.

The Chairman: Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan, go ahead with your Point of Order.

Senator Ahmad Lawan: Mr. Chairman, I come under Order 122, and upon your permission I will read. It states thus:

Upon receipt of a certificate as referred to in paragraph 121, the Clerk shall distribute to each Senator a list of the nominees in respect of whom a certificate has been received. The President shall make available sufficient copies of the relevant documents.

Mr. Chairman, the very brilliant Curriculum Vitae here, at least the one I have is not accompanied by any document; that is the Point of Order, Sir.

The Chairman: It is all right, your Point of Order is noted, Senator Ahmad Lawan.

Senator Adegbo Eferakeya (Delta Central): Our nominee does not seem to have understood the Senate President. You were asked to say something about yourself then you started telling us as if you have been posted to the Ministry of Health. As a matter of fact, all the questions we wanted to ask, you have already answered them because you were telling us what you would do. That is not the question that was put before you.

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Having said that, maybe few things are left. As a Medical Doctor and as you assumed that you were going to be posted to the Ministry of Health, we have found that cerebrospinal meningitis is now a recurring decimal in this country especially in the northern part of the country. What would you do to ensure that such things do not reoccur and if they do occur what is the management strategy you will put forward?

Senator James Manager (Delta South): Mr. Chairman, I have two questions for the nominee. Firstly, I will take you back to Ebonyi State where you come from. Recently, Ebonyi State was in the news both the electronic and print media on the negative side; to the effect that two communities are at war against themselves or one clan against another clan which of course threatened national security because from the reports that we read, it came at a time very dangerous to drive on the Ebonyi – Enugu highway.

If you are confirmed as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria from Ebonyi State, what would you bring to bear to ensure that the problem in Ebonyi State is curbed? Before that, what was the problem? What can you do if confirmed as the Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria to complement the efforts of all those who have been involved including Senator Julius Ucha who at a time addressed the press? I am sure there is confusion somewhere. What will you do to solve the problem in Ebonyi State?

Secondly, I will bring you to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). It was only yesterday that we debated the general principles of the Appropriation Bill of the FCT and a very startling revelation was made by the Senate Leader in his lead debate that it is becoming very risky to fall sick in the FCT because of dearth of private hospitals in the vicinity.

As a Professor of Medicine, if you are confirmed as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria by this Senate, and if by the Grace of God Almighty the Acting President makes you the Minister of Health, what robust policies will you put in place to attract private medical practitioners from within and outside the country to establish private hospitals and clinics in this city called Abuja.

Senator Mohammed Mana (Adamawa North): Prof. Chukwu, you are a Professor of surgery and, in fact, orthopedic surgery. I believe

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during the course of your profession, you must have come across road accident victims in Nigeria and you know that Nigeria has the highest number of road accidents in West Africa. I am surprised that when you are listing your priorities, you did not include this aspect of our tragedy in this country having been closely related with accident victims.

In fact only recently, we have several losses of lives as a result of lack of emergency spots and attendants. Take for example, the late Alhaji Abubakar Rimi and even our colleagues here. Now, if you are confirmed as a Minister of the Federation and as you have predicted, you are posted to the Ministry of Health, what will you do to save the loss of lives in this country, especially from accidents?

Secondly, on the issue of politics, I have seen your wonderful Curriculum Vitae as to the Medical Profession and I have not seen any indication that you have been in any part of politics. Now that you are going to be in it, we know that Ebonyi State is predominantly PDP State. First, are you a card carrying member of the PDP, Yes or No? What would you do to help PDP grow in Ebonyi State?

Senator Umaru Dahiru (Sokoto South): Point of Order!

The Chairman: Go ahead with your Point of Order.

Senator Umaru Dahiru: Mr. Chairman, Senator Lawan has raised a fundamental Point of Order and equally in the contribution made by my Leader, he raised the issue of Constitutional Point of Order, the Membership of the Party. If you go through our Rule and in particular Order 120 down to 125 relating to the screening of the nominees, we do not seem to be following the right thing. I have no objection to what is going on but certainly, we are breaching our Rules and I am wondering why we simply go on without furnishing us with the relevant documentation as required by our Rule; and particularly, Order 120 down to 121, 122 etc.

People are grumbling and issues are being raised and they have not been addressed, particularly whether the gentleman has resigned from his previous employment for example, or he is a member of a political party under the Constitution, etc. So many other things have not been addressed. The CV is just empty. It is just a

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mere copy of what is going on. I am wondering how we are going about it.

The Chairman: That Point of Order was raised and I said I have noted the Point of Order. I said so because the same Point of Order was raised before and Senator Mana has asked him a very specific question and I think he will give an answer to it. Therefore, your Point of Order which is a repetition of Senator Ahmed's own is noted.

Senator Mujitaba Mohammed (Jigawa South West): Mr. Nominee, I have two sets of questions for you. The first one is a direct question while the other one is for me to know your opinion.

I will begin with the direct question. It has often been said that no democratic system is ever built on the foundation of poverty, hunger and starvation. In the light of the contemporary political issues in Nigeria that has to do with the conduct of free and fair elections and also the concept of good governance, which one do you think is more appropriate at this material time? Do we emphasise the concept of free and fair election to the detriment of good governance, or vice versa?

I want to know your opinion on this statement. Some political analysts often say that unhealthy and desperate contest for political powers and its attendant benefits is a simple consolidation of democracy in this country. What is your view on this statement?

The Chairman: Professor, answer these first set of questions. There are four of them.

Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu: Your Excellency, with your due permission, I would want to start with the questions that were posed by distinguished Senator Mujitaba on poverty and hunger, free and fair election and good governance.

I wish to humbly submit to the best of my understanding that the foundation of all the three is to have the people decide their own fate and therefore, free and fair election should be the topmost priority. Thereafter those who have been properly granted the mandate of the people should naturally ensure good governance. If that is done, poverty and hunger will be a thing of the past. Indeed, that is the first millennium development goal.

On the issue of citizens, leaders and politicians who may apparently be stifling the tenets of

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democracy, my own attitude to it is that just like surgical skills, whether one wants to accept it or not there has to be a learning curve. I believe that Nigeria has steadily emerged. With each passing year there has been an improvement to the best of my understanding.

Democracy thrives on tolerance. We should be able to tolerate divergent views, but then, we have the Constitution which is supreme, and all the other enabling laws enacted by the National Assembly to guide us. It is a learning curve and I think those issues will gradually go, but we need to continue to educate ourselves. The political class has been doing well, they have been educating themselves. They have not been resting on their oars.

Distinguished Senator Mana, I want to thank you. It was an oversight. At a stage I felt I have talked for too long and I was just trying to summarize. Indeed, road traffic injuries remain a major problem in Nigeria. It is significant that road traffic accidents claim the very able members of our society upon whom others depend on. Those who are always on the move are those in the reproductive segment of their lives, particularly men who are the bread winners for their respective families. Certainly, something should be done. First, prevention is always better than cure.

The Federal Road Safety Commission should be strengthened to perform its duties. The capacity of that organization ought to be increased. I remember at a seminar held here in Abuja some years ago, Professor Wole Soyinka who was among the founding fathers of the Federal Road Safety Commission chaired the session on Emergency and Disaster Management and in his opening remarks he said that it was only then that we started having road traffic accidents in Nigeria.

Many of us in the audience were baffled but he went on to explain that indeed accidents only occur by definition in an ordered society. When a driver knowing fully well that his tyres are worn out, the break parts are worn out and he decides to move onto the highway, that is no accident when a crash occurs because that is a planned activity. But that the Federal Road Safety Commission has been educating the drivers and other road users on conducts on the roads.

So, prevention is important. Good roads are also important and I think the present administration is doing a lot with the support of the National Assembly to ensure that roads are

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rehabilitated, re-constructed and new ones constructed.

The third factor in terms of accidents are the individual themselves (the drivers and other road users). We must ensure that those who receive the National Driving License have gone through the requisite training and have passed the necessary driving tests. For the victims when accidents thus occur, in spite of all these, when accidents occur there must be rapid response. Some States and the Federal Government are doing something in this area. We should encourage States to ensure that they have Emergency Response Teams. For the hospitals, we need to provide facilities within easy access.

On the question posed by distinguished Senator James Manager, it is true that I have not been directly involved in the peace-resolution of crisis in Ezilo in Ebonyi State but as a concerned citizen and someone working in hospital where sometimes the victims are brought, I have some idea of what is going on there which borders on issue of indigenes, settlers and their likes. It is similar to what we have been reading in the media about the Jos crisis.

Like the distinguished Senator posited when he asked what I would bring in if this Senate confirms me as a minister, certainly, I would become a major player because I will think that as a minister I have a responsibility to ensure that my home and the residents in my home State live in peace. I strongly feel that no matter whatever the reason, wars can be fought but each war is always resolved at the negotiation table. That is what I would bring in. I will talk to the people from both sides. But of course, the governor is in charge in that State and he would be briefing Mr. President, the security agents are involved also. I will be part of it if I am confirmed as a minister.

On the issue of the dearth of our private hospitals in the Federal Capital Territory, there are already policies in place, for instance, the Public Private Partnership (PPP). Part of the reasons why many people have not been able to establish private hospitals or private health facilities have been the inability to access loans to enable them do so. This is an area we can explore where the government can actually partner with private organizations and private doctors.

The Indian experience is something we can learn from. In the United States alone, we have

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over 2,000 Nigerian doctors, highly skilled, who actually are major components in that country's health system. We could encourage them the way India has done by providing enabling environment and ensure that our own people come back to establish similar things. I have read in the papers that some of them are thinking along that direction.

Distinguished Senator Eferakeya asked on what I could do about cerebrospinal meningitis especially in the northern part of Nigeria. That is one disease even before I became a doctor that I was a bit conversant with. I had my secondary education at the Federal Government College, Sokoto. Even while we were students in Sokoto particularly during the hot season oral drugs were usually administered to us on weekly basis. But now the situation is even better, there are now vaccines for the prevention cerebrospinal meningitis.

It is the responsibility of government to ensure that not only does government procure these vaccines; they make them available, they should ensure that the vaccines remain potent and not just giving ordinary water to the citizens. They should also ensure adequate coverage that everybody who is at risk must be immunized. This is one of the diseases that is better prevented than treated. But then, a few people may still have a number of reasons that may be a breach and the vaccines are not well preserved. They may not have been reached for one reason or the other and so they develop this serious illness.

There should be facilities for early detection. Diagnosis is very important. Those even at the level of the wards - the health workers, the communities, the local governments should be trained on how to recognize cerebrospinal meningitis; it should not be left to those in the tertiary hospitals because before you get these patients to the hospital, the disease has progressed and they may not survive.

Senator Osita B. Izunaso (Imo West): Mr. Nominee, there has been a raging controversy amongst medical practitioners in Nigeria about who is most suitable to be the Minister of Health, is it the medical doctor, the pharmacist or the lab technologist or a nurse or a matron? What is your take on this as a ministerial nominee?

Secondly, only recently the Acting President visited America for a State visit where he had audience with President Obama and also was able

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to attend a Nuclear Energy Summit. What in your views are the gains of such visit?

Senator Eme Ufot Ekaette (Akwa Ibom South): Mr. Nominee, I looked through your Curriculum Vitae and I found out that all your Thesis and trainings revolve around Ebonyi and Abia States. Within a second you are going to get into the international arena, what would be your first priority in that Ministry? What would you bring to the table in the Ministry that you would be posted to, assuming you are being posted to the Ministry of Health?

Secondly, we noticed that some of the treatments and distribution of drugs for certain ailments do not say HIV/AIDS because you emphasized it during the introduction. The policy today has just one hospital per State where ARVs are distributed and within that State you have a lot of local governments and the patients might not be able to travel from their local government to the centre. How would you help to improve this and how would you help to ensure compliance so that the patients get better?

I know that you have answered the issue of accident and emergency but that to me is a very nagging issue today in Nigeria. I see that you have attended the Seminar you quoted Wole Soyinka but you were in Ebonyi State and you did not transmit your knowledge into the State as a person who was heading the medical department. What would you do when you come to the Federal when you did not recommend that to the State government?

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Prof. Onyebuchi Chukwu, I do not want to go into your CV because looking at it like the men and women of the wig and gown profession would say, *res ipsa loquitor* which means, the case speaks for itself. You are highly qualified; there is no doubt about that.

My first question is a follow-up to that of Senator Osita Izunaso's question. Yes, I want to agree that there is a lot of internal bickering or what can be called intra-sectoral bickering in the health profession as a whole. As a medical personnel myself, I do know that healthcare delivery is a team approach. My question is, considering your new position, if confirmed as a Minister of Federal Republic of Nigeria, how do you intend to exert some influence in order to achieve what I call intra-sectoral harmony within the health sector?

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Secondly, in a few months time Nigeria will be 50 years. What do you consider the three major challenges confronting us as a nation?

Finally, in a few days time as well, the Nigeria Medical Association will be 50. How has that organisation fared in its 50 years of existence by your own assessment?

Senator Abubakar Danso Sodangi (Nasarawa West): Mr. Nominee, I am a realistic and I want to ask you some direct questions. If you look over the whole world, if you go to Germany, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, where our *VIPs*, are always taken out for treatment, most of the professional doctors there are Nigerians. Some of them have gone there either to acquire further professional qualifications as Masters and Ph.D like you and they end up staying there. Assuming you are confirmed and made a Minister of Health, how can you reduce this greener pasture phenomenon of Nigerians leaving their country Nigeria and going abroad?

In relation to this, you would be confronted by your colleagues because their welfare is your problem. Doctors are not well paid and not well catered for. How would you muster this and bring a panacea to see that their welfare is well taken?

Lastly, you know that we do not have equipment. If you go to National Hospital in Abuja, I understand through my inquisitiveness that there are some equipment there that have been bought in the last two to three years but have never been used for whatever reasons. How would you bring your experience and energy to bear to see that our Healthcare Institutions are working, not only that of the National Hospital, but other Government Hospitals all over the country; and that we can deliver healthcare to Nigerians?

Senator Ganiyu Solomon (Lagos West): Mr. Nominee, I have two very brief questions for you. Going through your *Resume*, the nearest you come to serving your community is your stint at the Rotary Club as the President of Rotary Club of Abakaliki. Can you give us a brief insight to that your presidential year; what you were able to do to your community?

Secondly, by accepting this nomination, you have chosen to be part of the last leg in a relay competition which means what you do would be very important to the outcome of that particular

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race. Do you think that in just 12 months you can make much impact bearing in mind that this will be your first effort in public office?

Senator Nimi Barigha-Amange (Bayelsa East): My question to Prof. Chukwu are very simple ones but I want to remind you that it is only a Lawyer that can stand where you are standing and explain himself or the Ministry that he will likely go. As a Medical Doctor, you are not tied to Ministry of Health because when you opened up, you were talking more of health. You can still go to the Ministry of Niger Delta or to Ministry of Water Resources. Section 150 of the Constitution says that if you want to be the Attorney General, you must be a Lawyer of at least 10 years.

Mr. Nominee, if you look at the Constitution, since you do not have it, I will just read one section for you because you will take an Oath of Allegiance. I will read Schedule VII and I will assist you before I ask the question so that it would guide you. If you look at the Oath of a Minister, it states thus: *That I will strive to preserve the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy contained in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.*

On the economic policy, Section 16(2)(d) reads thus: *That suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.*

As a Minister how can you assist the government to achieve Section 16(2)(d) of the Constitution?

Secondly, as a Minister, for you to perform very well, you need money. The Niger Delta has problem and you know that that is where the money is coming from. What are the suggestions that you would give to the government that you want to serve in so that that place will be at peace?

Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu: Your Excellency and distinguished Senators of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, I have just been asked on what I could suggest to the President in order to achieve lasting peace in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta problem is actually part of the 7-Point Agenda of the present Administration. My perception of the Niger Delta problem is that there is a feeling of marginalisation by Nigerian citizens who come from this area that is oil rich. There is

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the perception that whereas some other parts of the country are developing based partly on funds that have been derived from petroleum, oil and gas; and that they have not had a fair share.

The first step is education. Education is fundamental. I would suggest that education of citizens in that areas should be accelerated because it held to eradicate extreme poverty. Education would also make someone to become employable. This is because even if you ask someone to establish industries there, if someone does not have the requisite skills and knowledge, that person will still be unemployable.

Good governance and transparency are important. If the people appreciate that this is the much funds that government has, they would also appreciate the problems and to what existent that can be solved. It is for the rest of the country to be sensitive to the needs of that region.

On the Section 16 (2)(d) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, those issues - shelter, food, national minimum living wage, care of old people and pension are all social benefits. Certainly, it has to be an inter-sectoral collaboration. From what I see there, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Housing and Environment, the Ministry of Labour, the Office of Establishment in the Office of the Secretary to the Government to the Federation, and the Nigerian Pension Commission, all these bodies must be involved. So, I will want to advise that there has to be a way of integrating the functions of these different government agencies. Once that is done that Section will definitely be addressed. It is something that can even be achieved within the life of the present administration.

Distinguished Senator Solomon noted that I am a member of Rotary Club of Abakiliki South which is part of the Rotary International and that I had served a couple of years as the President of my Club. Rotary is a service club and it is the largest service organization in the world. Presently it has 1.2 million people, and you must belong to a club and the emphasis is on service. During my year as President of that club, I was able to reach out to other Nigerians who make contributions in so many areas. We were able to donate, as it were, ₦1.2 million state of the art equipment to the Ebonyi State University Teaching Hospital. That is diagnosis equipment, an Iron Selective Analyzer. Up till now to the best of my knowledge that teaching hospital is still using the equipment.

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We were able to tackle the issue of the almost lack of reading habit amongst our children. We organized a lot of literacy programmes including reading competitions. We distributed textbooks to various schools. We also noted that Nigerians particularly, at that time, before the establishment of the National Blood Transfusion Service, that there was no organized blood transfusion service such that when there is mass casualty and you require blood, there was none in the blood bank.

We were able to sensitize the people of Ebonyi State and many of them did come forward voluntarily to donate blood to the existing blood bank in the State Capital, and that help so many patients who were unfortunate to require blood. These were some of the things that were done under my leadership then.

Distinguished Senator Solomon also asked whether I believe I can make any impact in 12 months if I am confirmed as a Minister. I definitely think so. One of my traits is that I work when a deadline is issued. It suits my nature. I perform better when I have a deadline and I think that is what it is, you have a deadline. I think since that is my natural way, certainly there is no doubt that I would make an impact. Like I told you, there is already a blue print, and if I am posted to the Ministry of Health, all I require is just to get action on the way.

Distinguished Senator Mamowora who is my very senior colleague in the profession talked about the intra-sectoral bickering and wanted to know how I should influence the establishment of industrial harmony in that sector. Let me just say one thing, I know there is so much argument about who is the leader of the health team, but having being a Chief Medical Director for 5 years, I do know that in all sincerity, the leader of the health team actually depends on the task at hand at a particular stage. That is the truth; it is not a permanent feature. For instance, when matters relate to the issue of production, distribution, and dispensing of drugs, obviously it is the Pharmacist who is the leader there. It all depends on what aspect at a particular time; that is the truth.

In combining the question that I was asked by distinguished Senator Osita Izunaso at this stage, recently there is so much controversy about who is the most suitable person to head the Ministry of Health. One of the distinguished Senators has just alluded to the fact that in the case of the Ministry of

Justice, it is combined with the position of the Attorney-General and therefore it is clear that you must have the requisite qualification to become Attorney-General for you to become Minister of Justice. But in the present system in the Federal Minister of Health; actually whoever is the Minister of Health is just there to help bring up, analyze and implement policies of the Federal Government as far as health is concerned.

On the surface, it will seem that any good politician who has had managerial and administrative experience, no matter, even if the person read Humanities, should be able to handle that portfolio. But I think why there is that confusion is that unlike some other countries, particularly country like the United States of America where there is a constitutionally provided Office of the Surgeon-General who is actually the Chief Medical Officer of the United States of America; there is none yet in our Constitution. Therefore, most often, even Mr. President without knowing it actually expects the Minister of Health to double as the Chief Medical Adviser for the Federation, and therefore some people now say, if someone is going to be the Chief Medical Adviser, then he should have the requisite qualification. That is my take on that issue. But the bottom line as far as I am concerned is team work, nobody can do it alone.

If you exclude the medical laboratory scientist the health system will collapse, for sure, no mistake about that. The nurses, as far as I am concerned are the most powerful in the health sector, and that is why they do not blow their trumpet. They stay with the patients, they access all information, the patients know them thoroughly, yet they do not blow their trumpet. I think it is well that they do not blow their trumpet.

If I may use this analogy your Excellency, if you permit me, even in a family, the leader in the family depends on the task at hand. If the men do not believe it, go to the kitchen and see whether you can recognize anything there. *(Laughter)* And many of us these days, if you want to watch NTA at 9.00 p.m., we do not even know how to put on the Television, you call junior, and if junior refuses to put on the Television you cannot listen to that news. So, I think it is all team work.

The other question that was asked by Distinguished Senator Mamowora has to do with what I consider the three major challenges facing Nigeria especially now that Nigeria will be

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celebrating her golden anniversary this year. To my mind, I think, the first is good governance, the second, is extreme poverty while the third is illiteracy and lack of education. Although it is true that some people mentioned Power but once there is good governance there would be power, once there is education the power will come. That is what I consider the three most challenging issues.

On how has the Nigeria Medical Association fared in its fifty years, this week I am aware that Nigerian Medical Association is celebrating fifty years of its existence. I think that the Nigerian Medical Association has done well. Nigerian Medical Association is not a regulatory body. That regulation is vested in the Medical and Dental Council of Nigeria but the Nigerian Medical Association is a key player in the health sector. As an Association of professionals, very relevant to the health sector, they have served as adviser to the Government. They have served as catalysts for the development in the health sector. They have ensured that certain legislations have been brought to produce enabling laws for administration of the health sector.

Distinguished Senator Ufot Ekaette did ask about my exposure and felt that I was smuggled to Ebonyi and Abia States. Truly, I was Head of Surgery at Abia State University and Abia State University Teaching Hospital. Truly, at a certain point I was the Head of the Accident and Emergency Services. I have also worked in Lagos University Teaching Hospital. I have also worked in Chassell Hospital, Kaduna – a standard private hospital and I have also worked in America.

The Chairman: I do not know if Distinguished Senator Greg Ngaji has any question to ask. If he has no question for him, we can ask him to take a bow and go.

Thank you Prof. Chukwu. You can take a bow and go.

(Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu took a bow and left)

Senator Gregory Ngaji (Cross River North): I can still make my remarks, your Excellency. Actually, he is a very brilliant person. He has seven distinctions in his School Certificate. I think he would do very as a Minister of Health.

The Chairman: Distinguished colleagues, the point raised by Ahmed Lawal emphasized by

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Senator Dahiru are very valid. I think there was a bit of an administrative cork-up really. Distinguished Senators Aba Aji and Cairo, I think what I am saying is relevant to you because it is not sufficient for them to just send their attachments to me because every Senator is entitled to it. Just for me to have the attachment in my own copy is not the correct thing. Ideally, those are very valid point but I believe that his character or professional qualifications would not be in doubt. He does not seem to me like somebody who is fake.

Truly, they have not done a good work in terms of attachments. The three Senators who have followed him out, I do not know why they have gone out with him. They should have ensured that this happens. I think it is because of the excitement that this is not done properly. Unless you decide otherwise, I think in spite of these shortcomings we can go ahead with his clearance.

Senator Ahmed your Point of Order and that of Senator Dahiru are very well noted. They are valid but I just did not want to stop the clearance or the screening while that was going on. Against next time please, the Senators from the various States must ensure that this is done properly.

I think I can put the question now.

Several Distinguished Senators: Yes.

The Chairman: Would the Senate approve the confirmation of the nomination of Mr. Obadiah Ando as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Question put and agreed to

Would the Senate approve the confirmation of the nomination of Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Question put and agreed to

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin: Mr. Chairman, you can now report progress.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Having fulfilled all righteousness, I second the Motion that you do report progress.

Question put and agreed.

(The President in the Chair)

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The President: The Senate in the Committee of the Whole considered in an open Session the request of the Acting President, Commander-in-Chief for the confirmation of nominees for appointment as Ministers of the Government of the Federation. The nominees answered questions from distinguishes Senators on a number of topical issues; thereafter the Committee approved the nominations of Mr. Obadiah Ando and Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu.

Is this is a true reflection of what transpired in the Committee of the Whole?

Several Senators: Yes.

Confirmation of Nominees

The President: Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Mr. Obadiah Ando as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Question put and agreed to

Would the Senate confirm the nomination of Prof. Christian Onyebuchi Chukwu as a Minister of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria?

Question put and agreed to.

I would like to on behalf of all of us congratulate the two of them. Senators Agbo Ucha and Anyimchukwu Ude, while the two of you were busy escorting your nominees out, we emphasized on the fact that he was not properly prepared in terms of documentation before us. I am sure you are aware that your colleagues have really done you a favour because ideally without this, we should not have gone ahead. But on the understanding that he is an appropriate person as a Professor, we graciously accepted and we did consider him. I think you should have sat down early to listen to that rather than escort him out.

We would like to urge that once they are given portfolios they must, like we told their other colleagues, make sure that within the next few months they prove their worth, especially the professor whom we have done this honour.

Once more, I would like to thank distinguished Colleagues for your active participation and for your cooperation.

Suspension of Other Items on the Order Paper

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Mr. President, I move that all other items on the Order Paper be stood down till the next legislative day.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): I rise to second the Motion that other items on the Order Paper be stood down till another legislative day.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That other items on the Order Paper be stood down to another legislative day

ADJOURNMENT

Senator Teslim Kolawole Folarin (Oyo Central): Mr. President, I move that this Senate do adjourn till Thursday, 22nd April, 2010 at 11.00 a.m. because of the Budget signing ceremony by Mr. Acting President.

Senator Adeleke Olorunnimbe Mamora (Lagos East): Pursuant to the explanation made by the Leader, I rise to second the Motion that this Senate do adjourn till tomorrow at 11.00 a. m.

The President: Before I put the question, I would like to remind my distinguished Colleagues about the announcements from Senators Bassey Ewa-Henshaw and Akaagerger about the presentation of Memorandum by the Apa State Movement Group in Room 301, New Senate building this afternoon.

Question put and agreed to.

Resolved: That the Senate do adjourn till tomorrow Thursday, 22nd April, 2010 at 11.00 a. m. prompt.

The Senate adjourned accordingly at 1.20 p. m.