



WHEN ACTIVISTS DISAGREE ON EFCC PROSECUTION TECHNIQUE

The ongoing prosecution of Speaker of Lagos State House of Assembly, Adeyemi Ikuforiji and his personal assistant, Oyebode Atoyebi by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) has continued to generate differing reactions. Ikuforiji and Atoyebi have been on trial before a Lagos Federal High Court since March 1, 2012 on a 20-count charge bordering on money laundering. The anti-graft commission also alleged that Ikuforiji used his position to misappropriate about N500 million belonging to the legislature. Specifically, the EFCC alleges that the duo conspired between April 2010 and July 2011, to commit an illegal act of accepting cash payments amounting to N273 million from the Assembly, without going through a financial institution, an offence the anti-graft commission says contravened Section 18 (a) of the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act 2011.

Incidentally, since March 1, 2012 when they were first charged before a Federal High Court in Lagos, it has been followed by intrigues and allegations of conspiracy. For a case of such magnitude, many expected that the commission would pursue the prosecution diligently. Rather, the case continued to suffer endless adjournments with trial judge, Justice Okechukwu Okeke who granted the Lagos Speaker bail on self recognition accused the EFCC and the prosecution of “deliberate act” to delay the trial, following which he adjourned indefinitely.

In fact, when he adjourned the case indefinitely in April this year, the judge noted that; “This matter has suffered series of adjournments all at the instance of prosecution. It is a

deliberate attempt by prosecution to disrupt hearing in the case and blackmail this court. I hereby adjourn this case sine die (indefinitely). Whenever the prosecution is ready to diligently handle their case, hearing notices will be issued.” Unfortunately, this notice never came before he retired in May.

The Speaker has however been re-arraigned before a new judge, Justice Ibrahim Buba on June 24. The judge not



EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Lamorde

only revoked the earlier bail on argument that he was not bound by the terms of the bail earlier granted to the accused by the former trial judge, he also imposed stiffer bail conditions. The judge initially imposed N5bn bail with two sureties in like sum but it took the intervention of counsel for the accused persons – Messrs Tayo Oyetibo (SAN) and Tunde Akinrimisi – for him to reduce the bail sum to N1billion each with two sureties in like sum for each of the accused. He also said each of the two sets of sureties must swear to an affidavit of means, even as he also gave Ikuforiji and Atoyebi a 48-hour ultimatum to meet the bail conditions or be remanded in prison pending when they would perfect the conditions.

The Speaker was able to perfect his bail conditions within the time-frame and escaped going to prison, but varying views have continued to trail his prosecution. While some people believe that the trial is in line with the anti corruption crusade of the Federal Government, others think it is politically motivated. For instance, the Speaker's admirers accuse the Lagos State Government of engineering the travails of the Speaker. Specifically, they accuse forces loyal to Governor Babatunde Fashola of being behind the Speaker's ordeal as they argue that the Speaker is being punished for the role he played during the allegations of corruption peddled against the State Governor by a group called, The True Face of Lagos in 2010.

It would be recalled that in January 2010, the True Face of Lagos had made series of corruption allegations against the State Government especially regarding the budgeting processes which it said has not impacted on the lives of the people. It is also recalled that following the allegations, various civil society organisations including the Coalition Against corrupt Leaders (CACOL) put pressure on the Lagos State House of Assembly to not only launch an investigation into the allegations by way of performing its oversight functions, but to also investigate its self since it is part and parcel of the State Government.

However, while the House inquest was ongoing the legislators were ordered to halt their investigation following a suit filed by another group questioning why the legislators were acting on the report of a faceless group. In fact, CACOL had condemned the court verdict halting the

NATIONAL CONFAB: A DIALOGUE DOGGED BY CONTROVERSY

When President Goodluck Jonathan announced on October 1 during his 53rd Independence Anniversary address that he would set up a presidential Advisory Committee to work out modalities for a national dialogue, he thinking was that he was giving Nigerians what every other administration before him had denied them. For a long time, Nigerians have been agitating for the need to the ethnic nationalities to sit at a round-table and discuss the continued existence of the country especially as they argue that the ethnic nationalities were not consulted before the 1914 amalgamation that gave birth to the present day Nigeria.

Nevertheless, despite the agitations, successive governments have used cohesion to suppress the demands or turned a deaf ear to them. For instance, the military regimes of Generals Ibrahim Babangida and Sani Abacha often employed the instruments of state power to suppress groups like National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), Campaign for Democracy (CD) and others who canvassed such dialogue. Between 1999 and 2007, the administration of former President Olusegun Obasanjo initially ignored calls by the Pro National conference Organisation (PRONACO) for a confab before setting up the National Political Reform Conference (NPRC), which did not really address the pertinent issues on nationhood. The administration of late President Umaru Yar'Adua favoured the Electoral Reforms Committee approach to resolving the political crisis, but even the recommendations of the committee headed by Justice Mohammed Uwais, a former Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) was not adopted.

"Fellow Nigerians, our administration has taken cognisance of suggestions over the years by well-meaning Nigerians on the need for a national dialogue on the future of our beloved country. When there are issues that constantly stoke tension and bring about friction, it makes perfect sense for the interested parties to come together to discuss. In demonstration of my avowed belief in the positive power of dialogue in charting the way forward, I have decided to set up an advisory committee whose mandate is to establish the modalities for a national dialogue or conference," the President said in his speech. In his mind, he must have thought that he has scored a point with Nigerians as a listening President that acceded to the demands of his people.

Unfortunately, this appears not to be the case. As a matter of fact, rather than receive commendations for his action, he has been getting knocks from some sections of the

country who accused him of having a hidden agenda. Moreover, many other observers argue that the Federal Government could still think with its recommendations before taking a final stand on what would constitute the terms of reference for the dialogue.

This position they argue is already being manifested in the recent announcement by the President that whatever recommendations the proposed confab come out with would be sent to the National Assembly. According to the President, after the recommendations of the national conference, "It is only left for all of us who are Nigerians to impress it on our



President Goodluck Jonathan representatives those in National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly because our state and federal parliament must work together to ensure these are properly enshrined in our constitution so that as a nation we will handover a country that is better than what we have met to our children."

However, cross sections of Nigerians have argued that sending the proposed conference outcome to the National Assembly will defeat its essence. For instance, Debo Adeniran, Executive Chairman Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) argues that the purpose and necessity of the conference would be defeated "if the outcome would be subjected to the whims and caprices of the National Assembly." "Sending the outcome of the Sovereign National Conference to the National Assembly for ratification

defeats the purpose completely. The final decision should rest with the people.

If the conference must hold, its outcome must be ratified by the Nigerian people through a referendum; anything short of this is no longer a conference of the people, but an imposition. Sending the outcome of the conference to the National Assembly to incorporate in the constitution amendment project would amount to a great waste of resources, time and effort and will make it just a conference.

"It is only a fool that will continue to do the same thing and expect a different result. What Nigerians want is Sovereign National Conference. Other regimes had tried their hands on a conference. Nigerians are tired of having just a conference. We have had the Constituency Assembly in the days of Shagari, we had General Debate about the Economy under Babangida; we had the Constitutional Conference under Abacha. We had another Conference under Obasanjo; now that the outcome of this would be endorsed by the National Assembly, it would be another Talk-shop because all the former conferences have not given us what we want," he said.

Yinka Odumakin agrees, arguing that the National Assembly could tamper with the recommendations if it were sent to them for ratification.

"Nigerians are talking about a sovereign national conference and not a constitutional conference. The role the National assembly should play is to pass the enabling laws for the conference to go on, and after the sovereign national conference has met and produced a constitution, to repeal the existing constitution," he says.

On his part, Bamidele Aturu questioned what the Federal Government hoped to achieve from the proposed conference of ethnic nationalities, arguing that a "conference of the people proceeds from the action of the people to change the government." This is even as he warned against the confab throwing the nation into crisis in the build up to the 2015 general elections.

Incidentally, the All Progressive
Contd. on page 7

BETWEEN REPS AND FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS

The Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) and Tribunal derives its powers from the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Chapter 56 LFN 1990, which gives the Bureau the mandate to establish and maintain a high standard of public morality in the conduct of government business. It is to ensure that the actions and behaviour of public officers conform to the highest standard of public morality and accountability.

To implement the above mandate, Section 3, part 1 of the Third Schedule to the 1999 Constitution as amended clearly spells out the functions of the Bureau and as well provides an enabling legal environment for the body to work.

The Bureau, as part of its responsibilities, also ensures that all public officers declare their assets at the beginning and at the end of their tenure of office as well as every four years while in office. Upon the declaration of the assets, the CCB ensures that the assets declared by the public officers are verified to establish any case of misconduct or corrupt enrichment for further necessary action. Any infraction of the guidelines stipulated in the Bureau's Act by any public officers is found a contravention of the law and offenders are arraigned before the Code of Conduct Tribunal.

From the workings of the Bureau, many Nigerians oftentimes are of the opinion that it has not really lived up to expectation judging from happenings in the nation's polity where civil servants and other public officers flaunt their ill-gotten wealth with some measure of impunity. Cases abound on how some public officers under-declare their assets or acquire wealth while in service through dubious means and still walk freely and enjoy the stolen wealth without anyone questioning them.

In its wisdom, however, the House of Representatives is currently working on a legislation that deals with operations of CCB. One of the amendments being proposed to the Bureau's Act has to do with the provisions that restrict public officers from operating foreign bank accounts. The

House is now seeking to allow public officers operate foreign bank accounts while in office and the proposal has scaled the Seconding Reading (quote). The Bill was one of the consolidated bills that were so passed at the last plenary of the House.

The bills are: a Bill for an act to amend the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Cap. 15 LFN, 2004 so as to make the leave of the Bureau necessary for a public officer to maintain or operate a bank account outside Nigeria and other related matters; a Bill for an act to amend the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act by deleting proviso to Section 3, deleting Section 18(1) and enacting an amended Section 81(2); and a bill for an act to amend the Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, Cap. C15 Laws of the federation of Nigeria 2004 so as to make accessible assets and liabilities declared by public office holders and other matters connected therein. Promoters of the bills included Honourables Bamidele Faparusi, Emmanuel Jime and Udo Ibeji.

Before now, it was criminal for any public office holder to operate foreign bank accounts, but Honourable Faparusi who sponsored the amendment that sought to amend the law, while leading debate on the general principle of the bill, informed his colleagues that, Section 7 of the Act prohibited public officers in Nigeria from operating foreign accounts and said "the obvious impracticability of the law has only helped in breaching the law."

According to him, the amendment to the Act, "will give the Bureau some teeth to bite based on the fact that it would be able to prosecute any defaulter and seek the imposition of sanctions in line with section 23 of the Act", stressing that, "this bill is hinged on the principle of disclosure and advocates a process whereby a public office holder can inform and get leave of the Bureau concerning any bank account he wishes to maintain and operate, which leave shall not be reasonably denied." To drive home his argument Honourable Faparusi maintained that, "Today, people are operating such accounts by proxy or even in the open because they know that nothing will happen. But this amendment says you can operate the account but this

must be with the leave of the bureau" noting that such amendment would now make people to know that there will be punishment for non-disclosure of foreign bank accounts.

Honourable Ibeji, who sponsored the second leg of the amendment, said his proposed amendment sought to expunge the provision in the Act that allows the president to amend the Act through an executive order, removes the power of the president to exempt some people from sanction by the Bureau and provide for public access to declared assets.

While the third leg of the amendment was sponsored by Honourable Jime who said that his proposed amendment to the Act was to ensure that assets and liabilities declared by public office holders are accessible to Nigerians, stressing that such development would make Nigerians to hold public office holders accountable during and after they might have left office.

To this end, Jime said that the amendment he sought would "establish legal framework which has been missing in the Code of Conduct and Tribunal Act and offer procedure for records of assets and liabilities declaration for public office holders to become more public and accessible to all members of the Nigerian public."

He added that the amendment would bridge the existing gap in curtailing the conflicting private interest and public activities of public office holders, stressing that if the proposed amendment scaled through, assets declared by public office holders must be made public in two weeks to encourage trust and promote transparency in governance.

Most lawmakers who spoke supported the amendment while others opposed it. Those who supported the bill were of the view that the amendments would go a long way in strengthening the workings of the Bureau, while those opposed the amendments actually argued against the aspect that sought to allow public officers to operate foreign bank accounts as they were of the view that it would further give room for public officers to open foreign

Contd. on back page

LAGOS OPEN PARLIAMENT UPDATE

PHOTO SPEAKS



THE REMAINS OF THE COLLAPSED BUILDING AT MURI OKUNOLA STREET, VICTORIA ISLAND LAGOS.



PEOPLE WADING THROUGH FLOOD AT JAKANDE GATE, ALIMOSHO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF LAGOS STATE



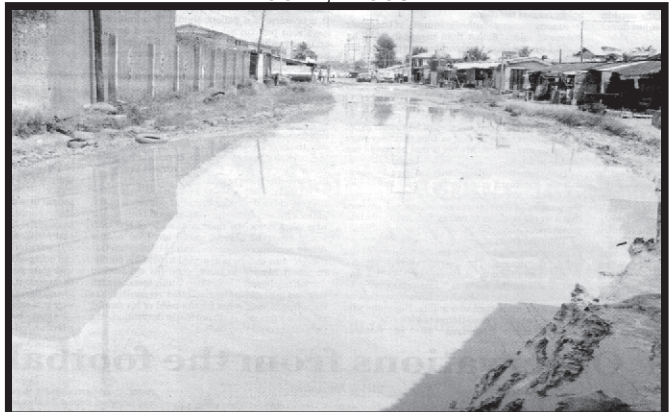
AN ABANDONED PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE TAKEN OVER BY ROADSIDE SELLERS AT OJUWOYE MARKET, MUSHINE, LAGOS



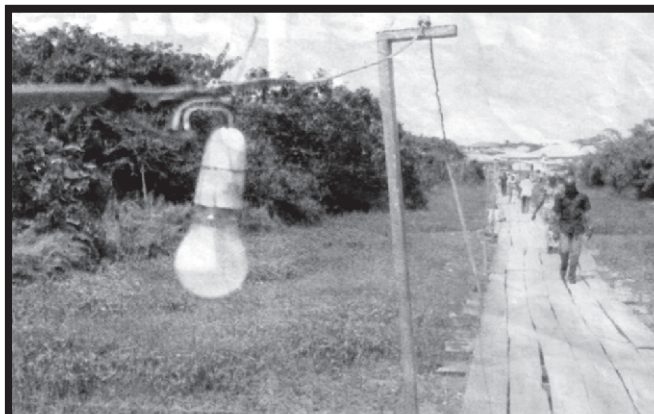
REFUSE DUMP IN FRONT OF OLUWOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL, OGBA, LAGOS



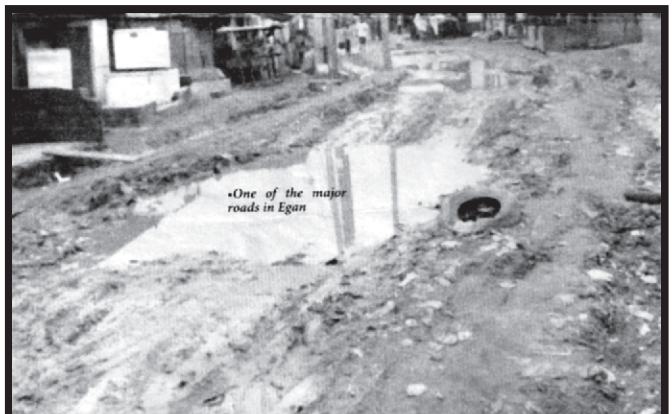
THIS IS THE ROAD FROM THE CAR PARK OF THE MURITALA MOHAMMED INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, IKEJA.



ADEBAYO OYELANA LINK ROAD, EJIGBO, LAGOS



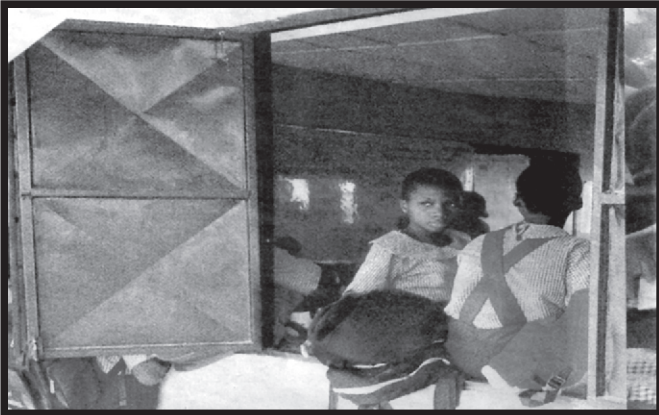
A MAKE SHIFT LIGHTING SYSTEM SERVING WOODEN BRIDGE IN AYOBO AREA OF LAGOS



ONE OF THE MAJOR ROAD IN EGAN, LAGOS

LAGOS OPEN PARLIAMENT UPDATE

PHOTO SPEAKS



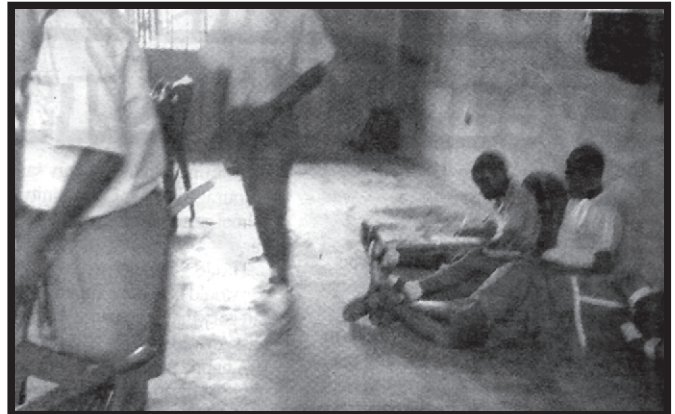
**PUPILS SITTING ON WINDOW TO LEARN AT
IKEJA GRAMMAR SCHOOL**



IKEJA GRAMMAR SCHOOL



**PUPILS SITTING ON BARE FLOOR TO LEARN AT
EWETUNTUN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, MAFOLUKU-OSHODI**



**PUPILS SITTING ON BARE FLOOR TO LEARN AT
EWETUNTUN GRAMMAR SCHOOL, MAFOLUKU-OSHODI**



**PUPILS CONSTRUCTING CHAIR BY THEMSELVES AT
FAGBA JUNIOR GRAMMAR SCHOOL, IJU ROAD, LAGOS**



**PUPILS STANDING OUT THE CLASSROOM TO LEARN AT
ILORO GRAMMAR SCHOOL, AGEGE**



**IKEJA GRAMMAR SCHOOL WHERE PUPILS
SEAT ON BARED FLOOR TO LEARN**



SCENE OF AN ACCIDENT AT ORILE IGANMU BUS-STOP IN LAGOS

Contd. from page 3

BETWEEN REPS AND FOREIGN BANK ACCOUNTS FOR PUBLIC OFFICERS

bank accounts as they like, adding that when there is a law in place banning public office holders from opening foreign bank accounts some still through the back doors open and maintain such accounts while in active service.

The Deputy House Leader, Honourable Leo Ogor, who led the lawmakers that opposed the amendment, was of the opinion that the amendment "can actually encourage corruption rather than reduce it." Instead, he said the amendment should have encouraged public officers to "operate domiciliary accounts in the country."

However, after heated arguments, when the Speaker, Honourable Aminu Tambuwal, who presided over the session put the question on the consolidated bills that sought to be amended to vote, the proposals were supported by majority of the lawmakers and subsequently referred

the bills to the House Committee on Anti-corruption, Value and Ethics for further legislative inputs.

Not long after the amendments scaled through Second Reading when reactions started trailing the action of the lawmakers. Executive Chairman, Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL), Comrade Debo Adeniran, while commenting on the amendments said, "It is not only absurd but unreasonable for our legislators to base the reason for the scrapping of the extant Code of Conduct Bureau and Tribunal Act, 2004 on non-enforcement. Does it mean that if you cannot enforce any law then you scrap it? This is like cutting off the head because one has headache. It is clear that the problem is not in the law, but its enforcement".

According to him, "this new amendment will actually encourage corruption rather

than reduce it. The bill to allow public office holders open and operate foreign bank account will definitely expand corrupt practices to an unimaginable level, thereby worsening the current worrisome massive corrupt practices being perpetrated by the Nigerian politicians. Though we know that some public officers still smuggle and open foreign accounts by proxy, but this bill will just be another way to legalize the fleecing of our country's treasury and laundering of the public funds to other countries.

"It is more reasonable to ask public officers to operate domiciliary accounts for the benefit of the country instead of giving them the leeway to stash their stolen loots in some foreign accounts where it would be difficult to trace," he maintained.



FURRY OVER \$49.8B OIL REVENUE!

Amido Sanusi again? That must be the question on many lips. In late 2010, the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) Governor caused ripples when he said that about 25% of the annual budget was spent on the National Assembly. He was then delivering a lecture entitled, 'The Future of Nigeria's Economy', at the 8th convocation ceremony of the Igbinedion University, Okada, Edo State where he lamented that the Nigerian economy may not meet its Financial Sector Strategy (FSS) 20:2020 target of being one of the 20 largest economies by 2020.

Sanusi is in the news again, tackling the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) on corruption. In a letter to President Goodluck Jonathan dated September 25, 2013, he accused the NNPC of not remitting revenue from crude oil sales totalling \$49.8bn (about N8trillion)

representing about 76 per cent of the total crude oil revenues from January 2012 to July 2013, thus contravening extant laws. The letter reads in part: "Our analysis of the value of crude oil export proceeds based on the documentation received from pre-shipment inspectors' shows that between January 2012 and July 2013, NNPC lifted 594,024,107 barrels of crude valued at \$65,332,350,514.57. Out of this amount, NNPC repatriated only \$15,528,410,098.77, representing 24 per cent of the value. This means the NNPC is yet to account for, and repatriate to the Federation Account, an amount in excess of \$49.804bn of the value of oil lifted in the same period."

However in a swift reaction, the NNPC has through Omar Farouk Ibrahim, its General Manager, Media Relations Department refuted the position of the CBN governor, saying the apex bank does not understand the workings of the oil and gas industry and the modality for remitting crude oil sales revenue into the federation account. The corporation also faulted the 594.024 million barrels of crude oil given by the CBN as the total crude oil lifting for the period saying rather that the correct figure is 618.55million barrels; "This shows that the CBN understated the actual crude lifting by 4.13 per cent." It further says proceeds from crude sales are categorised and are statutorily collected by different government agencies, even as they are also paid into separate accounts. According to the corporation, "Petroleum Profit Tax is collected by the Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS), royalty

goes to the Department of Petroleum Resources (DPR), third party financing goes for research, development, programme and satellite fields development, while NPDC goes to NPDC for upstream development...While NNPC pays proceeds from equity crude directly to the federation account with the CBN, the FIRS and DPR pay PPT and royalty respectively into the federation account with the CBN."

Nevertheless, as the CBN and the NNPC trade words, informed analysts wonder who is actually fooling the other, even as they demand a thorough probe into the matter. The demand to probe is coming at a time stakeholders are calling for the unbundling of the NNPC which some analysts see as a cesspool of corruption. As a matter of fact, some analysts argue that most of the illegal activities being perpetuated by the corporation would not have been successful without the connivance of the top management and the Ministry of Petroleum Resources.

They argue that the probe is long overdue because the NNPC is only feeding the public estimates of crude oil lifting in the country because most of the international oil companies (IOCs) have refused to install meters that would tell the exact volume of crude oil produced. Moreover, analysts observe that reconciling the revenue from crude oil sales should not really be a problem because the federation account into which the NNPC pays proceeds from equity crude and the account into which the FIRS and DPR pay PPT and royalty respectively are both domiciled with the CBN.

In the light of this, Debo Adeniran, Executive Chairman Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) reiterated his argument that the NNPC is

Contd. on back page

QUEST FOR CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS FOR PROPOSED CONFERENCE

The need for a conference where the various ethnic nationalities of Nigerian would sit to discuss those issues that constantly stoke tension and bring about friction among them with a view to finding lasting solutions to the crisis has been a recurring agitation for a long time. Many have traced the problems to the fact that the people were not consulted before the forced amalgamation of 1914. They argue that proven Western theories like the desire to federate cultural and ideological similarities and desire to forge a stronger economic and political were not applied by the British colonialists before amalgamating the ethnic nationalities that constitute the present day Nigeria. Thus, stakeholders have continued to call for a conference where some of these reoccurring challenges to nationhood would be resolved. Past administrations refused all calls from the citizenry to convene such a conference. However the President Goodluck Jonathan-led government agreed to the conference and has also set up a Presidential Advisory Committee headed by Dr. Femi Okurounmu to work out modalities for the conference.

However, agreeing to the conference has only opened another debate on the workability or otherwise of the proposed conference. Presently, stakeholders are not agreed on the purpose and essence of the conference. The President says that the outcome of the conference would be sent to the National Assembly for consideration and incorporation into the ongoing constitution amendment exercise. But, civil society organisations are opposed to the National Assembly ratifying the outcome of the conference, arguing that the conference of the people should be ratified by the people through a referendum.

Debo Adeniran, Executive Chairman the Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) for instance argues that “if the conference must hold, its outcome must be ratified by the Nigerian people through a referendum; anything short of this is no longer a conference of the people, but an imposition.”

Nevertheless, for Mike Ahamba, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN), the problem

with the proposed conference is that there is no constitutional basis for it. He argues that the Federal Government needed to establish a constitutional basis for the proposed conference for it to produce result. He argues that no matter how well desired the proposed conference it must be subject to the provisions of the constitution.

He argues that for the conference to be effective, the government must not only provide the legal framework, but also address the issue of the scope of the conference. The Okurounmu-led committee says it has been given an unlimited scope and that there are no “no go areas”. The legal luminary however faults this claim. “When somebody wants to hold a conference in Nigeria and they say there is no no go area, I say it is a fallacy because the constitution has already provided a no go area, which has not been removed. The constitution clearly states that Nigeria is an indissoluble nation. So, you can't dissolve this country. There are people who have said that they are going to decide whether they are going to be together or not. You can only go to decide how you will be together because the constitution says you cannot stop being together,” he says. He also points out that the 1999 Constitution neither provides for a constitutional conference nor empowers the President or the National Assembly to set up one, arguing that “what we need to do is to look at the Constitution and see the provisions that will enable the National Assembly to pass an Act that will create how people can come together and discuss their fate.” He argues that lots of previous discussions held in the country have no legal basis and most times amounted to waste of time and money.

Yinka Odumakin agrees that there is need for the National Assembly to provide the legal framework by passing a Bill for an Act to hold the national conference. “Nigerians are talking about a national conference and not a constitutional conference. The role the National assembly should play is to pass the enabling laws for the conference to go on, and after the sovereign national conference has met and produced a constitution, to repeal the existing constitution,” he says.

Contd. from page 2

NATIONAL CONFAB: A DIALOGUE DOGGED BY CONTROVERSY

Congress (APC) believes that the conference was designed to be a political tool by the President Jonathan-led administration. It argues that the proposed conference was a tool for driving the President's second term ambition and has subsequently directed its governors not to participate. To buttress its claim, the party also says that timeframe before 2015 general elections was too short to organise a meaningful conference that would discuss the problems of the country.

Governor Adams Oshiomhole of Edo State has in fact accused the Presidential Advisory Committee on National Dialogue of working with the Federal Government to truncate the proposed dialogue. The two-time President of the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) who was shouted down by Col. Tony Nyiam (rtd), a member of the Committee argues that the proposed national conference is a fraud programmed to fail. “I will be surprised if anything changes. Sincerely, I have no business to deceive or mislead anyone. I believe that the outcome of this conference will not be different from that of other conferences we have had in the past,” the governor argues.

With the controversies trailing the proposed conference, some analysts argue that it may have been jinxed from inception. First, they observe that Professor Ben Nwabueze who was initially pencilled down as the secretary had to refuse the offer. Understandably, Nwabueze said the conference which is meant to discuss the future of the country should be handled by the younger generation.

However what is puzzling Nigerians now is the resignation of Col. Nyiam from the advisory committee after his altercations with the Edo State governor.

In a resignation letter to the President, he said he had to leave the advisory committee “after several meetings and wide consultations with the progressives, self-determination and civil society movements and in order not to cast as a distraction or be used as an excuse to destabilise the noble cause the President has put before us...”

With the advisory committee one man short, analysts continue to ask what the next line of action would be.

Contd. from cover page

WHEN ACTIVISTS DISAGREE ON EFCC PROSECUTION TECHNIQUE

Assembly's inquiry, arguing that the State Government must answer to the people who elected it. It urges that the state government should explore the instrument of a State of the State Address to respond to the allegations levelled against it, insisting that the continued silence of the government "shows that our government cares less about what we the people think about how well or otherwise we are governed."

The investigation had exposed Governor Fashola to an impeachment threat from the House of Assembly, even as Speaker Ikuforiji was seen as the arrow head. Some Ikuforiji sympathisers believe that the ongoing prosecution of the Speaker is designed to discredit his image and weaken his political structure in the face of his alleged interest in contesting the governorship of the state in 2015.

However, even as the intrigues continue, the CACOL which is one of the civil society groups that in 2010 agitated that the House of Assembly should not only investigate the allegations of the True Face of Lagos against the State Government but should also probe itself has explained its silence on the allegations and counter allegations trailing the EFCC prosecution of the Speaker.

In a recent encounter with Daily Independent, Debo Adeniran, Executive Chairman of the group said that after studying the allegations against the Speaker, they found out that the allegations against the Speaker bothered more on failure to follow administrative requirements, rather than core acts of corruption and misappropriation of funds. According to him, the anti-graft agency has so far not been able to establish that there are missing public funds nor have they traced any to the Speaker's private

account. He argues that until there is established that the Speaker transferred public funds into his private account, it will be difficult to establish a case of corruption against him.

Adeniran also argued that there could be some politicking in the case as some people allege, considering that there are several other cases of alleged corruption that are pending. For instance, he says the N39 billion spent on the construction of the cable bridge at Lekki, in Lagos is "an absurd of the highest order" and a drain on the tax payers' money. He said that the amount spent on the cable bridge could have been judiciously used to construct a road somewhere else in the city. He said the construction of the bridge which he argues was not approved by the House of Assembly is an act of corruption, adding that if the EFCC were serious about fighting corruption, it would have investigated the petition on the huge amount spent on the bridge and all other over-bloated projects preceding that against the Speaker.

"What we discovered in the case against the Speaker is that the charges against him bother on administrative lapses. We believe that there is a little bit of politicking in that case. The allegation of N7 billion fraud initially filed against him has been reviewed downwards. How can the EFCC take up the case with dispatch when the allegation against the State Government preceding that of the Speaker has not been addressed," he asks. Adeniran also blamed the EFCC for the seeming intrigues that have dogged the case, arguing that the commission should have had all their facts before charging the Speaker to court.

Like the adage says that when two elephants fight, the grass suffers, Adeniran also argues that Lagosians are at the receiving end of whatever

intrigues playing out in the EFCC prosecution of the Speaker of the State Assembly. He says that the executive and the legislative arms of government have concentrated so much effort on the matter that the welfare of the people has been relegated.

For Adeniran, the way forward is for the EFCC to insulate itself from politics and prosecute cases of corruption diligently. He also advises that all the actors imbibe democratic values which recognise the people as giving the government its legitimacy, arguing that all the arms of government must be answerable to the people.

Contd. from page 6

FURRY OVER \$49.8B OIL REVENUE!

riddled with corruption insisting that the recent controversy provides new impetus for the anti-corruption agencies to probe the activities of the NNPC as well as the Ministry of Petroleum.

Moyo Jaji however attributes the development to triviality on the part of government. "We have jokers in government. If the CBN the chief banker of the Federal Government is kept in the dark about financial transactions of NNPC, the most important parastatal of the nation, thieves will continue to have a field day. Unfortunately, the President appears helpless and hapless to intervene," he said.

Fund CACOL

CACOL activities is currently being funded with subscriptions and donations from affiliates, members and patrons.

We hereby appeal for cash and kind donations / sponsorship from public-spirited individuals, organizations, local and international donor agencies and corporate bodies

All monetary donations should be directed to the account of our hub affiliate: CHILDREN Project; Union Bank; Acct No: 0009522865; Sort Code: 0 3 2 1 5 4 2 4 1

The Coalition Against Corrupt Leaders (CACOL) was established in August 2007 to exert pressures on anti-graft agencies to investigate and prosecute known corrupt leaders in Nigeria. CACOL also undertakes to sensitize Nigerians to *Name, Nail, Shame and Shun Corrupt Leaders Anywhere, Everywhere* to serve as deterrent that corruption does not pay. CACOL is primarily funded by affiliate and individual members but also seeks support from public-spirited individuals, corporate bodies and donor agencies. This DIGEST is supported by First Faculty Ventures - an organizational development consultancy firm. For further information contact: The Executive Chairman, CACOL, The Humanity Center, 610 Lagos-Abeokuta Expressway, Ijaye-Ojokoro, Lagos, Nigeria. E-mail: cacolc@yahoo.com, www.cacol.thehumanitycentre.org. Phone: 01-4736534, 08037194969, 08023226276 Editor: Abimbola Adegoke