



## **Executive-Legislature Relations and Budgetary Process: Implications for Democratic Consolidation**

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### **ABSTRACT**

A budget is the financial plan of a country involving inputs and approvals covering government expenditure for a fiscal year involving inputs of Executive and Legislative arms of government responsible for the implementation of all government programmes. Incidentally, the budget process has not been without frictions between the two stakeholders involved in the budgetary process with such clashes not only causing delay in the passage of the budget but also culminating in a breakdown of inter-governmental relations. The controversies that trail Nigeria's budgetary process since 1999 has contributed in the frosty relations between the Executive and Legislature in Nigeria. The frequency of the frosty relations raises concern about relations between organs of government and how the nature of inter-governmental relations threatens or deepens democracy in Nigeria. The objectives of this paper include among others an examination of the processes involved in Nigeria's budgeting process as well as the implications of incessant bickering, hostility and frictions between the executive and legislative relations on smooth running of government. It adopted a descriptive and analytical approach in drawing conclusions. It concluded that the incessant face-off between the executive and legislature over their respective roles and functions was an invitation to anarchy and threat to democracy. The paper calls for respect of rule of law and constitutionality on the part of persons holding executive and legislative positions in Nigeria as avenue of reducing the clashes between key government institutions in order to preserve the Nation's fledgling democracy.

**Keywords:** Budget, Executive, Legislature, Budget process, Inter-governmental relations

### **INTRODUCTION**

Budgets are estimates prepared annually containing the plan of a government for a fiscal or financial year. The budget of a nation which can be situated under Public Finance Management is a detailed plan containing source of revenue and expenditure for a fiscal year. Its importance cannot be over emphasized to a country as no country run without resources or revenue. A budget is part of the plan to meet the yearnings and aspirations of the populace as reflected in Section 80 of the 1999 constitution which contains provisions relating to financial management of government as well as the roles of the executive and legislature in achieving this goal. A budget is a fiscal document determining to a large extent whether an administration succeeds in its developmental programmes or not. However, the process of putting in a place an annual budget which runs for a fiscal year is a painstaking process involving lobbying, negotiation and compromise between critical sectors of the economy in order to achieve and implement developmental programmes for state and country.

The budgeting process of Nigeria involves critical sectors of the economy ranging from the Central Bank of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget office, Debt Management Office, which are all components of Ministries Department and Agencies (MDAs) as well as the legislative arm of government to mention a few. It is instructive to note that Nigeria's budgeting process has not been without hiccups, challenges and controversies as it has pitched executive and legislative arms of government against each other since the return of democracy in 1999. Incidentally, frictions between the Executive and Legislature over their respective powers over the budget have been a catalyst for

inter-governmental frictions leading to crisis of confidence which itself is not healthy for democratic consolidation and the general administration of the country. The Executive and Legislature are major pillars of democracy and as such unnecessary bickering over their respective powers on the budget is counterproductive and represents a clog in the wheel of progress with regards to achieving meaningful results through mutual cooperation and respect for the independence of each arm of government. Considering the fledging nature of Nigeria's democracy, relations between the Executive and Legislature should be no less than cordial, in view of their critical roles in delivering on their respective mandates through the provision of democratic dividends to all and sundry.

Nigeria's budgeting process is characterised by frictions and sometimes cold war between the executive and legislative arm of government over the extent of their respective powers as regards the budgeting process. This has caused more complications in form of delay in passage, poor implementation, breakdown of inter-governmental relations, slowing down the pace of governance which ultimately constitutes a threat to democratic rule. On the factors responsible for the crisis of confidence between the two organs of government according to Onyekpere (2017) was the attempt by these organs of government attempting to perform the role and functions of the other arm of government.

The objectives of the paper include an examination of the role of the executive and legislature in the budget process and the implications on the crisis of confidence on Nigeria's democratic practice. To achieve this objective, this paper is divided into seven sections. The first section takes a look at all the issues involved in budgeting process, while the second examined Nigeria's budgeting process and budgeting and democratic consolidation. The third explores Executive and legislative relations and the flexing of muscles over their respective powers on the nation's budget. The fourth discusses the implications of a flawed budget process while the penultimate section examines lessons from the legislature-Executive face-off while the last section contains the concluding part of the work.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

**Budget** - A budget is an estimate or plan for certain developmental project for a certain period of time. The budget encompasses a government document presenting the government's proposed revenue and spending for a financial year that is often presented by the President, examined and approved by the legislature, and approved and implemented by the executive arm of government. The estimate often referred to as bill becomes a law and valid document once it is approved by the legislature and assented to by the President. Adamolekun, (1986), defined budget as a financial plan embodying an estimate of proposed expenditure for a given period and the proposed means of financing them. A budget encompasses all revenue expectations, provisions for deficit and expenditures and keeps the economy of a country running for a fiscal year.

In addition, Ezeani (2006) describes a budget as an annual plan indicating proposed government expenditures for a period and proposed sources of revenue for finance. Dibia (2014) opined that budget is a planned quantitative allocation of resources for specific activities. In view of the above, the importance of a budget involving the allocation of public resources to drive government policies and programmes cannot be over emphasised. Kiragu (2002) concluded that the budgetary process starts with the identification of goals and objectives that the government seeks to attain within a specified period and in accordance with its overall socio-economic policy.

**Executive** – The executive arm of government is one of the two organs of government involved in the budgetary process playing critical roles from the preparation of the draft up to execution and implementation. Anifowose (2008) submitted that the executive is that branch of government which gives effects to the will of state by carrying out or executing the law of the land. The President who is the Head of state is vested with the executive power and assisted by subordinate departments or ministries responsible to him that carry out specific areas of law and policy. In the same vein, the executive is involved in three stages of budget processes namely budget preparation, budget execution and budget monitoring. In Nigeria for example, the ministries, departments and agencies involved in the budgetary process ranging from the Central Bank of Nigeria, Federal Ministry of Finance, Budget Office, Ministry of Budget And Planning, Budget Performance and Monitoring Unit among others all fall under the purview of the executive thereby emphasizing the prominent and germane roles played by the executive arm of government in the budget process (Smith, 2015).

**Legislature** – The Legislature has been described as the bastion of democracy because it is the only organ that differentiates a military government from a democratic one. The legislature is the body statutorily responsible for law making including screening, vetting and passing the appropriation bill. The roles of the Nigerian legislature which consists of 109 Senators and 360 House of Representatives members in the budgetary process is not in doubt as they are statutorily empowered to work on the budget and authorise it before it becomes law and policy document. The National Assembly consisting of two houses of parliament through several standing committees examines, (cut or increase votes as the case may be) and harmonise positions before it becomes a national document. After its passage, they are also involved in budget monitoring through oversight functions to ensure monies allocated are judiciously utilized.

### **Inter-Governmental Relations**

Literarily, the term intergovernmental relations would connote relations or interactions between and among government departments, units and agencies. Since government consists of different institutions, agencies, departments, ministries, tiers, organs and establishments, it is not unusual to find these units interacting among themselves in order to produce desirable outcomes. Intergovernmental relations have been given different interpretations by several scholars including Adamolekun (1986) who defines intergovernmental relations as the interactions that take place among the levels of government within a state. In addition, Obi (2004) accounts for intergovernmental relations to mean the complex patterns of interactions, cooperation and inter-dependence between two or more levels of government. In the case of Nigeria, one may therefore conclude that intergovernmental relations cover relations and exchanges between the tiers of government namely Federal, state and local government.

By extension, it would not be out of place to posit that inter-governmental relations covers interactions and relationships between the three organs of government; Executive, Legislature and Executive because they are autonomous groups working for the general good of the country and its peoples. This is in line with Thornhill's (2012) definition of intergovernmental relations consisting of all the actions and transactions of politicians and officials in national, sub-national units of government and organs of the state. Relationship between the Executive and Legislature over their respective roles and jurisdictions over the administration of the country can well be situated under the concept, inter-governmental relations. In Nigeria, the process of making laws, nomination, screening and confirmation of appointees, putting in place appropriation bill, and approval of statutory transfers among many others including inputs of both the Executive and Legislative arm of government with each contributing its quota to improving service delivery. In view of the foregoing, Bello (2014) concludes that intergovernmental relation is that glue that holds all units of government to participate effectively and carry out mandates in order to achieve set goals. To this end, this paper which focused on the interactions between the Executive and Legislative arm of government especially in the process leading to the passage of the Nation's budget situates the concept of inter-governmental relations as a process or tool to achieve that relationship. The dangers of competition and rivalry prevalent in intergovernmental relations more than often plays out in the supposed power play between the Executive and Legislative arms of government over their respective roles in the preparation, vetting, approval and implementation of the country's appropriation bill.

### **Budgeting Process**

The budgeting process in any clime is a complex process requiring inputs from all ministries, departments and agencies of government as well as other key government institutions. Though, the budget process may differ from country to country, certain distinctive features such as the preparation of estimates otherwise called drafts by the executive, vetting and passage by the legislature and assent by the president and implementation by the executive remain the same. According to Ndlovu (2015), the budget process runs in phases and is often cyclical in nature. He identified the phases to include Budget formulation, budget enactment, budget execution and finally budget oversight and assessment. From the foregoing, it can be seen that issues that characterise the entire process of the budget process which involve principally the legislature and Executive arms of government was capable of slowing down the running of government at all levels.

### **Nigeria's Budgetary Process**

The budgetary process in Nigeria just like many other countries goes through some process before it becomes a law and an economic tool. The process involving the executive and legislature arms of government has the potential for positioning the country to the path of economic prosperity or otherwise depending on prevailing circumstances and realities. According to Ugoh and Ukpere (2009), the budgetary process involves all centres, programmes and administrative units of an entity in the development of periodic budget. For example, the executive consisting of MDAs prepare a draft bill involving all expenditures and anticipated source of income to meet the proposed expenditure for a fiscal year. The budget is then presented to the National Assembly by the President as contained in Section 81 (1) of the 1999 constitution. The section states thus:

‘The president shall cause to be prepared and lay before each house of the national assembly at any time in each financial year estimates of the revenue and expenditure of the federation for the next following financial year’ (p. 57)

After the presentation by the President usually done through a joint sitting of the National Assembly, it goes through all the rudiments of law making including committee stages, public hearing, and defence of figures by the different MDAs before its final passage. The preparation of budget involves identification and setting of developmental goals, revenue targets and fiscal development plans. As such, the defence of figures by the various heads of units, departments and agencies is also done in line with the goals and targets of specific projects. Ekeocha (2012) while reiterating the importance of government budgeting concluded that it help set priorities capable of influencing the economy by making sensible fiscal choice that are hallmarks of good governance.

Nigeria's budgetary process usually involves 'horse trading' between the executive and the legislature especially when seeking a common ground for speedy passage of the appropriation bill. As soon as the bill is passed into law by both houses of parliament, the two chambers represented by their respective appropriation committees sit to harmonise the budget figures and subsequently send a clean copy to the President for assent. Once the President assents a budget, it becomes law and an economic tool. Kiragu (2002) opined that after Presidential assent comes into effect the third and fourth stages of the budgetary process which is the budget execution and budget monitoring stage of government projects. Currently, the budgeting process is bedevilled with all manner of irregularities; the horse trading between the legislative and executive arms of government have exposed certain unethical practices involved in the budgeting process. Over the years, sharp disagreements have ensued between the stakeholders sometimes leading to media war and bickering. Such was responsible for the sack of former Minister of Education, Prof. Fabian Osuji, Former Minister of Health Prof. Adenike Grange and even the impeachment of former Senate President, Adolphus Wabara to mention a few. A similar scenario played out in the 8<sup>th</sup> National assembly following allegations of padding by the former House of Representatives appropriation committee Chairman, Abdulmumin Jibrin. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that Nigeria's budgeting process is far from ideal as the processes are still bedevilled with discrepancies, irregularities and issues.

### **Budgeting and Democratic Consolidation**

The budget is not only an important tool in governance but arguably the most relevant economic document of any country. It is the second most important document after the constitution in any nation (Ugoh & Ukpere, 2009). The place of budget in nation building cannot be over emphasized hence the need for its timely presentation, passage and full implementation. The timely presentation, passage and implementation of a budget are indeed a leeway to re –invigorating a depressed economy and or jumpstarting and revolutionizing a dying economy.

To meet the needs of the citizenry, a budget has a crucial role to play if the demands of the electorates and general populace are to be met. The inference drawn here is that, there is a strong connection between a good budget, economic development and democratic consolidation. A fairly implemented budget will lead to economic development capable of deepening democratic consolidation. The importance of budget to a nation brings to the fore the relations that exist between politics and economics. Budgets are a necessity for planning, for it enhances the prudent management of the nation's resources with a view to ensuring long-term macroeconomic growth and stability. For

democracy to take firm root, it requires resources which are a function of budget in order to improve the living conditions of citizens and create better opportunities. To this end, a good budget will engender democratic tenets and ideals because it will involve inputs from the Legislature and executive arms of government serving as a recipe for nation building. In reiterating the importance of budgets, Dibia (2014) opined that the budget is capable of delivering public sector goods and service which itself is a catalyst for democratic consolidation.

#### **Executive –Legislature Face-off: Flexing Muscles**

The executive and legislature are two basic institutions in any democratic process that have their roles clearly outlined by the constitution. Not only are they the hallmarks of any democratic society, but also set the tone for governance and administration the world over. The prospect of one performing the roles of the other led to the separation of power theory as propounded by Baron de Montesquieu. The legislature and executive in Nigeria are both responsible for making life better through functional representation and law making and execution respectively. Indeed, due to the importance of both organs in the nation, it is not uncommon to witness some frictions between them; however, one should not gag the other in the discharge of its responsibilities and constitutional assigned duties. The process of preparing a budget is a shared responsibility between the executive and legislature arms of government whether at the Federal or State levels. Each has critical roles to play right from the planning stage to execution, monitoring and evaluation. A review of Nigeria's budgeting process clearly reveals a distorted relationship between the legislature and executive over that all important economic tool. It is on record that no other issue has pitched the executive against the legislature more than the budget since the return of democracy in 1999.

Today, the relations between the legislative and executive arms of government have remained dysfunctional, conflictual and at the lowest ebb. Momodu and Matudi (2013) identified some causes of executive–legislative conflicts to include pride and personality clash, executive dominance, ignorance of the constitution, overlapping roles and legislative performance of oversight functions. In all of this, administration of the country suffers tremendously from the disagreements between key institutions of democracy and government. While the legislature may appear inexperienced with regards to putting in an effective, transparent full–proof budget process due to the long years of military rule which gave no role to the legislature, the fact is that, some blame can also be put at the doorstep of the executive that seem to want to perform the constitutional roles of the legislature.

The legislature has been described as the bastion of democracy because it is the only difference between a civilian and military regime. Thus, the disagreement caused by putting in place annual budgets can only be a test for constitutionality and democratic consolidation. Apparently, the frosty relations that exist between the legislature and executive due to the fluid roles performed by these organs limits service delivery, for instance, the controversies that trailed the passage of the 2016 and 2017 budgets revealed that not only is the budget process tainted with corrupt practices, but its late passage and eventual poor implementation slowed down the running of government and the delivery of campaign promises. Such unethical conducts will not only rubbish the budgeting process, but also portray the country as one with irregularities possibly responsible for widespread and institutionalised corruption.

The dysfunctional and antagonistic relationship that exists between the legislature and executive also takes a negative toll on the budgeting process and the machinery of government (Igbokwe–Ibeto & Anazodo, 2015). One of the fallout of Nigeria's peculiarity is the overbearing roles of the executive who often perceives the legislature as an approving body and rubber–stamps, a situation often leading to crisis of confidence between both organs. The fallout of such perception is the power tussle between the executive and legislative arms of government over their respective powers and roles as contained in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This apparent disagreement which bothers on inter-governmental relations is not only a threat to smooth working relations but also an albatross on developmental programmes that require input from both arms of government. For instance, the threat and delay by the 8<sup>th</sup> National assembly not to screen Resident Electoral Commission (REC) nominees over the refusal of the President to drop the nomination of the Acting EFCC Chairman, Ibrahim Magu constituted threats to elections, which is a central feature of democracy. If there are no RECs in place across the 36 electoral commissions in Nigeria to supervise the conduct of elections in all the states, that will not only threaten elections, but also harm the country's ongoing process of democratic consolidation.

Secondly, of all issues that require inputs of the executive and legislature including screening and confirmation of nominees, *virement* of votes and redistribution of service wide votes, the budget seem the most contentious often leading to bickering, friction and crisis of confidence between the Executive and legislature. Using the 2016 and 2017 budgets as case studies, the disagreements over the inclusion of projects not initially included in the original drafts, cutting of votes in respect of projects, the issue of constituency projects, refusal to allocate funds to some government agencies such as Economic and Financial Crimes Commission in respect resolutions by the National assembly, were all apparent power play between the executive and legislative arm of government.

Just like previous administrations of Olusegun Obasanjo and Goodluck Jonathan, the budget process under President Muhammadu Buhari has not been without hiccups. The 2016 budget was characterised by budget padding allegations while the 2017 was no less controversial over issues of cutting down and movements of votes, poor implementation amongst other issues. Similarly, there have been situations where the National assembly passed resolutions not to honour requests from the executive until its wishes are respected. Such instances which characterised Executive-Legislature relations in the past years are not only antithetical to smooth running of government, but threatens smooth working relationships between the executive and legislature.

The executive and Legislature have continued to flex muscles even though they both claim to be exercising constitutionally assigned roles. The implication here is that both the executive and legislature are yet to fully understand what their respective roles are in delivering public good and consolidation of the nation's democracy process. This may largely be responsible for deep divisions and lack of sincerity of purpose in the Nigerian project. On the approach to be adopted in fighting the ongoing war against corruption, both arms of government are yet to agree on the best approach to be adopted in the fight against the scourge. As such, they appear to be working cross purposes with accusations and counter accusations of aiding and abetting corrupt practices in the country. The non-confirmation of the appointment of the Acting EFCC chairman, Mr. Ibrahim Magu and the resolution of the National assembly that Mr. President should look for a more qualified Nigerian for the office has been instances of muscle flexing over issues of National importance and significance. The outcome of this power play in the coming days is yet to be seen however; there is no doubt that such power play, sharp disagreements and bickering disrupts the service delivery process and dividends of democracy that Nigerians anxiously anticipate.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework adopted in this paper, Systems theory credited to Karl Luwid von Bertalanffy (1968) is an interdisciplinary field which studied systems as a whole. In addition, Enemuo (2008) posited that David Easton is usually credited with domesticating the theory within the field due to his conception of political system as the system of interactions in any society through which binding or authoritative decisions are made and implemented (Ogundiwin, 2015: 172). Systems theory can be used to analyse and explain the relations between the executive and legislature especially as it concerns the processes leading to the preparation, passage and implementation of the nation's budget process. The processes leading to the passage of the country's annual budget requires input and output of both organs of government in order to bring about desirable outcomes. Because the theory recognises that the various sub systems need to interact in harmonious relationship towards the achievement of governmental and societal objectives, the theory concludes that except a system works in harmonious relationship, inputs might not meet up with output thereby leading to a dysfunction of such a system (Enemuo, 2008). In the same vein, a good working between the Executive and the Legislature will produce desired result that would for instance lead to the passage of annual budget in good timing and ensure full implementation of same.

In the event of disagreement between these two organs or any deviation just like the components of a system that is faulty, the cooperation and coordination needed for producing good and workable outputs will be lost. Issues such as budgets, governance, administration to mention a few require cooperation and co-ordination between the legislature and executive arms of government in order to achieve stated and desired goals and objectives. To avoid frictions between the legislature and executive arms of government, this paper calls for coordination between the different components that are involved in the budget process because the task is a collective one. This will ensure all institutions

involved in the process from conception to implementation remains within their confines and area of constitutional competence in order to achieve the desired outcomes.

### **Implications of a Flawed Budget Process**

There is a general consensus that Nigeria's budgeting process is bedevilled with irregularities going by the controversies that trailed the budgetary process of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and now 8<sup>th</sup> National assemblies. With allegations ranging from the legislators appropriating to themselves an average of 20% of annual budgets to cater for remunerations and allowance to the inclusion of constituency projects which are supervised by the representatives to mention a few, Nigeria's budgeting process is far from been transparent. The consequences of a flawed budget process are multi-faceted. A flawed process will not only deny the country the much needed funding to execute developmental projects, it also breeds corruption and all manners of financial impropriety.

The budget is an all important document that shapes the economic framework of a country. Its effectiveness translates automatically to meeting statutory obligations and bringing the gains of democracy closer to the people. One of the consequences of a flawed budgeting process is the inability to record 100% performance of annual budget, a situation which has been quite difficult to achieve since 1999. Onyekpere (2012) opined that since 1999, hardly had capital budget implementation gone above 50% at the end of the fiscal year. The implications according to Ehigiamusoe & Umar (2013) include poor social indicators, infrastructural deficit, mass unemployment and high rate of poverty and underdevelopment. One other consequence of a flawed budgetary process is the diversion and mismanagement of public funds. The *virement* of contract figures by the various ministries will only bring about the fleecing of the country's resources thereby making nonsense of the accountability mechanisms put in place. It is important to state that no country can emerge as a dominant player politically and economically if its budget process is found wanting. Nigeria's case is far from the ideal thus requiring urgent reforms in order to improve the process.

### **Lessons from Executive-Legislature Face-off**

There are important lessons to be learnt from the face-off between the Executive and Legislative arms of government. These lessons will go a long way to strengthen inter-governmental relations and Nigeria's democracy if taken into consideration. The first lesson is the need for both Executive and Legislature to fully understand and appreciate their respective roles in the budgeting process and for the sustenance of democracy as a whole. The practice of the appropriation bill getting stuck due to inter-governmental rivalry is counterproductive and no less a threat to sustainable growth and development. It would seem that face-off between the Executive and Legislature over the national budget is becoming a recurring event; a situation accounting for an obvious lack of coordination between organs of government that are critical to service delivery.

Secondly, there is no diligence on the part of those holding public office. It is quite obvious that there is no joint purpose, vision and mission. The institutions of government appear disjointed sometimes working at cross purposes. This slows down the running of government with the citizenry bearing much of the brunt. This in turn contributed to infrastructural and social well being deficit for the Nigerians citizenry. In all, the lack of diligence and purpose of persons in positions of authority not only slows down the passage and implementation of the budget, but also takes a toll on the welfare and good living of the generality of Nigerians.

It is important to state that the controversies that trial the budget process is also due to constitutional provisions. Section 82 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) provides for benchmarking by allowing government departments, agencies and parastatals to disburse funds not exceeding the previous years' budget for recurrent and capital overheads. The provision states that;

If the appropriation bill in respect of any financial year has not been passed into law by the beginning of the financial year, the President may authorise the withdrawal of moneys from the Consolidated Revenue fund of the Federation for the purpose of meeting expenditure necessary to carry on the services of the Government of the federation for a period not exceeding six months or until the coming into operation of the Appropriation act, which-ever is the earlier (p.57)

The implications of this provision is that while such provision may serve as buffer in order not bring government running into a standstill, it on the other hand provides for unnecessary delays on the part of the legislature and executive resulting in the slowing down of government business. The implication would be the uncertainty that would characterise the conduct of government business which ultimately affects the rate of economic growth and development. In order to limit frictions between the executive and legislature and allow government business to run optimally, there is the need for timely passage of annual budgets.

On the whole, there are lessons for the key actors of the organs of government. It must be made clear that confrontation in whatever guise between the Executive and Legislature is not in the interest of the country and the citizenry, more so, when there are apparent issues of development that should pre-occupy the holders of public offices in the executive and legislature in order to place the country on a pedestal through purpose-driven government policies, legislation and programmes.

### **CONCLUSION**

In the aftermath of a crisis of confidence between the Executive and Legislature which the President alluded to was slowing down the business of government, efforts needs to be stepped up to improve inter-governmental relations. The executive and Legislature are key and central organs of democracy which at the same time are capable of truncating democratic government if relations between both are not well managed. Leaders of both organs of government need to understand their respective roles, mandates and limitations in order to limit frictions during the budget process. The practice where the executive wields unnecessary influence on other organs weakens democratic institutions and represents an invitation to anarchy and threat to democracy. Conclusively, the need to separate politics from governance is canvasses because on many occasions, politics sip into governance which often leads to frictions and crisis between the executive and legislature. The resort to pettiness or name calling as witnessed in the current dispensation will not do the two organs, the citizenry and the country in general any good.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. This paper calls for respect of rule of law and constitutionality on the part of persons holding executive and legislative positions in Nigeria. Through strict compliance to constitutional provisions, the incessant breakdown of inter-governmental relations which bothers on how the functions of these organs are discharged which ultimately threatens the current democratic consolidation can be greatly minimised.
2. There is the urgent need for the ongoing constitutional amendments to cover issues of budget as contained in Section 82 of the constitution. This paper recommends constitutional amendment to jettison benchmarking as a way of arresting unnecessary delay in the passage of budget.
3. This paper calls for due diligence and purpose-driven leadership. The actions and inactions of political office holders have a direct impact on millions of citizenry positively or otherwise. By imbibing due diligence and common purpose, they will be able to close the widening gap and work for the general good of all.
4. There is the need for a drastic cut in the emoluments of public office holders. The huge salaries drawn from public treasury is not only a strain on public finance, but partly why the rush for public office has heightened. The huge salaries therefore means persons who seek public office are not necessarily interested in service or improving the lots of Nigerians but for self-enrichment.
5. There is also the need for sanctions for unnecessary delays in the passage of budget and poor implementation. The practices which have become common place can be checked though sanctions of erring officials in organs, departments and agencies of government. As such, this paper recommends sanctions and consequences for late passage or poor implementation as well as poor implementation.

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