



[#MondayMeme](#)

Parliamentary C'tees (House Services & Other Special C'tees) (Ref. 07/26/10/15)

Welcome to **#MondayMeme**, the platform where we learn about terminologies peculiar to and how the parliament works. **#MondayMeme** is part of our modest contributions towards achieving an **#OPENNASS** in which citizens can participate in and feel a sense of participation in legislations and legislating by lawmakers.

Last week, we focused on Parliamentary Committees with emphasis on **ETHICS, PRIVILEGES** and **PUBLIC PETITIONS** Committee as a special panel of the parliament which has been specially highlighted in the on-going **#MinisterialScreening** by the @NgrSenate.

In today's edition, we shall focus on other special c'tees like the **Parliamentary Services and Rules & Business** Committees. This **#MondayMeme** series on Committees is particularly timeous because the @ngrSenate is expected to name its Standing Committees soon following the House of Reps which unveiled its last Thursday.

We proceed by clarifying what is meant by 'Standing Committees' in parliament. Understood against Ad-hoc panels, a Standing Committee is a regular one listed on the rule book of the parliament and functions throughout the life-span of the assembly. And Ad-hoc Committee on the other hand is created for a particular set of functions and ceases to exist once those

responsibilities are discharged and report submitted to the House or Senate as the case may be. In this regard, we have had for example, the Ad-hoc Committee on Subsidy chaired by Hon. Farouk Lawan in the House of Reps; there is the Senate and House Committees on Constitutional Amendment; and the current senate ad-hoc Committee on Importation of Rice through Land Borders chaired by Sen. Adamu Aliero.

Before we zero in on our focus Committee for today's **#MondayMeme**, let us also mention other Special Committees in Parliament although composition and functions may vary according to different jurisdictions. Basically however, a parliament has the following Special Committees: **Selection; Rules & Business; House Services; Ethics & Privileges; Public Petitions; Public Accounts; and Media & Public Affairs.**

The **Parliamentary Services Committee** is the one that deals with everything relating to the welfare of MPs and how to make their work convenient towards an effective discharge of their duties. In Nigeria's House of Representatives for instance, the House Services Committee has the following jurisdictions:

- i. Welfare of members
- ii. Budget and appropriation of the House
- iii. Maintenance of the House Chamber and premises including offices and accommodation
- iv. Office accommodation for members
- v. Provision of equipment and materials for House premises
- vi. Provision of Utility vehicles for House Committees
- vii. Monitoring the finances of the House; and
- viii. Address such other matters as may be referred to it.

From the above listed functions, it is not hard to see that the **Parliamentary Services Committee** is like the skeletal framework which provides the structures for a smooth functioning of parliament. Clearly, matters relating to allowances, perks and pecuniary benefits of MPs outside the jurisdiction of the Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMARC) fall within the consideration of the House Services Committee.

This is why agitations for **#OpenNASS** should find this Committee as a focus of attention. Incidentally, House Speaker @doyakubu was chairman of the House

Services Committee in the 7th assembly and accordingly knows a lot about the allowances, wages and welfare of MPs. Speaker @doyakubu in response to **#OpenNASS** weeks ago set up a Committee to look into the running costs of the House and recommend measures to cut down costs. The Committee is headed by renowned constitutional lawyer and Executive Director of @PLACNg, Mr. Clement Nwankwo. While the nation awaits Mr. Nwankwo's report @doyakubu will do well to contribute towards realizing an **#OpenNASS** by coming clean and sincerely so on the running costs of the House of Reps. He should be a partner in this agitation and not attempt to play to the gallery by obfuscating issues with Committees.

Nigerians want to know for a fact how much our lawmakers earn. We want to know for a fact what allowances they receive both for Committee work and on individual basis. Nigerians want to know why lawmakers go away with so-called utility vehicles at the end of their tenure even when vehicles have been monetized as part of their allowances. Nigerians want to know precisely how much Committees get to facilitate the performance of their duties and how these funds are allocated and utilized at the Committee level.

These are some of the core issues of **#OpenNASS** and this is why @doyakubu as speaker and former chairman of the House Services Committee will do well to assist the crusade for transparency and accountability of public expenditures. It is also expedient for **#OpenNASS** to pay more attention to the current Parliamentary Committees of both Houses of the National Assembly and the state assemblies.

It is pertinent to add that because of the sensitive nature of this Parliamentary Services Committee, its membership is made to reflect equality and equity so no subnational unit or municipality as the case may be is excluded in representation. The House of Reps in this regard for instance, clearly stipulates that the House Services Committee shall comprise of 'not less than 37 and not more than 40 members.' By implication, every state of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) is represented in the House Services Committee.

This is where we call it a day on **#MondayMeme**. Till next week when we bring you titbits on other Committees of parliament we expect to receive your

comments, questions and other feedbacks on today's edition and indeed other past **#MondayMemes**. Have a blessed evening.

*This edition of **#MondayMeme** was broadcast live on our Twitter handle @orderpaper on Oct. 26, 2015. To read and download other editions of the programme please visit www.orderpaper.ng/downloads.*