



## #MondayMeme

### Parliamentary Committees (Public Accounts and Media/Public Affairs)

(Ref. 09/09/11/15)

Welcome to today's meme. In the past three editions, we have been considering Parliamentary Committees as building blocks of legislative business. We have treated Committees on Parliamentary Services; Ethics, Privileges and Public Petitions; and Rules and Business. We continue in this series by looking into others –Public Accounts; and Media and Public Affairs.

Before we delve into details let us quickly point out that standing Committees of the National Assembly have been fully constituted.

Last Wednesday, Senate President @bukolasaraki announced 65 @ngrsenate Committees for the red chambers with the @APCNigeria taking 41 chairmanship slots and @PDPNigeria left with 24. Speaker @doyakubu had about a month ago constituted the standing Committees of the House of Reps and there has been rancour and disagreement over the distribution of chairmanship slots ever since. ***(See infographic of Committees distribution in both chambers on orderpaper.ng)***

The Majority leader and his loyalists in the House have been handed the shorter end of the stick and @femigbaja is not one to take such side-lining lying low. He has been locked in battle with the speaker over the list with the

former accusing the later of having not carried him and other principal officers of the House along in the process. Although the politics of @ngrsenate c'tee has not played out as openly fractious as the case in the House suffice to say that the politics of NASS Committees usually plays a substantial role in defining the peace and stability or otherwise of the parliament in Nigeria.

But away from the politics of Committee constitution, let us now return to the study of the day. We begin with the **Public Accounts Committee**. This is one special Committee that the rules require to be evenly spread in terms of membership composition to reflect geographical balance. This Committee is a very important one with respect to monitoring of expenditure of public revenue in the country to ensure compliance with budgetary provisions. For clarity, the Committee on Public Accounts is saddled with the following functions:

- i. Oversight of the Office of the Auditor-General of the federation and all Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) of government in respect of audit queries on public expenditure
- ii. Examine the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by parliament to meet the public expenditure together with the auditor's report of the same. For this purpose, the Committee is empowered to summon persons, subpoena documents, reports and records for examination and make a submission to plenary
- iii. Examine accounts or reports submitted to it by the auditor-general with respect to pre-payment audit queries raised by internal auditors of a ministry, department or agency that have been over-ruled by the chief executive of the MDA concerned.
- iv. Examine any account or report of statutory corporations and board after they have been laid on the table of parliament
- v. To report and recommend to parliament on matters relating to audit queries of government MDAs to ensure implementation and compliance with appropriated funds.

As just recently constituted the Chairman of @ngrsenate Committee on Public Accounts is **Sen. Andy Uba** (PDP, Anambra State) while that of the House of Representatives is **Hon. Kingsley Chinda** (PDP, Rivers State).

The next special Committee of Parliament for consideration today is that of **Media and Public Affairs**. This Committee is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining an interface btw parliament and the public with respect to its activities. In the House of Reps, it is specifically saddled with the following clear-cut duties:

- i. Promotion of the image of the House
- ii. Curbing press speculations on House activities
- iii. Effective management of House publicity; and
- iv. Annual budget estimates

The nature of this Committee makes it the immediate point of contact when it comes to public enquiries about parliament. This is why the chairperson of the Committee on Media and Public Affairs is referred to as the spokesperson of the parliament. This member is expected to brief the media and maintain a cordial relationship with the press corps to be able to perform his/her duties optimally.

Before the constitution of @ngrsenate standing Committee last Wednesday, Senator @dino\_melaye performed the role of spokesman of the red chambers in ad-hoc capacity. But the substantive Chairman of the @ngrsenate Committee is Sen. Aliyu Sabi Abdulahi (APC, Niger State) while that of the House of Reps is Mr. Adulrazak Namdas (APC, Adamawa State).

This is our package for today. We hope you enjoyed it and please do get back to us with your questions, comments and general feedback. Thank you for your attention and we hope to be with you again same time next week. Meanwhile don't hesitate to keep tabs on our website, [orderpaper.ng](http://orderpaper.ng) for updates and news on the Parliament in Nigeria and elsewhere.

***This edition of #MondayMeme was broadcast live on our Twitter handle @orderpaper on Nov. 9, 2015. To read and download other editions of the programme please visit [www.orderpaper.ng/downloads](http://www.orderpaper.ng/downloads).***