

# **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

**NILDS Under Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman**

**Editors:**

**J. Shola Omotola & Doris Aaron**

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NILDS Under Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman

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Secondly, we extend our profound appreciation to all the chapter contributors. Your prompt responses, institutional memory, scholarly insights, rigorous analyses, and thoughtful

reflections have greatly enriched the intellectual depth and relevance of this work. Each contribution represents not only a piece of scholarship but also a commitment to the collective vision of archiving the monumental transformation of NILDS under the leadership of Professor Sulaiman as Director-General.

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displayed in the publication process remain highly commendable.

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Thank you.

**J. Shola Omotola and Doris Aaron**

## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to the lasting legacies of Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman, through the course of his stewardship at NILDS, and to the growth and success of legislative governance in Nigeria. A special dedication to past and present Governing Council Members of the Institute, the past and present leadership of the National Assembly, and the past and present members of the National Assembly, and to the Management and Staff of NILDS, for their unwavering support. To all those who supported his dreams and aspirations in taking NILDS to its enviable heights.



## FOREWORD

Every truly great institution has its special moments when its trajectory is fundamentally altered, its impact deepened, and its legacy secured. Such moments are usually defined by transformational leadership, who are not only visionary, but also courageous and bold in executing their vision. For the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), such a moment came with the appointment and under the stewardship of Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman as its Director-General. Without mincing words, Sulaiman's tenure as DG stands as a testament to transformative leadership in the service of democracy.

I recall that his appointment was a subject of contestation, engulfed in a form of legitimacy crisis when I became the President of the Senate in the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The primary contention was that he was appointed by my predecessor as Senate President, Distinguished Senator Bukola Saraki, whose leadership team I was a key member. But Saraki was Senate President from the People's Democratic Party (PDP) in a government controlled by the All Progressive Congress (APC). As such he was never in the good book of the presidency and APC. Worse still, he lost his reelection bid in the 2019 senatorial election for which Sulaiman was the Director-General of his campaign organisation. So the odds were grossly stacked against the retention of Sulaiman as DG from all fronts, most notably politically and internal power struggles at NILDS. The popular opinion was that Sulaiman

would be a mole not only working for the political interest of Saraki, but also capable of undermining APC's in general and mine in particular. To cut the long story short, we reluctantly kept him as DG, but unknown to him under serious surveillance.

Today, permit me to use this space to publicly express it that I am glad about the decision we took to retain him. Within a very short period of time, Sulaiman, through visionary leadership, openness, transparency, accountability, hard work, innovations and reforms, has been able to win everyone over. These dispositions, together with his unprecedented commitment to staff welfare and development, also assisted in resolving internal power struggles and resistance to change. The result was a massive upsurge in the productivity of the institute, as well as improved national and international reputation and image, turning it into a truly world-class institute of legislative and democratic governance in Nigeria, Africa and all over the world.

I was not surprised, therefore, to see Sulaiman's remarkable contributions to the tremendous transformation of NILDS being recognised and celebrated by his colleagues and staff through the publication of this book. It is an honour well-earned and deserved. The book contains not only his record of institutional achievements, but also a holistic overview of his leadership style, anchored in the belief that effective legislative governance is the cornerstone of any thriving democracy. As documented in many chapters of the book, the Institute under the watch of Sulaiman has emerged as a critical driver of Bill analysis, legislative reform, policy research, institutional development, and democratic capacity building in

Nigeria and beyond. Most of the success stories narrated in the book were possible due to the strategic vision, intellectual depth, innovations and reforms, creative responses to critical challenges, unwavering commitment of the Director General and cordial working relationship with the Governing Council and leadership of the National Assembly, particularly the Senate Presidents and Speakers during his stewardship.

Specifically, NILDS has experienced remarkable growth, both qualitatively and quantitatively under Sulaiman's leadership in many respects. Once regarded primarily as a support institution for the National Assembly, the Institute has, over time, assumed a broader continental role: shaping democratic norms, fostering regional parliamentary cooperation, and providing cutting-edge policy analysis and training for a new generation of legislators, scholars, and public servants. These achievements were not incidental, they were the result of carefully planned reforms, tireless advocacy, and an expansive vision for what NILDS could become under Sulaiman and beyond: a) strengthening of the legislative process through the institutionalisation of research-based policymaking and evidence-informed legislative interventions; b) enhancing of capacity development locally and internationally; c) the elevation of NILDS on the global stage through robust international partnerships and collaborations with leading institutions across Africa, Europe, and North America; d) a commitment to inclusivity and democratic values, including championing gender mainstreaming, youth political participation, civic education, and intergenerational dialogue.

These attainments and many more underscore Sulaiman's foresight, and an abiding sense of duty. In an age of cynicism



and institutional fatigue, he has offered a different model of leadership—one grounded in public service, excellence, and legacy-building. This book documents these accomplishments, the enabling factors, notable challenges, creative responses and options for stronger reforms and sustainability.

Overall, the book preserves institution memory, celebrates collective success, underline success factors, with additional capacity to educate, inspire, guide and serve as a benchmark for measuring organisational success. It also reminds us that institutions matter, but people make institutions matter more. This is one important lesson from Sulaiman's leadership of NILDS. I, therefore, recommend this publication to scholars, policymakers, legislators, development practitioners, advocacy groups and the general citizens as an outstanding reference material on leadership, institution building and democratic development.

**Distinguished Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan, PhD,  
GCON**

Senate President, 2019-2023

## PREFACE

**B**uilding positive legacies are no mean feat. This is because they are long lasting impact of particular events and actions that took place in the lifetime of an individual or institution. The importance of building a positive legacy cannot be overemphasised, because they provide meaning, purpose, and continuity for humans by passing on values, wisdom, and contributions that shape future generations and leave a lasting positive impact on the world. It also offers a compass for present day actions, offers a sense of identity and belonging, and ensures that life lessons and experiences continue to influence others long after the builder of the legacy is long gone.

The life of a great leader is never merely a story of one individual; it is the story of an era, of a people, and of the timeless values that rise above circumstance. A true leader is not defined by power or position alone, but by vision, sacrifice, and the unwavering courage to stand firm in the face of adversity.

This book captures the journey of such a leader, the man Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman, one who rose from ordinary beginnings to leave behind an extraordinary legacy, especially in his stewardship as the captain steering the ship of leadership at the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) from 2019, and whose tenure is expected to lapse in 2027. His path was marked by trials that would have broken many, yet it was in those very struggles that his resilience was unparalleled and his character was refined. Guided by principles greater than personal ambition, He carried the hopes of others and gave voice to the silent, strength to the weary, and direction to the lost.

His ground breaking records as the Director General of NILDS since his assumption of office is worth emulating, the narrative in this book on his achievements are not mere rhetorics but are backed by verifiable data and evidence. No institution or agency of government or outside of it, had done more to facilitate and support the National Assembly and State legislatures across the country, in developing their capacity to be effective in an emerging democracy than NILDS. No individual has done more consequential impact on the operations of NILDS than He has.

When I established the Legislative Mentoring Initiative (LMI) as a youth leadership development programme, to identify, equip and empower a new generation of young people to lead in government and public service particularly in the legislature, He supported my efforts and has since continued to support the LMI to be a rigorous and impactful mentorship programme. In tracing his life and achievement, we are invited not simply to admire greatness from afar, but to reflect on how the same virtues can take root in our own lives and positions of responsibilities. Leadership is not the preserve of a chosen few; it is a call that resounds wherever there is need for justice, compassion, and vision.

Without any doubt, the book makes a great reading. It is generally well written in simple prose. The organisation of the chapters and sub headings are coherent and easily assimilated. Its practical dimensions, with pictorial illustrations where needed, constitute important value addition. I describe this book as a legacy project, and the timing for its launch laudable as it coincides with the celebration of the 60th Birthday of Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman, a landmark celebration of life and contribution to humanity. While I commend the contributors and the efforts made in putting up this legacy book, I believe Prof. Sulaiman has done much more than it's

captured in this book, posterity will be fair to him. I have no hesitation in recommending this book to all who are interested in appreciating the life of this great leader and those who are willing to learn the rudiments of administration and leadership. I am particularly glad that the legacies left by Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman in NILDS are being documented in this book for posterity, like the saying goes ‘The faintest ink is more powerful than the strongest memory.’

May the story of Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman a great leader and administrator remind us that greatness is not inherited but forged; not proclaimed but proven; not in monuments of stone, but in the hearts and lives transformed along the way.

**Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, CFR**

Speaker 9th House of Representatives,

Chief of staff to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.



# 1

## **INTRODUCTION:**

### **THE TRANSFORMATION OF NILDS UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF ABUBAKAR O. SULAIMAN**

**J. Shola Omotola and Doris Aaron**

#### **Introduction**

**L**eadership has long been recognized among scholars and practitioners as a pivotal element in the organization of human society, with effective leadership reputed as the cornerstone of all organisations (George, 2003; Seligman, 2002). In the absence of effective leadership, it will be difficult, if not impossible, for any organisation, big or small, old or young, to attain desirable outcomes. This partly explains why the leadership question has been at the centre stage of academic discourses and policy engagements over the years. While some measure of appreciable progress has been made, contentions still

abound regarding the best model of leadership that can help foster sustainable institution building and transformation. Given the array of theoretical postulations on the subject, such contentions seem understandably inevitable.

In this book, we contend that transformational leadership, while not necessarily the best of the contending models of leadership, represents one of the most effective for institution building and organizational transformation. This position is predicated mainly upon the salient elements such a leadership model that reinforce symbiotic relationships between leaders and followers.

In driving home this important point, we draw empirical illustrations from the transformational leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, the Director-General (DG) of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) since 2019. The focus on the DG of NILDS is important in many respects. First and foremost, the mandates of NILDS make it one of the most significant democratic institutions in the country. As the research and capacity building wing of the National Assembly (NASS), NILDS has critical responsibilities not only to NASS, but all democratic institutions in Nigeria and beyond, including political parties, electoral management bodies, particularly the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), security agencies, civil society organisations –in short, all institutions that have a role to play in the democratic process. The leadership of such an important democratic institution should naturally be of interest to all those interested in the strengthening and consolidation of NASS and Nigeria's democracy in general.

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Moreover, the DG came into office under extremely challenging circumstances that made many write him off *ab initio* as one that would most likely fail even before he had assumed office. The situation was not helped by the politics of his appointment and leadership transition. And upon assumption of office, he was also confronted with realities that made it seem that the prophets of doom would eventually have their way. But in a sudden twist and turn of great proportion, the DG was not only able to successfully navigate the steep, slippery terrains and banana pills, but also establish his authority, power and control within a very short period of time. Again, he was also able to quickly consolidate, winning over some of his most ardent adversaries at the time, initiated and implemented far reaching reforms and innovations, including correcting the bases of historical alienation and injustices, as well as laying the foundation of restorative justice. Today, the DG is generally seeing or considered as the father of modern NILDS. It was a classic case of sustainable transition from rejection to popular acceptability and legitimacy.

How was the DG able to navigate the challenging circumstances highlighted above, change the narratives, initiate and implement far-reaching reforms and establish landmark legacies as documented in this book? This is the central concern of this book. In addressing it, we propose that the DG was able to effect positive changes because of his adoption of transformational leadership approach in the governance of the institute from inception. His ability to constantly maintain this approach through thick and thin, contributed immensely to the outstanding success he recorded in institution building as DG of NILDS. This book highlights his transformational leadership qualities and practices that



made this possible. These leadership attributes must have benefited significantly from his solid early life foundations, including good parentage and upbringing, Islamic religious virtues and spirituality, educational background and cumulative leadership experiences, most notably as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

### **The Significance of Transformational Leadership**

Leadership basically has to do with the process by which a person or a group of persons influences others to accomplish an objective and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent. It was in this respect that Peele (2005: 19) posits that leadership should be thought of in terms of six dimensions, which allow for a clear balance and cross-contextual applicability. These dimensions are: a) the character of the leader; b) the followers; c) the organizational/societal context; d) the problems which confront the leader; e) the techniques the leader uses to gain support for her agenda/position; and f) the effects of leadership. For Ohno and Shimamura (2007: 3), good leadership ‘involves providing long-term development vision, and possessing a strong political will to realise that vision’. Robert C. Tucker (1981: 21) defines leadership as ‘a process of human interaction in which individuals exert, or attempt to exert, a determined influence upon others’. For MacGregor Burns (1978: 19), however, leadership connotes ‘leaders inducing followers to act for certain goals that represent the values and the motivations – the aspirations and expectations – of both leaders and followers.

The debate about leadership has spanned several decades, leading to the emergence of several leadership theories, with

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emphasis on personality, institutions and the relationships between them. Irrespective of the theory in question, the main concern focuses essentially on ‘identifying traits/ behaviour/ characteristics required of a person to be an effective leader in a given context’ (Reddy, William and Srinivasan, 2015: 45).

The debate has birthed many contending perspectives. For some, leaders are made not born, positing that if one has the desire and willpower, one can become an effective leader and vice versa. From this point of view, good leaders develop through a never-ending process of self-study, education, training and experience. This is known as transformational leadership theory, which sees leadership as a learning process, rather than a destination or event-specific. This perspective approximates the behavioural approach in leadership research, which posits that ‘behaviours can be learnt and modified based on the context’.

Counterpoised to the above perspective is the argument that leaders are born, not made. This implies that leaders are endowed naturally with some personality traits that may lead people naturally into leadership roles. This is the trait theory. Yet, others see leadership from the point of view of what has come to be regarded as the great events theory (also known as contingency theory). The argument here is that a crisis or important events may cause a person to rise to the occasion, which brings out extraordinary leadership qualities in an ordinary person. Other theories of leadership abound. These include the integrative, servant, authentic, holistic, developmental and transformational models of leadership, each with its strengths and weaknesses (Best, 2011).

By our own judgement, however, transformational leadership seems the most suitable and relevant to the subject of this book for obvious reasons, notably its nuances, features and comprehensiveness. By this we do not mean or claim that transformational leadership is the best of all leadership models. Rather, our contention is that why it may not necessarily be the best, it is one of the most effective leadership models mainly because of its salient elements as we will highlight shortly. Generally, transformative leadership is reputed as one that ‘inspires employees to exceed expectations by fostering a clear vision, providing individualized support, promoting innovation, and acting as an ethical role model’. This approach also ‘increases motivation, boosts morale and productivity, reduces turnover, and helps organizations adapt to change, creating a loyal and engaged workforce dedicated to achieving common goals’. Yet, it is also democratic in orientation, fostering participation in decision making.

Basically, transformational leadership has to do with a process whereby ‘leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation’ (Burns, 1978). It is usually said to be defined by four elements: *idealized influence*, which pertains to providing a role model for high ethical behaviour, instils pride, gains respect and trust’; *inspirational motivation*, which has to do with ‘the degree to which the leader articulates a vision that is appealing and inspiring to followers. Leaders with inspirational motivation challenge followers with high standards, communicate optimism about future goals, and provide meaning for the task at hand’; *intellectual stimulation*, that is, ‘the degree to which the leader challenges assumptions, takes risks and solicits

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followers' ideas. Leaders with this style stimulate and encourage creativity in their followers'; and *individual consideration*, that is, 'the degree to which the leader attends to each follower's needs, acts as a mentor or coach to the follower and listens to the follower's concerns and needs' (Turner, 2023; Bass and Riggio, 2008).

Once these conditioned are fulfilled, it is assumed that the organization would prosper both in terms of the attainment of its goals and the wellbeing of its workers. This is because, as Bass and Riggio pointed out in their *Transformational Leadership*, transformational leaders can help 'stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extraordinary outcomes and, in the process, develop their own leadership capacity'. They can also 'help followers grow and develop into leaders by responding to individual followers' needs by empowering them and by aligning the objectives and goals of the individual followers, the leader, the group, and the larger organization'. In other words, transformational leaders engage in practices that foster personal development, creativity, and collaboration among team members. By doing so, they not only enhance individual performance but also contribute to the overall effectiveness of an organization (Deng, et al, 2023; Amor, et al, 2020).

## **Transformational Leadership and Institution Building**

It follows, logically, that transformational leadership is directly connected to institution building. By institution building we mean a multifaceted process that involves the establishment, development, and strengthening of organizations and systems that govern social, political, and economic interactions within a society. It entails 'programmes

of sustainable, constructive change in organisations which are designed to make them better at doing what they already do, and more efficient; or which are designed to change the character of institutions by modifying their goals and strategies, cultures, ways of functioning, management styles'; the ultimate goal of which is to improve the effectiveness and capacity of formal organisations (Igbuzor, 2019:3). It is multidimensional, encompassing such critical elements as legal frameworks, governance structures, human resources, and organizational culture.

Effective institution building fosters organizational stability, accountability, and transparency. By logical extension, weak institution building will make it difficult, if not utterly impossible to lay the foundation for sustainable growth and development. At its core, institution building involves creating formal structures and rules that facilitate collective action among individuals within an organization, a community or society, in this case NILDS. This is essential because effective institutions are characterized by clear rules and regulations that guide behaviour while ensuring equitable access to resources and services in ways to advance the welfare and wellbeing of organizational staff across board. They also require a commitment to uphold democratic principles such as popular representation and participation in decision-making processes and the protection of individual rights. It was the lack of, or the weakness of these critical requirements of institution building that tended to undermine the stability, productivity and self-actualisation of NILDS, particularly as an institution and its staff before the appointment of Abubakar Sulaiman as Director-General in 2019.

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Transformational leadership is directly connected to institution building in many ways. As studies have shown, such leadership engenders institutional innovations. They also bring about grand plans that will improve the effectiveness and capacity of formal organisations and institutions. Leading by example and serving as role models, transformational leaders are also reputed as a viable source of inspiration for follower performance and greater institutional productivity (Bakker, et al, 2023; Elrehail, 2018; 2023; Igbuzor, 2019).

Abubakar O. Sulaiman, as demonstrated across the various chapters of this book, has amply and aptly demonstrated these salient attributes of transformational leadership. This leadership approach has enabled him to positively transform NILDS in many significant ways. The book captures the various dimensions in which Abubakar O. Sulaiman had demonstrated transformational leadership and how such interventions have contributed to the institutional transformation and development of NILDS, measured not only in terms of its enhanced stability, improved staff welfare and wellbeing and improved productivity, but also the overall contribution of NILDS to effective legislative governance and democratic development broadly defined in Nigeria and beyond.

### **Objectives and Significance of the Book**

This book is basically about the leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as a two-term Director-General of NILDS. The primary objective of the book is to critically dissect the DG's leadership of the institute, which we have characterised as transformational leadership. The book underscores the DG's salient leadership attributes and

activities at NILDS that qualify him to be so classified as a transformational leadership. It also evaluates the specific dimensions of the DG's contributions to the transformation of NILDS, highlighting his landmark legacies, challenges and creative responses.

Such an adventure is critical for many reasons. One, it offers practical insights into the multidimensional aspects of transformational leadership in real life setting, including the challenges of navigating leadership transition and succession politics in a slippery terrain; as well as institutional innovations and reforms for institution building. Two, rooted in local illustrations from NILDS, as opposed to most of the famous books on leadership rooted in different cultural jurisdictions, this book also offers critical insights into sustainable institution building from which burgeoning leaders at various levels can draw critical lessons and inspiration. As the various chapters in the book illustrate, a holistic reading of the entries is sufficient to develop a framework of Abubakar Sulaiman's School of Leadership predicated upon his astute and transformational leadership of NILDS that not only enabled him to overcome salient foundational challenges upon his appointment as DG, against all odds, but also succeed in turning the institute into a truly world-class institution of legislative and democratic governance in Nigeria and beyond. As most of the chapters illustrate, NILDS under the leadership of Abubakar O. Sulaiman experienced geometric expansion and became a truly world-class institute that can compete favourably with similar institutions across the globe. The book sheds light on how the DG was able to do this within a very short period of time.

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Moreover, the book also documents, in great details, some of the most outstanding contributions and legacies of Abubakar Sulaiman to the transformation of NILDS. These include his unprecedented commitment to staff development in all ramifications, notably the establishment of clear line of career advancement, creation of new directorates, departments and units thereby offering platforms for career advancement for staff, gender inclusion in leadership and decision making, as well as the completion and relocation to the permanent site of the institute, among others. The DG's commitment to staff welfare and wellbeing has yielded tremendous results. One particularly rewarding outcome that is worthy of note is the fact that most of the Directors of the various directorates are now from within the institute, young officials who have grown through the system. This was unlike the past where most of such positions were outsourced, thereby blocking the line of career progression of internal staff, dampening their morale and contributing seriously to the high rate of staff turnover at the institute. Though not permanently over, the rate has nosedived tremendously with these opportunities for career advancement.

Beyond the revitalisation of NILDS, the book also documents how the DG has been able to exploit the platform of NILDS, following its transformation, to strengthen legislative and democratic governance in Nigeria and Africa. Unlike the past when NILDS' main engagement was with the NASS, its services have since been extended to other critical institutions of democratisation, including INEC, political parties, security agencies, CSOs and even traditional institutions. Again, these services are no longer restricted to the national level, as was the practice before the appointment of the DG. Today, NILDS



now services subnational legislatures at the state and local government level. Yet, more than ever before, NILDS has forged sustainable collaborations and partnerships with non-state actors nationally and internationally. The growth in NILDS international engagements, promoting legislative and democratic governance in several African countries through trainings and workshops, exchange of visits for peer learning and review are also significant.

The book also highlights some of the most critical challenges that confronted the DG from the inception of his administration, notably the politics of his appointment and power transition, internal resistance to reforms and innovations, betrayals and backstabbing, as well as unhealthy rivalry with other institutions under the National Assembly, including the National Assembly Service Commission. By reflecting on these challenges, but more particularly the strategies deployed by the DG to overcome them such as leading by example, empathy, reconciliation, forgiveness and reintegration, as well as discipline, the book provides helpful insight into the effective handling of organizational politics, conflicts and constraints. Old and young leaders can draw important lessons from the illustrations in the book for relevant applications.

Overall, our book illuminates these and related dimensions of the leadership of Abubakar O. Sulaiman as DG of NILDS. It offers critical lessons in the foundational pillars of transformative leadership and institution building in real life, with valuable lessons on how to navigate the slippery terrains of succession politics and leadership transition in formal institutions of governance and come out of it unscathed. It is a

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classic on transformational leadership and institution building. Without any doubt, the book will serve as an important source of insight and inspiration for students, researchers and scholars of leadership and institution building in Nigeria and beyond.

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# 2

## **APPOINTMENT AS DIRECTOR- GENERAL AND POLITICS OF TRANSITION**

**Asimiyu Abiola and Mohammed Amali**

### **Introduction**

**L**eadership transitions are an inevitable and pivotal moment in the life of any organisation. Depending on its form and character, especially whether planned or unexpected, leadership transitions can bring both opportunities and risks. The way a leadership transition is handled can determine an institutions stability, morale, culture, and long-term success. With thoughtful planning, clear communication and strategic execution, transitions can be opportunities for growth and positive change. Conversely, a poorly handled transition can cause confusion, resistance, and long-term instability in the life of any organisation. These scenarios aptly illustrate the story of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), particularly at the turn of the year 2019 when the curtains fell on the storied career of Professor Ladi Hamalai,

MFR as the Director-General (DG) of the Institute, and the politics of succession in search of a new DG was also in full gear.

The primary objective of this chapter is to appropriately situate the form and character of the transition process, with emphasis on its context, politics and key actors, culminating in the eventual appointment of Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman as the DG of the institute. The chapter also engages how Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman upon his appointment, navigated stormy waters to establish and gradually consolidate his powers and authority as the second substantive DG of NILDS. This is important not just for the role of key actors in the process, including the high, moderate, and low, as well as the attendant contradictions and intrigues, but more importantly, also about some critical lessons for future leadership transitions at NILDS and beyond. When properly articulated and aggregated, such lessons hold important prospects for policy reforms and possible amendment to certain provisions of the Establishment Act of NILDS, particularly those bordering on the appointment and tenure of office of the DG.

The chapter ultimately reveals how custom and practice in the appointment of the DG was jettisoned in a high-stakes game of compelling acquiescence and gamesmanship; and how these tendencies contributed in large measures to some of the post-transition issues and challenges.

### **The Transition**

It all began in the year 2019 when the maiden DG of NILDS, Professor Ladi Hamalai, MFR was to leave office after 15

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years at the helm, spanning two four-year terms as the DG and seven years as the Coordinator of the Policy and Research Project (PARP) which birthed NILDS. Typical of such periods of transition, names were beginning to emerge as rumored successors to the outgoing Director-General. Camps were beginning to form within the Institute, with each camp feeding information to the powers that be about the happenings in the Institute. Consequently, and via a letter from the leadership of the National Assembly, the tenure of Professor Hamalai ended on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> of May, 2019. As a substantive appointment of a new Director-General had not been made at the time, the leadership of the National Assembly directed the outgoing Director-General to hand over the leadership of the Institute to the most senior Director in the research-based departments, as provided by the regulations of the Institute. In that regard, Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi, the Director of Research and Training, took over as Acting Director-General pending the appointment of a substantive DG with effect from Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2019.

It should be noted that some other senior Directors, although not from the research-based departments of the Institute also jostled to take over power, but the outgoing DG stood her grounds and tried to preserve the sanctity of the regulations. This was laudable, especially given the prevailing circumstances. Upon Professor Hamalai's departure, the position of DG became vacant and it became imperative that a substantive successor be named as soon as possible.

## **The Legal Framework and Actors in the Appointment of the DG NILDS**

Statutorily, the appointment of the Director-General is covered by the provisions of Section 7 of the NILS Act, 2011.



The section specifically provides as follows:

- 1) *There shall be for the Institute, a Director-General who shall possess appropriate qualifications and cognate experience;*
- 2) *The Director-General shall be appointed by the President of the Senate in consultation with the Speaker of the House of Representatives;*
- 3) *The Director-General shall hold office for a period of 4 years and may be reappointed for another term of 4 years;*
- 4) *The Director-General shall be the Chief Executive Officer of the Institute and shall be charged with the general responsibility for matters relating to the day-to-day management and operations of the Institute; and*
- 5) *The Director-General shall be responsible to the Council.*

Significant to the discourse is the fact that NILDS is just one of four parastatals under the supervision of the National Assembly as at that time, the other three being the National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO) whose establishment Bill is yet to be passed, National Assembly Service Commission, and the Public Complaints Commission. Each of these agencies is headed by a Chief Executive Officer in varying nomenclature and appointed by the leadership of the National Assembly. By the aforementioned Section 7(2) of the NILS Act, the appointment, and renewal of term of the maiden Director-General of the Institute was made by Senator David Mark.

By way of practice and custom however, the presiding officers may have unwritten agreements between themselves as to who makes each of the appointments of persons to head the aforementioned agencies, and this may be irrespective of what the relevant enabling Acts provide. This was reportedly the case with the 8th Assembly where a gentleman agreement

between the President of the Senate, Distinguished Senator Bukola Saraki, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara purportedly shared those appointive roles. In the light of this configuration, the President of the Senate made nominations and appointments of the Chairman and members of the National Assembly Service Commission, nominations that needed the confirmation and approval of the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. This was done with the understanding that the Rt. Hon. Speaker would appoint the next DG of NILDS. By providence however, the political *higi-haga* four years prior, that led to the emergence of Senator Bukola Saraki, and Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara as the President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives respectively, reared its head in the politics for the appointment of the new DG- NILDS and altered the dynamics in its entirety.

From a historical standpoint, fresh from taking power from the PDP at the federal level in 2015, the bigwigs of the APC had positioned both Senator Ahmad Lawan and Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila for the positions of President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives respectively. By clandestine design and high-wired political maneuvering however, Distinguished Senator Bukola Saraki and Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara played a fast one on their own party by entering into what was perceived to be an “*unholy*” alliance with legislators of the PDP and other opposition parties for their support in the election of the Presiding Officers of the National Assembly. This was done with the understanding that the position of Deputy President of the Senate would be ceded

to the opposition PDP, and to the chagrin of the ruling APC, this was executed successfully.

This was perceived as an unforgiveable act of disloyalty and betrayal of the APC by the two aforementioned legislators, and would set the tone for what would be a strained and acrimonious relationship between the leadership of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly and the Executive President, Muhammadu Buhari. This damaged relationship would lead to the President refusing to sign off on many things forwarded to the Executive by the Legislature, and one of such instances where the President played his hand was with the nominations sent by Distinguished Senator Saraki for the appointment of Chairman and members of the National Assembly Service Commission. The refusal of the President to sign off on the nominations completely altered the complexion in the appointment of the new DG of NILDS.

### **Emergence of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman as DG, NILDS**

The appointment and subsequent assumption of office by Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman as the Director-General of NILDS did not roll by smoothly. From the gridlock between the two Presiding Officers of the National Assembly regarding the appointive authority, to the clandestine shenanigans and brinksmanship from interested forces within the Institute, the appointment of the second Director-General of NILDS was shrouded in power play, intrigues and politics.

As previously stated, even before the departure of Professor Hamalai, names had begun to emerge as possible successors to the exalted office of DG-NILDS. Prominent amongst those

names were Professors Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman of the University Abuja and Prof Sylvester Shikyel of the University of Jos. The latter, a Professor of Law and a Member of the Inner Bar (SAN) initially had a clear upper hand in the grand scheme of things, having been the candidate of the then Speaker of the House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Yakubu Dogara who by the unwritten (gentleman) agreement with the President of the Senate was to make the appointment. Equally in Professor Shikyel's favor was his prior working experience at NILDS having been an integral part of the Policy and Research Project (PARP) that birthed NILDS.

At the internal level, there was nothing to suggest that the outgoing DG favoured the appointment of any of the Institute's Directors at the time to succeed her as DG. This did not deter the Directors however. At the instant time, NILDS had six eligible Directors in place, all with the credentials and pedigree to succeed her. These were Director of Finance and Accounts- Dr. Kabir Ahmed, Director, Legal- Dr. Shuaibu Danwanka, Director, Democratic Studies- Professor Femi Ajayi, Director, Legislative Support Services- Professor M.T. Ladan, Director, Post-Graduate School- Dr. Asimiyu Abiola, and Director, Research and training- Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi. All but one of these aforementioned Directors were desirous of emerging as the next DG of NILDS and made overtures to the powers that be at that time. Nevertheless, of all the aforementioned Directors, no one prominently advanced his cause more than Dr Adeyemi Fajingbesi. This was mainly because he held sway as the Acting DG in the intervening period between the erstwhile DG's departure and the appointment of a new one. The Acting DG through his actions

while in the saddle would be an active actor in the events that led to the appointment of the new DG.

The two weeks that Dr Fajingbesi served were eventful. He wasted no time in showing a clear interest in taking the job on a permanent basis and made incursions into the leadership and membership of the National Assembly to make a case for himself. It was also rumoured that prominent amongst the Acting DG's camp who aided his cause were members of staff of the Institute, some of who would later become very prominent figures (*as Special/Personal Assistants and Aides in whatever nomenclature called*) in the administration of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman after his appointment, further justifying the popular adage that "*there are no permanent friends/enemies in politics, only permanent interests.*" One thing that cannot be taken away from Dr Fajingbesi's short reign, however, is that he never took his eyes off the ball in the administration of the Institute.

The term of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Assembly was winding down within a week, and an appointment of a new DG had not been made. As previously stated, two prominent names were in the mix and at every point in time it seemed all but certain that Professor Shikyil was to be appointed as the second substantive DG of the Institute until providence, occasioned by the bitter Executive-Legislative squabble at the federal level completely altered the dynamics in favour of the perceived outsider- Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman. Having lost out on securing President Buhari's approval for his nominations to the National Assembly

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Service Commission, the President of the Senate prevailed upon the Speaker to (despite the prior gentleman agreement) relinquish the appointment of the DG, NILDS to him. This would swing the pendulum firmly in favor of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman who was the pick of the Distinguished President of the Senate, Bukola Saraki who ultimately appointed Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman as the substantive DG of the Institute.

The appointment had not yet been made official however, but staff members of the Institute were not oblivious of these developments; and through friends and acquaintances, Professor Sulaiman was being kept abreast of the shenanigans going on at the Institute. With days of the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly to go, it was the “*word on the street*” that the Acting DG on the advice of the aforementioned allies who would later become prominent Aides to Professor Sulaiman advised him to lock the office of the DG up and travel away from Abuja. This was on the weekend the term of the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly was to lapse, and the intention was allegedly to shut the newly appointed DG out while returning to office on the next Monday by which time the 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly’s term would have been up and Distinguished Senator Bukola Saraki would no longer wield the powers he previously had. The plan was to then make inroads into the National Assembly through the Clerk to National Assembly to vitiate the DG’s appointment. Through highly intelligence reports from some staff of the Institute however, word got to Professor Sulaiman and he promptly stormed the Institute armed with a new letter that overrode the prior one in which it mandated the Acting DG to hand over with immediate effect. True to the intelligence reports, the office of the DG was firmly locked when the new DG arrived,

with the keys nowhere in sight. The electronically controlled door had to be breached by technical experts before the DG gained entry, heralding the start of the administration of the former Minister of National Planning and new DG of NILDS, Professor Abubakar Olanrewaju Sulaiman.

### **Assumption of Office of the newly appointed Director-General**

Assuming leadership positions also often comes with intrigues- complex dynamics, challenges and unexpected situations that can make the transition both exciting and difficult. These factors could range from resistance from subordinates, internal transformation, adapting to criticism, and political and power struggles. Of the aforementioned factors, the new DG was faced mostly by two forces, namely resistance to reforms as well as political and power struggles, and this would prove to be the most destabilising challenge he faced in his first few months at the helm.

As previously elaborated upon, the political intrigues that brought upon the Senate Presidency of Senator Bukola Saraki still featured prominently in the dynamics of the new DG's first months in office. The APC finally had its way in the election of the Presiding Officers of the National Assembly with its two preferred choices from their failed attempt of 2015 now occupying the two presiding seats of both chambers of the National Assembly. Distinguished Senator Ahmad Lawan, PhD, was now the President of the 9<sup>th</sup> Senate, and considering the fact that Senator Saraki had just appointed his own person- an indigene of Ilorin, Kwara state, (who also served as the Director General of the Bukola Saraki's political campaign for the Presidency of Nigeria), in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of his Senate

Presidency, there was a blatant refusal on the part of the new President of the Senate, and by extension, the Speaker of the House of Representatives to recognize the DG.

To further exacerbate the situation for the new DG, as a card-carrying member of the People's Democratic Party (PDP), and having served as a Minister of the Federal Republic of Nigeria under the PDP, there was fierce resistance from some members of the All Progressive Congress (APC) ruling party against having a member of the opposition in such a role. The insinuation then was that Professor Abubakar Sulaiman as DG, NILDS could use federal government resources under the APC led administration to fund the PDP in Kwara State. In a sensible move subsequently, the DG denounced partisan politics due to the non-partisan needs of his new office. However, such a move was not enough to convince his traducers and calm the raging storm. There was a complete blockade from the two presiding officers of the National Assembly. The DG just could not access them no matter how hard he tried. At this point rumors were rife that the DG would be removed from office at any time, and his lack of access to the President of the Senate and the Speaker, House of Representatives only further fueled those stories. This continued for a few months. To his credit however, the political intrigues did not affect Professor Abubakar Sulaiman's vision for the Institute as he kept on with his initiatives and consolidated on them until reason prevailed over sentiments and the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives finally opened their doors to the new DG.



This shift was achieved by the DG through qualities of loyalty, integrity, persistence, competence, and confidentiality among other virtues. This heralded the start of a new friendship that would blossom among the trio and bring about groundbreaking reform initiatives and transformation to the Institute. From an Institute with just three core departments, through the amendment of the Institute's scheme of Service, the Governing Council led by the two Presiding Officers approved the expansion of the departments to twelve. Equally ground breaking especially with the distinct peculiarities at the time was the introduction of the certainty of career progression at NILDS. Previously, careers stalled and many staff felt stagnated, but the introduction of a transparent process of promotion occasioned by the reviewed scheme of service was a revitalising tonic for staff of the Institute. Staff training was also high on the list of Professor Sulaiman's transformational agenda blueprint, and he hit the ground running in that regard by mandating the Department of Training to collate names of all staff for trainings both internationally and locally. Remarkably, this was executed successfully in what would be the first time that staff trainings were all-inclusive in the Institute.

This would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of the Presiding Officers of the National Assembly and the Governing Council. The Governing Council led by Distinguished Senator Ahmad Lawan, PhD and RT. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila would also support the DG and the Institute in the establishment and commissioning of the Legislative Centre for Security Analysis as well as the Democracy Radio, both major initiatives that advance the actualizing of the statutory mandate of NILDS.

### **Lessons Learnt**

There are lessons that this chapter has revealed. Transparency rather than opaqueness trumps everything. The appointment of the DG of NILDS will remain full of intrigues that can snowball into messy situations if the status quo remains. It must be noted that right from the appointment of Professor Hamalai, MFR as the Coordinator of the Policy and Research Project for seven years, and as DG NILDS for two terms, and on to the appointment and renewal of appointment of the incumbent DG, no advertisement calling for qualified candidates was ever put out. As the intellectual hub of the National Assembly, the Institute should be insulated from partisan politics. Therefore, as is obtainable at the Ivory Towers, the appointment of the DG of an Institute of this repute should be advertised, calling for suitably qualified candidates to apply and face a team of interviewers. This sort of transparency will ensure that no Presiding Officer comes on board with the first instinct and notion of a DG being someone else's appointee. The National Assembly as a whole should own the process more than it obtains today.

It is pertinent at this point to note the events that played out towards the final months of Professor Sulaiman's first term and his quest for a renewal of his position where even closest aides of the DG allegedly exhibited reprehensible acts of betrayal and disloyalty. Those aides either for their personal interests or for the interests of unidentified persons allegedly colluded to malign the DG's chances at a re-appointment in ways that were detrimental and inimical to the stability of this great Institute. Such instances can, and should be averted in the future by making the tenure of the DG a single five-year

term. This is the position in similar Institutes of learning and may be adopted at NILDS.

### **Conclusion**

The transition of power is rarely a simple handover. Behind closed doors, alliances shift, and decisions are made that may never reach the public domain. Outgoing leaders often attempt to shape and control the narrative by influencing the choice of successors, while incoming leaders on the other hand must navigate the stormy waters of tests of loyalty, the management of expectations and the general acceptance of the powers-that-be. Beneath the ceremonial exchanges and public statements that accompany transition of power, usually lies the intrigues of negotiation, strategy, and at times, tension.

The chapter has revealed how the tenure of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman weathered all of these aforementioned factors and consolidated his power and authority as the second Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies.

# 3

## INSTITUTIONAL INNOVATIONS AND REFORMS

**Joke Akinsanmi, Chris Ngara, Moshood Olalere, Arthur Ikeme & Doris Aaron**

### **Introduction**

**T**he National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) has undergone significant evolution since its establishment as an agency of the National Assembly in 2011. It was founded initially as the Policy Analysis and Research Project (PARP) in 2004 with support from the World Bank through the Africa Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF). The concept of PARP as a capacity-building agency of the National Assembly was conceived in response to the need to enhance the effectiveness of the legislature in Nigeria.

This was against the background where the legislature is frequently set aside once a military intervention occurs, denying this cardinal democratic institution necessary continuity, stability, experience, and knowledge of its

operations. Although PARP during the seven years of its operations built a reputation for good service delivery in terms of output and outcome, it could not cater to the vast and expanding capacity-building needs of the National Assembly. The need to fill this gap led to the establishment of the National Institute for Legislative Studies through an Act of the National Assembly in 2011.

Since its establishment as a successor to PARP, NILS has grown into a premier legislative capacity-building institution supporting legislatures in West Africa and beyond. In 2018, the mandate and scope of NILS was expanded following the enactment of the NILS (Amendment) Act 2018. The new legislation changed the name of the Institute from the National Institute for Legislative Studies (NILS) to the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) and expanded its scope to cover the executive, judiciary, and other democratic institutions.

Despite the feats achieved by NILDS over the years as a capacity-building hub of the National Assembly, and its remarkable contributions to democracy in Nigeria and by extension Africa, the Institute remained relatively unknown on the continent and even in many parts of Nigeria. The appointment of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as the second Director-General of NILDS marked a transformative period characterised by institutional reforms, structural innovations, and expanded mandates, that have significantly enhanced the Institute's reach and impact.

On the 28<sup>th</sup> May 2019, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman was appointed the Director General, National Institute for

Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). This strategic appointment by the leadership of the Eighth National Assembly marked a turning point for the Institute setting it on a trajectory to becoming the premier legislative and democratic institution in West Africa and beyond. During his inaugural address on June 3rd, 2019, the Director General articulated a vision of transformation and outlined ambitious goals that will redefine NILD's role and impact. Interestingly every promise made during the inaugural speech has been kept in the last six years of his stewardship. This Chapter will begin by reproducing the inaugural speech unedited, and the subsequent paragraphs will capture all that has been achieved as articulated in the speech and much more.

### **Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's Inaugural speech as Director-General, NILDS**

*I'm pleased to welcome you all to this epoch meeting; this is an event that marked the beginning of a new era in the life of this Institute and indeed that of our dear country, Nigeria.*

*As a matter of immediate priority, we must commence the movement to the permanent site of the Institute in the quickest possible time. The structure of the permanent site is a world-class edifice, the best in Africa, we must maximize its usage.*

*We shall establish, but not limited to the following: a press center and radio station. I hope to expand with your support and cooperation our directorates, departments, and units to accommodate such things as academic planning, administration, maintenance, physical development.*

*I shall improve on the existing structures and academic contents, physical structures, and capacity building of legislatures and legislative aides.*

*I hope to institutionalize an academic advisory board comprising of eminent academics that will proffer the social intellectual base to the Institute from time to time.*

*The academic component of our Mandate will be developed to an enviable world-class standard. We will inculcate academic culture and expand and improve on existing academic programs such that the quality of our researches will address the existing legislative and democratic challenges of our nation.*

*This administration shall revisit the national and international lecture series of the institute by improving on its participation and deliverance.*

*As an activist in my younger days, I shall prioritise staff welfare in all ramifications. We shall entrench a transparent and open-door policy based on equality and devoid of injustice. Staff productivity must be commensurate with motivation and reward system.*

## **Specific Reforms and Innovations**

### **a. Review of the Conditions of Service, Administrative Manual and Expansion of Organisational structure**

Recognising the need for a more efficient institutional framework to the success of any institution, Prof. Sulaiman embarked on a comprehensive reorganisation of NILDS. The existing Four Departments were streamlined, and additional 8

## Transformative Leadership in Practice

Departments, and units were created to align with NILDS's expanded mandate. This restructuring aimed at improving internal efficiency, fostering innovation, and ensuring a more effective delivery of services. Through this initiative the Institute can now boast of the following departments: *Democracy and Governance, Studies, Training and International Cooperation, Administration and Human Resources, Economic and Social Research, Legislative Support Services, a World-Class Library, Internal Audit, Finance and Accounts, Democracy Radio, Legislative Centre for Security Analysis and Centre for Advanced Executive Education Programme*. Worthy of note is the establishment of a Gender and Inclusivity Unit domiciled in the Office of the Director General to handle issues bothering on Women, Youths and People Living with Disabilities.

A significant milestone in this reform process also, was the holistic review and update of the Scheme of Service and Administrative Manual in 2021, aligning them with best practices in both the Nigerian public sector and international standards. A seven-member committee chaired by a notable bureaucrat, Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmed, was tasked with implementing these changes. The recommendations from this exercise were far-reaching with the production of a standard document for the Institute to work with. As if that is not enough, in line with his promise for periodic review of the Conditions of Service, another seven-Member Committee led by Honourable Hakeem Olabode Akamo (a former National Commissioner with the National Assembly Service Commission), was inaugurated on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2025, to continue with holistic review of the Conditions of Service. Their mandate included aligning the institute's scheme of



service with current trends in the public service and incorporating new Departments, Divisions and Units that were not in existence at the time the last scheme of service was reviewed in 2021. The Hon. Hakeem Olabode led committee submitted their report on the 18<sup>th</sup> of August, 2025, with far reaching recommendations that will lay the foundation for future expansion of the Institute and for effective administration of the Institute. As at the time of writing this book, the implementation of their recommendations was awaiting the Institute's Governing Council approval.

Also, in a bid to ensure that the right professionals are employed in the services of NILDS, upon his assumption of office, a 5-man verification Committee led by Prof. Kayode Omole former Deputy Vice Chancellor (DVC), Administration University of Abuja, was inaugurated on the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 2019, and charged with the task of verifying credentials of all staff, and flagging any suspicious credentials. The committee discharged their task effectively and upon the submission of their reports and findings, three prominent staff members of the Institute were laid off on account of certificate falsification. This move by Prof. Sulaiman purged the Institute of unqualified staff, and set the tone for the employment of only qualified and verified persons into the services of the Institute, keeping to his promise of ensuring that only the best are retained so as to take the institute to the enviable height of becoming a world class institution.

This, did not stop with the 2019 verification exercise but has become a tradition of periodic and continuous verification. On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2025, another 9-man committee led by Dr. Yusuf Lawal (a former Director at the Joint Matriculations

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and Admissions Board (JAMB), and senior staff of the University of Abuja, was inaugurated. The committee was mandated to thoroughly screen the credentials of all NILDS staff that came on board after the 2019 screening exercise, and also all staff who got additional qualifications after the first exercise. At the time of writing this book, the committee has commenced work in earnest to ensure that they deliver on their mandate and submit their report within six weeks of their inauguration.

Prof. Sulaiman did not stop with his reform agenda, in a bid to fulfil his promise to develop the academic component of the Institute's mandate to an enviable world-class standard. He inaugurated the Academic Advisory Board led by the eminent scholar and professor of Political Science, Professor Nuhu Yaquob of blessed memory, and other eminent professors. Their mandate was clear, that is the revamping of the academic mandate of the Institute to conform to global best practices. Their composition, activities, and achievements, are as captured in subsequent narrative on the Academic Advisory Board.

Prof. Sulaiman also continued with the tradition of developing a four yearly strategic plan for the institute. Under his guidance, two operational strategic plans were developed for the institute. The first covered the period 2019-2023, and the second and current one covers the period 2024-2028. These plans x-rayed strategic areas of operations of the institute, which include but not limited to; operational assessment of the institute, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the institute, strategic direction, and also monitoring and evaluation. These plans have helped shaped the priority

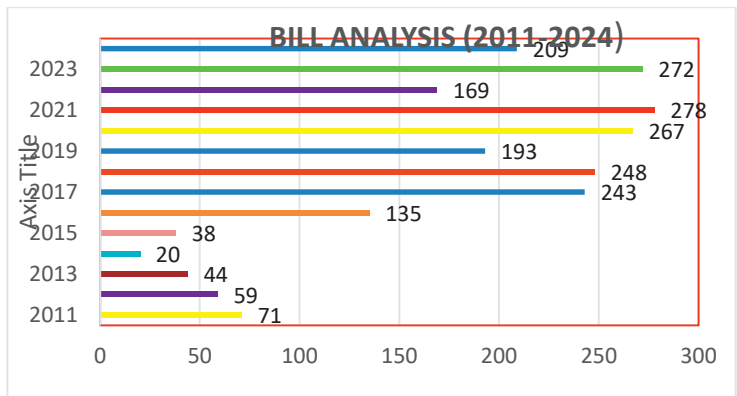
projects and activities of the institute and ultimately serve as a guide and a compass to help navigate the expected and unexpected challenges the institute is likely to face. It has also guided the institute to build on its strengths and work on its weaknesses. These plans are also well documented in the Institute library for reference.

### **b. Enhancing Legislative Support Services**

Under Prof. Sulaiman's leadership, NILDS has strengthened its capacity to provide critical legislative support services, including bill drafting, policy analysis, and issue briefs. The Institute's Liaison Office at the National Assembly was restructured to improve responsiveness to lawmakers' requests, thereby making the services rendered to be demand driven. As one of its major statutory functions, NILDS provides legislative research assistance to the legislators to enhance quality legislation and the law-making process. Figs. 1 to 5 show a comparative analysis of a yearly number of aggregated routine analytical and drafting outputs to the legislators from 2011 to 2018 and between 2019 and 2024.

The data in figure 1 below presents a yearly aggregate of Bill Analysis between 2011 and 2024. The data shows that between 2011 and 2018, which is the period under the former administration, a total number of 858 Bills were analysed, while 1388 Bills were analysed between 2019 and 2024. The data also shows a high level of increase in the number of Bill that were analysed under the administration of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman.

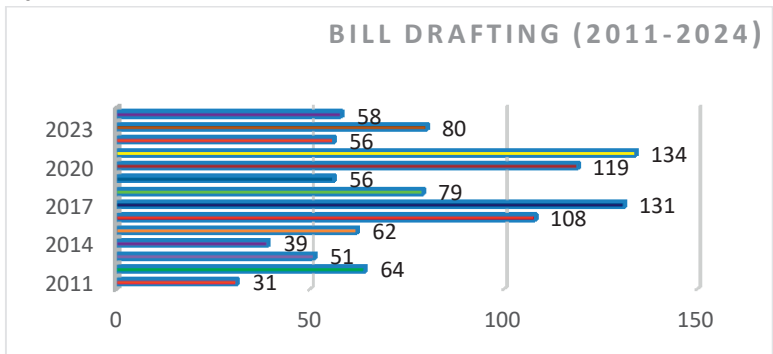
**Figure 1 Yearly Aggregate of Bill Analysis between 2011 and 2024**



(Source: NILDS PM&E Division, 2025)

Data presented in figure 2 below shows that the highest number of Bill Drafted was in 2021 and slightly 2020 irrespective of the COVID-19 Pandemic. During the lockdown, the institute researchers were encouraged to work from home. The data also showed an oscillatory trend in the number of Bills drafted.

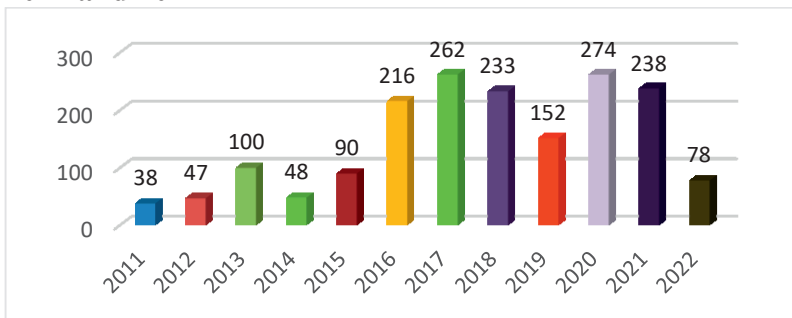
**Figure 2 Yearly Aggregate of Bill Drafting between 2011 and 2024**



(Source: NILDS PM&E Division, 2025)

Figure 3 below showed a noticeable steady increment in the number of Brief of Arguments between 2011 and 2024. From 2016 to 2018, and from 2020 to 2021, the number was very high. However, it went slightly low in 2019 due to the general elections. 2022 recorded the highest number of Brief of Arguments prepared and transmitted to the legislators.

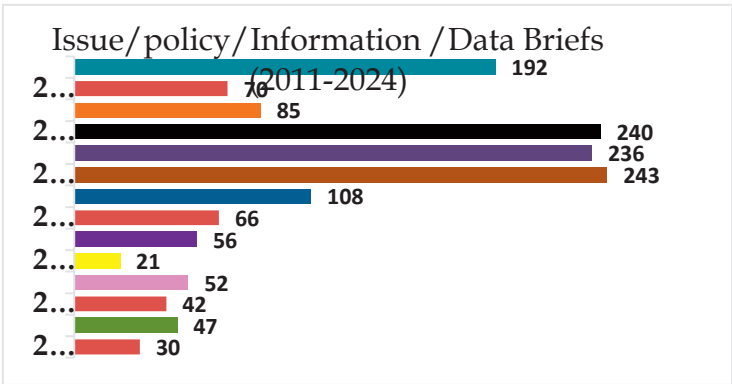
**Figure 3 Yearly Aggregate of Briefs of Arguments between 2011 and 2022**



(Source: NILDS PM&E Division, 2025)

The data presented in figure 4 below, showed a very high increment in the number of Issue/Policy/Information /Data Briefs. 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2024 respectively were relatively very high, however, the decline in 2022 and 2023 was due to the general election and election campaign.

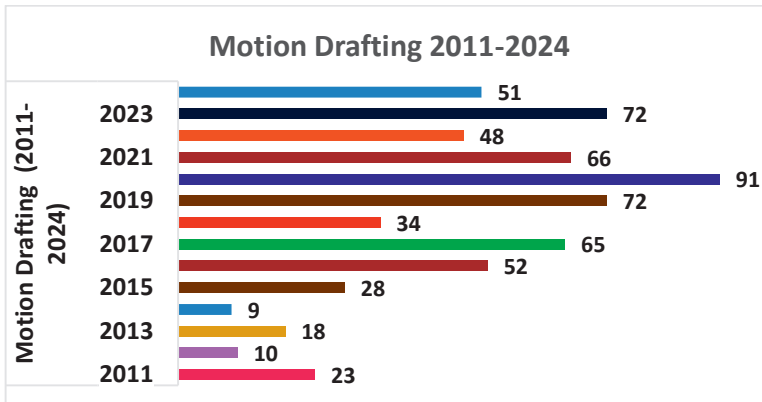
**Figure 4 Yearly Aggregate of Issue/policy/Information /Data Briefs between 2011-2024**



(Source: NILDS PM&E Division, 2025)

Motion Drafting is one of the major outputs supplied by the institute to the legislators to enhance their legislative functions. Data from figure 5, presents a steady increment in the number of motions drafted and transmitted to the legislators between 2011 and 2024 respectively. Again, between 2019 and 2024 under Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, the institute witnessed a very high number of motions drafted. These legislative support services significantly improved the quality of legislative decision-making and enhanced the effectiveness of the Nigerian National Assembly

**Figure 5 Yearly Aggregate of Motion Drafting between 2011-2024**



(Source: NILDS PM&E Division, 2025)

### **c. Staff Development and Capacity Building**

Understanding that institutional success hinges on human resource development, Prof. Sulaiman prioritised staff training and welfare. A structured training calendar was introduced, ensuring that all staff members had access to professional development opportunities. Within his time in office, 95% of the staff participated in either local or international training programmes. Also, to further boost staff morale, he established a Staff Audit Committee to address long-standing grievances related to promotions, placement, and welfare. These efforts fostered a more harmonious work environment and enhanced productivity within the Institute. Below are some testimonials from some staff that benefited from capacity building and training workshops and also conversion and promotions.

**LETTER OF APPRECIATION FOR STAFF  
CONVERSION**

I wish to sincerely express my profound appreciation to you for the opportunity granted to me through my conversion from casual staff to permanent staff of the Institute on 7th October, 2019.

This gesture has had a significant impact on my professional growth and personal development, and I remain deeply grateful for the confidence and trust you have shown in me. I am committed to continually upholding the values of the Institute and contributing meaningfully to its success.

Thank you once again for your kind support and exemplary leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ayuba Sule', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ayuba Sule Administrative Officer



I got employed in 2012 into the services of National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) after serving at the defunct Policy Analysis and Research Project (PARP) which later metamorphosed into NILDS. My dream was to rise to the peak of my career and this might not be achieved without regular training and retraining.

In 2019, the tenure of the pioneer Director General elapsed and Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman was appointed as the new Director General. Interestingly, one of his priorities is staff training and development. During that period, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman has graciously granted approval to my nomination to attend an international training programme in Mombasa, Kenya.

I was delighted and saw my nomination as an opportunity to not only attend an international programme but also to board a plane for the first time in my life. I successfully attended the programme and the institute is already benefiting from the knowledge gained at the workshop.

May I please use this medium to express my appreciation to our amiable Director General for affording me with this rare and ample opportunity. I will forever be grateful to Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman I will also like to appreciate the Director General for the good work he is doing at NILDS. His ability, commitment and the political will he exhibited in transforming NILDS into a world class institute is quite commendable. I believe that his achievements will be sustained under his leadership



**Abdulwahab Dahiru**

Principal Administrative Officer/ Head  
DG's office Registry

## Transformative Leadership in Practice

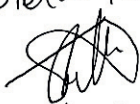
My name is Stella Ngozi Paul, a Principal Confidential Secretary in the Advanced Executive Education Center in NILDS. The first year when the Director General was appointed in NILDS, he signed many staff members into permanent status, and I was among the beneficiaries. In August 2022, the Director General sent a group of four staff from NILDS to Kenya for an intensive training on Information Management and Documents and Record Control, I was among the recipients. This was one of many series of International Training introduced by the Director General that many staff in NILDS have benefited from since 2019 to date, and I am very grateful to be one of them. The training workshop was a very intensive and interactive class that focused on the importance of managing information and records in the workplace. The main focus was on the Confidential Secretaries and the IT officer, since they are the gateway to the storehouse of an organization when it comes to record keeping.

Efficient record keeping and information management are very vital to an organization because unlinked and undocumented records can really cripple the day-to-day activity in the workplace. For an organization to be taken seriously in the global world, the gatekeepers of information must be trained to perform at a level of top-notch professionalism and accuracy.

The training was very informative, fun, and productive. I learnt how to strengthen my capacity in my duties and present a better way of recording files, taking minutes, interacting with other departments, managing my boss, and keeping my department affairs very confidential. Three years after the training, I am benefiting from the experience, and it has given me the zeal to move forward and grow in my career in NILDS.

Additionally, the Director General approved my application for a scholarship in the NILDS/UNIBEN Postgraduate Studies 2022/2023 and Master's in Legislative Studies 2024/2025. The encouragement gave me the inspiration to work hard and be focused, and in the end, it paid off. I graduated at the top of my Postgraduate class and am working on repeating the accolade in my Master's.

With all the encouragement from the Director General and his staff welfare policies, I am forever grateful to be part of this wonderful Institute and encouraged to give my best in my duties.

Stella Paul  
  
4/8/2025

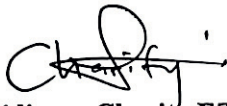
## International Training Workshop Opportunity and Experience

The foundation of creating a productive workforce is training. It has been discovered that training has a direct impact on an organization's performance by providing employees with the chance to hone their current talents and pick up new ones. This increases both individual and organizational performance. Good employee training increases workers' dedication, loyalty, and sense of fulfilment inside the Institute. As part of Prof. Sulaiman O. Abubakar's leadership posture in boosting staff capacity through training workshops, I was opportune to join my colleagues for a 5-day international training workshop, themed: "Boosting Workplace Productivity and Office Management Training". The training was held at Radisson Blu, Nairobi, Kenya, on 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> June, 2024.

The training lecturers were rich and the resource persons were carefully selected. Part of the lecturers delivered was on "Technology for Productivity: Productive Apps and Tools for Effective Work Delivery" also Delegation and Team Productivity. The key take away for me from the training is that AI tools (ChatGPT, Gemini, Trello etc.) can facilitate clearer and more efficient communication if properly used. The use of AI tools in the workplace can support efficient and productive work output. More work can be completed if time is managed efficiently, as poorly managed time can result in significant expenses. I also learnt that work is completed more efficiently when team members work together in synergy. Finally, I discovered that poorly handled stress can be detrimental to an organization's health as much as an individual's, with some employees venting their frustrations and transferring aggression via hatred and creating a toxic work atmosphere.

It was an amazing experience for me, a memorable one indeed. The organizers of the training took us to Nairobi National Park, which is situated in the city Centre. I enjoyed seeing wild animals like giraffes, crocodiles, buffalos, wild pigs, hippopotamuses, bears, zebras, and monkeys during the 7:00 am-1:00 pm safari trip.

The training on Boosting Workplace Productivity and Office Management was a laudable one as new knowledge and skills were acquired. My capacity as a research staff has been improved so far. I remain grateful to the Director General, Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman for the great opportunity to improve staff capacity and boost workplace productivity.



**Chidinma Charity EZENWAJOBI**  
Research Officer, DD&G

## Transformative Leadership in Practice



I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to the Director General, Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman, for the life-changing and invaluable opportunity of being converted to a permanent staff, particularly at a time when I was uncertain about the future of my employment. This singular gesture has greatly deepened my commitment, strengthened my dedication, and increased my sense of responsibility within the Institute.

I am also profoundly grateful for the opportunity to participate in the intensive training on *Workplace Productivity and Office Management*, held in Upper Hill, Nairobi, Kenya, in 2024. I had not imagined I would be given the chance to travel for an international training through the office, but you made it possible, granting me and others a rare and empowering privilege.

The training was robust and highly impactful. It equipped me with essential knowledge and practical tools relevant to my role, while also exposing me to emerging trends, challenges, and global best practices, particularly the strategic use of AI tools to enhance workplace efficiency.

This experience has reignited my passion to contribute more meaningfully to the work of the Institute and has given me a renewed drive to pursue greater productivity and excellence in all that I do.

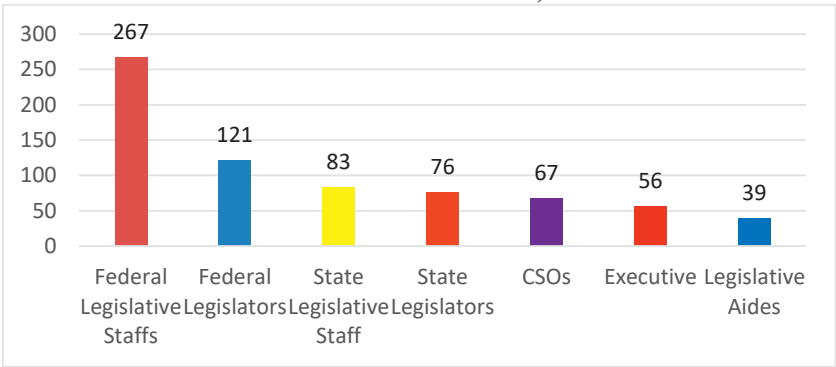
  
**Suzie Orefi Odeh, MCIA, SCPM, ACIPM**

#### **d. Expansion of Training and Capacity Development Initiatives**

NILDS's reputation as a premier legislative training institution has been reinforced through targeted capacity-building programmes since the assumption of duty by Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman as the Director General of NILDS. Training and capacity building is one important area where the impact of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman's leadership is most felt. Figure 1 highlights key training programmes, workshops/seminars, round tables, and conferences conducted by the Institute to build the capacity of federal and state legislators, legislative staff, legislative aides, and other democratic stakeholders. This includes participants from the executive branch of government and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from 2019 to the first quarter of 2025. The programmes were tailor-made and customized to the needs of the respective group of participants. These training programmes were inspired by the strong desire of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman to make a quick impact in strengthening democratic institutions and facilitating the growth and development of civic political culture and ethics among political actors that conduce to deepening democracy and promoting good governance. Figure 1 shows that a total of 121 capacity-building programmes were implemented for the federal legislators, 76 for the state legislators, 267 for federal legislative staff, 83 for state legislative staff, and 39 for legislative aides. Also, 67 training programmes were organized for CSOs while 56 were for the executive branch of government.

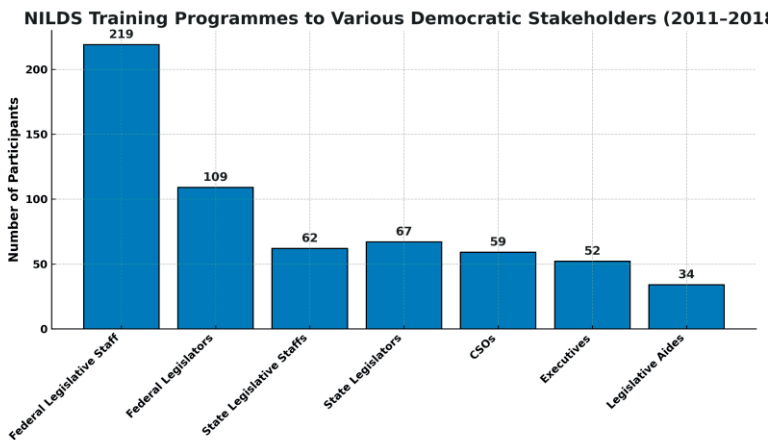


**Figure 6: Total Number of NILDS Training Programmes to Various Democratic Stakeholders, 2019-2025**



Compiled by:(NILDS Monitoring & Evaluation Division, 2025)

In the specific case of the National Assembly and the legislature in Nigeria, the growing trend of high turnover of legislators after each general election became an issue of great concern to Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman. In his position as Director General with privileged information on how much is invested into the training of legislators annually, the low retention of legislators was particularly troubling for him especially because of the knowledge and skill gaps it creates. To bridge this gap, Prof Sulaiman innovated and implemented special training programmes for legislators and organised strategic retreats for the leadership of the National Assembly. For example, the Retreat organized by the Institute in 2024 was well received and highly commended by the leadership of the National Assembly. This retreat declared open by Vice President Senator Kashim Shettima, GCON, facilitated experience-sharing between past and serving presiding officers, strengthening Nigeria’s legislative processes.

**Figure 7: NILDS Training Programmes (2011–2018)**

Source: Compiled by NILDS Monitoring & Evaluation Division

It is important to note that the giant leap in NILDS training programmes under the current administration can be linked directly to Prof. Sulaiman's expansion of the Institute's Departments and Training Programmes. Also, most of these programmes were carried out in collaboration with different development partners that came on board under the current administration.

#### **e. Strengthening Linkages with Sub-National and International Institutions**

One of Prof. Sulaiman's key strategies has been to strengthen NILDS's engagement with state legislatures and international partners. He conducted advocacy visits to several state governments, urging them to invest in legislative capacity development. As a result, partnerships with various State Assemblies were fortified, leading to the successful training of

state legislators and assembly staff across multiple states as shown in Figure 1.

At the international level, collaborations were renewed with ECOWAS Parliament, the Ugandan Parliament, the Gambian National Assembly, the Parliament of Ghana, the Parliament of Malawi and most recently the Parliament of Benin Republic. Additional engagements with institutions such as Johns Hopkins University, the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy further cemented NILDS's position as a leading legislative research and training hub. Other collaborations include NILDS partnership with the UN-Women, the Konrad Adenauer foundation, YIAGA Africa and CLEEN Foundations amongst many others. There is also collaboration with educational institutions both within and outside Nigeria as exemplified in details across various chapters, most notably on educational development.

### **f. Advancements in Research and Teaching**

Leveraging his academic background, Prof. Sulaiman placed significant emphasis on enhancing research and postgraduate training. The Institute undertook ground-breaking studies, such as the “Public Perception of the Legislature and Expectations of the 9th National Assembly,” which provided critical insights to lawmakers.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, NILDS established a technical committee to develop legislative frameworks for health emergencies. Additionally, a comprehensive book project was commissioned to analyse the pandemic's impact and inform future policy decisions. Also, a comprehensive



publication on Nigeria's Twenty-Five (25) years of democracy was published. A summary of the book reads: A Political Economy of Pandemics and Consequences of COVID-19 for Nigeria is a publication by the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) in 2020 as a strategic response to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Nigeria's socio-economic and political landscape. At a time when Nigerian policymakers were grappling with how to manage a multifaceted crisis, NILDS sought to provide an evidence-based framework to guide legislative and executive action. The publication aimed to fill a critical knowledge gap by analysing the pandemic's implications on governance, public health, the economy, and social welfare, thereby equipping lawmakers and other decision-makers with the necessary insights to design effective and sustainable interventions.

Lastly, the book reflects NILDS' mandate to support the National Assembly and other democratic institutions through research and policy advice. Given the pandemic's ripple effects on fiscal policy, health infrastructure, employment, and national security, there was a pressing need for a contextual, locally grounded analysis tailored to Nigeria's realities. The publication was thus intended to inform not only immediate legislative responses such as emergency spending and public health measures, but also long-term strategies for resilience, preparedness, and institutional reform. It underscores the role of informed policymaking in crisis management and the importance of integrating empirical evidence into national planning and legislative oversight.

The book, *25 Years of Democracy and Development in Nigeria* on the other hand is a reflection on progress and challenges of Nigeria in the last 25 years of democratic rule. It was published in 2024 and is one of the most recent publications of NILDS. It was developed as a critical resource to mark a significant milestone in Nigeria's democratic journey. As the country celebrated a quarter-century of uninterrupted democratic rule, the Institute saw the need to document and evaluate the gains, setbacks, and evolving dynamics of governance and development since 1999. The book was aimed at providing lawmakers, policymakers, and democratic institutions with a clear, evidence-based assessment of Nigeria's democratic experiences, institutional reforms, policy shifts, electoral processes, and socio-economic outcomes, to support more strategic decision-making going forward.

In line with NILDS' mandate to strengthen the capacity of the legislature and enhance democratic governance, the publication also serves as a policy guide for identifying structural weaknesses and proposing actionable solutions. It provides a sober analysis of persistent challenges such as corruption, insecurity, electoral violence, and institutional inefficiencies, while also showcasing areas of progress, including constitutional reforms, improved legislative-executive relations, and enhanced civic engagement. By offering a balanced reflection on the past, and a roadmap for the future, the book empowers legislators and decision-makers with the knowledge needed to deepen democratic consolidation and accelerate national development.

In the area of education, Prof. Sulaiman oversaw the expansion of NILDS's postgraduate programmes in partnership with the University of Benin. The institute also initiated and commenced a new academic programme, with emphasis on the award of PhD in collaboration with Federal University Lokoja. The Institute witnessed a marked increase in student enrolment, with over 200 candidates participating in specialised programmes, including Legislative Drafting, Parliamentary Administration, and Elections and Party Politics.

**g. Elevating NILDS Library to a World Class Standard**

Prior to the appointment of Prof. Sulaiman as the DG of NILDS, the Institute Library was under the Department of Research and Training (DRT). However, Prof. Sulaiman with the approval of the Council, led the reorganisation of the library, successfully transforming it from a unit under the Department of Research and Training into a full-fledged, standalone department. This strategic decision has positioned the library to better align with its core mandate and is consistent with international best practices.

Prof. Sulaiman also oversaw the relocation of NILDS Library to the Institute's permanent site, providing expanded space for library collections and staff. This move enhanced accessibility for researchers, students, staff, and general public. In terms of infrastructure, Prof. Sulaiman also approved the establishment of a branch library at the Legislative Centre for Security Analysis, promoting specialised research support and timely access to security-related legislative resources.

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Furthermore, the DG also spearheaded a strategic recruitment drive, doubling the library workforce from six to twelve staff members. He also encouraged professional advancement, resulting in two staff members obtaining Master's degrees and another two attaining Doctoral qualifications, while encouraging staff to get to the Professorial level and two staff have risen to the rank of Professors in the Library. In addition, he has demonstrated sustained commitment to capacity building by supporting staff participation in both national and international professional development programmes.

This growth is not limited to staff strength alone, as the library's collections have also expanded significantly from what it was in 2019 before his assumption in office. For the records, the number of books increased from 10,407 to 13,644; journals from 6,090 to 7,353; and archival resources from 616 to 1,679 as at September 2025. These substantial increases reflect Prof. Sulaiman's commitment to strengthening the library's knowledge base and enhancing its capacity to support research and scholarship. In addition, the e-library is furnished with 19 desktop computers, providing users with access to unlimited digital resources.

Prof. Sulaiman also oversaw the procurement and implementation of critical digital library tools and software that position NILDS library as a world-class, modern, technology-driven information hub. These include:

- Institutional repository - DSpace
- A fully functional Online Public Access Catalog (OPAC)
- A fully operational library website to deliver seamless access to library resources

- Law Pavilion
- Plagiarism Checker – Turnitin

It is worthy of note that the Institute library is equipped with reading rooms where physical and online access is provided for legislators, parliamentary staff, and legislative aides. The archival collections cover areas of Treatise, legislative council debate, parliamentary debates, constitutional amendment reports, Act and Decrees, etc.

It is important to also note that the Institute has published several books, policy analysis reports, manuals and guide for the legislature on areas of legislative oversight, legislative drafting, legislative practice and procedure. Other publications include annual reviews of Federal government revenue and expenditure plans and budget analysis, these materials are accessible on the Institute repository the Dpspace, for use by not only researchers, but the general public. The library also offers a wide range of research materials, analysis and information services to legislators, legislative staff, and other researchers in general. The NILDS' library is uniquely devoted to legislative studies. However, the library strives to maintain a basic reference collection on many subjects that include: Economics, Law, Political Science, Public Administration, Current Affairs, and History. The library has four sections: Archives, e- Library, General Circulation, and References.

The achievements recorded under the leadership of Prof. Sulaiman reflect a transformative era in the history of NILDS Library. From structural reorganisation and infrastructural expansion to the strengthening of human resources, collection development, and digital innovation, the library has been

repositioned as a centre of excellence in legislative research. These initiatives not only align the Institute with international best practices but also ensure that the library is strategically equipped to support the legislative process and promote research. With a solid foundation already laid, the NILDS Library is well poised to embrace future innovations and remain at the forefront of legislative and academic support in Nigeria and beyond.

### **h. Infrastructure Development, Completion and Movement to the Permanent Site Project**

A major priority of Prof. Sulaiman's tenure has been the completion of the Institute's permanent site in Piwoyi District, Abuja. Recognizing the significance of this project, he engaged with the leadership of the National Assembly to secure the necessary support for its timely completion. The ultra-modern facility, spanning over 81,200 square meters, serves as a centre of excellence for legislative and democratic studies upon completion.

Within weeks of his reappointment in 2023, Professor Sulaiman successfully oversaw the long-awaited completion of the permanent site. The multi-billion-naira complex, which had been in limbo for a decade, was finally commissioned by former President Muhammadu Buhari on May 25, 2023. This achievement signified a major infrastructural milestone, reinforcing NILDS' position as a premier institution for legislative research and democratic studies. This feat didn't come easy, as many challenges were encountered along the way. A fuller presentation on the move to the permanent site is captured in chapter seven of this book.

### **i. Establishment of the Legislative Centre for Security Analysis**

Another key milestone during this period was the establishment of the Legislative Centre for Security Analysis. It was commissioned on 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 by the President of the 9th Senate, Senator Ahmad Ibrahim Lawan, GCON, highlighting NILDS' role in legislative interventions on security matters. The Centre is one of the initiatives of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman to close the knowledge and skill gap between the National Assembly and the executive branch of government. It is a specialized organ of NILDS designed to enhance national security through evidence-based research, policy recommendations, and collaborative initiatives with the Defence, Law-Enforcement, Security and Intelligence Agencies (DeLESIA), Security Committees of the National Assembly, and related national agencies. The mandate of the Centre also includes organising conferences and dialogue sessions, as well as training programmes that build the capacity of relevant committees of the National Assembly to enhance their oversight of the security sector while providing critical inputs for security policy.

Since its inauguration in May 2023, the Centre has implemented several notable projects. Among these are: A Roundtable Dialogue on “Enhancing the Oversight Role and Capacity of National Assembly Security Committees in Strengthening Civil-Military Relations through Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Nigeria” and a Public Dialogue on National Security themed “Building a Resilient National Security Framework through Legislative Intervention.” The two Dialogue sessions were well attended by relevant stakeholders. The Centre has also contributed to

debates on national security matters and produced several Briefs on various issues of national security concerns, policy analysis and research papers. The Centre currently runs the Legislative Journal of Security Analysis as one of its flagship projects.

**j. Establishment of NILDS Academic Advisory Board**

One of the first key innovations Professor Sulaiman implemented as DG of NILDS was the establishment of NILDS' Academic Advisory Board to serve as an advisor in respect of academic matters in the Institute. The board consists of twelve (12) members chaired by the late Prof. Nuhu Yaqub, former Vice-Chancellor of the University of Abuja and Sokoto State University. He was succeeded by Prof Attahiru Jega, also a former Vice-Chancellor of Bayero University Kano and former Chairman of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). All the members of the Board are senior academics representing different geo-political zones of the country who had distinguished themselves in their various fields of specialization, some of whom are former Vice-Chancellors and Deputy Vice -Chancellors of Universities.

The Board, despite being advisory in nature, have all its recommendations given due considerations by the management committee of the Institute. The Board is responsible for the quality control of all the academic programmes undertaken by the Institute. The academic board also has one representative from all academic institutions in collaboration with NILDS, namely Universities of Benin and Abuja and Federal University Lokoja.



### **k. Launch of NILDS Democracy Radio (104.9FM)**

On the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2023 NILDS Democracy Radio was also officially commissioned by the then President of the Senate Ahmed Lawan (GCON). Conceived as one of Professor Sulaiman's visionary projects since assuming office in 2019, the radio station was launched to amplify legislative discourse and deepen democratic awareness among Nigerians. The idea behind Democracy Radio was borne out of Prof. Sulaiman's concern and observation that since the return to democracy in 1999, the legislature has been the closest to the people among the three arms of government. Yet, the legislature has been the most misunderstood and misrepresented. In Nigeria's presidential system modelled after the United States of America, the three arms of government have different mandates and responsibilities in the spirit of separation of powers and checks and balances. However, following the return to democracy, and the euphoria that greeted this development, great expectations were placed on the legislature as a symbol of popular representation and as the link between the people and the government. The failure of governance to provide the much-expected "dividends of democracy" increased the accountability pressures on the legislature in Nigeria. Thus, members of the legislature were expected to fill the gaps in governance by embarking on projects such as the construction of roads, bridges, hospitals, installation of pipe-borne water, and the provision of social amenities and services, rather than focusing on making legislation, oversight, and representation.

While the judiciary is politically neutral, the executive branch of government controls media and other means of strategic and corporate communication, engagement, and mobilization of

citizens. The National Assembly as an institution of government had no means of corporate communication with the citizens, save for constituency relations by individual members. Thus, the National Assembly relies on the traditional mainstream media which are mostly ignorant of the constitutional roles of the legislature to pass information to the general public on their activities. Many of the traditional mainstream media like most of the general public are ignorant of the expected constitutional role of the legislature. To fill this gap and to provide a medium for the legislature and experts to communicate with the general public from an informed position, Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman initiated the idea of Democracy Radio and executed the same with the support of the NILDS Governing Council under the leadership of Senator Ahmad Lawan as Chairman and Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, as Alternate Chairman, respectively.

Democracy Radio since its inauguration in 2023 has provided an important platform for legislative experts and practitioners to communicate to the public about the activities of the legislature at both the national and sub-national levels. However, this has not absolved the legislature in filling the governance gap left by the executive branch of government, but has significantly increased public awareness of the constitutional role of the legislature. Correspondingly, many citizens have come to appreciate, for instance, that the implementation of projects such as road construction and bridge building, as well as the provision of social services, is not the constitutional responsibility of the legislature but rather of the executive.

Under the leadership of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, Democracy Radio has significantly expanded its content offerings, now airing over two dozen informative and engaging programmes each week. These programmes cover a wide array of themes, ranging from governance and civic education to youth empowerment and grassroots participation. With consistent scheduling and high-quality content, Democracy Radio has established itself as a trusted voice in shaping public discourse and promoting democratic values throughout the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. A major highlight of the station's work has been its commitment to engaging the community and educating citizens about the workings of the Nigerian legislature. Signature programmes such as *Inside the National Assembly*, *Legislature 101*, *Grassroots Democracy*, and *Youth in Politics* have created space for accessible and insightful discussions on legislative processes, citizen rights, and public policy. These programmes have demystified parliamentary affairs for the average Nigerian, encouraging active civic participation and holding public institutions accountable through the power of information.

In addition to its grassroots engagement, Democracy Radio has played a crucial role in raising awareness about the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). Through its coverage, interviews, and special reports, the station has spotlighted the Institute's pivotal role in strengthening legislative capacity, promoting research, and deepening democratic culture in Nigeria. This consistent attention has not only elevated NILDS' visibility but has also highlighted the importance of evidence-based policymaking and institutional reforms. It is also helping to mould future minds with events like the NILDS Democracy Radio's

Citizens Journalism Workshop for Nigerian students, which, in its maiden edition, hosted over seven schools in the FCT, coaching and equipping them with the tools to be effective citizen journalists. Undoubtedly, the Radio has solidified its position as a leading platform for democratic education and civic engagement in the FCT and its environs.

### **I. International Collaborations and Recognition**

Since Prof. Abubakar came into office in 2019, NILDS has continued to gain national visibility and international prominence. The institute hosted a high-profile delegation led by the Speaker of the ECOWAS Parliament, Rt. Hon. Sidie Mohammed Tunis, and the Speaker of the East Africa Legislative Assembly, Rt. Hon. Joseph Ntakirutimana. This visit laid the foundation for collaborative legislative engagements across Africa. In Nigeria, the Institute also witnessed a surge in the number of Institutions seeking collaborations for instance in 2019, the Institute collaborated with the Nigerian Natural Resource Charter (NNRC) an indigenous Non-governmental organisation, to carry out a number of activities, which include but not limited to capacity building programme for Clerks of Committees on Solid Minerals and Environment on the then Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), and also the development of a National Assembly Oversight Toolkit for Carbon Emission Reduction in Nigeria. NILDS was also integrated into the Presidential Committee for Fiscal and Tax Reforms, inaugurated by President Bola Ahmed Tinubu, GCFR in July 2023. This appointment not only underscored the critical role of the Institute in shaping economic and legislative policies but also its overall contributions to deepening democracy and strengthening democratic institutions in Nigeria.

In 2023, Professor Sulaiman's leadership also received global recognition. The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), a UK public body, honoured NILDS with the Impact and Innovation Award for its contributions to advancing democracy in Nigeria. Additionally, Professor Sulaiman was awarded the Fellowship of the Institute of Labour during the 40th-anniversary celebrations of the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS) in June 2023, in recognition of his efforts in staff welfare and institutional development. He also received the enviable award of public servant of the year in 2024 by the Presidency and also Fellowship of the Institute of Chartered Secretaries of Nigeria (ICSAN) amongst many others. Under Prof. Sulaiman's administration more than 20 Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) have been signed with different institutions of repute, including the University of Johannesburg and the Ernest Shonekan Centre.

### **m. Advocacy for Gender Equality and Climate Legislation**

Continuing its commitment to inclusive governance, in August 2023 NILDS convened the International Conference on Women in Governance. The conference brought women from different walks of life such as the academia, political parties, CSOs, political and public office holders and others. Guests included the President of the Senate, Distinguished Senator Godswill Obot Akpabio, GCON, and other key figures in Nigerian and international politics. The conference reinforced NILDS' advocacy for gender equality in politics and governance. The proceedings of the conference and the recommendations that emanated therefrom were published into a book titled *Women Representation in Governance in*

*Nigeria: Issues Challenges and Way Forward,* ' edited by Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman and published by the University of Johannesburg Press August 2025.

The conference served as a precursor to the establishment of the Gender and Inclusivity Unit. The Unit is basically tasked with the responsibility of promoting gender equality and inclusivity in the workplace. It is also to ensure the development of policies on inclusiveness, coordinating, and interfacing with relevant domestic and international partners on research, programmes, and advocacy, targeted at empowering, promoting, and projecting women, youth, and persons living with disabilities (PWDs) in governance, in the Institute and Nigeria at large.

Since inception, the Unit has done quite a lot in the area of advocacy and capacity building programmes for women. A summary of some of its activities since its establishment in 2023, include:

- i. Review of National Assembly Gender Strategy 2014 and development of a Gender Strategy for NILDS and other Institutions like the Correction Centre.
- ii. Advocacy for establishment of Women's Caucus in the National Assembly.
- iii. Drumming support for Female Parliamentarian at the National level and some State Legislatures, precisely, Ekiti, Lagos, Ebonyi, Cross River and Kogi States, through the NILDS -UN Women Step Down Project between September to December, 2024.

- iv. Advocacy visits to Committees on Defence, Women Affairs, Army, Air Force, Navy, Police, and Interior, in the Senate and House of Representatives in the NASS on issues around Women in Peace and Security.
- v. Exchange of experience visit to the Parliament of Kenya by selected female Parliamentarians in Nigeria and some male Parliamentarians referred to as ‘He for She’
- vi. Training Workshop for representatives of PWD’s groups on enhancing their participation in governance.
- vii. Training workshop for relevant Committees of Women on Peace and Security at the National Assembly;
- viii. Strategic Engagements with the National Assembly to endorse and support the implementation of Nigeria's 3rd National Action Plan (NAP), including passing Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security;
- ix. Facilitated the induction of some key members of the Senate and House of Reps as HeForShe and Gender Champions;
- x. Conducted two-day retreat for Members and key Staff of the Borno, Yobe, and Adamawa State Houses of Assembly;
- xi. Reviewing of the gender strategies for police, Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corp (NSCDC), and Defence to ensure alignment with the proposed gender Bills for Security Sector Agencies by consultants;

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- xii. Facilitated the drafting of briefs of arguments and motions on the need for National Assembly to endorse and support the implementation of Nigeria's 3<sup>rd</sup> National Action Plan (NAP) by the consultants;
- xiii. Breakfast Meeting with National Assembly Leadership, Chairmen, and Clerks of Security Committees, on the presentation of amended security sector institution laws for gender inclusion.
- xiv. Updated and revised the legislative tool guide to capture and reflect the 3<sup>rd</sup> National Action Plan (NAP).
- xv. Advocacy visits and follow up to some selected States, precisely, Ebonyi, Ekiti, Cross River, Borno, Plateau, Kaduna, and Adamawa States, to canvass for the establishment of a Commission or a legislation that will see to the protection of women's rights and the domestication of the relevant provisions of Convention on the Domestication of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) between 2023 and 2024. This advocacy yielded positive results in Ekiti, Kaduna, Plateau, Adamawa and Ebonyi States, with the States laws either enacted or at the last stages of being enacted.
- xvi. Collaborations with organisations and CSOs to champion programmes on women inclusion in governance, and eradication of other discriminatory practices against women. One of such was the Launch of the National Scorecard for the Implementation of the Maputo Protocol organised by the Forum for African



Women Educationalists (FAWE) and NILDS in November, 2025.

### Some engagements with NILDS/UN Women



*Members of the National Assembly, with the DG NILDS and other participants at the training workshop in Transcorp Hilton, Abuja*



*Induction of the Speaker, Adamawa State House of Assembly as UN Women HeForShe and Gender Champions at a 2-Day retreat, December, 2024*

## Transformative Leadership in Practice



*Induction of Members, Adamawa State House of Assembly as UN Women HeForShe and Gender Champions at A 2 Day retreat, December, 2025*



*Members of the Borno State House of Assembly at the 2-day retreat on their roles in supporting the implementation of State Action Plans (SAPs) on WPS in their respective states, Sept. 2024*



*From L-R: Hon. Kafilat, Sen. Idiat Adebule, Her Excellency; Dr. (Mrs.) Claudiana Ibijoke Sanwolu, Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman (D.G., NILDS), Hon. Zainab Gimba and Sen. Sharafadeen Alli Abiodun, at the workshop on Advancing Gender Responsive Legislation through the Establishment of Women Caucus in the National Assembly in May 2024, Lagos Nigeria*

*Advancing Gender Responsive Legislation through the Establishment of Women Caucus in the National Assembly in May 2024, Lagos Nigeria.*

With respect to climate change, Professor Sulaiman has also been up and doing, championing climate change legislations through the Institute's partnership with the African Group of Negotiators Experts Support (AGNES). At the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi in September 2023, he advocated for West African nations to enact climate-related laws for sustainable regional development. Through Prof. Sulaiman's quest for partnership on key areas of human endeavour, NILDS and AGNES championed a number of programmes on climate change which include the following:

- i. Lagos Legislative Capacity Building Meeting held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of March 2022 – The meeting was targeted at National Assembly Committees on Climate Change, to strengthen oversight and identify aspects of the Climate Change Act requiring amendment.
- ii. Nairobi Climate Summit held from the 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> September, 2023 – The Summit was targeted at driving Green Growth and Climate Finance Solutions for Africa. Prof. Sulaiman presented a paper at the Summit.
- iii. Rwanda Meeting on Climate Tracking Tool, held from the 30<sup>th</sup> April- 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2024- The Training Workshop was for Model Climate Framework with East Africa and Central African Economic Community.
- iv. Monrovia Model Climate law meeting held from July 16<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> 2024- The meeting was targeted at operationalising the Climate Monitoring TOOL (CMAT) and deepening the need for model climate change legislation in West Africa. Participants were

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

drawn from across the West African Parliaments especially Chairmen of Climate Change Committees. Prof Sulaiman also made a presentation at the meeting.

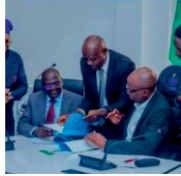
- v. NILDS climate model law Validation Workshop, Abuja, held from 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> January 2025, at the NILDS Complex, Abuja- The workshop was aimed at validating the draft model climate change legislative framework for Africa.



*Below are selected pictures from some engagement with AGNES*



AGNES visits DG NILDS, March 2023



AGNES & NILDS sign MoU, October, 2024



AGNES & NILDS sign MoU, October, 2024



AGNES Regional Workshop in Monrovia, 2024



AGNES & NILDS Model Climate Framework Validation Workshop, January, 2025



AGNES Workshop on CMAT in Rwanda, 2024



AGNES Workshop on CMAT in Rwanda, 2024



DG NILDS as panelist in Monrovia, 2024

## **n. Global Legislative Engagements**

In May 2023, Professor Sulaiman embarked on a knowledge-sharing mission on the international stage; leading a delegation to the Austrian Parliament in Vienna, he engaged in parliamentary discussions that showcased NILDS' contributions to legislative development worldwide. The President of the Austrian National Assembly, Norbert Hofer, acknowledged his outstanding contributions, further solidifying the Institute's international reputation.

His engagements extended to Berlin and Brussels, where he and several Speakers of Nigeria's State Houses of Assembly participated in experience-sharing programmes facilitated by

the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung. These interactions with European Union leaders aimed at improving legislative processes in Nigeria's subnational parliaments.

Professor Sulaiman also addressed an extraordinary session of the ECOWAS Parliament in Winneba, Ghana, where he tackled the pressing issue of unconstitutional regime changes and presidential term limits in West Africa. He also led a high-powered delegation in Nov 2023 to the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance led by the former Senate President, distinguished Senator Ahmed Lawan, alongside chairmen of security related committees of both the Senate and House of Representatives, to enhance their knowledge of security sector governance.

### **o. Establishment of the Legislative Drafting Internship Programme**

At the commencement of his second term in office, Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman initiated the legislative drafting internship programme of the Institute. This is in the quest to support and build professionalism in the area of legislative drafting in Nigeria. It was also to bridge the gap in the paucity of legislative drafters in Nigeria both at the National and sub national levels.

The initiative was also in line with a critical component of NILDS' mandate of strengthening legislative capacity, promoting democratic governance, and enhancing the technical competence of individuals in legislative processes. The programme was specifically targeted at equipping participants with specialized skills in drafting clear, precise, and effective legislation, enhancing understanding of legislative processes, procedures, and the constitutional

framework of law-making, and fostering a new generation of legislative experts who can contribute meaningfully to Nigeria's governance and policy development.

Since its inception in 2022, a number of remarkable successes have been recorded, these include but not limited to training of over 200 young professionals in legislative drafting, many of whom now serve in various legislative and government institutions in Nigeria. Additionally, the Institute gives the best-performing interns automatic employment. As at June 2025, the 5<sup>th</sup> Batch of the internship programme commenced.

**p. Establishment of the Legislative Mentorship Initiative**

The Speaker of the 9<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives and the current Chief of Staff to the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, H.E. Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, CFR established the Legislative Mentorship Initiatives (LMI) in 2022. It was an initiative to mentor young Nigerians on legislative practice and procedures. The Initiative aimed at transforming participants into credible and capable public sector leaders, by reshaping their public service ideology, challenging them to envision and commit to building a stronger public sector, as well as preparing and positioning them to take on the reins of leadership. Another objective of the initiative was to foster a vibrant and well-equipped legislative cadre capable of navigating the complexities of governance and delivering effective representation to the Nigerian people.

Due to strategic positioning of NILDS, the Visioner sought partnership with NILDS in this regard, and subsequently upon his exit as Speaker of the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the former Speaker and former Alternate Chairman of the Institute handed over the Administration/Secretariat of the initiative to the Institute

for the purpose of continuity. Thus, the 2023 and 2024 editions of the LMI were held at NILDS, with supports from the Founder.

Since its inception three years ago, the LMI has successfully guided a cohort of promising young Nigerians through an intensive mentorship program, providing them with the tools, knowledge, and networks necessary to excel in the legislative arena. Mentees are often drawn from all over the country through a competitive and transparent method. The programme has been growing in leaps and bounds under the watch and guidance of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman.

### **q. Introduction of the Distinguished Parliamentarians lecture Series**

In December 2021, Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman introduced the ‘Distinguished Parliamentarians Lecture Series’, this initiative was aimed at knowledge and cognate experience sharing by selected former and current parliamentarians drawn across the globe. The lectures are tailored to explore and address pertinent questions and thematic issues such as, strategics and tactics of ensuring good working relations between the executive and the legislative branches of government. It is also a platform for the parliamentarians to share their story, and clear the air on some of the misconceptions about the legislature. Two editions were held under Prof. Sulaiman’s stewardship at NILDS. The first lecture which held on 13<sup>th</sup> of December 2021 was delivered by the then President of the Senate, Distinguished Senator Ahmad Lawan, PhD, GCON, at the International Conference Center Abuja on the topic ‘*The Legislature, Legislative Mandate and the People- The Reality and the Public Perception.*’



The second lecture held on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 2022 at the International Conference Centre, Abuja, and was presented by the then Speaker House of Representatives Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila CFR on the topic *'Delivering on our Contract with Nigeria: Implementing the Legislative Agenda of the 9<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives-Progress, Challenges and the Way Forward.'* The lecture was chaired by the then Executive Governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasir El-Rufai.

#### **r. Establishment of the NILDS Advanced Executive Programme**

In May 2025, Professor Sulaiman Abubakar inaugurated the Centre of Advanced Executive Education Programme (CAEEP) as an Academic and Research Department charged with the development and delivery of advanced executive education programmes for top tier administrators, chief executives and permanent secretaries of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies of Government, and the Chief Executives, Board Members, Governing Councils, and Governing Boards, of public and private institutions, Directors of public and private intuitions, Chief Executives of public and private corporations, as well as leadership of Political Parties, Civil Society Organisations, and Top Tier Non-Governmental Organisations in Nigeria and from other countries.

The CAEEP was also charged with recruiting resource persons, development of modules as the need arises, including bespoke and tailor-made programmes and where necessary collaborating with national and international Ivy League institutions and capacity building outfits in the delivery of advanced executive education. They are also to facilitate action-oriented research, publication and documentation of its

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

activities and studies that promote effective, goal, and development-oriented leadership, particularly for the consumption of participants in its programmes, and prospective leaders in all sectors of the national and international economy.

During the inauguration, the DG emphasized the point that the institute has the resources for international programmes and leadership development that can rival any other around the world, hence the need to build institutions within the country to discourage capital flight. The Pioneer Director of the Department was Prof. Attahiru Jega, who has been succeeded by Dr. Bethel Ihugba, a Deputy Director in the Institute with background in law.

### **s. NILDS Engagement with the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures (COSPAL).**

It can be safely argued that the vision of Prof. Sulaiman for the Institute is limitless. Upon the successful completion and movement to the permanent site, the institute became the first Secretariat of the Conference of Speakers and Presidents of African Legislatures (CoSPAL). CoSPAL was conceived in 2020 as a platform for collaboration, deliberation, and presenting a united African front, in advocating for crucial matters that affect the continent. As custodians of democracy and the voices of the people, the urgent need for more cohesive pan-African parliamentary voice led by leaders of African Parliaments to support the global and regional campaigns for Africa's growth and sustainable development was pressing. CoSPAL therefore seeks to work in a cohesive, strategic, and effective manner, to advance the African development agenda, within and outside the continent, in conjunction with the

executive arms of government, the international and regional institutions, civil society, foreign development partners, and other key stakeholders.

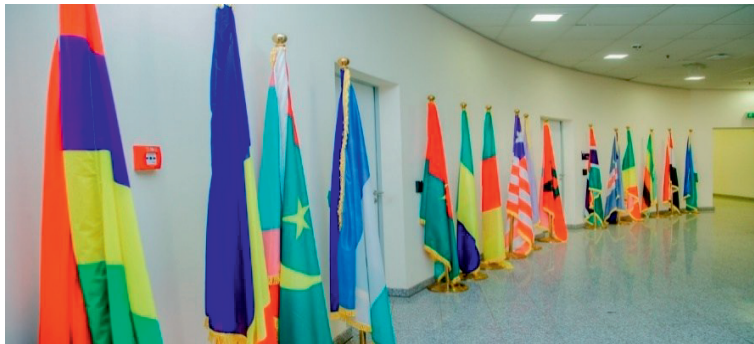
CoSPAL Headquarters and Secretariat are statutorily in Abuja and NILDS respectively. Article 3(1) of the CoSPAL Constitution states that: “unless otherwise determined by the General Assembly, the Headquarters of CoSPAL shall be in Abuja, Nigeria, and its Secretariat shall be hosted at the National Institute of Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), Plot 307, Cadastral Zone, Umar Musa Yar’adua Express Way, Airport Road, Abuja”.

Other NILDS Activities to CoSPAL includes:

- Served as Head of Secretariat of CoSPAL of the Technical Working Group (TWG);
- Drafted the Constitution of CoSPAL;
- Drafted the Host Country Agreement between CoSPAL and Nigeria;
- Participated actively as member of the Steering Committee to advocate membership of CoSPAL to other African countries;
- Served as member, Organising Committee and head of secretariat for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Physical Annual General Assembly in Accra, Ghana.
- Provides Technical Assistant and support to the Secretary General of CoSPAL and in the setting up of the secretariat; and
- Provided office spaces within NILDS permanent site complex for CoSPAL Secretariat take-off.

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### Picture gallery of Cospal Secretariat



#### t. Other Notable Programmes and Projects

The programmes and projects executed under the stewardship of Prof. Sulaiman at NILDS are too numerous to mention. Notwithstanding, there are quite a number of these projects

and programmes that are worth mentioning, one of which is the Elite Consensus Project inaugurated in February 2024. The target of the project centred on driving Elite consensus on thematic national issues such as inclusion (especially increasing participation of women, youth, persons living with disabilities through quota system), electoral reforms, governance driven by development agenda, federalism, etc. The project stems from the conviction that unless there is a broad agreement by power elites to reify aspects of national life above partisanship and sectional bigotry, the Nation may continue to grow apart. To further drive the project, a Methodology Workshop of seasoned experts, senior academics and stakeholders on national development was organised on March 7, 2024 with support from MacArthur Foundation, to draft a methodology and propose a roadmap for elite consensus building in Nigeria. After the Methodology Workshop, a national survey was carried with the survey report subjected to a Survey Report Validation Workshop on August 7<sup>th</sup>, 2025. These two Workshops were quite engaging with far reaching outcomes. At the time of writing this book, a national summit is being organised for a public presentation of the National Survey Report, and Commissioned Papers on key thematic areas as identified, to the general public, which is billed to take place in the first quarter of 2026.

Other programmes of note include but not limited to policy dialogues on election security, election and technology, economic development and sustainability, judicial independence and integrity, enhancing the Nigerian security architecture, effective oversight for committees of the ational Assembly, taxation, the state policing debate and many others.

## **Conclusion**

In the last Six years of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman stewardship in NILDS, he has reaffirmed his reputation as a goal-oriented and visionary leader. His tenure has attracted the attention of development partners, resulting in numerous calls for partnerships and collaborations.

Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman's tenure as Director-General of NILDS has been marked by remarkable institutional innovations and a strategic expansion of the Institute's mandate. Through comprehensive reforms, enhanced legislative support, staff development, and strengthened partnerships, the Institute has solidified its position as a premier institution for legislative and democratic studies in Nigeria and beyond. As it moves forward, the foundation laid by him will undoubtedly continue to shape its trajectory in strengthening democratic governance across Africa.



# 4

## **SCALING NEW HEIGHTS: PARTNERSHIPS, COLLABORATIONS, AND NETWORKING**

**Emily Ikhide, Chris Ngara and Francis Ojie**

### **Introduction**

**C**ollaborative partnerships among agencies are crucial in building and fostering innovations, enhancing problem-solving, improving decision-making, and strengthening relationships that ultimately lead to better outcomes, increased productivity and sustainable democracy and governance (Nambisan, 2008). In recent times, collaborative partnerships among government agencies, Civil Societies Organisations (CSOs) and International Organizations (NGOs) have been viewed as a proactive policy instrument used to deploy resources on a larger scale, extending from one local context to another (Ansell and Gash, 2018). It is a tool used by transformative leaders to inspire and motivate followers to perform beyond expectations, fostering innovation and change within an organization.



In the period under review, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), under the leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as Director General (DG), realizing this key important tool of partnership, had several engagements with different partners, both governmental and non-governmental, national and international. The aim of these engagements was to allow access to the Institute, to engage through international organizations, and benefit from the several resources available within the international community. A review of some of these collaborative partnerships shows that the Institute, the National Assembly, and Nigeria at large, have benefited immensely from such collaborations and partnerships, as will be illustrated shortly, with significant effect in promoting inclusive democracy, particularly for marginalized groups such as women, youth, and persons with disabilities (PWDs), and improved governance, broadly defined.

In this chapter, we document some of the collaborative partnerships with key organisations like the United Nations Women (UN Women), Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), MacArthur Foundation, and the programmes implemented so far, that cut across the different sectors of the economy. These collaborations include financial and technical partnership on capacity building, advocacy, and policy development, in promoting and advancing inclusive democracy in Nigeria.

## **Overview of Selected International Donor Partnerships and Collaborations**

This section highlights key collaborative engagements/programmes of NILDS and selected local and international organizations in the period of 2019 to 2025. These collaborations are grouped into domestic and international partnerships, with focus on the various activities implemented and the contributions and impact of such programmes in Nigeria's democratic and development processes.

### **NILDS Collaborations with United Nations Women (UN Women)**

The Institute's initial collaboration with UN Women took off in October 2020. This partnership occurred in the aftermath of the 2015 general elections, where Nigeria had only 19 women out of 360 in its House of Representatives (5.6%) and 7 out of 109 in the Senate (6.4%). This put the country in 180<sup>th</sup> position in the world as a country with less commitment to women representation in parliament. Furthermore, following the 2019 general elections, it was also discovered that women made up 7.3% of the Nigerian Senate and 3.1% of the House of Representatives. This situation was even more pronounced at the states level, with no women as state governors, and fewer women appointed as Commissioners. At the Ministerial level, the number of women serving as ministers and appointed executives was also very low, with 11 of the 636 executives' appointments between 1999 and 2015 being women (17.5%) and 15% of ministers in the same period.

The World Economic Forum (2020) *Global Gender Gap* report measures ‘political empowerment’ in terms of the ratios of women to men in ministerial and parliamentary positions, as well as number of years as heads of state over the years. Out of a total of 153 countries covered in the report, Nigeria was ranked as having the 128th largest gender gap in ‘political empowerment’. Women performance during the general elections pointed to the fact that despite global clamour for inclusion and the concerted efforts by government, NGOs, donor agencies, and international partners, towards ensuring increased participation and representation of women in politics and governance, achieving inclusive governance would require a more careful and tactical policy design in Nigeria. This status became increasingly worrisome and necessitated the collaboration between NILDS and UN Women.

Against this backdrop, the NILDS in collaboration with the UN Women Nigeria Country Office signed an agreement to develop NILDS/UN Women Gender and Legislative Training Manual 2020 among other programs. Ever since, NILDS in collaboration with UN Women has implemented various programmes focused on advancing women’s political participation through advancing gender equality, promoting women's political empowerment, economic empowerment, strengthening women, peace and security, and combating gender-based violence, among others. This collaboration was to strengthen NILDS in achieving its mandate while enhancing women's representation in decision-making positions in all sectors, provide economic opportunities, and ensure women's safety and well-being in Nigeria.

## **Enhancing Gender Responsive Security Operations and Community Dialogue Project II**

Nigeria's security sector institutions (SSIs) are major actors not only in the prevention and response to security issues in Nigeria, but also in strategic conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives. While these SSIs have striven to achieve their mandates over the years, huge gender gaps are visible in their policies and operational procedures at all levels, as well as their enabling legislations. Yet, ensuring women's meaningful representation in the security sector is critical to building an inclusive, responsive, and accountable security sector that reflects the diversity of the community it serves, and to better respond to their needs. This has been increasingly identified as a key strategy for advancing gender responsive security sector. It is also supported by global normative frameworks, including the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) and UNSCR 1820 (2008), among other international instruments. As a result of this, there is need to review the SSIs legislation to become more gender-responsive.

NILDS, with the support of UN women implemented the Enhancing Gender Responsive Security Operations and Community Dialogue project II. This project aimed to work with the Nigerian National assembly and identified Security Sector Institutions on the need to make their laws and acts more gender-responsive. The project also sought to strengthen gender-responsive security sector policy reforms and implementation of gender policies adopted by target security institutions.

To achieve this activity, NILDS collaborated with the NDC to carry out several advocacy visits to relevant security Committees in the NASS, as well as to top leadership of the Nigerian Air force, Navy, Army, and NSCDC, to sensitize them on the need for SSIs laws to be gender-responsive through the review and amendment of laws in Nigeria. Other activities implemented include: consultative meeting between NILDS and NDC with gender desk officers from the SSIs to discuss the need for SSI laws and gender policies to be gender-responsive; a 3-day strategy meeting with Security Institutions & NASS Committees/Review legislation/ (UNSCR 1325) (Security and Women Committees Chairmen and vice Chairmen/Clerk of committees), to provide technical support to guide the sector's gender-responsive legislative and policy reform and foster strategic engagements with the relevant committees; and an in-depth policy analysis and review of the SSIs legislations. These activities resulted in producing and validating draft amendment Bills; a policy dialogue/public discourse and live discussion on NTA were held to create public awareness and public support for the need to integrate gender perspectives in security sector reform and legislation; among other activities.

A meeting with sponsors of the amended Bills was convened in May 2025 to assist in fast-tracking the passage of the proposed amendment bills. The hope is that this project will result in Nigeria's security sector becoming more gender-responsive, while creating a platform for women within these spaces to flourish as their male counterparts.

## **Capacity Building for Women Political Aspirants and Elected Officials**

A critical aspect of the collaborative partnership with UN Women revolved around working with female politicians to support their electoral campaigns in increasing their chances of getting elected. Women face several obstacles in participating in politics in Nigeria, due to structural barriers through discriminatory laws and other obstacles that limit women's options to run for office. Capacity gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts, and resources needed, to become effective leaders. Thus, training and mentoring initiatives for women candidates are popular measures to enhance their skills in campaigns during elections. To this end, NILDS in collaboration with UN Women, organised series of workshops and training sessions to enhance the skills, knowledge, and effectiveness of women in elective positions, thereby improving their performance, public trust, and credibility.

Key initiatives to achieve this activity include: Workshops on advancing gender-responsive legislation and the workshop on the establishment of parliamentary women's caucus in the National Assembly held at Marriott Hotel, Lagos and at BON Octagon Hotel, Abuja in May and July 2024 respectively. This workshop brought together all female parliamentarians, alongside the HeForShe Champions. Engagement is ongoing for the formal establishment of the parliamentary and cross-party women's caucus in the National Assembly. NILDS and UN Women also organized a three-day retreat on legislative roles in the localization, implementation, and oversight of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda for three states (Borno, Adamawa and Yobe) in 2024. The three-day retreat

focused on strengthening legislative oversight on WPS implementation at the subnational level and deepening legislators' understanding and support for the implementation of SAPs on WPS in their respective states.

### **Support for Legislative Reforms to Improve Gender Representation**

Part of the programs and activities enumerated in the signed Long-Term Agreement (LOA) between NILDS and UN Women was to conduct extensive engagements with legislative bodies at both national and state levels to support the passage of gender-responsive legislations in Nigeria. Given the inability for the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly to pass the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill (GEOB) into law in 2022, NILDS had discussions with team members of the UN Women on how to further strategize for the passage and support of both National and States Houses of Assemblies. In furtherance of the objectives of championing the Gender and Equal Opportunities Bill in all 36 States of the Federation, the NILDS-UN Women partnership paid courtesy/advocacy visits and organize programs with leadership and Members of the National Assembly, Speakers of State Houses of Assembly, Ministries of Women Affairs, and State Governors in four selected states from the six geopolitical zones. The four states include Ebonyi (South East), Ekiti (South West), Borno (North East) and Cross River (South South). The result from the engagement revealed that the buy-ins of the principal and other members of the House of Assemblies and the Executive arms were obtained.

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

From 2023 till date, NILDS has continued to work with both National and States Houses of Assembly, and other Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to push for the passage of gender legislations to promote the inclusion of women in politics. NILDS provided technical support in developing the bills and continue to provide support to Houses of Assemblies at National and sub-national levels. NILDS also collaborated with key CSOs like the Women Advocates Research and Documentation Centre, and Women in Politics Forum (WIPF) in reviewing the GEOB to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Bill and convened a two-day Co-Creation Workshop with Speakers and legislators from selected states houses of assembly to discuss the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Bill. The Workshop was held at Protea Hotel on Friday, February 21st and Saturday, February 22nd 2025.

The collaborative partnerships on gender responsive legislations at the National and sub-national levels have yielded positive results with a few states who have now presented the bills on the floor of the state houses of Assembly. The bill has also been presented at the Chambers of the National Assembly, and NILDS is collaborating with selected CSOs to galvanize more support for the passage in the 10<sup>th</sup> Assembly. The collaborative partnership with UN Women, and other CSOs have fast tracked this achievement both at national and states levels.

**The Convening of Town Hall Meetings (Constituency Outreach) for all Female Legislators from Federal and Selected State Houses of Assembly Tagged “Step Down Project”**



Given the need for regular constituency-relations, where constituents are afforded the opportunity to communicate with their representatives and advance their concerns in a bid to strengthening the relationship between the government and the governed, a pioneering advocacy campaign was launched to amplify women's voices in politics and enhance their public perception. With the main objective being to strengthen the relationship between lawmakers and their constituents by creating an avenue for interaction and robust communication between female lawmakers and their constituents in a town hall setting. NILDS, in collaboration with the United Nations Women (UN Women) organized a "Step Down" project in 2024 which entails the convening of a series of Constituency Town Hall Meetings for all female lawmakers at the federal level as well as female lawmakers from selected state houses of assembly to create an avenue for engagement between the lawmakers and their constituents.

Key highlights of this project include the engagement with all female legislators at federal and state levels, resulting in the organization of constituency outreach/townhall meetings between female lawmakers and their constituents to strengthen trust and democratic accountability; Townhall meetings were held across senatorial and constituency districts represented by female legislators.

### **Workshop on Training of Trainers (TOT)**

Training of trainers (TOT) is a critical element for achieving long-term integration of gender issues and analysis in an institution. To build the capacity of NILDS staff on gender mainstreaming principles, frameworks, and tools, in order to integrate gender perspectives into the design, implementation,

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

monitoring, and evaluation of NILDS policies, programs, and activities especially in the services they provide to the NASS, a TOT workshop was organized in 2024 by NILDS in collaboration with UN Women. The workshop was aimed at building the technical capacity of staff and partners of the NILDS to support the Legislative and Gender Training Workshop for Female Legislators in Nigeria. This workshop was geared towards enhancing capacity of NILDS staff in gender mainstreaming principles, methodologies, and tools, promote integration of gender perspectives into NILDS policies, programs, and activities, resulting in more inclusive and gender-responsive initiatives; improved quality and relevance of research outputs and publications produced by NILDS, with a focus on addressing gender gaps and promoting women's participation and leadership; strengthened institutional commitment to gender equality and women's empowerment within NILDS, fostering a culture of inclusion and diversity; and increased collaboration and partnerships between NILDS and gender-focused organizations, institutions, and experts, to advance gender equality in legislative and democratic studies.

## **International Tour for Members in the Constitutional, Electoral Review Committees and Chairpersons of Women Affairs Committees in NASS**

Gender equality and the promotion of women's rights are critical components of a thriving democracy and a just society. Given the ongoing Constitutional and Electoral reforms which present a unique opportunity to integrate gender-responsive legislations that can significantly enhance the participation and representation of women in governance; and to ensure that these reforms are informed by global best practices, it was

essential for legislators involved in these committees to interface and learn from parliamentarians in other countries that have made significant strides in this area. In view of this, a learning tour was organized by NILDS in collaboration with the UN Women and with support from the Canadian Government for selected Members of NASS to under study the Republic of Kenya Parliament. The learning tour took place from 30th September to 3rd November 2024. It provided an opportunity for the participants to interface with members, staff, and committees, of the National Assembly of the Republic of Kenya.

Kenya has a progressive and transformative constitution which recognizes gender equality and equity and is one of the classical examples of women representation in governance in Africa. The strategic parliamentary learning tour yielded some recommendations, which could serve as the main learning outcomes, useful perspectives and important lessons for promoting gender-responsive legislations in the Nigerian Parliament. For example, the Kenyan Constitution and other relevant laws of the country clearly defined the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural, and social spheres. This is seen through the compulsive directive to parliament to enact legislation to promote representation of marginalized groups, including women, in parliament, enforce the “no more than two-thirds gender principle”, and ensure certain seats are reserved for women, youth, and persons living with disabilities. These provisions have enhanced and contributed to the promotion of gender equality in Kenya and are valuable lessons that could be instrumental for the Nigerian Parliament in passing necessary legislative and socio-economic reforms.

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

The learning tour provided an avenue for experience sharing and consolidation of best practices for the participants. It also provided useful perspectives and important lessons for promoting gender-responsive legislations in Nigeria. It is believed that the experiences from the tour will be instrumental for the Nigerian Parliament in passing necessary gender-responsive legislative and socio-economic reforms. Much of what is required now is to set the pace for the alteration and implementation of these best practices through the Constitutional Review Committee.

### **National Citizens' Summit on Constitutional Reform and Ending Violence against Women and Girls**

As Nigeria undergoes constitutional and electoral reform conversations, a process that was triggered by, among other concerns, a long period of prolong insecurity, dwindling economic growth, underrepresentation of women, including young women and women with disabilities, two committees of the National Assembly (the Joint Committee on Constitutional Reform and the Joint Committee on Electoral Matters) have been constituted to drive the national conversation, collect, and collate views from Nigerians and present proposals to the National Assembly for consideration. To contribute to the process, UN Women is working with key stakeholders focusing on the prevention of violence against women and girls and implementing initiatives aimed at increasing the number of women in elective and appointive positions throughout the country.

To galvanize a national and nationwide support for the gender agenda in the constitutional and electoral reform conversation, and a campaign against gender-based violence and violence

against women and girls, NILDS in collaboration with UN Women, and different Government Agencies and Civil Society and Women's Rights Movements, with financial contribution from the Government of Canada, and the Government of the United Kingdom, convened a National Citizens Summit on Constitutional Reform on 10th December 2024, in Abuja. The Summit brought together 1,000 participants drawn from the government, civil society and women's rights movement, Speakers, Majority and Minority leaders from the 36 State Houses of Assembly, few traditional and religious leaders, youth groups, persons with disabilities, and the media.

This activity has resulted in a national and nation-wide campaign on women's inclusion and representation in elective and appointive positions through a constitutional provision unveiled during the Summit; women inclusion in elective and appointive positions through constitutional and electoral reforms highlighted and strongly articulated during the conversations; Secure endorsement on Constitutional Gender Quota from key strategic partners and secured support from key stakeholders on addressing GBV and Violence against women and girls in Nigeria.

## **2. NILDS Collaborative Partnership with Konrad-Adenauer- Stiftung (KAS)**

### **a) Background and Progress of the Partnership**

The pursuit of effective democratic governance in Nigeria has necessitated strategic collaborations between national institutions and international development partners. One of the most impactful partnerships in this regard has been the collaboration between the National Institute for Legislative

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and Democratic Studies (NILDS) and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), a German political foundation committed to fostering democracy and the rule of law globally. This partnership was birthed under the administration of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as Director General of NILDS, and has evolved both in scope and in impact, reflecting a shared vision for a more capable, responsive, and democratic legislature in Nigeria.

Under Professor Sulaiman's administration, the NILDS-KAS relationship has been sustained under two consecutive KAS Country Representatives, with each year of the partnership marking a significant shift in the dynamism, breadth, and strategic orientation of collaborative projects. Anchored on a mutual commitment to democratic consolidation, the collaboration has aimed to enhance the capacity of legislators, legislative aides, NILDS staff, civil society actors, and political institutions through technical support, research, training, and civic education.

### **b) Core Thematic Areas and Activities with KAS**

The partnership between NILDS and KAS has focused on several key thematic areas:

- i. Capacity Building for Legislators and Legislative Staff
  - Organization of retreats, workshops, and induction programs for newly elected federal and state legislators.
  - Technical trainings for Legislative Committees
- ii. Research and Policy Development
  - Joint publications on democratic governance, electoral reform, and parliamentary practices.

- Development of legislative toolkits for improved legislative performance.
- iii. Support for Democratic Institutions and Processes
  - Civic engagement and voter education campaigns in partnership with civil society.
  - Dialogues on constitutional amendments, electoral reforms, and inclusive governance.
- iv. Legislative Engagement with State Houses of Assembly
  - Collaboration in organising capacity building activities with sub-national parliaments, aimed at sharing best practices in legislative development.
- v. Monitoring and Evaluation of Legislative Performance
  - Development of assessment frameworks to track legislative productivity, transparency, and accountability.
- vi. Capacity Building for NILDS Staff
  - Annual residential capacity building programmes for both academic and non-academic staff of NILDS.
  - COVID-19 Pandemic: The global health crisis significantly limited in-person engagements and delayed many planned activities during 2020–2021.

Since 2019, under the leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, the partnership between NILDS and KAS has translated into a series of practical initiatives designed to strengthen Nigeria’s legislative and democratic institutions. These initiatives have spanned

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capacity-building programmes for legislators at both the National Assembly and State Assemblies, targeted support to legislative committees, professional development for NILDS staff, and engagement with civil society, and other democratic stakeholders. The table below highlights some of the key joint activities implemented within this period, demonstrating the breadth and impact of the collaboration:

**Table 4.1: NILDS-KAS Activities, 2019-2025**

S/N	Activity	Date	Location	Participants
1.	2-Day Retreat for Management of the National Assembly and (NILDS)	1 – 2 November, 2019	Uyo, Akwa-Ibom	Management of NILDS/NASS
2.	Capacity Building Workshop for Research Fellows of National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies.	10 – 11 December, 2020	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Academic Staff of NILDS
3.	Capacity Building Workshop for Research Fellows of National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies. (NILDS)	26 – 27 March, 2021	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Academic Staff of NILDS
4.	3rd Capacity Building Workshop for Fellows and Staff of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies	6 – 8 December, 2021	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Academic and Non-Academic Staff of NILDS
5.	NILDS – KAS 1-Day Planning Workshop for Speakers of KAS	Wednesday 9 February, 2022	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Conference of Speakers of State Houses of Assembly



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	Partner State Houses of Assembly			
6.	Capacity Building Workshop for the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)	28 – 29 March, 2022	Wells Carlton Hotel, Abuja	Non-Academic Staff of NILDS
7.	NILDS – KAS Capacity Building Workshop for Oyo State Houses of Assembly	21 – 22 June, 2022	Ogere Resorts, Ogun State	Members of Oyo State House of Assembly
8.	NILDS – KAS Capacity Building Workshop for Ondo State Houses of Assembly	22 – 23, June, 2022	Ogere Resorts, Ogun State	Members of Ondo State House of Assembly
9.	NILDS – KAS Capacity Building Workshop for Lagos State Houses of Assembly	23 – 24, June, 2022	Ogere Resorts, Ogun State	Members of Lagos State House of Assembly
10.	NILDS – KAS Capacity Building Workshop for Clerks, Deputy Clerks and Directors Legal of State Houses of Assembly.	28 – 29 July, 2022	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Clerks, Deputy Clerks and Directors Legal of State Houses of Assembly
11.	NILDS – KAS Capacity Building Workshop for Adamawa State Houses of Assembly	3 – 4 August, 2022	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Adamawa State House of Assembly
12.	NILDS – KAS Training Workshop for the Press Corps of the Senate and	13 – 14 September, 2022	Johnwood Hotel, Abuja	Press Corps of the Senate and House of Representatives

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	House of Representatives			
13.	5th Capacity Building Workshop for the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)	13 – 15 December, 2022	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Academic Staff of NILDS
14.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Oyo State House of Assembly	15 – 16 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Oyo State House of Assembly
15.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Lagos State House of Assembly	17 – 18 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Lagos State House of Assembly
16.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Ogun State House of Assembly	19– 20 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Ogun State House of Assembly
17.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Osun State House of Assembly	19 – 20 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Osun State House of Assembly
18.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Ondo State House of Assembly	22 – 23 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Ondo State House of Assembly
19.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Kwara	22 – 23 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Kwara State House of Assembly

	State House of Assembly			
20.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Ekiti State House of Assembly	24 – 25 May, 2023	Ikeja, Lagos	Members of Ekiti State House of Assembly
21.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Plateau State House of Assembly	5-6 June, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Plateau State House of Assembly
22.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Bauchi State House of Assembly	5-6 June, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Bauchi State House of Assembly
23.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Adamawa State House of Assembly	6-7 July, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Adamawa State House of Assembly
24.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Benue State House of Assembly	3-4 July, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Benue State House of Assembly
25.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Taraba State House of Assembly	3-4 July, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Members of Taraba State House of Assembly
26.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Delta	19-20 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpenne, Akwa Ibom	Members of Delta State House of Assembly

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	State House of Assembly			
27.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Abia State House of Assembly	19-20 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Abia State House of Assembly
28.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Rivers State House of Assembly	21-22 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Rivers State House of Assembly
29.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Enugu State House of Assembly	23-24 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Enugu State House of Assembly
30.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Cross River State House of Assembly	23-24 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Cross River State House of Assembly
31.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshops for Members of Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly	26-27 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Akwa Ibom State House of Assembly
32.	NILDS – KAS Induction Workshop for Members of Ebonyi State House of Assembly	26-27 June, 2023	4 Points, Ikot Ikpene, Akwa Ibom	Members of Ebonyi State House of Assembly
33.	NILDS-KAS Official Visit on Parliamentary Work and Federalism in	25 – 29 September, 2023	Kingdom of Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany	Speakers of Select State Houses of Assembly

	Nigeria and Germany, to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Federal Republic of Germany			
34.	2-Day Retreat for the Leadership of the 10th National Assembly	21 – 23 September, 2023	4 Points Hotel, Ikot Ikpen, Akwa Ibom	Principal Officers from the 10 <sup>th</sup> Senate and 10 <sup>th</sup> House of Assembly
35.	NILDS-KAS National Security Legislative Reform Retreat	2 – 3 November, 2023	Lagos Marriot Hotel, Ikeja, Lagos	Chairmen of Security Related Committees in the Senate and House of Representatives
36.	NILDS - KAS International Roundtable on Parliamentary Security Sector Governance in West Africa	7th - 8th December, 2023	Fraser Suites, Abuja	Chairmen of Security Related Committees in Parliaments of ECOWAS Member States
37.	6th Capacity Building Workshop for the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)	14-15 December, 2023	Fraser Suite, Abuja	Academic Staff of NILDS
38.	NILDS – KAS 2-Day Capacity Building Workshop for Select Clerks of Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives	21 – 22 February, 2024	Johnwood Hotel, Wuse Zone 5, Abuja	Select Clerks of Committees of the Senate and House of Representatives
39.	1-Day NILDS – KAS Roundtable for Members of the Senate Committee	18 <sup>th</sup> November, 2024	John Wood Hotel, Abuja	Members of the Senate Committee on Legislative Compliance

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	on Legislative Compliance			
40.	7th Capacity Building Workshop for the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS)	21 <sup>st</sup> – 22 <sup>nd</sup> November, 2024	Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja	Non-Academic Staff of NILDS
41.	Workshop on Harmonisation of Standing Orders of the State Houses of Assembly in Nigeria and 2025 Constitution Review	20 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup> March, 2025	Lagos Continental Hotel, Lagos	Conference of Speakers of State Houses of Assembly

**Source:** Compiled by NILDS Desk Officer for KAS partnership

Another significant area where the NILDS–KAS collaboration has made meaningful impact under the leadership of Professor Sulaiman is in security sector reform and governance in Nigeria. Through joint programmes, the partnership has actively engaged security-related Committees of the National Assembly and fostered dialogue with security actors and stakeholders to strengthen legislative oversight in the sector. These engagements have not only deepened the capacity of legislators to interrogate security policies and budgets, but have also provided a platform for constructive interface between parliament and security institutions. Furthermore, the collaboration has supported initiatives to review the establishment Acts of security agencies, with a view to identifying areas of overlapping mandates, institutional gaps, and inefficiencies. The outcomes of these reviews have

provided evidence-based recommendations for amendments aimed at improving coordination, accountability, and the overall effectiveness of Nigeria's security architecture.

### **3. NILDS Collaborative Partnership with Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD)**

#### **a) Background of the Partnership**

The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies began a partnership with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WVFD) in 2021. The initial collaboration saw NILDS and WFD collaborate to convene policy dialogues on pressing concerns in the Nigerian polity, the training of staff from NILDS and the National Assembly on Post- Legislative Scrutiny (PLS), and the publication of a position paper on PLS in Nigeria. As a flagship project of the Department of Democracy and Governance (DD&G), this initial partnership fruitfully blossomed into an extended Grant Agreement (GA) between the Institute and WFD and it has spanned three consecutive project cycles i.e., 2022-2023; 2023-2024; and 2024-2025.

#### **b) Projects Implemented with WFD Till Date**

The following is a comprehensive list of projects and activities implemented under the NILDS-WFD partnership thus far.

##### **i. Project Cycle 2021-2022: Convening of Three Policy Dialogues and Establishment of the Post-Legislative Scrutiny Academy**

Within this period, the following key outcomes were achieved under this project:

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- Policy dialogue on the Electoral Act and Presidential Assent: Matters Arising.
- Policy dialogue on the Not-Too-Young-To-Run Act and the Manifestos of Political Parties.
- Policy dialogue on Electoral Security and Inclusive Citizen Participation in Nigeria.
- Training of 15 fellows from NILDS and NASS under the NILDS-WFD Post- Legislative Scrutiny (PLS) Academy.
- Publication of the Position Paper on Institutionalising PLS in Nigeria (Over 1000 copies distributed to lawmakers, clerks, and other stakeholders).

### **ii. Project Cycle 2022-2023: The Political Party Watch (PPW) Project**

The PPW project achieved the following relevant outcomes:

- Undertook a national research project on the inclusive practices of Nigeria's political parties. (This research was published online and in print and over 700 copies widely disseminated to critical stakeholders).
- Organised three consultative dialogues with Nigeria's 19 political parties.
- Undertook strategic visits to key officials of IPAC with a MoU signed for future collaborations.
- Setting-up of an Observation Centre for real-time analysis during the 2023 General elections, and developed press releases and briefings.



- Organised an engagement and capacity strengthening training on inclusion for about 80 youth leaders in partnership with the Nigerian Youth Parliament.
- Training of clerks on PLS from 52 relevant committees in the NASS.

### **iii. Project Cycle 2023-2024: The Nigeria Open Political Party (NOPP) project**

The following outcomes were accomplished under this project:

- Development of the Political Party Performance Index (PPPI).
- Baseline Study of Political Parties' Performance in Nigeria conducted.
- Reviewed all of the constitutions and manifestoes of Nigeria's political parties.
- Organised three technical engagements/capacity-building on inclusion for officials of all 19 political parties.
- Electoral Act (Amendment Bill), 2024 on inclusion of underrepresented groups drafted and validated.
- Convened a high-level cocktail on PLS with principal officers of the NASS.

#### **iv. Project Cycle 2024-2025: Institutionalisation of PLS Units in the Oyo State House of Assembly (OYHA) and NILDS**

Under this partnership agreement, the implementing partner (NILDS) was able to:

- Conduct a knowledge assessment on PLS in the Oyo State House of Assembly (OYHA) and Oyo State Ministry of Justice.
- Develop a framework for the establishment of PLS Units in the OYHA and Oyo State Ministry of Justice.
- Conduct a training on PLS for lawmakers, clerks, legislative officers and aides, legal drafters, permanent secretaries, and the Attorney-General in Oyo State.
- Facilitate the establishment of a PLS unit in the OYHA and the Oyo State Ministry of Justice and staff deployed.
- A PLS unit was also established in NILDS and staff were deployed.

#### **4. NILDS Collaborative Partnership with MacArthur Foundation**

The National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), in recent years has also collaborated with MacArthur Foundation in implementing specific projects like the Elite Consensus Development project, and in the development and review of the National Assembly Gender Strategy. The MacArthur Foundation is a private foundation

that supports a wide range of NGOs through its grant making programs on various issues, including human rights, education, peace and security, and more. Given its interest in supporting projects on human rights, the Director General (DG) approached the foundation on the need to support the Institute in carrying out some of its mandates that falls in the preview of the Foundation. NILDS and the MacArthur Foundation team had an initial meeting in 2023 on the need to review the National Assembly Strategy, to enable the NASS deliver more gains of development for the country and citizenry.

The role of the National Assembly in addressing the challenges of women representation through shaping of legislation is central in Nigeria. With this in mind, NILDS and MacArthur Foundation set up a committee of consultants and experts to review and coordinate the development of NASS gender strategy to reflect current realities in the country. The developed NASS Strategy was presented in a validation workshop in February, 2025, to NASS Management staff and the Chairpersons on the NASS Committee on Women Affairs. As a continuation of this partnership, NILDS is to continue to work with the MacArthur Foundation to ensure the adoption of the National Assembly Gender Strategy with commitments from the NASS leadership for its implementation. This partnership will bring about increased awareness and understanding of gender issues among members of the parliament, parliamentary staff, and other stakeholders, enhanced capacity of the National Assembly to integrate gender considerations into legislative processes, and ensure the adoption of gender-responsive policies and practices to promote women's participation and representation in decision-

making, and improve collaboration and partnership between the National Assembly, civil society organizations, and development partners to advance gender equality.

### **Roles of the DG in Facilitating and Sustaining the Partnerships and Collaborations**

It would be noted that partnerships are vital in the development sector, enabling organizations to address complex challenges effectively. Effective partnership management is crucial for achieving sustainable outcomes and maximizing the impact of development initiatives, emphasizing collaboration, trust-building, and continuous learning as key elements for success. This section explores the efforts of Prof. Sulaiman as the DG NILDS in fostering collaboration for sustainable impact and to ensure an effective partnership management with all the Development Partners. The section also explores strategies deployed by the DG-NILDS for managing partnerships, emphasizing the importance of clear vision, mutual trust, strong governance, effective communication, resource mobilization, monitoring, and continuous learning.

Though collaborations and partnership agreements predate the appointment of Prof. Sulaiman as the DG-NILDS, but he has played crucial roles in attracting more, and sustaining the development sector to the Institute. Due to his efforts, the Institute now leverages diverse expertise, resources, and networks to break new grounds in the development sector in order to address complex social challenges. Having understood that effective partnership management is essential for maximizing the impact of development initiatives and achieving sustainable outcomes, Prof. Sulaiman adopted the

following key strategies and best practices for managing relationships with the development partners:

- i. ***Identification of potential partners:*** Prof. Sulaiman prioritized the creation of strong networks and linkages among development partners and democratic institutions and then approach relevant partners to have a clear idea of the partners' interests and what the Institute could do to achieve and sustain collaboration. He also directs or assigns relevant staff members or create units to research the landscape of potential partners, including their mission, values, strengths, challenges, and priorities. This actually helps NILDS to reach the most relevant and compatible partners for its mandates, as well as the gaps and opportunities for collaboration.
- ii. ***Building a Strong Relationship:*** Relationship building is vital to the success of any partnership. It is a long-term process that requires patience, respect, and empathy. Therefore, in NILDS, once a potential partner has been identified, the DG then directs the appropriate Departments or Units to establish and maintain relationships with them. This involves reaching out to them, introducing the Institute and mandates to them, expressing the areas of interest and value proposition, and listening to their feedback and concerns. A follow up plan is also designed regularly in order to share updates and information, and demonstrate the Institute's commitment and credibility.

- iii. ***Implementation of Activities:*** Implementing activities is a dynamic and iterative process that requires adaptability, creativity, and problem-solving. So, when agreements have been formalized, Prof. Sulaiman ensures that implementation of activities of the project are according to the agreed plan and standards. He ensures that the partners and the Institute are on the same page, and that any issues or changes are addressed promptly and transparently.
- iv. ***Evaluation of Outcomes:*** Evaluating outcomes is a learning and improvement process that requires honesty, accountability, and recognition. So, as activities are being implemented, under Prof Sulaiman as DG-NILDS, he also directed relevant staff members to evaluate the outcomes of the project, both in terms of the results achieved and the quality of the partnership. The Monitoring & Evaluation Unit collects and analyses data, feedback, and lessons learned, and share them with partners. Frequently, he celebrates the successes and acknowledges the challenges of the project. He also recognizes and appreciates the contributions and efforts of each partner.
- v. ***Sustaining partnerships:*** Sustaining partnerships is a strategic and relational process that requires loyalty, mutual benefit, and vision. Therefore, Prof. Sulaiman tries as much as possible to sustain the partnerships that he has established and nurtured throughout his administration by maintaining contact and communication with partners, and exploring opportunities for further collaboration or support. He

also leverages the network and reputation that has been built with existing partners, and use them as references or advocates for your work. With this we can confidently say that under Prof. Sulaiman as the DG-NILDS, more partnerships were made and sustained.

### **Benefits of Collaborative Partnerships in the Period under Review**

In the period under review, NILDS benefited from international donors' partnerships in so many ways that have contributed to strengthened stakeholders' engagement programmes among others. These partnerships recorded numerous measurable successes. For example, the collaborations led to more structured capacity-building programmes for both federal and state lawmakers, leading to improved legislative output and professionalism. Also, jointly published manuals such as the harmonized Standing Orders for State Houses of Assembly, Gender Strategy Training Manuals, and research reports have served as valuable references for legislators and scholars alike. This further positioned NILDS as a thought leader in legislative capacity development, particularly at the sub-national level, extending its services to all the 36 State Assemblies in the country. Other specific benefits include financial and technical support, which has been to NILDS in achieving its mandate and goals.

In the period under review, NILDS benefited substantially from donors in the areas of financial and technical support. This has been crucial for NILDS to implement programmes and achieve goals, especially in areas of international and local capacity building programmes for members of the National and State Houses of Assembly, NILDS staff capacity building

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workshops, etc. Partners have also played a vital role in fostering collaborations between NILDS and different organizations and stakeholders, such as government agencies, CSOs, traditional and religious leaders, and other non-profits. The financial and technical support contributed to the sustainability of programmes implementation by providing ongoing financial support, which have allowed NILDS to develop long-term strategies and build resilience.

How about capacity building of both NILDS staff and legislators who have benefited from the various tours and training programmes?

Technically, NILDS has also benefitted from a number of capacity building trainings/workshops either facilitated or sponsored by some of these partners. Together, these collaborations have brought about improved visibility, as well as the national and international image and reputation of NILDS.

## **Challenges Encountered**

Despite the success of the partnership, several challenges have hindered its full potential:

- **Funding Constraints:** Budgetary limitations have sometimes affected the scale of planned programmes, particularly in recent years.
- **Logistical Limitations:** Organising programs across Nigeria's geopolitical zones occasionally posed logistical hurdles, particularly in conflict-prone or inaccessible regions.
- **Political Instability and Turnover:** Frequent changes in legislative leadership and political transitions at both the



national and subnational levels sometimes disrupted programme continuity.

### **Conclusion: Toward Sustainably Scaling New Heights**

Over the years NILDS has achieved major milestones of its mandate due to the collaborative partnership between NILDS and its various partners. This is indicative of what is possible when national institutions and international partners align their efforts towards a shared democratic vision. Under Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's visionary leadership, the partnership has not only deepened but also expanded in its impact and relevance. As Nigeria continues to navigate the complexities of democratic consolidation, strategic partnerships such as this will remain vital in equipping institutions with the tools and capacities required to meet the aspirations of the people.

To ensure that the benefits of collaborative partnerships in the past few years are sustained, NILDS is looking into different strategies to better reach out to more donor agencies in the areas of Climate Change and Environment, Social Inclusion, and Governance. It is believed that sustaining the various partnerships, will further lead to increase in the impact and reach of development projects beyond pilot or limited-scale initiatives. However, it is important to note that all programmes under the NILDS and her partners since the year under review, have been successfully implemented. In scaling up future collaborative partnerships, NILDS is currently working/developing MOUs with several organisations, to expand the scale of its activities and programmes geared towards promoting and achieving sustainable democracy and governance in Nigeria.

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There are currently several projects in the pipeline with the Institute's partners. The MoUs signed with the various partners like UN Women have of recent been amended to include new programmes, and other MoUs with local organizations are being developed for signing. NILDS is currently providing technical support and working with a team from the Nigerian Correctional Service to develop their Gender Strategy, the partnership with the MacArthur Foundation is still on-going, and NILDS is also providing technical support to State and National Houses of Assemblies on the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Bill. On the local scene, NILDS is working on signing MoUs with private and non-governmental organisations like Leadtots and Human Development Services on the comprehensive Youth Leadership Development Program (CYLDP), Phillips Consulting Ltd., CLEEN Foundation, etc. The sustainability of these collaborations is key and will further put NILDS on the global and local limelight as a government Institute, promoting and enhancing partnerships and legislative governance in Nigeria.

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# 5

## **A NEW REGIME OF STAFF WELFARE AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT**

**John Olanrewaju, Usman Wali, Joke Akinsanmi and  
Hassana Ibrahim**

### **Introduction**

**I**n the dynamic landscape of modern businesses and public services, staff welfare has emerged as a foundational pillar for fostering a resilient and thriving work environment. The profound significance of staff welfare is underscored by its potential to shape the trajectory of organisations, steering them toward unprecedented levels of productivity, employee engagement, and organizational growth (Cheong, 2023). Employee welfare, also known as staff welfare, refers to initiatives adopted by employers to enhance the quality of life for employees by providing generous fringe benefits or any measures taken for the comfort and improvement of employees that are not covered by their wages (Makanjuola, Shaibu, and Isijola, 2013). It encompasses numerous initiatives and policies, ranging from ensuring safe working conditions, to promoting work-life

balance, and providing access to essential benefits. At its core, staff welfare encapsulates a commitment to safeguarding and enhancing the quality of life for employees (Cheong, 2023). The primary objective of employee welfare is to boost employee morale, foster a more positive image of the organisation, promote efficiency, and cultivate a satisfied workforce (Keka et al, nd).

From this perspective, it is safe to add that human capital development has been traditionally regarded as a component of staff welfare, but this has changed over the years. Human capital development has gradually acquired independent recognition and significance due to its direct correlation with organizational competence and skill set, especially in a competitive global market economy and a fast-changing technological environment. The value of investing in the development of workers to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency has been recognized by successful organizations for many years. The time and resources spent on developing skills and knowledge of workers to achieve the desired objectives of the organization is one of the best investments (Morhead & Griffen, 1998). The utmost need to be current and relevant in all spheres of human endeavour makes staff development necessary to keep up with today's highly competitive labour market (Morhead & Griffen, 1998). Igbaekemen & Odivwri (2014) observe that the need for rapid human capacity development goals is felt almost everywhere, especially in the public sector organizations in Nigeria, where workers' training and development have not received the desired attention due to the low levels of investment in human capacity development.

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However, contrary to the prevailing trends in Nigeria in general, and NILDS in particular, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, on assumption of duty as the Director General (DG) of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), approached this situation differently. He immediately rolled out plans on staff welfare and human capital development, which culminated in foreign training for over 120 staff of the Institute across different countries of the world during his first four years in office. Prof Sulaiman's commitment to improved staff capacity and skills is predicated on his strong belief that effective and efficient utilization of skills is an essential element of modern development strategy and human capital formation. Also, several other local and national trainings were organized for all categories of staff within the same period. This is in addition to enhanced staff welfare, which improved the morale, commitment, and performance, of the staff of the Institute.

Prof. Sulaiman's visionary leadership in enhancing staff welfare, and heavy investment in the acquisition of skills, education, and capacity building of the staff of NILDS is an important legacy that will challenge previous and future leadership of the Institute in terms of surpassing it beyond a simplistic margin and the efforts and dispositions that would be needed to surpass his record. This chapter documents in great detail some of the leading interventions of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman as DG of NILDS in these connections. The chapter is divided into four sections, beginning with an introduction and followed by Prof. Sulaiman's leadership philosophy and passion for staff welfare and capacity building in the second section. Sections three and four discuss the

various efforts and achievements. The chapter closes with a conclusion in the fifth section.

### **Professor Sulaiman's Leadership Philosophy and Passion for Staff Welfare**

The appointment of Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman as DG, NILDS was not just one of those events when looked at in the context of the growth and development the Institute has enjoyed since he assumed the position. His inauguration as the DG ushered in a new era of organizational transformation across the different structures and operations of the Institute. As Prof. Sulaiman himself has often said, “an organization can only be as good as the people that work in it and not how beautiful the edifice is.” This kind of philosophy can only come from a right-thinking mind, a builder and a transformational leader who prioritises people, rather than abstract things, and one who has a deep concern for the dignity of the human person. Plato, in his most famous and widely read dialogue, regarded the likes of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman as the “philosopher king.” The connecting virtue between Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman and Plato's Dialogue Republic is their shared vision of social change through knowledge acquisition and beneficial study. This is embodied in a kind of leadership style that is committed to higher truth and social transformation, found only in the wise philosopher king.

For Prof. Sulaiman, leadership is not just an end in itself, but a means to an end. A philosophy that is deeply rooted in Islamic teaching, and as a devout Muslim, he believes that a leadership position is given by God Almighty as a trust to solve problems faced by humanity, and everyone with leadership responsibility must give account of their

stewardship to God. This philosophy has been a guide for Prof Abubakar Sulaiman in his public life during his career as a lecturer, Minister of National Planning, and Director General of NILDS. His leadership idiosyncrasies can be neatly classified as a transformational leader – a style of leadership that inspires and motivates followers to achieve a shared vision, fostering personal growth and organisational changes through charisma, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Oguchukwu, 2024).

Little wonder that Prof. Sulaiman committed considerable energy, time, and resources, to the personal development of staff, training and re-training, and different staff welfare initiatives. The staff welfare and capacity development initiatives implemented by Prof. Sulaiman serve as a great source of inspiration and motivation for staff, never witnessed since the Institute was established. Prof. Sulaiman's staff welfare disposition led to a drastic decline in the high turnover of staff resigning from their appointments, which was witnessed in the previous administration. Also, capacity building for the staff witnessed a remarkable departure from what the Institute had contended with in the days before his appointment. Indeed, Sulaiman was in full agreement with the assertion that “staff are the most valuable assets of any organization. They form the pivot on which other resources revolve and transform to finish and semi-finish products for human satisfaction” (Iheanach & Amgbare, 2010). In order, therefore, to enable the staff of the Institute to unleash their full potential for both the organizational and their personal development, the DG focused attention on improving staff welfare as well as building their collective and individual capacities. Below are some of the initiatives and



improvements that Professor Sulaiman has brought about in these two critical areas of the Institute's life from the time of his appointment as DG in 2019.

### **Improving Staff Welfare**

Abubakar Sulaiman, who is a distinguished Professor of Political Science and International Relations, is not only a theoretician but also one who believes in the practical application of organisational theories that seek to enhance organisational performance. Indeed, the true value of knowledge lies not just in its acquisition but in its practical application to address real-world problems, fostering innovations, progress, and ultimately, a better future for humanity.

Theories of staff welfare abound in the literature, touching on different value propositions. Cowling (2002) described staff welfare as a corporate attitude or commitment reflected in the expressed care for employees at all levels, underpinning their work and the environment in which it is performed. Vroom & Brayfried (1955) noted that “when employees perceive that their well-being and growth matter to the organisation, a strong bond is formed leading to enhanced job satisfaction. They argued further that “the feeling of being an integral part of a progressive workplace, cultivates loyalty, and fuels intrinsic motivation driving employees to go the extra mile.” In his take on staff welfare, Armstrong (2006) observed that “every organisation is concerned with what should be done to achieve sustained high levels of performance through its workforce. This means giving close attention to how individuals can best be motivated through means such as

incentives, rewards, leadership, etc., and the organisational context within which they carry out the work.

From the above few theoretical statements, which are grounded in research studies, it goes without mention, that the leadership approach of Prof. Sulaiman to staff welfare prioritizes the interest of both the staff and the organization at heart. For a better understanding of these efforts, they can be classified into two namely: (i) Compensations/ Benefits and (ii) Human Capital Development.

### **a) Compensations and Benefits**

The most basic attraction of any employment is the financial compensation that goes with it. Some organisations, either because of economic reasons or simply management disposition, do not see the need to juxtapose benefits with organizational productivity, especially where employment is in dire demand. Staff members are seen as mere personnel who would work irrespective of the welfare provisions in the organization because they need the jobs to survive. This was almost the situation in NILDS from when its first Act was promulgated in 2011 through its period of review in 2017, up until 2019 when there was a change of leadership. Staff motivation was not given the priority it deserved. The following are some of the major highlights of the working environment:

- Staff work longer hours with little incentives, even though the official working hours are 8 am – 5 pm.
- No staff member is entitled to annual leave. The Institute usually closes for a week during Sallah, Easter, and two weeks during the Christmas period, making it difficult

for the Institute's employees to plan their lives outside the NILDS schedules.

- Maternity leaves are granted at the discretion of the DG;
- Most employees of the Institute were on temporary appointments, and no staff dared to ask for confirmation of their appointment.
- Allowances are approved and removed at will at the DG's discretion;
- Staff training is discretionary and approved by the DG, and only a select few staff were favoured.
- Irregular and selective promotion;
- Portions of the Institute scheme of service is amended at will, anytime they feel like changing the rule to favour someone.
- The scheme of service is used only when it is convenient;
- Only a select few were allowed to participate as resource persons in the Institute training programmes, and the rest were drawn from outside the Institute, leaving no room for insiders to grow on the job. This situation promoted internal bickering in the Institute, where snitching and backstabbing were promoted by the Management at the expense of productivity. Under this condition, the Institute employees were divided into two groups of "favoured," "under favoured," and the neglected staff, thus making the work environment toxic. The poor state of employee welfare, coupled with internal bickering, compelled some staff, led by Dr. Christopher Ngara to join a labour union - the National Association of Parliamentary Staff of Nigeria (PASSAN), headquartered in the National Assembly, at the twilight

of the previous administration in early 2019, to demand better conditions of service.

Although Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman inherited both the toxic working environment and the ill-organised staff union, things took a different turn when Professor Sulaiman stepped in as the new Director General of the Institute in 2019. His transformational leadership style and innovative programmes on staff welfare and capacity building, led to the restoration of order, and the refocusing of some of the academic departments that had turned into war zones. Prof. Sulaiman's skilful handling of union matters by implementing and going beyond their demands to promote employee welfare, endeared him to the staff. With several welfare and capacity-building initiatives starting with international training for all staff, it was only a question of time for the union to fold up and declare support for Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman.

### **b) Review of Conditions of Service**

One of the first major things Prof. Sulaiman did on the assumption of office was to set up a high-powered committee to review the staff conditions of service. Before that, two separate documents guided staff administration, namely the Scheme of Service and the Administrative Manual. These documents contained a lot of irregularities, and some of their contents were skewed to favour some anointed staff. Other challenges with the documents were that there was no clear path of career development for most of the departments. Also, several portions of the documents were not consistent with the public service rules. This created a lot of misgivings among staff, and many employees of the Institute resigned from their

appointments to pursue careers elsewhere. The confusion created by these documents was also a source of friction and antagonism between staff, particularly across the academic departments.

After he assumed office, Prof. Sulaiman, in his inaugural meeting with staff, flagged the confusion in the Institute's administrative manual and the scheme of service and promised to cure the same. He also promised to restructure and refocus the Institute, especially the research and academic departments, for better performance. Prof. Sulaiman swung into action by setting up a committee to review both the administrative manual and the scheme of service. In his words, "Before I leave the Institute or finish my tenure, I will build an institution that will outlive us and stand the test of time. That is what I am going to do for you. You, the staff, are the future of the Institute, and I will, with your support, remodel it as a world-class facility." The objective of the review was to streamline contentious issues and address challenges that revolved around service and staff career progression. The Committee was chaired by Dr. Hakeem Baba Ahmad, a former Federal Permanent Secretary, a seasoned administrator, and a Consultant with the Institute. At the end of the exercise, a comprehensive staff condition of service that took into consideration the peculiarities of the Institute, without ignoring the bigger civil service context, was produced. Based on the spelled-out provisions, many staff of the Institute got their placements adjusted to accommodate their actual qualifications and experiences. The document also provided clear career paths for staff, which served as a great motivation for higher productivity. The nomenclature of "Manager" which the Institute adopted and which was akin to what was

obtained in the Private Sector was abolished, and more professional nomenclatures such as those in the Directorate and Officer cadres were adopted and synchronized with what was obtainable in the Public Service. Similarly, qualifying years for promotion from one grade level to another were streamlined and standardized for every cadre in line with those of the Public Service.

### **c) General Staff Audit**

There may be contentions as to whether staff audit can actually be categorised as a component of staff welfare. But in the context of NILDS, it was, given the circumstances and outcomes of the exercise. Specifically, while the review of the staff conditions of service was ongoing, it was necessary to address other important staff matters that were inherited from the previous administration. A consortium of auditors was engaged to carry out staff audits in the Institute. The staff audit was initiated based on the request of the staff union led by Dr. Christopher Ngara, who raised concerns to Prof. Sulaiman about the qualifications and placement of some staff of the Institute. The exercise revealed many discrepancies in staff matters, mainly on staff records and staff qualifications. Without hesitation, the Director General directed the implementation of the findings, which resulted in the disengagement of several staff members who were found wanting, one way or the other, including allegations of forged certificates from the Institute. Ever since the exercise, certificate verification has become a major aspect of staff recruitment in the Institute.

#### **d) Staff Promotion**

Before the assumption of office of Prof. Sulaiman, promotions were carried out irregularly and at random despite the existence of the Appointment and Promotion Committee. The promotion committee never sits at the predetermined period or appointed calendar, mainly because the promotion exercise was not regular. Promotion was done at the discretion of the DG and was usually very selective. Promotion matter was a major contentious issue, and no staff dared to speak out because there was no union, and most of the staff were on temporary appointments. This meant that staff were not eligible to form a union since their appointments were not confirmed. Prof Sulaiman, filled with compassion for staff due to his humane disposition, set up the process to address the matter head-on. He established a system to address promotion matters regularly at a determined period (September of every year). The appraisal system was reviewed to accommodate specific departmental concerns and peculiarities. The membership of the Appointment and Promotion Committee, which included Heads of Departments and the Director General, was maintained for consideration of eligible staff. The new system and approach created a lot of confidence amongst the staff with assurances that no staff would suffer undue neglect, provided they deliver on their mandate. This, no doubt, created some effects in the seriousness of staff and the motivation to work harder, as each qualified staff member looks forward to the year of his or her promotion.

In a related development, and to achieve his vision of the Institute as a world-class facility and retain its manpower, Prof. Sulaiman established the Academic Advisory Board composed of leading and seasoned academics and

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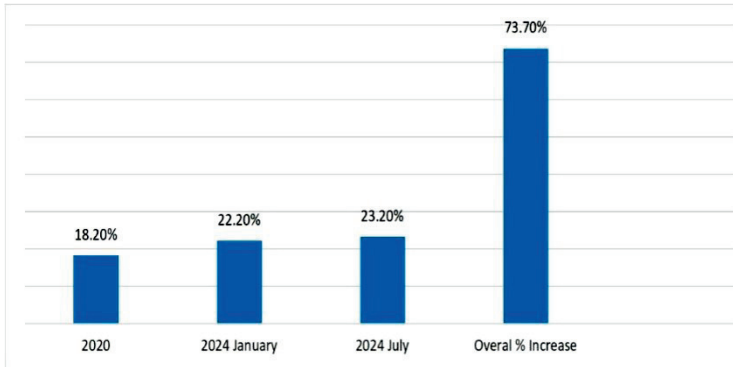
administrators, such as the late Prof. Nuhu Yaqub as the pioneer Chairman of the Board, Prof. Attahiru Jega, and the current Chairman of the Board, among other eminent academics. The responsibility of the Board is to vet and approve academic programmes and process the assessment and award of professorship to the eligible and deserving staff of the Institute. Since the inauguration of the Board, the Institute has introduced several academic programmes in collaboration with the Federal University, Lokoja, and the University of Abuja. Also, some eligible staff members of the Institute have been assessed for associate professorship and full chair, awaiting the confirmation of the NILDS Governing Council. This promotion exercise has led to a drastic decline in the exit of staff from the Institute to pursue career progression in the mainstream universities. Today, NILDS has become a top choice for sabbatical leave and employment for many academics from mainstream universities and other institutions of higher learning.

### **e) Salary Review**

Before Professor Sulaiman's assumption of office, the staff had enjoyed a mild upward review of salary. However, for the first time in 2023, staff salary was reviewed with a comfortable margin to reduce inflationary pressure on the staff. It was greatly welcomed by the staff who saw the new leadership as a saving grace. The Management of the Institute under Prof Sulaiman has also fully implemented a salary review following the minimum wage adjustment in 2024.



**Fig. 1. Percentage Increase in Salary from 2019-2024**



**Source:** NILDS Account Department

The figure below shows that the Director General, upon inception in 2019, has seen a considerable increase in staff salary from 10.7% in 2019 to 18.20% in 2020. The salary further increased to 22.2% in January 2024 and 23.20% in July 2024, making an overall 73.7% increase from 2019 to 2024.

#### **f) Creating a Serene Work Environment with Required Workstation**

One of Professor Sulaiman's greatest impacts was the completion and relocation of the institute to its permanent site. This achievement created the opportunity to access to more space, with magisterial architectural design and fantastic aesthetics, better furnishing, as well as a beautiful landscape. He also ensured the provision of working tools to all staff, most notably the procurement and allocation of Laptops to all staff of the institute. This never existed before his appointment as DG in 2019. Together, these have contributed to facilitating ease of work, reduced pressure on staff and boost productivity.

**g) New Tax Regime**

In the Year 2023, staff were greeted with a shock that over the years, the personal income tax that they were paying to the government was grossly under-calculated, and that henceforth the appropriate tax would be deducted from staff's salary. Furthermore, staff would be expected to refund to tax authorities the tax differences that they did not pay over a long period. All these were coming on the heels of the salary review that the staff were enjoying. If the threat of tax authorities were implemented, staff would find themselves in a serious financial predicament, especially with the refund of the unpaid difference. However, the Management under the leadership of Prof Sulaiman noted the concern and appealed to the Tax Authorities for a more humane method of repaying the tax backlog. This resulted in the spread of the repayment over time while staff continued to pay the appropriate tax going forward. In addition to this, Prof. Sulaiman magnanimously and graciously offset about 3 years of default arrears on tax to cushion the economic effect on staff. This brought great relief to the staff who hailed the concern and effort of the Management.

**h) End of Year Productivity Appreciation**

Although it is more common in the private sector, some public institutions do appreciate the efforts of their staff at the end of every year through such tags as "end of year bonus", "thirteenth month," and "productivity allowance." The essence of such welfare gestures was to encourage staff to enhance their productivity in the organization and to develop a sense of attachment to it in a way that their loyalty becomes unshaken. At take-off, the Institute had commenced that novel approach to encouraging staff, but it was not sustained due to

some administrative challenges. Prof. Sulaiman resuscitated the initiative by addressing the observed challenges and introducing a new approach. Since 2022, Prof. Sulaiman has kept faith in this practice as different categories of awards have been introduced. The effort was well received by the staff and has boosted both morale and productivity in the Institute.

Indeed, as a way of cushioning the effects of the tax burden and other economic hardship, Prof Sulaiman was able to secure an end-of-year 50% salary payment for all categories of staff in the Institute. This has been a morale booster for the staff of the Institute.

**i) Financial Support during Festive Periods**

Prof. Sulaiman inherited the tradition of institutional support to staff during festive periods such as Eid and Christmas festivals. Staff were supported with food items that would enhance their festive joy. Prof Sulaiman sustained the spirit but modified the support method by monetizing it robustly. The new approach took some administrative burden off the Institute and gave staff leverage to purchase food items of their choice. Although the support was welfare in nature, it took into consideration inflationary trends.

**j) Extension of Welfare to Contract Staff and Consultants**

Given the need for their services, the Institute maintained a modest number of contract staff. Some of them were later converted to permanent staff, but others remained contract staff either because of their age or because they chose to. For the whole period that the Institute operated before the appointment of Prof. Sulaiman, the contract staff enjoyed only a few welfare benefits despite the significant contribution they made to the work of the Institute. The new Director General

considered the scenario, reviewed it, and approved their inclusion in some additional welfare benefits.

**k) Introduction of Best Performing and Best Dressed Staff of the Year**

To create healthy competition among staff regarding performance on the job, the Director General established a platform for such assessment, and the best performers within a given year are rewarded during end-of-year gatherings in the presence of all staff. There is an award for the best-performing staff member of each department, and then the overall best performer in the Institute. All winners get monetary rewards, and their pictures are placed in an open space for all to see throughout the year. The overall institutional winner enjoys overseas training as an additional incentive.

In a related development, the Director General also established the best-dressed contest among staff to improve the quality of dress of staff. The need for qualitative dressing in the Institute cannot be underrated, given the Institute's outreach and collaboration with high-level organizations both locally and internationally. Monetary rewards are given to male and female winners as well as their two runners-up.

Although the above two contest variables are separated for recognition and award, the Director General continues to emphasize that they are mutually inclusive and staff are at any time expected to combine the two professional values in their performance in the office. It is not a choice of which one you want to excel in.

### **l) Review of Working Hours and Establishment of a Crèche**

Before the appointment of Prof. Sulaiman as head of the Institute, staff complied with working hours that spanned 8.00 am to 5.00 pm. However, it was observed that it was against labour law and did not support work/life balance, which is a critical welfare matter. The new Director General changed the policy to align with best practices and international labour law. The new policy spans working hours from 8.00 am to 4.00 pm. That was joyfully welcomed by the staff, who now have more time to be with their families and for other personal matters. Furthermore, to ease the burden of child rearing on women, the Director General established a Creche with relevant functional facilities and employees to care for children. This is in recognition of the many limitations confronting the womenfolk. This facility has enabled women employees in NILDS to focus on the job even while nursing their babies. The objective was to remove as many barriers as possible that inhibit the career progress and social mobility of women. As a result of this, among other welfare policies, several women have risen to the enviable positions of Directors and Deputy Directors for the first time since the establishment of the Institute.

### **m) Capacity Building and Human Capital Development Initiatives**

It cannot be disputed that human capital development is one of the most important steps an organization takes to ensure greater productivity and create a competitive edge in the contemporary, volatile work environment. The term human capital development can be defined as those activities geared towards improving knowledge, sharpening skills, instilling

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values, and encouraging the behaviour necessary to actualize the potential of the staff of the organization (Alo, 2000). Talento Human Capital noted that “at its core, human capital development recognizes that individuals are the most valuable assets within any organization. It involves initiatives aimed at nurturing and cultivating these assets to create a more skilled, adaptable, and innovative workforce. This developmental process encompasses various facets:

- **Education and Training:** Formal education, specialized training programs, workshops, and seminars, that enhance technical skills and knowledge in specific fields.
- **Skill Enhancement:** Continuously refining and acquiring new skills to adapt to changing industry demands, technological advancements, and evolving job roles.
- **Professional Development:** Programs and opportunities that focus on personal growth, leadership skills, communication, problem-solving, and other soft skills crucial for career advancement.
- **Experience and Exposure:** Gaining diverse experiences, exposure to different work environments, cultures, and challenges, that contribute to broader skill sets and adaptability.”

The above is virtually the script that Prof. Sulaiman sought to implement with respect to staff capacity development in NILDS. Below are a few of his capacity-building initiatives aimed at making the Institute a world-class institution and a regional leader.

➤ **Departmental Training**

He introduced and put into practice the idea of departmental training. This was in recognition of the fact that departments have some functional peculiarities which, individually, they could address better. On the strength of this understanding, all departments of the Institute were encouraged to periodically organize training where the high and low would learn one thing or the other, and the younger would have a timely opportunity to learn from the seniors. This also added value to the concept of succession planning, as every staff member of the department was learning about the needs, requirements, and focus of the department.

➤ **Annual Retreat for Staff Under NILDS/KAS Partnership**

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) has been a very strong capacity-building partner of NILDS since 2020. The focus of their partnership includes sustaining democracy, governance, and deepening the understanding of parliamentary work in Nigeria. Under the platform of this partnership, the Director General established an annual retreat for all its staff that often lasted 3 to 4 days in a very conducive environment in Abuja. The residential retreats allow the staff to interact and discuss relevant issues of the retreats even at night after the close of each day's events. Important, topical issues are identified for discussion, and facilitations are done by renowned scholars and practitioners in relevant fields. This was an important development in the history of the Institute as it bolstered the knowledge, experience, and exposure of many staff members of the Institute. Participation in the retreats cuts across research, academic, and administrative staff.

➤ **Personal Staff Development**

At every available opportunity, the Director General would challenge staff on the need to develop themselves further. Those with a Ph.D. should aspire for a professorship, and those with a Master's Degree to aspire for a Ph.D., and down the ladder. Consequent upon such encouragement, many Ph.D. holders of the Institute are now professors, while many more have registered for one Ph.D. programme or the other, including many from the service departments. Under the encouragement of the new administration, one driver completed a Higher National Diploma program in Parliamentary Administration while another is in his 400 Level at the National Open University. Before he assumed office, administrative and other non-research staffs were hardly ever encouraged to pursue higher degrees. There was therefore a complete change in mindset. Indeed, but for the Director General's encouragement, many of those who registered for Ph.D. programmes might not have done so.

It is worth noting also that staff who acquire new or additional qualifications are allowed to change or move from one job to another, which will facilitate their personal and professional growth and their contribution to organizational productivity. At the last count, over 65 staff of the institute have benefited from the DG's magnanimity to further their education. Those who have completed their programme of studies were also upgraded and converted to the appropriate cadre/ grade level to enrich their job schedules. Under this programme, a photographer, who got a PhD, was promptly upgraded and converted to the Research Officers cadres. See the annexure for the list of Personal Staff Development beneficiaries.



➤ **Local Training, including Drivers**

Apart from training received by the staff at both departmental and retreat levels, staff enjoy other forms of local training. Training institutes like the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS) and the National Defence College occasionally send nomination requests for participation in their periodic training programmes. This type of training brings together participants from different organizations, and experiences are shared, which help to shape participants' world views on issues and skills. Participants often learn new ways of doing things or addressing issues for the betterment of their respective organisations. Because of the importance, the Director General attached to such avenues of learning, he would often personally nominate particular staff members to attend or require relevant departments to nominate appropriate staff to attend, as circumstances may dictate. Such a type of training resulted in staff members establishing a network of associates and contacts, which became a platform for sharing information on work procedures and related policies. They also assisted in the personal development of staff. Under the local training platform, even the most junior staff, such as drivers, had benefited from one training or the other. On different occasions, drivers of the Institute had been sent to training outfits in Nasarawa, Ogun, and Lagos states for training that focused on skills, attitude, and behaviour requirements of the profession.

➤ **Overseas/ International Training for Staff**

Until the assumption of office of the Director General, overseas training was for only to a select few in the Institute. However, despite the heavy financial implication of overseas training, Prof. Sulaiman believed that first, it enables staff to

acquire the knowledge he or she goes to acquire; second, it exposes the staff to the international environment and new ways of doing and viewing things and third; it motivates staff and strengthens their loyalty and commitment to organizational ideals. Shortly after assuming office, he committed himself to ensuring that all staff members he met on the ground in the Institute benefited from overseas training while he was still the Director General. He was able to accomplish his intention within the first year of his second tenure. This was a remarkable achievement and a testament to his staff-work-centred leadership style.

### **➤ Human Resource Sensitisation and Awareness Programmes**

To ensure that the staff of the Institute are kept up-to-date with happenings in both the internal and external environment of the Institute, the Human Resource Department has continued to sustain and enhance its educative efforts in such areas as induction programmes for staff and collaboration with vital public services agencies like the NHIS, Federal Mortgage Bank, PENCOM and Pension Administrators. All these are agencies that facilitate future and retirement plans of public officers, and staff of the Institute should be abreast of happenings in those critical areas.

### **➤ Professional Subscription**

Another staff-focused innovation introduced in the Institute is the payment of subscription fees on behalf of staff for the various professional bodies that staff are affiliated with. While this has a lot to do with individual career and professional progression, it is believed that the Institute would have a lot to benefit from the initiative as staff would most certainly bring

to bear in their official work all the learning and experience-sharing they gathered from their respective professional bodies. Indeed, the intervention by the Institute has encouraged a lot of staff to belong to one professional body or another.

➤ **Conferences, Workshops, Seminars, and Stakeholder Meetings**

Either at the behest of the Institute or individual requests, staff of the Institute at various levels participated in numerous conferences, workshops, seminars, and stakeholder meetings that pertained to their respective areas of competence. The Management believes that in addition to normal conventional training, these are also areas where staff can polish themselves and the take-home will undoubtedly impact their regular official work.

➤ **Internal Leadership Development and Career Enhancement**

One of the greatest qualities of a transformational leader is the ability to produce other leaders through mentorship and deliberate policy intervention. In Prof. Sulaiman's interest to leave an enduring legacy for NILDS, one of his priority areas has been to develop the internal leadership capacity of the Institute to manage all aspects of its operations.

For instance, before the assumption of duty of Prof. Sulaiman, 80% of the institute's academic programmes, especially at the Postgraduate school and other capacity building initiatives, were handled by external resource persons. This trend was immediately reversed with Prof Sulaiman's policy of empowering internal resource persons and building their

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capabilities. Today, 70% of the Institute's expanded Postgraduate programmes are handled by internal resource persons.

Prof Sulaiman also made deliberate efforts to develop the leadership skills of staff by giving them responsible tasks and challenging assignments to test their resilience and ability to work at higher levels. Many of the staff were made to serve in critical committees and other task forces that review and study various aspects of the Institute's operations.

As part of his policy for sustaining the gains of the Institute in the future, Professor Sulaiman started mentoring staff and putting them in leadership positions. He also created career opportunities for staff who have distinguished themselves in critical areas of the Institute's endeavours by appointing them to vacant positions of authority. This process has created a pool of future leaders for the Institute that are capable of carrying out its mandate successfully into the future.

For instance, Prof. Sulaiman's policy of allowing internal candidates to head departments has been a source of motivation to these young future leaders. Today, departments such as Training and International Cooperation, Governance and Democracy, Administration and Human Resources, are managed by young and enterprising officers who rose through the ranks within the institute. The DG not only mentored these officers but also kept on monitoring their performances to ensure that they did not deviate from the standards laid down by NILDS. This policy is a strategic succession planning initiative designed to meet the future leadership needs of NILDS.

➤ **Critical Areas Covered in the Various Trainings**

It will consume enormous space to capture all the trainings that the staff of the Institute were exposed to during the tenure of Professor Sulaiman. Any attempt to do that cannot be exhaustive. It suffices to note that the training touched on virtually every area that the Institute needs to function optimally, and to motivate the staff to not only perform and develop themselves for current and future purposes, but to strengthen them, and give them the intellectual and analytical confidence for any possible encounter nationally and internationally. In some specific terms, the training could be said to have touched on the core mandates of the Institute (i.e., Legislative and Democratic matters) as well as Research, Train the trainers, Economy, Policy, Strategy, Good Governance, Law and Constitutional matters, Administration, Finance, Facility Management, Information and Communications Technology, and issues of Professionalism, and routine clerical services and procedures.

➤ **Other Vital Privileges**

Two other privileges stand out. These were the introduction of Sabbatical Leave and Leave of Absence in the institute. Before the appointment of Professor Sulaiman as DG, such never existed. The institute only accepted staffs from universities and other organisations for these opportunities but never allowed their own staff to enjoy same. It was such that if a staff of the institute secured appointment, he or she would be required to resign from NILDS to take up the new appointment. This anomaly has since been corrected with the new regime of staff welfare, which has significantly boosted staff morale and productivity.

## **Conclusion**

The legacy of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, as captured in this transformational leadership book, is one marked by an unwavering commitment to staff welfare and human capital development at the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). Under his visionary leadership, the Institute witnessed a renaissance in staff motivation, career progression, and overall well-being.

With a clear focus on critical areas such as improved welfare packages, enhanced compensation and benefits, and a comprehensive review of conditions of service, Professor Sulaiman prioritized the needs of the workforce as a catalyst for institutional growth. His tenure saw unprecedented attention to timely promotions, periodic salary reviews, and innovative schemes like the end-of-year productivity merit awards and bonus packages, that helped reduce the tax burden on staff, practical interventions that boosted morale and productivity.

Equally commendable is his drive for human capital development, demonstrated through expanded opportunities for in-service training, academic upgrading, and targeted career development initiatives. These efforts not only empowered individual staff members but also positioned NILDS as a model institution in the legislative sector.

Through leadership modelling and a people-centred management approach, Professor Sulaiman's nearly six-year stewardship transformed the workplace culture at NILDS into one that values competence, merit, and continuous learning. His legacy is not only institutional—it is deeply personal to

every staff member who has benefited from this regime of welfare and development. Indeed, his impact will resonate for years to come.

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**Annex 1: LIST OF NILDS STAFF WHO HAVE  
UNDERGONE EDUCATIONAL COURSE BETWEEN  
2019 - DATE**

S/N	NAME	COURSE OF STUDY
1	Patrick Udefuna	PhD in the Institute of Governance & Development Studies (In view)
2	Charity Ezenwajiobi	M.Sc. Political Economy & Development Studies
3	Maryam Sada	PhD Economics
4	Aminu Bello Dukku	PhD Climate Change Resilience & Sustainability (In view)
5	Tijo Zara Boryo	PhD Climate Change Resilience & Sustainability (In view)
6	Joke Akinsanmi	PGD Mass Communication (In view) for subsequent PhD in Mass Communication
7	Chirstabel ukoh	M.Sc. Information Management
8	Stella Paul	PGD Election & Party Management
9	Tosin Owoeeye	M.Sc. Public Administration (In view)
10	Ibe Ezechi	PhD Political Science
11	Abubakar Sodeeq	PhD Election & Party Policy (In view)
12	Musa Haruna	M.Sc. Political Analysis (In view)
13	Yahaya Abdulahmid	M.Sc. Civil Engineering (In view)
14	John Etimkbuk	B.Sc. Public Administration (In view)
15	Queeneth Chiwendu Udonsi	M.Sc. Early Childhood Education (In view)
16	Hauwa Pate	PhD Policy Analysis (In view)
17	Jeremiah Enenche Agada	M.Tech Library & Information Technology (In view)
18	Titilayo Marvellous Olakunbi	M.Sc. Library & Information Science (In view)
19	Chinako Asogwa	PhD Library & Information Science (In view)
20	Catherine ikokoh	PhD Library & Information Science
21	Hauwa Shiru	PGD Election & Party Management
22	Olajide Ayobolu	M.Sc. Election & Party Politics
23	Naziru Rabi	M.Sc. Public Policy & Admin



24	Dare Magobon	M.Sc. Legislative Studies (In view)
25	Juwairatu Abdulsalam	
26	Livinus Ature	PhD Policy Analysis (In view)
27	Hassana Ibrahim	PhD Political Science (In view)
28	Sofiat Sholagberu	M.Sc. Finance & Investment (In view)
29	Andrawus Musa	PhD (in view)
30	Rahimat Suberu	M.Sc. Finance & Investment (In view)
31	Stacy Igwe	PhD Legislative Studies (In view)
32	Moshood Olalere	PhD Parliamentary Administration (In view)
33	Abdulwahab Dahiru	M.Sc. Parliamentary Administration (In view)
34	Saratu Attajiri	M.Sc. Business Administration (in view)
35	Hawannat Salawu-Oyenike	M.Sc. Business Administration
36	Bakari Hussaini	HND (In view)
37	Omonigho Wesey	Ph.D Parliamentary Administration (In view)
38	Kolapo Abayomi	PH.D Political Science – Policy Analysis (In view)
39	Uju Nwachukwu	M.Sc. Legislative Studies (In view)
40	Oche Otene	M.Sc. Election & Party Politics (In view)
41	Ayuba Sule	B.Sc. Accounting (In view)
42	Gidado Muhammed	M.Sc. Public Administration (In view)
43	Jimoh Zaka	M.Sc. Election & Party Politics (In view)
45	Muniru Jibrin	PhD English Language (In view)
46	Umar Ali Muhammed	M.Sc. (In view)
47	Paul Terlumun	Ph.D Security & Strategic Studies (In view)
48	Hamza Dauda	Ph.D Accounting (In view)
49	Katman Gift	M.Sc. International Affairs & Diplomacy (in view)
50	Idris Ibrahim	PhD Public Administration
51	Ibrahim Yusuf Ayodele	PhD Management Science & Engineering (In view)

### Transformative Leadership in Practice

52	Elizabeth Onyeaku	M.Sc. Information Technology (In view)
53	Usman Waziri	M.Sc. Accounting & Finance (In view)
54	Taiwo Olaniyan	PhD Public Policy Analysis (In view)
55	Jamila Abdul	M.Sc. Procurement Management (In view)
56	Victor Etim	M.Sc. Data Science & Technology
57	Gideon Lamido	B.Sc. Sociology, B.Eng. Mechanical Engineering (in view)
58	Simon Wakawa	M.Sc. Electronic & Electrical Engineering
59	Rahila Nurudeen	M.Sc. Financial Economics
60	Ibrahim Usman	PhD Law
61	Muhammed Bello	M.Sc. International Relation & Diplomacy
62	Umar Musa Padah	LLM (Law) In view
63	Mohammed Rajid Adamu	M.Sc. Public Administration
64	Aliyu Sani Abubakar	M.Sc. Information Management (In view)
65	Uche Hulda Okechukwu	PhD In View
66	Lucky A. Tongs	PhD Political Economy and Development Studies (In view)

### In Summary:

The staff that have either completed or still in the process of completing their academic advancement from 2019 till date are as follows;

PhD Candidates	-	26
M.Sc. Candidates	-	32
B.Sc. Candidates	-	3
PGD Candidates	-	3
HND Candidates	-	2

# 6

## **LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES** **Shuaibu Danwanka, Usman Ibrahim and Bethel Ihugba**

### **Introduction**

**T**he period from 2019 to the first quarter of 2025 marked a pivotal phase in Nigeria's legislative development, characterised by extensive legal and policy reforms, institutional strengthening, and improved legislative support services. Under the leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as Director-General (DG) of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), the Institute served as a key technical resource for the National Assembly, state legislatures, and other democratic institutions. Its contributions were central to enhancing the quality of law making, governance, and democratic processes during this period.

Legislative support services encompass a broad spectrum of activities aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of lawmakers. These include bill drafting, motion drafting, bill scrutiny and analysis, brief of argument/lead debate preparation, academic publications, capacity-building

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

programmes, policy research, and legislative oversight assistance. As Nigeria's foremost legislative think tank, NILDS played an indispensable role in delivering these services, ensuring that legislators had the necessary tools and expertise to fulfil their constitutional responsibilities. The Institute's work strengthened parliamentary processes and fostered greater accountability and evidence-based policymaking.







Beyond core drafting and research functions, NILDS provided critical capacity-building initiatives, technical assistance to legislative committees, and platforms for public engagement. The Institute reinforced the link between governance and citizen participation by facilitating training workshops, stakeholder consultations, and policy dialogues. Through its academic publications and policy briefs, NILDS also contributed to broader discourse on legislative best practices, both nationally and internationally. Collectively, these efforts underscored NILDS' vital role in advancing Nigeria's democratic governance during Professor Sulaiman's tenure, leaving a lasting legacy of legislative excellence.

Examining legislative support services under Professor Sulaiman's leadership of NILDS from 2019 reveals remarkable institutional transformation and professionalisation within Nigeria's parliamentary system. As detailed in the preceding paragraphs, NILDS, under Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's leadership, fundamentally redefined the scope and quality of technical assistance available to lawmakers, establishing new benchmarks for legislative excellence.

The comprehensive support framework developed during this period - encompassing bill drafting, motion formulation, debate preparation, and research services - represented a quantum leap in parliamentary capacity building. These services enhanced the technical quality of legislation and strengthened the National Assembly's oversight and representative functions, contributing to more robust democratic governance.

This era will be remembered as a watershed moment when legislative support services transitioned from basic administrative functions to sophisticated, research-driven technical assistance. The institutional legacy and professional standards established during these years continue to shape Nigeria's legislative processes, ensuring sustained improvements in lawmaking quality and democratic accountability well beyond the period under review.

## LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES IN 2019

Analysis/Reports		(104)
Other Tech Reports		(79)
Motions		(29)
Bills		(26)
Lead Debates		(19)
Published Papers		(22)

Even though 2019 was an election year and a period of orientation for many new legislators, it still recorded a commendable level of legislative support service delivery, totalling 279 outputs. Notably, the dominant services provided were research-based, with Analysis/Reports accounting for

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

104 outputs (37.3%) and Other Technical Reports totalling 79 (28.3%). Drafting Bills (26) and Motions (29), though relatively modest at a combined 19.7%, was significant considering the transitional nature of the year. This pattern underscores the role of 2019 as a foundational phase, where emphasis was placed on equipping new members with analytical support to aid informed legislative participation.

The 2019 outputs, particularly the research-intensive nature of the services, laid the groundwork for the more robust legislative activities that followed. In subsequent years, especially by 2023, there was a dramatic increase in output volume and diversity, with Bills alone surging to 185. The absence of certain service types, such as Internal Review in 2019, also points to institutional evolution and the gradual expansion of service portfolios in response to growing legislative demands. Thus, 2019 marked a year of transition and set the trajectory for more dynamic and output-driven legislative support in the following years.

The year 2019 marked a significant turning point for legislative support services in Nigeria, particularly with the commencement of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's tenure as Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) in the third quarter of the year. His appointment came at a critical juncture, when Nigeria's National Assembly and state legislatures, increasingly needed enhanced technical capacity to address complex governance challenges, and deliver on their constitutional mandates.

Before 2019, though functional, legislative support services in Nigeria faced limitations regarding the depth of research, modernisation of drafting techniques, and strategic alignment with national development goals. The advent of the 9th National Assembly in June 2019 created fresh demands for evidence-based policymaking, requiring more sophisticated legislative tools and expertise. Professor Sulaiman's assumption of office brought renewed vigour to NILDS' mandate, initiating immediate reforms to position the Institute as the premier centre for legislative excellence in Africa.

Under his leadership from Q3 2019, NILDS began implementing transformative changes across all aspects of legislative support services. This included upgrading bill drafting protocols, introducing contemporary motion formulation methodologies, and establishing robust legislative research and analysis mechanisms. The Institute's interventions in 2019 laid crucial groundwork for what would become a geometric progression in the quality and impact of Nigeria's legislative outputs throughout the subsequent years of Professor Sulaiman's tenure. These early reforms demonstrated his distinctive leadership approach - combining academic rigour with practical parliamentary experience to bridge the gap between legislative theory and practice.

## LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES IN 2020

Bills Drafted	██████████ (41) vs. ██████ (26)
Motions	██████████ (33) vs. ██████ (29)
Analysis/Reports	████████████████████ (81) vs. ████████████████████ (104)
Lead Debates	██████████ (26) vs. ██████ (19)

**Graph: 2020 vs. 2019 Output**

Despite the unprecedented challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic—which triggered global lockdowns, disrupted legislative calendars, and strained institutional operations—the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), under the leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, exhibited exceptional resilience and adaptability. Rather than experiencing a complete halt, NILDS swiftly transitioned to remote legislative support services, ensuring that the legislature's critical functions were maintained and significantly optimised during this crisis period. This strategic shift is evident in the 2020 output data, which reflects a strong commitment to continuity and innovation in service delivery.

Despite physical restrictions, NILDS maintained high research productivity. For instance, Analysis/Reports totalled 81—only a 22% decline from 2019, while other Technical Reports reached 67, representing a minimal 15% drop. These figures are impressive, given the scale of global disruption. Remote work enabled sustained policy analysis, allowing lawmakers to receive timely and data-driven insights critical for crafting effective health and economic response strategies. At the same time, NILDS recorded notable increases in core legislative functions, with Bills rising to 41 (a 58% increase from 2019) and Motions growing to 33 (up 14%). These gains underscore how digital tools and virtual collaboration ensured that legislative processes remained active and effective.

Moreover, 2020 marked the expansion of NILDS into new service areas. Internal Review outputs stood at 39—its first recorded entry—signalling the introduction of remote quality-



control frameworks. Similarly, Lead Debates and Briefs increased by 37% from 2019, and Published Papers jumped by 50%, indicating that remote collaboration sustained and enhanced academic productivity. These developments reflect a strategic pivot toward innovation and institutional growth, with NILDS effectively leveraging the pandemic to catalyse reform and modernisation in legislative support services.

2020 stood out as a clear testament to the visionary leadership of the Director-General, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, as NILDS navigated the COVID-19 crisis with agility and innovation. By swiftly implementing remote drafting systems, virtual training, and e-consultations, the DG effectively mitigated the impact of nationwide lockdowns on legislative support services. His strategic focus on sustaining essential outputs—such as bills, motions, and critical policy reports—ensured that legislative functions continued uninterrupted despite the global disruption. Introducing new services like Internal Review demonstrated the Institute's institutional resilience and capacity for innovation under pressure. Far from halting operations, the pandemic became a springboard for transformation, and the 2020 data decisively dispels any notion that legislative work was paused—proving instead that under the DG's leadership, NILDS not only adapted but expanded, laying a solid foundation for the exponential growth witnessed in subsequent years.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES IN 2021

Bills Drafted	██████████ (47)	vs.	██████████ (41)	vs.	██████ (26)
Analysis/Reports	██████████ (80)	vs.	██████████ (81)	vs.	██████████ (104)
Lead Debates	██████ (26)	vs.	██████ (26)	vs.	██████ (19)
Internal Review	██████████ (30)	vs.	██████████ (39)	vs.	—

Graph: 2021 vs. 2020 vs. 2019

The year 2021 marked a pivotal phase of post-pandemic recovery and strategic expansion for legislative support services in Nigeria. Under the continued leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) transitioned from pandemic-induced adaptations to a more structured and forward-looking approach to legislative assistance. This period reflected not only a rebound from the disruptions of 2020 but also a consolidation of innovations introduced during the pandemic. With enhanced digital infrastructure and institutional resilience, NILDS built upon the previous year's momentum to expand its scope and refine its service delivery to the legislature.

In legislative drafting, NILDS recorded a significant rise in Bills drafted, reaching 47 in 2021—a 15% increase from 2020 and an impressive 81% jump from pre-pandemic 2019. Although Motions drafted dipped slightly to 31 from 33 in 2020, they remained above 2019 levels, suggesting a stabilisation and strategic reprioritisation of legislative initiatives. On the research front, Analysis/Reports remained steady at 80, closely mirroring 2020's output, but still 23%

below 2019's peak. The decline in Other Technical Reports to 45 (down 33% from 2020) indicates a resource shift toward legislative drafting, as the post-pandemic legislative agenda intensified and required more targeted interventions.

The Institute also maintained strong performance in debate and knowledge support services. Lead Debates and Briefs held steady at 26, double the 2019 figure, confirming the successful institutionalisation of virtual and hybrid preparation systems introduced during the pandemic. NILDS recorded data for Papers Presented (8) for the first time, reflecting a new emphasis on external knowledge dissemination. Meanwhile, Internal Review outputs stood at 30—a 23% decrease from 2020's initial high, signalling that quality control mechanisms were now fully embedded into regular workflows. Overall, 2021 was not just a year of recovery but of consolidation, as NILDS transformed pandemic-era innovations into lasting institutional practices.

### **Strategic Insights: Post-Pandemic Rebalancing**

In 2021, NILDS transitioned from the emergency-driven responses of the COVID-19 era to a more sustainable and structured model of legislative support. The focus gradually shifted from short-term crisis management to long-term impact, with increased emphasis on core legislative functions such as bill drafting and policy debate facilitation. This rebalancing ensured that the Institute continued to meet the evolving needs of the legislature more deliberately and strategically.

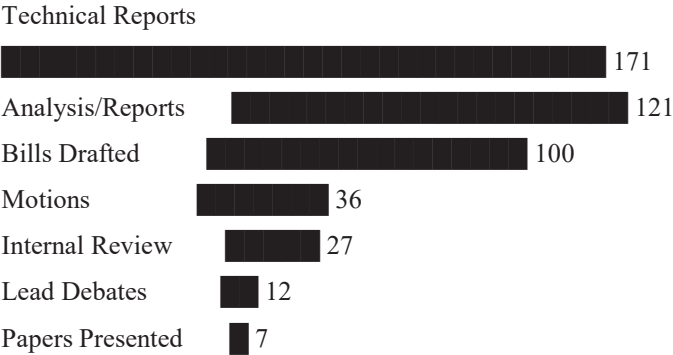
**Institutionalising Innovations:**

Technological tools and remote work systems introduced in 2020 were retained and refined in 2021. Virtual drafting, e-consultations, and hybrid engagement methods, became permanent features of NILDS' operational model, resulting in improved service quality. While the volume of reports declined compared to pre-pandemic levels, the consistency and relevance of outputs demonstrated an intentional move toward higher-impact interventions over sheer quantity.

**Expanding Influence – A Foundation for Geometric Growth:**

The introduction of Papers Presented and the gradual inclusion of postgraduate supervision (which would grow in subsequent years) signalled the DG's broader vision of transforming NILDS into a knowledge-driven institution. These developments, coupled with the institutionalisation of remote tools and strategic realignment, made 2021 a crucial bridge year. It consolidated pandemic-era innovations while laying a strong foundation for the exponential growth observed in 2022 and 2023—where bill outputs alone more than doubled. The data underscores NILDS' capacity to evolve through adversity and seize opportunities under Professor Sulaiman's transformational leadership.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES 2022



2022 marked a watershed moment for NILDS' legislative support services, with total output surging to 495 services—a 75% increase from 2021 and the highest annual performance recorded. This dramatic growth was driven by two key factors: the full institutionalisation of digital workflows developed during the pandemic and a strategic reallocation of resources to address post-pandemic legislative priorities. Technical reports skyrocketed by 280% (to 171), while bill drafting more than doubled to 100, reflecting NILDS' enhanced capacity to support lawmaking's technical and substantive aspects. The data reveals an organisation that had not just recovered from pandemic disruptions but had fundamentally transformed its service delivery model.

A closer examination shows strategic rebalancing across service categories. While research outputs (analysis/reports + technical reports) collectively grew to 59% of total services, their internal composition shifted significantly. The explosion in technical reports (34.5% of total output) suggests improved documentation systems and knowledge management, while the 51% growth in analysis/reports (to 121) indicates sustained

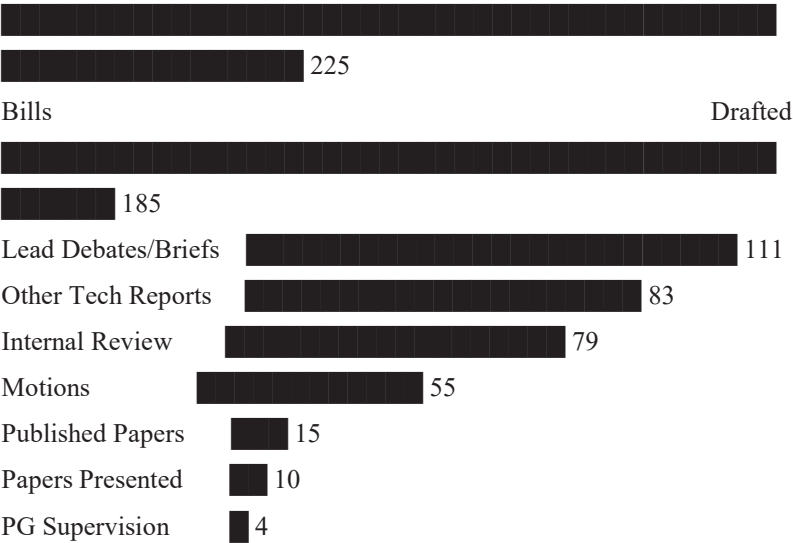
## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

demand for policy research. Notably, debate preparation services temporarily declined (54%) as NILDS prioritised urgent legislative drafting needs—a pragmatic reallocation that enabled the National Assembly to process critical post-pandemic recovery legislation. This demonstrates NILDS' agility in aligning services with evolving parliamentary priorities.

The 2022 results laid crucial groundwork for future expansion. The stabilisation of internal reviews (27) and introduction of new categories like papers presented (7) signalled the maturation of quality control mechanisms and academic outreach. Most importantly, the year established three enduring trends: (1) the viability of hybrid digital-in-person service delivery, (2) the centrality of technical documentation in legislative support, and (3) the ability to scale core services like bill drafting without compromising quality. Under Professor Sulaiman's leadership, these institutional advancements positioned NILDS for its record-breaking 767-service output in 2023, making 2022 the pivotal transition year from recovery to transformative growth.

LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR 2023

Analysis/Reports



Unlike typical election-year patterns—where legislative output often declines due to political transitions—2023 saw a 55% surge in services (from 495 in 2022 to 767), directly contrasting with the 45% drop observed during the last election year (2019 to 2020). This anomaly suggests systemic capacity improvements or exceptional demand for legislative support. For instance, while Published Papers fell by 29% (consistent with 2019's post-election drop), critical services like Bills Drafted (+85%) and Analysis/Reports (+86%) expanded dramatically. This implies that core legislative functions were prioritised despite electoral disruptions, possibly due to unresolved policy backlogs or proactive preparation for new administrations.

The most striking outlier is Lead Debates/Briefs, which ballooned by 825% (12 to 111), starkly contrasting 2019's

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

63% decline in similar activities. This could reflect heightened legal or constitutional debates tied to the election (e.g., litigation preparedness) or institutional efforts to safeguard legislative continuity during transitions. Even traditionally secondary services like Internal Review (+193%) and Motions (+53%) grew, underscoring a broader trend of institutional resilience. The introduction of PG Supervision further signals an expansion of roles beyond typical election-year constraints.

This divergence from historical norms raises critical questions: Did procedural reforms (e.g., digitisation and staffing) mitigate election-year disruptions? Or was 2023's output driven by external pressures like economic crises or judicial interventions? Either way, the data challenges the assumption that election years inherently reduce productivity, instead revealing how strategic prioritisation can invert traditional trends. Future efforts should codify these lessons to sustain performance during upcoming electoral cycles.



LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR 2024

Analysis/Reports



Bills Drafted



Lead Debates/Briefs



Other Tech Reports 83

Internal Review 79

Motions 55

Papers Presented 10

Published Papers 15

PG Supervision 4

Defying Election-Year Conventions

The 2024 legislative services data breaks from historical trends by maintaining peak productivity levels identical to 2023's record output of 767 services, directly contrasting with the 40% decline witnessed after the 2019 elections. Core services like Analysis/Reports (225) and Bills Drafted (185) sustained their 2023 highs, suggesting that institutional strengthening through digital transformation or expanded permanent staffing has mitigated traditional election-year disruptions. The return of Published Papers (15) and continued operation of PG Supervision (4) further demonstrate stabilised workflows that now appear resilient to electoral transitions,

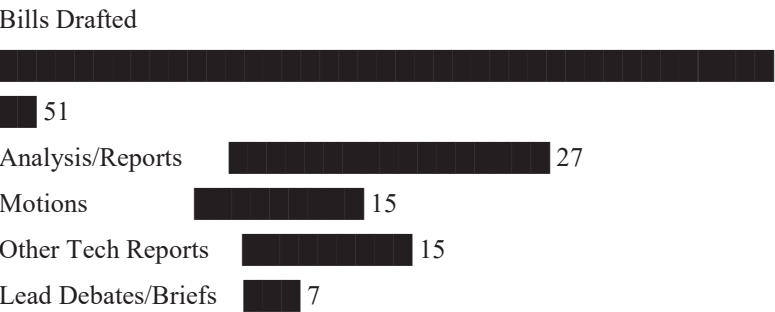
**Transformative Leadership in Practice**

marking a significant evolution in legislative operational capacity.

**Strategic Focus on High-Impact Services**

A clear prioritisation of knowledge-intensive work has emerged, with Analysis/Reports and Lead Debates/Briefs collectively growing to constitute 44% of total output – a notable increase from 34% in 2022 – signalling a deliberate shift toward evidence-based policymaking and legal preparedness. While essential legislative functions like Bills and Motions maintain strong output, more peripheral services such as Papers Presented and PG Supervision persist at consistent but minimal levels, indicating resources are being strategically allocated to maximise institutional impact. This two-year pattern establishes 2023-2024 as a potential new benchmark for legislative productivity, reflecting optimised processes that emphasise quality and utility over quantity.

**LEGISLATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES Q1 2025**



**Q1 2025 Performance in Context**

The first quarter of 2025 shows 115 services rendered, mirroring the full-year 2024 preliminary total and suggesting either consistent quarterly distribution or early-year

slowdown. Bills Drafted (51) and Analysis/Reports (27) remain the dominant categories, maintaining their historical prominence but at reduced volumes compared to recent annual outputs (185 and 225, respectively, in 2023-2024). Notably absent are published papers, PG supervision, and internal review, which are gaps that may reflect reporting delays or strategic de-prioritisation of these services during early legislative sessions.

### **Emerging Quarterly Patterns**

At this run rate (115 services per quarter), 2025 could project to ~460 annual services – a potential 40% decline from 2023-2024 peaks if sustained. The persistence of Lead Debates/Briefs (7) and Motions (15) at minimal levels aligns with post-election year trends observed in 2020 and 2021, while Other Technical Reports (15) show unexpected resilience. This distribution hints at a possible return to pre-2023 service prioritisation, with core legislative functions (Bills, Analysis) being shielded from cuts while ancillary services are scaled back.

### **CONCLUSION**

The legislative support services data from 2019 to 2025 showcases an extraordinary transformation in Nigeria's parliamentary institution-building, achieved under the visionary leadership of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman, Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). Professor Sulaiman's strategic reforms - including digital transformation of legislative workflows, institutionalisation of knowledge-based services, and capacity development initiatives - have produced unprecedented results: breaking the cycle of election-year

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

productivity declines (evidenced by sustained 767-service outputs in 2023-2024), tripling research outputs, and establishing Nigeria as a continental leader in legislative support services. The remarkable growth in Analysis/Reports (225%), Lead Debates/Briefs (825% since 2022), and the innovative introduction of PG Supervision reflect Professor Sulaiman's unique ability to simultaneously strengthen core legislative functions while pioneering new democratic development frontiers.

This data narrative ultimately tells the story of transformational leadership in action. Professor Sulaiman's tenure at NILDS has redefined the boundaries of legislative institutional performance, demonstrating how technical excellence combined with visionary leadership can produce quantitative leaps (the 175% increase from 2021-2023) and qualitative transformations in governance systems. As Nigeria's National Assembly enters the 2025 electoral cycle, the institutional resilience and service delivery frameworks established under Professor Sulaiman's leadership provide an enduring foundation for democratic development. This legacy will continue to benefit Nigeria's governance architecture for years. His model of "development-focused legislative institutionalism" offers valuable lessons for parliamentary bodies across the Commonwealth and beyond.



# 7

## **A DARING MOVE: COMPLETION, COMMISSIONING AND MOVEMENT TO THE PERMANENT SITE**

**Maryam Bello, Doris Aaron, Moshood Olalere and Tijo  
Zara Boryo**

### **Introduction**

**T**his chapter discusses issues pertaining to the permanent site of NILDS. It opens with a review of the state of the permanent site when Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman assumed office as the Director General in May 2019, followed by an analysis of the specific interventions of Prof. Sulaiman to facilitate a speedy completion of the project to a habitable level. The chapter also highlights the strategies/mechanisms adopted and the role of key actors in the process. It discusses the commissioning of the project, with pictorial evidence of main actors such as the then President of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, etc; as well as the eventual relocation to the site

in phases. It as a result of this daring move. These challenges will also be captured, including the steps taken to overcome such challenges and critical lessons for future/other chief executives.

### **The Pressing Needs of NILDS Permanent Site**

The NILDS Permanent Site was birthed out of the Institute's desire to have proper infrastructures for capacity building of participants and the effective functioning of the Institute. The target of the Institute was to be internationally recognized as a research outfit that facilitates the development and sustenance of dynamic and effective legislature and democracy not only in Nigeria, but the sub-region and the entire African continent.

In recognition of this need, a contract for the construction of the Permanent Site was awarded by the National Assembly Tenders Board on December 18, 2012 to Julius Berger Nigeria PLC, to be completed within the period of 102 weeks after the completion of the legal agreement. In line with proper supervision of the execution of the contract awarded to the German based company, M/S Integrated Practice Consultants, in conjunction with the Department of Estate and Works of the National Assembly, as well as the NILS Procurement Unit, were all incorporated to be part of the project.

The development of NILDS Permanent Site commenced in 2013 on 8.12 hectares (81,200m<sup>2</sup>) of land on Plot 307 Cadastral Zone C00 Piwoyi district, along the Airport Road in Lugbe, Abuja. The project was categorized into two phases. The Scope of the work includes the Convention Centre,

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

Administrative Building, Library, Lecture Halls, Main Entrance/Reception, Hostel, Recreation Centre, Chapel, Mosque, Clinic, Creche, Maintenance Building, Chairman's residence, Alternate Chairman's residence, Senior Management Quarters, Middle Management Quarters, Junior Staff Quarters, main and rear gate houses along with associated electrical, structural and mechanical services.

From the scope of the project as highlighted above, many perceived it as an ambitious project due to its capital-intensive cost of execution. However, in a bold move by the 7<sup>th</sup> Assembly, led by the former President of the Senate His Excellency, Senator David A.B. Mark, GCON and former Speaker, House of Representatives, His Excellency, Rt. Hon. Aminu Waziri Tambuwal, CFR performed the ground breaking ceremony of the Institute's Permanent Site, which took place in the year 2013. The contract was designed to be completed within 102 weeks. However, the set target for the completion of the contract could not be accomplished due to inundated challenges which will be highlighted in details subsequently.

As at 2019, the construction of phase 1 which addresses the core structures/ facilities such as the main reception hall, administrative building, lecture halls, library building, convention centre, service building, sewage treatment, water treatment plant, and the entrance gate house was at an appreciable completion stage. However, construction work was suspended during the period of change in the Institute's Management from that of Prof. Ladi Hamalai who handed over to Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman in April 2019. Phase 2 of the development comprised of support facilities such as the



hostel accommodation, post graduate school building, mini fire station, clinic, crèche, DG's guest house, Chairman's guest house, Alternate Chairman's guest house, and staff accommodation.

### **Completion of the Permanent Site**

Upon assumption of duties, Prof. Abubakar O Sulaiman made the completion and occupation of the Permanent Site one of his priorities. The construction of the Permanent site was encapsulated with challenges that halted the progress of the project. A project of 26 months (104 weeks) from 2013 was yet to attain practical completion as at 2019. The construction witnessed disruption of site activities with Suspension of Works (SoW) from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 to 1<sup>st</sup> June 2016 and from January 2017 to November 2018. This was as a result of delays in payments that had accumulated into unpaid valued works. There is also Extension of Time (EoT) on the contract.

Upon assumption of office, the Director General visited the Institute's Permanent Site to do an onsite assessment of the project. However, the contractor (Julius Berger) had left site on the account of outstanding debts to the tune of Seven Billion Naira and insisted that the payment must be made before they resume work on the site. This was indeed a major challenge that affected and slowed down the work of the Permanent Site. Determined by the audacity of breaking barriers, and the resilience of Professor Sulaiman, he personally facilitated a meeting between the leadership of the National Assembly, Julius Berger Nigeria, contract consultant, as well as the Institute's team to seek a way out in the overall interest of the Institute and the National Assembly. At the meeting, the Director-General agreed to pay off the

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

outstanding debts incurred by the Institute with the contractor. However, it was agreed to be paid in instalments from the capital budget of the Institute and other sources in order to ensure that the contractor returned to Site.

Prof. Sulaiman sought for interventions on the funding for the completion of the project with the help of the leadership of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly. He further ensured that funds were allocated to the project through Special Intervention Funds from the Federal Ministry of Finance using his personal unparalleled ability to network. He ensured that debts incurred were cleared over time. The contractor was able to resume work on site to complete core structures that would enable the Institute to occupy it. This was attained by the tenacious efforts of Prof. Sulaiman, who also facilitated an oversight visit to the site by the then Speaker of the 9th House of Representatives, Rt. Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila (CFR) to personally inspect the state of the project. Professor Sulaiman was vocal in affirming that NILDS had met its financial obligations to the contractor, and that any delays were not due to institutional debt, emphasizing the urgency to complete the project without further setbacks. The role of the leadership of the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly was very instrumental in achieving this vision because they were interested in ensuring that NILDS relocated to its Permanent Site.

In another bold move by the audacious Professor Sulaiman, he set up a technical committee to review the existing contract for the construction of the Institute's Permanent Site. The Committee carefully reviewed the contract and discovered that the contract agreement was skewed in favour of the contractors against the client. Some of these unfavourable

conditions included payments for staying out of site, exchange rate differentials among other factors that placed the Institute at a disadvantage. Those challenges on the contract of the permanent site were responsible for delays, funding uncertainties, and contractual complexities. Professor Sulaiman's leadership was instrumental in bringing renewed focus and coordination to the completion effort.

Professor Sulaiman also oversaw quality control and the integration of modern technological amenities to ensure the permanent site met international standards for legislative research and democratic training. Facilities included research centres, lecture halls, policy analysis units, conference rooms, a specialized library, and administrative offices, equipping NILDS to fulfil its mission as a leading regional institute. This was done through his personal efforts, when the contractor gave outrageous bill for furnishing the state-of-the-art facility. This daring move and his leadership style saved a lot of cost to the Institute.

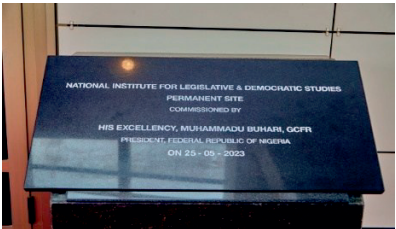
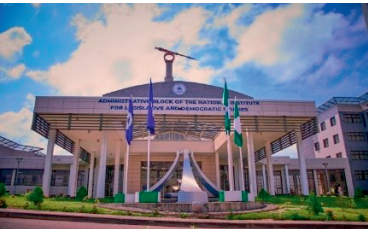
### **Commissioning of the permanent site**

The Permanent Site was commissioned by President Muhammadu Buhari on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> May, 2023. Prior to the event, completion of the core structures for habitation was ensured by the Management of the Institute. Testing of installed equipment and some aspects of the furnishing was done. A special Committee was also set up to ensure a smooth commissioning and sectional handover of the completed structures was done. The event was graced by dignitaries in the public and private sector. Some of the notable personalities in attendance were the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Muhammadu Buhari (GCFR), Senate

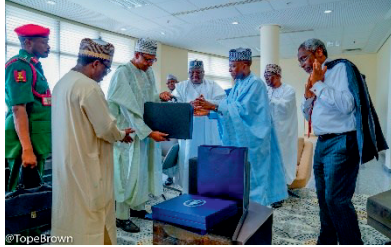
**Transformative Leadership in Practice**

President and former Chairman of the NILDS Governing Council Sen. Ahmed Lawal, former Alternate Chairman and Speaker of the House of Representatives Hon. Femi Gbajabiamila, Clerk of the National Assembly, Management of NILDS and others. This was a significant milestone in the administration of Prof. Sulaiman.

Below are some selected photos from the commissioning of the permanent site.



**A DARING MOVE: COMPLETION, COMMISSIONING  
AND MOVEMENT TO THE PERMANENT SITE**



**Relocation of the Institute from the Temporary Site in  
Maitama to the Permanent Site Piwoyi**

In August, 2023 Prof. Sulaiman set up a five (5) member Relocation committee. Their responsibility was to strategise and implement the movement of the Institute from its temporary site in Maitama to the Permanent site. The relocation was planned in phases. The 1<sup>st</sup> phase was to move the DG's Directorate which comprised of all divisions and units under the directorate being accommodated at the right wing of No. 18 Danube Street, Maitama. The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase comprised of the movement of Finance and Accounts Department, the Audit Department, the Office of the Legal Adviser, Information and Communication Unit, Department of Training and International Collaboration (DTIC), and the Protocol Unit. The 3<sup>rd</sup> phase comprised of Department of Administration and Human Resources, Department of Democracy and Governance, and the Institute Stores which were accommodated at No. 14 Danube Street Maitama. All

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

departments in the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> phases were relocated to the administrative building on the Permanent Site.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Phase comprised of all departments accommodated at No. 1 River Niger Street, and No.30 Danube Street, Maitama. The departments are Institute Library, Department of Legislative Support Services (DLSS), Department of Studies (DOS), and Department of Economic Research Studies (DERS), which were relocated to the library building, on the Permanent Site. The exercise commenced on the August 25, 2023 and was completed in April 2024. The transition from temporary offices to the Permanent Site was carefully planned and executed, to avoid disrupting ongoing programs. Professor Sulaiman personally supervised the relocation process, ensuring staff adaptation, and continuity of research and training activities. The new environment fostered collaboration across departments and enhanced the institute's operational efficiency and visibility.

### **Challenges Encountered with the Completion of the Permanent Site**

Like every daring move, the journey to completion and commissioning was fraught with challenges. Financial shortfalls remained a recurrent obstacle, and the bureaucratic layers of government approval slowed progress at critical points. Some sceptics argued that given the economic downturns and competing national priorities, pushing for the completion of the permanent site was unrealistic. Others feared that the relocation could disrupt the Institute's ongoing programmes and operations. Yet, Prof. Sulaiman remained undeterred. His leadership style often described as courageous, pragmatic, and forward-looking, enabled him to



counter resistance with facts, persuasion, and persistence, by constantly engaging stakeholders, and demonstrating transparency in the utilization of resources, he built the credibility necessary to sustain momentum. Some of these specific challenges include:

**a) Project funding/Budgetary Constraints and contractual technicalities**

Government project financing has always been a huge challenge in the construction industry. Government projects are financed through budgetary allocations. In the event the MDA is unable to get the required funds or intervention for the year, the project will suffer setback as in the case with the NILDS Permanent Site Project. Some of these setbacks include interests on delayed payments increasing the cost of the project, and currency fluctuation affected the delivery of specialist materials, change in price of local materials and workforce.

In 2016 an agreement between the stakeholders and the contractor was made with a payment schedule in order to resume site construction work after the suspension of work (SoW) of 2015, however in 2016 the required funds to address outstanding payments was not forth coming hence the contractor suspended work for the second time from 2017 to 2019, thereby adding an Extension of Time (EoT) on the project.

**b) Lack of commitment by stakeholders**

There was also lack of commitment by the legislature to see to the steady flow of funding on the project due to change of leadership. The 8<sup>th</sup> Assembly showed little interest towards the

funding of the Permanent Site project. This was seen in the budgetary allocation for the construction of the permanent site from 2015 to 2019. From 2019 to 2023, intervention was made by the 9th Assembly as it showed commitment to the project. Specifically, the leadership of the 9<sup>th</sup> Assembly facilitated the allocation of funds to the project so that the core structures would be completed and commissioned before the end of their tenure.

### **c) Review of the contract**

Changes to the original terms and conditions of the contract were made due to changes in market prices and inflation. However, these changes did fundamentally alter the terms of the contract. Julius Berger Nig. Plc varied the original contract sum from N52, 031, 164, 741.06 in 2012 to N59, 808, 282, 845.33 in 2014. An increase of N7B to the original contract sum. This made it an uphill task in meeting up the new realities of these changes made by the contractor. This challenge remained unprecedented in view of the fact that meeting up with the new contract change will pose a challenge in achieving the target and expectation of the contract agreement.

### **d) Introduction of technicalities on contract payment certificates**

This seriously affected the progress in the construction of the permanent site. The technicalities included job variations, currency fluctuations as well as a host of other factors that were not favourable in achieving the contract as expected.

### **e) Contract agreement poorly drafted in favour of the contractor**

The contract for the construction of the permanent site was poorly drafted to favour the contractor. The Consultant alluded to this at the meeting with representatives of NILDS and the



Consultant held on 5th April, 2024. For example, the clause 66.1(e) of the contract provided that the contract was to be implemented on 63:35 foreign: Local basis (Euro: Naira) at N203 to 1 Euro. That particular clause provided that “If the NGN/Euro exchange rate quoted by the CBN on the dates of receipt of payment by Contractor decreases below or increase above the exchange rate stated in the paragraph, then the net amount of such decrease or increase calculated pro-rata shall accordingly be deducted from or added to the contract price and allowed by or paid to the contractor as the case may be.” This clause placed the contractor at a more advantaged position than the contract awardee.

**f) The Consultant was not ready for the commissioning of the Permanent Site**

Despite the numerous challenges encountered from the commissioning of the project, substantial progress was made and the Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman’s led administration felt it was time to commence the movement to the permanent site. However, there was stiff resistance by the consultant having being engaged by the client to the project to protect his interest in the process of the execution of the contract, but in the turn of events, it was as though the consultant was working more in favour of the contractor than the client in ensuring the smooth execution and commissioning of the project. Having realized this, the consultant was suspended from site and later reengaged after committing itself to now work in favour of its client. Thankfully, the consultant came to the reality that it was no longer business as usual, and that the determined and firm leadership of Prof. Sulaiman to get the permanent site of the Institute commissioned, made them come to terms with the reality that the new dispensation under his leadership is

committed to purpose driven leadership, and achieving clear goals. In that regard, they committed themselves in ensuring that they work in in the general and collective interest of the Institute.

**g) The Contractor was also not ready for the Commissioning**

Indications also showed that prior to the commissioning, the former project coordinator was not ready for the commissioning. This was because, all requests made to him by the Relocation Committee were turned down. The pragmatism of the Director General by requesting the authority of Julius Berger to change him as the Project Coordinator, as well as other strategic moves made by the Director General as an experienced public servant, was what salvaged the situation.

**h) Incomplete process of handing over of completed structures and equipment by the Contractor to NILDS**

The process of handing over of the completed facilities by the Contractor, Julius Berger Nigeria PLC, to the Institute, was incomplete and not procedural. The process of testing and commissioning of special equipment such as the 4nos. Generators with the capacity of 1.3MVA, HVAC system, Fire Fighting system, sewage treatment system, and water treatment system, in the presence of the Institute's monitoring team, was not adhered to. Training of the Institute's Maintenance team on the above installed systems is yet to be conducted. This delay of handover/takeover of the systems has made the Institute to depend on the Contractor for the operation of the various equipment. It also made the Institute to depend on alternative power supply through generators owned by the contractor as the Institute was yet to be

connected to the national grid for power. The running cost was bearing on the Institute.

**i) Insufficient office and classroom accommodation**

The Permanent Site was design to accommodate 4 (four) departments, the Director General's Directorate and the Library. The departments were: Department of Administration, Finance and Accounts (DFA), Department of Research and Training (DRT), Department of Legislative Support Services (DLSS), and Post Graduate school. There was no provision for future expansion. The Institute has grown over the years from four departments to eleven (11) departments. There has been more collaboration with other academic institutions resulting to more post graduate students. Library building accommodates the three (3) departments and classrooms for the post graduate students due to the delay in the construction of the Post Graduate school (DOS) building.

**j) Sectional completion and Partial handover of Core structures.**

Although this is supposed to be a seeming positive development given the numerous challenges that were encountered, but the incomplete handover posed some challenges as there were office constraints. The facilities completed and partially handed over to the Institute for use are the main reception hall, administrative building, lecture halls, library building, service building, water treatment plant building, and sewage treatment building. With the sectional completion and partial handover of these facilities, the Institute is able to function, while the Contractor gradually addresses the completion of the outstanding facilities.

**DG's Innovative Strategies to Surmount the Challenges**

There is no gainsaying the fact that Prof. Sulaiman has exemplified visionary leadership as well as an unparalleled ability to network as a visionary leader, in the overall interest of the Institute to get it to the stage it is today, as a leading research and training think tank that has gained its pride of place both nationally and internationally. Some of the giant steps taken by Prof. Sulaiman to ensure the commissioning and the final relocations to the permanent site of the Institute include:

- a) Facilitated the offset of outstanding liabilities of Seven Billion Naira owed Julius Berger before he joined the Institute.
- b) Facilitated an interface of the representatives of the Contractor and the Consultant with the Governing Council in March, 2021.
- c) Facilitated various visits of Members of NILDS Governing Council to the Permanent Site to enable them make adequate budgetary provisions for the project.
- d) Facilitated the visit of the Speaker of the 9<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives to the Permanent Site where the Speaker literarily directed that the commissioning must hold before the end of the 9<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.
- e) Sought that JBN changed its Project Coordinator to NILDS Permanent Site to guarantee efficiency, credibility, competence, as well as building trust between the contractual parties.
- f) Furnishing the administrative building inherited in phases by the Director General saving the Institute more than half of the cost of furnishing the complex as submitted by the contractor.

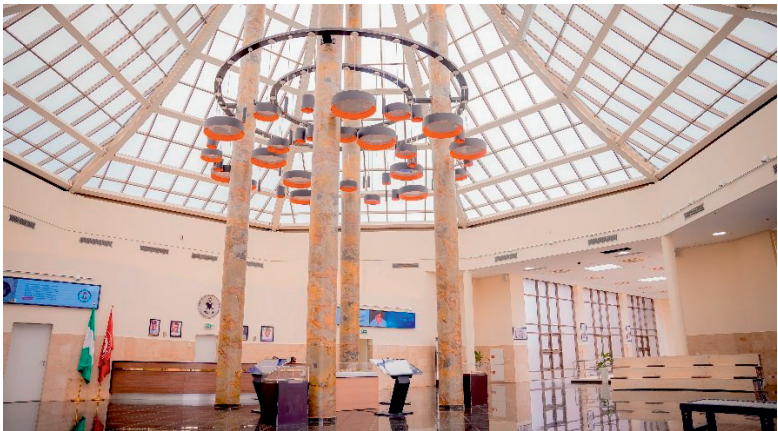
- g) Completely furnished the 60, 70, 120, and 300 capacity seater halls of the Institute with modern state-of-the-art facilities like language translators that can be found in a modern world class institution. He also saw to the completion of the redesigning and furnishing of a 150-seater capacity open arena for events and programmes in the Institute. This move made the Institute a sought-after venue by renowned institutions for their corporate programmes and activities. Prof. Sulaiman is also making efforts at ensuring that the 1000-seater capacity auditorium is furnished and put to use before the expiration of his tenure in May 2027.
- h) Improvement on the general landscaping and horticultural upliftment of the premises, with a modern state of the Art reception, that gives the facility an ambience befitting of an international research institute. The reception is equipped with modern technological navigation gadgets, that aid visitors to the institute in navigating the institute without stress. Also, a scanning machine is attained at every floor of the building for security check, making the Institute a safe haven for both staff and visitors.
- i) Completely furnished the Institute library with world-class facilities such as the circulations, archives, e-library, processing rooms among other international library facilities.
- j) Digital world class legislative museum
- k) Modern International state-of-the-art Information, Communication, Technology Laboratory.

**Picture gallery of the completed projects.**

Transformative Leadership in Practice



NILDS Building



Reception

**A DARING MOVE: COMPLETION, COMMISSIONING  
AND MOVEMENT TO THE PERMANENT SITE**



**Reception**



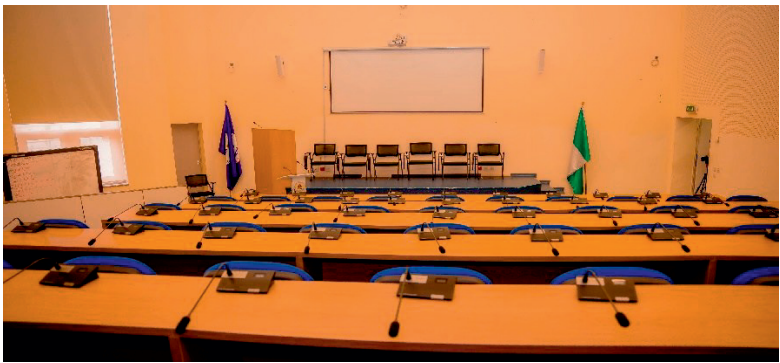
**Open Arena**



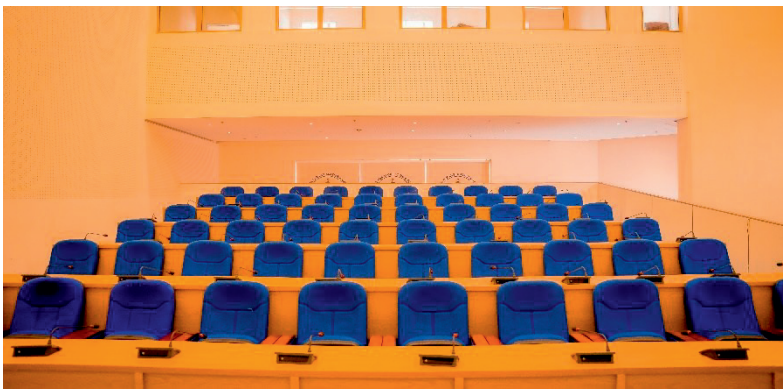
**Transformative Leadership in Practice**



**60-Seater Capacity Hall**



**70-Seater Capacity Hall**



**70-Seater Capacity Hall**

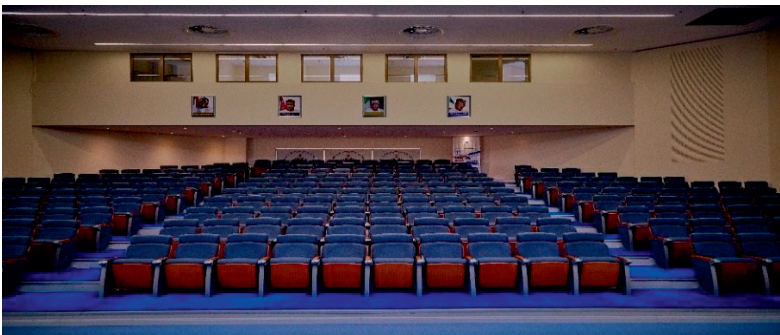




**120-Seater Capacity Hall**



**120-Seater Capacity Hall**

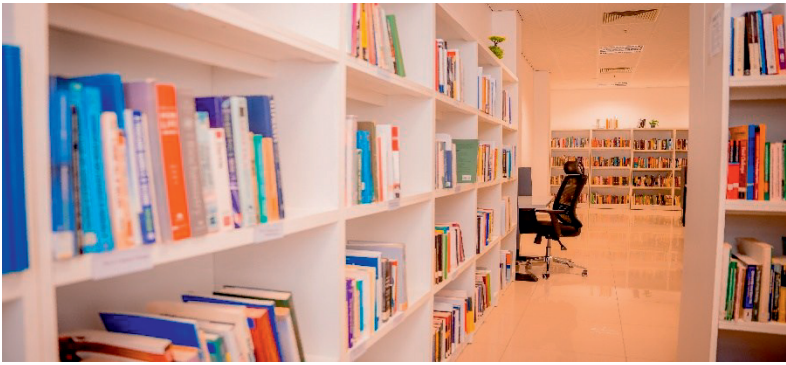


**320-Seater Hall**

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**



**320-Seater Hall**

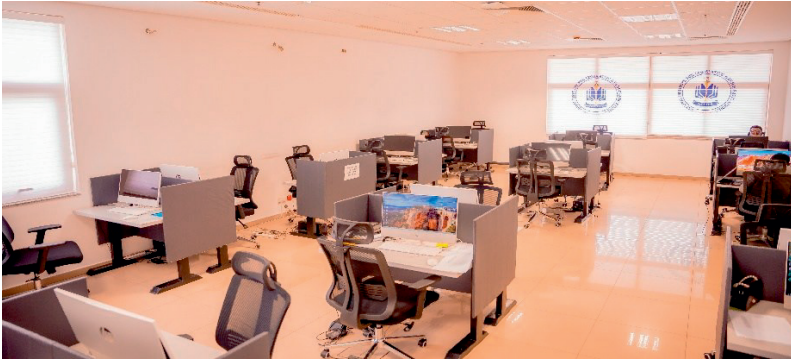


**Cross Section of NILDS Library**

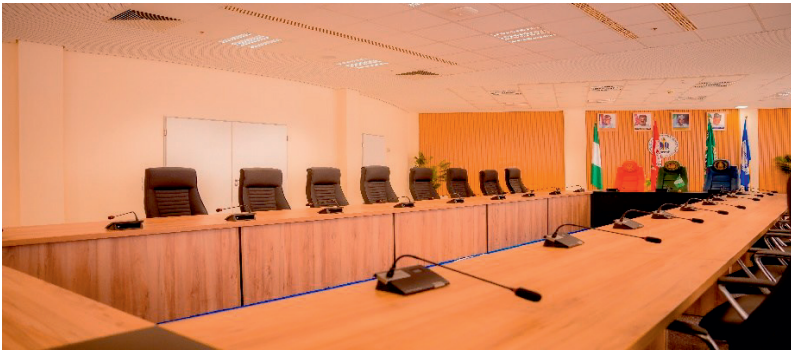


**Cross Section of NILDS Library**

**A DARING MOVE: COMPLETION, COMMISSIONING  
AND MOVEMENT TO THE PERMANENT SITE**



**Cross Section of NILDS Library**



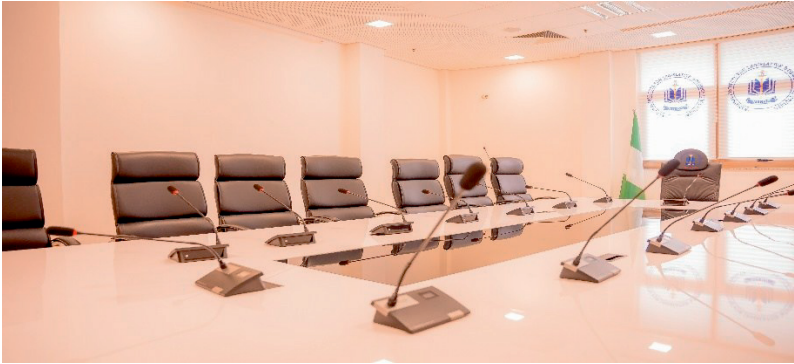
**Boardroom**



**Boardroom**



## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**



**Meeting Room 7960**



**Convention Centre under Construction**



**Convention Centre under Construction**

## **Critical Lessons for Future Chief Executives**

The story of the daring move by Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman to move the Institute to its world class edifice calls for reflection

for incoming chief executive of the institute. The following sterling qualities are worthy of emulation:

- i. Clear vision and passion
- ii. Determination and resilience
- iii. Networking
- iv. Informal communication with top government officials
- v. Lobbying
- vi. Boldness/courage
- vii. Unwavering vision

### **Conclusion**

The milestone achieved by the Institute under the leadership of Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman in ensuring the relocation and occupation of the NILDS Permanent Site, which over the years was like a dream that will never come to fruition, is an indication of his transformational leadership style, that has made it possible. Without his determination, resilience, and dedication, the commissioning and possible occupation of the Permanent Site, would have been a mirage. Despite compromises by the contractor and the consultant, exemplified in several ways, Prof. Sulaiman maintained his vision without distraction, until he achieved the desired result. Even after relocation to the Permanent Site, the reluctant and lackadaisical attitude of both the JBN and the Consultant to connect the Institute to the National Grid for almost a year, became yet another uphill task to achieve, yet the indefatigable Director General took the bold step by ensuring that the Institute is connected to the National Grid. The Management also took over the issue of furnishing and landscaping when it was obvious that JBN was not ready to carry it out and was affecting the efficiency and utilization of the edifice. All of these frantic efforts are a justification of the transformative leadership of Professor Sulaiman whom has shown that leadership is simply and squarely role performance within a duration of time.

### **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's daring move to complete, commission, and relocate NILDS to its permanent site, not only resolved longstanding infrastructural challenges but also set the stage for the Institute to be a premier regional hub for legislative excellence and democratic sustainability. His blend of strategic vision, resourcefulness, and stakeholder engagement, has ensured NILDS remains a critical pillar in shaping Nigeria's democratic future.

# 8

## ACADEMIC REVOLUTION AND THE EXPANSION

**Asimiyu Abiola, Usman Walli and Moshood Amuda**

### **Introduction**

**T**he tenure of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman as DG NILDS witnessed significant developments in the area of training and academic expansion. The developments can best be described as ‘academic revolution and expansion of the frontiers of knowledge’. Most of the developments that were recorded were anchored mainly by the Department of Studies and at other times by the Training and International Cooperation Department, two of the core departments of the Institute. The chapter is divided into sections namely: Introduction- capturing the mandate and organo-gramme of the Department; Student Matters- capturing the academic programmes being run in the Institute, the quality of lecturers as well as enrolment status; Examination matters- capturing innovations introduced in the examination processes and procedures; Academic collaborations- capturing various institutions the Institute collaborates with and the nature of the collaboration; Internal reforms- capturing institutional and process reforms

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

introduced in the Department such as digitization, automation of services, Fellowship award, and the establishment of an Academic Advisory Board, and extensive professional training and workshops facilitated and carried out by the Institute aimed at democratic enlightenment and consolidation.

### **Mandate of the Department of Studies**

The Department of Studies is an established organ of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS). The department was established in 2013 which was a year after the take-off of the Institute. The Division is saddled with the responsibility of building credible academic, legislative, governance, and democratic capacity, for legislators, legislative aides, and the public.

Aside this core mandate, the department showcases the Institute in the public space as a citadel of knowledge and academic excellence. The Department of Studies also engages in various academic collaborations with various academic institutions with the aim of extending the frontiers of knowledge.

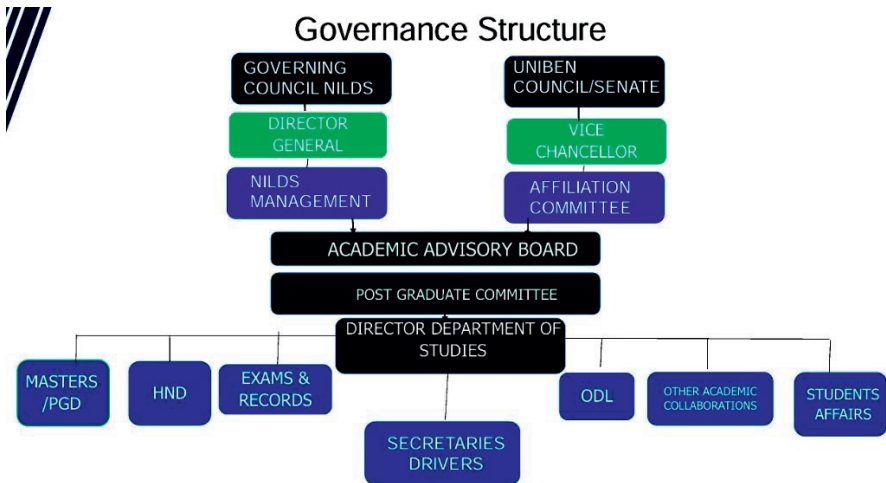
Furthermore, the Department of Studies ensures that lecturers engaged by the Department to handle the various courses offered are very experienced and well-bred. Finally, the Department serves as the hub of academic excellence for the Institute, the legislative arm of government, and the entire country.



## Organogram of the Department of Studies

The Department of Studies is carefully structured to enable and maintain free work flow and information dissemination across the administration chain.

Illustrated below is a chart of the Governance Structure of the Department:



Source: Dept of Studies, 2025

## Specific Academic Innovations and Reforms

NILDS witnessed tremendous improvements in its academic programmes under the leadership of Professor Sulaiman. We highlight some of the specific accomplishments during this period.

### a) Floating of new Postgraduate programmes with NILDS/UNIBEN

In its bid of extending the frontiers of knowledge, the Department of Studies introduced the following four (4) new

## **Transformative Leadership in Practice**

post-graduate programmes under the NILDS/UNIBEN collaboration:

- i. Master in Constitutional Law and Constitutional Development (MCLCD)
- ii. Postgraduate Diploma in Legislative Studies
- iii. Postgraduate Diploma in Legislative Drafting
- iv. Postgraduate Diploma in Parliamentary Administration

### **b) Increase in the Number of Highly Qualified and Experienced Lecturers**

The quest for expansion and growth propelled the Department to increase the number of post-graduate programmes from five to nine. This increase in number of programmes led to a corresponding increase in the number of courses, and a careful selection of lecturers who are thorough bred academics, as well as professionals. This provides a combination of scholarship and professionalism in the running of the Institute's academic programmes.

### **c) Increase in Enrolment into the NILDS/UNIBEN Programme**

The success of the NILDS/UNIBEN Post-Graduate programme has continued to flourish over the years. The success stories of the programme have attracted students from far and wide. At the inception of the programme, students were mainly drawn from the National Assembly, but presently, the programme has attracted students from other sectors, including the military. The number of admitted students in the NILDS/UNIBEN post-graduate programmes has been increasing with every new academic session. The 2024/2025

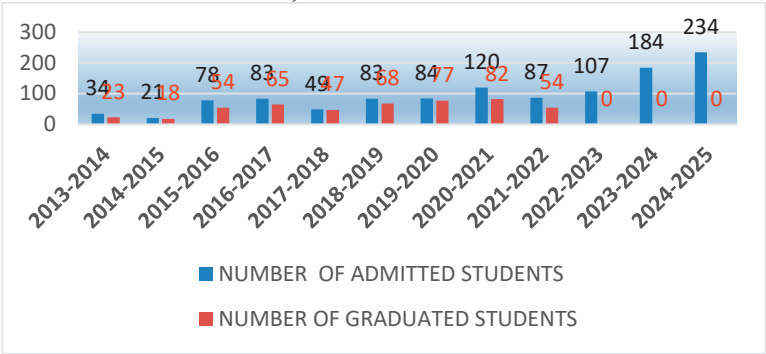
academic session recorded a total of two hundred and thirty-four (234) students and still counting which is the highest so far since inception.

**Table 8.1: Data on Admitted and Graduated Students from 2013/2014 – 2024/2025**

S/N	Year of Admission	Number of Admitted Students	Number of Graduated Students
1.	2013-2014	34	23
2.	2014-2015	21	18
3.	2015-2016	78	54
4.	2016-2017	83	65
5.	2017-2018	49	47
6.	2018-2019	83	68
7.	2019-2020	84	77
8.	2020-2021	120	82
9.	2021-2022	87	54
10.	2022-2023	107	0
11.	2023-2024	184	0
12.	2024-2025	234	0

Source: Dept of Studies, 2025

**Fig. 8.1: Admission and Graduation Distribution (2013/2014 -2024/2025)**



Source: Dept. of Studies, 2025

**d) Introduction of Open Distance Learning (ODL) for Prospective Students from States Assemblies and Local Government Councils, and other sectors**

In recent years, the landscape of education has undergone significant transformation, driven by technological advancements and the need for flexible learning solutions as technology continues to advance and become more accessible, educational institutions are increasingly adopting online platforms to deliver courses and training to diverse range of learners. This trend has been accelerated by various factors, including the global pandemic, which necessitated a rapid transition to remote learning environments.

The ODL offers prospective learners the opportunity to strengthen their career prospects (providing fast and practical learning in specific fields). Similarly, based on the Act, 2011 of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies, National Assembly Abuja, it is stated clearly that the Institute shall have powers to among other things: (2b)

“Award appropriate professional certificates and testimonials according to the training and teaching offered to its clients”.

### **Examination and Quality Assurance**

Examination is one of the major components of academic programmes and a critical measure of the credibility of an academic institution. Even though the NILDS academic programmes had enjoyed seamless conduct of examinations, the need for continuous improvement led to a number of reforms that helped to improve the quality of examination procedures of the programmes. Most of the reforms were introduced during the tenure of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman and they included the following:

#### **a) Introduction of Re-Sit Examination Policy for students:**

Over the years, the NILDS/UNIBEN Post Graduate Programme only operated the “Repeat System” for students who either failed the examination or missed writing the examination for whatever reason. Based on that practice, the student can only wait for the corresponding semester of the following academic session to sit for the missed examination.

The introduction of the Re-Sit policy assists students who were unavoidably absent during examination due to health issues or students on national assignment. It is also intended to prevent students who find themselves in such circumstances during the examination from carrying over the course (or courses) in the following academic session.

**b) Introduction of NILDS/UNIBEN Post-Graduate - Examinations Monitoring by Representatives from UNIBEN**

In order to promote transparency and objectivity for the NILDS/UNIBEN programmes, the Department of Studies deemed it necessary with the approval of the Post-Graduate Committee (PGC) to introduce the presence of External Examination Monitors during the semester examination as provided for in the MOU between NILDS and UNIBEN for the Post-Graduate programmes. The monitors, two erudite professors critically observe the conduct of examination and produce report of the process.

The Examination Monitors were appointed by UNIBEN to be present in halls during examinations to ensure that examination standards are not compromised by students, lecturers, or staff of the Department. This practice was initiated by the Prof. Sulaiman's administration which enforces quality control.

**c) Introduction of Virtual Oral Examination**

The Department under the current Director General Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, introduced the use of zoom software to conduct oral examination for students in the NILDS/UNIBEN Post-Graduate Programmes who are unable to attend in person due to cogent reasons.

Apart from students, examiners involved in the oral examination also take advantage of this initiative to provide quality examination for their students.

**d) Increasing the Number of External Examiners for Oral Examination**

Owing to its insatiable quest for efficacy and efficiency, the Department of Studies increased the number of external examiners for oral examination. The pool of external examiners provides variety for knowledge acquisition as well prevents limitations for the Department as regards to scholars.

**e) Conducting Examinations in the Morning Hours Instead of Afternoon**

Previously, under the former administration, NILDS/UNIBEN Post-Graduate semester Examinations were conducted in the afternoons between 3pm and 6:00pm. However, through the prompting of the Department of Studies during the leadership of Prof Sulaiman, the Post-Graduate Committee (PGC) resolved that examinations could be held in the morning hours between 10:00am and 1:00pm. The decision was a welcome development for students, lecturers and staff of the Department of Studies.

**New Academic Collaborations**

The under listed are the different collaborations and the number of programmes the Institute has with other institutions and they include the following:

S/N	Name of Collaboration	Number of Programmes
a.	NILDS / FULOKOJA	PhD (6)
b.	NILDS / ICSAN	Masters (1)
c.	NILDS / UNIABUJA	PGD, Masters & PhD (5)

Source: Dept. of Studies, 2025

**a) NILDS / Federal University Lokoja (FULOKOJA)**

The Institute, successfully signed the MoU on Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2023; under the signed MoU, seven (7) programmes each are currently running in the two ongoing 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic sessions with a total of 175 and 143 students respectively. The 7 PhD. Programmes are as follows:

- i. PhD in Legislative Studies;
- ii. PhD in Parliamentary Administration;
- iii. PhD in Election and Party Politics;
- iv. PhD in Leadership and Strategic Studies;
- v. PhD in Peace and Conflicts;
- vi. PhD in Social Works; and
- vii. PhD in Legislative Drafting.

**b) NILDS/ and Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators of Nigeria (ICSAN)**

- Successfully signed MoU on 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 2023;
- Establishment of Committee members from the tripartite institutions;
- Running of 1 Masters programme in Governance;
- Commencement date is 2024/2025;
- Successful allocation of courses to lecturers; and
- Other logistics are being put in place.

**c) NILDS / University of Abuja (UNIABUJA)**

- Successfully signed MoU on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2024;
- Under the signed MoU, seven (5) programmes would be mounted each on PGD, Masters and Ph.D. in the 2024/2025 academic session respectively. The 5 PGD, Masters and Ph.D. Programmes are as follows:
  - i. Electoral Management
  - ii. Democracy and Security Studies



- iii. Legislative and Democratic Leadership
- iv. Legislative Entrepreneurship
- v. Gender and Democratic Governance.

### **Internal Reforms/Initiatives in the Department of Studies under the DG**

#### **a) Introduction of Orientation Programme for New**

Under the leadership of Prof Abubakar Sulaiman an annual orientation programme was introduced to welcome new students to the Institute. The importance of the orientation programme is to introduce the new students to available facilities in the Institute through a facility tour and its code of conducts. During the programme, NILDS Management, staff of Department of Studies, lecturers and other students, would be introduced. The programme would also make use of the students' handbook for the new intakes to study and digest for proper understanding of the academic and related requirements of the programmes in NILDS.

#### **b) Creation of three (3) New Divisions in the Department**

Under the present administration, approval was given for the creation of three new divisions in the Department of Studies to encourage delegation of authority and ensure efficiency of services. The new divisions created include: Open Distance Learning (ODL), Other Academic Collaborations, and Students Affairs Division.

The creation of these divisions has unbundled and decentralized some existing divisions and has fashioned a seamless workflow process within the mandate of the Department of Studies. This development is geared towards

the expansion of the department to greater heights in the nearest future.

**c) Increase in staff strength of the Department**

In 2019, at the inception of the present administration, the manpower of the department was low. Despite its huge mandate and very tasking schedules, the department was limited to a personnel capacity of seven (7) staff. However, currently the Department boasts of personnel strength of fifteen (15) capable staff who are well trained and highly motivated.

**d) Creation of an Information Communication Technology (ICT) Unit**

The Department of Studies recently introduced the Information Communication Technology Unit, headed by an experienced expert in the field. The ICT unit acts as a support to all the divisions especially the Open Distance Learning (ODL) Division.

**e) Digitization of the Department's workflow**

The developed Automation Workflow System, Task Management System, and Leave Application for Department of Studies, allow the Director of the Department to assign task to divisional heads and any staff of the Department, and the divisional heads can do same to the staff under them. The Director-General can monitor and access the Department activities from anywhere in the world. The digitization of the Department has the following components:

**i. Access Privileges**

- a. Super user privileges
  - Director General, NILDS and
  - Director, Department of Studies
- b. Administrator user privileges (Consultants and Divisional Heads)
- c. User access levels (Non divisional head staff)
- d. Read only/ View and Report Privileges (Appointed DG's Aides)

**ii. Operational functionalities**

- a. Super administrator tasks assignment to both Divisional heads and other staff
- b. Administrator tasks assignment to staff under their supervisions
- c. Tasks statistical display
- d. Task status display with percentage progression (Total tasks, Pending, In Progress, and Completed)
- e. Group tasks assignment for team work
- f. Staff *Ad hoc* or personal assigned tasks
- g. Task Reporting and Printing capability
- h. Advance Search for reporting or decision making
- i. Audit trail (Super Administrator able to monitor deletion of tasks by administrator) and able to view login trail of administrator

**iii. Leave Application**

- a. Online leave application (Annual, maternity, paternity, sick, casual and emergency leave)
- b. Approval status Report (Approve or Rejected)
- c. Leave Status Report (Advance search for leave title)

**f) Implementation of Students Portal for Department of Studies**

Subsequent to the approval given by the Director General, the Department of Studies has reached an advanced stage in the commencement of the online students' portal to ease ways of processing students' enrolment, payments collection, course registration, generating of secured barcode ID Card, lecturers' course allocation, and online result computation that will allow authorized staff of the Department of Studies, lecturers, and students secured access. Already, the Department has bought the cloud server, configured it, registered the subdomain name [www.portal.nildsdos.edu.ng](http://www.portal.nildsdos.edu.ng), and has hosted the students' portal automation system. The benefits of the new computer automated system include, but not limited to, ability to seamlessly track students' personal data, academic documents, students' payments, claims of payments accruing to the department, performance of students and teachers, streamlining channels of reporting, and increasing work productivity of the department to meet up the global best practices.

**g) Introduction of Awards of 'Fellow of the Institute' to Distinguished Personalities during Convocation and Matriculation Ceremonies**

Guided by its passion for fostering good governance, democratic principles, and enhancing the legislative process, the Department under the initiative of the Director General, Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman introduced the award of 'Fellow of the Institute' to be conferred on citizens who have distinguished themselves through their immense contributions in the above-mentioned areas. The awards are conferred during the Institute's annual convocation ceremony.

Recently at the its 8<sup>th</sup> Convocation Ceremony, the Award of ‘Fellow of the Institute’ was conferred on well deserving personalities for their contributions to the society. These individuals include: General Abdulsalami Abubakar, GCFR (rtd), Senator (Dr.) Abubakar Bukola Saraki, CON, Rt. Honourable Yakubu Dogara, CON, Honourable (Mrs.) Nkeiruka Onyejeocha and Professor Mike Idiahi Obadan.

**h) Introduction of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) Regularization and National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) mobilization for Higher National Diploma (HND) Students of the Institute**

The Department of Studies, under the leadership of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, achieved regularization of students’ admission from JAMB for its HND programme and is currently working towards achieving same for its undergraduate programme. Similarly, efforts were made to ensure the mobilization of Higher National Diploma (HND) students for the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Scheme.

**i) Provision of Improved Learning Environment and Facilities**

In May, 2024, the Department of Studies was relocated by the present administration of Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman to NILDS Complex. The relocation made way for a more conducive learning environment for students, compared to the rented apartment where it previously operated. The new environment made provision for better lecture halls, furniture, and improved technology.

**j) Introduction of Under-Graduate programmes in the curriculum of studies**

Concrete plans to introduce under-graduate programmes into the academic curriculum of the Department of Studies are in top gear. The under-graduate programmes would serve as a platform to nurture students into the post-graduate level, thereby further extending the horizons of learning. Presently, a nine-member committee inclusive of a secretariat, has been set up by the Director General, to ensure the sustainability and continuity of the Under-Graduate programmes. The committee has been given three months to come up with its report.

**k) Ongoing Plans to Upgrade the Department to a University**

Under the vision and guidance of the DG, there is an ongoing plan and efforts to upgrade the Department to a full-fledged university. It is envisioned that the university would be referred to as University for Legislative and Democratic Studies. It is also envisaged that a separate location would be provided for the take-off of the university. This is in line with the mandate of the institute to extend the frontiers of knowledge on legislative and democratic studies and governance.

**Conclusion**

Beyond Nigeria, the Institute extends its training services to National Parliaments across Africa, conducting benchmarking and exchange programmes, with countries such as Liberia, Ghana, Uganda, the Gambia, Somalia, and Benin Republic, and indeed, personnel of the ECOWAS Parliament. The training and capacity-building initiatives of the Institute have

significantly enhanced legislative effectiveness in Nigeria. Through strategic collaborations, innovative training approaches, and a commitment to democratic governance, NILDS continues to strengthen legislative institutions at all levels.





# 9

## **NOT ON A PLATTER OF GOLD: CHALLENGES AND CREATIVE RESPONSES**

**J. Shola Omotola, Osaretin Godspower Okungbowa and  
Kolapo Quadri Abayomi**

### **Introduction**

**W**ithin a few years of his emergence as DG, the NILDS administration led by Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman has achieved tremendously. The scope of activities and reach of the Institute has been expanded, there was a mixture of innovations and reforms, media revolution, expansion of directorates and appointment of experts, increase of institutional collaborations, staff welfare and human capital development initiatives, increase in research outputs, infrastructural development and movement to the permanent site, enhanced legislative support services, and others as discussed extensively in the previous chapters.

However, those achievements were not achieved on a platter of gold. They came with a number of challenges that required and were matched with innovative responses. While some of these challenges were internal, others were external. The primary objective of this chapter is to highlight and discuss major challenges faced by Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman as Director General of NILDS and the innovative responses he adopted in addressing those challenges. Such an insight offers critical lessons for navigating institutional constraints for improved productivity and the attainment of organisational goals.

### **Notable Challenges faced by Prof. Abubakar O. Sulaiman as DG NILDS**

Attaining the lofty height exemplified by the achievements in the previous chapters was never a tea party. There were a lot of encumbrances that threatened to derail the determination and resolve of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman in taking the Institute (NILDS) to the next level. Thus, the following are considered as the highlights of the major challenges between the months of May 2019 and July 2025:

- a. Intrigues of transition;
- b. Internal resistance to reform;
- c. Exit of staff and the *Japa* syndrome;
- d. Inter-agency rivalry;
- e. Financial constraints;
- f. Institutional constraints.

#### **a) Intrigues of Transition**

The transition of leadership at NILDS in 2019 was filled with intrigues and theatrics. What ought to have been a routine

administrative handover quickly spiraled into a theatre of intrigues and institutional sabotage. First, it is important to provide a context to the buildup of events. On May 17, 2019, in a sudden turn of events, the then Clerk to the National Assembly, Mr Mohammed Ataba Sani-Omolori, acting on the directive of the Chairman of the NILDS Governing Council, Distinguished Senator (Dr) Bukola Saraki, instructed then outgoing Director-General, Professor Ladi Hamalai, to hand over to Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi, then Director of Research and Training (DRT). At the time, DRT was the most senior among the three core research departments in the Institute (the other two being the Department of Legal Support Services and the Department of Democracy and Governance).

While this decision was framed as a procedural necessity pending the assumption of a substantive DG, it would later lay the foundation for a web of resistance and disruption. Two weeks later, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman assumed office as the duly appointed Director-General. What awaited him was not the ceremonial reception typical of leadership transition but an orchestrated drama that cast a shadow on his first day in office.

Shockingly, upon arrival at the Institute, Professor Sulaiman could not access his office! The door to the DG's office was locked, and the keys—normally kept in a known, designated location—had mysteriously vanished. To compound the strangeness, Dr. Fajingbesi, who had overseen the Institute for just less than two weeks, had reportedly travelled out of Abuja and became incommunicado. His phone was allegedly switched off, and no official explanation was provided. In order for the newly appointed DG, Professor Sulaiman to gain

entrance into his office and avert a situation where the matter would degenerate into a kind of administrative embarrassment, the office door was eventually forced open to allow the new DG access to his rightful workplace.

When Dr. Fajingbesi finally resurfaced, he cited ill-health as an excuse, claiming to have been hospitalised with his phone off throughout. However, the timing, secrecy, and his earlier proximity to Professor Sulaiman during his time as Minister of National Planning led to speculations. After all, Dr. Fajingbesi had previously served as Special Assistant to Professor Sulaiman in his ministerial days, and the DG had expected a cordial and collaborative reception from someone he once trusted, which was not to be the case.

This early episode proved to be a harbinger of more entrenched resistance. Although Dr. Fajingbesi returned to his substantive position as Director of Research and Training, there were insinuations that he harboured aspirations to remain as DG and was unwilling to support the new administration. Subtle undermining and passive sabotage followed, feeding an atmosphere of suspicion and internal strife. The desire to frustrate the new leadership seemed deeply rooted among a segment of staff who viewed the transition not as a fresh chapter but as a contest for control.

At the heart of this intrigue was also the political context of Professor Sulaiman's appointment. He had been appointed during the twilight of the 8th National Assembly—a legislature that many in the 9th Assembly considered antagonistic to the administration of then-President Muhammadu Buhari. As a result, there were calculated efforts

to cast Professor Sulaiman as a political appointee of the Saraki-led Assembly and to question the legitimacy of his leadership. Others viewed it as giving the prized political appointive positions of the ruling party to members of the opposite party—the People’s Democratic Party (PDP).

These developments and perceptions made his early days precarious. As he often reflected, it felt like a case of “a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph.” The shifting political landscape emboldened detractors, some of whom sought to exploit the transition period to instigate his removal or weaken his authority. Professor Sulaiman, however, remained calm under pressure, refusing to be drawn into pettiness or vendettas.

Instead, he focused on stabilising the Institute and asserting his leadership through strategic reforms and engagement. But the intrigues of his early days served as a stark reminder that leadership transitions—particularly in politically sensitive institutions—often come with invisible battles that require a steady hand and clear purpose.

#### **b) Internal Resistance to Reform**

One of the most formidable challenges Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman encountered during his tenure as Director-General of NILDS was internal resistance to reform. Despite his clear vision to reposition the Institute for greater efficiency, professionalism, and staff development, some individuals and groups within the organisation actively opposed these reforms, often creating friction and institutional tension.

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A major manifestation of this resistance was the sudden agitation for NILDS staff to join the Parliamentary Staff Association of Nigeria (PASAN)—a union traditionally reserved for employees of the legislative arm of government and its directly affiliated institutions. It is noteworthy that this demand had previously surfaced during the tenure of Professor Ladi Hamalai but was quickly dismissed on the basis that NILDS functions primarily as a research and training institute, not a legislative bureaucracy. However, under Professor Sulaiman's administration, the agitation resurfaced with renewed intensity, raising questions about its timing and underlying motives.

The renewed push for unionisation coincided with the introduction of far-reaching administrative and welfare reforms by the DG. Evidence emerged that key figures within the Institute were mobilising staff across departments to leverage PASAN as a platform to engage the new leadership. Among those reportedly involved in this mobilisation were Dr. Charles Alfred (Department of Governance and Democracy), Dr. Augustine Osigwe (Department of Research and Training), Dr. Christopher Ngara (Department of Democracy and Governance), and Dr. Mohammed Amali (Department of Legislative Support Services).

While some of the grievances raised by the agitators such as improved welfare, inclusiveness, and accountability, were valid, Professor Sulaiman maintained that many of these concerns had already been incorporated into his broader reform agenda. Notably, his administration significantly expanded training opportunities for staff at all levels—both domestically and internationally—compared to previous

administrations. These initiatives were aimed at building capacity, boosting morale, and fostering professional growth across the board. Despite these efforts, tensions escalated among some staff.

Another reform that faced resistance was the introduction of a biometric-based electronic attendance register. The system was designed to curb chronic absenteeism, truancy, and lack of accountability associated with the previous analogue sign-in method. While the reform was initially met with partial compliance, it eventually lost traction due to continued resistance and internal sabotage. As of the current period, the Institute has reverted to the manual attendance register—a step backward from the technological improvements envisioned by the DG.

These episodes of resistance reflect the broader leadership challenge of institutional inertia—where entrenched interests and reluctance to change can undermine well-intentioned reforms. For Professor Sulaiman, navigating this internal opposition required a balance of firmness, legal recourse, and continued engagement with staff. His ability to remain focused on long-term institutional goals, even in the face of internal pushback, is a testament to his leadership maturity and commitment to institutional transformation.

In summary, the resistance to reform experienced by Professor Sulaiman was not simply a matter of administrative disagreement—it was emblematic of the broader struggles reform-minded leaders often face in the public sector. It underscores the difficulty of driving change in legacy institutions and the importance of resilience, strategic

communication, and legal grounding in leadership within the policy space.

**c) Exit of staff and the Japa Syndrome**

Another most pressing issue has been the issue of exit of staff, especially the departure of experienced personnel across key departments. This trend, exacerbated by the widespread *Japa* Syndrome, represents one of the most formidable obstacles to institutional stability, continuity, and efficiency during his tenure.

The *Japa* Syndrome—a now-popular expression describing the mass emigration of Nigerian professionals seeking better economic prospects abroad—has had a direct impact on NILDS. It also means staff movement to other work environments within Nigeria. Like many government institutions, NILDS has found itself vulnerable to this brain drain. Experienced researchers, policy analysts, administrative experts, and legal professionals have exited the Institute in search of greener pastures, creating a vacuum. This development, it must be noted, had little or nothing to do with the leadership of Professor Sulaiman. Rather, it is much more connected to general national trend and long-established deprivations suffered under previous administration to which the DG was already addressing. But for many of these staff, opportunity comes but once, a case of one bird at hand worth several thousand birds in the bush. Waiting patiently for the outcomes of the ongoing reforms and innovations by the DG was, for such staff, totally out of the equation. It must also be noted that during the time in question only Nine staff left, three relocated to Canada, two to other MDAs, two to donor agencies, two to take up political appointments, some of which



have shown interest in returning back to the institute. None was on the basis of poor welfare or toxic working environment.

This wave of staff exits has affected the Institute in multiple ways. Firstly, is the erosion of institutional memory. NILDS, as a knowledge-based organisation, relies on the technical depth and tacit experience of its staff to support the National Assembly and democratic governance more broadly. The departure of long-serving officers will naturally weaken mentorship system and delayed delivery timelines on crucial legislative and policy advisory programmes.

Secondly, the frequent exit and the japa syndrome effect, naturally affect the morale of the remaining staff. As colleagues leave for perceived better opportunities, those left behind often feel overburdened or uncertain about the future. This has occasionally bred dissatisfaction, reduced internal cohesion, and hindered team performance. Furthermore, in some cases, newly recruited staff—though competent—require time to understand the workings of the Institute, leading to delays in productivity and knowledge gaps.

Thirdly, recruitment and onboarding processes are time-consuming and costly. The Institute has had to constantly train new staff, reorient them, and reintegrate them into teams—an administrative burden that stretches already lean operational structures. Unlike in more commercially-driven organisations, NILDS operates under tight public sector rules, which limit the agility required to match the remuneration or working conditions that attract or retain high-end talent. Beyond the confines of the Institute, the challenge reflects a broader

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national concern. Across the public sector, institutions are grappling with talent flight, placing strain on Nigeria's ability to sustain long-term institutional development. In NILDS, this has been particularly pronounced due to the technical and policy-driven nature of its work, which demands highly skilled professionals.

A very important point to note in this regard is that one of the most challenges of the administration identified by the DG was the poaching of staff of the institute by both the leadership and members of the National Assembly without adequate consultation with the management or due diligence. This development, according to the DG, later resulted into some ugly development between The National Assembly Leadership and the institute.

The challenge of staff exit under Professor Sulaiman's leadership has thus been more than just a routine HR issue; it has been a strategic threat. It arrived at a time when the Institute was scaling up its programs, expanding partnerships, and deepening its policy advisory roles. At such a critical moment, losing key personnel threatened the Institute's ability to meet rising expectations from stakeholders, including the National Assembly, development partners, and the broader governance ecosystem. For Professor Sulaiman, the impact of this challenge was not theoretical—it was practical, day-to-day, and deeply personal. Having to constantly replace experienced hands, reassign duties, and realign institutional priorities became part of the leadership terrain. It tested the resilience of his administration and the ability of NILDS to adapt in the face of shifting human capital dynamics.

In summary, staff exit and the *Japa* Syndrome stand out as one of the teething problems Professor Sulaiman has faced as DG of NILDS. It exposed structural weaknesses, tested institutional durability, and raised fundamental questions about sustainability in Nigeria's public policy institutions.

**d) Inter-Agency Rivalry**

The inter-agency rivalry especially within the agencies and institutions under the National Assembly including the National Assembly management and bureaucracy particularly the Office of the Clerk to the National Assembly (CNA) and NILDS has been a reoccurring issue from the incubation of NILDS when it was Project Analysis and Research Project (PARP) in 2003 to 2011, and its inception as NILDS in 2011 to date which is affecting the progress of NILDS and all the agencies under the National Assembly. For the sake of record and emphasis, the following are formed from our conversation in the body of the inter-agency rivalry section:

- i. Office of the Clerk to the National Assembly (CNA) and its bureaucratic component;
- ii. National Assembly Service Commission (NASC);
- iii. National Assembly Budget and Research Office (NABRO);
- iv. National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF); and
- v. Public Complaints Commission (PCC).

NILDS has witnessed a lot of unhealthy relationships with the Office of the CNA and other agencies under the National Assembly which had led to withdrawal and transferring of numerous NILDS initiatives and programmes to either National Assembly or private organisations for which the National Assembly paid heavily for such activities instead of

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accessing them for free in NILDS. Specifically, the following programmes were some of the mandate and initiatives of NILDS that has been hijacked:

- a. Legislators Induction Programme;
- b. National Assembly Staff Promotion and Assessment;
- c. National Assembly Service Commission Staff Promotion and Assessment;
- d. National Assembly Exhibition Day Programme;
- e. Legislative Aides Training and Capacity Building programmes; and
- f. The recently conducted Orientation and Training Programme for the originating staff the National Assembly Library Trust Fund (NALTF).

In fact, during the period under review, the attempt to create another similar agency with overlapping mandates in the National Assembly was seen as targeted at NILDS by the critical stakeholders. However, billions of naira that were supposed to be invested in either expansion of NILDS or other critical areas of service-oriented areas had been expended on the building of the Agency in the National Assembly. In addition, most of the heads of these agencies have not been honouring NILDS invitations to attend the numerous programmes and workshops meant for the national development. Meanwhile, these rivalries had also gone eating the financial strength of the Institute to continue its mandate and importantly, its facility maintenance.

The attempt to undermine the growth and functionality of NILDS under Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, sadly reached a crescendo in 2023 when efforts were made to actually legalise the process. For instance, in 2023, there was an attempt to

establish a parallel institution to be known as the ‘Council for Regulation of Legislative Counsel and other Legislative Practitioners. This was done through a Bill in the House of Representatives titled ‘*Council for Regulation of Legislative Counsel and other Legislative Practitioners. (Establishment, etc)* Bill 2023, with Bill Number HB.61.

A perusal of the contents of the Bill reveals that there was an attempt to usurp the powers and functions of NILDS, for instance, the Bill amongst other things, seeks to subject the drafting of Bills, Motions and other services by Legislators, their aides and legislative drafters to the approval of the Council, a function that falls squarely on the mandate of NILDS.

The *National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies* establishment law, the *NILS ACT 2011* already covers the entirety of the areas, with respect to training of legislative drafters, certification, drafting of Bills and provision of other services, which the Bill sought to provide and regulate. In addition to the issue of duplicity of functions, the Bill attempted to replace specialised government institutions like NILDS with a private organisation of legislative drafters. Although the Bill went as far as getting to the second reading at plenary, it did not get the required support to enable it become law.

These attempt at undermining the existence of NILDS continued with the enactment of another proposed Bill in the House of Representatives, titled ‘*An Act to Amend the National Institute for Legislative Studies Act to Establish a Legal Framework for a National Legislative Drafting Institute*

*as a Distinct National Institute for Formal Training of Legislative Drafters.*’ A perusal of the proposed Bill showed that the Institute shall be located within the premises NILDS, taking over part of the structure. Also, the Institute shall have as its take off grant 50% of the NILDS budget. This second attempt was even more daring as it was a direct affront and attack on the continued existence of NILDS. The proposed Bill also attempted to provide drafting services to staff of the National and State Assemblies, train legislative drafters in Nigeria and beyond and award certificates, diplomas, and degrees in legislative drafting, all in direct conflict with the statutory mandate of NILDS. Even the composition of members of the Council of the proposed Institute mimicked that of NILDS. Although just like the first attempt, the Bill did not get legislative backing owing to the vigilance of some legislators who rejected the Bill from the onset.

It is worthy of note that, there seem to be some duplication of responsibilities between the organs of the National Assembly, particularly with the recent establishment of the National Assembly Library Trust Fund in 2023. The function of the Library Trust Fund as provided for in its enabling law Bill include:

- Serving as a bastion of knowledge and fostering a culture of enlightenment, research, and informed decision-making amongst not only the legislators but other policy makers.
- Serving as a depository and archival for preserving the invaluable history of Nigeria, while actively supporting the development of a more informed and empowered society.

- Safeguarding the rich legislative history of Nigeria, by archiving and curating an extensive collection of legislative documents, reports, and records.
- Ensure the preservation of the voices of our lawmakers and the evolution of our governance for generations to come, and
- Fostering a sense of community engagement and active citizenship, by offering resources that shed light on legislative processes, governance, and civic responsibilities, and encouraging meaningful participation in the democratic process.

These outlined functions and responsibilities are partly duplication of the NILDS mandate, while some are extension of the NILDS mandate. This is also coming at a time when government is trying to reduce the cost of governance. At best the Library Trust Fund should have been established as a department under NILDS. These realities may lead to inter agency rivalry and duplication of responsibilities. These developments also threaten the existence of the Institute and its prospects. For instance, the poaching of two staff of NILDS staff by the office of the Speaker at the same time without replacement has also been challenging. The same office has also taken away from NILDS the organisation of NASS Open Week, which has been one of the primary responsibilities of NILDS until this 10<sup>th</sup> House of Representatives.

#### **e) Financial Constraints**

During the period under review, the Institute had faced financial issues due to less attention given to the needs assessment and budget cuts by the bureaucracy of the National Assembly. With the transformative agenda including

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expansion of the directorates, staff recruitments, infrastructural development, movement to the permanent site, increasing the spread and reach of NILDS for national development, etc. by the Director General, critical stakeholders acknowledged that there is a need to increase NILDS budget and financial requirements. Unfortunately, there are saboteurs bent on constraining the activities of NILDS through budget cuts. As a matter of fact, NILDS has been placed on a particular budget for three (3) financial cycles, despite the rising inflation.

### **f) Institutional constraints**

The aspect of institutional constraints is also a key aspect of challenges faced by the administration of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman. As at the time of his administration that intended to provide innovative leadership and expansion, constraints such as bureaucratic red tape, staff union' executive confrontations, limited resources including human, financial and technological; outdated policies and procedures, resistance to change by both management and general staff, inefficient communication and coordination system, cultural and social norms, and regulatory constraints. These constraints impact various aspect of the system such as the innovations, productivity, employee morale, and strategic planning.

### **Innovative Responses to the Challenges**

However, all these challenges were confronted with several creative responses which resulted into the achievements as earlier discussed in the previous Chapters. This section would briefly discuss the responses using the subtitled as highlighted under the challenges above.



### **a. Overcoming Transition Intrigues through Decisive Leadership**

The first few weeks of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman's tenure as Director-General of the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS) were fraught with tension and suspicion as earlier narrated. Having faced an unexpectedly dramatic handover, locked offices, vanished keys, and a largely unresponsive Acting DG in Dr. Adeyemi Fajingbesi, it was clear that the path ahead would be far from smooth. Yet, rather than respond emotionally or retaliate, Professor Sulaiman chose a leadership approach rooted in calm resolve, institutional preservation, and strategic realignment.

From the outset, it was evident that Dr. Fajingbesi's conduct during the transition had shaken staff confidence and introduced a wave of uncertainty. Rather than allow resentment to fester or risk further administrative disruption, Professor Sulaiman summoned the courage to make a difficult but necessary leadership decision by redeploying Dr. Fajingbesi as Director Department of Research and Training to a new role. This move was not punitive but preventive—intended to de-escalate growing tensions within the department and avert a situation where staff loyalty could be divided along the lines of competing interests.

In his place, Professor Sulaiman appointed a trusted and respected hand, Dr. Asimiyu Gbolagade Abiola, to serve in an acting capacity while continuing in his original role as Director of Studies. This dual assignment was not only a reflection of Dr. Abiola's administrative competence but also a strategic decision to reinforce trust and stability across the

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Institute. Under Abiola's watch, the Department of Research and Training regained focus and cohesion, allowing the new DG to consolidate his reforms.

To further ease the internal politics and prevent the re-emergence of unhealthy alliances under Dr. Fajingbesi's previous leadership, Professor Sulaiman created a new department—the Department of Special Duties—and reassigned Dr. Fajingbesi there. Importantly, this department was housed in a different office complex altogether, physically and structurally removing sources of friction. By taking this non-confrontational but assertive step, the DG successfully reduced the risk of internal sabotage while giving Dr. Fajingbesi a new opportunity to contribute to the Institute's work in a constructive space.

This leadership style—decisive yet not vindictive—defined Professor Sulaiman's early approach to governance. He understood the delicate institutional politics at play, especially as his appointment by the 8th National Assembly had not necessarily endeared him to all players within the incoming 9th Assembly. Recognising this, he sought to win legitimacy not just through political affiliation but through performance, reform, and professional integrity.

He maintained open channels of communication with staff, reinforcing a culture of transparency and inclusiveness. Where others might have cracked under pressure or become entangled in personal vendettas, Professor Sulaiman remained focused on stabilising the Institute, delivering on its legislative support mandate, and creating a cohesive work environment.

Most crucially, his handling of the transition crisis demonstrated his capacity to make tough decisions in the interest of institutional harmony. He turned a potential mutiny into a moment of redirection, reminding all staff that leadership is earned through character, not connivance. Over time, the dust settled. Staff, initially unsure of where their loyalties should lie, began to see in the DG a principled leader focused on their welfare, professional development, and the long-term relevance of the Institute.

Ultimately, Professor Sulaiman's strategic handling of the early intrigues, especially around the transition, laid the foundation for his later success in reforming NILDS. By reasserting authority without breeding animosity, he showed that it is possible to steer through institutional turbulence with clarity, courage, and tact.

#### **b. Addressing Internal Resistance through Strategic Innovation and Institutional Renewal**

In response to entrenched resistance that threatened the implementation of his reform agenda, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman adopted a bold and strategic approach that combined innovation, transparency, and structural transformation to redirect the Institute toward a progressive and performance-driven culture. Rather than suppress dissent, he used the challenge as a catalyst to modernise operations, deepen accountability, and institutionalise staff motivation.

One of his most innovative responses was the introduction of the **Best Staff Award** initiative. Under this scheme, each department identified its best-performing staff, culminating in an overall Best Staff of the Year award. This initiative fostered

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healthy competition, inspired higher productivity, and gave due recognition to commitment and excellence. The awards were merit-based, transparent, and widely celebrated, helping to shift focus from agitation to achievement.

To provide a structured framework for addressing longstanding grievances related to career progression, recruitment, and workplace expectations, Professor Sulaiman spearheaded the development and implementation of an Enhanced NILDS Conditions of Service. This document, developed in consultation with staff and relevant stakeholders, provided clear guidelines on promotion criteria, recruitment processes, disciplinary measures, and welfare policies. For the first time in the Institute's history, staff had a comprehensive reference point that codified their rights and responsibilities.

A critical institutional intervention was the comprehensive Staff Audit, chaired by renowned academic and former Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic University of Abuja Professor Kayode Omole. The committee was tasked with authenticating staff credentials and verifying roles and functions across the Institute. The process revealed discrepancies in academic qualifications and job functions. Notably, some senior staff—including those in the DG's own office—were affected. The impartial execution of the audit sent a strong signal that Professor Sulaiman was committed to fairness, meritocracy, and institutional integrity, even when politically inconvenient.

Recognising the need to realign the Institute's structure with its growing mandates, the DG approved the creation of new departments, such as the Department of Training and

International Cooperation, Department of NILDs Library, and the Department of Audit. These new departments allowed for greater specialisation, better service delivery, and international engagement. They also created new leadership opportunities for upwardly mobile staff and brought in professionals with fresh perspectives and skills.

In his commitment to promoting a family-friendly work environment, Professor Sulaiman established a state-of-the-art crèche for nursing mothers within the Institute. This initiative, the first of its kind within the institute, ensured that female staff could effectively balance work and motherhood. It underscored his administration's sensitivity to gender inclusion and workplace support systems.

Perhaps the most symbolic and transformative accomplishment under his leadership was the completion and commissioning of the Institute's permanent headquarters. Construction of the complex had been stalled for years, but under Professor Sulaiman's leadership, work was expedited and delivered within record time. The edifice was officially commissioned on May 25, 2023, by former president Muhammadu Buhari, marking a new era in the Institute's operational independence and visibility. The subsequent relocation of all staff and departments to the new complex ended the era of fragmentation and signalled a consolidated institutional identity.

Despite internal opposition—some of which took the form of litigation, resistance to digital reforms like the biometric attendance system, and union agitation—Professor Sulaiman remained resolute but inclusive. He expanded training

opportunities for staff across all levels, increased stakeholder engagement, and maintained legal and administrative integrity throughout his tenure. His leadership demonstrated that sustainable reform requires not just vision but also innovation, fairness, and institutional courage.

In summary, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman turned internal resistance into a springboard for transformation. Through carefully curated policies and symbolic actions, he redefined NILDS as a forward-looking, transparent, and high-performing institution—proving that challenges, when faced with clarity and conviction, can serve as pathways to enduring progress.

### **c. Addressing staff exit and the Japa syndrome**

Confronted with the dual challenge of staff exit and the *Japa* Syndrome, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman did not adopt a hands-off approach. Instead, he tackled the issue with a blend of strategic thinking, administrative innovation, and pragmatic leadership—ensuring that the Institute remained functional, focused, and forward-looking.

First, Professor Sulaiman recognized the inevitability of some departures, especially in the face of national economic realities and global labour mobility. Rather than resisting the trend, he focused on institutional resilience—building systems and structures that could absorb shocks and continue to deliver results, even with changing personnel. This involved strengthening internal documentation processes, creating detailed program manuals, and ensuring that every project had a team-based implementation model rather than being dependent on a few individuals.

To mitigate the loss of experienced staff, he introduced succession planning mechanisms within departments. Younger professionals were identified and mentored to gradually take on more responsibility. This approach created a pipeline of emerging leaders and reduced the vacuum often left by sudden resignations or exits. For example, the measure saw the emergence of a fresh set of staff facilitating capacity building workshop for the legislators and legislative aides.

Furthermore, recognising that many exits were linked to perceptions of limited growth opportunities, he began to invest in staff development. Under his leadership, NILDS prioritised training and capacity-building, not just for technical enhancement but also for career motivation. Staff members were nominated for local and international conferences, workshops, and short courses. For example, in March 2024, Dr Mohammed Amali and Dr Augustine Osigwe were sponsored by the Institute to Canada to strengthen their research capacities and experience learning at McGill University, Montreal, Canada. This not only enriched the skills base of the Institute but also gave employees a sense of being valued and supported professionally.

Another significant move was his advocacy for improved welfare and working conditions. Within the boundaries of public service regulations, Professor Sulaiman lobbied for better incentives for staff—from allowances to improved office facilities. Under his leadership, staff salaries were increased in the wake of the adverse effect of fuel subsidy removal and exchange rate unification. In the same vein, staff got enhanced welfare to cushion housing in the FCT. While not every demand could be met immediately, his commitment

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to staff welfare was visible and earned him goodwill internally.

Internally, he promoted a culture of recognition and meritocracy. By celebrating achievements, recognising long-serving employees, and publicly appreciating team efforts, he rebuilt morale. This helped counterbalance the feelings of instability that often follow waves of staff exits. It also created a sense of belonging and institutional pride, even among those contemplating migration.

Importantly, Professor Sulaiman deepened partnerships with academic and policy institutions to create a pool of technical consultants and adjunct professionals who could support the Institute when staffing gaps emerged. These partnerships, including with universities and think tanks, allowed NILDS to remain productive and maintain quality outputs, even when internal staff strength was under strain.

To cushion the impact of staff turnover and the JAPA syndrome, Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman strategically engaged seasoned academics on sabbatical to fill critical gaps and strengthen institutional capacity. A defining moment was the appointment of Professor Jeremiah Shola Omotola, a former Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, whose leadership and scholarly insight revitalised research outputs. Similarly, Professor Peter Siyan, former Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and now Dean of Postgraduate School, University of Abuja, served as Acting Director of the Department of Economic and Social Research (formerly DRT). Both professors brought their vast academic and administrative experience to mentor junior staff, deepen



leadership values, and entrench a culture of research, productivity, and resilience across the Institute's core departments.

Finally, Professor Sulaiman demonstrated emotional intelligence and servant leadership throughout. He remained approachable, regularly engaged with staff at all levels, and maintained an open-door policy. This approach reassured staff, promoted transparency, and fostered a collaborative environment where challenges were tackled collectively.

In the end, while staff exit and the *Japa* Syndrome remain national challenges, Professor Sulaiman's response at NILDS illustrates what adaptive leadership looks like in practice. Rather than lament the trend, he focused on building a resilient, motivated, and forward-thinking institution—proving that even in the face of human capital flight, visionary leadership can steer a policy institution toward growth and relevance.

#### **a) Handling Inter-Agency Rivalry**

The inter-agency rivalry was responded to with diplomatic meetings, frequent visitations to the leadership of the National Assembly and that of the agencies, quality service delivery by the Institute, and better performance. During this period, it also invested in training and retraining of the legislators and the management and other staff of the National Assembly and the sister agencies. These strategies drastically reduced the rivalry and expanded the scope of reach as well as the service impact of NILDS on the National Assembly and the sister agencies within the National Assembly.

**b) Dealing with Financial Constraints**

In responding to the financial constraints, Abubakar O. Sulaiman led administration engaged several development partners such UN Women, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS), Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD), African Group of Negotiators Experts Support (AGNES), and several other partners within the country for strategic partnership and implementation of programmes and projects in Nigeria. This partnership provided NILDS with hundreds of millions of naira to finance its yearly workplans and projects.

**c) Handling Institutional constraints**

On the issue of institutional constraints, there are a number of strategies deployed by Abubakar O. Sulaiman which include:

- a. Streamlining processes;
- b. Investments in technology;
- c. Foster culture of innovations;
- d. Investments on the capacity of both management and general staff;
- e. Review and update of the Condition of Service and other institutional policies.

First, the streamlining processes got a simplified as well as automated processes which put staff of NILDS at the middle for exceptional performance. It also reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and staff as well as institutional performance. Second, the Institute expanded technological infrastructure in enhancing productivity, communication, discipline, decision making and innovations. Third, the management also encourage culture of innovations with standard procedure and experimentations, learning, critical peer reviewing and innovations to drive growth. Fourth, there were investments in

staff capacity building which accommodated both international and local trainings. Compared to the past administration, Abubakar O. Sulaiman invested more on staff capacity development. And lastly, before the current administration, the Institute administrative policies and manuals were not coordinated and even not gazzetted. Abubakar O. Sulaiman administration set up a powerful committee that produced the current Condition of Service and related institutional policies, which were gazzetted and served as working tools of the Institute.

### **Conclusion**

The administration of Professor Abubakar O. Sulaiman at NILDS from 2019 to date reflects a bold journey of transformation against formidable odds. From navigating political intrigues and internal sabotage to tackling staff exit, inter-agency rivalry, financial shortfalls, and institutional inertia, the challenges were real and persistent. Yet, these did not deter the DG. Instead, they became the fuel for innovation, strategic reform, and bold leadership. Through the engagement of sabbatical scholars, expansion of directorates, improvement in staff welfare, development of robust institutional frameworks, enhanced collaborations, and movement to a permanent site, Professor Sulaiman demonstrated that transformational leadership is not defined by the absence of adversity but by the ability to confront it creatively.

His administration responded to each challenge with foresight, tenacity, and inclusiveness—prioritising systems over sentiments, merit over mediocrity, and institutional vision over personal ambition. The result is a redefined NILDS—

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more resilient, productive, and positioned for global relevance. Indeed, the story of NILDS under Professor Sulaiman is not one of privilege but of perseverance; not one handed on a platter of gold, but earned through grit, strategy, and courage. It is a model of public sector leadership worthy of emulation in Nigeria's evolving democratic and governance landscape.

# 10

## **CONCLUSION: LESSONS LEARNT FOR SUSTAINABLE INSTITUTION BUILDING AND DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION**

**J. Shola Omotola and Doris Aaron**

**I**n this concluding chapter, we undertake a prognostic analysis into the future of NILDS, with specific emphasis on its prospects for effective and sustainable legislative and democratic governance. Primarily, we highlight areas for possible improvements, including specific innovative and reform initiatives required to reposition the institute for greater efficiency and productivity. Though these positions were predicated upon the insights gained and lessons learned from the administration of Professor Abubakar Sulaiman as DG of the institute, the politics of succession and transitional politics that preceded his assumption of office constitute other critical considerations.

The central postulation here is that the story of the transformation of NILDS offers profound insights into the interplay between leadership, institutional design, and the

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demands of democratic governance. This point came across very strongly in the book. Little wonder that the book highlighted the transformative role of leadership in shaping institutions. It also demonstrated that while the form and character of leadership counts, much depends on the degree or extent to which leadership is supported by appropriate structures, processes, and values. Otherwise, it will be difficult to consolidate whatever gains were recorded overtime. Ultimately, the lessons from NILDS reaffirm that democratic consolidation rests on deliberate, consistent, and visionary leadership approaches to institution building. In what follows, we highlight some of the most pertinent lessons learnt from Prof. Sulaiman's leadership of NILDS for institution building and democratic consolidation.

### **Critical Lessons for Institution Build and Democratic Consolidation**

The ultimate desire of every democratic system is to attain the lofty height of democratic consolidation. To consolidate democracy is to have grown it to a point where democracy has become "the only game in town". By this it is meant that all democratic institutions, actors, and players, have attained a reasonable level of democratic maturity, playing the game according to established rules and capable of withstanding inevitable waves or threats of democratic reversals, no matter how strong. A critical but holistic reading or review of the mandates of NILDS reveals that the ultimate goal is for NILDS to play roles that can enable it contribute meaningfully to the consolidation of democracy. This is why it has responsibilities towards not only the National Assembly, but all democratic institutions for capacity building, legislative

and democratic reforms, as well as deepening democratic policy and advocacy frameworks.

One of the most critical lessons from the narratives of the book is that leadership matters for institution building. At every stage of the Institute's growth, the vision, courage, and capacity of leaders determined not only the direction of reform but also the extent to which innovations were embraced and institutionalised. Transformational leadership provided the spark for change—through strategic foresight, inclusivity, and bold decision-making—but it was the ability to institutionalise those reforms that ensured continuity beyond individual personalities. This dual emphasis on leadership and institution-building is central to sustainable democratic consolidation.

Also of great significance is the nature of succession politics. In many public institutions, transitions from one leadership to another can be moments of uncertainty, contestation, and even disruption. NILDS aptly demonstrates this reality, underscoring the fact that how succession politics is handled directly affects the stability and sustainability of an organisation, including the ability of the new leadership to stabilise, secure loyalty and legitimacy, hit the ground running and initiate sustainable reforms and innovations. A transparent and well-managed transition process ensures continuity, preserves institutional memory, and reassures staff and stakeholders of the Institute's stability. Conversely, poorly managed succession politics risks eroding gains and undermining staff morale. This latter reality was the situation at NILDS during the last succession. It was only due to the transformational leadership skills and acumen of Professor

Sulaiman that the succession crisis did not consume the Institute. This is one critical area to pay attention to as the DG winds up his administration in order to avert a repeat of that terrible history.

Related to this is the **tenure of office**. Experience suggests that a defined tenure—such as one term of five years single term—can provide stability, allow leaders sufficient time to implement reforms, and douse tensions associated with succession struggles. A structured tenure not only reduces unnecessary politicisation but also creates predictability in planning and accountability. Thus, tenure arrangements are not merely administrative issues but central elements in institutional sustainability. Implementing a single tenure should not be that problematic because institutions of similar status and mandates such as universities and research-based government institutions in the country are already running with this. It saves such institutions from the distraction and contradictions of the struggle for second term by incumbents. Often times, such struggles tend to polarise institutions and generate tensions with staff pursuing varying interests.

Another important dimension is the role of effective regulation. Democratic institutions thrive when guided by clear rules, consistent enforcement, and respect for due process. NILDS benefitted from regulatory frameworks that defined its mandate, clarified responsibilities, and provided a safeguard against arbitrariness. Effective regulation helps institutions maintain legitimacy, foster accountability, and remain aligned with broader democratic values. But beyond rules and regulations lies the significant roles of the Governing Council of the Institute. The Council needs to ensure effective



oversight of the institute, holding statutory meetings regularly and ensuring accountability and control, thereby preventing executive excesses.

Closely related to the above is the importance of synergy between the Governing Council and Management. Successful institutions require harmony between policy direction and operational execution. NILDS' transformation illustrates that when councils provide strategic oversight and management implements with commitment and professionalism, institutions experience steady growth. This synergy prevents duplication, minimizes conflict, and enhances collective ownership of reforms. This is one area where Professor Sulaiman really excelled, always securing the buy-in of the presiding officials of the National Assembly and the Governing Council of NILDS.

The NILDS experience under Professor Sulaiman also reveals the significance and enduring impact of beneficial innovations and reforms. From capacity development programmes to research output and democratic education, these innovations helped the Institute remain relevant and responsive to emerging needs. Reforms, when sustained and institutionalised, build resilience and ensure that progress is not reversed with changes in leadership. Innovation thus becomes both a driver of transformation and a safeguard against stagnation.

A further lesson closely connected to reform initiatives of Professor Sulaiman is the centrality of staff welfare. The reforms and innovations in this area not only endeared him to all staff, but also assisted him in gaining legitimacy, built an

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expansive circumference of loyal staff, and in countering initial resistance to his innovations and reform agenda. The key lessons from this are clear: Institutions are only as strong as the people who serve in them. Prioritising staff welfare—through fair remuneration, clear career progression and development opportunities, and recognition of contributions—fosters loyalty, enhances productivity, and creates a culture of shared commitment. Neglect of staff welfare, on the other hand, undermines morale and weakens institutional capacity.

Beyond internal dynamics, collaborations and partnerships have proven indispensable to the priceless success of Professor Sulaiman at NILDS. The Institute's engagement with national parliaments, civil society organisations, international organisations, and academic institutions, as documented in this book amplified its reach and enriched its work. Partnerships also expand access to resources, enhance credibility, and enable knowledge exchange. They also situate the Institute within a wider ecosystem of democratic support, making it a key player in the consolidation of democratic governance across borders.

At a broader level, the transformation of NILDS underscores the salient point that strong democracies rest on strong institutions. Electoral systems, political parties, and civic participation can only flourish when institutions are resilient, inclusive, and grounded in fairness and accountability. NILDS' journey reveals that building such institutions requires visionary leadership, prudent management of succession, effective regulation, sustained innovation, staff empowerment, and robust partnerships.

The story and experiences of NILDS under Professor Sulaiman primarily underscores the importance of institution building, which is only possible with the right leadership. Significantly, the lessons from NILDS' transformation under Sulaiman should not be taken as something confined to a single institute or NILDS alone. It resonates across democratic institutions in Africa and beyond. Leadership matters, but leadership alone is not enough; the politics of succession, tenure arrangements, regulation, council-management synergy, staff welfare, and partnerships are all equally critical for institutional sustainability. Together, these elements form the foundation of sustainable institution building and democratic consolidation. As emerging democracies navigate pressures of governance, legitimacy, and citizen trust, the NILDS experience stands as a powerful testimony that with deliberate choices and transformative leadership, institutions can thrive and become enduring pillars of democratic development.

### **NILDS after Sulaiman: Some Other Salient Considerations**

Apart from the salient lessons teased out in the immediately preceding section, which are fundamental for taking NILDS to the next level, there are a lot of other important factors that can boost the prospects of NILDS as key player in strengthening and consolidating democracy in Nigeria. The existing structure of the Institute and the credibility it has attained over the years, particularly under the leadership of Professor Sulaiman as DG, has positioned it for greater productivity and impact. Some of the prospects of the Institute are enhanced by, but not only the following:

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- i. An imposing edifice fit for learning and training activities, equipped with standard modern facilities.
- ii. Legal backing for the Institute and strong institutional support, which not only puts the Institute on the path of sustainability but also ensures the commitment of staff.
- iii. High credibility conferred by years of effective and efficient service delivery as well as growing reach of the Institute and its activities across Nigeria, ECOWAS sub-region, and the African continent at large.
- iv. Growing recognition and acceptance of the Institute as a premier legislative capacity-building hub in Nigeria and beyond.
- v. An increasing awareness of the need for government policies and legislative proposals to be backed by evidence-based research.
- vi. A fast-developing research base for training programmes. The research and studies conducted by NILDS on topical and relevant issues provide a basis for making its training programmes dynamic and current.
- vii. Large market for legislative capacity development. NILDS enjoys the privilege of being the first institution that is fully dedicated to the capacity enhancement of legislators and parliamentary staff in Nigeria, the ECOWAS sub-region, and the African continent at large.
- viii. A supportive and committed governance structure with political will and support from the Institute's Governing Council.
- ix. A responsive managerial leadership with the vision to consolidate the successes of the Institute and expand its

frontiers to better serve the legislature and other democratic institutions in the country;

- x. Improved relationship between the Institute and the Management of the National Assembly and growing synergy and cooperation in program implementation.
- xi. A team of faculty members with a good blend of theoretical knowledge and practical experiences in legislative, governance, and development issues.
- xii. A remarkable record of networking and collaboration with national and international organisations reflected in joint activities, sponsorship of programmes, exchanges and attachments, among others.

NILDS has, no doubt, done very well in delivering on its mandate of deepening democracy and building the capacity of democratic actors. In order to do more and maintain its effectiveness in the years to come, it is important to address some of the key issues and challenges highlighted in this book and thereby put the Institute on the right trajectory. Other important recommendations include:

- Increased budgetary allocation to the Institute to expand its activities and retain qualified personnel especially in the area of Research. There are so many areas of needs in this regard, for instance NILDS receives participants from all over Africa and there's need to have befitting hostels within its premises to cater for its teaming number of applicants. This is global practice in most research institutions of this nature. For instance, the Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute (ESAMI), in Arusha Tanzania, houses all participants within the premises of the institution, for easy access to

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the Institution's facilities and capacity building programmes.

- Tied to the issue of funding also, is the need for improved staff welfare to eliminate the *japa* syndrome and to retain qualified personnel. While the institute under Sulaiman has done (and still doing) a lot, there is still room for improvement. One key area still lacking is the issue for affordable housing and accommodation for staff; this has become a lingering issue due to paucity of funds. Most of the issues identified below are also tied to the issue of funding.
- Strengthening and harmonising legislative processes at the national and sub-national levels.
- There is need for increased synergy between not only the leadership of the National Assembly, but members as well. The challenge of having leadership and members of the National Assembly poach staff of the Institute, without recourse to the management of the Institute should be addressed.
- Developing capacity in the French language to deliver courses to ECOWAS Parliament and parliaments in the sub-region. This is necessary if the language barrier would not prevent the Institute from extending its services to parliaments in the Francophone and Lusophone zones.
- Lastly, there is need for more collaboration with development partners and donor agencies; it is no longer news that government budget is never enough to fully fund research initiatives, which is what the institute stands for. It is therefore important for the institute to expand its collaboration with donor agencies, and

improve on its capacity to attract grants. This will go a long way in ensuring that funding of most programmes of the institute is taken off government. Although Prof. Sulaiman has done a lot in this area by organising seminars and symposiums on grantsmanship especially for the research staff of the institute, and established a grants unit under the DG's office, a lot still needs to be done in this regard.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Like the saying goes, a man's success is measured by the number of successors produced; there is no doubt that Prof. Abubakar Sulaiman, has done so much in the area of mentorship and capacity development. It is also clear that NILDS under his leadership has done so well in promoting democratic norms not only in Nigeria but across Africa. As rightly pointed out, a lot more needs to be done to sustain the institution and expand its reach. The prospects of the Institute are undeniable and implementing the recommendations proffered above will take the institute to the enviable heights it deserves and help in building and sustaining democracy in Africa. It is also hoped that with the capacity of NILDS staff under Prof. Sulaiman, the next administration will do much more than what he has achieved and take the Institute to the next level. This expectation is, without any doubt, a huge challenge, given Professor Sulaiman's giant strides as DG of NILDS.

