

NASS pass 2025 budget, increase estimate by N749 billion

The National Assembly have passed the sum of N54,990,165,355,396.00 as aggregate expenditure of the Federal Government in the 2025 fiscal year

The budget passed by both chambers of the National Assembly is N749.99 billion higher than the Presidential request of N54.2 trillion. The highlights of the amount include: N23,963,251,624,250.00 as Capital Expenditure, N14,317,142,689,548.00 for Debt Service, N13,064,009,682,673.00 for Recurrent and Non Debt Expenditure and N3,645,761,358,925.00 for Statutory Transfers and Deficit to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 1.52 per cent. The passage of the budget followed the presentation, consideration and adoption of the recommendation of the joint Senate Committees and House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations. The President had submitted a budget of N49.7 trillion to a joint session of the National Assembly the 18th of December, 2024 for consideration, but later requested for an increase in the estimate to N54.2 trillion in view of additional revenue available to government. However, presenting the report of the joint Committee on Appropriation for consideration, Chairman of the Committee, Kabiru Abubakar Bichi said the joint Committee of the Senate and the House agreed on the figure after series of meetings. Senate Committee Chairman on Appropriation, Senator Solomon Olamilekun Adeola presented the report before the Senate. He revealed that after a joint meeting with revenue generating agencies, the Committee realized the availability of additional revenue which it forwarded to the Executive to be included in the budget. The additional revenue of N4.5 trillion forms the increase in the aggregate budget which the president requested for. It was discovered that the North Central Development Commission and South South Development Commission that were not budgeted for in the original budget received appropriation. Also, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) had its budget increased from N40 billion to N140 billion for its activities for 2025. The Chairman of INEC had requested for an increase of the budget of the commission to about N125 billion, saying the N40 billion being allocated to it did not take into consideration the new minimum wage and the activities of the commission for 2025. Bichi explained that as part of preparation for the budget defence by MDAs, the Committee held a one-day public hearings to receive inputs from Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), Civil Society Organizations, Captains of Industries; and Development Partners among others.

He said "while processing the Bill, the Joint Committee on Appropriations met the President's Economic Team which includes the Coordinating Minister of the Economy/Minister of Finance, the Minister of Budget and Economic Planning, the Minister of State, Finance, the Director General, Budget Office of the Federation, the Director General Debt Management Office and the Accountant General of the Federation, to further discuss the revenue projection and expenditure of the 2025 Appropriation Bill. "After the series of meetings held, the Committee on Finance in conjunction with our Committee sourced additional revenue from some revenue generating Agencies". They include Government-Owned Enterprises (GOES)- N1,823, 879, 970, 637, Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS): N1,497,600,000,000 (Federal Government's

52% share of the increase in revenue from N22.1 trillion to N25.1 trillion after the deduction of cost of collection) and the Nigerian Customs Service (NCS): N1,209,000,000,000 (Federal Government's share of the increase in revenue from N6.5 trillion to N9.0 trillion after the deduction of cost of collection). He further explained that "the total sum of N4,530,479,637 additional revenue realized from the above effort was communicated to the Executive who applied the funds to address critical challenges and advance the Government's development". Bichi stressed that "the recent action by the United States Government to suspend further intervention in the Nigerian Health sector through provision of vaccines and drugs for malaria, Polio, HIV and Tuberculosis using its agency USAID will have adverse effects on Nigerians affected by such diseases. "On this note, the President proactively made a new provision of \$200m which is equivalent to N300bn, in the Service Wide Votes to fill the gap created by the United States (US) Government's suspension of intervention to Nigerian Health sector, to proactively address the above-mentioned health challenges which are currently being suffered by Countries like Uganda and others. "Similarly, some critical agencies of government forwarded genuine requests to Mr. President for additional funding. After thorough examination by the Joint Appropriations Committee, additional funds were provided to the agencies which include: Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), Nigerian Financial Intelligence Unit (NFIU), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Offences Commission (ICPC), National Judicial Council (NJC), National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), Department of State Service (DSS), Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces among others.

He said further that the Budget size was increased by over N700 Billion to cater for some critical needs which include N270 billion differential between the details of the budget and the bill; the provision of \$200m which is equivalent to N300bn for procurement of vaccines and drugs; and some agencies of government were provided funds to take care of critical needs. According to him, the Joint Committee worked harmoniously with the Leadership of the National Assembly and the Executive arm of government in the processing of the Bill. This ensured maximum collaboration of the two arms in the utilization of additional revenue projection, to improve the funding of some critical projects, which could not be adequately funded in the budget proposal earlier submitted by Mr. President, due to funding constraints.

He however said that the Appropriation Bill was presented late in comparison with 2024 Appropriation Bill, adding that the Executive should be asked to present the annual Budget to National Assembly, not later than 3 months before the financial year as this will help return the country to the January – December budget circle