

IMPACT OF THE 9TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ON ANTI-CORRUPTION INSTITUTION IN NIGERIA, 2019-2023

By

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Abstract

The battle against corruption in Nigeria has been a key focus of governance reform, especially since the return to democracy in 1999. Institutions aimed at combating corruption, like the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), have played a vital role in fostering accountability and transparency. The 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) was convened during a period when public expectations were heightened for legislative moves that could either bolster or weaken these institutions. This study assesses the influence of the 9th National Assembly's legislative actions on anti-corruption institutions in Nigeria during this period. Specifically, it investigates the nature and purpose of the bills passed, the oversight roles performed, and the financial resources allocated to key anti-corruption agencies. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources, including legislative documents, committee findings, expert interviews, and media reviews. The theoretical framework is based on Principal-Agent Theory, which helps clarify the interactions between legislative entities and anti-corruption organisations. The findings indicate a complicated relationship between political motivations, institutional changes, and the legislative process. Although the 9th Assembly enacted several bills aimed at enhancing anti-corruption efforts, the effectiveness of these laws is hampered by frail implementation strategies, political meddling, and duplicative institutions. The study concludes that, despite legislative actions having a measurable effect, they did not achieve transformative reforms. It advocates improved legislative independence, greater involvement of civil society, and tighter performance monitoring of anti-corruption institutions.

Keywords: Anti-corruption, legislative oversight, corruption, governance, accountability, political interference.

Introduction

Corruption remains a significant threat to effective governance, eroding public trust and hindering both economic and social Development globally. In developing regions, its impact stretches from policy decisions to routine administration, fueling inequality and weakening critical institutions. The far-reaching consequences of unchecked corruption have prompted international organisations to recommend stronger institutional frameworks and accountability as key strategies for reform.

In the African landscape, corruption has been recognized as one of the main barriers to

democratic development and socio-economic change. Many African nations have begun reforms, established anti-corruption bodies, and pursued international collaboration to address this issue. However, despite these initiatives, corruption remains deeply rooted due to reasons like weak legal systems, limited political commitment, institutional inefficiency, and fragile democratic foundations. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, exemplifies a particularly intricate and revealing case. In Nigeria, corruption has been a longstanding challenge since independence, permeating both public and private sectors and impacting all levels of government. It is generally seen as a significant obstacle to national growth, hindering advancements in infrastructure, education, healthcare, security, and economic diversification. The widespread nature of corruption has resulted in profound disillusionment among citizens, weakened the credibility of government institutions, and led to social unrest.

Various administrations, military and civilian, have sought to tackle this issue through the creation of anti-corruption agencies, legal reforms, and public awareness campaigns. Organisations such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) have been established with mandates to investigate, prosecute, and prevent corruption. Even with these organisations in place, the effectiveness of Nigeria's anti-corruption framework remains uneven and inconsistent. While some progress has been made, substantial challenges remain, including political meddling, selective enforcement, limited resources, and legal gaps.

Importantly, the legislative and political environment in which these agencies function plays a crucial role in determining their capability and independence. The legislative branch, in particular, wields considerable influence through its lawmaking, oversight, and budgeting responsibilities. By passing relevant legislation, allocating funds, and exercising oversight, the National Assembly can either bolster or undermine anti-corruption institutions.

The 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) operated in a distinctive political climate, marked by close engagement with the executive branch. This environment raised questions about whether greater cooperation would improve governance and anti-corruption efforts or weaken checks on executive power. Previous scholars have debated whether close government alignment promotes cohesive reforms or undermines legislative autonomy, affecting oversight and institutional independence. In this context, it becomes essential to examine the actual impact of legislative actions on anti-corruption institutions. This paper focuses on how the 9th Assembly's decisions—enacting laws, approving budgets, and conducting oversight—influenced the effectiveness, independence, and credibility of Nigerian anti-corruption agencies. By analysing these legislative dynamics, the study sharpens the understanding of lawmaking's role in shaping institutional performance in Nigeria's anti-corruption landscape.

Conceptual Review

This section introduces the Conceptual Review, designed to simplify and clarify the essential ideas that underpin the study. By exploring the key terms, concepts, and frameworks pertinent to the research, this section gives a clear insight into how these ideas are applied within the study's context. It also emphasises the connections between the concepts and builds a strong intellectual foundation for the following analysis and discussion. Through this review, readers gain a richer understanding of the topic and the

theoretical questions that inform the research.

Concept of Corruption

Ekumankama (2022) explains corruption as morally decayed, lowly, corrupt, damaged, spoiled, and compromised actions carried out for unfair gain. Corruption weakens the moral fabric of society and, more importantly, infringes on the social and economic rights of the disadvantaged and the needy. Namo, Agwadu, and Amakoromo (2024) characterise corruption as not only widespread but deeply rooted and primarily accountable for the nation's lack of progress. Tyokyaa (2024) describes corruption as manifesting in various ways, including stealing public funds, falsifying data, cheating, dishonesty, and accepting kickbacks from contractors. Ajibade (2023) describes political corruption as the actions or failures to act by those in power who, through the abuse of their roles, aim to gain personal or political benefits at the cost of the common good, thereby obstructing national progress. Based on these definitions, the study examines the views of institutional and political-economy approaches to corruption, as they most effectively illustrate corruption as a failure of moral principles, a misuse of authority, and a widespread governance issue that hampers national growth.

Concept of Anti-Corruption

Okolie & Egbon (2025) describe anti-corruption as a planned and structured effort focused on eliminating corrupt practices through reforms in public administration and the implementation of legal systems by committed anti-corruption bodies in Nigeria. Nwosu (2022) defines anti-corruption as the adoption of laws, policies, and regulatory measures to prevent, uncover, and penalise corrupt behaviours in both the public and private sectors, thereby improving governance and accountability.

Akinsanya (2025) defines anti-corruption as the comprehensive legal and policy framework aimed at reducing corruption by strengthening institutional capacity and fostering transparency, accountability, and integrity in public service. Ajah & Biereenu-Nnabugwu (2023). Anti-corruption involves the Development and application of government strategies to reduce corruption through legal reforms, effective oversight, and the active involvement of civil society in governance. Adeyemi & Mutambara (2022). Anti-corruption is an organised approach that includes crafting policies, enforcing anti-corruption laws, and fostering institutional collaboration to reduce corruption and enhance governance in Nigeria. However, anti-corruption can be seen as a coordinated and complex effort utilising laws, policy changes, strengthened institutions, and citizen engagement to prevent, detect, and punish corruption, with the ultimate goal of enhancing transparency, accountability, and effective governance.

Legislative Action

Adewale (2021) explains legislative action as the process authorised by the constitution through which the Nigerian legislature creates, discusses, and establishes laws to manage social relationships and enhance governance. Eze and Okonkwo (2023) describe legislative action as the organised effort by Nigeria's National Assembly to create, change, or remove laws in response to national growth challenges. Bello (2020) views legislative action as the means by which Nigerian elected officials consider and enact laws that set legal guidelines for socio-economic management. Oluwole (2022) considers legislative action to be the official role of Nigeria's legislature, involving the establishment and alteration of legal standards that influence public policy and governance. Ibrahim (2024) clarifies that legislative action is the official, thoughtful process of making laws carried out by Nigeria's parliament to meet public demands

and support democratic values.

Theoretical framework Principal-Agent Theory

The study, anchored in Principal-Agent Theory, first introduced by Stephen Ross (1973) and expanded by Michael Jensen and William Meckling (1976), investigates the dynamics in which one entity (the principal) grants another (the agent) authority or decision-making power to act on their behalf. Initially grounded in economics and corporate governance, the theory has been widely utilised in political science and public administration to illustrate how delegated authority can cause misaligned incentives and governance failures. In democratic governance, the public (citizens) serves as the principal, while elected officials and public servants act as agents. These agents should operate in the public's best interest. Problems arise when the agents prioritise their personal or political gains over the principal's goals. This leads to what is known as agency loss: a failure of representatives to effectively or honestly fulfil their responsibilities, often worsened by information asymmetry, in which the agent possesses more or superior information than the principal and can operate with minimal oversight.

In Nigeria, the National Assembly serves as a prime example of this principal-agent conflict. Elected by the populace to uphold public interests, the legislature also supervises key anti-corruption bodies, such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), which serve as agents tasked with combating corruption. This multifaceted delegation creates opposing incentives. Legislators, acting as public representatives, might propose or back anti-corruption laws to show accountability. However, they may also undermine oversight processes or interfere in investigations to shield political allies or protect their own interests. This inconsistency between public declarations and private motivations is a central issue in Principal-Agent Theory. The theory sheds light on why anti-corruption initiatives in Nigeria often seem sporadic or ineffective, despite formal legislative endorsement. While laws may be enacted, their enforcement might be strategically postponed or inadequately applied. It has become clearer how institutional constraints, political motivations, and power imbalances influence legislative conduct. It also provides a vital framework for evaluating whether the actions taken by entities such as the 9th National Assembly were sincere efforts to enhance accountability or largely symbolic moves aimed at satisfying public demands while retaining political dominance.

Legislative Bills and Motions Related to Anti-Corruption (2019-2023)

During Nigeria's 9th National Assembly (2019-2023), there were significant strides to enhance the nation's anti-corruption framework through the creation and revision of key laws. Acknowledging the ongoing corruption in public institutions, the Assembly sought to strengthen legal tools, address institutional gaps, and align Nigeria with international best practices. One of the key achievements was the passing of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, a groundbreaking law that established a consolidated system for tracking, freezing, managing, and disposing of assets obtained from illegal activities.

Prior to this Act, anti-corruption agencies such as EFCC, ICPC, the Nigeria Police, Customs, and NDLEA operated separate asset recovery systems, leading to overlaps, secrecy, revenue losses, and, at times, re-looting of recovered assets. The new law introduced a central asset database and encouraged transparency, accountability, and cooperation among agencies, reflecting recommendations from global partners such as

the UNODC. As for implementation, initial reports from the Federal Ministry of Justice indicated that over ₦30 billion in assets, including cash, properties, and vehicles, were processed under the framework from 2022 to 2023. Nonetheless, challenges like inter-agency competition and delays in making the Asset Management Committee fully operational hindered the law's early effectiveness.

The Assembly also achieved significant progress by passing the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, which bolstered Nigeria's compliance with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) standards. This law increased reporting requirements for financial institutions and non-financial businesses, empowered the NFIU with enhanced monitoring powers, and tightened customer verification processes. These changes helped Nigeria avoid the FATF grey list and improved the quality of suspicious transaction reports submitted by banks. However, enforcement issues persisted, especially in the real estate sector and among professional groups such as lawyers and accountants, many of whom resisted compliance obligations.

In a similar vein, the Terrorism (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, while primarily focused on security, implemented strong measures against terrorist financing and illegal financial flows. This Act improved collaboration between security agencies and financial intelligence units and increased penalties for entities that facilitate illegal transactions. Although it strengthened Nigeria's adherence to global counter-terrorism financing standards, weak enforcement in rural and border areas continued to limit its effectiveness overall. Aside from these pivotal laws, the National Assembly also introduced essential anti-corruption measures through the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA) 2020, particularly regarding transparency of beneficial ownership.

The creation of the Beneficial Ownership Register enhanced efforts to uncover shell companies used for money laundering and tax evasion. International partners in the Open Government Partnership acknowledged Nigeria's advancements in this field. However, challenges persisted: many companies provided incomplete or false beneficial ownership details, while the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) lacked sufficient verification capacity.

In addition to legislative actions, the Assembly approved motions and conducted oversight efforts to combat corruption within Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). These efforts included probes into revenue losses, failure to deposit funds into the Treasury Single Account (TSA), discrepancies in fuel subsidy payments, corruption claims involving NIRSAL, and misuse of social investment programs. Such oversight helped uncover financial misconduct and pushed MDAs to comply with financial regulations. However, despite these successes, many important anti-corruption reforms stalled or failed. The Whistleblower Protection Bill, aimed at providing legal protections and incentives for individuals who report corruption, remained stuck in the legislative process. This setback was widely condemned, as Nigeria's whistleblower policy, introduced in 2016, had already led to the recovery of billions of naira. However, whistleblowers faced ongoing victimization, a lack of safety, and delayed rewards due to insufficient legal support. Likewise, the Assembly's failure to pass the EFCC Act Amendment Bill, which sought to remove the EFCC chairman's appointment from political pressure, was a missed opportunity to bolster the institutional independence of Nigeria's leading anti-corruption body. Consequently, worries about executive interference in EFCC leadership and operations continued throughout this period.

Overall, the 9th National Assembly made notable strides in asset recovery, financial intelligence reforms, transparency in beneficial ownership, and aligning legislation with

international standards. Still, shortcomings in implementation, selective enforcement, rivalry between agencies, incomplete databases, and the inability to pass crucial bills persisted in limiting the transformative potential of its anti-corruption efforts.

Legislative Oversight: Rhetoric vs. Reality

The 9th National Assembly of Nigeria (2019-2023) actively utilised its formal oversight powers, including investigative hearings, committee probes, and public summonses of government officials. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these actions is questionable because of weak enforcement mechanisms, a lack of transparency, and poor follow-up on findings. Although Sections 88 and 89 of the Nigerian Constitution grant oversight powers to investigate the conduct of public officers or institutions, these powers were often merely symbolic rather than practical tools for ensuring accountability. A key example is the investigation into the use of COVID-19 intervention funds.

In 2020, the House of Representatives initiated a probe into how funds assigned to ministries and agencies, notably the Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, were utilised. Despite extensive media coverage of mismanagement and inflated contracts, particularly regarding cash transfers and food assistance, the results of the legislative investigation were never completely revealed. Significantly, the ministry spent over ₦500 billion during the pandemic, with claims that large sums were unaccounted for (Premium Times, 2021). While hearings were conducted, no substantial administrative or legal actions ensued, and the officials involved were neither prosecuted nor removed from their positions. Another significant area of oversight failure concerns budget padding and recurring questionable allocations. The Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) disclosed in 2022 that federal MDAs had included duplicate projects amounting to over ₦300 billion in the 2021 budget (ICPC, 2022). Constituency projects often supported by legislators were marked by corruption, inadequate implementation, and a lack of accountability. Many of these projects were never carried out, and reports suggested that some oversight committees accepted inducements to overlook discrepancies, which weakened public confidence in the process (BudgIT, 2021).

In the oil and gas sector, even with the landmark passage of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) in 2021, the National Assembly failed to implement transparency and accountability measures, particularly regarding the Nigerian National Petroleum Company Limited (NNPCL). Concerns such as unpaid oil revenues, inflated subsidy payments, and a lack of clarity in crude oil sales largely remained unaddressed. The Senate Public Accounts Committee in 2023 found audit discrepancies amounting to ₦210 trillion related to NNPCL operations, but could not enforce meaningful action (ThisDay, 2023). Together, these examples reflect a concerning gap between legislative claims and genuine accountability. Although oversight tools were employed, the lack of repercussions for misconduct indicates a deficiency in political will and, in some instances, possible collusion or the legislature's suppression of accountability.

Budgetary Allocations and Legislative Appropriations

A look at federal budget trends from 2019 to 2023 shows that the 9th National Assembly made slight increases in funding for Nigeria's central anti-corruption bodies. While this suggests nominal legislative support for boosting anti-corruption initiatives, the funding often fell short of the agencies' budget requests. This continuous underfunding severely limited their capabilities, thereby restricting the effectiveness of agencies such as the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt

Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB).

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC): From 2019 to 2023, the EFCC's budget slowly increased in absolute terms, rising to ₦30.8 billion in 2023, up from around ₦24 billion in 2019 (Budget Office of the Federation, 2023).

However, this growth was diminished by high inflation and rising operational demands, including the need for more cybercrime investigations, increased international partnerships, and heightened asset recovery efforts. The real value of funding, when adjusted for inflation and operational costs, thus remained flat or even fell in practical terms. Consequently, the EFCC faced challenges in hiring and training personnel en masse, advancing forensic capabilities, and establishing regional offices across Nigeria. Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB): The ICPC and CCB received much smaller budgets compared to the EFCC, often labelled as inadequate for their responsibilities. For example, the ICPC received around ₦15.5 billion in 2023, up from ₦9.4 billion in 2019 (Budget Office of the Federation, 2023). Although this signifies growth, both agencies noted difficulties in receiving funds on time, particularly for capital expenses, which directly hinders their investigation and prosecution efforts. Delayed fund releases meant that crucial infrastructure, such as forensic labs, data centres, and surveillance tools, could not be developed or upgraded as intended. The CCB, in particular, remained underfunded, struggling to digitize its asset declaration processes and maintain its investigative independence. Asset Recovery and Proceeds of Crime: A key legislative success during this timeframe was the enactment of the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act (POCA) in 2022. This law aimed to unify the asset recovery process across anti-corruption bodies and to promote transparency and accountability in the management of assets. However, its execution has been hampered by insufficient budget allocations. Even though the Act requires the establishment of structures such as the Proceeds of Crime Management Directorate, the budgets for 2023 and 2024 did not allocate sufficient funds to effectively implement this framework (SERAP, 2023; BudgIT, 2023). This shortfall leaves asset tracing, seizure, and management mostly disjointed and reactive, with persistent inter-agency conflicts.

Political Dynamics and Legislative Independence

One of the keys and most discussed aspects of Nigeria's 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) was its notably "harmonious relationship" with the executive branch, particularly during President Muhammadu Buhari's tenure. While some lauded this cooperation for enabling smoother governance and reducing political stalemates, it also sparked serious worries about the decline of legislative independence. The effects of this relationship were especially evident in anti-corruption legislation and oversight. Fast-Tracking of Executive Bills: Throughout the 9th Assembly, the executive sponsored many significant anti-corruption laws enacted. These included the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, and the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022.

These laws were frequently expedited through the legislative process, passed with few revisions and limited public discussion. According to legislative tracking data from the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC), over 70% of successful anti-corruption bills during this period originated in the executive (PLAC, 2023). While the quick passage of such bills strengthened the legal framework for combating corruption, critics contend that this tendency undermined the legislature's deliberative and oversight roles.

Neglect of Private Member Bills: Conversely, private member bills, particularly those proposing reforms to the framework and management of anti-corruption agencies, received little attention or stalled at the committee level. For example, bills promoting the independence of bodies like the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB) or clarifying overlapping roles between the EFCC and ICPC seldom advanced. Legislative efforts pushing for more open appointment processes for agency leaders or increased parliamentary oversight of anti-corruption agencies were largely overlooked.

This trend indicated the Assembly's reluctance to contest or modify the executive's dominance over the anti-corruption framework. Limited Oversight and Critical Scrutiny: The close connection between the legislature and the executive also raised concerns that the Assembly was hesitant to perform its constitutional oversight duties effectively. Civil society organisations and media sources reported multiple instances in which lawmakers failed to investigate or discuss credible corruption allegations involving high-ranking officials or state agencies. For instance, scandals involving the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) and the Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs, both facing accusations of financial mismanagement, did not lead to ongoing legislative inquiries or penalties (SERAP, 2021; Premium Times, 2022). This perceived inaction raised doubts about the distribution of power and the legislature's function as a check on executive misconduct. According to the Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), this situation created an "accountability vacuum," in which corruption thrived under the guise of political loyalty and legislative inaction (CDD, 2023). In short, the 9th National Assembly's collaboration with the executive helped expedite lawmaking, particularly anti-corruption laws, but it also weakened necessary oversight. The reduced independence of the legislature curtailed its ability to hold the executive accountable, undermining Nigeria's broader institutional struggle against corruption. A strong, independent legislature is essential to ensure that political agendas do not merely drive anti-corruption initiatives but are grounded in transparency, inclusivity, and the rule of law.

Effects on Major Anti-Corruption Institutions

The legislative and political climate of the 9th National Assembly (2019-2023) had varied effects on Nigeria's leading anti-corruption institutions. Some agencies gained from legislative focus and policy changes, while others continued to face neglect, insufficient funding, and structural challenges. The three leading institutions, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC), and the Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB), each had different outcomes during this time. Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC): Throughout the 9th Assembly's term, the EFCC was the most prominent and active anti-corruption body. Its role as Nigeria's leading institution in the fight against corruption was strengthened by support from the legislature and the executive, especially during the spotlight confirmation of Abdulrasheed Bawa as chairman in 2021 (Premium Times, 2021).

Legislative support also included the Money Laundering (Prevention and Prohibition) Act, 2022, and the Proceeds of Crime (Recovery and Management) Act, 2022, which enhanced the EFCC's legal framework for tackling and prosecuting financial crimes. Nevertheless, challenges persisted. Critics often highlighted the political bias in the EFCC's operations, alleging that it targeted political opponents or acted as a weapon for political revenge (Transparency International, 2022). Furthermore, the Commission continued to struggle with inadequate funding, logistical hurdles, and capacity constraints,

particularly in digital forensics, staff development, and international partnerships. While the EFCC was more visible than its counterparts, its effectiveness was frequently compromised by broader systemic issues and selective enforcement.

Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC): The ICPC attracted significantly less legislative and media attention than the EFCC. Although it kept a consistent pace of investigations mainly in the education and public procurement sectors, there was little initiative from the legislature to enhance its legal authority or increase its funding.

The ICPC's preventive anti-corruption efforts, including audits of government agencies, system evaluations, and public awareness campaigns, were important but often overshadowed by the EFCC's high-profile cases. As reported by the Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC, 2023), legislative interest in reforms for the ICPC was low, with no major bills introduced or approved to enhance its operational independence or broaden its investigative powers. This lack of involvement left the agency functioning below its capacity, despite its essential role in systemic and institutional anti-corruption efforts.

Code of Conduct Bureau (CCB): Despite being constitutionally empowered to enforce asset declarations and maintain public service ethics, the CCB remained the most neglected of the three agencies. It struggled with chronic underfunding, outdated facilities, and limited legislative focus. Even with its vital responsibilities, such as assessing the asset declarations of public officials, the Bureau lacked the political and financial backing required to operate effectively. Civil society organizations, including the Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), have consistently urged changes to enhance the CCB's independence and modernize its processes to improve transparency (SERAP, 2022). Nevertheless, these changes were not a priority for the 9th Assembly. Consequently, the CCB's role in combating illegal wealth accumulation and fostering transparency in public service remained limited.

Conclusion

The 9th National Assembly of Nigeria (2019-2023) had a detailed and intricate role in influencing the operational landscape of the nation's anti-corruption institutions. While it made notable strides, such as enacting the Proceeds of Crime Act and aligning with global anti-money laundering practices, its legislative actions were characterized by both hope and flaws. Significantly, the Assembly's cooperation with the executive branch enhanced legislative effectiveness but diminished the crucial checks and balances necessary for robust democratic oversight. Even though several investigative hearings were held, their results seldom led to meaningful institutional changes or prosecutions, raising doubts about the authenticity and influence of these oversight efforts. Funding for anti-corruption agencies saw only a modest increase and, in many instances, remained inadequate for the level of operations required.

Additionally, the inability to pass vital legislation, such as the Whistleblower Protection Bill, and reforms to diminish executive control over the leadership of anti-corruption agencies indicates hesitation to implement sweeping reforms that could alter the political landscape. Institutional Theory and Principal-Agent Theory both shed light on these results: institutional limitations, political motivations, and conflicts between elected officials and the public good shaped legislative actions. The resulting policies, although symbolically connected to anti-corruption objectives, frequently lacked the foundational strength to create systemic change. In summary, while the 9th Assembly did not entirely forsake the anti-corruption agenda, it failed to become a transformative agent. Its influence was gradual rather than groundbreaking, leaving essential reforms to future legislatures and an engaged civil society.

Recommendations

The following suggestions are made.

1. **Pass Critical Legislative Reforms:** The National Assembly should focus on pending bills, such as the Whistleblower Protection Bill and the EFCC Act Amendment, to boost institutional independence and public involvement in fighting corruption.
2. **Enhance Oversight Effectiveness:** Investigative hearings should produce tangible results, such as legal action and reforms, rather than mere political performances.
3. **Increase Funding for Anti-Corruption Agencies:** Budget allocations must align with the operational needs of agencies such as the EFCC, ICPC, and CCB, ensuring timely funding and performance-based financial models.
4. **Reduce Executive Influence:** Appointments to anti-corruption organisations should be subject to greater legislative scrutiny and merit-based processes to avoid political bias.
5. **Strengthen Legislative Independence:** Future assemblies must claim their independence from the executive branch to genuinely act as guardians of public accountability.
6. **Promote Civil Society Engagement:** The legislature should establish mechanisms for civil society organisations to regularly provide input into the creation and oversight of anti-corruption laws.

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