

EXECUTIVE- LEGISLATIVE RELATIONS AND THE ROLE OF FINANCIAL AUTONOMY IN THE EFFICACY OF LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative oversight in Nigeria was evaluated, along with the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature and the significance of financial autonomy. The research examined a number of conceptual and empirical works that demonstrated agreement on certain points of view while presenting divergent opinions on others. The study's findings were explained using a combination of David Easton's input-output analysis and Gabriel Almond's 1966 structural-functionalism. The relationship between the phenomena under examination was explained by the study through the use of a descriptive survey approach. Out of the 2,730 people in the study population, a sample of 546 was taken. Based on the researcher's assessment, the respondents who took part in the survey were chosen by the purposeful sampling approach. The questionnaire was the instrument used in the study to collect data. The Likert scale with four points was used for this. The descriptive data was analyzed using mean and standard deviation, and the study's hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative monitoring in Nigeria is influenced by the financial autonomy of the House, according to the study. To enhance the effectiveness of legislative monitoring of the Nigerian House of Representatives, the report proposed that the House of Representatives operate with financial autonomy. Financial independence and the ability to perform their oversight responsibilities as needed of them will be ensured by their financial autonomy.

Keywords: *Financial autonomy, efficacy, executive, legislative, relations, legislative oversight, and autonomy*

INTRODUCTION

In the political system, especially the presidential kind, there are three distinct branches of government: the legislative, the executive, and the judicial. According to Bodin (2019), the existence, acknowledgement, and acceptance of the three arms are not only indicative of the division of powers but also align with Montesquieu's (1976) claim that every man endowed with authority acts both to abuse and manage it in addition to exercising authority for the protection of political liberty. The responsibilities that the executive and legislative branches play in the political system are fundamental to their visible and expected complementarities. Although the executives exercise leadership within the political system, this leadership is probably not limited to the application of laws but also extends to the formulation of policies. Party management, mediating disputes within the political system, and representing the nation both domestically and internationally are additional functions added to the executive's remit. On the other hand, the

legislature is an institution mandated by the constitution to approve binding public policy initiatives and turn those measures into laws. It also guarantees that the executive acts in accordance with the law and effectively implements policy. These include approving requests for the budget, monitoring spending, assessing how policies are being implemented, and looking into allegations of improper or maladministration (Rockman, 2021).

Hamzat (2018) emphasized that the 1999 Nigerian Constitution empowers the National Assembly to direct or cause to be directed an investigation into any matter or thing with respect to which it has the authority to make laws, as well as into the conduct of affairs of any person, authority, ministry, or government charged or intended to be charged with the responsibility of carrying out or administering laws enacted by the national assembly and for disbursing or administering money appropriated or to be appropriated by the legislature. In this regard, Hamzat (2018) further emphasized the significance of legislative oversight as a veritable instrument in the Nigerian context. Through its oversight role, the Nigerian legislature also has the authority to reveal corruption, inefficiency, or waste in the enforcement of legislation under its purview and in the distribution or management of monies appropriated by it.

It is a little unexpected that the legislative oversight functions' effectiveness is primarily limited by various variables given the above-mentioned cross-cutting relevance of these functions in the actualization of accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness in government. For example, Inyang (2019) contended that weak commitment, mismanagement, and the politics of trade-off and pay-off between the legislature and the executive affect the parliamentary oversight function in Nigeria.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the executive- legislative relations and the role of financial autonomy on the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria

1. Investigate the executive- legislative relations and the role of financial autonomy on the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

Research Question

i. To what extent has financial autonomy affected the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

ii. **Ho₁**: There is no significant relationship between financial autonomy and the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria.

Literature Review

The Executive: Logical Clarification

The term "executive governance" describes the synthesis of two distinct fields of research: political science's study of executive government and public administration's study of governance. We concentrate on where they converge, on points of agreement and shared puzzles. We begin with a succinct overview of the several political science approaches to executive studies and the different currents in the field of governance research. We discuss the main CEOs of the parliamentary politics in Western Europe and Westminster. Following this survey of the literature, we focus primarily on the common problems at the intersection of governance and executive studies. We concentrate on four conundrums: formal or informal coordination; central competence or

implementation; political accountability or webs of accountabilities; and dominating or collaborative leadership. We offer some recommendations for future research under the following headings: presidential studies, judicial politics, and the interpretative turn.

Dibie (2021) asserts that the executive branch of government is in charge of formulating national policy and carrying out the laws and policies passed by the nation. The president or prime minister of a nation, governors of individual states, ministries, the civil service, the armed forces, the police, and so on are all considered to be part of the executive arm of government. Whether it be federal, state, or municipal government, the executive handles the day-to-day operations of the government. For example, the executive branch may equally carry out some judicial and legislative duties in certain nations. For instance, the constitution grants the presidents of the United States of America, Nigeria, and other countries the authority to name justices for the Supreme Court, high ranking civil officers, and pardon criminals. Nonetheless, the nature of the constitution in force in a given nation has a significant impact on the executive's responsibilities. For instance, the roles played by the executive branch in presidential democracies like the USA differ from those in British parliamentary democracies. Executives exercise leadership in the form of governance, which is likely to extend beyond putting laws into effect to cover initiation policies, monitoring bureaucracy, managing political parties, and, consequently, mediating disputes within the political system. In addition to carrying out ceremonial duties both domestically and internationally, executives represent the nation in international affairs (Dibie, 2021).

Overview of Legislative Oversight

Ndoma-Egba (2012) defines legislative oversight as the legislature's ability to review, keep an eye on, and oversee government agencies, programs, activities, and the executive branch's methods for implementing policies. This is to guarantee that the arm maintains the values of good governance and continues to be transparent, accountable, and responsive to the public. Committees of the House of Representatives and Senate of the National Assembly are responsible for oversight tasks include monitoring, keeping an eye out for abuses, and vetting executive actions and programs. The legislature's ongoing observation and examination of the executive branch's and its agencies' actions is made possible by its oversight powers. It has long been believed that the leadership of the legislature is essential to preventing executive tyranny.

The legislature oversees, inquires about, and, when necessary, censors the acts of the executive branch and government agencies (such as ministries, departments, and parastatals) in order to ensure good governance and accountability (Onuoha, 2009). The same people who have the authority to write laws may find it too tempting to use that authority to carry them out, encouraging them to break the rules they create in order to escape responsibility for their actions. When the legislative and executive branches are consolidated under one person or body of magistrates, liberty cannot exist because of the possibility that the same king or Senate will create and implement oppressive legislation (Johari, 2009).

According to Heywood (2017), assemblies' capacity to restrain or check the authority of the executive branch has grown in significance, while legislatures' legislative and representative functions have become less significant. Assembly oversight is growing, with the main objective being the delivery of accountable or responsible governance. He made the observation that keeping executives accountable isn't always accomplished by assemblies. Deliberating over, shaping, and/or modifying the executive president's annual budgetary appropriations plan offers the chance to influence governance and shape state policy. In this way, the administration and the central legislature finally work together to fulfill the will of the governed. This legislature's

involvement in the financial appropriation proposal is crucial in a state where the absence of institutional accountability and participatory policy-making under successive military regimes has led to the waste of national resources and dysfunctional public policy. Under the democratic Nigerian fourth republic, the legislature-executive partnership on budgetary appropriation should reverse the economic crises and deterioration of national cohesiveness under the juntas.

Nigerian Legislature Oversight

The purpose of the parliament in any given polity is to enact, alter, and repeal laws for the benefit of the community, with a particular focus on maintaining peace and order and providing efficient and effective government services. For instance, effective use of public monies is a need if any administration is serious about good governance in a developing country with limited resources and many areas vying for attention. The legislative is supposed to play a crucial role in ensuring that the executive performs its duties effectively and efficiently, even if financial management in a democracy is fundamentally an executive responsibility (Williams, 2019). It includes making sure that qualified individuals are chosen by the executive branch to oversee public funds, making sure that monies are only allocated to projects that are pertinent to societal requirements, and keeping an eye on projects to guarantee that established protocols are being followed.

As a result, the legislature is involved in both ex-post (after an expense is incurred) and ex- ante (before an expenditure is incurred) financial management (Lawan, 1999). In actuality, disputes between the government and legislature over financial matters have existed since 1628, during the early years of English political history. The point of disagreement at the time was King Charles I's reluctance to abide by the Petition of Rights' declaration, among other things, that taxes could not be imposed without the approval of parliament. Charles I was forced to call parliament in order to get funding for the administration of public affairs, which led to him dismissing it from 1629 till 1640 as a result of this conflict. Because of this, the legislature is a crucial tool for raising funds to manage public affairs.

The above is due to the fact that individuals are more likely to pay taxes when they are aware that someone is keeping an eye on things and making sure the money they donate is being used wisely. This is also due to the fact that the parliament, which serves as the people's eyes on the government, is a crucial tool for raising funds for its operations. Therefore, in addition to its main function, the legislature now has other, ostensibly non-legislative responsibilities due to the requirements and complications of public administration. Implicitly, the legislature performs judicial and executive powers with the intention of restraining the administration and forming national policy. Like in other countries, Nigeria's legislature performs a number of legislative oversight duties, such as approving appointments to the executive and judicial branches and setting officer salaries, ratifying and adopting treaties, approving public expenditures, and overseeing the public accounts committee.

The Difficulties of Legislative Supervision

Numerous variables limit the vigor with which legislators carry out their oversight responsibilities. Legislators from the government's party have a second, contradictory role under parliamentary systems, where the executive is elected based on its ability to command a majority in (one house of) the legislature. To prevent overthrowing the government or drawing criticism for cabinet ministers, there may be less incentive to make sure the executive is operating appropriately (Adamolekun, 2017). In presidential systems, the executive is independently elected and does not require the legislature's support in order to function, hence tensions between supporting and questioning the executive are particularly noticeable. Nonetheless, in presidential systems as well,

lawmakers' inclination to back a party administration may outweigh their concern for legislative scrutiny. In fact, in every system, public disagreements between the legislative and executive branch are likely to be curtailed by a shared political affiliation. It is expected that internal party channels, to which the public and media have limited access, will play a significant role in the settlement of disagreements (King, 2016). There are two types of obstacles that come with congressional oversight: internal challenges and external challenges. The term "internal challenges" refers to problems whose fundamental causes can be found in any country's constitution, whereas "external challenges" are outside forces that undermine legislative capacity and oversight roles but are not connected to any constitutional mandate.

Empirical Research on Legislative Supervision

In Rivers State, Nigeria, Gogo (2018) evaluated the impact of parliamentary supervision on public accountability from 1999 to 2011. The study examines the legislature's involvement in establishing public accountability in Rivers State from 1999 to 2011. The specific goals were to: ascertain whether the pursuit of reelection by legislators jeopardized the effectiveness of legislative mechanisms of accountability in Rivers State during the study period; ascertain whether legislative oversight by the Rivers State House of Assembly enhanced infrastructural development in the State during the study period; and ascertain whether there is any significant relationship between the exposition of executive corruption in the State between 1999 and 2011. The institutional theory, as well as quantitative and qualitative data gathering techniques, were used in the study. In order to choose the local governments from which the sample was purposefully chosen, multistage cluster probability sampling was used. The study's conclusions are as follows: (1) the Rivers State House of Assembly's legislative oversight was significantly linked to the revelation of executive corruption in the state between 1999 and 2011; (2) the pursuit of reelection by legislators weakened the effectiveness of the state's legislative accountability mechanisms during the study period; and (3) the House of Assembly's legislative oversight contributed to the state's increased infrastructure development. According to the study, the legislature should make sure that the yearly audited account for Rivers State is made available online by both the government of Rivers State and Nigeria. The Rivers State government should also think about utilizing a combination of financing options, as doing so will maximize the state's output and hasten the realization of its aspirations for infrastructural development.

Legislative oversight under the Nigerian presidential system was studied by Fashagba (2017). Regardless of the actual structure of government, one of the main functions of modern legislatures is oversight. This study looks at how well the Nigerian legislature has carried out its oversight function in spite of its sporadic political appearances and atmosphere that is primarily controlled by the executive branch. The study, which is essentially empirical, contends that in addition to obstacles like executive interference, severe internal conflict, inexperience, and a high member turnover rate impeding legislative efficiency, the Nigerian legislature has compromised its role and has thus been unable to carry out its oversight function. Nonetheless, sporadic outbursts of assertiveness from the legislature indicate that as parliamentary culture becomes more deeply ingrained, performance will increase with efficient management of its internal issues.

Legislative fiscal supervision and budget transparency were studied by Ana-Maria, Bastida, and Benito (2016). The essay assesses how improving budget openness is aided by legislative budgetary supervision. Thus yet, this relationship has not been put to the test empirically. We demonstrate that, for a sample of 93 nations polled by International Budget Partnership in 2010, legislative budgetary oversight positively affects budget transparency, as one might anticipate.

Budget transparency is also found to be influenced by the legal system, political rivalry, and economic status. We also look into the factors that influence parliamentary budgetary supervision at different stages of the budgetary process. In a similar spirit, legislative budgetary oversight is determined by the nature of the legislature, the legal system, the financial oversight of the Supreme Audit Institution, the economic level, and the democratic level.

Igwe-omoke, Abdullahi, and Charles (2020) looked into how legislative oversight affected the way the Nigerian Army carried out its budget. The concepts of check and balance and separation of powers served as the foundation for theoretical analysis. By employing the survey study design method, primary data was gathered. The study's target audience includes secretaries and clerks in the House of Representatives and Senate, as well as members of National Assembly committees. Inferential statistics and the Statistics Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to analyze the data gathered from the respondents. Multiple regression analysis was employed for data analysis. The study discovered that the Nigerian Army carries out annual legislative oversights, and that throughout the study period, there has been a significant increase in the oversight duties' monitoring and evaluation. The study also found that the Federation's budget office and even the Nigerian Army itself are not always provided with access to the conclusions of the parliamentary oversight committee about the execution of the annual budget in the Nigerian Army. The results of the study also showed that parliamentary oversight has been beneficial in addressing the Nigerian Army's budget implementation revenue gap. This is achieved through the application of virement. Therefore, to enhance the Nigerian Army's current 39% budget implementation rate, the report recommends that legislative committees on the army continue to focus on budget monitoring and evaluation of their oversight functions. The Federation's Budget Office and even the Nigerian Army itself should be the recipients of reports from legislative oversight committees about the army. Legislative committees overseeing the Army should continue to be responsible for the legislative monitoring of budget execution in order to ensure that all projects and programs are completed.

Theoretical Framework

The structural-functionalism of Gabriel Almond (1966) and the input-output analysis variation of the general system developed by David Easton will be used to illustrate the theoretical framework of this study. Explaining the fundamental ideas of Montesquieu's (1748) separation of powers is crucial for understanding presidential democracy. In order to prevent tyranny or misrule, the three main branches of government must be clearly and effectively divided, according to Montesquieu's fundamental theory of separation of powers. In a similar vein, Willoughby (1936) contended that: it is reasonable to declare that the concentration of all authority—legislative, executive, and judicial—in the hands of one, a small number of people, or many—and regardless of whether those positions are inherited, self-appointed, or elective—is the precise definition of tyranny. John Locke reinforced the idea of the separation of powers when he pointed out that if one person or organization performed all of the duties of government, it may lead to tyrannical and arbitrary rule. The idea of checks and balances implies that authority should be utilized to check other powers, which is complimentary to the theory of separation of powers.

According to the principle, every one of the three branches of government must keep an eye on the others. According to the constitution, the legislature's role is to serve as a check on the executive and judicial branches. In accordance with the constitution, the legislature must also make sure that the executive branch uses state resources effectively and efficiently. The aforementioned claim is supported by Section 88 of the 1999 Constitution. The National Assembly is in charge of controlling the purse through the approval of laws and the appropriation of

government funds because of the concepts of checks and balances and the separation of powers. Therefore, the Senate's or the House of Representatives' oversight authority is a crucial check on the executive branch's ability to oversee, hold agencies responsible, and set public policy. However, structural-functionalism holds that every political system has a set of fundamental structures that carry out vital tasks without which the system cannot exist.

This theory primarily explains the roles that a political system needs to play in order to exist and identifies the structures that can play these roles most successfully. According to Almond (1966), structures are "observable activities which make up a political system" in his structural-functional analysis paradigm. To shed more light on this, Almond says that in any situation where a government is in existence and a regular function is found, there is a framework in place to carry out that role. Taking a lesson from the aforementioned, the executive branch is a crucial branch of government tasked with setting policy, creating the budget to support it, and carrying it out. On the other hand, because of its oversight responsibilities, the legislature is expected to act on such policies, examine and approve the budget, and keep a close eye on the executive branch to guarantee accountability, openness, and probity in the system. This notion makes the system function smoothly, in the best interests of the country, and permits stability to reign. As a result, this argument best fits the logic of the separation of powers among the three branches of government to explain the significance of legislative oversight.

Research Method

The researcher employed primary and secondary sources to gather data on the variables under study from the sample that was selected from the population, which is why the study used a descriptive survey methodology. 2,730 people make up the study's population. Five hundred and forty-six (546) managers and senior employees of the six federal government ministries, departments, and organizations make up the study's sample. The purposive or judgmental sample technique was used to choose the 546 top employees and managers. The three portions of the questionnaire, which were chosen as the instrument for gathering data, allowed the researcher to distribute the questions and items among the independent and intervening factors. The study employed the mean and standard deviation to address all research issues, and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was utilized to assess each of the null hypotheses for significance at the 0.05 level of significance.

Findings and Discussion

Table 4.1: The Respondents' Demographic Details

Items		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	128	32.7
	Female	264	67.3
Educational Qualification	OND	49	12.5
	HND/B.A./B.Sc.	222	56.6
	M.A/M.Sc.	79	20
	PhD	42	10
Ministries/Departments/Agencies	Federal Ministry of Works	61	15.6
	Federal Ministry of Power	57	14.5
	Federal Ministry of Housing	51	13.0

	Niger Delta Ministry	87	22.2
	The Nigeria Customs	65	16.6
	Federal Road Safety Corps	71	18.1

Source: Author's Fieldwork, 2023

Table 4.1 reveals that 67.3 percent of participants in the poll were female, and 32.7 percent were male. This shows that the poll had a higher female participation rate. According to the respondents' educational backgrounds, 12.5 percent had an OND and those with an HND/B.A./B.Sc. 56.6 percent of the M.A./MSc. holders. held 20 percent, and PhD holders 10 percent. The distribution of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies reveals that the Federal Ministry of Works has the highest percentage of respondents (15.6%), followed by the Federal Ministry of Power (14.5%), the Federal Ministry of Housing (14.0%), the Niger Delta Ministry (22.2%), Nigeria Customs (16.6%) and the Federal Road Safety Corps (18.1%).

Research Question: What is the extent to which financial autonomy has affected the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria?

Table 4.2: Respondents' responses on financial autonomy and efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Remark
1	The oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria has been affected by the non-financial autonomy of the legislature	2.71	.89	Agree
2	Commitment to the oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria has been affected by the non-financial autonomy status of the legislature	2.61	.79	Agree
3	The quality of the oversight functions of the house of representatives in Nigeria has suffered as a result of the non-financial autonomy of the legislature	2.60	.96	Agree
4	Non-financial autonomy of the legislature has contributed to the poor performance of the oversight functions of the House of Representatives in Nigeria	3.03	.98	Agree

Source: 2023 Fieldwork

Table 4.2 displays the average scores and standard deviation assessments about the impact of financial autonomy on the effectiveness of legislative oversight of the Nigerian House of Representatives. The survey found that participants were in agreement on every topic. Respondents concurred that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy had an impact on the house of representatives' oversight functions in Nigeria, that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy had an impact on the house of representatives' commitment to these functions, that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy had a negative impact on the quality of the house of representatives' oversight functions in Nigeria, and that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy had contributed to the House of Representatives' subpar performance in these functions. This is demonstrated by the favorable replies with mean scores of 2.71, 2.61, 2.60, and 3.03.

This suggests that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy has an impact on the house of representatives' oversight functions in Nigeria, that the legislature's lack of financial autonomy has

an impact on the house of representatives' commitment to these functions, that the lack of financial autonomy of the legislature has a negative impact on the quality of the house of representatives' oversight functions in Nigeria, and that the lack of financial autonomy of the legislature has contributed to the House of Representatives' subpar performance in Nigeria.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho: There is no significant positive relationship between financial autonomy and the efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria

Table 4.3: Correlation analysis for the hypothesis

	financial autonomy	efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria
financial autonomy	1	.462
Pearson Correlation		.168
Sig. (2-tailed)		390
N	390	390
efficacy of legislative oversight of the House of Representatives in Nigeria	.462	1
Pearson Correlation	.168	
Sig. (2-tailed)	390	
N		390

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

If the estimated Pearson r value is higher than the Pearson r critical value, which indicates a rejection of Ho and a retention of Hi, then the null hypothesis is accepted. If not, though, hold onto Ho and reject Hi. With a degree of freedom of 390, the crucial Pearson r value at the 0.05 level of significance is 0.1946. Table 4.3 result indicates that Ho is rejected and Hi is accepted because the computed Pearson r value of 0.462 is higher than the crucial Pearson r value of 0.1946. This indicates that the effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative oversight in Nigeria is positively correlated with financial autonomy.

Discussion of Results

The results of the first hypothesis test showed that financial autonomy and the effectiveness of the House of Representatives' legislative supervision in Nigeria are significantly positively correlated. This result is consistent with the work of Stapenhurst (2016), who maintained that legislative committees serve as the legislature's engine rooms and that the legislature's budgetary role is weak in areas where the committee system is underdeveloped. This indicates that the legislative system's incapacity to comprehend its roles results in inadequate budgetary execution and has an impact on their financial independence. Additionally, Anderson's (2018) research backs up the conclusion of the initial test of the hypothesis. Anderson states that ombudsmen and supreme audit institutions, among other extraparliamentary accountability agencies, regularly support legislatures and their committees in their monitoring responsibilities. The potential benefits of having independent analytical budget units, according to Anderson, include elevating the legislature's standing in relation to the executive branch and improving the budget process' general accountability, openness, and credibility. The findings are corroborated by research by Warren and Joachim (2019), who suggested that the parliament can assist government agencies

and departments in better planning and executing budgets, which will decrease corruption, close budgetary gaps, and improve departmental spending efficiency. According to Santiso and Belgrano (2020), achieving more democratic accountability while upholding budgetary discipline is one of the most challenging problems. They also said that there has been a recent increase in legislative participation in public budgeting, which comes after decades of severed executive-parliamentary relations since the restoration of democracy. However, they argued that the legislature's ability to contribute to budget supervision is limited for institutional reasons that are both internal and external to parliamentary institutions. Furthermore, the presence of an enabling environment and the capacity to carry out budgetary tasks responsibly and successfully are prerequisites for efficient legislative budgeting.

CONCLUSION

The study came to the conclusion that the House of Representatives' legislative oversight role over the executive branch in Nigeria hasn't been very successful. This is because the executive branch of government has improperly interfered with the House of Representatives' operations and responsibilities through its party platform. Decisions made in parliament, particularly those made by the House of Representatives, can be influenced and swayed in favor of the executive branch under party control through the presidency. Because they are unable to perform their tasks as expected by the citizens who have entrusted them with the obligation of representing their interests at the national level, the legislature's oversight function is weakened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To guarantee the effectiveness of legislative monitoring of the Nigerian House of Representatives, the House of Representatives should have financial independence. Financial independence and the ability to perform their oversight responsibilities as needed of them will be ensured by their financial autonomy.

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