

ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU)



FESTUS IYAYI NATIONAL SECRETARIAT COMPLEX,
UNIVERSITY OF ABUJA, GIRI, ABUJA

PRESS RELEASE

ENOUGH OF THE BLACKMAIL

1. The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) held an emergency meeting at its Festus Iyayi National Secretariat, University of Abuja, on Saturday, 18th December, 2021 to review the level of government's implementation of the FGN-ASUU Memorandum of Action (MoA) of 23rd December, 2020 and other related matters. The ASUU-NEC meeting held against the backdrop of the union's numerous consultative meetings, communications and discussions with relevant agents at both the executive and legislative arms of government since the suspension of the 2020 strike action.
2. NEC was worried by the spirited efforts of government agents to reduce the demands of ASUU to a regime of intermittent payment of watered-down revitalisation fund and release of distorted and grossly devalued Earned Academic Allowances (EAA). NEC condemns, in strong terms, the surreptitious moves to pooh-pooh our demands on the review of the NUC's Act to curb the proliferation of universities by State Governments who are not funding the existing ones; adoption of the University Transparency Accountability Solutions

(UTAS) with concurrent discontinuance of the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS) and distortion in salary payment; release of accumulated promotion arrears; and the review and signing of the draft document on the Renegotiation of 2009 ASUU-FGN Agreement. ASUU shall not relent in demanding for improvement in the welfare and conditions of service of our members. However, we shall resist any attempt to blackmail the union and derail our patriotic struggle for a productive university system by official propaganda founded on tokenism and crumb-sharing.

3. NEC noted with regrets that the Federal Government has turned its back on plan to set up an inter-ministerial committee to review the draft Renegotiated 2009 FGN-ASUU Agreement to enable the parties conclude a negotiation process which began in March 2017. This is contrary to the assurance given the leadership of ASUU by the Minister of State for Education, Hon. Chukwuemeka Nwajiuba, at a meeting with the Honourable Speaker of the House of Representatives on 19th November, 2021. The Minister assured us that the process of reviewing the document would be set in motion within one week from that date. Hon. Nwajiuba's failure to fulfil a promise made in the hallowed chambers of the National Assembly is not only provocative but reminiscent of trust-deficit that has bedevilled all agreements and understandings reached with this government and those before it since 2009.
4. NEC reviewed the letter by the Minister of Labour and Employment conveying the report of the "integrity test" on the University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) by the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) through the Minister of Communications and Digital Economy. The union wonders why it would take more than one year to get the needed feedback on a home-grown solution at a time Nigeria is yearning for "local content". NEC is pleased that the end-user evaluation report overwhelmingly endorses UTAS for immediate deployment by government for Nigerian universities. On our part, ASUU is fully prepared to address all the

technical observations made by NITDA in order to make this happen. Our hope is that the National Universities Commission (NUC) and other agencies of government would promptly respond to issues that concern them in the NITDA's report to pave way for speedy migration to UTAS and spare Nigerian universities of the evil effects of the IMF/World Bank-engineered IPPIS.

5. NEC took full account of efforts by student union bodies, leading media practitioners and organisations, religious and opinion leaders, frontline traditional rulers, civil society organisations and other interest groups within and outside Nigeria to make government address all outstanding issues arising from the December 2020 MoA. In particular, special cognisance was taken of the pledges made by the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council (NIREC) to make further consultations on the crisis in the coming days with a view to finding an amicable resolution.
6. NEC concluded that government has failed to satisfactorily address all the issues raised in the 2009 FGN-ASUU Agreement and subsequent MoUs and MoAs. However, considering the ongoing intervention and consultation efforts, NEC resolved to review the situation at a later date with a view to deciding on the next line of action.
7. Finally, NEC appreciates the concerns expressed by patriotic Nigerians and friends of Nigeria in solidarity with ASUU's mission to salvage public education in general and the Nigerian University System in particular. We assure all and sundry that ASUU shall spare no efforts in its struggle for repositioning public universities and the transformation of Nigeria.
8. The struggle continues!



Emmanuel Osodeke
ASUU President

19th December, 2021