

NEC once again calls upon the National Assembly, the Nigeria Labour Congress, the Nigeria Bar Association and other professional bodies, Civil Society Organizations, Religious Organizations, Parents associations, Students Associations, Women Organizations, and individuals genuinely concerned about Nigeria University system, to intervene effectively now

Â

**COMMUNIQUE OF THE MEETING OF THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC) OF THE ACADEMIC STAFF UNION OF UNIVERSITIES (ASUU) HELD AT EBONYI STATE UNIVERSITY (EBSU)
SATURDAY-SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23-24, 2008**

The National Executive Council (NEC) of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) met Saturday, 23 February Sunday 24 February 2008 at Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki. NEC deliberated exhaustively on the issue of forty-nine (49) academic staff disengaged from their jobs in 2001 in violation of the non-victimization clause in the June 2001 FGN-ASUU Agreement.

NEC received reports of various efforts by the union to resolve the issue through an out-of-court settlement. It also reviewed its one-week warning strike and the protest march to the Federal Ministry of Education (Abuja) and the National Assembly.

NEC observed that (i) Out-of-court settlement was in fact proposed by representatives of the then in-coming President of Nigeria at a meeting held on June 26, 2007, after a meeting with the President himself (June 24th 2007) during which he pledged to intervene and resolve the problems. And accepted as a compromise by ASUU representatives, who had preferred and proposed the immediate reinstatement of the UNILORIN 49, and (ii) A letter was written to the President of ASUU by the Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education (June 26, 2007), conveying Government position that the recall of the UNILORIN 49 would be effected through an out-of-court settlement.

NEC was astonished by the view credited to the Visitor to the University of Ilorin, President Umaru Musa YarAdua that an out-of-court settlement would amount to violation of the rule of law. NEC affirmed that an out-of-court settlement is a legally legitimate practice, which ends up with the court pronouncing as its judgment the terms of settlement as agreed by the party in dispute.

NEC further reiterated that the Visitor to the University of Ilorin, to correct the injustice of disengagement of the UNILORIN 49 (in violation of the 2001 Agreement), has the power to intervene through the Governing Council of the University of Ilorin, without violating either the

rule of law or university autonomy.

NEC affirmed that the refusal by the Visitor to effect an out-of-court settlement in the case of the UNILORIN 49 is a breach of faith, in view of the letter of June 26th, 2007, on the basis of which ASUU later called off its strike. The continued suffering of the UNILORIN 49 and their families is unacceptable to ASUU. The persistence of the injustice to our colleagues portends danger for the growth and stability of the university system. It is morally wrong to sustain injustice to the UNILORIN 49 just because measures taken to bring justice to them would cause inconvenience to others who are not victims of injustice.

All those who are concerned about the university system, and its growth and stability have the responsibility to put an end to the injustice done to the UNILORIN 49. It is not enough to ask ASUU to exercise refrain from the right of its members to strike as a weapon of bringing justice to its members. It is necessary for all concerned to make the use of strike unnecessary by prevailing upon the Visitor to the University of Ilorin to recall the UNILORIN 49 through an out-of-court-settlement as agreed between his and ASUU representatives on June 26, 2007 and communicated in writing to the union.

NEC expressed its appreciation of the efforts by the National Assembly, especially the House Committee on Education, and some concerned individuals to resolve the issue of the UNILORIN 49.

However, NEC once again calls upon the National Assembly, the Nigeria Labour Congress, the Nigeria Bar Association and other professional bodies, Civil Society Organizations, Religious Organizations, Parents associations, Students Associations, Women Organizations, and individuals genuinely concerned about Nigeria University system, to intervene effectively now and get the Federal Government to resolve the UNILORIN 49 issue through the out-of-court-settlement agreed with ASUU. Should ASUU be forced to take the only option left, the Nigerian public should understand our union unwillingness to sacrifice our members at the altar of injustice.

Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano
President