

The current situation of Federal Government Universities

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 02 September 2009 09:35 -

Effective from December 2006, Staff Unions of Universities (ASUU, SSANU and NASU) have been re-negotiating the 2001 Agreements with Federal Government of Nigeria based on the Principle of Collective Bargaining. All previous negotiations with the Federal Government have been centrally done. That is, staff unions negotiate with representatives of Association of Pro-Chancellors and sign an agreement centrally. This is in consonance with the existing framework of Collective Bargaining as contained in Nigeria Labour Act (1990); which defines Collective Bargaining as an agreement in writing regarding working conditions and terms of employment concluded between

PRESS BRIEFING ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF NIGERIA (FGN)/UNIVERSITY STAFF UNIONS, ASUU, SSANU AND NASU DISPUTE

HELD AT ABUJA ON AUGUST 28, 2009

PREAMBLE

Effective from December 2006, Staff Unions of Universities (ASUU, SSANU and NASU) have been re-negotiating the 2001 Agreements with Federal Government of Nigeria based on the Principle of Collective Bargaining. All previous negotiations with the Federal Government have been centrally done. That is, staff unions negotiate with representatives of Association of Pro-Chancellors and sign an agreement centrally. This is in consonance with the existing framework of Collective Bargaining as contained in Nigeria Labour Act (1990); which defines Collective Bargaining as an agreement in writing regarding working conditions and terms of employment concluded between:

a. an organization of workers or an organization representing workers (or an association of such organizations) on the one part and

The current situation of Federal Government Universities

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 02 September 2009 09:35 -

b. an organization of employers or an organization representing employers (or an association of such organizations on the other part;â,¬Â

It is also in conformity with Cooley Commission Report (1981) as approved by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The report recommended selected representatives and advisers to be constituted and mandated to represent University Governing Councils, from among Pro-Chancellors/Chairmen of Governing Councils (CPC).

At the onset of the renegotiations, both Teams, Federal Government and Staff Unions, affirmed that they had mandate of their respective principals to negotiate and sign the resulting agreement centrally. It has however become clear that the Federal Government Team has not been sincere with the issue of mandate and the frame-work of Collective Bargaining. This is because it has refused to formally sign agreements reached with the respective staff unions, ASUU, SSANU and NASU as required by the mandate which they said they had. By refusing to sign the 2008 agreement, which is a product of the re-negotiation of the 2001 Agreement, the FGN would be unilaterally abrogating the valid 2001 Agreement, and this is in violation of the Principles of Collective Bargaining and Nigerian Labour Laws.

The series of events that led us to this quagmire is now history but one had hoped that the intervention of the President via the Vice President would yield fruits. Alas! This too was bungled by the government team led by Deacon Gamaliel Onosode insisting that the negotiations be concluded at individual university level with their respective councils.

We as staff unions, ASUU, SSANU and NASU have consistently insisted that the current framework of negotiation is already between the employer (representative of association of university Governing Councils) and employees (representative of staff unions). This framework is clearly in conformity with Section 91 of the Labour Act of 1999; and the approved Federal Government guidelines as enunciated by Cooley Commission of 1981, Kalu Anya Commission, Etsu Nupe Commission of 1993 and National and ILO Laws on Collective Bargaining.

Government also peddled the misinformation on the Constitutionality or non-constitutionality of the federal government signing a collective bargaining agreement on behalf of the State Governments that own universities. The truth is that the agreement is directed towards addressing the issue of brain drain and the rot in the university system.

The current situation of Federal Government Universities

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 02 September 2009 09:35 -

It does not recommend benchmarks for each university to meet the standards envisaged for the Nigerian University system in the same way that the NUC undertakes the accreditation of courses in all universities in Nigeria regardless of their proprietorship. We thus repeat, that no provision in the Agreement requires the Federal Government to compel State Governments to abide by it. Rather, the agreement sets minimum benchmarks necessary for universities if they are to meet basic national and international standards.

It becomes imperative when

- The NUC operates uniform academic standards in all universities
- The NUC accredits the degrees and other academic awards in the universities
- Lecturers in the public university system move from one university to another as lecturer or external examiners, irrespective of their ownership, state or federal.
- JAMB conducts admissions into the university system, with one set of requirement.

The state universities would however be guided by the minimum standards set in the agreement if they are to operate within the goals of achieving the same standards for Nigerian University system.

The attitude of government and its officials leaves little room for trust, and transparency, and honour on their part.

It is unfortunate that the NUC, ETF Secretaries who were part of the Negotiations and meetings even with the Vice President were being economical with the truth, instead created a stop gap mischief, aiding and abetting the collapse of the negotiation.

Unfortunately too, this is happening under a Minister of Education who seems not to have appreciated the schedule of his duties, and hence hijacked by bureaucrats who provided him executive briefs tailored towards bringing him to ridicule.

The current situation of Federal Government Universities

Written by Administrator
Wednesday, 02 September 2009 09:35 -

OUR POSITION

The Unions reject unilateral awards of 40%, 20% and 20% to ASUU, SSANU and NASU respectively, as it is not a product of Collective Bargaining.

The unions frown at this attempt by government to divide the Unions and instigate parity war on our campuses. The only solution to this crisis is that government should conclude and sign the agreements it willingly reached with the respective unions as this will be the only path to industrial harmony.

The three Unions want to use this medium to solidarize and emphasize with our students nationwide. They should, and we believe many of them do, understand that this struggle is to ensure that the University System in Nigeria is raised to the standard befitting of our dear country. As such it is actually their struggle. Together, we can make sure that **government does what is right.**

Thanks for the audience.

ASUU President SSANU President NASU President

The current situation of Federal Government Universities

Written by Administrator

Wednesday, 02 September 2009 09:35 -
