

The attention of the Academic Staff Union of Universities Negotiating Team has been drawn to a press release of March 16, 2007, titled Federal Government of Nigeria/Academic Staff Union of Universities Renegotiation: Situation Report issued by the Federal Government Negotiating Team and read at a press conference in Abuja on the same day by the Chairman of the Team, Deacon Gamaliel Onosode. In his statement, the Chairman of the Federal Government Team claimed that after ASUU Team had asked him whether the Government Team had a mandate to negotiate and had an offer different from the Consolidated Salaries.

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The Chairman responded that he had the mandate to negotiate and that there was an opportunity to improve on the figures on offer. At this point the ASUU Team led by its leader unceremoniously walked out of the meeting.

Our observations are as follows:

1. Nigerians, including representatives of government who want to resolve the problems facing our country ought to cherish the value of truth-telling. And when there is a dispute or crisis, government functionaries and representatives who play with the truth only generate more distrust, with the consequence that they aggravate the problems on the ground.

2. Credible Government representatives must also respect the canons of rationality. Specifically, a cardinal canon of rationality is that any human agent who makes a proposal or a demand for something will not run away when the demand or proposal is met.

3. The Chairman of the Government Team claim that ASUU walked away when he offered to negotiate as ASUU proposed does not make rational sense. The truth is different. ASUU leader had observed that there were two documents - one containing ASUU proposal and the other Government consolidated salaries, and asked two questions: (1). Did the Government Team have a mandate? The Chairman responded: "Yes" (2). What was that mandate? Deacon Onosode reply was My mandate is to persuade ASUU to accept the consolidated salaries, that all.

4. In other words the Government Team had no mandate to negotiate the consolidated salaries but had mandate only to get ASUU to accept the consolidated salaries. ASUU Team was rational and correct to conclude that the Government Team was not ready to negotiate. The Consolidated Salaries existed even without the ongoing exercise. ASUU was being asked on the negotiating table to accept salaries that its members would have enjoyed even if there had been no negotiation existing. We challenge the Government Team to publish the offer made by it in response to ASUU Leader proposal.

Signed

Dr. Abdullahi Sule-Kano

President