

CREATION OF NEW FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

Written by Dr M K Aliyu

Friday, 10 June 2011 06:20 - Last Updated Friday, 10 June 2011 06:35

ASUU NEC is seriously concerned about the recent decision of the Federal Government of Nigeria to establish more Federal universities which at the last count, now amounts to 12. The concern of ASUU NEC arises from the following:

- There is a precarious position in the existing Federal universities because even the First Generation Universities, five of them, with great names, have been dwarfed and stunted because the federal government has refused to fund them properly.
- Nearly all the Second Generation Federal Universities, seven of them, are still in their first and/or second stage of crippled development due to shortage of funds and lack of adequate attention from government. Many of them including about twenty four third generation universities are still operating from temporary sites.
- The Federal Government has refused to implement any aspect of the capital grant in the FGN/ASUU 2009 Agreement and other important strategies in the Agreement that would help to develop Nigerian universities.

The arguments presented by government and some political praise singers supporting the establishment of the new Federal Universities are not valid. For example, it has been argued that the establishment of the new Federal universities will provide a solution to the problems of access to university education. This argument is misleading: presently only about 270,000 out of over 1.5million qualified candidates gain admission in Nigerian universities. 12 new universities will not address this huge gap in demand for university education. It has also been argued that the universities will not only bring development in the areas where they are to be established but that it will also 'democratise federal government presence' in those areas. These arguments are also not valid: as we have shown, poverty and inequality have become entrenched as a way of life for over 75% of the Nigerian people. Twelve new universities will not make a dent on these problems.

ASUU is deeply committed to the expansion of university education in Nigeria but ASUU believes that the process must be properly thought through and not be the outcome of some knee jerk reaction to some unanticipated political pressure. Establishing a university is a VERY SERIOUS BUSINESS that requires adequate and proper vision, adequate planning, implementation and development. A university is not established through some sudden political pronouncement that then has to be funded with a questionable grant of N1.5 billion. And all these before a decision has been made on the type of university, where it will be located, what programmes it will offer, what facilities it will need, in what sequence and so on. The practice of establishing universities through a process of 'Fire, Ready, Aim' can only lead to failure of the university and ultimately, waste of precious national resources. ASUU believes that Nigerians deserve better.

CREATION OF NEW FEDERAL UNIVERSITIES IN NIGERIA

Written by Dr M K Aliyu

Friday, 10 June 2011 06:20 - Last Updated Friday, 10 June 2011 06:35

ASUU believes that it is far cheaper and more effective for the country to address the problem of access by expanding the first generation universities and completing the stages of development in the second and third generation universities in Nigeria. The argument about bringing development to the regions cannot be considered seriously more especially from a government that allocated only 1.6bn for a new university to take off from ETF, a non-budgetary source, while the same government allocated 1.2bn to furnish the residence of the President in the Federal budget.

Finally, ASUU objects strongly to and rejects the method by which Vice – Chancellors were appointed for the universities. The method violates the process that both Government and ASUU have agreed for appointing Vice-Chancellors. That process reserves the pivotal role for the Governing Council. That process also has no place for the re-appointment of people who have already served as Vice-Chancellors for another indefinite period. ASUU therefore calls on government to go through the process for appointing Vice-Chancellors properly for the new universities. The current appointments cannot stand.