



NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS

MOTTO: LABOUR CREATES WEALTH

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16th September 2020

President/General Secretary

COMMUNICATION OF THE DECISION OF THE CENTRAL WORKING COMMITTEE OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS

We bring you fraternal greetings from the National Secretariat of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC).

I write to communicate the decision of the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the Nigeria Labour Congress at the end of its emergency meeting held today, 16th September 2020 at the NLC National Headquarters at the Labour House, Central Business District, Abuja.

The objective of the meeting was to discuss pressing national issues especially the recent hike in the pump price of the Premium Motor Spirit (PMS) also known as 'petrol' and the increase in electricity tariff.

Considerations by the Central Working Committee

1. The Central Working Committee considered that the increases in the pump price of petrol and electricity tariff were ill timed and insensitive to the sufferings that Nigerians are going through at the moment especially in the wake of the socio-economic dislocations occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic.

2. The CWC noted that the increase in energy cost has automatically upped the cost of doing business in Nigeria resulting in hyper-inflation thus wiping out gains made by increase in the national minimum wage and threatens to force many local businesses to either close shop or relocate to friendlier business climates.
3. It was the well-considered position of the CWC that successive governments in Nigeria have failed to resuscitate our public refineries and even build new ones. The current government under President Muhammadu Buhari through its Economic Recovery and Growth Plan (ERGP) promised to ensure that at least 70% of our consumption needs for refined petroleum products are met by our refineries by 2018. Till date, that promise remains what it is – an overdue promise. The NLC has stridently advocated for modular refineries and opening up of the space in the downstream petroleum sub-sector for real competition, but nothing concrete has been done by government in response to these genuine developmental yearnings of the Nigerian people.
4. It was the reasoned position of the CWC that subjecting the price of refined petroleum products to the twin factors of volatility in the global oil market and instability in our exchange rate only means that there is no end in sight to the skyrocketing price of petrol and other refined petroleum consumables. This means that Nigerians in the nearest future would be forced to pay up to five hundred naira for a liter of petrol. That is clearly unacceptable to Organized Labour in Nigeria and certainly to the Nigerian people.
5. On the increase in electricity tariff, the Central Working Committee noted that government has continued to pump scarce public funds as investments into an already privatized power sector clearly showing the failure of the power sector privatization program. The CWC also noted that the investments in the power sector has not translated into the improvement of services and increased efficiency. The CWC reasoned that government cannot therefore transfer the cost of its own failure in the power sector privatization exercise on innocent Nigerians.

6. The CWC described as worrisome the fact that those mainly targeted by the latest increase in electricity tariff are manufacturers many of whom would be forced to shut down resulting in mass redundancy thus worsening the unemployment and crime situation in Nigeria. The CWC concluded that manufacturers that manage to survive the double jeopardy of high operating costs for their independent power generators and high electricity charges would simply transfer their new costs on already impoverished masses of our people. Ultimately, the dislocations consequent on the rise in the cost of living have eroded gains of the recent increase in national minimum wage.

Decisions of the Central Working Committee

After a careful consideration of the foregoing socio-economic realities especially in light of the insufferable hardship they present to the working-class family and the masses of our people in Nigeria, the Central Working Committee decided as follows:

1. The CWC resolved to issue a 2 weeks ultimatum for an indefinite strike action if government fails to reverse the recent hike in the pump price of petrol and electricity tariff;
2. The CWC resolved that government must demonstrate its commitment to resuscitating Nigeria's four public refineries and building new ones as a sustainable response to the perennial instability and hike in the pump price of refined petroleum products particularly petrol, diesel and kerosene; and
3. The NLC will begin a mass mobilization of the Nigerian people, professional groups, religious organizations, market women, the informal sector and Congress civil society allies towards total compliance to the indefinite strike action.

Directives to all Affiliate Unions of Congress

In furtherance of the foregoing decisions of the Central Working Committee, we write to direct all affiliate unions of the Nigeria Labour Congress as follows:

1. To immediately commence necessary actions towards full mobilization of their members across the country for total compliance with the indefinite call for strike action should government fail to meet our demand for a reversal of the recent increase in the price of refined petroleum products;
2. That all affiliate unions of Congress should write their state councils to immediately begin mobilization for total compliance with the indefinite call for strike action should government fail to meet our demand for a reversal of the recent increase in the price of refined petroleum products. All affiliate unions of the NLC should copy the national secretariat of Congress on their letters to their state councils to this effect; and
3. NLC affiliate unions should await further instructions from the national leadership of Congress.

Yours in Solidarity!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Emmanuel Ugboaja', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja, Esq
General Secretary