



## Commitment to Advancing Workers Rights and Socio-Economic Justice



Comrade Joe Ajaero  
From the President's Desk



HE Clara Pulido  
Ambassador of Cuba to Nigeria



Swearing-in of New Nigerian Labour Congress  
National Administrative Council Members

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STATE OF THE STRUGGLE MAGAZINE



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# From the President's Desk

*Forward Ever...  
Backward Never*



## **Total Commitment to Defend Workers' Rights and Advance Socio-Economic Justice**

On behalf of the new leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress, I congratulate all Nigerian workers, compatriots, and friends of labour on the commemoration of the 2023 International Workers Day also popularly known as the May Day. There is no gainsaying the fact that May Day brings to the very fore the commitment and unalloyed devotion of the working people of the world to productivity, wealth creation, prosperity, and sustainable development.

I use this occasion of the 2023 May Day to felicitate with Nigerian workers and pensioners whose sweat and blood built our motherland from the ruins of colonial tyranny to a modern state with potentials for the consolidation of democracy, social justice and a governance system that works for all. We have no doubt that our investments in nation building will not be a waste.

Pursuant to this desire, the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress under my stewardship has already made a pact with Nigerian workers that we will be totally and unapologetically committed to defending the workplace rights of workers and the socio-economic interests of the generality of the Nigerian people. Your cry will be our command. Your interests will be our inspiration. We will not

relent until the right of every worker is fully granted. The theme of this year's May Day, **"Workers Rights and Socio-Economic Justice"**, says it all.

Very paramount in our drive for an industrial milieu that resonates with workers' highest expectations is the fight for freedom of association and the right of workers to organise and

freely engage in collective bargaining with employers of labour both in the public and private sectors of the economy. We will knock on the doors of employers of labour who have coronated casualisation of labour as a business practice. We will engage state governments and agencies of government which act as if the payment of pensioners entitlements and workers' wages are deeds of grand benevolence. We will speak against industrial tyranny. We will march, picket and strike against workplace infractions sustained at the pleasure of unscrupulous employers.

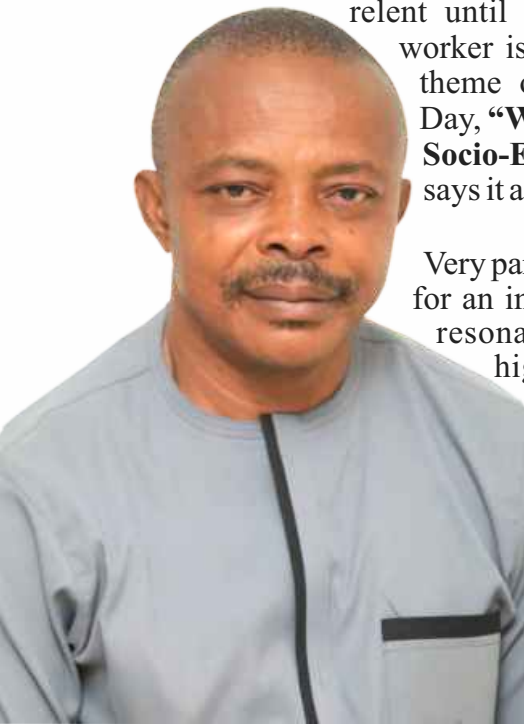
The leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress under our watch will keep eagle eyed watch to safeguard and advance already secured rights in the workplace. To this end, the National Administrative Council of Congress recently demanded from the Ministry of Labour and Productivity for clean copies of our collective endeavour to review Nigeria's labour laws. We will ensure that only the laws reviewed with our collective consent are transmitted as executive bills to the National Assembly. We will also demand the full operationalisation of the National Labour Advisory Council as a clearing house for all industrial relations issues in Nigeria.

It is salubrious that the Federal Government has washed its hands off the drive to increase the price of petroleum products under the guise of the removal of petrol subsidy. We wish to remind the Federal Government that neither this technical retreat nor the reported unilateral increase of the wages of federal workers will assuage our demand that Nigeria must take full ownership for the value optimisation of her resources especially petroleum and electricity assets for the good of the generality of our people. We renew our call for the rehabilitation of our oil refineries and an immediate reversal of the failed privatisation of the electricity sector.

The Nigeria Labour Congress will continue to work with our partners in the international space, local activist NGOs, past leaders of Congress to ensure total emasculation of Nigerian workers.

Once again, we wish you a rewarding 2023 May Day. Aluta Continua... Victoria Ascerta!!!

**Comrade  
Joe Ajaero**  
President, Nigeria Labour Congress





## *From the* **EDITOR IN-CHIEF**

### **Absolute Commitment to Workers' Rights**

At the 13<sup>th</sup> Quadrennial National Delegates Conference of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC), a new National Administrative Council (NAC) was elected. At the head of the new national leadership of the NLC is Comrade Joseph Ajaero, the immediate past General Secretary of the National Union of Electricity Employees (NUEE). In his inaugural acceptance speech, Comrade Joe Ajaero made a solemn commitment to Nigerian workers that his priority would be their interest. He made it clear that no cry and tears of workers would go unnoticed. The Comrade President pledged to consolidate on the success of previous NLC leadership including his immediate predecessor, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, to liberate Nigerian workers from all forms of industrial tyranny, deprivation, and emasculation from recalcitrant employers.

True to his words, Comrade Joe Ajaero directed the first industrial salvo of his administration at the Abia State Government. This was in response to the several and severe industrial infractions and dehumanising treatment by the State Government against workers and pensioners in Abia State. In a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023, Comrade Ajaero gave the Abia State Government a 14-days ultimatum to reverse the maltreatment of workers and pensioners in Abia State. In the letter, Comrade Joe Ajaero demanded that the Abia State Government must clear all the arrears of pension and salaries and other entitlements owed workers in the State.

After the expiration of the 14 days ultimatum to the Abia State Government, the NLC declared an indefinite total industrial shut down of Abia State. The action commenced on February 28, 2023. After five days of strike, the Abia State Government was forced to negotiate and pledged to address all the demands made by Congress with respects to rights denied Abia workers.

The slew of industrial injustice against Imo State workers took a dangerous bend when the government using hired urchins disrupted the March 7, 2023 NLC State Delegates Conference in Imo State. The attack was a new frontier of the siege on Imo State workers by the State Governor. Consequently, the Congress directed workers in Imo State to withdraw their services effective from March 8, 2023. The shut down of socio-economic activities in Imo State forced the state government to retrace its steps and negotiate with workers.

Acting on the resolution of the National Executive Committee (NEC), Comrade Joe Ajaero issued an ultimatum to the Federal Government and Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) to address the mounting cash scarcity or risk a national industrial action. The Minister of Labour and Employment was first to intervene as he wrote to posit the readiness of government for dialogue. Sensing the resolve of the Congress, the top management of the CBN also came to the Labour House to negotiate with the NLC. Immediately, Thereafter, the CBN issued various guidelines to banks to ensure the availability of cash to Nigerians. The Congress also set up a committee to monitor compliance all over Nigeria. Snippets of the feedback from the NLC State Councils are featured in the cover story of the edition of this month's State of the Struggle.

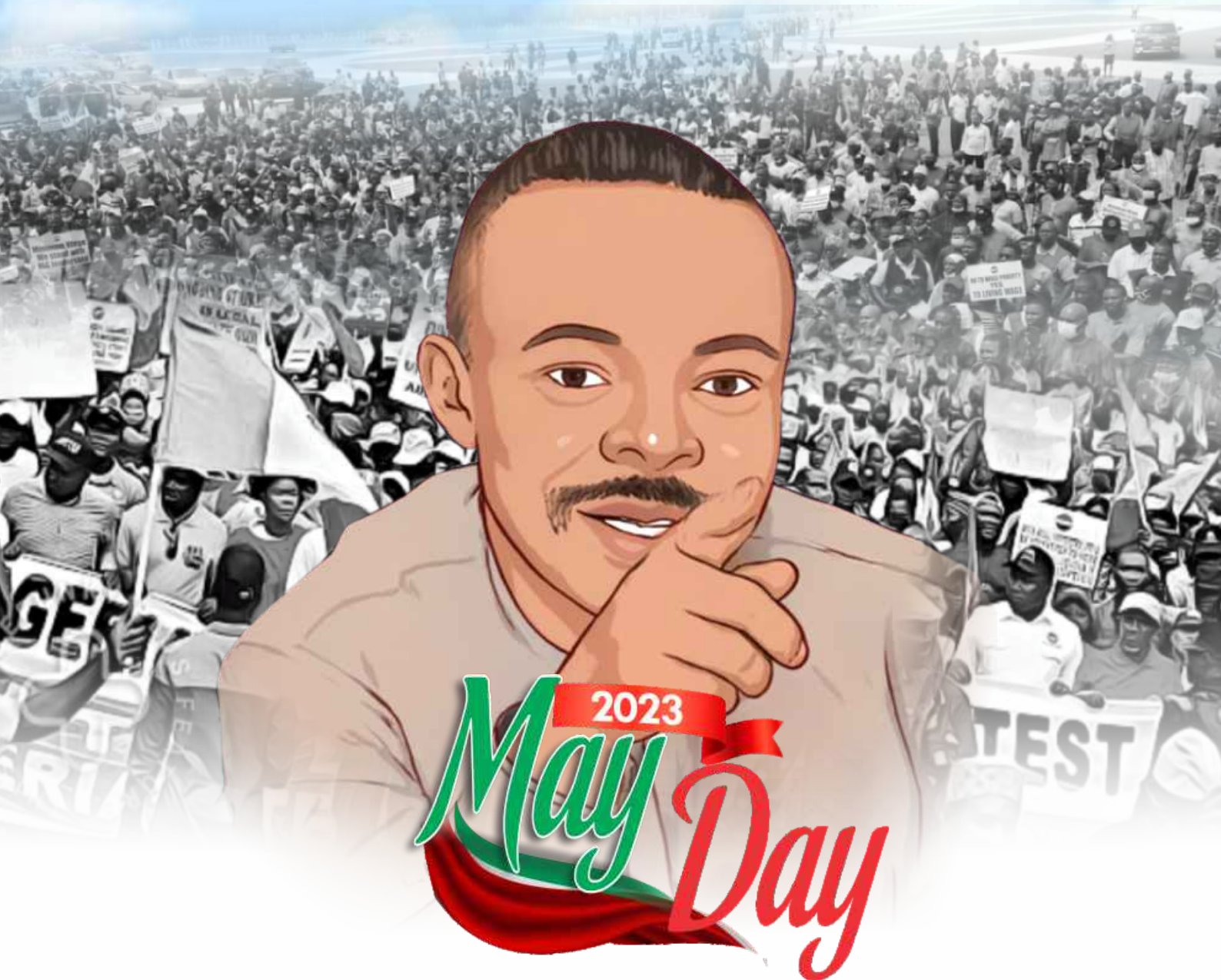
In this edition of the SOS, we present to our reading public a special report on the conduct of the 13<sup>th</sup> NLC Delegates Conference. We also present the activities of the affiliates of the NLC and the State Councils especially the recent NLC State Delegates Conference. An icing on this edition of the SOS is the May Day Speech by the Congress President .

***Enjoy a conscious reading!***

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## COVER STORY



# Commitment to Advancing Workers Rights and Socio-Economic Justice

In Illinois Chicago in May 1886, a group of workers organised by a labour organisation known as the Knights of Labour held a protest to demand for a national 8-hour work in the United States of America. Soon, the protest descended into chaos as an unknown assailant threw a bomb into the protest and the Police responded by firing live ammunitions into the crowd of protesters. By the time the smoke cleared, about fifteen persons were killed and scores more were injured. The incident came to be known as the **Haymarket Affair**. Some public commentators refer to the incident as the Haymarket Riot or Haymarket Massacre.

The government blamed workers for the incidence and prosecuted some of those perceived to have organised the protest. August Spies and seven other labour activists – the “**Chicago Eight**” were

convicted of murder on the charge that they had colluded with the unidentified assailant who threw the bomb that triggered the bloody pandemonium. History, however, records that many of the “Chicago Eight” were not within the vicinity of the protest when the violence broke out. Despite this proof, August Spies and three other defendants were hanged on 11<sup>th</sup> November 1887. One other defendant among the “Chicago Eight” committed suicide.

In commemoration of the sacrifice of those who lost their lives particularly labour activists, the Second International in 1889 designated the 1<sup>st</sup> of May every year as a day to honour the sacrifice and contributions of workers. Over time, the May Day Commemoration also known as the International Workers' Day has gained traction globally mostly as a public holiday.







Tracing the history of the May Day to the Haymarket Massacre illustrates the centrality of Rights and Socio-Economic Justice and the promotion of the same in the organisation of the workplace and in the lives of workers. The rights of workers in the workplace revolves around the philosophy of Decent Work which provides a canopy of representation, social protection, social dialogue, and the promotion cum advancement of labour standards in the workplace.

The theme chosen by the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress for the 2023 May Day – **“Workers Rights and Socio-Economic Justice”** speaks not only to the existential struggles of the working class in Nigeria and all over the world but also to the consciousness that the strength and essence of the labour movement is a

measure of its ability to defend workers' rights and promote socio-economic justice for those whose toil turn the wheels of production, profit and prosperity.

Pursuant to the commitment to upholding workers' rights as was established during the Haymarket Affair, Nigerian workers have at different times in its chequered history demonstrated ample determination to defend their rights in the face of all forms of industrial tyranny by hegemony of capital. The Iva Valley massacre was exemplary of such commitment. There were also many other instances where Nigerian workers stood up to industrial injustice.

In his acceptance speech after being sworn in as the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Joseph Ajaero made no pretence about his commitment to fighting for, defending,

and promoting workers' rights everywhere. In his words “no workers cry would go unnoticed during my stewardship as the President of the Nigeria Labour Congress.” Comrade Ajaero with a spark of fire in his eyes warned oppressive employers in Nigeria that their days of toying with the lives and livelihood of Nigerian workers are over. He pledged to work with other labour leaders to ensure that every right of every worker is accounted for without fear or favour.

The very first test of this commitment was the deplorable industrial situation in Abia State where the State Government under Dr. Okezie Ikpeazu had made the maltreatment of workers a matter of state policy. From the records of petitions written by trade union leaders in Abia State particularly the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress Abia State Council, it was established that the Abia State Government was owing workers and

pensioners arrears of salary and pension payments running into several years. A breakdown of the major debts owed workers and pensioners in Abia State reveals the extent of industrial wickedness in Abia State.

- 1. Unpaid Pension – August – December 2014 – 5 months**
- 2. Unpaid Pension – January – April 2015 – 4 months**
- 3. Unpaid Pension – January – December 2018 – 12 months**
- 4. Unpaid Pension – January – November 2019 – 11 months**
- 5. Unpaid Pension – February – December 2022 – 4 months**
- 6. Arrears of Unpaid Gratuity – 21 years (2001 – 2022)**
- 7. Local Government Employees – 3 months salaries.**
- 8. Staff of ABSUTH – 23 months' salary arrears.**





9. HMB – 13 months' salary arrears.
10. Secondary School Teachers – 11 months of salaries.
11. Primary School Teachers - 3 months' salary.
12. Pensioners in Abia State - 30 months' pension benefits (Pensioners in the Judiciary sector have not been paid their monthly pension benefits from February 2021 to date).
13. Workers in Abia State Polytechnic – 30 months' salary arrears.
14. Workers in Abia State College of Education – 29 months' salary.
15. Workers in Abia State College of Health Sciences – 5 months.
16. Non – Implementation of Harmonized percentage Increases in Pension Benefits
17. Non- Implementation of Minimum Pension]
18. Non-Implementation of CONHESS

The irony of the industrial sepsis in Abia State is that the Abia State Government under the leadership of Dr. Okezie



Ikpeazu owes a lot in the midst of plenty as Abia State is one of the oil producing states in Nigeria. Clearly, the challenge is the will not the means to pay. Reports from the trade union leadership in Abia State shows that many of the workers and pensioners pushed to the fringes of poverty and hardship by the refusal of the State Government to pay their legitimate wages, pension and entitlements died while waiting for their payment.

The sordid situation in Abia State moved the Congress President, Comrade Joe Ajaero to identify Abia State workers as a priority case in his mission to emasculate Nigerian workers from the clutches of slave labour and industrial oppression. In a letter dated 13<sup>th</sup> February 2023, barely one week after his inauguration as the NLC President, Comrade Joe Ajaero drew the attention of the Abia State Government to the suffering of workers and pensioners in the state and gave a 14-days ultimatum to the State Government to address and resolve all the issues affecting workers and pensioners in the state or risk total industrial blockade in Abia State. Being recalcitrant, the Abia State Government ignored the 14-days ultimatum issued by the NLC. At the end

of the ultimatum, the NLC President, Comrade Joe Ajaero, mobilised all the affiliate unions of the NLC to ground every socio-economic activity in Abia State.

The action which commenced on the 28<sup>th</sup> of February 2023 was massively complied with by the workers and the ordinary people of Abia State. In the course of the strike action, workers and citizens were also mobilised to rally and protest in different cities in Abia State.

Five days into the protest, mass action and strike,

the Abia State Government was

forced to the negotiation

table. During negotiation,

the Nigeria Labour

Congress insisted that

all the rights accrued to Abia

State workers which had been

denied them must be

restored. Given the veracity and compelling nature of the

claims made by the Congress, the Abia State Government not only admitted to the infractions but also signed to a commitment to resolve the issues.

On the heels of the industrial intervention in Abia State, the Imo State Government unwittingly invited the Congress into a swift action on the festering industrial concerns in the State. On March 7, 2023, thugs acting at the pleasure of the Imo State

Government invaded the venue of the 2023 NLC Imo State Council Delegates Conference and violently disrupted proceedings.

The action of the mercenaries acting overtly on the instructions of agents of the Imo State Government was perceived by Congress and right-thinking members of the public as not only illegal but criminal.

The action was in grave violation of the provisions

of the 1999

Constitution, the

Trade Union Act,

and relevant

articles of the

International

Labour

Organisation

(ILO)

Convention

s 87 and 98.

Article 3 of

the ILO

Convention 87

states:

**“1. Workers' and employers' organisations shall have the right to draw up their constitutions and rules, to elect their representatives in full freedom, to organize their administration and activities and to formulate their programmes.**

**2. The public authorities shall refrain from any interference which would restrict this right or impede the lawful exercise thereof.”**





The response of the Congress to the industrial conundrum in Imo State was very swift. The Congress President, Comrade Joe Ajaero acting on the principle of wild card industrial response immediately directed that workers in Imo State should withdraw their services pending when the Imo State Government under Senator Hope Uzodinma addresses and redresses the slew of industrial iniquities meted against workers in Imo State.

The invasion of the State Delegates Congress of the NLC was not the first by the Imo State Government. Workers and the general public would recall that on Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2021, street urchins hired by the Imo State Government invaded the Secretariat of the NLC Imo State Council and molested workers including staff of the State Council.



The thugs returned the next day being Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and unleashed even greater violence on the NLC Secretariat destroying properties in the Secretariat Complex including the vandalization of a number of cars, buses and motorcycles belonging to the Nigeria Labour Congress, workers and the staff of the NLC Imo State Council. After the show of shame, the invading army of thugs marched triumphantly to the Imo State Government House where they were

received and feted by the Imo State Governor. At the dishonourable rendezvous, the Imo State Governor went on to announce the government's choice of leadership for the NLC Imo State Council. Never had Nigerian workers witnessed such brazen interference in its activities.

With the benefit of hindsight, many workers believe that the motive for the unsavoury thirst by the Imo State

Government to illegally appoint and control the leadership of the NLC in Imo State is borne out of the desire to continue perpetuating a horrid regime of infractions against workers' and pensioners' rights in Imo State. In a letter to the Imo State Governor dated 15<sup>th</sup> March 2023 with reference number **NLC/NS/B.10/292**, the President of the Congress, Comrade Joe Ajaero, drew the attention of the Imo State Governor to the several

infractions against workers' and pensioners' rights in Imo State including the following:

1. Stigmatization of about 11,000 workers in the payroll of the State Government as ghost workers and criminally diverting their salaries.
2. Declaring over 10,000 retired civil and public servants in Imo State as ghost pensioners and refusal to pay their retirement benefits thus

precipitating untimely death for hundreds of pensioners in Imo State.

3. Refusal to clear 20 month salary arrears owed to some workers in Imo State and thus inflicting untold hardship on the workers.
4. Physical attack, intimidation, propaganda, and verbal threats against trade union leaders in Imo State orchestrated by the Imo State Commissioner of Information who has gained notoriety as an attack dog debasing his high office and obfuscating efforts at bipartite negotiations for the resolution of the industrial stalemate in Imo State.
5. Illegal withholding, and criminal diversion of check off dues accruing to the NLC.
6. The deployment of thugs and hoodlums to attack the facilities and activities of the Nigeria Labour Congress in Imo State.
7. Constant harassment of the Imo State public workforce with covert and overt threats of violence, redundancy, and outright sack.

The industrial action embarked by the Nigeria Labour Congress in Imo State claimed its first causality a few days into the action. The Governor of Imo State on the 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 announced the sack of the Imo State Commissioner of Labour and Productivity, Mr. Ford Ozumba. The sack followed botched negotiations between the NLC and the Imo State Government as the latter refused to sign a

fresh Collective Bargaining Agreement validating the previous ones signed and reneged upon by the Imo State Government.

Following the intervention of well-meaning Nigerians and in order not to scupper the governorship and state houses of assembly component of the 2023 general election, the Nigeria Labour Congress on March 15, 2023, suspended the industrial action in Imo State. This position was communicated to the Imo State Government through a written correspondence to the Governor of Imo State, Senator Hope Uzodimma.

After a joint meeting of the National Executive Committee of the Nigeria Labour Congress and the Trade Union Congress, the leadership of the two national labour centres wrote another letter dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 to the Imo State Governor reminding him of the need for the government of the state to communicate to the two centres a definite date for the conclusion and signing of a new Collective Bargaining Agreement that addresses the concerns of Imo State





workers. The leadership of the NLC and TUC warned that failure to act accordingly would compel the two labour centres to re-start with greater vigour the suspended industrial action in Imo State.

A very important aspect of workers' and pensioners' rights all over the world is socio-economic justice. It has been proved that industrial rights won in the workplace can be easily eroded by the erosion of social justice. Over the years, successive governments in Nigeria appear to treat industrial rights different from socio-economic rights. This has yielded a situation where gains made on the improvement of workers' wages especially the national minimum wage are usually quickly eroded by high handed taxation, subsidy cuts, increase in user access charges to social amenities, unfair fiscal policies, and general inflation in the prices of goods and services.

The Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in the last quarter of 2022 announced its intention to re-design the national currency, the Naira. The CBN went on to announce the deadline for the circulation of the old currency used prior to the re-designed currency. The NLC's response to the policy communication from the CBN was to warn that the currency re-design

project should be handled in such a manner as not to further worsen the vulnerability of Nigerian workers and people especially those who operate in the informal economy.

Contrary to the warning of the Congress, the CBN went ahead with the implementation of the currency re-design policy and the associated deadlines without adopting the necessary due diligence to emplace adequate safeguards in the implementation of the currency re-design. A few days into the implementation of the naira re-design policy, it became clear that the CBN was ill-prepared for effective circulation of the newly re-designed currency. The acute scarcity of both the new and old currencies that ensued subjected Nigerians especially workers and those in the informal economy to the worst fiscal trauma ever witnessed in our national history.

Some state governments went to the Supreme Court and obtained judgement ordering the suspension of the ban on old currency. The Supreme Court also ordered that the old currency should be circulated by the CBN alongside the re-designed currency till December 2023. Sadly, those orders were largely ignored by the CBN thus perpetuating the suffering of workers who were increasingly finding it difficult to commute to work and to meet basic needs of life.

At a meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) of the NLC which took place on Monday, March 13, 2023, the CBN was given an ultimatum of seven working days beginning from Tuesday, March 14, 2023, government to ensure that ordinary Nigerians have access to the



Naira with relative ease. The NLC warned that failure to comply with its demand, the Congress would be left with no choice than to withdraw workers' services.

Immediately, the position of the NLC went public, the top management of the CBN visited the leadership of the Congress seeking an amicable solution to the crisis. This was followed up by an apprehension of the dispute by the Federal Ministry of Labour and Employment which scheduled a meeting between the CBN and the NLC. At the meetings, the CBN expressed its firm commitment to ensuring that Nigerians including workers have access to cash in order to meet up with their daily needs and the demands of business transactions.

The Central Bank of Nigeria, thereafter, issued a number of policy statements directing the full re-introduction of the old currency until the December deadline granted by the Supreme Court judgement.

The CBN also directed banks to open on weekends to ensure that Nigerians who need cash are availed the same. The CBN also set up compliance monitoring units.

While the currency situation has improved, the NLC in its bid to ensure total compliance set up a Currency Crunch Committee and gave it the mandate to work with NLC State Councils to monitor compliance in all the states and local governments. This Committee has already swung into action and has received compliance reports from more than 24 NLC State Councils.

According to Karl Marx, the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles. Karl Marx went on to postulate that throughout history we see the oppressor and oppressed in constant opposition to each other. He said that this fight is sometimes hidden and sometimes open, however, each time the fight ends in either a revolutionary reconstruction of





society or in the classes' common ruin. Nothing appears to validate this timeless philosophy by Karl Marx than the fierce power contestations that played out in the 2023 general elections.

Given the primacy of political power in the quest for the reconstruction and enabling of workers' rights, the Nigeria Labour Congress for the first time in a long time invested very strenuous efforts at recovering its gravitas in Nigeria's political space, stood solidly behind the Labour Party during the 2023 general election.

The Labour Party which was the creation of the Nigeria Labour Congress and with stakes by the Trade Union Congress was designed to be the political vehicle for Nigerian workers, pensioners, and the downtrodden people of Nigeria who have been short-changed by an amorphous political calibration that is essentially reactionary and insular to the aspirations and travails of the ordinary people of Nigeria who bear the burden of failed political leadership. It was in response to this institutionalised anomie and incentivised amnesia of the general public

that the Nigeria Labour Congress took steps to recover and reposition the Labour Party to serve as the political vehicle of the Nigerian workers and people.

In line with the 2022 decision of the National Executive Committee of the NLC to back the Labour Party and candidates of political parties who subscribe to the Workers Charter of Demands, the NLC in a circular signed by Comrade Chirs Uyt, Secretary NLC Political Commission, directed Nigerian workers, pensioners, and people to vote for candidates of the Labour Party at all levels. This was done with faith in the promise of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) that the 2023 general election would be free and fair.

Unfortunately, what transpired in most polling stations all over the country on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> February 2023 could hardly be described as free and fair elections. There were widespread reports of organised violence against voters who came out to exercise their franchise and to elect their presidential and national assembly candidates of choice.



The violence was so severe that voting in many polling stations were aborted, suspended, or conducted in active violation of laid down electoral standards and norms. Many voters also woke up on the morning of the election and discovered that either their names had been moved from the voters roll or that their polling units had been moved.

The perennial challenge of early deployment of election materials and logistics became even more monstrous as election materials arrived late in most polling units. To crown the litany of electoral malfeasance, the uploading of election results as required by law was jettisoned by INEC in the most curious manner. Very strange is the fact that while the National Assembly results uploaded, the presidential results failed to go through.

In a statement released by the President of the NLC, Comrade Joe Ajaero, the Nigeria Labour Congress condemned the hijack of the electoral process by unscrupulous politicians bent on imposing their will over

the votes of the electorates.

The NLC also condemned the complicity by INEC officials in the subversion of the democratic process as was witnessed on February 25 and March 11, 2023. The NLC reiterating the cardinal place of electoral reform in the restoration and preservation of workers' political rights called for sweeping reforms in line with the recommendations of the Justice Uwais led Electoral Reform Commission.

Report by

**Comrade Echezona Asuzu**  
**Comrade Chris Onyeka**  
**Comrade Tahir Hashim**







## ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY

# COMRADE JOE AJAERO

**AS THE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC) DURING THE 13TH QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES' CONFERENCE OF THE NLC HELD ON THE 7TH & 8TH OF FEBRUARY 2023 AT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE CENTRE, ABUJA**

### Protocols!

Today, Nigerian workers have demonstrated their commitment and resolve to continue to work in Solidarity in the quest to build fair and equitable workplaces thus better societies. Our deep understanding of the nature and character of what we seek to achieve and the portend of the forces surrounding it, creates an urgency in our hearts and a determination to succeed. The need for inner strength that can only be founded in a Cohesive and united NLC has been brought to the fore and is massively expressed here today. The thickness of the effusive camaraderie gripping us in this year's Conference is yet to be matched! History has already been made!

Buoyed in that spirit and its effervescence, we strongly believe that this journey though, will be filled with huge challenges but the strength founded on the outcomes here will take us to victory. The readiness for effectively engaging our social partners thus unleashing greater benefits is expressly manifest on all our faces both on the old team, the new team and all Nigerian workers. It is a new dawn!

We therefore want to thank the almighty God who has made today possible and also show our deep appreciation to those within the Congress that have worked tirelessly within these past months to ensure that we navigate all the

labyrinths and berth upon this shore safely. Comrade Ayuba Wabba; our President and leader who withstood great pressures and under whose able and creative hands we were able to get here, we reserve our greatest appreciation. We salute you as you have once again taken your leadership capacities and capabilities to another height after occupying the office of the President of ITUC.- the leading voice for workers all over the world. We are proud of you! To all the Presidents and General Secretaries of our great affiliates including our Secretariat staff, we salute you all!

Our work will surely be guided by the huge outpouring of trust demonstrated here today. We will not betray that trust! We are committed to resolutely pursuing the interests and desire of Nigerian workers and by extension the majority of Nigerian masses. We therefore, pledge our loyalty to the NLC, Nigerian workers, Nigerian masses and Nigeria. Our breathe comrades, our thoughts and our actions shall be propelled by this avowal!

We shall seek to reconnect more strongly to build greater solidarities with the people of Nigeria rising once again to be the carriers of their desires and amplifiers of their voices. We shall not only speak for the 133m Nigerians who are multi-dimensionally poor but shall also seek platforms to lift the shackles of poverty from the shoulders of our people. We shall once again be the true champions of the Nigerian people; crying their cries and jointly waging our wars against all forces of impoverishment and misery.

Seeking deeper engagement with governments at all levels more creatively in keeping with our philosophical foundations and traditions. Deepening existing engagements in various

ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY  
**COMRADE JOE AJAERO**  
AS THE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC)



areas of our national lives and opening new vistas to expand opportunities for Nigerian workers and people to freely express their capabilities and untie developmental factors upon our nation will be our general focus in the next four years.

The NLC will seek in conjunction with our social partners including key national stakeholders to build a nation that would be more inclusive in all its ramifications and fair to all Nigerians especially Nigerian workers. Ensuring therefore the reduction in Decent –Work deficits and the mainstreaming of the goals and outcomes of the SDGs will be a priority including a drive for a more effective Social inclusion framework with strong legal and institutional foundations.

On this note, we acknowledge the continued support of the ILO including its various Organs and the diverse mechanisms of the United Nations and much more the solidarity of the International workers movement especially the ITUC, the OATUU, OTUWA and the various Labour centres scattered around the world. We shall seek to deepen this network and use them to

optimise our pursuit of better societies both in Nigeria and internationally.

We would, seek the resurrection of the review of the nation's Labour Laws through the National Labour Advisory Council (NLAC) which seems to have been deliberately stalled to ensure that all legal loopholes exploited by unscrupulous workplace partners to restrict the effort at making our workplaces more Decent work compliant are blocked. To this end, we urge all employers of labour who have unsettled industrial relations issues with their workers and unions to immediately resolve them to avoid our intervention.

The NLC will pursue with utmost urgency a new national minimum wage law that would take into consideration the objective realities of our socio-economy; expand its reach to capture more workers and create variables and thresholds for automatic adjustment of the nation's wage floor to avoid unnecessary politicking and impunity by our employers and reduce the suffering of Nigerian workers

Our engagement with government shall be aimed at assisting governments to cut down on the cost of governance; cut out fats and reduce the opportunities for fat cats to raid the economy. We shall seek our inclusion in various Policy cycles and join hands with government to establish the supremacy of due process in Public life thus dismantle all structures and vestiges of rent-seeking, wastes and misappropriation in public governance.

NLC shall continue in its tradition of ensuring that Nigerians are protected from all anti-people policies so that plunder in governance are reduced to the barest minimum while government is assisted to work for the majority. We shall therefore robustly engage government to stop the impunity and pervasive wickedness currently going on in the country in the name of Petroleum product pricing.

The current Electricity tariff and provisioning remains stacked against Nigerian workers and masses and we shall therefore work with



ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY  
**COMRADE JOE AJAERO**

AS THE ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS (NLC)

government to bring sanity to bear to that sector. We urge the federal government again to review the Privatisation of the Electricity sector; a process both the government and all of us have agreed was mired in corruption.

Nigeria is currently critically challenged and faces existential threats both from within and without. The trade union movement is also likewise confronted but the contradiction is that we are expected to be one of the key platforms in causing a national reawakening. It becomes incumbent on us to dig deep into our historical resolve to purge ourselves, rebuild our strength; reactivate our Organic solidarities including our wide and inclusive solidarities so that we can strategically position ourselves to respond to the yearnings and aspirations of Nigeria workers and peoples.

To this end, we shall work assiduously with our various affiliates and partners to strengthen our industrial unions. Our strength as a labour centre is built on the strength and capacities of our affiliates and with this understanding; we shall embark on deliberate campaigns to make our Unions stronger and more viable. We call our affiliates to action today to initiate processes at rebuilding capacities so that together, we can serve Nigerian workers and masses better and deliver greater benefits to them all.

Once again, Nigerian workers and indeed the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) have shown how leadership transition ought to occur. We therefore urge Nigerian Politicians to learn from what we have done in our leadership recruitment

process; the ability to heal our wounds, build bridges, show tolerance and stand together to push the cause of Nigerian workers further in the midst of countervailing pressures. Our values, traditions and indeed the organisation is more important to us than personal interests so, the lives of Nigerians and the survival of the nation within the context of equity, fairness and greater inclusivity should be more important than the ambitions of our politicians especially as this year's general elections approaches.

Our nation comrades is currently at the edge of the precipice! It is our responsibility to pull it back! NLC led by our team will lead the charge towards assisting the nation rebuild. We therefore call on all patriots and key national stakeholders to join hands with us to salvage what is left of our country. It is our responsibility and indeed our civic duty to create a new trajectory; a new path for our dear nation.

The usurpation and use of state power to impoverish the citizenry abuses the ideals of democracy and destroys the nation. Governance ought to provide comfort for the citizenry so, it pains us to witness the increasing frustrations Nigerians have had to go through in the last few months just to fuel their cars and generators, the new phenomenon of black market Naira – buying our own monies at a discount from illegal brokers. This is unacceptable!

Governance in Nigeria seems to have broken all known records for bad governance. We will definitely not keep quiet in the face of this deliberate defilement of citizenship by the ruling



elite as we may mobilise variously across the nation to nudge the government to act more responsibly towards the citizenry and seek ways of alleviating the suffering that currently walks our streets with arrogance.

We pledge to lead the battle to reclaim Nigeria from the front. In this spirit, the NLC urges the federal government to take immediate action to set free the deposits of Nigerians it has impounded in banks across the federation by making cash available also, untie the Petroleum products supply conundrum at the agreed price. If nothing is done before the end of next week, we shall be forced take necessary steps to save the lives of Nigerians in conjunction with our Civil Society partners. The choice is in the hands of the government and we urge them to make the right choice!

It is crucial that our Politicians learn from history to avoid its pitfalls. They must play according to the rules avoiding actions that may truncate our democratic process and imperil our nation. The Electoral umpire must ensure a transparent and equitable conduct of the elections at all levels while we urge all Nigerians to seize the opportunity which this presents to vote the right people into positions of power. Those that are destroying our nation and stealing our collective patrimony must not be allowed any longer in our corridors of power.

As Nigerians, we must not allow them divide us along religious and regional lines. Our demands on the Nigerian State are basically the same. We have unwaveringly asked for a secure nation where we can move freely and carry out our daily activities without violently losing our lives and properties. We have demanded equity and fairness in the sharing of our nation's resources, more functional and accessible education system for our children, increasing access to high quality medical care, high quality road infrastructure, increasing access to nutrition and generally elevating the factors that increases human wellbeing. We should therefore vote the candidates who have the Competence and character to deliver on these demands come

February and March.

Since these demands and much more are the same and blind to primordial considerations so, we pledge to continue to champion them; amplifying and pursuing their attainment shall be our utmost consideration as leaders of the NLC in the elections. Our position as to where we stand has been well canvassed in the nation's media and has not changed.

Comrades, the challenges are many! We saw the challenges! We still sought your mandate! You gave it to us unflinchingly! We humbly accept this mandate! We accept to be your voice and your standard bearer lifting proudly our collective flags symbolising the crystallisation of years of historical struggles!

We have asked God not to allow us lead the NLC if we are going to use it for our own personal objectives to the detriment of Nigerian workers and peoples. We renew our commitment to that pledge.

We will not fail God! We will not fail Nigerian workers! We will not fail the NLC! We will not fail you and will not fail Nigerian masses!

Long live Nigerian workers! Long live the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)!  
Long live Nigerian masses! Long live Nigeria!

“Struggle continues for our Victory is surely Certain”







# **NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS & TRADE UNION CONGRESS**

## **“Workers Rights and Socioeconomic Justice”**

Workers' Day Address of  
Organized Labour in Nigeria

**Comrade Joe Ajaero**  
– President, NLC

&

**Comrade Festus Osifo**  
– President, TUC

Presented in Commemoration of the





### **Protocols!**

**E**very year at this time, we gather in many parts of the world in celebration of work! Without work, the society as we know it today fails and without work, wealth creation becomes impossible. Our gathering is to honour those who make the world of work possible; Men and women without whom the world of work becomes impossible. It is indeed a day chosen to celebrate the very existence of our societies for without work, the society ceases to exist. Today is therefore a celebration of the very basis of our society and the globe thus, it is a celebration of the pivotal role which workers have played and continued to play to sustain humanity.

At this moment of our inaugural May Day as Presidents, we bring you warm felicitations from the leadership of both Congresses and their various Organs especially the mass of Nigerian Workers who toil day and night to create the enormous wealth that has sustained our nation in the midst of the mindless theft and misuse of resources generated by workers by those

occupying and bestriding our various corridors of power. Organised labour in Nigeria welcome you all!

Comrades and guests, It is with great pride and honour that we celebrate the great men and women whose efforts have built the great cities of the world, men and women who have worked day and night to keep our nations going in the face of wanton deprivations; workers who against all odds both human and material kept our societies supplied and serviced. Indeed, it is a celebration of resilience and a deserving annual tribute to workers who in the midst of insurgency kept working; that group who were owed salary arrears running into months yet, they kept the machinery of state operational, that group who were hounded and denied their democratic rights yet, they persevered; that special group of people who were denigrated and taunted by the ruling elite but have kept trudging on out of their love for humanity and our nation, that special breed of persons who jump into the mines to extract resources and turn them into finished products for the benefit of society. It is our day!

We salute you Carpenters and Wood workers, Mechanics, Engineers, Pilots, Road sweepers, Construction workers, Domestic workers, those that work to lay the Pipelines, the Electricians and Technologists, the Nurses, Doctors, Lawyers, Secretaries, Sportsmen and women, Operators, those that produce our foods and beverages, Agricultural workers, Teachers at various levels, Engineers, Technicians and indeed those who engender the creation of wealth all around the world. We doff our hats for you!

It is not that we are comfortable that we celebrate! It is not that we are not exploited neither is it that we are not emasculated! It is not that we are not denied, pauperized and afflicted! Our celebration is a recognition of our fundamental role in breathing life into our societies. It is borne out of our recognition of the near divine and pristine duty to global sustainability; an understanding shaped by the fact that workers remain the only key to life. We may have gone unappreciated but we realize that





without us, Nigeria and all the nations of the world will become dysfunctional. No wheel can turn anywhere in the world without us!

These and much more drives our decision to thump our chest and shout hurray to encourage ourselves even in the face of the daunting challenges that confronts us at the various shop-floors, Pits, Mines and other workplaces as a result of the unwholesome actions of the bosses and those occupying our various public offices. The Lizard fell from a great height and nodded its head to encourage itself that it has done well. Today, just like the Lizard, we salute ourselves! We have done well! If the Society can pollute the very air it breathes for survival, it becomes clear why our leaders treat us with scorn. We are indeed workers and we are proud of what we do! Work not only defines us but also defines our nation! In this celebration, we echo it and cause it to resonate all around our communities, nation and the entire globe!

However, the question is whether our leaders realize this and if they do, whether their actions and Policies are shaped by this understanding. Any nation that is thinking seriously about development will not joke with its workforce but unfortunately, our leaders treat us with near disdain and sometimes with outright contempt. If not, why would the welfare of workers be seen as charity? Why would governments at diverse levels owe workers arrears of Salaries running into years without remorse? Why the lethargy in paying workers their hard earned income?

You cannot continue treating us poorly and expect a miracle from us. We are shaped by how we are treated as anything that happens to us in the world of work impacts us positively or negatively causing us to either withdraw or commit more to work. It is therefore very simple, if our social partners want more from us, if they want to increase productivity which is the basis for national development then, they must be prepared to treat us better. They must be prepared to treat us first as humans then, as major contributors to wealth creation.

That is why we have chosen to celebrate ourselves this year under the theme ***“Workers Rights and Socioeconomic Justice”*** through which we seek to remind ourselves and the society of the critical nexus between the welfare of workers and Socioeconomic rights and privileges because as we say; workers rights are human rights. The dynamics of workers rights shapes the character and quality of life within the socioeconomic framework.

Workers welfare is central to the achievement of socioeconomic justice which is key to national and global sustainability. The realization that without crafting a more responsible and creative way of organising Production and Distribution of global resources; that we may be embarking upon a collective journey to doom; a collective race to the bottom; led to the call for a rethink of the existing Economic world order. This eventually led to the creation of platforms to foster a more inclusive world that would build a new globe that enthrones shared responsibilities and shared outcomes built on equity.

Equity, fairness and Justice underpins the survival of societies and creates resilience for nations in the midst of upheavals and turbulence. It provides a belief thus a buy-in for all the critical segments of the society allowing continuous solidarity and cohesion within the disparate groups of the society. Every nation needs this criticality to make progress. Nigeria it should be noted needs the presence of this mass to jump start the process of development.

That is why even the drafters of our Constitution recognizes the essence of Socioeconomic justice as critical to our nation's development. Chapter two of the Constitution dealing with the Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy specifically speaks to these rights though it has remained unjusticeable thus far in our nation. Sections 14 - 24 indeed further attests to the desire of the Constitution to ensure the protection of these rights across our nation. That is why we keep saying that it is



unfortunately the character of leadership that determines the fulfillment of Socioeconomic justice. It is therefore our responsibility to ensure that the right characters access leadership position so as to guarantee and protect the rights of workers as an adjunct of Socioeconomic justice.

Obviously, there exist a necessity to show understanding of our long term goals as a nation anchored on the fine principles of Socioeconomic justice to avoid actions and programs that may in any way marginalise and exclude certain segments of the society especially workers. We must therefore have a zero tolerance for parochialism and greed especially that which pertains to self interests and desires. Provisioning for the masses and workers is pivotal and should be given supremacy.

Poor wages excludes, Increased Decent-work deficits alienates, abuse of workplace rights and privileges dishonours, unpaid salaries strips workers of their humanity, violation of rules of engagement defiles, harassment and intimidation of workers humiliates and refusal to grant access to social infrastructure for workers reduces. Poor nutrition, Increasing number of working poor and restricted access to decent Housing, Health and Education combine to dehumanise and subjugate the rights of Nigerian workers. Subjugating workers rights, subjugates the entire society.

Socioeconomic justice allows for a more equitable, fair and just globe especially in the midst of the inexorable march of globalization and its attendant consequences of increased alienation and polarization of the society thus exacerbation of the internecine struggle between the existing classes, groups and cleavages in our nation. The SDGs and its predecessor MDGs with all their weaknesses are products of this thinking which are becoming bedrocks for global action against the imperfections of the current dominant ideology and its subsequent world order.

It is on record that without Socioeconomic Justice, about 16,000 children die each day globally before celebrating their fifth birthday, mostly from preventable causes meaning that almost 70 million children under five will die by 2030 if nothing is done and a third of these deaths occur because of under-nutrition. These are children of workers!

According to the UN's official statistics, there are more hungry people in the world than the combined populations of North America and the European Union. Hunger is the greatest risk to health worldwide, killing more people than AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined. Workers especially in our nation are exposed to increasing hunger because our salaries are poor. Our salaries are poor because our leaders steal our collective wealth while our employers do not want to share organisational profits equitably.

In 2015, one in three people (2.4 billion) still lack access to adequate water and sanitation facilities and around 4.2b persons globally are living in poverty and are denied access to the basic necessities of life while a few continue to profiteer. Nigeria as the headquarters of the world poor according to NBS accounts for about 133m of that number and majority of this number are workers. If the rights of workers to decent wage and income is ensured, more people will be lifted out of poverty since the income of one worker sustains on the average about 20 other persons.

Annual preventable death rate far outweighs the fatalities from any other single event in history since the Second World War, and around half of those affected are young children. If this atrocity continues at current rate, some 255 million more lives could be lost by the end of 2030 – equivalent to the entire population of Nigeria and other West African countries combined.

Where is Socioeconomic justice when workers and the masses of the globe are dying while global wealth has grown to about US\$300 trillion as technology advances and the club of Billionaires kept increasing their share of globe's wealth while fewer individuals continue to





control a larger portion of these wealth. There is no Justice in a world that has kept over 50% of the globe in Poverty while 98% of the population have access to less than 10% of the globe's resources.

It is a crucial reminder that society cannot make progress if workers are not treated fairly. It is a reminder of the centrality of the worker in determining Social inclusion which is key to sustainability. In essence, we seek to underlay the importance of championing the cause of the worker and see in it a source for driving social progress. Nigerians and Nigerian Workers need evidence of the commitment of Nigerian leaders to ensuring their safety, their security, their progress and eventually their liberty. It is only the proof of these that can reconnect the masses and workers with the government.

In our celebration this year, we seek to reestablish the mutually causative relationship between the nature and quality of the way workers are treated and the depth of Socioeconomic justice that exists within our societies especially in Nigeria. This relationship is mutually reinforcing and has wider and complex implications for our nation. Deeper protection of the rights and privileges of workers ensures greater socioeconomic justice which leads in building a nation that is more cohesive and is able to withstand the fissures and powers of centrifuge that seeks its disintegration.

It is therefore not charity or a DASH when workers salaries are improved! It is not a give away when we insist on better deal for the workers who are the geese that lay the golden egg! It is neither self-seeking to ask for more Decent - work compliance in our workplaces nor group speak when we articulate, protect and project our rights as a key social partner. It is truly out of our love and commitment to the survival of the nation that we seek the fulfillment of these rights. All these, inject positive multipliers into our societies thus make our nation better and more progressive.

We must deliberately and collectively seek the protection of workplace rights to protect our

nation. It is a collective duty and the surest path to build a nation as our national anthem summarizes; “..where peace and justice shall reign”

### STATE OF THE MOVEMENT

Comrades! our movement remains stronger than ever before. We are on a rebound at the cusp of overcoming most of the challenges of the past. Efforts are being made to reinvent ourselves by digging deep into ourselves and resolving the internal contradictions within the movement. This will help us to purge ourselves of the obfuscating shibboleths that weigh us down so that we can build greater strength and capacities to engage the realities that confront us both as workers and a people.

To this end, we are beginning to resolve the identified crisis in some of our industrial unions and State Councils and stepping in to nip in the bud emerging ones wherever they are envisioned. Internal capacities are being built both within the Congress and the affiliates to strengthen our collective effort at delivering increasing benefits to our members and Publics.

Recall that on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of February this year, the NLC held its 13<sup>th</sup> quadrennial delegates' conference which elected new leadership and this was followed later in March by the election of new leaders across the 36 states of the federation including Abuja to run the affairs of our state councils. There are pockets of difficulties which have been resolved within the confines of our dictates and traditions.

Since then comrades and guests, we have hit the ground running reconnecting with our various allies both in the Civil Societies and in other platforms that had hitherto for one reason or the other felt alienated. We want to report that this is still ongoing but significant results have been achieved which puts us in better pedestal as a movement to critically query and interrogate present and future challenges that may confront us. The bond between us in the NLC and in the TUC is stronger than ever before.



However, many challenges still abound. These are both within and without our ranks while others are generated by those forces who lack the requisite understanding of what trade unions represent. As a result, our movement continues to experience threats and attacks from forces who are determined to corner unduly larger percentages of the earth's resources to the detriment of workers and global majority. They seek to weaken and strangle trade unions as a credible voice and platform for the articulation and protection of the rights and privileges of workers and masses. Rights to organise and collectively bargain including to freely associate have variously been trampled upon by these forces especially in our clime with brazen impunity.

We remind you that some state governments continue to refuse to comply with the provisions of the 2019 national minimum wage act while some others have pocketed deducted check-off dues belonging to trade unions. Some private sector employers have begun to act in total disregard to our laws and the various rules of engagement governing industrial relations in our country. Flagrant disobedience to our laws is abhorrent thus all employers that are not complying with the dictates of our extant labour laws should be prepared for more robust engagement with organised Labour.

Recently, we engaged the Government of Abia state to address serious industrial relations infractions in the state which led to an industrial action but was resolved via an agreement. However, Imo state under governor Hope Uzodimma has posed a peculiar challenge to the rights of Nigerian workers. The state government sponsored a violent attack against the NLC in the state disrupting the State Delegates Conference organised to elect new leaders of the Congress in the state. This was because the workers resisted attempts by the state government to impose its stooges on them who it believed will continue to collude with it to continue inflicting pains and reign of terror on public servants in the state.

Currently, workers salaries in the state are in arrears, pensions have gone unpaid, workers are

declared ghost workers while on their duty posts, leave allowances and gratuities remain unpaid as the government has broken all records of impunity against workers in Nigeria. To show its contempt for dialogue, the state government without reason aborted the signing of the agreement which it had reached with us to resolve the dispute arising out of its ill-treatment of workers. The government uses violence against its workers and was responsible for invading, ransacking and stripping of the state secretariat of the NLC. We have since reported this incident to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and will continue to pursue it until it is satisfactorily resolved in favour of Imo state workers.

Despite these challenges, the beautiful thing though is that our responses are very critical in determining their outcomes. This singular understanding means that our destiny remains in our hands. We must therefore continue to rebuild our movement so that our responses to these forces will be more creative and robust to yield the desired outcomes for our members and the trade unions.

As part of our response comrades, with your permission we shall mount a robust campaign rising out of this celebration against all the states and private sector employers involved in the denial and dehumanisation of workers all over the nation. We shall continue to work with the registrar of trade unions to give voice to all strata of workers whose voices are mute because no trade union currently represents them and we shall continue to insist on deepening and expanding our engagements at the revived NLAC to ensure that our extant laws and statutes remain in sync with international best practices and current realities.

Comrades, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) is under attack by some south west Governors who claim to have disbanded the Union in their domains. This is unacceptable and a total breach of our constitution and the laws governing Industrial relations in the country.





At this time of great trepidation in our nation! At this time of despair and anxieties! At this time of deep schisms and at this time of hopelessness which have left our dear nation tottering at the edge of the precipice; the trade union movement remains one of the few bastions of hope and light. This responsibility may seem enormous and insurmountable but our resolve deploying our usual instruments anchored on our innate traditions and philosophies will surely empower us in pursuit of this onerous mission.

The controversy surrounding the venue of this year's May Day celebration on demonstrates to all of us the nature and character of the battle ahead for all of us as workers, as a people and much more as trade Unions.

The withdrawal of the approval given to us long time ago to use the Eagle Square which is our traditional ground few days to today and the eventual re-validation is a clear signal of the intention of those who have captured the corridors of power. Nigeria is at the crossroads, and requires an honest and concerted effort to sail to safety. We have discovered that the more some patriotic Nigeria work to sustain the unity of the country and economy the more some tear us apart. They do not really care about what befalls the country because they have dual citizenship. ns!

We must stand together now more than ever before to withstand the forces that are crystallizing against us. The nation needs us! The masses need us! Market men and women need us! Students need other and other different segments of the society across the geographical spread need us! We must stand together with them!. Our strength is in standing together both as workers and as a people!

We can make history. We will make history. It is possible. Come comrades. Come fellow soldiers. Let us make history together. Our nation needs us. Let us recreate Nigeria. The paradise we all dream and want can only be built by us. No one will do it for us but it starts today with our collective decisions to stop impunity in every facets of our nation's life. It comes with a

determination to fight all forces of retrogression. It comes with a single-minded pursuit of the enthronement of equity, fair play and justice in every areas of engagement as a nation.

That is why it is critical that we begin by enthroning justice for Nigerian workers through the drive for the eradication of all untoward industrial relations practices in our various workplaces.

### **THE STATE OF THE NATION**

It is totally shocking listening to the ethnic profiling and violence that has erupted before, during and after the last general elections which in all portends great danger for our nation. The use of inflammatory words that deepens our national cleavages remains unacceptable and the attempt to brand some groups in certain ways to muzzle free speech and criminalize the holding of opposing views speaks to the level of intolerance that pervades our nation.

Nigeria transcends individual or narrow political interests of whatsoever kind and those that insist on placing their personal interests above that of our nation are the real enemies of the country. We condemn in unmistakable terms the idea behind the use of violence to intimidate and cow other segments of the country to submission when sane dialogue and mutual respect would have sufficed.

The just concluded general elections remain the most hotly contested in the history of electioneering in our country and the reasons are obvious. However, it also remains the most distorted, corrupted and abused. It marked a dangerous watershed in our political engagement as a people and as a nation. It brought with it huge opportunities for our nation to turn the corner and become great or to continue to dwell in the cesspit of underdevelopment.

However, as has been demonstrated, INEC seems to have chosen the wrong path. A route that has perceptibly dashed the hopes of many Nigerians throwing them into despair and hopelessness destroying the rebounding belief that our nation can get it right once again. The



patriotic fervour that preceded the election has never been witnessed in a long time in our country and all of us had believed that INEC was going to ride the crest of that wave to make history by following its promises but that was not to be. That fervour has dissipated and almost replaced with melancholy while the people rues a lost opportunity. The electoral umpire built our collective hope based on their pledge to abide with the Electoral Laws and its own guidelines to provide a level playing ground for all the participants yet surprisingly it chose to do otherwise.

We do not want to know who were declared as winners but we view it from the fact that the process was hugely flawed as there was a wide gap between what was expected within the ambit of the Law and morality and what was pronounced by INEC as the outcome. The process heavily contaminated the outcome and was therefore largely perceived as not being a reflection of the wishes of the electorate who had expectantly cast their votes at the different polling units across the nation.

A willful subversion of the rules made to guide the elections and acts that may have intentionally frustrated the BVAS clearly questions and undermines the credibility of an election. To us, it was like INEC shot itself at the foot by the several guarantees it gave to our citizens and deciding to shift the goal post when the match had already started. Compliance with its own Guidelines and the electoral act would have secured the integrity of the election and its outcomes irrespective of the nature of the individuals that emerged victorious.

Perhaps, the present disquiet in Nigeria would have been avoided or reduced if INEC had paused in its indecent haste as we suggested to look into the grievous allegations made by the parties before announcing the final outcome. This would have saved INEC from being perceived as working towards an outcome that had been arranged before the elections began. The truth is that INEC by its actions heavily undermined its credibility thus

undermined whatsoever it came out with and this is not good for a country with highly sensitive cleavages and sub-nationals. One of the immediate consequences of that shoddiness in handling the Presidential election was the dampening of moral and withdrawal of citizen support and believe in the electoral process. The ensuing Gubernatorial and State Assembly elections witnessed a very low voter apathy as participation nosedived from around 36% voter turn out as witnessed during the presidential to about 16% during the state level elections. There is no other faster way to destroy a nation than what INEC did. Its action almost amounted to a subversion of our nation.

The Adamawa Gubernatorial supplementary election debacle bears an ugly testimony to what is possible in Nigeria through INEC, the Security agencies and the politicians! INEC has wasted all the work we collectively did towards ensuring viable and credible elections since 1999 and made our nation a laughing stock in the international arena.

However, the results have been announced and aggrieved parties have advisedly gone to the Courts which remains their democratic rights; the need to tone down the rhetoric have become important to allow the Judiciary concentrate and do its work. The level of propaganda after the results were announced seem to have reached a higher crescendo than during the campaigns with accusations and counter accusations some of them akin to outright blackmail and threats to muzzle voices of dissent. We will not support any action that undermines the right to peaceful protests and the freedom to associate. Free speech is key to survival of any democracy and this must be respected as we go into the various adjudicatory processes.

On this note, we call on the Judiciary to exercise due diligence in its handling of the various elections petitions presently before them. Nigerians expect the processes to be transparent and in keeping with the rules of the game and avoid actions that would further alienate them from the people. We see in the present election





petitions huge opportunities for the nation's Judiciary to redeem itself, restore its dignity and ascend that moral height once again as the revered true champion of the people and our nation.

Our promise is that the trade union movement in Nigeria using its various networks will monitor diligently the handling of the various petitions in our different courts to ensure that Justice is done. We urge the Judiciary to stop the delay

### **THE ECONOMY:**

Our nation has unfortunately become a country led by men and women whose delight seem to be in enacting policies that are detrimental to the progress of the nation. The economy is on auto pilot struggling on its own to survive while those entrusted to manage it kept throwing filth and injecting toxins into it. It is serially abused and has therefore become one of the most mismanaged economies in the world. All the key macro economic variables are not promising with inflation at double digits, unemployment worsening and rising and at nearly 40% with youth unemployment very high at 65%; Exchange rate depreciating steeply while the debt stock continues to rise.

The two key broad instruments for a successful management of any Economy as experts have pointed out remains having the right mix of Monetary Policies and Fiscal policies. These are supposed to work in sync to create an effective and a successful economic systems but to all intents and purposes, the reverse is the case in our system as we have witnessed terrifying discordance between the managers of these two elements in our economy.

An economy is a system with deep structural linkages which ought to work together at all times to drive growth, progress and development. Interdependence of these structures is key to a bouyant economy; if the Educational sector is sick, the entire economy suffers shortage of human capacity and if the Agricultural sector is under-performing, food

and raw materials availability becomes negatively impacted. If Monetary Policies lead to cash crunch, it shrinks economic activities that in turn shrinks revenue thus impacts negatively the GDP.

The structures ought to complement each other not oppose each other. It is this complementarity that serves as the keel and rudder that keeps it balanced and sailing even in the midst of choppy waters. In a nutshell, when there is a structural dissociation, the economy experiences schisms and suffers dislocations that must be corrected for system balance and sustenance.

The CBN's Currency redesigning effort for example was a good policy that was badly managed because it was not properly coordinated especially with other structures of governance so rather than achieve the expected results, it created deep dissonance in the system which inflicted humongous suffering on the populace destroying in the process the lives and livelihood of millions of Nigerians. The Informal economy lost about 50% of its businesses while productivity shrunk to about 41% and the entire economy took a hit estimated in Hundred of Billions. It took our systematic intervention comrades to correct this aberration and save our nation.

Our debt profile as a nation must worry every patriot and it worries us not just as workers but as citizens of Nigeria. We have warned repeatedly of the dangers of excessive borrowing of foreign exchange denominated loans and alerted the nation of the inherent danger urging the nation's economic managers to desist but all of these fell on deaf ears with some very unfortunate attempts at justification. This prodigious borrowing has almost left our nation's economy stranded and fiscally insufficient.

It is projected by the Debt management Office (DMO) that by this month, our total Public debt will be about N77trn meaning that by the time this administration exits on the 29<sup>th</sup>, each Nigerian will be owing about N384, 860 only.



Today, our external debt profile stands around US\$42b and is increasing and the debt to GDP about 39% then the most worrying, our debt service as at 2022 to revenue stands at 81% but this year's budget shows that it is at 123% meaning that we will be unable to service our debts without borrowing that is for every N100 we earn as income, we need to borrow additional N23 from somewhere just to pay interests on our debt.

Our Economy is in the doldrums. We wonder why these does not scare the nation's leaders? We wonder whether they do not understand the implications of these for our nation both now and in the near future. We wonder why they refused to learn from the former debt trap which we successfully exited under the deft management of the Presidency of Obasanjo and his team of Ngozi Okonjo Iweala? We wonder why they insist on eating our future now and putting us into another slavish debt trap?

It looks like in our nation, the only reason we borrow is to steal because we cannot see its benefits on the people. We insist that while nations can borrow for productive reasons such as investments in well thought out projects, it is unhealthy to borrow for consumption. Even a child knows this and that is why we are surprised that at this dying period of this administration, it has decided to receive loans of USD800m as it claimed to cushion the suffering it plans to inflict on the masses of this nation. If this is not a Cash out then, it is entirely ill-advised and counter-productive given the history of such in our nation.

We call on the Federal Government to consider the incorporation of transition fuels such as Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) as an addition to currently available energy in Nigeria. The use of Compressed Natural Gas which is a lot cheaper can also be a long-term alternative to petrol thus saving Nigerians of the current and future spiraling cost of petrol.

We urge our economic managers to be more prudent and seek ways to deliberately diversify our economy by deepening manufacturing

capacity and investing in human capital that would drive youth creativity which is key to industrialisation. We advocate a freeing of Capital for MSMEs and then a deliberate direct investment by governments at all levels in setting up manufacturing entities across the nation. Hiding under the neo-liberal maxim that government has no business in business rings hollow and not true. In a weak economy like ours, Government has business in business and we must invest in businesses to drive economic growth in our nation.

Investment in Education is truly an Economic Investment and that is why we worried that a nation that is serious about development allowed its Universities to be on strike for over 8months. This is not how Economies are managed and this is not how Human capital are built. The incoming administration must ensure that this does not happen again by resolving all the remaining issues with ASUU including payment of the 8 month Salary arrears owed lecturers.

## **THE ENERGY SECTOR**

Comrades and Guests, it is crucial that any nation that cannot manage its energy resources effectively and efficiently is doomed. One of the key factors holding us down as a nation is our inability to manage this sector effectively for the benefit of the citizens and the nation. Power however it is generated remains key to jump starting any economy while Oil and Gas is critical to a robust energy success in every country. It is therefore crucial for government to work with the people to create frameworks that would make energy work for Nigerians instead of for the few who have succeeded in capturing the state.

For decades now, we have used all forms of persuasions to make the Federal Government fix the refineries and possibly build new ones but all to no avail. There seem to be a deliberate sabotage of our domestic refineries to ensure that it remains none operational so that few fat cats will continue profiting from the sinful importation of refined petroleum products into the country at the detriment of the Economy.





Your Excellencies, comrades and guests, Nigeria is the sixth largest oil producing country in the world yet it is the only OPEC country that cannot refine her crude. Our dear country extracts crude, exports to refine and import to sell to the citizens and turn around to talk about subsidy. We insist that we will no longer allow any increase in Petroleum product prices in whatever guise until all of our Local refineries are reactivated and are fully operational. We will not allow the continued gang up of the elite against Nigerian workers and masses to continue unabated.

Congress has been following the activities going on at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) Trading Limited especially as regards assigning products to marketers. We also watch with keen interest the goings on at the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (NMDPRA) to ensure issues of cargo clearance, tracking compliance, route inspection, metering calibration/maintenance, accurate delivery to trucks, record keeping, etc. are expeditiously taken care of. We demand the inclusion of NUPENG and PENGASSAN in the Steering Committee set up by Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC).

Your Excellencies and comrades, the plight of the power sector has not changed 10 years since after privatisation has been well documented by us and the reasons are very obvious. As long as those who sold the Companies remained the buyers, Nigerians will continue to experience serious challenges in the power sector.

The only way to make progress in the Power sector which is crucial for national development is to review the Privatisation exercise for the purposes of a reversal. What is going on in that sector defies economic logic and reason despite all the Billions in USD lavished to revive it.

### **THE JUDICIARY**

Our nation's Judiciary seems to have been heavily compromised and has lost its moral authority in the eyes of many Nigerians. When the refrain; go to Court from Politicians after

every electoral heist becomes rampant; it makes mockery of the judiciary and its various processes. That refrain shows the contempt with which our Politicians have come to hold the Courts and strips the Lordships the usual reverence attached to their offices. It shows a desecration of a once hallowed entity but which they have now besmirched.

Many public commentators have aired serious dissenting views to some judgments from our hallowed temples of justice. There are instances where some judgments have departed from time tested and honoured foundations of equity, fairness and logic and rather relying on technicality to decide very sensitive public interest cases. In recent times, courts of coordinate jurisdictions have delivered contradictory judgement thus throwing the unlearned public into very serious quagmire of which to obey.

Nigerians as we speak are still amazed at the judicial wizardry of the Lordships of the Supreme Court who gave judgment in the Governorship election in Imo state. People are still surprised how a person who is not the candidate of his Party was declared a winner under a party which the same Supreme Court had declared that its candidate was another person? We are still surprised who the authentic candidate for the ruling party was in that election due to the ruling of the Supreme Court or was there a provision in our Laws for independent candidates?

Nigerians are still astonished at the ruling of the same Court on the issue of the Candidacy of Senators Akpabio and Lawan for a seat in the Senate against the dictates of the Electoral Act which clearly forbids candidates from running for two positions in the same election.

Some of these questionable rulings have greatly undermined the judiciary and deeply worries us as we go into the elections petitions since mainly the same judges will preside over the processes again. We are deeply concerned and hope that the Judiciary will use the opportunity to redeem itself rather sink deeper into the murk.



### **PUBLIC SERVICE**

Fellow Comrades, we have consistently presented the issue of gratuity payment to the government but nothing has been done in that regard. As you are all aware, the concept of gratuity payment to employees is predicated on the fact that those who have laboured for public institutions or private enterprises are entitled to the proverbial golden handshake from their employers. Thus, gratuity is a monetary benefit given by an employer to his or her employee at the time of retirement without the worker making any financial contribution whatsoever to the fund. Such a lump sum is meant to enable the retiree finance any post-retirement endeavour of his or her choice.

The Pension act did not abolish Gratuity payment and we demand its restoration in many Public sectors where it has been stopped.

### **NEED FOR GENERAL SALARY REVIEW IN THE CIVIL SERVICE**

It is necessary to recall that we have continued, over the years, to demand that the salary of core Civil Servants should be beefed up to narrow the gap between the emoluments of Civil Servants and those of employees in other segments of the public service. They all possess the same educational qualifications and cognate experience on the job, so why the disparity?

### **REVIEW OF RETIREMENT AGE TO 65 FOR ALL PUBLIC SERVANTS**

The need to review upward the retirement age and years of service in the entire Public Service has become imperative. Extension of years of service as was done in other sectors of the Public service, we believe should go round. Only few other establishments including the core Civil Service are now left out. We are, therefore, demanding that the age of retirement and length of service in the entire Public Service including the Civil Service should be reviewed upward to 65 years of age and 40 years of service, whichever comes first.

### **THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AfCFTA)**

Organised labour in Nigeria commends the Federal Government for taking a popular position on our country's engagement on the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). By listening to the voice of organised labour and other stakeholders especially through co-opting labour in the national processes for engagement with AfCFTA, government has demonstrated that we make better progress when we strive forward together.

In order to consolidate the progress made on AfCFTA, we demand that the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement should be reviewed to include a social and labour protocol in order to accommodate the concerns of workers for decent work conditions. It is important to note that the objectives of AfCFTA would be defeated and cascade to a race to the bottom if the parameters of decent work such as trade union representation, social protection mechanisms, social dialogue, living wages and workplace rights are mainstreamed into the AfCFTA trade instrument.

### **THE NATIONAL RESEARCH AND INNOVATION COUNCIL BILL**

The NLC and TUC calls upon the out-going government of President Buhari to quickly sign into Law the National Research and Innovation Council Bill which serve as one of the legacies of his government.

We believe that this will help boost research to generate much needed foundation for our nation's quest for industrialisation. Without Research the quest for industrialisation will turn into a pipe dream as this remains the basic infrastructure for technological advancement of any nation. A nation is only as rich as its capacity for Research and Innovation.

### **INTERNATIONAL ARENA**

We have observed with consternation the present war mongering across Europe, Asia and America over the War in Ukraine. We are alarmed at the



Nuclear threats and are worried that instead of the parties seeking ways to deescalate and stop the carnage to lives and properties, the tempo of the war drum is still increasing. We are afraid of the continuing escalation and its consequences on the people and workers of the world. We need peace to make progress as a globe.

Organised Labour in Nigeria calls for understanding especially between Russia and the US including the EU to end the war and return to the table. The international community must deploy the time tested instruments of dialogue to resolve the issues that led to the war in Ukraine so that warmongers across these nations can be put to shame.

War does not benefit workers and the masses. It is mainly workers and the people that die in Wars! This war is therefore not for the protection of the people of the world neither is it in our interests. It is purely driven by those who profit from wars - the bourgeoisie either in the West or in the East. We call for global peace and a cessation of hostilities so that the killing of men and women and the huge suffering will end.

On this note, we welcome the peace treaty signed between Saudi Arabia and Iran which has brought to an end the war in Yemen and is bringing peace to many parts of the middle East. We note the role played by China in that effort and urge other leading nations to emulate this effort for global peace.

We use this opportunity to once again call for the total freedom of the nation of Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (Western Sahara) who are under forceful occupation and repression by Morocco. The entire world remains in bondage as long as this people are in bondage. Let the United nations pursue their independence now. Western Sahara must be free.

Nigerian workers call on the warring Generals in Sudan to sheath their sword for the sake of the people and workers of Sudan. Allowing personal pursuit to destroy a nation and a people is most callous and allowing themselves to be used as pawns by foreign powers to against the wishes of the citizens of the citizens serves none of them any good. We call on them to immediately allow the ceasefire already negotiated to hold so that lives and

properties will be protected. The AU must step in robustly to restore peace to that nation.

We call on the United States of America to stop its economic embargo on the nation of Cuba and withdraw its blockade of that nation. We had thought that the Obama policies would have been geared-up to allow for full restoration of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The US remains the bastion of democratic expressions and should allow this find traction in its relationship with the people and nation of Cuba.

### **CONCLUSION:**

Comrades and guests as we wind down our speech, it is important that we understand that no society can make progress by excluding its major stakeholders; the workers and masses from having an equitable share of the nation's resources. If we are serious about increasing productivity and making progress as a nation then, we must seek ways of ensuring that the rights and privileges of workers are not only protected but that they are granted unfettered access to socioeconomic justice.

To this end, we suggest deliberate actions by the government to expand and strengthen the nation's existing Social Security framework. The Social Investment Programme (SIP) ought to be given legal backing by speeding up the legislative processes towards codifying it in our laws. This will deepen engagement in those areas and provide stronger backing to our quest for socioeconomic justice to all Nigerians.

We also call on the federal government to begin the process of ratifying conventions 102 of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on Social protection. This is central to the actualisation of Social justice and inclusiveness. It provides appropriate guarantees for workers rights to survival during and after work life and also guarantees access to decent life for many Nigerians.

It is important that Nigerian leaders understands that without guaranteeing the rights of workers, without allowing workers to win, Nigerians and Nigeria will not win. We are Nigerians; when we win, our nation wins and makes sustainable progress. It is the duty of government to provide the right environment for this to happen.





Our nation must lead with a job led growth. When jobs grow, income increases and the economy is revved higher but we need to protect those that work in these jobs. To protect them, we must ensure that the right legal environment is created and frameworks for compliance with laws are established.

We therefore demand:

1. **The deepening of the engagements at the NLAC and expanding the periodicity of meetings**
2. **Establishing constant tripartite workplace audits have become inevitable**
3. **Encouraging the registration of more unions to cover the unorganized sectors**
4. **Speeding up the trade dispute resolution mechanism**

In view of the rising wave of impunity in our workplaces and the actions of Public sector employers, we will soon commence:

1. **Actions against state governments that are yet to fully implement the 2019 national minimum wage law and owes arrears or Salaries, Pensions and allowances etc.**
2. **Actions against private companies nation-wide that have turned their workplaces as platforms for lawlessness the dehumanization of workers.**

This speech will not be complete without making the following demands:

1. ***That the proposed USD1.2b National Census scheduled to hold before May 29 this year be halted to allow the new administration to handle it***
2. ***That the privatisation of the Electricity sector be reviewed in favour of Nigeria***
3. ***That the resumption and ramping up of the activities of kidnappers and bandits since after the election should be quickly addressed***
4. ***That the Judiciary should purge itself and redeem our democracy by its handling of the various election petitions before it***
5. ***The setting up of an independent panel to investigate the INEC chairman and his team in their conduct of the last general election***
6. ***Investigate the spending of N12b by the***

7. ***Aviation Ministry to buy 10 fire trucks***
8. ***Stop the ongoing legislative madness in the NASS that seeks to stop Medical personnel from taking employment outside the country.***
9. ***Continue the objective of returning the local refineries to full capacity and invest in new refineries but in the short-run, sort out the supply bottle-necks that has made product availability difficult in Nigeria.***
10. ***The outgoing President must take steps to ensure that those in his administration planning last minute heist of the nation's treasury are stopped***
11. ***The stoppage of every action, program or policies that may inflict any form of suffering on Nigerians and workers***
12. ***The federal government should not heed not just IMF's advise on Tax increase but all of its economic pieces of advises as they are poisonous to our nation's economic health.***

Once again comrades, we reiterate our preparedness to resist every action of the government to inflict suffering on Nigerian workers and masses. We will not allow our members to be turned mindlessly into beasts of burden any longer. We will stand together as workers and as a people to protect our rights to decent work and social justice!

***Our hands are extended to you all and to our civil society allies! It is our civic duty to remain together! Our hands joined across the divides and the regions of our great nation! We build solidarity and we will build power! With these, we shall build a nation that would become the envy of nations anchored on the supremacy of the rights of the sovereign masses! It is our duty to hold our governments accountable to the people! Let us gird our loins!***

We wish workers all over Nigeria and the world a wonderful May – Day celebrations! It is our day!  
We shall meet again in 2024!

**Long live the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC)!**  
**Long live the Trade Union Congress (TUC)**  
**Long live Nigerian workers!!! Long live Nigeria!!!!**

**Aluta Continua! Victoria Acerta!!**

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## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS



The 13<sup>th</sup> National Delegates Conference of the Nigeria Labour Congress took place from February 7 to 8, 2023 at the International Conference Centre, Central Business District, Abuja. The theme for the Conference was **“Building People's Power, National Unity and Quest for a New Social Contract”**. The theme resonated with the expectations for the 2023 election and the contributions of the Nigeria Labour Congress throughout its history to build authentic people's power for good governance, national unity, and sustainable development especially fostered through a new social contract.

The 2023 Quadrennial National Delegates Conference of the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) was the 13<sup>th</sup> since the re-organisation of NLC in 1978. The Delegates Conference was attended by 53 affiliate unions of the NLC cutting across the

private and public sectors and traversing the key sectors of the Nigerian economy.

Traditionally, the National Delegates Conference of the NLC is primed at reviewing the activities and engagements of Congress over the four-year period intervening since the last Delegates Conference. The Conference also provided Congress the space to evaluate the state of the nation, evaluate workers' struggles, and set an agenda and mandate for the leadership of Congress in the next four years.

From the proceedings of the Conference, it appeared that those objectives were met. About one thousand delegates from the affiliate unions of the Congress including new unions which affiliation were ratified at the Conference deliberated and debated on the motions that were presented at the Conference. The motions provided an opportunity for members of the Congress to examine the different socio-economic and political issues that confront Nigerian workers and the Nigeria Labour Congress as a national labour centre.

Setting the tone for the business of the Conference was the Welcome Address by the immediate past President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Brother Ayuba Wabba, mni. In the welcome speech, Brother Wabba pointed to the need for the NLC to continue to hold the fort as the social conscience of Nigeria and bastion of the defence of workers and citizens' rights. He urged the incoming leadership

## REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS

to consolidate on the stride of the past eight years including campaigns for decent work, economic justice, and political renaissance.

The 13<sup>th</sup> National Delegates Conference of the NLC attracted many dignitaries. The Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Professor Yemi Osinbajo delivered the Opening Address and declared the 13<sup>th</sup> NLC Delegates Conference open. Other dignitaries that graced the Conference included the Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mr. Femi Gbajabiamila, the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha, the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, Senator (Dr) Chris Nwabueze Ngige, and the Honourable Minister of the Federal Capital Territory, Mallam Mohammed Bello. There was also strong diplomatic presence as the Ambassadors of Cuba, Congo DRC, South Africa, Namibia, Saharawi Republic, and Venezuela graced the Conference.

The international development community was also well represented at the 13<sup>th</sup> National Delegates Conference of the NLC. The ILO Director General was represented by the ACTRAV Specialist, Ms. Inviolata Chinyangarara and delivered a goodwill message to the Conference on behalf of the ILO. The global secretariat of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) delegation to the Conference was led by the Ag. General Secretary, Brother Owen Tudor. The ITUC-Africa delegation was led by the General Secretary, Brother Kwasi Amankwah. There was also top management representation by the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, American Solidarity Centre, Organisation of African Trade Union Unity, OTUWA, and international trade unions from Kenya (COTU), Zambia, Ghana, South Africa, Senegal, Belgium, Italy, Saharawi Republic, and others.

Two of the leading presidential candidates at the February 25, 2023, Nigeria's general election: Senator Rabiu Kwankwaso of the NNPP and Mr. Peter Obi of the Labour Party made speaking appearances at the Conference. The Presidential candidates were robustly engaged by workers and delegates on the NLC Workers Charter of Demands.



The highlight of the Delegates Conference was the election of a new national leadership of the Nigeria Labour Conference with Comrade Joe Ajaero emerging unopposed as the new President of the NLC. The full list of elected members of the National Administrative Council who were duly sworn in by Barr. Femi Falana, SAN included the following:

1. **Comrade Joseph Ajaero – President**
2. **Comrade Kabiru Ado Minjibir – Deputy President**
3. **Comrade Audu Amba – Deputy President**
4. **Comrade (Prince) Adewale Adeyanju – Deputy President**
5. **Comrade Akeem Ambali – National Treasurer**
6. **Comrade Benjamin Anthony – Vice President**
7. **Comrade Salamat Aliu – Vice President**
8. **Comrade Michael Akuma Nnachi – Vice President**
9. **Comrade Stephen Okoro – Vice President**
10. **Comrade Oluwale Adeleye Sunday – Vice President**
11. **Comrade Williams Akporeha – National Trustee**
12. **Comrade Marwan Mustapha Adamu – National Financial Secretary**
13. **Comrade Babatunde Goke Olatunji – Internal Auditor**
14. **Comrade Garba Ibrahim – Internal Auditor**
15. **Comrade Mohammed Ibrahim –**



## **REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS**

### **Internal Auditor**

**16. Comrade Roselyn Anarah – Ex-Officio**

**17. Comrade Professor Member George-  
Genyi – Ex-Officio**

At the Conference, there were debates and ratification of motions from the industrial unions which are affiliates of the NLC. Some new unions were also formally affiliated with the NLC.

Side events at the Conference included the ILO supported Engagement on Climate Change and Just Transition and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area. The ILO through the ACTRAV Specialist, Ms. Inviolata Chinyangarara made speaking appearances at both events. Other Special Guests

who made speaking appearance at the NLC Climate Change and AfCFTA side events included Dr. Peter Terfa who doubles as the past Permanent Secretary Federal Ministry of Environment and Labour and also a Climate Change Expert, Professor Emem Olutoke, Gender and Development specialists, Mrs. Priscilla Achakpa and the representatives of the Federal Ministry of Environment and the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade, and Investment.

Also in attendance at the side events were the Focal Persons on Climate Change and Desk Officers on AfCFTA from the different affiliate unions of the Nigeria Labour Congress.





REPORT OF THE 13<sup>TH</sup> QUADRENNIAL NATIONAL DELEGATES  
CONFERENCE OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS





## REPORT OF STATE DELEGATES CONFERENCE



The National Administrative Council (NAC) of the NLC at its meeting which took place on the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, designated 7<sup>th</sup> March 2023 for the conduct of the NLC States Delegates Conference. The States Delegates Conference is statutorily a follow up Conference at the state level after the convening of the national delegates conference.

In preparation for the 2023 NLC States Delegates Conference and in line with the directives of the NAC, the national secretariat of the Nigeria Labour Congress developed guidelines for the conduct of the States Delegates Conference. These guidelines were communicated to the State Councils. The State Councils were also directed to set up planning, screening and accreditation committees which were to work towards arranging the logistics for the Conferences, receiving nominations, and ensuring that aspirants meet the requirements. The contested positions are:

1. **NLC State Council Chairperson**
2. **2 Vice Chairperson Positions**
3. **1 Treasurer Position**
4. **2 Auditor Positions**
5. **2 Ex-Officio Position (Strictly for Women)**

The NLC National Secretariat appointed Returning Officers for all the States of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory for the conduct of the NLC State Council election. The Returning Officers appointed were mandated to supervise the general conduct of the election working with State Administrative and Executive Councils pursuant to established guidelines.



At the States Delegates Conference, the major activities included consideration and adoption of the Standing Order, Report of the Accreditation Committee, Report of the State Executive Committee, Financial Report of the State Council for the past four years, Report on Motions, and the conduct of elections into the various positions being contested for at the Conference.

Reports from different parts of the country indicate that the election was largely peaceful, cordial and in tandem with the ideals of trade union solidarity and fraternity. A few states however experienced difficulties in the conduct of the elections. In Anambra State, the Returning Officer was only able to announce and swear in the elected State Chairperson, Comrade Nwafor Humphery and the two Ex-Officio who were returned unopposed. Election into the rest of the positions contested for were declared inconclusive as the allocation of delegates slots to the ballot papers shared to the respective unions who participated in the election was discovered to be inaccurate. In Ebonyi State, there was a petition from a section of the unions which believed that the process was unduly skewed to favour certain persons. Some comrades protested the process and outcome of the States Delegates Conference in Zamfara State. By the time the SOS went to bed, it was gathered that the petitioners in Zamfara State had withdrawn their protest and accepted the outcome of the election. Petition was also received by one of the contestants for Chairperson position in Benue State.

In response to the few petitions that trailed the State Delegates election, the leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress set up an Election Petition Committee chaired by the President of the Amalgamated Union of Public Corporation Civil Service Technical and Recreational Services Employees (AUPCTRE), Comrade Benjamin Anthony, General Secretary of National Association of Nigerian Nurses and Midwives (NANNM), Comrade Thomas Shettima, and Comrade Echezona Asuzu, Principal Assistant General Secretary of Nigeria Labour Congress.



# ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

## 1. The NLC Commissions the Hassan Sunmonu Court

On the eve of the 13<sup>th</sup> National Delegates Conference of the Nigeria Labour Congress, precisely on Monday, 6<sup>th</sup> of February 2023, the immediate past leadership of the NLC under Comrade Ayuba Wabba commissioned the Hassan Sunmonu Court – a 28 Suites apartment named after the pioneer President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Hassan Sunmonu.

Leading the dignitaries at the Commissioning Ceremony was the Secretary to the Government of the Federation, Mr. Boss Mustapha who cut the commissioning tape. Other dignitaries at the event were the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, Senator (Dr) Chris Ngige other key officials of the Ministry and the Honourable Minister of the FCT Minister, Mallam Mohammed Bello. Past and present leadership of the Nigeria Labour Congress were also present at the commissioning including former Presidents: Comrade Hassan Sunmonu, Comrade Adams Oshiomhole, Comrade Abdulwahed Omar and the newly elected President of the Congress, Comrade Joe Ajaero whose leadership has continued to invest resources to ensure that the Hassan Sunmonu Court commences full scale operation.





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 2. The NLC Pre-Conference CWC and NEC meeting and Awards Dinner

The last meeting of the Central Working Committee (CWC) and The National Executive Council (NEC) took place under the leadership of Comrade Ayuba Wabba, took place on the 6th of February 2023 at the Continental Hotels, former Abuja Sheraton Hotel and Towers

Also, on the night preceding the 13<sup>th</sup> National Delegates Conference, the NLC leadership hosted Congress partners and the friends of labour to a dinner event at the Abuja Continental Hotel, Abuja. The event which was spiced by the investiture on Comrade Ayuba Wabba as a fellow of the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies (MINILS), awards of deserving retired and serving members of the NLC Secretariat and the political leadership, music and food.



## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 3. Inaugural Meeting of the NLC National Administrative Council (NAC) under the leadership of Comrade Joe Ajaero

On the 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2022, the National Administrative Council of the Nigeria Labour Congress under the leadership of Comrade Joe Ajaero held its first meeting at the Committee Room of the NLC, Labour House, Abuja. The inaugural meeting also received briefly in audience the immediate past National President of the NLC, Comrade Ayuba Wabba, mni. The inaugural NAC meeting took a number of decisions including scheduling the 2023 States Delegates Conference. Highlights of the meeting included a brief handing over ceremony.





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 4. NLC President Meets with Industrial Unions in Lagos

One of the first activities of the newly elected NLC President was to meet with industrial unions in Lagos State. The meetings which took the NLC President and some members of the newly constituted NAC to industrial unions with their national secretariat in Nigeria's commercial capital was aimed at acquainting the industrial unions with the vision of the new leadership of the NLC.

Some of the unions visited during the visit were MHWUN, NUCFLANMPE, NUEE, NUPENG, NUCECFWW, NUFBTE, NUATE, ANAP, NUR and others.





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 5. NLC President Interfaces with NLC Staff

On the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023, the NLC President held his first formal interface with the staff at the National Secretariat of the Congress. Joined at the meeting by the General Secretary of the Congress, Comrade Emmanuel Ugboaja, Esq., mni, Comrade Benjamin Anthony, Vice President and Heads of Department of the Congress who are also members of the NAC.

At the meeting, the Congress President, Comrade Joe Ajaero promised to operate an open door policy and to prioritize the welfare of staff. He also encouraged staff to reciprocate by increasing their productivity at work. The meeting was highly interactive.



## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 6. Early Courtesy Calls

The President of the NLC, Comrade Joe Ajaero, received a number of early visitors who came to pay him courtesy visit and to felicitate with him and other members of the newly elected National Administrative Council (NAC). Some of the early callers include the Resident Representative of the Fredrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), Dr. David Mann who led some members of his management team to pay a courtesy visit to the NLC President.

Also at the Labour House to felicitate with Comrade Joe Ajaero was the Labour Attache to the United States Embassy. The Labour Attache conveyed the goodwill of the American Embassy and government on the election of Comrade Joe Ajaero as the new President of the NLC. He said that he looked forward to a productive working relationship with the Congress during the tenure of Comrade Joe Ajaero. In his response, Comrade Joe Ajaero recounted the history of partnership between the NLC and the American people especially American trade unions particularly the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO) and their international body – the American Solidarity Centre.





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 7. The Outgoing Cuban Ambassador Visits

**A**fter nearly four years of tour of service in Nigeria, the Cuban Ambassador to Nigeria, HE Clara Pulido Escandell Clara is rounding off her work in Nigeria. The Cuban Ambassador paid a courtesy visit to the newly elected President of the Nigeria Labour Congress, Comrade Joe Ajaero, to extend the diplomatic goodwill of the people and government of Cuba. The Ambassador during the visit intimated the NLC President of her work and good memories of the relationship between the Embassy and the working people of Nigeria. The Ambassador invited the Nigeria Labour Congress to the Cuban National Day celebration.

In his response, the President of Congress, Comrade Ajaero, commended the role of Cuba in the liberation struggle in Africa and other parts of the world. He also eulogised the remarkable resilience demonstrated by the Cuban people despite years of blockade by America and some western countries. Comrade Ajaero noted that despite the insufferable socio-pressure being piled on the Cuban nation, the country has been able to develop one of the most robust education and healthcare system in the world and has even exported their unique experience through their humanitarian and foreign development assistance initiatives. The Congress President wished the Ambassador well as she concluded her impactful tour of duty in Nigeria.





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 8. The Management of Central Bank of Nigeria Knocks

In response to the ultimatum given by the Nigeria Labour Congress on the currency crunch, the management of Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) knocked on the doors of the President of the Congress. The visit was to discuss plans by the CBN to address the persisting currency scarcity in the country. Congress President, Comrade Joe Ajaero urged the CBN to do more to relieve Nigerians especially workers of the hardship imposed by the currency crunch.



## **ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS**

### **9. The National Union of Food Beverages and Tobacco Employees (NUFBTE) Inaugurates her Five Star Hotel**

The National Union of Food Beverages and Tobacco Employees (NUFBTE) has commissioned its 5-star hotel in Ibadan, Oyo State. Leading a host of dignitaries which included the Honourable Minister of Labour, the immediate past President of the NLC commended the union especially its leadership under Comrade Lateef Oyelekan for consolidating on its strive over the years for trade union financial independence.

The highlight commissioning ceremony was the part of the highlights of the convening of the NUFBTE National Delegates Conference where Comrade Ibrahim Garba was elected to succeed Comrade Lateef Oyelekan as the new President of NUFBTE in addition to other members of the National Exco of NUFBTE who were also elected at the Conference.

It would be recalled that the NUFBTE under the leadership of Comrade Lateef Oyelekan had constructed a 4-star hotel in Lagos State and a bottled Water Production Factory in Lagos State as part of the efforts by the union to diversify its sources of revenue.





## **ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS**

### **10. Comrade Joe Ajaero reconciles the differences in NUSDE**

Comrade Joe Ajaero working with the Industrial Relations and Organising Department of the NLC has been able to reconcile the differences in the National Union of Shops and Distributive Employees (NUSDE) which became a matter of litigation.

At the end of the reconciliation meeting which took place on the 20th of April 2023 at the National Secretariat of the NLC and chaired by the NLC President with the assistance of the NLC Industrial Relations and Organising Department, the two factions of the NUSDE were reconciled through a terms of agreement signed by the two parties. The two parties also agreed to submit the signed agreement as a consent judgement at the next hearing of the court case.



## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 11. The NLC Women Commission Commemorates the International Women Day

The NLC Women Commission on Wednesday, April 26, 2023 commemorated the International Women's Day with a Seminar with support of the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung. Female trade unions thronged the Oliatan Oyerinde Memorial Hall for the Seminar. The leadership of the NLC Women Commission later paid a courtesy visit to the NLC President





## ACTIVITIES OF THE NIGERIA LABOUR CONGRESS AND NEWS FROM AFFILIATE UNIONS

### 12. NLC Holds the 2023 Pre May Day Lecture

The Nigeria Labour Congress held the 2023 Pre May Day Lecture at the Olaitan Oyerinde Memorial Hall, Labour House, Abuja on Friday, 28th May 2023. The theme of the Lecture was "Workers Right and Socio-Economic Justice". The lecture was delivered by Dr. Sam Amadi.



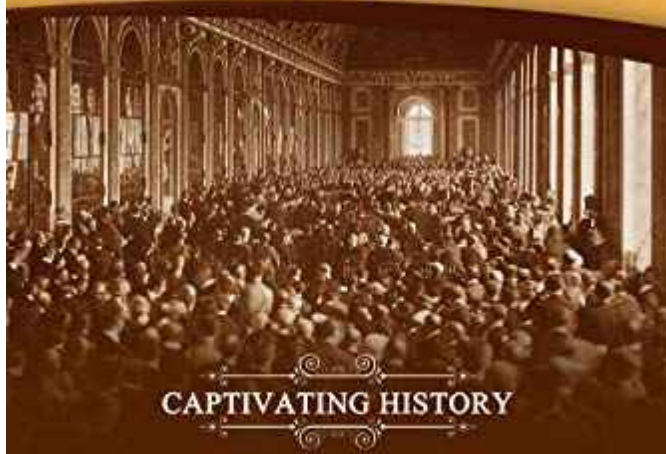


# INTERNATIONAL WINDOW

Comrade Echezona Asuzu

## THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES

A CAPTIVATING GUIDE TO THE PEACE TREATY  
THAT ENDED WORLD WAR 1 AND ITS IMPACT ON  
GERMANY AND THE RISE OF ADOLF HITLER



CAPTIVATING HISTORY

The history of the May Day or the International Workers Day is anchored on rights – workplace rights. Workers in the city of Chicago, United States of America were agitating for an eight-hour work per day labour standard. Their agitation suddenly turned fatal, and many workers lost their lives. Yet, before the unfortunate incident in 1886 that eventually gave birth to May Day, there were already agitations in Europe and America for the development and adoption of a formal body of labour standards to regulate the world of work.

This movement for international labour standards with origins in the nineteenth century was led by some social reformers, trade unionists and employers who were open to fair standards in the workplace. The government of Switzerland led this push very boldly

## MAY DAY

– An Exploration of the Origins and Essence  
of Workplace Rights through the Sails of  
International Labour Standards

through many international conferences that it hosted starting from the 1890s attracting middle class reformers and intellectuals. The main objective for this movement was the desire to improve the conditions of labour through a deliberate effort to ensure uniform labour standards all over the industrialised economies of the world and the emerging ones in a way that gains in one part of the world is not undermined by the threat of lower labour costs in other parts of the world.

A major milestone from the initiative and efforts of the Swiss government was the creation of the International Association for Labor Legislation in Basel in 1901. This was subsequently followed by the establishment of an International Labour Office to serve as secretariat of the newly formed international labour association. It however dawned on the promoters of this initiative that in the absence of government support and active participation in the work of the international labour standards initiatives, the success of the Association would be limited.

The First World War and the wave of labour dislocations and unrests that came with it quickly brought to the fore the need for a multistakeholder partnership on international labour standards. The widespread hardship imposed by the First World War had developed in every stratum of society a feeling that peace must mean something more than a return a knee jerk relapse to the industrial conditions that





# INTERNATIONAL WINDOW

**Comrade Echezona Asuzu**

existed prior to 1914. It dawned on governments, employers of labour and trade union organisations that a new world order was necessary to guarantee world peace and give to everyone the just reward of their labour.

The pressure of the Socialist Revolution where the proletariat class uprooted the Czar monarchical system in Russia and the acquiescing Bourgeoisie class sent cold shivers across Europe and America. It also brought home the consciousness of a negotiated labour standards that can yield some level of social justice that workers were demanding.

This re-approach crystallized at the Versailles (Paris) Peace Conference which took place just outside Paris, the French Capital in 1919. The task before the delegates at the Peace Conference was therefore to end two types of wars – the war engendered by political contestation and fought militarily, and the war precipitated by injustice and loss of rights in the workplace.

Pursuant to this objective, on 25th January 1919, delegates to the Peace Conference at Versailles appointed a Commission on International Labour Legislation which at the end of the Conference metamorphosed into the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The ILO since its establishment has distinguished itself not only as the first specialised agency of the United Nations (UN) but as its most democratic agency. Adopting a unique tripartite governance mechanism, the ILO has been able to coalesce the willpower of government, private sector employers and workers' organisations to develop a body of international labour standards that have become the bastion of workplace rights. The gamut of international labour standards includes ILO Conventions, Recommendations, Protocols and Declarations.

The development of the international labour standards mechanism is democratic as it involves first and second discussions at the ILO International Labour Conferences which holds between May and June every year in Geneva, Switzerland. After the second round of discussions, a simple majority vote leads to the adoption of any international labour standards. Subsequently and in line with Article 19 of the ILO Constitution, every member state of the ILO is expected to present for ratification the adopted labour standards usually Conventions and Protocols to their competent authorities which in most cases are National Parliaments in ILO member states.





# INTERNATIONAL WINDOW

Comrade Echezona Asuzu



Member states of the ILO where the National Parliaments ratify the ILO labour standards are expected to communicate same to the ILO Office in Geneva. Such ratified standards come into force one year after the National Parliaments or competent authorities ratify them. By the virtue of Article 22 of the ILO Constitution, each member state of the ILO that ratify ILO Conventions and Protocols are expected to comply with the obligations to periodically report to the ILO on the level of the country's compliance to the ratified standards in law and practice.

Compliance in law means domesticating the standards through enactment of new laws or review of existing laws to accommodate the ILO standards. Compliance in practice means actual implementation of the provisions of such ratified and domesticated standards. The ILO provides technical assistance to member states in helping them report how the country has been able to give effect to ILO standards that it has ratified. Such reports by national governments are expected to be shared with employers and workers organisations for their observations.

The ILO Conventions are categorised in three broad groups – the Fundamental Conventions, the Governance Conventions, and the Technical Conventions. From the very first Convention of the ILO which is the Hours of Work (Industry) Convention Number 1, the

ILO body of international labour standards has grown to 190 Conventions with the most recent being the Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work.

Fundamental Conventions of the ILO includes: Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98) Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) Abolition of Forced Labour Convention, 1957 (No. 105) Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138) Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182) Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). After the COVID-19, the ILO in 2022 adopted two Occupational Safety and Health Conventions (Conventions 155 and 187) as fundamental Conventions of the ILO.

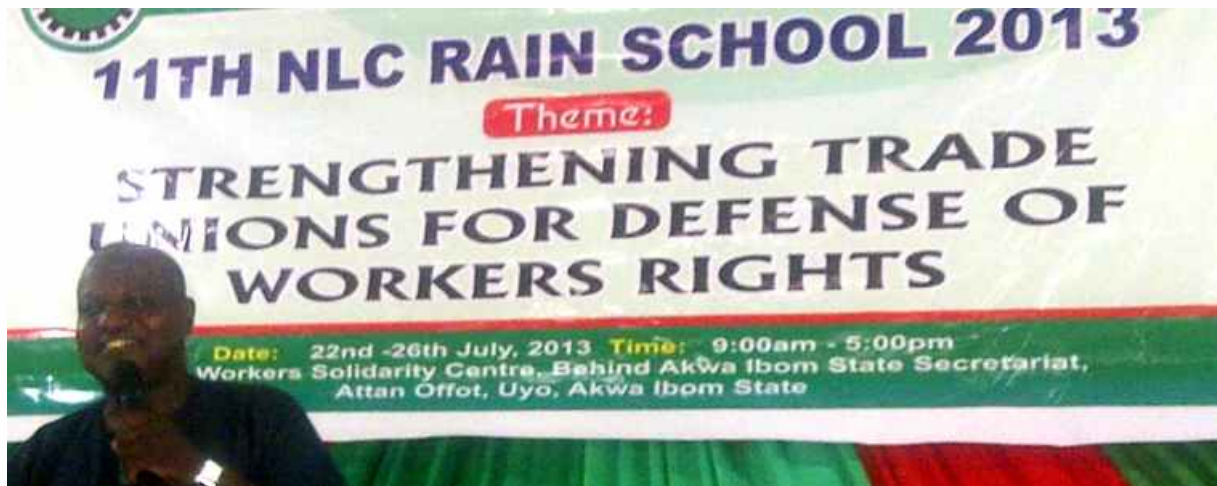
The ILO Governance or Priority Conventions are: Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129) Tripartite Consultation (International Labour Standards) Convention, 1976 (No. 144) Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122).

Nigeria is one of the few countries that have ratified all the ILO Fundamental Conventions.



# NLC Democratizes Workers' Education to Members of its Affiliates

by Tahir Hashim



The Nigeria Labour Congress in recognition of the importance of education to humanity and in particular to the working people of Nigeria did not rest on its oars to train the members of its affiliated unions. It was in this regard, that the Education Department of the NLC has undertaken some educational programmes for members of the affiliates of the NLC between 2019 and 2023.

Between 2019 and 2022, the Congress has held the 2019, 2021 and 2022 Rain School and 2021 and 2022 Harmattan School for the members of its affiliated union. The Rain and Harmattan Schools are the flagships of the NLC education programmes.

As part of the strategies to democratize its education programmes by incorporating the training for shop floor workers in as many places of work as possible, the NLC has also undertaken the training of the trainers for the Study Circle methodology for its 36 State Councils and the Federal Capital Territory. In order to prepare its affiliates to develop the knowledge base and skills of their shop floor members, Congress has also trained some trainers of its affiliated unions on the Study Circle methodology in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

In addition to the Study Circle which the Congress is using to step down workers' education to the grassroot, it has also in collaboration with the Fredreich Ebert Stiftung conducted train the trainers' workshop for the State Level School Facilitators for its 37 States Councils. The training was meant to revive the State Level School which has been moribund since 2010. The State Level School Sessions were also mounted in 25 State Councils of the NLC in 2021. The State Level School of the NLC is training programmes meant for the members of the affiliates in the states.

Recognizing the importance of refresher training for the members of the National Co-ordinating Group (NCG) of the educational activities of the NLC, the Education Department of the NLC undertook a comprehensive refresher training for the NCG members in Abuja in November, 2019 to renew their knowledge and skills for planning and facilitation at the Congress educational programmes.

In order to strengthen the negotiation skills of the State Councils of the NLC in difficult times like the Coronavirus pandemic had thrown up in 2020, the Nigeria Labour Congress in collaboration with the ILO conducted a workshop for its

# NLC Democratizes Workers' Education to Members of its Affiliates

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In order to strengthen the negotiation skills of the State Councils of the NLC in difficult times like the Coronavirus pandemic had thrown up in 2020, the Nigeria Labour Congress in collaboration with the ILO conducted a workshop for its 37 State Councils Chairmen on negotiation skills in November, 2020 in Abuja.

Given the importance of organizing as engine room of the trade unions, the Congress in partnership with the Solidarity Centre initiated an organising academy in June 2021 to build the capacity of the organisers of the affiliates of the Congress on innovative strategies of organising more workers into the unions. The inaugural organizing academy drew participants from 24 affiliated unions of the Congress from the private, public and informal sector unions.

In line with the directives of the National Executive Council Meeting of the NLC held some time in 2017 on the need to recruit state secretaries for the NLC State Councils, new state secretaries were recruited and trained from 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> July, 2022 at the Michael Imoudu National Institute for Labour Studies. They have since been posted to some State

Councils of the NLC to work in those state councils.

The Nigeria Labour Congress Education Conference held from 9<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> November, 2022 in Abuja. The objectives of the Education Conference were to review selected trade union education and training strategies and policies to identify best practices and develop a draft of recommendations for the NLC on education policy and strategies.

The NLC, since 1978 when it came into existence has recognized education as an indispensable means to develop the knowledge and skills of humanity to grow the mental potentials of individuals, groups and organizations to achieve social and economic development. It with this in mind that it has developed many educational programmes for all the cadres of members of its affiliated unions for them to be prepared to defend themselves in the workplace and in the society against the negative posturing of the employers and the government. Thus, the educational programmes of the NLC have over the years equipped the workers to keep the NLC in readiness as agent of social change and voice of the people in Nigeria.





# SOCIAL SPACE

## IN SOLIDARITY



In the period under review, Comrade (Hon) Uchenna Ekwe (Head of International at the NLC National Secretariat) and Comrade Ismaila Bello (Deputy General Secretary of the NLC) lost their beloved mothers, Mrs. Nnenna Bridget Ekwe and Alhaja Asiawu Asabi Bello, respectively. Mrs Bridget Ekwe, 78, was a retired schoolteacher, headmistress, trade unionist and community organiser. She is survived by many children, grandchildren, and in-laws.

Alhaja Asiawu Asabi Bello died at a full old age leaving behind many sons, daughters, grandchildren, and great grandchildren. Alhaja Asiawu Asabi Bello has since been buried according to Islamic rites.



Comrade Saratu Yahaya was delivered of a granddaughter. The daughter of Comrade Saratu and her child are in good health. Also, the family of Comrade Emmanuel Udoh welcomed another grand child as one of the daughters of our comrade was delivered of a bouncing baby girl. The naming ceremony of the young child took place recently in Gwagwalada, Abuja.

# SOCIAL SPACE

## IN SOLIDARITY

In the period under review, a number of our comrades celebrated their birthdays. They include Comrade (Hon) Uchenna Ekwe, Comrade James Eustace, Comrade Kehinde Olaewe, Comrade Chukwuma Nzeh, Comrade Maureen Onyia-Ekwuazi and Comrade Olakumbi Omisakin.



**Comrade James Eustace**



**Comrade Kehinde Olaewe**



**Comrade Maureen Onyia-Ekwuazi**



**Comrade Olakumbi Omisakin.**



**Comrade (Hon) Uchenna Ekwe**



**Comrade Chukwuma Nzeh**





NUFBTE 5-Star Hotel in Ibadan, Oyo State

*Food Is The Engine Of Life*

***On behalf of the National Executive Council (NEC)  
of the National Union of Food Beverages and  
Tobacco Employees (NUFBIE)***

***We wish all Nigerian Workers a very Productive and Fulfilling  
2023 May Day Celebration. We also felicitate  
with the new leadership of Congress under Comrade Joe Ajaero  
and all NLC Affiliate Unions  
for the efforts at advancing the cause of the  
Nigerian Working Class.***

***Our Struggles in Diverse fronts of Workers Right  
and Welfare will bear tremendous fruits.***

