

**COMMUNIQUÉ ISSUED AT THE END OF THE CENTRAL WORKING
COMMITTEE (CWC) MEETING OF THE NIGERIA UNION OF PETROLEUM
AND NATURAL GAS WORKERS (NUPENG) HELD AT THE NATIONAL
SECRETARIAT, 9, JIBOWU STREET, YABA - LAGOS ON FRIDAY, MARCH
31ST 2017**

The Central Working Committee of NUPENG met on 31st March, 2017 at the National Secretariat, 9, Jibowu Street, Yaba – Lagos and deliberated on issues of urgent concerns in the Oil and Gas industry and the Nation in general.

After an exhaustive deliberation on all the issues raised during the meeting, the following resolutions were adopted at the end of the meeting on issues critically impacting on the nation at large and Oil and Gas industry in particular.

(a) SPATE OF REDUNDANCIES AND CLOSURES

The CWC-in-Session noted with deep concern the continuous and increasing spate of redundancies and closures in the oil and gas industry, most especially within the International Oil Companies in the producing and service sector of the industry.

The CWC-in Session find the situation very disturbing considering the helplessness of the supervising ministries in intervening and apprehending unfortunate slide in the employment situations in the industry with several job losses despite the assurances and directive of the Honourable Minister of Labour and Employment, Dr. Chris Ngige.

The CWC-in-Session calls on the Federal Government to urgently intervene to stem the tide and prevail on the IOC^{'s} and Service Companies to stop the current spate of retrenchment and redundancies in the sector.

(b) THE PETROLEUM INDUSTRY BILL (PIB)

The CWC-in-Session examined the progress so far made in passage of the Petroleum Industry Governance Bill and other components of the proposed Petroleum Industry Bill and expresses its disappointment at the slow pace of work in the passage despite the assurance given by the leadership of the national assembly that the bill will receive accelerated hearing and passage.

The CWC-in-Session considered the delay in the passage of the bill to be majorly responsible for the rot in the industry and the slide in the returns accruable from investments made by successive governments and investors.

The CWC-in-Session calls on the National Assembly to expedite parliamentary actions for speedy passage of the bill for the purposes of engendering transparency, accountability and commensurate returns in the operations of Oil and Gas sector, which the CWC –in- Session believes will further enhance the visibility and attractiveness of the sector to both foreign and local investors.

TANKER DRIVERS WORKING CONDITIONS.

The CWC-in-Session examined the various complaints and agitations of Petroleum Tanker Drivers members of the union over their deplorable working conditions with regards to poor remuneration, insecurity on the highways, poor state of roads, absence of conducive rest places on the highways and the excesses of some security agencies, most especially, the Nigeria Civil Defense Corps.

The CWC-in-Session considered inhumane, the refusal of National Association of Road Transport Owner (NARTO) to commence negotiation

with the union for the renewal of the expired Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) on the working conditions of our Tanker Drivers members in PTD Branch after several appeals and even ultimatum.

The CWC-in-Session therefore resolved to give full backing to any industrial action the members in this sector might decide to take with effect from Monday 3rd of April 2017.

To avert the pains and discomfort the action might cause, the CWC –in - Session calls on the Federal Government to urgently intervene and apprehend the unfortunate situation to enable NARTO meets its obligations to Tanker Drivers.

CAPITAL OIL NIGERIA PLC ISSUE

The C.W.C-in-Session received with deep concern the reports in the news media about attempt to declare all workers in the Capital Oil Depot, including hapless Tanker Drivers redundant over issue of fraud they know nothing about.

The CWC-in- Session therefore advice the Federal government and the NNPC to adopt pragmatic approach in resolving the issues in such a manner that will not lead to job losses to avoid industrial unrest in the industry that may lead to scarcity of petroleum products in the country.

(c) REFINERIES

The CWC-in-Session notes the current calls and agitation by some interested capitalists for the privatization of the nation's four refineries. We kick against such moves and advise the Federal Government to sincerely do the Turn-Around-Maintenance (TAM) of the refineries and upgrade their systems in order to allow them produce at full capacity. The CWC believes that this will go a long way to reduce the massive importation of petroleum products into the country.

The CWC-in-Session also calls on the Federal Government to grant tax holidays and free land for investors who want to establish private refineries.

(d) MODULAR REFINERIES

The CWC-in-Session commends the Federal Government position to encourage operators of illegal refineries to be integrated into establishment of modular refineries.

The CWC –in - Session advice that the pronouncement should not be political but matched with actions to train the Refiners, put appropriate policies and regulations in place to regulate their operations in order to protect the eco system from possible negative effects of their activities.

The Council –in- Session further urge the Federal Government to support the Refiners with funds necessary for effective and efficient modular refineries which we believe will go a long way in supporting the supply of Petroleum Products for local consumption and also generate employment opportunities for the restless youths.

(e) THE ECONOMY

The Central Working Committee (CWC) x-rayed the state of the economy and commended the government in its efforts shore up the naira against the dollar and the drop of the inflationary rate to 17.5 percent. The session however states that a lot still needs to be done to address the current recession and reduce the hunger in the land.

The CWC-in-Session wants the Federal Government to address the challenges of poverty, unemployment and hunger in the land. It adds that the Federal Government should vigorously address the issue of rising costs of goods and services.

The CWC-in-Session calls on the Federal Government to look inward and put structures and strategies to restructure the economy. The Session

wants the National Assembly to quickly put finishing touches to the budget so that it can be passed and assented by the President, so that the liquidity squeeze can be addressed and debts owed contractors paid after verification.

(f) POWER

The CWC-in-Session deliberated on the poor power supply in the country which is adding to the cost of doing business. It laments that the economy is still generator-driven and states that the privatization of the power sector has failed.

It adds that the Federal Government should put pressure on the GENCO's and the DISCO's to be alive to their responsibilities or have their licenses revoked.

(g) PROPOSED INCREASE IN PUMP PRICE OF PMS

The CWC deliberated on recent calls by oil marketers that the current price of ₦145 per litre for PMS is no longer realistic in view of the landing costs. We state that any plan by the government to increase the pump price of PMS will be tantamount to increasing the suffering of the masses and NUPENG will resist it.

(h) BAD ROADS

The CWC-in-Session notes the current efforts of the government in bringing the contractors back to site but calls for adequate funding so that the pace of work can be increased. At present, the construction work on most of the sites is at a slow speed and wants the Federal Government to pay the contractors so that the bad roads, especially the major highways can be rehabilitated.

(i) INSECURITY

The CWC-in-Session commends the Federal Government for the flushing out of the Boko Haram members from the Sambisa forest but calls on the military intelligence to be up and doing to stem the current tide of suicide bombings in the Maiduguri area.

The Council-in –Session further commends the Nigerian Police and the Department of State Security for all the gallant efforts in stemming the spate of armed robberies and kidnappings in the country. We are aware of their limitations in terms of equipment and modern technology to address modern day security challenges

Notwithstanding the observed gaps, The CWC-in-Session expresses deep worries over the continued incidences of kidnappings and rapes in the country. We call on the security agencies to spread their dragnets in arresting the current scourge of kidnappings and raping in all parts of the country.

(j) UNITED LABOUR CONGRESS (ULC)

The CWC-in-Session affirmed the membership of NUPENG in the newly formed labour centre, the United Labour Congress (ULC). The Session agreed to pursue the ideals and programmes of the ULC. It also congratulated the Union’s President Comrade (Dr.) Igwe Achese as the ULC Deputy President.

The CWC –in –Session receives with consternation the unscrupulous clandestine moves of some individuals and desperate Politicians to paint the collective resolve of Workers to come together and freely associate in a bad light to the effect of making attempt to deny the registration United Labour Congress as a centre for registered Trade Unions in Nigeria.

The CWC-in-Session strongly noted that freedom of association, most especially for workers is expressly stated in section 40 of the Nigerian constitution and eloquently espoused in the ILO Convention. It was noted freedom of association is an inalienable right of Nigerian workers.

The CWC-in-Session emphasize the fact, it is only ULC that has made genuine and concrete efforts to duly registered as a labour centre in Nigeria as required by the law. It will therefore be a misnomer and blatant aberration if the wicked wishes of the ignoble cabals are allowed to prevail.

The CWC-in-Session resolved to do all within its powers for the full realization of the desire and aspiration of the teaming members of the United Labour Congress to get it registered and recognized as a Labour Centre representing major segments of Workers in Nigeria. We shall surely overcome.

Comrade Igwe Achese
President

Comrade Joseph Ogbebor
General Secretary