



**STATE OF THE UNION ADDRESS**  
**BY THE NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF SSANU**  
**COMRADE MOHAMMED HARUNA IBRAHIM**, *fnipr, fnils, fciml, manupa*  
**AT THE 54<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (NEC) MEETING**  
**HELD AT EKITI STATE UNIVERSITY, EKITI STATE**  
**24<sup>TH</sup> – 26<sup>TH</sup> MARCH, 2026**

***“ If funding remains inadequate, agreements are disregarded, renegotiations continue to stall, and our members are treated unjustly, the university system will face serious and unavoidable consequences.***

*Let this be a decisive wake-up call to the government that the time for action is now.*

***Comrades, Distinguished Guests, and Esteemed Members,***

It is my honour to welcome you to this 54<sup>th</sup> NEC meeting. I bring warm greetings from the National Secretariat and commend your continued commitment to our Union in these challenging times.

Comrades, before we continue, let us take a quiet moment to remember those we have recently lost to the tragic incident in Maiduguri, Sokoto, Zamfara, Kaduna, Niger, Adamawa, and Kwara.

The pain of that event is still fresh, and the loss remains deeply felt across the nation. Lives were cut short, and families have been left to bear a grief that words can hardly capture.

As a union, we stand in solidarity. We pray for the departed, for comfort to those who mourn, and for healing to the injured.

Invite us to observe a brief moment of silence in their honour.

Comrades, since our last NEC meeting, the realities confronting Nigerian universities and our members have not improved. If anything, the pressures have intensified. This moment demands clarity, unity, and firm resolve.

## **1. Funding Realities and the Widening Resource Gap**

The funding crisis in our universities persists. Infrastructure continues to deteriorate, essential services remain unreliable, and investment in research and innovation remains grossly inadequate.

Education must be treated as a national priority, not a discretionary expense. Universities cannot function on inconsistent funding. SSANU therefore reiterates its call for predictable funding, transparent releases, and strict accountability to ensure that resources are effectively deployed to support teaching, research, and administration.

## **2. Security and the Safety of University Communities**

Security challenges across our campuses remain a serious and evolving concern. Reports of intrusions, theft, harassment, and threats to life continue to create unsafe environments for staff and



students. In many institutions, campuses are no longer insulated from the broader national security challenges, as incidents of kidnapping, violent attacks, and criminal activities in surrounding communities increasingly spill into university spaces.

A major concern is the vulnerability of campus infrastructure. Poorly lit environments, inadequate perimeter fencing, limited surveillance systems, and under-resourced security units have left many institutions exposed. In some cases, campus security personnel operate without modern equipment, training, or the logistical support required to respond effectively to emerging threats.

This situation not only endangers lives but also disrupts academic activities, weakens staff morale, and undermines confidence in the university system.

SSANU hereby calls on the Federal Government, State Governments, and university authorities to take urgent and coordinated action. This includes strengthening internal security architecture, deploying modern surveillance and access control systems, improving lighting and perimeter protection, and establishing rapid response mechanisms in collaboration with national security agencies.

In addition, there is a need to prioritise the welfare of security personnel and ensure that all university workers are covered by comprehensive health and life insurance schemes. A safe university environment is not optional; it is fundamental to effective teaching, research, and administration.

### **3. Universities and the Global Knowledge Gap**

Comrades, the reality is that our universities are falling behind, not gradually, but at a pace that should concern every stakeholder in this country.

Across the world, higher education is being reshaped by digital systems, artificial intelligence, data-driven research, and strong industry collaboration. In contrast, many of our universities are still constrained by weak digital infrastructure, limited access to modern research tools, and outdated systems that no longer reflect current global standards.

This is no longer just a question of development; it is now a question of relevance. A university system that cannot adapt to global knowledge trends risks producing graduates who are unprepared for the demands of today's economy.

The situation is further compounded by inadequate investment in research, weak institutional support for innovation, and limited opportunities for staff development. Without deliberate intervention, this gap will continue to widen, with long-term consequences for national competitiveness and economic growth.

SSANU hereby calls for a decisive shift in policy direction. Government must prioritise digital transformation across universities, invest meaningfully in research and innovation, and create structured programmes for continuous staff development.



Equally important is the need to strengthen partnerships between universities, industry, and international institutions to ensure that our system remains connected to global knowledge flows.

Comrades, this is not a distant challenge. It is already happening. If urgent steps are not taken, we risk building a university system that is present in form but absent in relevance.

#### **4. Earned Allowances: Ensuring Fairness for All Staff**

Comrades, the issue of Earned Allowances remains a clear test of government's commitment to fairness and equity within the university system.

The ₦50 billion Earned Allowances agreed upon in 2022 as part of the conditions for resolving earlier disputes is yet to be fully and fairly implemented. Since the last NEC meeting, the Union has intensified its engagement with the Federal Government through formal communications and sustained follow-up to ensure that this obligation is honoured.

We have also drawn attention to the exclusion of Inter-University Centres and research institutes from previous disbursements, a situation that is both unjust and unacceptable.

Let it be clearly stated that Earned Allowances are not a privilege; they are entitlements arising from work already done by committed staff across the system. Any attempt to exclude categories of workers or apply selective criteria undermines trust and deepens dissatisfaction.

SSANU's position remains firm. Every worker who contributes to the functioning of the university system must be recognised and included in any disbursement. Anything short of this will not be accepted.

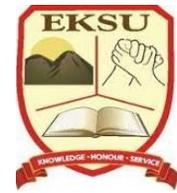
#### **5. Salaries, Increments, and Financial Justice for Workers**

It is unacceptable that the workers who sustain our universities continue to experience delays in the payment of their salaries and entitlements.

Since our last NEC meeting, the situation has deteriorated further. The delay in the payment of February 2026 salaries across federal universities has imposed severe hardship on our members and their families, particularly at a time of heightened financial responsibility during religious observances.

This is not an isolated occurrence. It reflects a persistent pattern of inefficiency and inconsistency in the salary payment system. The continued uncertainty around payment timelines, coupled with unresolved issues of approved increments and other withheld entitlements, has placed an unjust burden on workers who are already contending with rising economic pressures.

Comrades, when workers are unsure of when they will be paid, it disrupts not only their personal lives but also the stability of the institutions they serve. Delayed wages erode morale, weaken productivity, and undermine confidence in the system.



SSANU hereby reiterates its call for a reliable and unified salary payment structure, the immediate settlement of all outstanding increments and withheld salaries, and a firm commitment from the government to uphold the dignity of labour through timely and consistent payment of workers.

This is not merely an administrative issue. It is a matter of dignity, trust, and fairness.

## **6. Renegotiation of Agreements and Government Engagement**

Comrades, the slow pace and apparent lack of seriousness in the renegotiation process remain a matter of grave concern to the Union.

Since the last NEC meeting, engagements with the Federal Government have yielded little progress. While meetings have been held, they have not translated into clear commitments, defined timelines, or tangible outcomes. This pattern of engagement without resolution is unacceptable.

More concerning is the growing perception of imbalance in the system. Developments involving other unions have raised legitimate questions about fairness and equity, while public narratives suggesting industrial harmony do not reflect the realities confronting non-teaching staff across our universities.

Negotiation is built on trust, and trust is sustained by sincerity and consistency. When agreements are delayed and processes prolonged without direction, confidence is eroded, tensions rise, and the foundation of industrial harmony begins to weaken.

Comrades, we must be clear. The continued delay in concluding these renegotiations is not without consequence. It is already placing strain on the system, and if allowed to persist, it will inevitably lead to deeper disruption.

If funding remains inadequate, agreements are disregarded, renegotiations continue to stall, and our members are treated unjustly, the university system will face serious and unavoidable consequences. Let this stand as a clear and unmistakable wake-up call to the government that the time for action is now.

## **7. Labour Solidarity and Engagement with the NLC**

SSANU has continued to strengthen its engagement with the Nigeria Labour Congress in pursuit of fairness and equity for all workers.

The NLC has reaffirmed its position that all unions must be treated justly and has expressed its readiness to support any affiliate facing marginalisation. Members will recall that the NLC advised us to hold on with our planned strike in order to engage the government and draw attention to our concerns at the national level. This intervention underscores the importance of coordinated labour action and collective strength.

SSANU will continue to work closely with the NLC to ensure that the concerns of university workers remain firmly on the national agenda.

## 8. The Defining Phase Ahead

Comrades, we are now at a critical juncture. The period ahead will determine the direction of our Union and the future of the university system. If meaningful negotiations are not concluded and fairness is not restored, the Union will be left with no option but to take decisive and lawful action.

Our members must therefore remain informed, united, and prepared. The strength of SSANU lies in its discipline, cohesion, and collective resolve.

## 9. Public–Private Partnership and Protection of University Workers

The proposed Public–Private Partnership and divestment framework remains a matter of serious concern. SSANU has made its position clear. No reform initiative should result in job losses, casualization, or the erosion of workers’ rights. Thousands of our members currently provide essential services across the university system, and their roles cannot be transferred or diminished under any arrangement.

Any reform must focus on strengthening infrastructure and service delivery without compromising the workforce. SSANU will firmly resist any attempt to undermine the conditions of service or job security of its members.

## 10. Capacity Development and Union Strengthening

The Union continues to invest in the development and strengthening of its membership.

The National Women’s Conference and Harmattan School programmes have enhanced leadership capacity, deepened policy engagement, and strengthened organisational effectiveness across branches.

These initiatives remain central to building a new generation of informed, competent, and committed union leaders capable of navigating the complexities of the evolving university system.

## 11. Economic Pressures and the Welfare of Members

The economic situation continues to place severe strain on our members. Rising costs of living, driven by persistent inflation, have made it increasingly difficult for workers to meet basic needs, while the value of salaries continues to decline.

In recent Eid-el-Fitr messages, SSANU drew national attention to the worsening economic hardship facing university workers and Nigerians at large. The Union noted that many families are now doing more with far less, as the rising cost of living continues to place a heavy burden on workers who remain committed to sustaining the university system.

SSANU made it clear that these sacrifices must not be taken for granted. Government policies must go beyond pronouncements and translate into real relief for workers through improved welfare,

wage adjustments, and practical economic measures that restore dignity to labour. This situation is unacceptable. Workers who sustain the university system cannot continue to operate under such conditions without serious consequences for morale, productivity, and institutional stability.

SSANU hereby calls for immediate and deliberate action, including a realistic wage review that reflects current economic realities, expanded social protection for education sector workers, and policies that ease the burden of transportation, housing, and basic living costs.

A workforce under sustained economic pressure cannot support a functional and competitive university system.

## **12. Call for Unity, Discipline, and Collective Action**

Comrades, at a moment such as this, our greatest strength remains our unity.

All branches must continue to operate strictly within the provisions of the SSANU Constitution, uphold the authority of democratically elected leadership, and maintain discipline at every level of our Union. These are not mere formalities; they are the foundation of our credibility and the source of our collective strength.

We must act together, speak with one voice, and remain firmly focused on our shared purpose. The progress we have recorded has been possible because we stood united. Any sign of disunity at this critical time will weaken our position and undermine the gains we have worked hard to achieve.

Let us therefore remain steadfast, disciplined, and committed to the ideals that define SSANU. Together, we are stronger, and together, we will prevail.

## **13. Way Forward: Practical Steps for Immediate Resolution**

Comrades, while we have outlined the challenges confronting our members and the university system, SSANU remains committed to solutions that will restore stability, fairness, and confidence.

We therefore propose the following immediate steps:

1. The Federal Government must reconvene the renegotiation committee within a clearly defined timeframe and commit to a structured engagement process with all university-based unions. This process must be transparent, inclusive, and time-bound.
2. All outstanding salary issues, including delayed payments, withheld salaries, and approved increments, must be addressed without further delay. A unified and reliable salary payment system should be adopted to eliminate recurring inconsistencies.
3. The ₦50 billion Earned Allowances agreed upon in 2022 must be released in a fair and inclusive manner that captures all categories of workers, including Inter-University Centres and research institutes.
4. Any proposed Public-Private Partnership framework must be subjected to comprehensive stakeholder consultation, with clear guarantees on job security and conditions of service before implementation.

5. Government must initiate a realistic wage review and expand social protection measures to cushion the impact of the current economic hardship on university workers.
6. A standing consultative mechanism should be established between the Federal Government and university unions to ensure continuous dialogue, early resolution of disputes, and sustained industrial harmony.

#### **14. Industrial Action Trigger**

Comrades, these are not unreasonable demands. They are practical steps necessary to stabilise the university system and restore confidence among workers. The responsibility now lies with the government to act with urgency and sincerity.

My indefatigable comrades, let it be clearly stated that our patience is not limitless. SSANU has demonstrated goodwill, restraint, and a consistent commitment to dialogue, but we cannot and will not continue on this path indefinitely while our members are subjected to neglect and injustice.

If the Federal Government fails to act with urgency to conclude renegotiations, address salary delays, settle outstanding entitlements, and implement its commitments, the Union will be left with no alternative but to take decisive action. Such action will be total, coordinated, and comprehensive across all branches and units/centres of the university system.

We must be prepared to make the system inoperative if that becomes the only viable means to secure justice for our members. This is not a step we take lightly, but it is one we are fully prepared to take if circumstances demand it.

The government must therefore choose the path of dialogue and resolution, because the consequences of continued delay will be far-reaching and unavoidable. **The time to act is now.**

#### **15. Conclusion: Stand Together, Act with Resolve, Secure the Future**

Fellow Comrades, the future of Nigerian universities depends on the outcome of this NEC meeting.

If funding remains inadequate, if agreements are ignored, and if our members continue to be treated unfairly, the system will continue to decline.

SSANU will continue to engage constructively, but we will not hesitate to take lawful action where necessary.

Our duty is clear. We must defend the welfare, dignity, and rights of our members, and we will do so with determination and unity.

Thank you.

**Long live SSANU!**

**Long live the Nigerian University System!!**

**Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!!!**



**Signed:**

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*National President, SSANU*  
*National Internal Auditor, NLC*  
*Chairman of JAC (SSANU/NASU)*

