



SENIOR STAFF ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES (SSANU)

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PRESS RELEASE

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NIGERIA AT 66: INDEPENDENCE MUST DELIVER DIGNITY, SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL

On behalf of the National Executive Council and the entire membership of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities (SSANU), I warmly felicitate with Nigerian workers and indeed all citizens as our dear country marks the 66th anniversary of its Independence.

Sixty-six years after attaining political independence, this occasion provides an opportunity not only to celebrate our nationhood, but also to reflect honestly on the condition of our country, the welfare of our people and the future we are building for generations yet unborn. Nigeria is richly blessed with human and natural resources, and our people remain hardworking, resilient, innovative and determined. However, for independence to have its full meaning, this enormous potential must translate into improved living conditions, including security, decent work, quality education, affordable healthcare, food security and a dignified standard of living for all Nigerians.

For SSANU, national progress cannot be measured solely by economic statistics or government revenues. It must equally be reflected in the welfare of workers, the strength and quality of our public institutions, the opportunities available to young people and the ability of families to meet their basic needs.

The economic pressure facing Nigerian workers and their families remains a major concern for our Union, as the rising costs of food, transportation, electricity, housing, healthcare, education and other basic necessities continue to place enormous pressure on household incomes. While official economic indicators may record improvements in some areas, such progress must ultimately be reflected in the daily lives of citizens, because a salary that cannot adequately provide food, shelter, transportation, healthcare and education for a worker and his or her family is steadily losing its real value irrespective of the figure written on a payslip. Government at all levels must therefore pursue policies that reduce the cost of living, protect the purchasing power of workers, strengthen domestic production and ensure that economic reforms do not place disproportionate burdens on those who can least afford them. Workers must not continually be called upon to make sacrifices while waste, excessive expenditure and inefficiency remain visible in public administration; responsible and prudent governance must also reflect the sacrifices expected of the people.

For members of SSANU, this Independence anniversary comes at an important point in the implementation of the 2026 FGN/SSANU Agreement, which represents the outcome of years of negotiation, engagement and sacrifice by our members. While implementation has commenced in some universities, it must be full, uniform and without discrimination across the entire university system. The Agreement took effect from 1st January 2026, although it was formally signed on 29th June 2026, and the financial obligations arising from the effective date, including all outstanding arrears, must therefore be addressed. SSANU maintains that implementation cannot be regarded as complete while legitimate entitlements accruing to workers remain outstanding. We accordingly call

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on the Federal Government to release the necessary funds to universities and Inter-University Centres for the full implementation of both the financial and non-financial provisions of the Agreement, while State Governments must also ensure that workers in State-owned universities are not denied negotiated improvements in their conditions of service because of the ownership of their institutions. Collective bargaining has meaning only when agreements freely entered into are faithfully implemented.

At 66, Nigeria must recommit itself to protecting and strengthening public education as a fundamental instrument of national development and social mobility. Public institutions must remain accessible, adequately funded and publicly managed, with government retaining responsibility for their development rather than gradually transferring that responsibility to private bodies or associations. Nigerian universities require sustainable and predictable funding to address inadequate electricity, obsolete equipment, insufficient laboratories, weak digital infrastructure, deteriorating facilities and limited support for research and staff development. University education must be treated as an investment in the country's future, with transparency and accountability in the use of resources, while recognizing that universities depend not only on academic staff but also on the vital contributions of registry, bursary, audit, library, ICT, health, security, engineering, works, laboratory and other professional and administrative personnel whose welfare and contributions must receive due recognition.

Security and food security remain fundamental to Nigeria's development, as kidnapping, banditry, violent crime and attacks on communities continue to disrupt agriculture, education, economic activities and the movement of citizens. Schools and universities must be adequately protected so that staff and students can work and learn without fear, while farmers require security, affordable inputs, access to finance, modern infrastructure and reliable transportation to sustain food production. SSANU therefore calls for stronger intelligence gathering, improved community engagement, modern security technology and better-equipped security agencies, alongside deliberate efforts to connect university research in agriculture, biotechnology, engineering, climate science and food technology to practical programmes that can boost productivity and reduce dependence on imports. Security must remain a foremost responsibility of government, and a country with Nigeria's enormous agricultural potential must not allow hunger to become normalised.

Nigeria needs strong institutions, transparency, respect for the rule of law and responsible management of public resources. Citizens have the right to know that resources entrusted to government are being used for the public good, while public officials must recognise that leadership is a responsibility rather than a privilege detached from the realities faced by ordinary people. The fight against corruption must be pursued fairly and consistently, and law-enforcement institutions must operate within the law and respect the dignity and fundamental rights of citizens. Accountability strengthens government by building public confidence in institutions that act transparently, responsibly and fairly.

As Nigeria approaches the 2027 General Elections, SSANU calls on political parties, candidates, electoral institutions, security agencies and citizens to conduct themselves responsibly and peacefully, while ensuring that the will of the people is respected. Elections must not become an avenue for violence, ethnic division, religious hostility or intimidation. Workers are citizens and important stakeholders in the Nigerian project and must be free to examine the policies, programmes and records presented by those seeking public office and make their choices according to their own judgment and conscience. Nigeria needs an electoral discourse focused on security, employment,

education, healthcare, the economy, infrastructure, workers' welfare and the future of our young people.

As we celebrate 66 years of Independence, Nigerians must remain confident in the possibilities of our country despite the challenges before us. These challenges are significant, but they are not beyond solution. What Nigeria requires is responsible leadership, strong and effective institutions, dignity and fairness for workers, and a citizenry united in the determination to build a peaceful, just and prosperous nation. For SSANU, our responsibilities remain clear: we shall continue to defend the legitimate rights and welfare of our members, demand the faithful implementation of agreements reached with government, protect accessible and properly funded public education, promote professionalism and quality within the Nigerian university system, and lend our voice to matters affecting workers and the wider society. Political independence must ultimately translate into economic security, social justice, quality public services and a life of dignity for the Nigerian people. On behalf of the Senior Staff Association of Nigerian Universities, I wish all Nigerian workers and citizens a peaceful and memorable 66th Independence Anniversary.

Long live SSANU!
Long live the Nigerian Labour Movement!
Long live the Federal Republic of Nigeria!



Comrade Mohammed Haruna Ibrahim, *fnipr, fnils, fciml, manupa*
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